Lay Your Head on Me

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Lay Your Head on Me

by madeleineh32

Summary

Shane had made a joke, a passing quip, that if only they could somehow defy biology and reproduce naturally, that their child would be an unstoppable force of a hockey player. Hereditary. Genetic. Those were the words he'd used. Ilya knew what they meant.

Or: Ilya thinks about what may have been passed onto him from his parents, and Shane comforts him.

Ilya inhaled a shaky breath. He was, perhaps, overthinking. But also maybe he wasn't.

It had been an innocent, playful conversation about kids. Shane and him often spoke of their hypothetical children, joyfully imaging their lives post-hockey. They weren't quite there yet, but it was something that, for a while, had been definitely mapped out in their future.

So why was he breathing like the room was going to run out of oxygen?

"Ilya?" Shane rested a careful hand on Ilya's thigh. They were sat outside, the evening chill only just beginning to settle on their skin. The fire Shane had made was still flickering, though, casting a warm orange glow upon both men.

"M'fine." Ilya's words were stilted, decidedly un-fine as he choked them out. He puffed out his cheeks, exhaling again, slower this time, furiously swiping at his eyes which were beginning to prickle with the threat of tears. He would not cry about this.

"Come here," Shane murmured, pulled Ilya sideways. He was like putty, folding immediately and nestling his head in Shane's lap. It was warm, safe as Shane interlaced his fingers through Ilya's hair. His other hand ran up and down Ilya's arm, over the goosebumps that had raised the skin on his biceps.

He sniffed once, then again. Blinked. Let his eyes lose focus as he watched the flames licking the sides of the fire-pit. "Is stupid," Ilya muttered.

"No."

"Da."

"What is it? You don't… want kids?" Shane asked carefully, his voice measured. Ilya could tell, though, from years of hearing Shane's voice in every capacity, that it was tinged with fear, fear of the answer. Ilya's sure Shane knows that's not the case; they spoke about kids often. Ilya loved kids, was great with them, and Shane knows that.

He huffed out a laugh. Swiped at his eyes again. Nudged his head further into Shane's lap, let Shane's hand tighten against his scalp. He brought his other hand up and pressed it against Ilya's forehead. Shane knew that always grounded him for some reason, having the pressure on his head. Stopped the noise somewhat.

"When we say we adopt - of course. That is okay. I want that." He hears Shane exhale, feels him relax slightly. "But when you say…" his English seemed to fail him. It always seemed to when he got like this. He shut his eyes, sighing with frustration.

Shane had made a joke, a passing quip, that if only they could somehow defy biology and reproduce naturally, that their child would be an unstoppable force of a hockey player. *Hereditary*. *Genetic*. Those were the words he'd used. Ilya knew what they meant.

"Take your time." Shane's hands wander back into Ilya's hair, more gentle than the earlier pressure.

“About our child being best hockey player. Genetics. DNA. Heredit–” He groans in frustration again.

“Hereditary,” Shane finishes off softly.

“Da. *That*.” Ilya’s hand reached up and he wraps his fingers around Shane’s wrist. “I was thinking. I am glad we cannot have baby. Together.”

Shane’s confusion is palpable even without Ilya being able to see his face. He liked this about Shane. He liked being able to explain things to him in a way that made sense, because it made things make more sense in his own head, too.

Shane just hums, urging Ilya to continue. “We know I am depressed, yes?” Shane’s fingers curl into his hair. “Like my mother. Maybe not same, exactly. But similar. Probably… hereditary.” He says the word slowly, testing it on his tongue. He hates the way his accent wraps around the syllables.

He wishes Shane knew Russian, fluently. He wishes that he could ramble away, go off on tangents, not have to think everything through in both Russian and then English. He wishes he could speak perfect English. Perfect accent like Shane when he speaks French. Perfect Shane and his perfect genetics. He wishes he didn’t get wound up like this. He spirals so easily these days. He wishes he wasn’t so depressed. He wishes his mother hadn’t been depressed. *Stop fucking spiralling.*

He feels his heart rate pick up again, hears his breathing go shallow.

“Ilya.” Shane’s voice is grounding. It’s stern, without being unkind.

He inhales again, deeply, his fingers pressing more into Shane’s wrist. “Sorry.” His voice is thick, and his mouth feels dry. Shane presses his hand against Ilya’s head again, and he leans into the pressure.

“We’re managing it, though.” Shane’s voice is quiet as he cuts through the easing tension that hangs in the air. “Together.”

“Yes.” Ilya pauses before speaking again. “Dementia is also hereditary,” He lets his words sit between them, hears Shane exhale as the other shoe drops.

“That’s what you’re worried about?”

Ilya lifts his hand in a shrug. “Yes, Shane. I think that is something anyone would worry about, no?” He doesn’t mean to sound like an asshole, especially not to Shane.

“Okay, asshole.” Shane’s voice doesn’t hold any venom, only fondness, a little sad, even. Ilya almost smirks.

They sit in silence for a moment, Shane carding his hands through Ilya’s curls, the crackle of the fire the only thing filling the absence of words for a moment. He speaks again.

“It is something I think about. More recently, especially. What if I am not just like my mother? I could be also like my father. This is why I am glad. So I cannot ruin baby with… DNA.” He feels Shane tense up at his admission. Can only imagine the look on his face, what he’s thinking. “But also scared. For you. If I am like them both.”

“Ilya.” Shane’s voice sounds thick, desperate.

“It is possibility.”

“I’d take care of you.”

“Not fair.” Ilya hears how whiney he sounds as he counters Shane.

His mind unhelpfully supplies an image of some point down the line, where Ilya is older, maybe too depressed to get out of bed, just like his mother, or he cannot remember his own name or where he is, just like his father. What if he forgot Shane? He doesn’t want Shane to be there for either outcomes. He doesn’t want their children to see that.

“Would you say that? If it was the other way around?” Shane interrupts his train of thought.

Ilya’s cheeks warm. He groans. “Not fair,” he repeats, more of a mumble. And then, “of course not.”

Shane sucks in a deep breath. “Right. You might have inherited depression from your mother. And maybe your father’s dementia is genetic. Maybe it isn’t. We can’t dwell on it. That won’t do either of us any good.” Shane is speaking in a measured way, a calmness that almost seeps right into Ilya’s own panic.

“What have you done with my husband?” Ilya asks fondly, his heart rate slowing. “You are so calm. This is not Shane Hollander I know.”

Shane laughs from above him before leaning down and pressing a kiss to Ilya’s forehead. “Lots of things are possibilities. I could get another concussion, get brain damage. Or take a bad hit and get paralysed. Plane crash.” Ilya’s skin heated at the back of his neck. He swallowed. “But you’d take care of me. I’m pretty certain of that. Point is, anything could happen at any time. We’d deal with it together.”

Ilya lets the tears spill out onto his cheeks. He hums, unable to form a coherent sentence. His jaw clenches, teeth grit. He reaches up, grips Shane’s hand with his own. Together. He could work with that.

It wasn’t a fix, and he doesn’t feel much better about the whole *potentially-getting-dementia-or-maybe-being-so-depressed-he-does-something-extreme* thing, but he’s definitely been pulled from the swirl of catastrophic thinking. What-ifs were unhelpful. He knew this. His therapist reminded him of that enough. Shane reminded him of that, too. And Shane was, like, the king of overthinking and freaking out. He nuzzles further into his husbands lap, planting a long kiss on his thigh.

“Love you,” he murmurs.

“You more.”

“You are stupid.”

“Asshole.”

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