

Chanson Triste

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Chanson Triste

by [Liron](#)

Summary

“I had a dream,” Ilya replied. Shane tensed up. *Shit!* But Ilya soothed him, “A new one. Good one.”

“Good?”

“Yeah,” Ilya breathed.

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One day, Shane finds Ilya listening to a melancholic piano piece on repeat.

Notes

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

The moment Shane pushed the front door open, he froze. He could have imagined many things he might find behind that door—an excited, jumping dog welcoming him, his man snoring on the couch, maybe cooking smells wafting over from the kitchen, even Ilya off-key humming to a song from the radio. But this? Piano sounds? This was new.

Shane let his keys glide into the bowl he had put in what used to be Ilya's entrance hall and followed the music into the living room. It was lively, but sounded kinda sad, too. It made Shane's throat tighten with worry.

Ilya hadn't been on his antidepressants for long. The team physician had sent him to a specialist, fully supporting Ilya's wish to give his brain chemistry a little support. Shane couldn't have been more proud of him if he tried. Ilya had always been brave.

Shane circled the sofa with a wide radius, not wanting to startle Ilya who hadn't shown any signs of being aware of his presence as of yet.

The sight that opened up to him made his stomach lurch. The adjustment phase hadn't been easy. Ilya had tried to keep up either his stoic or his sunnyboy facade, depending on the circumstances. But at night, more than once, Shane had woken up to silent tears wetting his skin.

The same tears that were now leaving salty traces on Ilya's cheeks despite still running freely. Quiet tears were harder to bear than loud ones somehow. Not that it would matter. They always made Shane feel sick to his stomach, offsetting him. But only for a moment. As always, Shane forced himself to unfreeze. He knew how crucial it was to not oversee things at this stage of the medication. The point where Ilya seemed more energetic but his mood was still a work in progress, to put it nicely.

“Ilya?” Shane said quietly. The corners of Ilya's lips twitched slightly but his eyes remained closed. He wormed an arm out of the blanket cocoon he was wrapped in and raised his hand, his fingers trailing through the air, mimicking playing a piano. The movements surprisingly fit to the music filling the room. Shane looked at their dance, enthralled at the sight until the piano piece ended.

It restarted after a second's pause. But Ilya opened his eyes, his hand sinking to his side when he looked up at Shane with a crooked smile. He shook his head.

“I fucking love this song,” he said, his voice quiet and still filled with tears.

Shane didn't know anything about classical music. “It sounds nice,” he said.

“Nice?” Ilya huffed and shook his head. “Americans,” he muttered.

“Hey,” Shane protested. “I'm not—”

“Same continent, Hollander. Tiny history. No sense for—” Ilya searched for the right word but failed. “Big feelings,” he ended the sentence, clearly unsatisfied with his choice of words.

Shane wished his Russian was better so that Ilya could freely express himself in his mother tongue. *Eventually*, he consoled himself.

For the time being, he sat down next to his love and cupped his face, brushing away the fresh and old tears as best as he could manage. How long had Ilya been sitting here, listening to this piece on repeat?

“Are you having big feelings right now?” Shane asked. It sounded stupid to his own ears but Ilya didn't seem to mind.

He nodded, his smile faltering a little. “Tchaikovsky,” he said as if that would clue Shane in. Yes, he had heard that name before. He wasn't a full blown philistine.

“Is that his music?” he asked. Ilya nodded once more, his eyes closing again, but they seemed to be mostly dry.

“My mom loved him,” Shane said. “She sometimes sat at the piano and played it for me. When she was feeling... I dunno... not too bad, I guess, but still melancholic.”

Shane swallowed around the lump in his throat. “Is that how you feel, too?” he asked pressing around it.

“Maybe. A little.”

Shane nodded, mostly to himself. “Do you think listening to this on repeat is helping improve your mood?”

Ilya shrugged. “I think Tchaikovsky get what I feel. Or maybe, he just felt the same. We are the same.”

“How d'you mean?”

“Well more like you, I guess. He was gay. Gay and Russian. So not like you.” The crooked smile was back on Ilya's lips. “I just found out today. And... I had this CD for all those years. Was her favourite, you know? I stole it before my father threw away my mom's stuff. Kept it under my bed.”

“And brought it with you when you came here.”

“It's all that's left,” Ilya said and touched the cross necklace that had once been his mother's. “Never put it in a player. Until today.”

“It's beautiful,” Shane stated.

“Even you can hear that,” Ilya replied, the sound of his voice slightly teasing. It allowed Shane to breathe a little deeper again.

“I suppose,” Shane agreed. He wasn't feeling in safe waters enough to address Ilya's humour just yet. It often covered up pain and sadness. Shane knew that now, and hell, he would never be as oblivious again as he'd been in the past, ever.

“It speaks to my soul,” Ilya mused, his voice serious again. “But it doesn't make me too sad, don't worry.”

Shane couldn't help but smile. Ilya had really gotten better at voicing his feelings. Shane had, too. Not always, but most of the time.

“It's more like... a warm hug.”

Shane hummed in acknowledgement. “Want a real one?” he offered.

Ilya opened the blanket and held it for Shane to join him underneath. They settled, wrapped around each other, and listened to two full repeats of the piece, Shane's cheek pressed against Ilya's shoulder.

“What made you pull it out today?” Shane asked.

“I had a dream,” Ilya replied. Shane tensed up. *Shit!* But Ilya soothed him, “A new one. Good one.”

“Good?”

“Yeah,” Ilya breathed. Shane craned his neck to see Ilya's expression. He wasn't always good at reading faces, but Ilya's, he could read pretty well by now. Not that there was much to decipher on it right now. His happiness was written into every single one of the wrinkles around his eyes.

“Tell me,” Shane prompted.

Ilya's smile lines grew even deeper. Shane frigging loved them so much.

“Mom was playing piano,” Ilya explained. “This song. And she called me. ‘Ilyusha,’ she said. ‘Listen and don't you forget.’”

“And then?”

“I did,” Ilya said simply. He didn't even seem annoyed. “And you were there with me, listening, too.”

The piece played another three times. And yes, Shane could picture it—Irina Rozanova playing for them, her face so similar to Ilya's, just as beautiful, her eyes just as soft and kind.

“What's it called?” Shane asked after a while.

“Chanson triste,” Ilya said. It took Shane a moment to understand the somewhat butchered words.

“Fitting,” he said, frowning over the French title. But it was probably just popular at the time. He remembered a Polish team mate once complaining how Chopin hadn't been French despite everyone pronouncing his name in a francophone way. His teammate had been very

drunk and very homesick during his little speech. Strange what useless things the mind keeps a hold on while one can't remember what one walked to the kitchen for.

“Sad song,” Shane said, in case Ilya didn't know.

“No,” Ilya protested. “Not sad. Beautiful.”

“Can't it be both?”

“Maybe,” Ilya allowed.

“Does it make you feel good or bad?”

Ilya thought about it for a moment. “It makes me feel... peaceful,” he settled on.

“Peaceful,” Shane repeated. “Yeah. You're right. It should be called *Chanson tranquille* instead.”

“I love when you speak French,” Ilya murmured.

“Yeah?” Shane chuckled. “It's probably like I love listening to you when you speak Russian.”

“French is nearly as beautiful as Russian, nearly.”

“It's called the language of love.”

Ilya's eyeroll was audible in the huff he made. Shane grinned to himself.

“C'est vrais, ma tondeuse à gazon,” he said.

“What?”

“Nothing,” Shane replied, still grinning. He had to admit, that sounded way nicer, and more romantic than calling Ilya his lawnmower in English. The realisation made Ilya's silly Russian nicknames only sweeter.

“Is not the language of love,” Ilya said. “We speak the language of love without words.”

“I agree,” Shane said.

Another two repeats later, he pressed a kiss to Ilya's dry cheek. “Do you need a bit longer with your mom?” he asked.

Ilya pulled him closer. “Just a bit.”

“Okay,” Shane said and nuzzled against Ilya's neck. He felt his boyfriend's lips pressing warmly into his hair.

Maybe, a little *tristesse* was okay. Maybe it was engraved into Ilya's soul. But as long as it was calm and peaceful, safely wrapped in piano sounds, good memories and lovely dreams, this was all right, Shane thought. And if not, he'd be here to catch him, to get him through it

until Ilya could enjoy the sun shining on his face again. And Shane always would. They had forever now, after all.

End Notes

Thank you, Susan, for betaing this fic. 💜

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