

Faible comme ta mère (Weak, like your mother)

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Faible comme ta mère (Weak, like your mother)

by [HollowedHypoxia](#)

Summary

Weak.

But this time, instead of his father's voice, it was said in Shane's.

Ilya could no longer fight to escape the nightmare that was his mind.

Notes

Please heed the tags.

But in case you didn't, TW for suicide attempt and all that goes with it.

The quote from the long game: "He imagined Shane would be similarly unforgiving if Ilya took his own life. Not that Ilya ever would. Unless he couldn't help it." has stuck with me for weeks and weeks and I really hope S2 explores the depression that he struggles with even though I know I will cry.

Anyway, I needed a good cry so I wrote this. It's what I imagined would happen if Ilya could no longer help it.

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

Ilya's vision blurred, his now dark living room tilting sideways as he struggled to pour himself another glass of vodka. The cup slid off of his coffee table, the sound of glass shattering far enough away that it took him a few moments to even realize what had happened. Liquor pooled on the table, a waste he would have usually been disappointed by, but tonight? He was numb. A phantom in his own home. A spectre watching his life slide by in a series of colorful images.

Fear paralyzed him.

Would death be beautiful? His greatest memories flashing by, giving him one more chance to relive them? Or would it be mottled and grey, like the hand of his mother in the coffin he whispered 'goodbye' to her in? Bile stung his throat, hot and acrid, but he swallowed it down. He needed to be strong for this, even as the voice in his head whispered that he was weak. Ilya reached up to grab the crucifix that dangled from the chain on his neck, gripping it with enough force that he thought his skin might split from the still sharp edges of the cross.

There was only enough vodka left for a few good gulps-- He would save it then, to swallow his shame. The neon orange, white lid bottle of xanax had taunted him for days, a reminder that an easy end was mere moments away. It was on his table even now, the bottom now wet from spilled vodka, the cap flipped upside down to make opening it easier. He had no children. He had no pets. All he had was shaky hands and a boyfriend that had called him ten times that night.

Shane. *Shane.*

Weak. Faible. Slabby.

He knew the word in three languages now. If only his father could see him, now. Would he be proud?

Ilya's lower lip wobbled. No, his father wouldn't be.

It used to be his father's voice in his head, antagonistic and cruel, but somewhere along the line, it had morphed into Shane's. The soft lilt of his voice would turn mocking, a distortion of the man that he loved. It was almost perverse how self-sabotaging that Ilya could be. He had used Google Translate to search for the word that made his stomach turn, translate it to the French that he secretly loved to hear Shane speak.

Faible. Faible comme ta mère. Weak, like your mother.

Shane would never say anything like that to him-- It was his own fucked up, impossible to avoid, desire to self-destruct that had put the thought into his head. But now, he couldn't escape the words. They drove him to drink. They drove him to sleep through alarms and avoid any practices that weren't mandatory. They drove him to the brink, to the point where he could no longer help it.

He was at the ledge, and finally ready to leap from it.

Ilya twisted the cap off of the bottle and dumped the remaining handful of pills onto the table, not bothering to avoid the liquid that had puddled there. Eight. His leg bounced, a nervous habit that he had developed as a child and carried through his teenage years, all the way into the adulthood that he sometimes despised.

It was easy to swallow the first few, even as his throat burned from the vodka he chased the pills with. The wave of nausea that followed made it difficult to get the last of the pills down, but he managed it. He knew that they would kick in fast, just from his experience with taking the prescribed amount. The last few drops of vodka slid down his throat-- He set the now empty bottle down on the floor, tenderly, as if he was handling something precious.

His phone lit up again, buzzing for the now twelfth time tonight. Ilya's eyes were wet now, his cheeks dampened by the tears that freely fell. Shane would never forgive him for this. He would be a stain on the tapestry of Shane's life, a hole chewed into it by moths, a collection of broken threads too painful to revisit.

Shane: please answer

Two words, so full of emotion. Hope, fear, worry. A combination as deadly as the alcohol and benzos that were currently mixing in his stomach.

Buzz. His phone had been on do not disturb but Shane was an exception to that setting, and he knew it. Ilya answered, despite his better judgement warning him against it. This was hard enough to think about, even as his mind became pleasantly fuzzy from the medication setting in.

“Yes, *moya lyubov?*” *I’m sorry* was left unsaid. An apology would only be too much. The note he had written and addressed to Shane held all the explanation that was needed, a confession of his thoughts. The good ones, the bad ones, and all the love that he had for Shane, immortalized onto tear stained paper, ink smudged paper. He wanted to throw up just thinking about Shane finding it.

Thankfully, he wouldn’t have to think about anything, soon. Not how weak he was. Not how much of a disappointment he was.

Maybe he would get to see his mother again.

He blinked, blowing out the breath he hadn’t realized he was holding. Shane was talking, babbling really, and Ilya could tell that he was crying, little hiccuping sobs filtering through his speaker.

“Ilya, I’m sorry, I didn’t realize that things were this bad and I *should have* because I’m supposed to be the one person in the world that you can talk to about anything, but I just-- I just didn’t realize until--” Shane’s voice broke, his breathing becoming gasps. “I just didn’t realize until Troy said you’ve been talking about leaving. *He* didn’t know what you meant, but I’m scared that I do.” Another ragged inhale, a low moan like he was in physical pain. Ilya’s free hand clenched into a fist hard enough to leave crescent moon indents in his palm. This was not following the timing of his half-hatched plan.

“Shane,” He said, wincing when it came out slurred. “I love you, okay? Is okay, what is happening. Is not your fault.”

A pause, then the muffled sound of Shane talking to someone else. Ilya could tell that the phone was being shuffled around.

“I know,” He said, though he didn’t sound entirely convinced. “I love you, too, so much. I’m sorry I didn’t say it more. I’m sorry I didn’t-- That I didn’t tell people when you were ready, and that I let it get to this point.”

Ilya felt warm and cold and like his hands were no longer willing to obey him. He turned the phone onto speaker mode and laid it on his chest as he sank into his couch. “Is not your fault,” He repeated, blinking rapidly as starbursts of color flooded his vision. Pretty. Like the fireworks they had gone to on New Years Eve. “Am just weak. Could not..” He swore, wishing he felt strong enough to reach out and touch the colors that were just out of reach. “Could not be strong anymore. English, it is not easy now. Think I should hang up.”

“No!” Shane’s voice was loud, sharp enough that Ilya flinched. Angry, then. He had expected Shane would be, but had not expected to still be alive to face that anger. It soured his already churning stomach, made the cold fingers of dread grasp his heart and *squeeze*. “Just.. Stay on the phone, okay? Until it’s over?” Pleading, now, the desperation clear even to Ilya’s addled mind.

He could fulfill this last request for Shane. It was the least he could do. A final opportunity to do something other than be a disappointment.

“Okay, okay. Is.. Can you talk to me?” His words were almost unintelligible now, a perfect reflection of how fucked up he felt.

“Yes, of course,” An audible swallow and then--

“Sometimes, when I need something to cheer me up, I think about the future we were supposed to have.” Ilya didn’t miss the past tense-- *He knew*. “We would have gotten a dog like you constantly talk about. Not a Chiron sized one, but.. Something small-ish and cute and easy to groom. Gotten married, fuck,” Another sob, one that Shane didn’t try to cover up. “I had bought a ring for you already and I-I had these big plans to propose but I should have just done it, shouldn’t I?” He didn’t wait for Ilya to acknowledge or answer the almost certainly rhetorical question. “You would have made a really good dad. Maybe not Hayden level of kids, but I always pictured us with a big family with kids that look like a mix of both of us and maybe at least one could be boring like me.”

The call was muted for a long, painful minute. One that Ilya could hardly breathe through. He was tired now, but the kind of comfortable tiredness that came only when you knew you would be able to sleep soon. His eyelids were heavy and it was a fight to keep them open. He knew what would be waiting for him when he closed them, but Shane's voice, the real Shane, not the one that tortured him inside of his own mind, was a comfort he didn't want to release in his final moments.

Surely he had earned a few minutes more on Earth.

The call was unmuted, shaky breathing and more of those almost endearing hiccups now coming back through the speaker. "Sorry Ilya, I just had to take a sec. I'm sorry. I just thought that you were okay, but I didn't see it. The burden you've carried. The burden that I placed on you." His laugh lacked humor, a sound so self-deprecating that it competed with Ilya's own self-loathing.

There was a noise, distant but familiar. He couldn't quite place why it was familiar, or what it even was, but it sent a shock through his already frayed nerves-- Perhaps it was the chariot of death come to claim him, even as he fought to hear even just one more word from Shane.

It was louder now-- Sirens. Police sirens maybe, or an ambulance-- He couldn't tell, not with the way that his brain had turned to mush.

A loud few raps on his door, ones that he didn't bother to respond to. He couldn't, not with the heaviness of his tongue and the lack of response from his legs. Darkness beckoned him--

He gave in.

Mat? Mother?

The steady beeping from the heart monitor had been the only constant in Shane's now upturned life. Ilya's overdose and his presence in the hospital room that had become a

temporary home for both of them had made the papers-- Someone, somewhere had leaked it, but Shane couldn't find it in himself to care. His boyfriend was alive.

Alive.

Alive and on monitors, an oxygen cannula, with IV nutrition that dripped into his veins and kept him fed, but he was alive. They could deal with press fallout later. Or their agents could-- That was basically their job.

The monitor picked up in speed, the *beep* becoming louder, closer together as Ilya's hand twitched. It had been almost twenty-four hours since they had lifted the medical sedation they had been using to keep Ilya in a controlled coma after his arrival at the hospital. Something about giving his mind and body to heal from the overdose-- It had been full of complicated terminology, nothing that Shane had been able to piece together with the state he was in. Svetlana had flown up from Boston to be there for Ilya (to be here for *both* of you, she had said), but she had only managed to stay in the room for a few minutes before her tears had become too much for her to handle. Her hotel, however, was within driving distance-- Something that Shane was oddly thankful for. They were the closest thing to family that Ilya had.

"Ilya," Shane whispered, clutching the warm, still limp hand that rested against the clinical white of the hospital bedsheets. "Ilya, please. I can't do this without you, okay?"

The flutter of blond eyelashes and then his eyes were open-- His pupils were mere pinpricks against the hazel expanse of his irises, but they slowly began to dilate as he looked around, panic flooding his eyes as he tried to sit up but couldn't from the sheer amount of wires taped to him.

"Shh, shh, it's okay. You're okay. Well. Going to be okay." Shane squeezed his hand, letting his forehead drop to where they were touching. "I thought I lost you," He sniffled, willing himself not to cry. He had cried nonstop-- On the phone with his parents, with Rose. Even with Hayden who now *definitely* knew that they were together, but had sworn himself to secrecy.

Ilya cleared his painfully dry throat and squeezed his hand back, looking up at the speckled ceiling of what he assumed was a hospital room. It was the only thing that made sense. Shane

must have called somebody or done something to save him. He licked his lips then tried to speak, cringing at how hard it was to form the words.

“I’m sorry,” He started, turning his head to the side and away from Shane. He felt like a wounded animal-- Scared, and full of the need to escape. “I did not know how to live anymore. With these thoughts.”

Trembling fingers brushed the wild, tangled curls that were plastered to his forehead. “It’s okay. We’re going to get you help, and the Centaurs have already said you’re welcome to take all the time you need, even if it’s forever. This hospital has a really good inpatient program and I can see you every week and Svetlana can, too. They’re going to help you find a medication that works for you, and therapy, and--”

“Hollander..” His voice cracked from lack of use and the difficulty of biting back tears of his own. “You are having panic attack. Slow, deep breaths.”

Shane laughed, but it was sad-- Like the way that people laugh to humor the dying. “Maybe. Probably. But we’re going to help you, Ilya. You deserve the world.. Let me give it to you.” The slow brush of his thumb down Ilya’s wet cheek, and then Shane was cupping his jaw, gently tugging on him until he worked up the courage to look at Shane. Shane’s hair was fluffy in the way it was when he had just woken up and hadn’t brushed and wet it into submission yet. His eyes were red-rimmed and his lips were cracked enough to look painful, but it was still him. Freckles still lit up his face like constellations in a clear sky, his eyes were still the warm honeyed brown that Ilya found himself getting lost in.

Ilya nodded, wrinkling his nose at the feeling of the IV in his wrist. He hated needles. “I do not know about world but.. Maybe just deserve Canada. I think, is good idea. Stay here until is not so bad.” He tapped his temple, then let his free hand fall back to the sheets. “Is doctor coming back soon?”

Shane checked his watch. Cute. *Boring*. Ilya loved that despite having a smartphone at the tip of his fingers, Shane still defaulted to using a watch to tell time. “Soon. About an hour, but I could get them now?”

“Ah, no. Can wait. I think.. We have some things to talk about.”

Shane's eyebrows rose, concern clear on his face. "Like what?"

"Mm, you say you want to marry me.. And get dog? And have babies?"

Shane gaped at him, two spots of color forming on his cheeks. "You-- You fucking asshole! Oh my God, I seriously cannot believe you." He sighed, sitting back in the creaky plastic hospital chair. "Yes, I want those things. We can talk about that *after* you do all this wonderful therapy they're about to saddle you with, kay?" He smiled, the first genuine one since this nightmare had begun, and ran his hands over his face. "Still stuck in a freakin' hospital bed and you're already throwing my words back at me."

"Is exciting thoughts. Will keep me going when you can't be here." Ilya's words were playful, but he was entirely serious-- Shane had saved his life in more ways than one.

They talked for the full hour, until his doctor made rounds and quietly asked Shane to step out of the room, despite Ilya's initial protests that it was alright for him to stay. After question after question though, he was thankful for Shane's departure. This was the lowest he had ever felt, but.. There was hope that hadn't been there before. The realization that life didn't have to stay grey and colorless.

For the first time in a long time, Ilya rubbed the golden cross that nobody had bothered to remove and whispered a different kind of promise to the memory of his mother-- The one with shiny blonde hair and a crooked but beautiful smile.

He promised to *live*.

End Notes

If you are struggling, please feel free to send me a message. I lived through a suicide attempt and know what it is like to be that low. I never thought that I would be alive ten years after the fact-- Things do get better, even if the journey is difficult.

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