How feelings express themselves

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How feelings express themselves

by Aalvina

Summary

Shane ignores the slow apparition of colours his sight was missing.
Ilya does not understand why he keeps buying ginger beer.
Or how to accept you are in love, one soulmark at a time.

Notes

I love soulmarks but don't like how it's often predestined. I try to keep them as marks of feelings more than "hey we have to be together now."
Anyway, I wanted them to struggle a bit so I had a little fun.
Hope you enjoy it !

See the end of the work for more notes

“What do you know about soulmarks Shane?” the doctor had asked kindly to the young boy sitting in front of her. He turned to his mother who smiled at him.

“It’s a way to find your soulmate.” he answered shyly.

Dr Andreas smiled at him.

“Yes and no. Books and movies like to tell the story of destined lovers finding each other through their marks. However, science has no proof such destined love exists.”

Shane nodded, listening carefully.

“Soulmarks have many iterations, names, sentences or dates appearing on one's skin, the urge to gather items loved by the other or the heightened or missing sensation. All of these can happen anytime in life and they only signify one thing : feelings. Soulmarks are a way for the feeling of romantic love to express itself physically.”

“And I have that.”

“Yes, you do. You remember what you studied in class last week?”

“Paintings, we went to a museum. We had to make our own drawing of a painting.”

“The sunflower by Van Gogh.” added Yuna Hollander.

“Yes, and this painting is very famous because it has very bright yellow and orange.”

Shane lowered his eyes.

“I didn’t see that.”

“It’s okay Shane, it’s not your fault. The test we did together showed that your eyes and brain don’t detect and identify most colours.”

“I can see colours !” he argued, frowning. His little 10 year old mind did not understanding what the issue was.

“Yes you can, but they are duller than what they are in real life. It’s difficult to explain since you never saw them as they are and some you only see as greyscale.”

“So you can fix it?”

“No, I can’t, this means you’ll be dispensed from studies where colour takes a big place. This also means we’ll meet up each year to see if it changes. Okay?”

“Okay !”

November 2008

Shane Hollander knows a lot about soulmarks, he studied it, focused on understanding what was missing and how to not reveal that fact to outsiders. Once his path settled toward hockey, he leaned into the dark sportswear as an excuse not to care about clothes and colour matching. His sight never changed in his teenage years even though his mother had him meet up with his doctor every year to check. Once he started dating, Dr Andreas had him promise to get an appointment as soon as he caught colours shifting. It never happened, she also warned him that if his soulmark awoke and colours did appear brightly, they also could be lost if he couldn't act on his feelings. He promised to get a regular check-up anyway. It did not matter, he dated a few girls and nothing happened, colours stayed dull and he did not see how that was going to change. He had one thing in mind and that was to become the great hockey player he knew he could be.

November 2013

Ilya stared at the book in his hand, unsure of what he was holding. He'd strolled in one of the airport bookshops to spend some time while his flight was delayed, he did not intend to buy anything and yet here he was about to get into the plane holding a book entitled *Hockey's greatest games, a strategic analysis.*

Only Montreal airport would have a book like that for sale, more puzzling Ilya was pretty sure his english was not good enough to dive into such a book and he did not like to read this kind of stuff in russian either so he did not understand why he had bought it.

Something was itching his brain and a freckled smile came into his mind. Hollander would probably read such a book, Ilya was probably still a bit obsessed since their time shared in Hollande'sr apartment. The thought had him reminiscing about the night, about the feeling of the man's skin under his, the time spent kissing him, fucking him and the utter extasy of feeling him come undone under him.

This was probably nothing, he shucked the book in his bag and boarded the plane.

June 2014

We didn't even kiss. Staring at the text, Shane swore under his breath and deleted the message. This was pathetic, it's not like they were anything more than convenient to each other. Even though Shane had felt his skin prickled being near Rozanov once again after all these months, he was realizing that he did not lead this dance whatsoever and yet felt the pull toward the man, stronger each time.

I need you. He had said, horny out of his mind and Rozanov so far, he would have done anything to get him closer, within reach of him. The worst of it all was that Shane realized he did not care that Rozanov was leading the dance, he just wanted to be the one dancing with him.

"Fuck." he muttered, before he left the elevator he barely noticed the light of the button to his floor looked somewhat more yellow than he remembered. Probably a trick of his mind though.

May 2016

Ilya stared at his shopping list and the bags on his counter. He had written clearly :

-Chicken

-Rice

-Salsa

-Peppers

-Coke

And yet here he was staring at a kind of white fish, chickpeas and freaking cauliflower. What was he supposed to do with that? He could not remember picking all these items and yet did not remember getting the ones he had intended.

It was already late and he had no energy to get back out to find food he actually wanted. He reached for his phone and started to check for a restaurant to order from. Curious, he opened another tab and looked for recipes including the items he apparently purchased and found himself looking through recipes entitled “Macrobiotic diet : how to cook healthy and yummy”.

The recipes looked easy enough and he did not like the idea of wasting food so he started preparing the fish and the cauliflower, wiping out a sauce with what he had in his cupboard. He didn’t have all that was asked and just replaced some seed oils with the olive oil he had, ignoring the warnings to avoid such fats from the website.

The thought of Hollander came to mind, reminded of a chain of text they exchanged when Ilya had sent him all the food he had eaten in Russia and Shane answered back with the most boring bland food he’s seen photographed.

The meal was in the oven and Ilya went to close the tab when he read again “macrobiotic.” he knew this word, had seen it written before. Opening his conversation with Jane he scrolled back quickly until he found that group of food pictures they sent each other.

-*What on earth is that Hollander?*

-*Food?*

-*You know food is supposed to be good? And fun.*

-*Fuck you ! Some of us actually care about what we eat.*

-*So you eat like a sad man?*

-*That’s called a macrobiotic diet asshole.*

-*I would never eat that.*

-*Well I do, and I’m the one with two of these.*

He had attached a picture of his Stanley cup winner rings. Ilya had answered with a message about taking these from him with his mouth and things had derailed from there until Shane had made up an excuse to stop answering for a few hours.

Ilya went back to his browser and typed *Bought something I don’t like without knowing*. Internet answered immediately. *Purchase urge, or the silent soulmark.*

He closed his phone, the oven dinged, he wasn't hungry anymore.

October 2016

Soulmarks are a way for the feeling of romantic love to express oneself physically.

The sentence his doctor had told him so long ago was haunting Shane. Within the last two years his sight had changed ever so slightly but there was no doubt, he even had the medical exams to confirm it. The red wine his mother drank now had a shine to it when it was just a dull brown before. The sun's reflection on the lake at his cottage was a brighter, more striking white than he had seen in the past and more subtle changes. All of them indicators of feelings growing, bringing colours and change into his life. He had tried to ignore it because he knew one thing for sure and that was that his feelings for Ilya Rozanov could not be more than small ripples in his life. Feeling anything close to love would endanger their careers and the delicate balance and control Shane had in his life.

Yet, he could not help but seek Ilya every time he had the chance and they kept meeting, each game between Boston and Montreal bringing the sharp adrenaline of the challenge on the ice and the burning urge to get their body as united as they could in their beds.

Meeting up in Ilya's house meant big open windows and a sun that shined on their bodies as they kissed, the light bright and warm as Shane rode Ilya, desperate to get closer to their pleasure together. Each kiss was open and caring and Shane could feel the colours around him be less dull but that had to be a trick of his mind.

He stayed when Ilya asked and let the deep blue sheet envelop both their bodies, relishing in the closeness they could share without it being linked to need to find release.

Ilya made a tuna melt, he actually cooked a great tuna melt, handed Shane a cold ginger beer and all of it felt so much like something Shane could dream about when he let his mind wander free just before falling asleep. Dreams of a different life where they could learn to be together and exist in a routine, in the light and not in between their very public lives.

Yet when Ilya talked about his conquests and how Shane was one of many, he felt like ice trickled down his back bringing a deep shiver.

Once Ilya's call had ended, once Ilya smiled to him after Shane admitted he recognized the word for father in russian, they were back in the warm moment of calm from before but now Ilya was holding him, brushing his hand in his hair and Shane wanted more. He wanted so much more, he wanted that feeling, that comfort for more than every few months, but he had no place to put this desire so he brought himself to straddle Ilya and stroke them both together. They were breathing against their mouths, sharing air and pleasure building up and up and sharp. Shane wanted them like that in unison, his heart beating as strongly and as fast as he could feel Ilya's beating in his neck.

So when Ilya said his name, Shane had to say "Ilya" in a breath and Ilya kissed him so softly, like a promise they were sharing and the world was bright and the colours were vivid.

I love him.

Shane ran away, ignoring Ilya's plea, his last name said twice, so much unsaid still because they could not say it, not now, not ever.

Ilya looked beautiful and for the first time Shane could see him in all the vivid colours of the world but he turned away and the colours left him with each step he took.

When he woke up the next day in his hotel room, the world had turned to black and white.

December 2016

Svetlana had seen Ilya at his worst, a kid hiding from his bully of a brother, a 12 year old holding back tears at his mother's funeral, a teenager terrified of moving across the world. Svetlana knew Ilya and she would never fear or judge him. Yet, Ilya saw her shocked, staring at the destroyed pack of ginger beer he had thrown on his floor, looking back at him as he shucked items away from his grocery bag, items he did not intend to buy.

Book about hockey, wrap bandages for pulled muscles, ginger beer and a whole lot of macrobiotic diet food.

"Ilya…" she started, frozen in front of him.

"Fuck !" he shouted. "Fuck this shit, fuck all of this."

“Ilya.” she said softly, avoiding the sticky beverage on the floor with her heels. “What happened?”

He looked back at her and maybe his heartbreak was visible on his face because she stopped and immediately pulled him into a hug.

“I didn’t want to buy these. I never intend to and it keeps happening. Makes no sense.”

“Are you saying this is a soulmark urge?”

“Can’t be. He left, he doesn’t want me.”

“Oh Ilya, it doesn’t work that way.”

She hugged him more tightly, whispering sweet reassurance in russian. He did not cry, but held her, his fingers curled around her shirt as he kept staring at the mess on the floor.

Once he calmed down, she went and found a cardboard box he had with old shoes and emptied it. Calmly she took a marker and wrote in her elegant handwriting “Jane” on it.

“Now, you are going to put all that you got for Jane and put it in. We are going to close it and put it in your closet.”

Ilya was not sure what the point of it all was but he agreed, put down 3 books of the theory of hockey, a map of Montreal best hiking trail, a shampoo Shane had liked in one of the hotel, a pair of comfortable sweats, a recipe book for macrobiotic diet and one ginger beer can that had survived his destruction earlier.

Svetlana then closed the box and put it in the closet making sure Ilya was watching. Turning back toward him she took his face into her hands.

“Now, it’s here, all of it. You don’t need to get more, if Jane gets his head out of his ass you will have it all for him. If not, we will burn it together.”

llya forced himself to smile, he loved her so much and she cared for him. She kissed him softly.

Two days later Ilya received a package he had apparently ordered online, a pair of reading glasses from a prescription he did not know. He stared at it for a while and went to put it in the box.

January 2017

The world in black and white is much more annoying to deal with than what Shane had expected. He has to hire a stylist to manage his clothes and not look ridiculous, his doctor had him install an app to detect red and green lights so he could keep driving himself and it was oh so terribly sad to be in this grey world.

He kept reminding himself that at least he didn't get the full colour sight for long, a few minutes kissing Ilya before he turned away and all went grey. As time passed he wasn't sure it was such a comforting thought.

Dating Rose was his last hope to put Ilya Rozanov away from his life, his heart, his sight. She was perfect, they got along and maybe he didn't feel much when they kissed but he tried to trick his mind into feeling. It did not work, the world kept devastatingly greyscale for the whole time they dated. Except for one moment, in the club staring at Ilya and while his heart was breaking at the sight he felt flashes of colour, his shirt, her dress, the lights. But Ilya was kissing her and Shane was dating Rose so he left and went back to the black and white world he now lived in. Sad, lonely but safe.

It took Rose breaking up with him so gently, her saying "A problem is something you can fix." for his brain to catch up with the feelings he had buried deep within himself.

She was right, his lack of attraction was not a problem, he could not fix it. His situationship with Ilya was. Shane was miserable without him and maybe they could try and be something together.

All Star game brought hope back one colour at a time.

The red in Ilya's shirt at the bar, their tentative talk, eyes hungry for each other.

The blue of the pool, Ilya playing with children, offering a moment of light jest with Shane as he shook his wet hair at him.

The white of the ice, pristine, not dulled by shades of grey, they skated like never before, playing freely as Shane dreamed they could in the future.

And Ilya's hair, streaks of blond in his hair that Shane only every saw brown in the future, kissing in his bed, hugging him.

"Good night Shane."

"Good night Ilya."

Colours, bright, alive, something to care, to love, to keep.

August 2017

“The kitchen is emptied ! I don’t know how you can have so many different vodkas though.”

Shouted Shane from the other side of the flat.

“It’s good russian vodka. Not that you can appreciate it.” muttered Ilya to himself. He was packing his boston life in boxes. Movers were coming in two days to bring it all to Ottawa where he would build a new life, closer to Shane, closer to the life he wanted to have.

For now, his flat was full of boxes and it did not seem to stop. How could he own so much stuff? He didn’t buy that much and yes the flat was huge but still, he felt like he had been packing for a month.

Sighing, he closed his latest box of clothes and sat down on his bed. He heard Shane walk in and sitting next to him.

“Maybe I just leave it, I have money, I can buy new stuff when I need.” Ilya thought out loud. Shane barked a laugh.

“Try that and if my mother learns you did that you’ll lose your status as favourite son.”

“But there’s too much stuff.” he whined.

Shane ignored him and picked up an empty box, opened his closet to start emptying it, one shelf at a time. Ilya saw it before Shane but could not move fast enough to stop him from finding it.

“Uh… Ilya? What is this?” he asked, pointing at the box labelled *Jane*.

“Stuff, you can take it, it’s for you anyway.”

“What do you mean for me?” Shane was already opening it and taking each item out, looking it over with a puzzled expression on his face.

“Urge to purchase. Is the english name for it. Stupid expensive soulmark is what I think.” muttered Ilya.

Shane turned back to him, eyes shining with gathering tears.

“You had a soulmark for me?” he seemed to not believe it.

“Da, of course.” Ilya shrugged.

“Why did you not tell me?”

“Is embarrassing.”

Shane stood up and walked toward Ilya until he could hug him, straddle his thighs, holding on to him for dear life.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.” they whispered to one another. They stayed like that for a long time before Shane froze suddenly and left the room, leaving Ilya bereft. He came back with his phone, his glasses on his nose while he scrolled through something.

“Shane? You okay.”

Shane nodded and took a sharp breath when he finally found what he was searching for. He sat back next to Ilya and handed him his phone.

Ilya found himself staring at what looked like a medical report, immediately his stomach clenched, brain thinking something terrible had happened to the man he loved but when he turned to him Shane was smiling. He pointed to some data on the document.

“Here is the colour spectrum I could see before we met.” he turned the page on the document. “That’s when I started seeing more colours, though faint you can see the change, here and here.” Ilya looked at the date on top of the document. It was early in their relationship. He nodded, listening to what Shane was telling him.

“That’s when I left.” the data showed the colours disappearing completely. Silence fell for a second, the importance of what was being said settling. They were happy now, confident in their love and relationship but this was a reminder of a time where they stumbled the hardest.

“That’s after the All Star weekend.” Shane was smiling at Ilya, he raised his arm and gently curled his finger on one of the other man’s curls.

“My doctor said soulmarks are a way for feelings to express themselves physically. I don’t want to live without the colours you brought into my life. ”

“I love you.” answered Ilya.

He leaned his head on Shane’s shoulder, around them, his flat was in boxes, ready to be taken and for him, for them to start a new life.

End Notes

I wasn't sure if the ending was enough.
I hope you liked it all !

Shoutout to all the lovely people who leave kudos and comments. You're the best !

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!