

I'll Hold You Through the Storm

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I'll Hold You Through the Storm

by [YouthIsWasted](#)

Summary

An unexpected snowstorm forces Shane and Ilya to spend the night at Shane's parents' house.

Notes

Ooops accidentally projecting my own feelings onto fictional characters again 😅

The Hollander house was warm and full. Dinner had been good. Too good, maybe, because Shane had eaten more than he meant to, and now his body felt heavy. The kitchen smelled like garlic and onions and tomato sauce, the kind of smell that clung to clothes and hair and hands.

Yuna had lit candles on the table, making some excuse about wanting to make family dinner more fancy. But the light flickered, and sometimes Shane's eyes caught on it like a strobe.

He'd been managing anyway.

He always managed.

He answered questions at the right times, kept his face soft and engaged, smiled when his parents teased Ilya about how quickly he'd learned to clear plates without being asked. He let his mother pile extra food onto his plate because refusing would turn into a Whole Thing, and he made himself laugh at his father's jokes because David looked so happy when he did.

Shane loved his parents. He loved this house.

But he was tired. That was the simplest truth.

Not tired like he needed a nap. Tired like his brain had been filtering noise and light and scent and social cues for hours and he was starting to slip, the edges of his control getting thinner.

But he was okay. Still fine.

Until Yuna looked out the front window and went still.

"Oh," she said softly.

David followed her gaze. “What is it?”

Yuna’s hand lifted to the glass. “It’s really coming down out there.”

Shane glanced up automatically. The porch light illuminated the yard like a stage. Snow fell hard and fast, thick flakes stacking over one another until the whole world seemed to blur. The driveway was already disappearing into white.

Shane felt his stomach tighten.

“That wasn’t in the forecast,” he said, because it wasn’t. He checked the weather compulsively. He didn’t like surprises.

Ilya came up behind him and pressed a hand to the small of his back, just a steady touch, silent.

David pulled out his phone. “Let me see.”

He frowned almost immediately. “We’ve got an advisory. Roads are icing over fast.”

Shane’s brain started running numbers before anyone finished speaking. Distance. Time. Route. Traction. Risk. Other drivers. If they left now, they could maybe...

Yuna turned, eyebrows raised in that way she used when she was being gentle but immovable. “You boys aren’t driving home in this.”

“We can...” Shane started.

He caught himself. Rephrased. “I can. It’s not that far. And my car is good in the snow.”

Ilya didn’t argue. He just stared out at the snow like he’d already decided he wasn’t letting Shane do something reckless just because Shane wanted to follow the plan.

David shook his head. “Not worth it.”

Shane could feel the shift, like the floor under him was slowly cracking.

Because he had a routine. He had a plan.

Dinner at seven. Leave by nine-thirty. Home by ten. Shower. Pajamas. Bed. Chargers plugged in. Alarm set. He’d already pictured it, already lived it in his head.

Now the picture shattered.

He swallowed. Forced himself to nod once.

“Okay,” he said.

It came out too controlled, like he was gripping the word in a fist so it wouldn’t shake.

Yuna’s whole face softened. “Good. Good. I’ll make up the guest room.”

Shane’s heart dropped.

His mind jumped straight to the phone charger on his nightstand.

He hadn't brought one.

He never brought one to his parents' house because he never stayed over anymore.

He didn't have his pajamas. He didn't have his toothbrush. He didn't have his deodorant. He didn't have his hoodie that felt right. He didn't have the little comfort things he pretended weren't comfort things.

He didn't have *control*.

His skin tightened over his bones.

Ilya's hand stayed on his back, a steady anchor, but Shane could already feel himself sliding into that particular kind of panic that wasn't visible on the outside.

Not panic like hyperventilating. Panic where the world suddenly becoming too sharp.

It should have been fine.

Shane told himself it should have been fine, because it wasn't dangerous, it wasn't a crisis, it was just... staying at his parents' house for a night.

He'd done it his whole childhood.

Yuna found extra toothbrushes in the linen closet like it was nothing. David joked about how "snowed in" sounded romantic and winked at them like they were teenagers. Yuna rolled her

eyes and told him to stop embarrassing them.

The house stayed warm. Safe. Familiar.

But Shane's body didn't care about logic.

His body cared that the plan had changed without warning, and now there were missing pieces he couldn't replace.

His phone battery was at 37%. Shane knew exactly because he'd checked it the moment they decided they were staying.

Thirty-seven meant he was already in the danger zone. Thirty-seven meant he couldn't scroll until he fell asleep. Thirty-seven meant he couldn't set his alarm the way he liked. Thirty-seven meant he might wake up at 3 a.m. and not have his phone to anchor him.

His chest tightened again.

He drifted through the rest of the evening like a ghost, smiling when he was supposed to, laughing when his dad made a joke, keeping his voice even and light.

But his brain was starting to fray.

By the time they finally went upstairs to the guest room, Shane felt like he'd been holding his breath for hours.

Yuna had made it perfect in her own way: fresh sheets, extra blankets, a basket of toiletries on the dresser like she'd anticipated every need.

Except she couldn't anticipate all of his needs.

Because the needs were the parts of him that didn't make sense to other people.

Shane stepped into the guest room and immediately felt it: the smell of detergent, floral and strong, the unfamiliar softness of the sheets, the fact that the overhead light was bright enough to make his eyes sting.

He stood there, frozen.

Ilya came in behind him, took one look at Shane's posture and expression, and went still too.

Not alarmed. Attentive.

"Hey, hey," Ilya murmured.

Shane swallowed. His voice came out too flat. "It's fine."

It wasn't.

The words were there anyway, automatic.

Ilya didn't argue. Didn't ask if he was okay. Didn't ask him to explain.

He just reached up and turned off the overhead light.

The room fell into dim warmth from the bedside lamp and the hallway.

Shane blinked hard.

Better.

Then Ilya crossed the room, opened the closet door, and rummaged quietly until he found what he needed.

A spare hoodie. One of Shane's old ones that he'd left years ago and never brought home, gray and soft with the cuffs worn thin.

Ilya held it out like an offering.

Shane stared at it, throat tight.

"I found this," Ilya said. "You used to live here, remember? There must be more."

Shane's hands shook as he took it.

The fabric was familiar, wrong in some ways, but it was closer to right than anything else in this room.

He pulled it on and felt a tiny piece of himself click back into place.

Still, the panic didn't fully back off.

Because there were other problems. Bigger problems.

Shane glanced at his phone again. 34%.

His chest squeezed.

“I don’t have my charger,” he said abruptly, and the words came out sharper than he meant, like he’d stepped on a nail.

He hated it instantly. But he couldn’t fix it. He couldn’t rewind time and throw a charger in his pocket before they left home.

Ilya’s eyes softened.

“Okay,” he said.

Shane blinked. “Okay?”

Ilya nodded like it was simple. Then he turned and walked right out of the room.

Shane stood there, frozen all over again, heart pounding in confusion and dread, because the room felt too big without Ilya in it.

Two minutes later Ilya returned with David’s phone charger in one hand and an extension cord in the other.

“I asked,” Ilya said calmly. “He had one. He said you always were ‘weird about your phone’ when you were teenager.”

Shane's cheeks burned.

"I'm not weird," he muttered automatically.

Ilya crouched by the bed and plugged everything in with the kind of competence that made Shane want to cry.

"You are," Ilya said, not unkindly. Almost fond. "But it's okay."

He set Shane's phone on the bedside table.

Shane's whole body softened like he'd been braced for impact and the threat suddenly disappeared.

"It's not just the charger," Shane admitted, voice low, like he couldn't make himself say the rest too loudly.

Ilya looked up at him. "Tell me."

Shane swallowed. His throat felt too small.

"I don't have my pajamas," he said, and he hated how small it sounded. How childish. How stupid it felt, when he was a grown man and pajamas shouldn't matter like this.

But they did.

The texture mattered. The seams mattered. The waistband mattered. The familiarity mattered.

Ilya's face didn't change.

He just stood, crossed to Shane, and took his hands.

"You will wear my sweatpants," Ilya said immediately.

Shane blinked. "What?"

Ilya's thumbs rubbed over Shane's knuckles, grounding him. "If you want. It will smell like me. I will borrow something from David."

Shane's breath caught.

Because that might actually work.

He nodded once, jerky.

"I... yeah. That might... yeah."

Ilya didn't make it a big deal. He just started stripping down like it was nothing, handing Shane his clothes.

Shane took them with shaking hands.

He turned away to change, swallowing against the sting in his eyes, because it was all too much all at once: the snow, the change, the panic, and the way Ilya was just... fixing it.

Quietly. Like it wasn't a burden.

Like Shane wasn't a problem to solve, just a person to take care of.

When Shane pulled Ilya's clothes on, the fabric settled against his skin and...

Oh.

Oh.

It smelled like Ilya. Laundry soap and skin and the faint smell of cigarettes he pretended to hate.

Shane's whole nervous system exhaled.

Ilya stepped closer again, eyes scanning Shane's face.

"Better?" he asked softly.

Shane nodded too quickly. "Yeah."

But his voice cracked anyway. Ilya didn't comment on that either.

He guided Shane to sit on the bed, then sat beside him, knees pressed close, their shoulders touching.

Shane's hands twisted together in his lap.

He could still feel the overload humming under his skin, like static. Still felt the weight of the broken routine.

But the edges were blunted now.

The most urgent pieces had been patched.

Ilya touched Shane's wrist again, the place that always grounded him.

"Listen to me," Ilya murmured. "We are safe. We are warm. We are together."

Shane stared down at their hands, his throat tight.

"I tried not to..." he started.

Ilya cut him off gently. "No. Don't."

Shane blinked.

Ilya leaned in, forehead close to Shane's. "You don't need to hide from me."

The words hit Shane like a soft wave. He swallowed hard, shoulders trembling once.

"I didn't want to ruin the day," Shane whispered.

“You didn’t,” Ilya said immediately. “You were perfect.”

Shane shook his head. “I wasn’t.”

Ilya’s mouth twitched, almost a smile. “You were Shane.”

And somehow that was even worse, because it meant Ilya didn’t expect him to be different.

It meant Ilya didn’t want a version of him that was easier. Ilya was choosing *this*.

Ilya reached up and cupped Shane’s jaw, thumb brushing gently at the corner of his mouth.

“You are overwhelmed,” Ilya said matter-of-factly. “Yes?”

Shane hesitated.

Then nodded, barely.

Ilya nodded back like it was solved. “Okay. Then we do what we always do.”

Shane whispered, “What do we always do?”

Ilya kissed his temple.

“We make it smaller,” he murmured. “And quieter. And safe.”

Shane's breath shuddered.

Ilya stood and went to the door, closing it most of the way so the hallway light dimmed. Not dark. Just... less.

He came back and sat behind Shane on the bed, pulling him back against his chest.

A full-body pressure hold.

Shane melted into it like his bones remembered how.

Ilya's arms wrapped around him firmly. Not squeezing too hard, just enough to tell Shane's body where it ended, where safety began.

"You can stop holding it in," Ilya murmured into his hair.

Shane made a small sound that wasn't quite a sob and wasn't quite a laugh.

"I don't like surprises," he admitted, voice muffled.

"I know," Ilya said. "I also don't like surprises. But I like you."

Shane let out a shaky exhale.

Outside, the snow kept falling. Inside, Ilya's warmth pressed against him, steady and real.

And for the first time since the plan broke, Shane felt his nervous system start to come back down from the edge.

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