

Heavy-handed

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Heavy-handed

by [walkingdeadboy](#)

Summary

Shane's mind was fuzzy. The scratching of skates and the roar of the crowd overwhelmed him, distracted him. His head felt heavy, laden with sounds, not enough space to focus on the game. It felt as if his brain had fogged over suddenly, stopping him from thinking about anything other than how loud everything was.

Shane felt his brain pulling him back, pulling him away from the game, drawing him into himself. A pressure built up behind his eyes and it was all he could do to not tip forward with the weight, feeling the heaviness of his brain.

“-ander?”

Notes

Once again I need to stop writing for this fandom as it is stopping me from sleeping but alas, I am stupid and inspiration hits me at 2am (as of writing this, it is currently 6am the same night)

Uhhhh this one has zero smut, and instead taps into Shane's mental state. As someone who is pursuing an autism diagnosis, I relate to a lot of what Shane thinks/does and I have personally experienced having your brain completely fog up during sports and it really screws with what's happening on the court. Not fun.

Have fun, enjoy, it's kinda cute towards the end, less hollanov, more Shane focused (still some hollanov at the end, promise)

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Shane's mind was fuzzy. The scratching of skates and the roar of the crowd overwhelmed him, distracted him. He shook his head, trying to center himself, trying to re enter that space of focus, only to immediately be drawn back out.

His head felt heavy, laden with sounds, not enough space to focus on the game. It felt as if his brain had fogged over suddenly, stopping him from thinking about anything other than how *loud* everything was.

Shane took a deep breath and winced as he felt his padding scratching along his body, suddenly all too aware of the tight neck of the compression shirt he was wearing, how the sleeve hems cut into his wrists, how the elastic banding of his pants cut into his waist.

Someone shouted and it sounded far away. Shane turned, feeling as if he was moving through molasses, too slow to be on the ice. Marleau from the Boston Raiders had scored and was yelling in Shane's face, proud of his goal, unable to see that Shane had barely reacted.

Shane moved to centre ice, preparing for the puck to drop. He shook himself, urging his mind to refocus, to return back to the game at hand. The sharp hiss of skates made him wince and he glanced up, watching Rozanov take his position.

The fogginess tugged at the edges of his brain, and Shane felt his eyes glaze over slightly, staring into nothing. He was barely aware of the referee taking their place to his side, only being dragged deeper into his head, knowing deep in his core that he needed to be aware, be present, but unable to do anything but stand there.

Shane felt his brain pulling him back, pulling him away from the game, drawing him into himself. A pressure built up behind his eyes and it was all he could do to not tip forward with the weight, feeling the heaviness of his brain.

“-ander?”

Shane's eyes blinked slowly. His gaze refocused just barely, and he caught a small glimpse of Rozanov, his mouth curved down slightly. The referee's whistle blew and Shane flinched, missing the puck and watching Rozanov skate away with it, passing his defence, scoring.

Another whistle blew and Shane distantly heard his coach calling for him, swapping him out. He skated over to the Metros bench and sat down heavily, resting his head against his stick.

The heaviness crept again over his mind, pulling him back into the recesses of his brain. Shane's eyes moved lazily over the rink, watching players from his team skate by, staring at him in concern.

He pressed the side of his head even further into his stick, trying to elicit some kind of sensation, anything that would bring him out of this weird stupor. The crowd screamed behind him, and Shane screwed his eyes shut, needing to block out the sound.

The sensation of the clothes on his skin returned, and he resisted the urge to tug at his jersey, knowing that shifting any of it would make the feeling ten times worse. He took another deep

breath and opened his eyes slowly, looking down at his skates, counting the eyelets.

Ten laced on his left. Ten laced on his right.

Someone's shoes moved in front of his and Shane could only just register his coach's voice, telling him something about getting his head in the game, focusing.

As if he wasn't trying. As if he wasn't trying to pull himself out of whatever funk his brain had decided to place on him, making everything too loud, too present, too much. Shane had been playing for years and this had never happened. Never happened on the ice *during* a game.

Shane had never frozen. Had never gotten into his head while playing. Always had an eye on the puck, knowing what to do, know what other people would do, who would be the best option to pass to and assist, where to be to receive well. What angle of the net would yield the easiest goal, where the defence had gaps.

The heaviness of his brain only hit at home, when he was able to rethink his movements, doubt himself, question himself. Never during a game, never while he was playing.

But if it's happened now, could it happen again?

Could it happen again in a more important game, could it happen during a Stanley Cup grand final, could it happen during another Olympics game, would he make one stupid mistake, slip up, let the fogginess take over, costing his team, his coach, his sponsors, his *parents* something important?

Could he get hurt?

Would he get hurt?

If he let himself slip into his mind while skating, let someone check him into the boards while he isn't prepared, let someone damage him too severely to fix? Let someone end his hockey career?

He couldn't afford that.

Shane felt his breath speed up in his chest, feeling his muscles tense and lock up, keeping him in place on the bench.

He should look up.

He should be present, aware, watching his team.

Cameras were probably on him now, watching his silent panic attack as he stared at the floor.

Shane's head felt like mush, thoughts of what he should do, what he needed to be doing swirled around in his brain, telling him to look up, to be a good captain, to be aware of what was happening on the ice, to focus.

He needed to focus.

Shane's neck cricked slightly as he tilted his head up, still feeling slow, as if he was fighting against time itself to move faster.

Flashes of blue from his team sped past, whoever had been pulled on to replace him as centre battling with Rozanov for the puck, pulling it away only for it to be won back, pulled out of their grasp and slung towards the Metros goal.

Shane's eyes tilted towards the scoreboard and he watched as the points increased, letting the gap between the Metros and the Raiders grow larger.

He should be out there, be on the ice, providing the show that the fans wanted, making Montreal proud, keeping the points gap close, leading the Metros to victory.

But he wasn't.

Instead, he was benched. Fighting against his mind that wouldn't let him focus, wouldn't let him stay in the game, wouldn't let him doubt himself.

What good is it to be a captain if he can't even play?

Shane watched the minutes tick down, letting this win slip through his fingers. The final horn blared and he blinked, recoiling from the sudden explosion of sound from the Boston fans, exhilarated over their win against Montreal.

He stood, barely registering the feeling of his back stretching from the hunched position it had been holding on the bench, only just aware enough to shake hands with the Raiders, mumbling "good game", staring over their shoulders, looking through them.

He positioned himself at the entrance to the Metros changing room, holding out his fist, speaking words to his teammates that he didn't remember, feeling the disappointment of the loss crash over him, melding with the heaviness still present in his head.

The final player passed him and Shane turned, preparing to enter the lockers, to face his disappointed team when he saw a figure standing in the distance out of the corner of his eye.

Rozanov was staring at him, his helmet resting under his arm, a weird expression on his face. Shane's eyes skated over him, and he stepped out of the rink, leaving the mess of a game behind him on the ice.

The lockers were silent, sombre with the disappointing loss. Shane changed on autopilot, moves mechanic, nearly robotic. He could feel the eyes of his teammates on the back of his neck and ignored them, needing to leave, to escape the disaster of the loss.

The release of the compression shirt from his body lifted the foggiest of his head somewhat, letting him breathe again, but only opening himself back up to the failure of letting his brain take over his body, preventing him from doing what he should be able to normally.

Tears pricked the back of his eyes and he blinked roughly, packing his equipment into his bag, nearly running out of the change room.

He got to his car and threw his bag in the passenger seat, almost forgetting to buckle himself in his hurry to get home, to explode in the safety of his apartment. Orange streetlights flickered over his windshield and more and more tears began to blur his sight, built up by frustration and anger at his lack of self control.

He arrived to his building and threw himself up the stairs, feeling the burn in his muscles as he walked up the flights as the sting that should have been felt from a game well played. Shane's hands shook as he unlocked his apartment door, placing his gear down in it's designated spot and walking over to the counter.

He leaned against it feeling the cool stone bleed into his skin. He sniffed and choked back a sob, letting his failure wash over him, reminding him that if he had focus, if he had kept his head in the game that he wouldn't have lead his team to such a horrific loss.

He turned and slid down the side of the counter, sitting on the floor and drawing his knees up to his chest, resting his forehead on them, letting his tears soak into the fabric.

The heaviness swirled about his head, muffling his hearing, making it sound as if his own sobs were coming distantly, and somehow heightening the feeling of the clothes he was currently wearing, the lower neckline of his t-shirt scratching his neck, the roughness of his jeans rubbing against his already red face, forcing more texture to overwhelm him. Shane clawed off his t-shirt, feeling a slight reprieve of the cool air on his skin, only to lean back and be overwhelmed again at the sensation of his sweat wicked back against the linoleum counter sides.

Shane pulled his legs tighter, pressing his face further into the scratchy fabric, feeling it tug against his red cheeks, frustrating him further, knowing that he should get up, help himself, do *something*.

Instead he sat there, trapped, useless, unable to help himself, unable to fix the disaster of a game, disappointed in his incapability to lead the Metros to the point of getting benched for the end of the game.

His apartment, though silent, felt loud and imposing, all his lamps too bright, the cold too sharp, floor too hard beneath his shaking body. Shane felt his senses on high alert, aware of everything, but also somehow completely cut off from anything other than his own mind, dragging him deeper into this pit of despair.

Shane's shoulders shook as he breathed, forcing air in and out of his body, trying to regain some semblance of control over himself, only to shift his head slightly, forcing his raw skin against his now soaked jeans again and beginning the sensory overload anew, preventing him from making any real progress with calming himself.

He didn't know how long he sat there, shirtless, curled into a ball against the counter, too trapped in his own head to do much more than cry and breathe, desperate to escape his head.

A hand touched his shoulder and he flinched away sharply, looking up through tear blurred vision at a figure crouched next to him, face creased in concern. They reached out a hand again, palm turned up, offering him help.

Shane sniffed and took the person's hand, letting them haul him upright. He wiped his eyes, wincing at the feeling of his rubbed raw skin, and the figure came into focus.

What was Rozanov doing in his apartment?

He felt his chest squeeze and sucked in a breath, already preparing for a fresh wave of panic when he felt Rozanov's hands on either side of his face, drawing him back.

His mouth moved and Shane watched his lips curl over words that he couldn't process, still trying to figure out how Rozanov had gotten into his apartment. His eyes looked past him and saw his front door wide open, light from the hallway streaming in.

"-llander?"

Rozanov's words broke through Shane's thoughts and his eyes snapped back, focusing on the man in front of him.

"Hollander?" Rozanov's voice was laced with worry, his hands still holding Shane's head, forcing his gaze on him. "Are you okay?"

Was he okay?

Long answer, no.

Short answer... no.

Shane swallowed, then slowly, hesitantly, shook his head.

Rozanov sighed and nodded, and one thumb brushed against Shane's cheek. It was still raw from being pressed against wet and rough denim, but the pad of Rozanov's thumb was so light and gentle that Shane found himself leaning into it, seeking out more.

"What happened?"

What didn't happen.

"Um," Shane's voice shook and he cleared his throat. "I don't know how to explain it."

"That's okay. Do you want to try?"

Shane stared at Rozanov. He wanted to listen? To hear Shane's stupid explanation of how his brain just liked to randomly turn on himself, stopping him from functioning like a regular person?

"I, uh, I can try. Just, let me find a different t-shirt. One that doesn't make me wanna rip my skin off."

Rozanov nodded and stepped back, letting his hands drop from Shane's face. Without the pressure of them grounding him, Shane realised the stupidity of his position, how he was standing in his kitchen shirtless, eyes red rimmed with crying, all just because his brain couldn't fucking function.

A fresh set of tears stung his eyes and he wiped a hand roughly over his face, irritating his skin further, making him panic again. God wouldn't it be so stupid to just start crying again, *after* Rozanov had calmed him down, likely after seeing him sob on the floor of his apartment like the pathetic excuse for a captain that he was.

"-ey, *hey*, Hollander, look at me." Rozanov stepped forward again, this time opting to grab Shane's hands. "You are okay. Go put on a fresh shirt. I will be here. It's okay."

Shane heaved another shaky breath and nodded, taking his time to step back from Rozanov and walking up the stairs to his bedroom. He pulled open his wardrobe door and pulled on the closest thing he could see, some faded black thing worn soft with age. Nothing that would overstimulate him further.

Rozanov's steps echoed downstairs and Shane heard the soft click of his front door being closed, wondering momentarily if between the time that he had walked upstairs to now, if Rozanov had decided he didn't want to stay, didn't want to understand why Shane was so upset.

More footsteps reached his ears and Shane let out a breath he didn't know he was holding. Rozanov was still here. And still willing to hear him out. The sound of cupboard doors opening and closing floated upstairs and Shane walked slowly out of his bedroom, mentally preparing himself to talk about his brain.

Rozanov was in the kitchen, his back to Shane, busying himself with Shane's electric kettle, two mugs set slightly to the side, tea bag labels hanging over the lips.

Shane paused at the foot of the staircase, taking in the sight. Rozanov's golden curls reflected in the dim lamp light, muscular back shifting under his white t-shirt as he moved, looking nearly at home in Shane's large kitchen.

Shane centred himself, breathing again and padded over to the counter, dragging out a chair to sit on, and alerting Rozanov to his presence. He turned around, clearly having figured out how the kettle worked, and watched Shane settle in his chair, hands clasped on the stone counter top before him, jaw clenched slightly.

"Thought a drink might help and I saw tea in your cupboard, so..." Rozanov trailed off.

"Okay, thanks."

They sit in silence, neither of them willing to broach the topic that will inevitably be brought up. The kettle clicks off, signalling that it's done boiled and Rozanov turns to pour it into the two mugs, gently sliding one over to Shane, who takes it and positions it in front of him. A pretend barrier.

Shane clears his throat and opens his mouth.

“Congratulations on the win.”

“*Really?*” Rozanov scoffs. “I come to your apartment to find you having panic attack on the floor and you say “congratulations on the win”?”

“You won.”

“Because I had nothing to fight against! You were benched!”

Shane’s shoulders draw tight, and he breathes out through his nose, centering himself.

“Why were you benched?”

And that’s the question he’d been waiting for. Why was he benched, why had he abandoned his team, letting them flounder without him on the ice.

Rozanov was staring at him, leaning against the countertop, eyes searching Shane’s face, waiting for an explanation.

“I don’t know how to explain it properly.” Shane starts. “Sometimes my head just gets... heavy. Like there’s too much happening to be able to focus, I can hear everything at once, feel everything touching me, like all my senses are just heightened.

“And when that happens, I can’t focus. And I feel like I’m walking through honey, my body is too heavy to move properly, everything is slow and awkward. I keep knowing I need to focus, to be aware of what’s happening so I don’t get hurt or someone else gets hurt, but I can’t.”

Rozanov opens his mouth, clearly intending to say something, but Shane barrels on, needing to get all his words out.

“It usually doesn’t happen on the ice, it’s never happened in a game before, but tonight, something with the crowd, with hearing the skates, and with Marleau yelling in my face,” Rozanov’s face contorts and his brow furrows, “Don’t, it’s not his fault, he does it all the time, but something about everything that happened tonight, it was like I couldn’t deal with it all tonight, and my brain just, shut down.”

“And so it is sound and... texture?”

“Yeah, texture, like, clothing specifically if that makes sense. The only reason why you saw me shirtless earlier is because I could feel it getting too much and had to take it off.”

Rozanov nods slowly, lowering himself down onto his elbows.

“And so your brain just,” Rozanov pauses, trying to find the right words. “*Vklyuchayet druzhestvennyy ogon’?*”

“I don’t know what you just said.”

“Uh, some stupid word from videogames. I do not know it in English.”

“...*friendly fire*?”

“Yes. So your brain just does that?”

“Uh, I guess so.”

Rozanov nods, digesting the information. Shane shifts, feeling anxiety creeping in at the edges. Had he said too much? Not enough? What was Rozanov thinking?

“And so this happens, not often you said.”

“No, not often. Mostly at night, when I...” He stops. Rozanov stares, waiting for him to go on.

“When you?”

Fuck it.

“When I have time to let it get to me. When I have time to doubt myself. Question things.”

“And you let yourself on the ice?”

“No, god, no, never on the ice.”

“So, how?”

“I don’t know. Like I said earlier, something about the sound of everything just got too much, and I just... couldn’t.”

Shane’s chest feels tight. He’s spoken enough. His hands wrap around his mug, still settled in front of him, lukewarm now. The tea Rozanov had given him was some jasmine tea he’d likely pulled from the back of the cupboard, and he took a shaky sip.

“Ah, so that's why you looked like statue during face off. Your brain had just turned on friendly fire.”

“Yeah if we want to use that analogy now, then sure.”

“And you are okay now?”

Shane was shocked by the question. He had half expected Rozanov to hear him out, call him weird and retreat back to his hotel room, taking his flaws with him to be used in future. But if he was going to do that, would he have made Shane tea? Would he have been so open to hearing Shane’s flaws?

He didn’t know.

Was he okay now?

“Yeah, mostly.”

“Okay.” It was Rozanov’s turn to sip his cold tea. “How can you be fully okay?”

“Uh, I was going to go to bed and maybe watch hockey reruns.”

“Even after tonight, you *still* want to watch hockey. Okay. We can do that.”

“Oka-, wait, *we*?”

“Yes? Hollander, I want to make sure you are okay. You scared me.”

Shane had scared Rozanov. That’s new. Then again, there probably is something scary about walking into someone’s apartment only to see them crying on the floor, shaking and half naked.

“Okay. Um, I’m going to shower, cause I feel disgusting, and we can watch hockey.”

Rozanov nods, and gathers their mugs, turning to the sink in Shane’s kitchen.

Shane moves his chair back and gets up, walking to his bathroom, and shedding his jeans, placing them gently in the laundry basket, grateful to be rid of them for the evening. He places his t-shirt on the bathroom counter, intending to put it back on, and steps into the shower.

The water is boiling hot, and Shane tilts his head upwards, letting the water wash away the tear tracks from his face, breaking down the grime from the day and cleaning the loss from his skin.

Shane takes his time, recuperating from the mentally draining discussion, knowing that he has more to explain to Rozanov at a later date, how he accommodates for his overstimulation, how it can be avoided, what he uses as a distraction, but so far, this is a good start.

He shuts off the shower and tugs on the t-shirt and a fresh pair of underwear that he had the foresight to gather before the shower. As he walks into his bedroom, Rozanov is already under the sheets, scrolling on his phone, waiting for Shane’s arrival.

He smiles and lifts up one corner of the duvet, beckoning Shane forward. He walks to the edge of the mattress and climbs in carefully, keeping a careful distance between them. Rozanov sighs and reaches an arm out, pulling Shane into his warm body.

Shane freeze briefly before relaxing, letting the tension drip out of his shoulders. Rozanov somehow locates the remote for his TV, locating the hockey and putting it on a low volume. His hands card gently through Shane’s hair and he can feel himself getting sleepy, the weight of the conversation combined with how softly Rozanov was treating him lulling him into a calm state.

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“For not being weirded out by me.”

“You are boring. *Ya nikogda ne schitala tebya strannym.*”

“Uh huh. Goodnight Rozanov.”

“*Spokoynoy nochi malysh.*”

End Notes

Thank you for reading <3 Kudos and comments are so deeply appreciated, so while I may not respond to each of them, rest assured they are loved and adored (and freaked out over <3)

Russian translations (I used Google translate, please tell me of anything I got incorrect!):

Vklyuchayet druzhestvennyy ogon' - turns on friendly fire

Ya nikogda ne schitala tebya strannym - I could never find you boring

Spokoynoy nochi malysh - goodnight baby

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