

throw a brick right into that stained glass

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by [whatareyoulookingfor](#)

Summary

When he returned he noticed that Ilya had already changed the sheets and was sitting on one side of the bed, staring at the wall.

“You okay?” Shane asked.

“Yes,” Ilya said. He sounded distracted.

“Okay...” Shane didn’t buy it.

Why does Ilya take longer than usual in the bathroom post-sex? Why is he just staring at the wall after he's changed the sheets?

This Shane would never just roll over and go to sleep.

or: A fix-it scene for after Fabian's show.

Notes

i do not speak a lick of russian. everything is taken from google translate, sry if that sucks.
just a greek from chicago trying my best.

also i know its a lot of noah kahan, and i know its not that deep. like, youre correct. but it also kind of is that deep?? this is the first fic ive written since 2018 bro im just as confused as you are.

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

When he returned he noticed that Ilya had already changed the sheets and was sitting on one side of the bed, staring at the wall.

“You okay?” Shane asked.

“Yes,” Ilya said. He sounded distracted.

“Okay...” Shane didn’t buy it. He crawled across the bed to Ilya.

He had done this before, many times, on his hands and knees, inching towards this man from the other end of a bed.

Only now, he was sated and kept, this was *their bed*, and what he was thinking about had less to do with sex and everything to do with figuring out why Ilya was so...off.

He placed a hand on the small of Ilya’s back, *an offer, a bridge, a heads up* before he flopped onto his back next to Ilya’s thigh. He needed to read his face, but figured kneeling in front of him would only encourage deflection and jokes.

Shane shimmied his hand out from in between them and wrapped it over Ilya’s, whose were folded in his lap as he rubbed a thumb over his knuckles.

The contact ripped Ilya’s gaze from the wall. He couldn’t bring himself to meet Shane’s eyes yet, so he stared down at their tangled fingers instead, trying and failing to keep them from getting blurrier. He blinked the sting away.

He had all but sprinted to the bathroom when they were finished so that Shane wouldn’t see the tears he couldn’t will away and the breath he couldn’t catch. He was probably in there too long; he hoped Shane wouldn’t get curious and come looking.

Part of him, most of him, was relieved when he didn’t.

But another, quieter part desperately wanted Shane to come find him, to see him, to scoop him up and hold him without asking why. He was just so overwhelmed with the need to be *out*, to be loved in the light.

Always wondering if he would ever be worthy of it.

Sometimes the dark tried to suffocate him. Something about tonight, being so close to Shane, to the light, and not being able to step into it. It was right fucking there. And the way Shane recoiled when he—

Ilya shook his head.

I broke the rules.

That’s why Shane had flinched at his touch. That had to be it.

And Shane *had* touched him, eventually. *Small, scared, careful*. But there.

Ilya wished it were enough.

He shouldn't be feeling this aching, empty cold in a home where warmth lived, where it slept in his bed. And yet, there he was, silently begging the love of his life to *just touch him* in a room full of people, and now, staying silent, even when they were alone.

Weak.

He wouldn't ask that of Shane. He knew the rules. He knew the plan.

God, fuck that plan.

He didn't know what was wrong with him, why he couldn't snap out of this. He didn't even really know how to put what he wanted into words.

He just had Shane six ways from Sunday, after a (n almost) perfect date night out, and now he was in bed with Shane, *his* bed, with *his* Shane, who was right here and trying so hard and looking up at Ilya like he was something worth worshiping.

"Hey," Shane said with a soft grin.

Ilya finally looked down at him and blinked slowly, giving Shane a small, crooked smile that didn't quite reach his eyes.

"Hi." He said, his voice rough.

"Where'd you go just now?" Shane asked, casually and quietly, like he'd asked this before.

Because he had. Ilya was becoming increasingly introspective in the last few months, and it left Shane trying to bridge his way across the empty space between them. The great divide. Ilya always deflected before they could really get into it, but Shane could feel his partner's melancholy in his bones.

Ilya blinked again, faster, like he was trying to find the surface. He looked back at their hands and took one of Shane's in his. He didn't answer; he didn't know.

"Tonight was...a lot." Shane started, messing with his bottom lip. It was still flushed pink, still a little swollen.

"Yes." Ilya sniffed and scratched his nose.

"I had fun, don't get me wrong. Fabian is great, the show was amazing. And seeing Ryan like that, *wow*, they're just...happy."

"Yes, is good for him." Ilya's mouth was pulled into a tight line.

Shane traced his thumb over Ilya's and hummed. "Yeah. Yeah, he seems okay. Better, I mean. They're good for each other. But I uh...I saw you too, you know."

“What?” Ilya’s brows furrowed, *don’t, please don’t*, his head screamed, his heart hammered. He swallowed hard.

“I saw something, I think. Well, more felt it than saw it.”

Shane sat up a bit, resting against the headboard. He tucked his feet under Ilya’s thigh. Ilya took a deep breath; it prepared him as much as it regulated him. Not much.

“Listen, I’m sorry, and you can tell me to fuck off if I’m wrong, but I know you, and—”

Ilya started to shake his head. “I don’t—”

“And I feel like there was a moment,”

“Shane,”

“Where I think you maybe weren’t okay?”

Ilya swallowed hard, “Shane, I am okay.”

“Okay...I mean, yeah,” Shane shrugged, “now, after we’ve fucked each other’s brains out. But what about all the times we’re *not* doing that?”

“I don’t think that is often enough to be a problem.”

“It’s kind of happening right now.” Gentle but firm, the title of Shane’s memoir.

“Господи.” Ilya took another breath and exhaled hard through his nose.

He wrestled with the idea of letting Shane in, of letting him see. He didn’t want Shane to know what he was thinking tonight. Or how he had been thinking lately. Or maybe he did. How was he supposed to do this? Let Shane in like he wants to, without spoiling his beautiful head with everything that’s wrong with Ilya? He simply didn’t want to ruin him any more than he already has.

Weak.

Shane leaned forward, just a little.

“Look. I don’t want to push. But I know something happened tonight. At the show. I could see it in your eyes. And I can tell it came home with you, I can tell it’s here now.”

He thinks. Shane is playing a game he doesn’t usually play, guessing where he doesn’t usually guess and hoping it’s enough, but also not too much. He *thinks* he knows what Ilya wants, what he needs. But because Shane is Shane, he needs Ilya to say the words, to tell him directly, so he knows for sure.

Shane leaned in a bit more and set a hand on Ilya’s back. *Grounding, solid, warm.*

“But so am I, you know? And just for the record, I am sorry I didn’t do more, something bigger. I wanted to, I really wanted to, I just—you know. The plan deviated, I freaked, and I’m sorry.”

Ilya huffed a laugh, “It was nothing, really. I just had a moment. Is fine now, моя любовь. You can stop being sorry.”

“Is it? Fine now?”

Fuck. Ilya stiffened, his muscles tensing under Shane’s fingers.

His brain flashed an image, Vegas, ashing his cigarette into top-shelf vodka. Both ruined. He could hear the sizzle.

He squeezed his hands so hard his knuckles cracked, the pops echoing in the careful quiet.

“I think, mostly, yes. But sometimes, maybe, no.”

Ilya Rozanov, fluent in Russian, English, and dipshit, apparently. He took a quick, deep breath and sniffed, frustrated at how stupid he sounded.

Shane just silently moved his hand a little higher up Ilya’s back.

“My father never held me, I don’t think,” Ilya stated plainly, his eyes fixed on the floor. Shane froze and tried not to let his disgust show on his face.

“As infant, probably he did, I mean. I’m sure there is old photo somewhere. But I don’t remember it anyway so maybe doesn’t count. Unless he was slapping the shit out of me for something he didn’t really come near me. My mother,” Ilya sniffed and let out a dry chuckle. “My mother gave good hugs. Really good. The kind that people say to you at parties, “Wow, you are really good hugger.” She gave them all the time for no reason. “Ah, Ильюшенька, you woke up,” A hug. One for helping put groceries away. One for helping chop...what is word, каньчра?”

Shane scrunched his nose and hummed again, desperate to keep the air light enough for Ilya to go on, “Cabbage?”

“Да, cabbage, hug for chopping cabbage. Hug for taking trash out. Hug for doing schoolwork. One for good grade on test. Bad ones too. After a game, even if we lose, maybe harder if we lose. Always she would do this. Then she was dead. And she...she took all her hugs with her. I didn’t know I would miss them as much as I missed her. And now, is like my brain knows but my body maybe, forgets. That I don’t need them, or that I can’t have them, that I’ve been okay without this for a long time. But I forget, also, what they were like. I wish...that I could remember the last one.”

Shane’s heart was on the floor, busted into tiny pieces. How had he missed this? How had he not thought of it? How had he not considered? He felt sick.

“Fuck,” Shane breathed out.

You inched yourself across the great divide.

His hand slid up Ilya's back to hold the nape of his neck, fingers threading through golden curls, guiding their bodies together slowly enough to give him time to pull away.

He didn't.

Heavy arms snaked around him. Shane felt him melt almost immediately. He wrapped one arm around Ilya's lower back and pulled him in until there was no more space between them. Ilya's forehead fit perfectly in the dip of his neck. The muscles in his face relaxed in a way they hadn't in a long time, and suddenly his eyes burned, his breath shuddered. He felt so small and sad and he hadn't talked about her this much since—

His face was not listening to him. It was leaking and crumpled in an ugly, unfamiliar, eyes-wide-in-horror-at-your-own-desperation kind of way. He could hear his own sobs coming out in low groans and squeaky inhales. It didn't even sound like him. *Weak.*

"Ilya..." Shane whispered, "Okay, it's okay. Right here. You're safe. I know, I'm sorry, just breathe, baby," He was rocking them slowly, deliberately, one hand cradling the back of Ilya's head and the other tracing his spine, taking slow, overemphasized breaths until their nervous systems synced like they always do.

"I am not telling you this to make you feel bad," Ilya's voice shaky and raw and muffled against Shane's neck, "I know the rules, you say they keep us safe, of course I will listen. But for few minutes I just forget. And I *know*, okay?" He inhaled sharply as he was hit with another lump in his throat, "I know that it's too much risk and I know we could never but, *fuck*, sometimes I just need you to—"

Ilya cut himself off and centered his breath. Something he had picked up from Shane's yoga over the years.

The dimmer in his home gym had paid for itself by now.

Shane's fingers in his hair kept him tethered to the ground. *Just say it. Please, say it. Just tell me what to do.*

They were moving in slow circles, the way that slowed Ilya's heart rate and regulated his entire body. His body trusted Shane. He knew this in his bones. It was time his head caught on. He forced himself to pull away, just far enough to find brown eyes.

"I need you to know," He reframed, "Sometimes my brain is not...safe place. For me. Tries to keep me in, like, dark room with no door. No one knows that I'm in there. Sometimes when I am with you, he tries. Tonight, he tried. Very hard."

Shane was looking at him so intently that Ilya had to look away.

"That sounds very scary. And lonely." He kneaded the tension in Ilya's neck. *But I'm here.*

"Yes, probably." Ilya sniffed again.

“And tonight, it felt like, like nobody knew?” Shane asked softly.

Ilya shook his head, his eyebrows furrowing. He swallowed hard.

“Tonight was different. Room was smaller. Less air. And it was like...I could feel you on other side. Close. Like you knew, but you...could not get in. Almost worse this way.”

He didn't dare speak any real truth into the brain-Shane, about how it wasn't that he *couldn't* get in.

He wouldn't.

How it was like that version knew that Ilya was locked in the dark, and he didn't care enough to look for a way in. He didn't try to punch through the walls until his fists were bloody like Ilya did. That version just stood there, on the other side.

The version in front of him would never do that. This version's brow was furrowed tight, and he was looking at the wall but picturing the room and feeling itchy just thinking about it.

Ilya knew, and yet, something screamed at him. Something that needed correcting or he'd never be able to breathe properly. He closed his eyes and braced as if he was about to be slammed against the boards.

“You, Блять...you flinched, Hollander.”

“What?”

“At the show. When I tried to—whatever, you flinched.”

“I—oh, no, no that wasn't...I didn't mean—fuck. I'm so sorry, Ilya. I didn't know, I—I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.”

He squinted and pointed to his head and asked, just to be sure,

“You were not actually in there; you know this right?”

Shane shook his head, “Yeah, but you were.”

Ilya opened his mouth to respond, then snapped it shut and dropped his hand. He didn't know what to say to that.

“It's real for you, yeah?” Shane said softly. “So it's real to me. Even if there's no room or walls or whatever. How you felt at the show, how you felt when you were a kid, what you're feeling now, is real. Okay? Welcome to step one, asshole, your feelings are valid.”

“Yes, okay, but they are boring, stupid feelings, so I don't think—”

“Are they stupid, or do they make you feel stupid for having them?” Shane cut him off. Now he pushed. Always, always gentle but firm. Ilya held his gaze but fell quiet. Shane moved his hand to cup his jaw.

“What I’m hearing...is that somewhere under all this muscle, that I love, by the way, there’s a little boy chopping cabbage. Who I also love. Very much. And that boy grew up into a man. A *good* man,” he traced a thumb over his cheekbone, “Who I love, very, very much. Enough to break the rules, even. Like, maybe. A little. When he needs to.”

They both breathed a ghost of a smirk. “You know, I think about it all the time. My deep, deep misunderstanding of your life. I can’t imagine how bad it must’ve been for you back then. I’m just so sorry, Ilya, for all of it. How about...I dunno, maybe we can make a plan? For if it happens again, I mean. So I can be better.”

Ilya studied him closer now, because why was he *still* apologizing, and *why* did he look so fucking earnest?

“Mmm. Famous, these plans.” Ilya teased, but his voice was still wobbly, eyes swimming, chin trembling. *Anything. For you, anything.*

“Fuck off,” Shane shot back, the hearts in his eyes dampening any heat behind the chirp. *Anything, anything, anything.*

Ilya put a hand over the one on his face, his thumb finding its natural *back and forth, back and forth*. Shane continued, softer now.

“I would never leave you in there, you know that, right? I would find a way. I *will*. When it gets dark in there,” his thumb stroked into Ilya’s hairline at his temple. “I’ll come find you. With a flashlight, even. It’s you and me.”

This was everything he wanted, and he still felt guilty for needing it. He also now wanted Shane to stop feeling so guilty. It was making his chest tight and his brain cloudy. And the one thought that kept reading clear was that Shane felt like this because of him. *Слабый. His father’s voice now.*

Ilya’s thumb stroked the soft skin on the inside of Shane’s wrist, “I know, моя любовь. You do not have to be better. Already best.”

Shane’s eyes softened, his head swam at the praise, but he snapped back into himself quicker than Ilya would’ve liked. Suddenly serious, he moved both of their hands from Ilya’s face to his lap, never losing touch.

“Wait, no. I’m the worst, actually, which is why we need a plan. I couldn’t read you while we were standing less than a foot apart. I owe it to you to check in. I’m sorry that I haven’t been.”

He shook his head, silently cursing himself for being so fucking *blind*.

“I know that it’s hard for you, to ask for—to allow anyone to—” Shane closed his eyes and took a deep breath. “I suck at this. I don’t know what I’m doing. I don’t know the rules, but I do know you. And I think I can help, if you’ll have me. And we can start small, if you want. Bigger than tonight, obviously, something more, well, obvious. But we can use this as a good point of reference, I think.”

“What is this, point of rev-rence?” Ilya searched Shane’s eyes. Too many words, too much, too fast.

“Like a starting line. Think of tonight at our compass, telling us which way to go. It’s not step-by-step directions, but at least it’s the right direction.”

“Ah. This one would be much easier.”

“Yeah, probably. But maybe...maybe we can take the first step?”

“Where? How?” Ilya hated how small his voice sounded. How scared he was. He wanted to crawl into Shane’s skin and live there. He wanted his mom.

“Okay, uh, first, I think we need a signal. Maybe a couple different ones. I haven’t thought them all through, but I think the most important one, after tonight, would just be a signal for, “Hey, something’s happening. Something isn’t right.” You don’t have to know what *it* is, but the sooner I know to clock in, the better, yeah?”

Ilya hummed, looking at their hands and not Shane again. “Makes sense.”

Shane circled his hand over the back of Ilya’s and squeezed. “Hey. Right here.”

Ilya’s eyes stung as hot tears clouded his view of their hands. “Sorry,” he said, his voice wet and heavy.

An image flashed through Shane’s brain: A hotel room, Tampa. “No,” he repeated. This time, sated and kept, he knew his place, knew his partner. He pushed.

“You are allowed, Ilya. *Fuck*, you are always allowed, okay? There is nothing to forgive.”

Shane leaned back against the headboard and gently tugged at the hand he was still holding, “Come here. Please?”

Ilya just sniffed and huffed out a dry ghost of a laugh before curling himself between Shane’s legs and up against his chest.

He was mostly on his side, hugging himself with one arm and gripping Shane with the other, so hard his bicep ached. Shane’s arms snaked around him, over the arm that was wrapped around his own body, fingers immediately finding Ilya’s and lacing back together.

Anchored, tethered, fused.

The other wrapped around Ilya’s head, almost as if he were guarding a football. His forearm cradled while his fingers found shower-damp curls again, tracing their familiar circles. Shane pressed his lips to the top of his head over and over and over while Ilya’s shoulders shook, the soft hiss of his breathing as he let himself cry was the only sound in the room besides Shane’s small, whispered nothings.

After a while, it fell silent, other than an occasional sniff. Ilya couldn’t bring himself to pull away, as vulnerable as this position felt, he only nestled closer. Shane seemed to get the idea

and tightened his grip, peppering kisses into his hairline that drifted onto his temple.

“Я тебя люблю, Ильюшенька.”

Ilya let out a long, settling sigh, “Вы мой дома, Шейн.”

They stayed like that for a long time.

“So, signal.” Ilya stretched the second word, “Like spy.”

Another kiss to the temple, “Yes, exactly, 007. That’s what it should be? You order a martini?”

“And ruin vodka? Нет. Better to just order Coke.”

“Okay, that sounds easy enough.”

“Eh, no. It was joke, Hollander.”

“It was a good idea, Rozanov.”

“Okay, and what if there is no bar?”

Shane pursed his lips. A solid variable. “You could, maybe, just say you’re in the mood for a Coke? Even if we’re with people, what’s the worst that could happen? Someone offers? It’s like hiding in plain sight. Something we’re good at.”

Ilya considered. It was brilliantly simple. “Okay. We can try.” He rubbed at his nose a few times and then scratched the side. It was red and raw and sore, so he moved to his temple, scratching his hairline and tilting his head down so Shane couldn’t see his face.

Shane knew *this* tell by now, watching for this very moment when it crossed the line from self-soothing into nervous. He gently took the hand that wouldn’t stop scratching, letting out a soft, “Hey,” as he brought the hand to his mouth, pressing a soft kiss to each of Ilya’s knuckles. “Still with me? Still okay?”

Ilya watched, mesmerized by the steady, deliberate, honest care Shane constantly displayed for him. It was almost too much. It didn’t make him feel guilty anymore, his chest breaking open a little bit at the thought.

A few hours ago, the concept of being one of “Shane’s Plans” had made Ilya sick to his stomach. Now, the idea left him floating in the feeling of what it was like to be cared for by Shane Hollander. He took it for what it really was. Control, yes, obviously, but also *calculated, procedural care*. Sublime and almost ceremonial.

Shane required instruction. This was day one, basic stuff. How it took so long for Ilya to connect A to B, he still hasn’t quite wrapped his head around. But Ilya doesn’t ask for comfort, and Shane doesn’t guess. Tonight, they did both of those things.

“Yes,” he blinked back into himself, “Yes, still okay. What is next?”

Shane shifted his weight, biting at his lower lip. “Um, hmm. I guess, okay, and this is more for my own research, but I guess, if tonight had gone perfectly, like, exactly the way you wanted it to go, what would that have looked like...for you?”

Ilya didn't have to think, “It would have looked like kissing you until my fucking face fell off. Onstage.”

Shane let out a dry laugh, “You know, it's crazy, I've actually always wondered if a panic attack can kill you. The sold-out crowd and the, y'know, giant fucking spotlight would be a nice touch, for sure.”

"And people say you are not funny."

He leaned in slowly, eyes *searching, locking, certain*, before gently connecting their mouths in a kiss. They lingered, like they always do, pressing their foreheads together.

“How about we start offstage, at least?”

“Yes. Okay.”

End Notes

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