

**miss your voice**

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# miss your voice

by [Tizniz](#)

## Summary

“Can you speak?” Ilya asks, voice soft and careful. He keeps combing his fingers through Shane’s hair.

Shane opens his mouth, tries to produce a word, snaps his mouth closed as more tears rush to his eyes.

“Okay, okay,” Ilya moves closer, kissing Shane’s cheek, his nose, his mouth. “You do not need to talk. You do not need words with me. You talk when ready.”

*OR: Shane goes non-verbal.*

## Notes

Hi <3

I need more non-verbal Shane fics. This is only the first. I have intentions to write more. It's so important to me.

Sending you love!

Xx

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

**Jane:** *Not tonight.*

Ilya frowns as he reads the message again. He's been staring at it for nearly twenty minutes, as if the words Shane had typed and sent him would magically change.

They hadn't yet. Ilya wasn't holding his breath for them to anytime soon.

And it would be fine – this wouldn't be the first time one of them had opted out of talking on the phone. It's rare that they do, even more rare for Shane to opt out, but it *does* happen.

And Ilya would usually drop it. He'd reply with a simple *okay* and go about his evening. He'd putter around his home in Ottawa and do his best to not miss Shane.

It's just...

It's just...

Ilya had watched the game.

Of course he watched the game. Shane was playing and Ilya wasn't and so he watched his boyfriend glide around the ice through a screen.

In the beginning of the game, during the first period, Shane had been fine. Great, actually. Ilya had felt his chest swell with pride as his lips stretched into a wide smile, enjoying the way Shane had darted back and forth on the ice, leading his team with a grace and elegance that Ilya sort of wished he had.

And then the intermission had happened and Shane had returned different.

The close ups of his face had shown the same serious expression Shane always wore during games, but Ilya *knows* that face. He has spent so many hours tracing, memorizing, studying that face. He's bent over at centre ice during face off to stare into Shane's face.

Which is how Ilya had noticed the difference immediately.

Then noticed the way Shane was playing was different.

He wasn't the same.

From there, it only got worse.

The second period had ended, the second intermission had run through and Ilya had sent a few messages to Shane. Just checking in. Worry had replaced the pride in Ilya's chest, eating away at it until there was a hollow spot left behind.

His messages had gone unanswered.

The third period started.

Shane looked...empty. His eyes were vacant.

Ilya's stomach dropped.

Watched helplessly as Shane played, still amazing and as talented as ever, but Ilya could tell that Shane's heart wasn't in it. He wondered if he was the only one who could tell that Shane wasn't playing as *Shane* but as *Shane Hollander*. Did people even know the difference?

When the game had ended, Ilya found himself relieved. Shane no longer had to put up this act. Montreal had won, too, which had to be good.

Ilya waited patiently as the teams lined up, bid each other a good game, and then skated off the ice. He sat there and watched as Shane had microphones thrust into his face, his responses almost robotic and definitely rehearsed. He still looked empty inside. That wasn't Ilya's Shane.

Then the post-game interviews had ended and Ilya had waited some more, staring at his phone.

The two of them already had plans to talk on the phone once Shane's game finished. They would video chat and spend the evening together that way. Ilya had volunteered to drive up but Shane had shaken his head, saying it was too risky since Ilya had to be back in Ottawa the next day for an engagement that their agent had set up.

And then Shane had sent the text, bailing on their date, and Ilya felt dread tugging at his gut.

Something was wrong.

He didn't bother calling Shane, knew there was no point, knew that his boyfriend would ignore the call. Or worse, force himself to answer it when there's obviously no part of Shane that wants to talk on the phone.

Something had happened. Ilya needs to know. But the only person who can tell him is avoiding him.

Ilya doesn't hesitate before grabbing his keys and hurrying out of the house.

He can make it to Montreal in an hour and half. He's done it before.

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Ilya expected the house to be quiet when he let himself in, but the odd stillness to the air did nothing to ease the knot that had grown tighter and tighter as he flew down the Trans Canada Highway.

At one point, Ilya had caved and called Shane. The call had rung through until Shane's generic greeting had sounded through the speakers.

Ilya didn't leave a message. He simply pressed harder on the gas pedal.

He toes off his shoes, carefully arranging them next to Shane's. Sends a look at the bag that Shane had clearly deposited and left. That isn't like Shane; he always puts all his items away when he gets home from a game, even when he's exhausted or injured.

The lights are all off, but Ilya knows the floorplan well enough by now that he can move through the halls with just the glow of his phone screen. He goes straight for the bedroom, following the invisible string that is tugging him towards where his heart resides.

Stepping through the doorway, Ilya pauses. It's too dark in here to make out anything but he can hear the faintest sound of Shane's breathing. Steady. Even. But he's awake.

Reaching for the lightswitch on the wall, Ilya hesitates before dropping his hand. He crosses the room and flicks on one of the soft lamps on the bedside table instead. It illuminates the form curled up on top of the blankets, shoes removed but game day suit still encasing Shane's body.

Worry explodes violently inside of Ilya's chest.

"Shane?" He crawls onto the bed, resting on his side, facing his boyfriend. Shane's eyes are closed, scrunched a bit like he's hiding. His bottom lip looks red and agitated, clearly having been bitten at. "*Moya lyubov*, please, open your eyes." Ilya whispers, reaching out a hand to trace along Shane's freckles.

Ilya gets to eight on his silent count before Shane's eyes open. That emptiness is still present. He blinks, almost like he's confused that Ilya is there. A sheen forms over the brown that Ilya loves so much, a tear trickling down into the pillow.

"Are you okay?" Ilya asks, even though it is more than obvious that Shane is far from okay.

Shane shakes his head slowly, turns it to hide in the pillow.

"Hey, hey, no." Ilya cards his fingers through Shane's hair, "Please look at me." Shane sighs and turns his head away from the pillow, blinking tiredly at Ilya. "Did you shower?" Shane shakes his head a little. "Okay. Should we shower?" It takes a moment and then Shane dips his chin into a nod.

The silence worries further at Ilya, but he remembers another time, when Shane had barely spoken. How frantic Ilya had gotten as hours progressed and Shane said fewer and fewer words until there had been nothing.

Ilya wonders if this is like that.

“Can you speak?” Ilya asks, voice soft and careful. He keeps combing his fingers through Shane’s hair.

Shane opens his mouth, tries to produce a word, snaps his mouth closed as more tears rush to his eyes.

“Okay, okay,” Ilya moves closer, kissing Shane’s cheek, his nose, his mouth. “You do not need to talk. You do not need words with me. You talk when ready.”

Shane visibly relaxes at that, like the expectations to talk and be *normal* that had been tying him tightly together have been cut.

Ilya’s heart breaks for his love. Had Shane been pretending all evening? Had something happened to make him draw back into himself?

Of course something had. Ilya had watched it play out on the TV. It was the reason he had driven from Ottawa to Montreal, after all.

And while Ilya had been desperate for answers, wanting to make everything better for Shane, it was quickly becoming evident that that would not happen tonight. Shane was in no mindset to speak.

“Shower.” Ilya decides, rolling off of the bed and holding his hand out for his boyfriend, “And then comfy clothes and cuddles in bed.”

Shane nods and places his hand into Ilya’s, allowing himself to be pulled out of the bed and towards the bathroom.

He stays silent as Ilya strips him of his clothes, placing them into the hamper to be cleaned at another point. His eyes drift as Ilya leads him to the shower where the water has been warming. Ilya doesn’t force eye contact, not when Shane is struggling as much as he is. But Ilya is careful to constantly touch Shane, keep that connection so Shane has something to ground himself to.

Once they’re both cleaned and dried, Shane wearing one of Ilya’s old shirts and a pair of comfy socks, Ilya gets him to drink some water before they both climb back into bed. Shane plasters himself to Ilya almost instantly, burrowing his face as deep as he can into Ilya’s neck.

Ilya simply wraps his arms tightly around Shane and drops kisses wherever he can, trying to press his love into Shane's skin.

They fall asleep like that, tangled together.

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Ilya thinks that things will be okay when he wakes up the next morning.

Yes, Shane had a bad night, but he's slept and now things will be better. Everything will be fine.

The first sign that maybe everything is *not* fine is Ilya wakes up to Shane still asleep. He always wakes up first. And definitely never sleeps as late as it is when Ilya checks the time on the clock.

But, he reasons, there is nothing going on today in Shane's schedule. Ilya sends a silent thank you at that. Shane also looks completely at ease while asleep, expression slack and at peace. His fingers are curled loosely into the shirt Ilya had thrown on last night before they'd climbed into bed, his body angled towards Ilya.

Ilya scatters featherlight kisses along Shane's cheeks and forehead; not enough to wake the slumbering man, but enough to satiate Ilya's need to press his love into Shane's skin. Then he carefully and gently slips out of bed, deciding to start on breakfast for both of them. Shane will probably try and protest, going on about his ridiculous diet, but Ilya will find a way to convince him to eat.

The toast pops from the toaster just as Shane shuffles into the kitchen, rubbing adorably at his tired eyes.

"Good morning, *solnyshko*!" Ilya greets brightly, smiling over at his sleep rumped boyfriend. "I made breakfast."

Shane gives a small nod, continuing to shuffle across the floor until he barrels gently into Ilya, nuzzling into his neck. Ilya chuckles and wraps his arms around Shane, dropping a kiss to his shoulder.

"Still waking up?" There's no reply. Shane simply tucks himself closer. Ilya flips off the burner that he was using to cook their eggs before he gathers Shane tighter in his arms, their bodies swaying lightly from side to side.

Ilya indulges in this for a minute before he gives Shane a gentle nudge, "Go sit. I will plate up."

Shane nods and slowly makes his way over to the table. Ilya watches with a small frown; Shane has not made a single sound yet. The lack of eye contact isn't alarming. Ilya learned fairly early on with Shane that the Canadian struggles with that, and so Ilya has never forced it. But even with Shane's shyness around talking about some things, he doesn't normally remain this quiet. Especially when it's only the two of them.

Shaking it off, putting it to Shane simply still waking up, Ilya quickly dishes out their breakfast and goes to join his boyfriend at the table. He makes the decision as he places the plate down in front of Shane, earning a small smile, that he'll call their agent after breakfast and reschedule his engagement.

Shane needs him more.

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An hour later, Ilya is starting to properly worry.

Shane has yet to say a single word. Ilya hasn't heard his boyfriend's voice since their phone call the other night. Not for lack of trying on Ilya's part.

He's asked Shane simple questions, offering him easy prompts to reply to, but Shane has only shaken or nodded his head. A few times he seemed to struggle with understanding Ilya's question, even though Ilya had made sure to ask it clearly and slowly so his English was not misconstrued.

Now the two are curled up on opposite corners of the couch, legs stretched out and feet tangled together. Shane is absently watching the highlights from the game last night, the DVR having automatically recorded it. Ilya wanted to put on something else, not wanting Shane to relive whatever had caused him to spiral as bad as he has, but a frowning pout had him caving and selecting it.

He's not watching it. Instead he's on his phone, searching up a jumble of words to try and understand what exactly is going on with Shane.

Ilya misses the sound of his voice.

Shane hasn't given any obvious signs of distress, though. He'd eaten most of the breakfast Ilya had given him. Drank the water placed in front of him. Didn't pull away from any of the touches Ilya had initiated; if anything he had leaned into them and seemed reluctant to have Ilya stop.

If there wasn't concern about what is going on with Shane, Ilya would linger on how adorable that is.

Searching on his phone does nothing to help Ilya. As with most things, it all ends up at cancer. And Ilya is almost entirely certain that Shane doesn't have cancer.

But there *is* clearly something going on.

Yes, Shane has had small bouts of time where he doesn't talk, but it has never felt like *this*. Ilya can't help but worry something more serious is going on.

He had watched the game the night prior though. Shane hadn't received any hits that would affect his talking. There was no obvious bruising on Shane's neck either to indicate that something had happened. Ilya is familiar enough with Shane that he can pick up on signs of illness, and there'd been none of that.

Locking his phone, Ilya drops it onto his stomach and looks across the couch at the man who holds his heart. Shane is curled up on his side, one foot stretched out so he can hook it around Ilya's ankle. He'd put on one of Ilya's hoodies before leaving the bedroom earlier, and he looks quite cozy in it. His hair is all ruffled and soft from the shower last night, freckles catching in the late morning sun coming through the windows. He looks as beautiful as the first day Ilya laid eyes on him.

"Shane." Ilya says softly, knocking his foot against Shane's calf. He waits until those big brown eyes flicker from the TV to him. "You are okay, yes? Physically, I mean."

The question seems to confuse Shane for a moment before his expression settles. He squirms a bit in his spot, eyes darting away and then back to Ilya. Finally, he gives a small nod.

Ilya knows better than to ask if Shane is okay inside of his head. Clearly he is not. But Ilya wants – *needs* – Shane to know that this is okay. This is a safe place for him to not be alright.

"You do not need to talk." Ilya continues, voice soft, foot pressing into Shane's calf. Ideally, he'd gather Shane back up in his arms, but Shane had been the one to curl up in the corner, not really leaving a spot for Ilya to join him. "Not until you are ready. With me, there is no pressure."

Shane's eyes drop away, but not before Ilya catches the sheen of tears that forms there, and he gives a small nod. He turns his attention back to the TV, frowning as his on screen self misses a pass.

Ilya sighs, hating that his boyfriend is torturing himself. Shane had played a very good game. Ilya was probably the only one to notice anything had been off with the Canadian during the game, simply because he had made it his duty in life to learn everything and anything about one Shane Hollander.

But that also means Ilya knows Shane is not in the right headspace to hear that he played good and there is nothing to worry about. So he holds his words, slumps a little further down on the couch, tucking his legs closely around Shane's, and tries to keep his worry bottled up inside.

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It's late afternoon, more like early evening, when Ilya hears it. Almost too quiet to be heard over the movie he had put on when it became clear watching the game highlights again was only making Shane further upset.

"Ilya."

His head snaps over to Shane, brown eyes already looking back at him. "Your voice is back?" Ilya asks, hope making his own voice tremble lightly.

The worry existing inside of him hadn't disappeared at all but he had been able to shove it aside to focus on Shane. Doesn't mean Ilya is wanting to hear the sound of his boyfriend any less.

Shane nods, "Yeah. I think I'm good."

"Oh thank god." Ilya blurts out before he can stop himself, scrambling across the couch until he can get his arms around Shane, tugging him closer. "I missed your voice." He says, kissing every inch of Shane he can reach without loosening his hold. "And do not say sorry."

"Not fair." Shane mumbles, pressing himself closer.

"No. Because it is okay you did not talk, even if I love your voice."

"Ilya..."

"No. No sorry."

"Can I at least explain?"

Ilya nods and Shane wiggles in his arms so he reluctantly loosens them, Shane sitting up a bit to look Ilya in the eye. "Okay?"

"Now, yeah." Shane sighs, happily slotting his fingers between Ilya's when his hand is reached for. "I'm going to say sorry for not giving you a heads up or a prior explanation though."

"But you have." Ilya protests lightly, "This has happened before!"

"Not to this extent." Shane counters, "Not with you."

"But your parents?" Ilya guesses.

Shane nods, "When I was younger. I don't...I get overwhelmed. And talking feels...it feels impossible." He isn't looking Ilya in the eye, not right now, instead keeping his eyes focused somewhere around Ilya's throat. It's okay though. Ilya understands how not looking someone in the eye can make talking easier. Especially for Shane who barely looks anyone except Ilya, his parents, and Hayden in the eye. "I understand what's being said though. I can hear you. I know what you're saying."

"That is good." Ilya squeezes his hand, "Has it been like that ever?"

Shane nods slowly, "Once. Uhm, just after the draft, actually. I just...shut down. Mom and Dad said I didn't understand anything they were saying. I don't really remember it. The night is blank to me."

"Oh."

"I don't know why though." Shane frowns now, "I wasn't...I wasn't *that* overwhelmed."

“I think you were.” Ilya corrects gently, remembering his own experience. “Our lives changed forever.”

“Maybe. Yeah. But the draft is something I’d been working towards all my life.”

“Does not change how scary it is to happen.” Ilya gives his hand another squeeze, “What happened last night?”

Shane’s eyes drop fully to his lap. “I played bad.”

“I was watching. Not bad.”

“My coach disagreed.” Shane scoffs, “He kept tearing into me. And my teammates...they didn’t say anything, but the looks they sent...” He shakes his head. “And the arena just felt so loud. And the other team was saying so much to everyone. I think it just...”

“Shane.” Ilya pleads softly, glad when his boyfriend looks him in the eye. “I watched you. Even when I noticed something was wrong—“

“You noticed?!” Shane’s eyes widen, panic filling, “What if everyone else did?”

“Stop.” Ilya states firmly. “You heard sports people on show. They all praised you. Said how good you were. No one noticed.”

“*You* did.”

“Because I know everything about you.” Ilya tells him seriously, “I know what to look for! I know *you*. No one else knows you like I do, Shane. And so you can trust when I say you played *good* even when this,” He taps Shane in the middle of the forehead, “goes bad. I was worried because I noticed but no one else did. Is how I knew something hidden was wrong.”

Shane’s lip wobbles as his eyes grow wet. Ilya catches him as he falls forward. “I just wanted to be good. I was trying so hard.”

“You *were* good, *moya lyubov*. You were the best.”

“But everyone—“

“Is wrong. They put too much on you. You are part of team. They should support you. Not expect you to do it all.”

Shane heaves out a half sob half breath, body going slack in Ilya’s arms. “Thank you. For coming last night. For staying. For taking care of me today.”

“Thank you for letting me.” Ilya replies, kissing the top of Shane’s head. “Not easy to be like that with others, hm?”

Shane shakes his head. “No. I hate being like that. But...but I knew it was okay. I was safe to be like that with you taking care of me.”

Ilya hides his smile in Shane's hair, heart growing warmth with love for this man. It means a lot that he trusted Ilya while in such a fragile state. Ilya will never take it for granted.

“Always. *Ya tebya lyublyu.*”

“Love you too.” Shane murmurs, clearly content in Ilya's arms.

That's okay. They can lay here a little longer.

End Notes

Tumblr: [Tizniz](#).

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