Just us here

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by Tesoro06

Summary

Shane doesn’t respond right away, he just looks at him for a moment longer, before he nods back, mouth curving into a faint smile. A sad smile that Ilya didn’t expect.

He breaks the eye contract, turning his face to the side as he starts blinking hard, like he’s trying to force something back.

And oh.

Ilya’s chest constricts sharply when he realises what the other’s doing.

Shane is doing it again. Hiding his feelings before they can spill over. Stopping himself from crying. It’s an odd habit Ilya has noticed from the very beginning, the fact that Shane never truly lets his tears fall. Doesn’t matter how heavy the shine around his eyes becomes, they’re always swallowed back inside.

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Wherein Ilya comforts Shane after stupidly proposing the idea to marry Svetlana for a citizenship.

Notes

Hello y'all, this is my first Hollanov fic. I've become absolutely re-obessesed with this book ever since the shows come out, and ever since watching episode six it's been bugging me to write something where Ilya comforts Shane after he proposes marrying Svetlana.

The tears in his eyes actually had me screaming, so I needed to fix it. Protect Shane Hollander AT ALL COSTS. Say it with me!

So here it is. Hope y'all like it. Also I do not speak Russian at all, so Ilya's Russian dialogue is all taken from searching different translator apps. I hope it doesn't offend anyone if it's incorrect.

See the end of the work for more notes

“Do…you want that problem to go away?” There’s a wobbly smile on Shane’s face, like he can’t quite decide whether to laugh at Ilya’s teasing declaration or hold on to the seriousness of the question he’d meant to ask.

But strangely enough, tonight Ilya doesn’t feel like continuing the teasing. Something about the way Shane is looking at him, so open and careful has his chest stilling. So Ilya answers plainly, without deflection, without even a teasing lilt in his voice, that no he doesn’t want that problem to go away. Ever.

The other smiles again at his response, before his expression drops, and the corners of his mouth dip as something settles over his features, leaving him looking quietly dispirited. He swallows before he speaks again, throat working, eyes blinking too fast as they drift around the room, anywhere but Ilya.

“Don’t marry Svetlana,” He breathes, voice thin, and before Ilya can say anything, Shane rushes to finish, “Just don’t.”

“I know it wouldn’t be for love or whatever,” His eyes glisten now, unshed tears pooling at the edges, and it’s a painful beautiful sight. Shane’s eyes have always been gorgeous, but like this, bright and wet, it’s as if entire constellations live inside them, stars scattered around his pupils. They’ve been leaving Ilya breathless for years.

“Just don’t,” He repeats, lips trembling slightly, and the ache in Ilya’s chest deepens, but he keeps his expression cool, carefully composed. He doesn’t let it show.

It’s one of the many ways they’ve always been different.

Shane carries everything on his face, every thought, every feeling, and unguarded reaction. Even when his expression stays neutral, his eyes give him away in seconds. His gorgeous eyes lay everything bare, transparent to what he feels, whether he means to or not. And the most endeared thing to Ilya is that he’s almost certain Shane doesn’t even realise it.

Ilya though, through the whirlwind of a life he’d lived from his early days, had adapted very quickly to the skill of disappearing behind indifference. He’d mastered the art of tucking his emotions away, as a barrier to protect himself from getting hurt. He knows exactly which mask to wear depending on the moment, the person, the setting.

“We can figure something else out okay?” Shane finishes, voice steadier this time, with more determination this time as his eyes search Ilya’s face for an answer.

And it’s moments like this that remind Ilya why coming to the cottage had been a terrible idea. Because laying here, with Shane looking at him like that, he’s painfully aware of just how far gone he is. Aware that there’s very little he wouldn’t do just to see that stupid smile again.

Now, it’s Ilya who struggles to cool his expression, eyes transfixed on the man across from him so deeply besotted. He shifts his weight, feet pressed against Shanes, rocking back and

forth in small, restless movements, just enough to offer comfort the only way they know best. Through proximity, through touch, through being there. Of course he'll agree. The idea had only been a proposition of a practical method, for them to still be able to see each other. But if Shane doesn't like his way of doing things, then they'll do it Shane's way instead.

"Okay." He says, nodding softly.

Shane doesn't respond right away, he just looks at him for a moment longer, before he nods back, mouth curving into a faint smile. A sad smile that Ilya didn't expect.

He breaks the eye contract, turning his face to the side as he starts blinking hard, like he's trying to force something back.

And oh.

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Shane is doing it again. Hiding his feelings before they can spill over. Stopping himself from crying. It's an odd habit Ilya has noticed from the very beginning, the fact that Shane never truly lets his tears fall. Doesn't matter how heavy the shine around his eyes becomes, they're always swallowed back inside.

He can't help but think back to the All-Star Games this year, to the night he'd let himself break in Shanes arms. How easily Shane had created a space for him to fall apart in. He remembers how quickly, without any hesitation, Shane had climbed into his lap, pressing soft kisses to his lips, before cradling his head soothingly against his chest. There had been no judgement, no rushing, nothing other than the warmth, and weight of Shane in his arms.

Now, watching Shanes hand lift towards his face, most likely to pinch the wetness out of his eyes as he always does, something twists sharply inside Ilya in protest.

If Shane can create a safe space for Ilya to cry, then Ilya should be able to do the same for Shane.

"No." He says softly, nudging his feet to press against the other as physical protest. Shane stills mid-motion, his hand hovering near his face, confusion flickering across his expression, eyes still wet, dark lashes clumped together.

Before he can say anything else, Ilya rushes to fill the space.

"Don't do that, come here." He opens his arms, patting his chest once in quiet invitation.

Shane swallows, visibly puzzled, yet he still he nods, being the best boy he always is. But as he moves to shift over to Ilya, his hand lifts again already moving to pinch his tears away again. Ilya groans under his breath and sits ip properly, catching Shane's wrist before he can do it.

Shane's blink's at him, looking completely lost now."What…"

“Don’t do that, Hollander.” Ilya’s brow furrows, exasperation bleeding through the softness he feels. The hand not holding Shane’s wrist gestures uselessly in the air, as if it’ll help him find the correct thing to say.

“Don’t hide.”

At his request, Shane swallows head tilting slightly away, eyes sliding off the side, in hiding. Ilya reacts immediately, cupping his jaw and turning his face so that there eyes meet, lifting his chin gently when Shane refuses to make eye contact.

“No. Not from me. There is no need to… hide from me.”

The pressure behind Shanes eyes builds, thick and heavy, and Ilya knows Shane probably can’t see much at all now, not through the blur of tears threatening to spill.

He doesn’t give him the chance to retreat.

Ilya tugs Shane forward, lying back, pulling him down with him. They shift together, until Shane is sprawled out fully on top of him, his head tucked into the space between Ilya’s neck and shoulder, hands resting weakly against Ilya’s chest, their legs tangled together. Ilya can feel everything, there rapid thud of Shane’s heart beat against his own chest, the short uneven breath warming the skin of his neck.

He presses a kiss to the crown of Shane’s head. Then another. Then three more, trailing gently across the base of his skull, right where he knows Shane is most sensitive.

“It’s okay,” He mumbles, nose buried in Shanes hair, breathing in the familiar, soft scent of the shampoo Shane’s used ever since Ilya’s had the privilege of knowing him. “It’s okay if you cry. I won’t let anyone see, hmm.”

One hand comes up to cradle the back of Shane’s head, fingers threading slowly through his hair, massaging his scalp in steady, soothing strokes, as if trying to take to away the mental pressure Shane’s dealing with.

“You can cry with me Shane, it’s okay.”

And that’s it. That’s all Shane needs.

Because suddenly, the boy is sobbing hard. Harsh cries breaking loose against Ilya’s skin, unrestrained and endless. The sound vibrates through Ilya’s chest. His hand is warm and steady as it moves up and down Shane’s back, firm enough to anchor him, but he makes sure it’s gentle enough not to overwhelm. Ilya’s chest hums softly as he murmurs into Shane’s ear, sweet nothings whispered more for comfort than comprehension. He knows Shane probably can’t hear anything past his own sobs, but he keeps speaking anyway, low and constant, encouraging him to let it all spill out.

“плачь всё нормально.” He mumbles softly, “It’s okay, no one will see you.”

Shanes body trembles as he cries, the heaving growing worse. For a brief moment Ilya tenses, worried that Shane might tip himself over into a full blown panic attack. He moves his hand

up, gripping gently at the back of Shane's neck, trying to coax him to lift his head, to breathe. But Shane refuses, pressing his face even harder into the curve of Ilya's neck, clinging the tightly onto the Ilya's shirt, holding onto him like he'd float ashore if not for Ilya.

So Ilya relents, and his palm settled at the back of Shane's neck instead, cradling him there, protectively. His other half returning to repeat the slow, repetitive strokes along Shane's back, steadying him.

"Я с тобой здесь." He soothes, eyes unfocused as he stares at the ceiling above them. Maybe it's Shane who's crying, but the tightens unfurling in Ilya's chest is so heavy it feels like the other's sadness has transferred straight to him, heart aching in quiet sympathetic synchrony.

"Это только мы." He mumbles, and he means it.

It is, really just them.

Ilya and Shane.

Shane and Ilya.

For ten years, they have existed for each other beyond the ways they have with anyone else. More than just hockey players to the world. More than a friend to some. Son's to their parents. More than two men existing in the chaotic fame-filled lives they lead.

Together, they've nestled a secret between them. A secret meant to remain fleeting, casual, and trivial. Something fun and lighthearted. That's always been their cover story, the lie they'd tell too themselves, and each other, to make things easier to digest. Because, actually, Ilya doesn't think anything between has ever been casual. Not even from the start really.

At least not for him, because from the moment his eyes first locked with the sweet, freckled man ten years ago, something in the axis of his being shifted. Something luminous wove itself into his life, and it had taken far too long for Ilya to admit that the light he'd been chasing had always been Shane. From the very beginning, Shane has been what Ilya craves. What Ilya wants. What Ilya needs.

Eventually, Shanes tears slow, but his body still trembles, hiccups breaking the silence. Soft, faint sniffles lingering, that shouldn't be so endearing to hear. The after shocks still ripple through him, breath uneven and raw. He lies sprawled against the other's chest, boneless and motionless now, limbs loose and heavy, strength most likely drained by the force of his own breakdown.

Ilya could stake his life on this being the first time Shane has ever cried so hard, and so honestly. It has to be as exhausting as much as it is liberating. He lays perfectly still, arms firm around the other. He doesn't dare move, even quietening his own breathing, afraid of startling Shane, letting him tiredly rest against him.

After a while, Shane lifts his head. Ilya smiles the moment their eyes meet, the tight knot in his chest loosening. Shane blinks slowly, brows scrunching together, likely sensitive to the light even though it's only a warm, dim glow. His eyes are swollen, still glassy from tears,

cheeks flushed a soft pink that stands out against the freckles scattered across his skin. The very constellations Ilya lives and breathes for.

“Better?” He asks.

Shane doesn’t answer right away. His gaze drops instead, settling on Ilya’s neck.

“Now your neck’s all wet.” He finally mumbles, voice small, and Ilya’s smile deepens.

“I like wet things.” He says stupidly. That elicits a laugh out of the other, a soft, real one. Ilya mentally high fives himself at the sound and sight of Shane smiling again.

He lifts a hand, cupping Shane’s cheek gently, his touch tender as he wipes away the remnants of tears. His thumb moves in slow, soothing strokes, tracing over freckles he knows by heart. Ilya presses a kiss to Shane’s forehead, then his eyelids, kissing away the remnants of his tears before finally kissing him on the mouth.

“Feel better?” He asks again, and this time Shane nods.

Ilya smiles. “Why did you get sad?” Shane eyes drop down again, looking at Ilya’s chest, his ears slowly tinting red.

He’s even more curious now. Wanting to know if it’s simply out of jealousy out of the marriage proposition, like he’d assumed.

“Wasn’t sad,” Shane mutters still not looking at him.

Ilya huffs, shaking his head. “Hollander, my neck is ocean of your tears and snot.”

Shane looks up at him, eyes suddenly a lot more intense than they were a second ago, and this time it’s Ilya who wants to look away.

“I was just relieved.”

Ilya’s brows scrunch together, “What’s that?”

Shane goes quiet for a moment, hesitation settling into face. He worries his bottom lip between his teeth, gaze fixated on Ilya’s shoulder, as if deciding whether this is something he actually wants to say out loud. When he finally speaks, his voice is tentative.

“It’s….er, when you’re happy that something bad or-difficult has been stopped or gotten better.” He still isn’t looking when he finishes explaining. His voice trails off, growing quieter with each word, no doubt embarrassed,

Ilya stays silent for a few seconds, unable to respond. The underlying meaning of what Shane just explained sits too deep. Heavy with implication of what Shane is saying, what he means. It presses uncomfortably against Ilya’s chest, and despite the tender moment they just shared, he knows pulling at thus particular thread right now would unravel too much and lay to harsh on them.

It's not news that they're both not the sharpest communicators, and even now that they're are trying more than before to express themselves truthfully to each other, exploring Shane breaking down out of sheer relief that Ilya won't marry someone else feels like something that would be too much handle tonight.

So he does what he knows best, deflect and defuse.

"You are so happy I don't beat you in marriage, too?"

Shane's brow furrows briefly as if he doesn't understand Ilya's joke, but then something click and he rolls his eyes, lips curling at the sides in amusement.

He shifts his arm from where it's been trapped beneath himself, fingers releasing their grip on Ilya's shirt, and instead he reaches up to cradle Ilya's jaw. His touch is gentle, thumb brushing lightly over Ilya's bottom lip.

"I don't want either of us to get married to *anyone*..."

Ilya can practically feel the unspoken words that follow. '*But each other'*. He knows exactly what Shane is trying to say without saying it. He's aware that Shane is telling him there's no one else for him, that he's relieved Ilya feels the same way. But, again, tonight has already been heavy enough, so instead of leaning into it, Ilya lightens the mood the only way he knows how.

"You think I will not look sexy in wedding suit, Hollander?"

Shane snorts, lifting a hand to lightly smack Ilya's chest. And this is the most precious thing in the world. The sight Shane, with rosy cheeks and a pearl-filled smile. Ilya finds himself smiling without meaning to, warmth spreading through him at the sight.

The Montreal player sighs, brows drawing together as he presses a hand to his forehead. "My heads killing me."

"Yes, well, you cried enough to fill your well up."

Shane cracks a small smile, shifting as if to sit up, but before he can, Ilya tightens his hold. He moves quickly, rolling them over so Shane ends up lying back against the couch cushions, Ilya on top of him. Shane lets out a startled gasp as he's repositioned.

"You are dehydrated, Hollander. I will make you a drink, will make you feel better. Like aftercare, but only without intercourse." He exaggerates a pout, and Shane grins up at him. "You know words like intercourse, but don't know what relieved means?"

"I am a wise man, Shane."

Shane just shakes his head, amusement written all over his face. "Okay now you sit here I go make us hot chocolate okay." He starts to get up, but Shane reaches out and grabs his wrist.

"I er- don't drink hot chocolate."

Ilya frowns, “Hollander I saw in cabinet this morning, what are you saying.”

Shane’s gaze drifts away, embarrassed.“I brought that for you. I don’t drink things like that it doesn’t go with my di-”

“Yes. Yes. You have stupid diet, I know Shane, you say it every two second’s.” Ilya exaggerates his exasperation, waving a hand, but he can’t quite hide the flutter in his chest at the realisation that Shane had brought it *for him*. Specifically curated to Ilya’s sweet tooth.

“You can have some. It will not kill you.” He pats Shane’s chest lightly, coaxing, but Shane stubbornly shakes his head. Ilya groans.

“No sorry, I try not to drink my calories, it’s unnecessary. But I have green tea, that’ll help with the headache too. Plus, I like it.”

Ilya’s nose scrunches in disgust. He hates green tea. Disappointment if it were a drink. It tastes a whole bunch of nothing with a side of grass, but he’s not surprised that Shane likes it. The man thrives on his bird-food diet and restraint. He has a boring palette, so it makes sense that the dull drink appeals to him.

“So tasteless, Hollander.” He teases, as he leans down to the other, pressing a kiss to the other’s lips, quick and chaste, leaning back before Shane can kiss back, and he grins when Shane frowns at him for pulling away so quickly. Shane reaches up to grip the neckline of his shirt, bringing Ilya’s down until their noses press against each other. “Stop bullying me.”

“Is not bullying if it’s true. You like boring things.” Ilya argues, punctuating his words with a kiss to Shane’s chin.

“You think everything I like is boring?” He asks, innocently, and Ilya huffs a quiet “Yes, of course,” into his skin kissing along his jaw, then down to his neck.

“So… You’re calling yourself boring then?”

Ilya stills against his skin, realisation dawning on him, before he growls, biting at the skin stretched around his jawline. Shane gasps, then laughs, body shaking beneath him. The other pulls back, trying and failing to muster a dirty look, but the stupid smile on Shane’s face makes it impossible for Ilya to hide his own.

They look at each other at once, a shared beat of eye contact for a seconds too long that has Shane looking away, ears tinting red again. Ilya’s grin grows, pleased with himself.

“Okay,” he says, finally sitting up and getting off the couch. He pats Shane’s stomach twice. “You stay here, I will make myself, delicious hot-chocolate, and you can have horrible grass-tea.”

As he walks toward the kitchen, he glances back once more. Shane has one arm tucked beneath his head, eyes closed, face soft and peaceful, a blissful loom painting his face.

It’s a look Ilya hopes never leaves his beautiful face.

End Notes

And that's ittttt. Hope you guys enjoyed it. Don’t forget to leave kudos and comment if you enjoyed!

These are the translations for Ilya's Russian dialogue.
плачь всё нормально/ Cry, it's okay.
Я с тобой здесь/ I'm here with you.
Это только мы/ It's just us

I really enjoyed writing Hollanov, so hopefully I get inspired so write something else again soon. If you guys have any good plot ideas, please send me your ideas through my new twitter acc @bloomykook36683.

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