Stay

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by imjaebumism

Summary

> “Memory loss is quite common with head injuries.”
>
> Shane loses his memories after his accident.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Ilya thought he prepared himself well enough for the worst. Not death— he wasn't sure he could prepare himself for if Shane was dead. He thinks a part of him would die with him, maybe he's dramatic but if Shane was no longer apart of this world, Ilya couldn't see himself wanting to stay for long after him.

He thought of his mom, the pills she took that took her away from him. She downed a whole bottle of sleeping pills and Ilya always wondered how much exactly it was that did it. Would ten be enough? Maybe fifteen or thirty. He was much bigger than his mom, had more muscles and mass, parts of his memory are fuzzy because it's been so long since he'd seen her. She was taller than him before she passed, he'd only been 11, but he think if he had had her for one more year, maybe two he'd have towered over her for sure. All that to say that he'd probably need more pills to take himself out than she needed, but he would still have no way of knowing the exact number.

On the way to the hospital, he steeled his mind so that he wouldn't react to whatever he saw. Seeing Hollander splayed out on the ice like that, he replays the exact moment he watched his head bounce up and slammed back onto the cold hard ground. Even with his helmet on, it didn't look good, it looked terrifying.

Ilya's heart stopped then and he didn't think it would get the chance to restart until he laid eyes on Shane again, made sure he was okay.

He walks into the room slowly, cold eyes immediately taking Shane in from a safe distance. Shane Hollander, 5'10" 200 pounds of lean muscle and 0% body fat looks so small and fragile in the hospital bed and Ilya doesn't know how to react to that. His eyes are closed and his head is wrapped in some sort of hard looking foam cast like it needs extra protection. One arm is in a sling and they've got the head of his bed tilted up so he's permanently sat up even as he's sleeping.

Approaching the bed, it feels like there's shards of glass being shoved into his heart but he wants to touch him, make sure he's real. The heart monitor is going, incessant beeps filling the room so that's a good sign. Various wires and needles are poking out of him like he's a voodoo doll, his other arm tanned and strong lies limply at his side as Ilya finally reaches out to touch him, tracing the veins of his hand.

"Fuck, Hollander." He hears himself saying roughly, his voice shot to hell and he doesn't even know why. He holds Shane's hand, wrapping his fingers tightly around it so he can transfer some warmth. Shane hand is cold and he hates that.

Ilya doesn't think he's been so terrified in his life, even after he found his mom lifeless in her room he'd been more shellshocked than anything. Watching Hollander get slammed tonight and hit his head like he did, seeing it all play out, watching him go limp, Ilya had been fucking petrified. He's brushing away tears that are stubbornly falling down his face with his free hand when he feels pressure on the one wrapped around Shane's.

He drags tired eyes up from Shane's hand to his face and breathes out a heavy sigh when he meets sparkly brown ones, watching him with an expression so soft that Ilya just wants to

crumble up and fall apart right there in front of him and never leave. He doesn't care that his team is catching a flight in 2 hours. He used his title as captain to come see Hollander, captains would check in on another team member if they were hurt as a sign of good sportsmanship. He would've come seen Shane regardless but optically, that would be his reason, the one no one questioned.

Shane's pretty lips curl up in a small smile and Ilya can do nothing but slowly return it, "you okay?"

"Yeah. M'okay." Shane's slurring, enough that Ilya bets that the doctors have him on the best stuff. Shane's thumb rubs Ilya's knuckles gently, "you're beautiful."

Caught off guard at that comment, Ilya snorts, "you hit your head real hard on ice, Hollander."

"I don't think that changed my mind." Shane mutters, "I can't remember— what's your name?"

Ilya immediately goes cold, his whole body freezing like he'd been tossed into an ice bath unprepared. No. This can't be happening, this can't, "Hollander?"

Shane frowns a little and pouts and if Ilya's world wasn't currently crashing down around him he'd think that expression on Shane's face was so adorable, "don't be upset, I'm sorry. I can try to remember."

"Fuck." Ilya breathes, his knees buckle and he leans heavily on the side of the bed, his mind moving a mile a minute, "please don't fuck with me, Shane. I can't take jokes right now."

Carefully, so carefully, Ilya feels Shane's fingers comb through his curls like he's soothing him, comforting him. Shane is in a hospital bed with a concussion and a fractured fucking clavicle and he can't remember Ilya's name or who he is to him but his first instinct is to comfort him with his touch, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

"Stop apologizing." Ilya says brokenly, "it's Ilya."

"Ilya." Just Ilya. Not Rozanov, not asshole or dick, nothing that Shane has called him over all the years they've known each other. Just Ilya, just his name, "I know you. You're important to me."

Ilya's breath rattles through him so roughly and he's lost, he's angry, he's sad, so many emotions running through his body and leaving him wrecked. Fuck what is he supposed to do? How's he supposed to leave him like this? He can't believe that just last night he was going to end this with Shane— this mess of a relationship they built for the last 8 years. Maybe this was some sort of karmic retribution for him trying to end the one good thing he had outside of hockey, even if it hurt so bad that Shane could never truly be his, openly, proudly.

"Ilya?"

“Shane.” He rubs at his face, hates that his fingers come back wet, “sorry, I come to check on you but I have flight to catch.”

“Okay. Thank you for coming to see me.”

“Of course.”

“I’m sorry I made you cry.”

“Stop apologizing to me, Hollander.”

Shane’s eyes start to droop and Ilya cups his face, swiping his thumb over the constellation of freckles just under his eyes that he’s fucking obsessed with. He knows the medication is coursing through his veins again, making him sleepy but Shane still turns his cheek further into Ilya’s palm and nuzzles it, squeezing the other hand he’s still holding gently, “I’m right, right?”

“About what.”

“You’re important to me. Am I important to you?”

Ilya shuts his eyes, his heart shatters into a million pieces, “very much, sweetheart.”

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Ilya spends the next few days in a haze.

He replays what the doctor told him after he left a sedated Shane’s room with a million questions on running through his head. *Memory loss is quite common with head injuries.* He spoke some words that Ilya with his limited grasp on english couldn’t immediately translate and that only served to piss him off even more. *He will be like this forever?* The doctor looked at him with something like regret in his eyes. *There’s no way of knowing, it could be temporary memory loss, somethings he lost he might never get back. He needs a strong support system and a stress free environment to heal and see what comes back, are you his partner?*

That last question kept ringing through his head. Maybe, amnesia was transferable because he couldn’t even remember what he said to the doctor after that, or how he ended up at the airport with his team and on a plane to wherever the fuck their next game was. He couldn’t think straight.

He gets injured during the game, his ribs are bruised, mind elsewhere— probably thousands of miles away in Ottawa where Shane is probably healing with his parents. They lose and Ilya somehow comes up with some inspiring motivational bullshit to say to the locker room after but it all feels hollow.

Later, in his hotel room after he’s showered and laying in bed in nothing but a towel wrapped around his waist, his body still wet, he stares at his phone, screen opened on his messages with Shane. He can’t make the connection in his mind that just a few days ago they’d been fine, Ilya had been ready to tear his pathetic heart out and end this thing with Shane but at

least Shane had been whole then, at least he remembered him. Now he got what he fucking wanted and breathing didn't seem worth it anymore.

He jumps a little when on his chest, his phone vibrates.

Jane: Why are you in my contacts as Lily?

Ilya stares at his phone and blinks like the new message is going to disappear any second.

Jane: I've been looking for your number and I found this thread. Sorry about your game tonight

Had Shane watched him? He sits up and starts to type, not wanting Shane to stop talking to him.

Lily: win some lose some. doesn't matter. lily is long story- how are you?

Jane: good, my head hurts most of the time but it's getting better. you were hurt tonight

Lily: i'm ok

Jane: looked painful

Lily: no big deal. we're out of playoffs so now I have time to rest

Jane: when are you heading back?

Lily: tomorrow.

Jane: can i see you?

Ilya blinks at his screen, a lump forming in his throat.

Lily: i live in boston

It takes a whole minute for Shane's response to come through where his previous ones had been instant.

Jane: right, i forgot. Sorry

Lily: don't say sorry

Jane: sorry

Jane: I mean— okay. i remember some things

Lily: good things?

Jane: yeah. The doctor said I didnt lose everything, I know most things some are coming back slow and in pieces. I have to put them together like a puzzle, it's infuriating.

Lily: i’m sorry

Jane: don’t be.

Jane: I remember boston

Ilya closes his eyes, feeling that hollow hole in his chest ache at the edges.

Jane: while i was watching the game i was smiling just from seeing you again

Jane: my parents think im crazy

Lily: Your parents are right

It takes another minute for his next message to come through.

Jane: Hah. sorry i get a little dizzy if i stare at the screen for too long

Jane: fuck. not sorry. sorry.

Ilya doesn’t want Shane suffering just to talk to him, that makes him feel like an even bigger piece of shit.

Lily: you should get some sleep. Is late.

Jane: ok. i will. Can i text you tomorrow?

Lily: of course, sweetheart. Goodnight.

Jane: night 💚

He doesn’t sleep a wink that night, just goes over the message thread again and again until his eyes ache.

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Weeks later, Ilya is home alone at his penthouse in Boston watching New York win the cup and he feels deflated but Shane hasn’t gone a day without texting him and he thinks that’s the only reason he lives to see another day most of the time.

Shane’s been at his cottage in Ontario for some time now, his parents feeling comfortable enough to leave him alone since they’re only ten minutes away if he needs anything. Ilya still hates the idea of him being alone at all but he remembers being on FaceTime with Shane and him being annoyed that his mother *tried to bathe me again, she thinks i’m a fucking invalid or something. i have to get out of here.*

Every day, he tells Ilya something he remembers and ends it with did I remember correctly? And he’s so eager and innocent and anxious to get to the point where Ilya will— he doesn’t know, not look at him with this shattered look in his eyes like every memory Shane shares with him feels like a death sentence.

Shane remembers things so— flowery. Like Boston, for example. Ilya remembers it like this: he's at the point where he's falling for Shane and it's too late to stop it. He's obsessed with him, doesn't want a second to pass where he's not attached to him at the hip, their skin touching, his lips on Shane's. He remembers begging him to stay, he remembers wanting to take care of him so badly, having his favorite soda on hand, making sure that he was fed before it all fell apart. He remembers the fear in Shane's eyes when Ilya slipped and he called Shane by his name for the first time. How the fearless part of his boy fought back and Ilya's name fell from his lips and all Ilya could do was kiss him so hard that he feared everything he felt for Shane would leak through and Shane would know and that would scare him even more.

He remembers being right, he remembers Shane running.

He remembers them not talking after that for three whole months.

Shane plays it back like it was a moment away from everything, where neither of them were scared, like they were both spending this time they had just loving each other and being together. Like Ilya didn't put his foot in his mouth and start blabbering about women even when he saw it make Shane cagey. It's the same with Tampa where Ilya remembers being the scared one when Shane came out to him and told him that he cant pretend not to like him anymore. They hadn't even fucked that night and Shane had held Ilya to his chest, running his fingers through his hair and making him feel weightless.

Shane just remembers it as the next step to their very obvious relationship. In Shane's broken memories, he adds it all up to them being together. There's small rough patches, but they're in love and able to make it through anything. His faith in them makes Ilya feel like he's suffocating.

On screen, Scott is holding up the Stanley cup then he's heading to crowd, plucking a man from the stands and landing a hard kiss to his mouth all on live broadcast. Ilya is shocked and a text comes through to his phone.

Jane: Holy shit scott is gay? did i know this?

Ilya: no. neither of us did

Jane: fuck

Fuck indeed. There's warring emotions taking over his body, as he stares at Scott Hunter staring at this boy like he hung the stars, the moon the sky for him and him alone. They kiss again and Hunter looks so happy that Ilya forgets he hates him for a second. Now he's just extremely fucking jealous.

There's a few more texts from Shane on his phone but he ignores them and calls him instead, suddenly aching to hear his voice.

"Hey."

"Hi."

“I can’t believe that just happened. It makes me feel so much— I don’t even know how to pick one thing.”

“I know. I feel the same.” He thinks he could spend forever just listening to Shane breathing on the other end of the line. His eyes mist over, “do you still want to see me?”

“Of course. I miss you like crazy.” Shane since the accident is always so open and honest, unencumbered by the pressure and fear he had weighing him down before. He tells Ilya he misses him all the time, that he wants to kiss him, hug him and make love to him. It’s enough to have Ilya drunk off the feeling.

“Can you drive?” He knows Shane’s been practicing with his dad. He didn’t forget how or anything, but sometimes the lights at night give him a headache. So Ilya will look for a morning flight, it will be harder to disguise himself but he needs to know Shane is safe.

“Yeah.”

“I’m coming to the cottage.”

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Shane gets to the airport early the next morning, wearing his cap and dark sunglasses to keep from being recognized in the pick up line. The tint on his windows seems to help with that too.

He felt himself getting nervous and excited to see Ilya again, replace the memory of him crying, sad and worried sick for him at the hospital with something else, something new. He wants to hold him like he remembers they used to, kiss him, be close to him.

Shane hears the wheels of suitcases against the ground and he checks his rearview mirror and knows it’s Ilya even though he’s wearing head to toe black and his hood is up, sunglasses on obscuring his face. Ilya finds him just as easily, he assumes because he’s hopping into his SUV after shoving his bag into the popped trunk and putting his seatbelt on, bringing the smell of summer air, airplanes and leather with a hint of smoke. Shane smiles so hard it hurts.

“Hi.”

“Hey.”

He takes Ilya in, the bits of him he can see since he’s so covered up. His fingers are restless on his steering wheel, he wants to touch him. “It’s a 2 hour drive from here.”

“Okay.”

“Hungry?”

“No. You drive Jeep Cherokee?”

“It’s a good car. Practical.”

“Yes. If you have three kids in soccer and live in suburbs full time. You drive dad car.”

“Let me guess, it makes me boring.”

Ilya stares at him for what feels like a long time. Shane wishes he could see his eyes through his glasses and low cap, but he sees how Ilya’s mouth is slightly turned up in the corners and imagines that Ilya’s taking him in. “Yes, very boring. You look good.”

“I feel good. Better.” He feels his cheeks heating up and he clears his throat, looking out the front windshield. Being perceived by Ilya Rozanov feels like getting direct attention from the sun or the moon. It’s almost too much, “I think you’ll like the cottage. Its really relaxing.“

“That’s what you want to do? Relax?”

“It would be nice to relax with you, I think.”

“Mmh.”

Shane starts to drive then, his heart feels like a block of something heavy in his chest and he feels too much and yet it’s quiet in his head for the first time in a while. He’s not thinking about what he doesn’t remember or what will happen once they get to the cottage, he just floats in the moment, “I stocked up on groceries. We shouldn’t have to leave for a while.”

“Is good.”

He fills the silence as they drive because he can’t help it and Ilya responds with simple one or two word answers, ribs him for being boring and stares at him while Shane’s eyes are trained on the road. He wonders if Ilya knows he can feel him doing that, his eyes on Shane’s face has him feeling all prickly and warm inside.

“I told my parents I needed some space, meditating time, mental rest, so they shouldn’t bother us.” Shane gets to the trunk first when they get there since Ilya stands by the car for a little bit, taking in the building. They’re surrounded by trees and nature, his cottage is in the center of a clearing, large and modern with many windows and wood accents, “the lake and dock in the back are my favorite part.” He’s rolling Ilya’s bag to him and locking his car when Ilya takes the bag and starts up the rocky path. His hand is still tingling where their fingers brushed.

“Yes, where you do yoga.”

“You remember that.” He does too, the stupid interview he filmed her for some wilderness living site. He grins, “I don’t do yoga on there a lot. They made me for the shoot.”

“I remember.” Ilya says softly, then they’re inside the house, Ilya’s kicking off his shoes by the door and standing in his black socks to pull off his jacket and hoodie. It’s a lot of layers for July but it made sense for the anonymity. Shane takes off his own coat and cap, lines his shoes up next to Ilya’s by the door and hangs everything up on the pegs he has on the walls.

Ilya goes from taking in what he can of the open space in front of the entrance to watching Shane as he watches him, they’re both down to soft cotton shirts and sweats, their hair ruffled

by the stripping of layers.

“I’m really glad you’re here.” Shane takes a step toward him, his hands shoved into the pockets of his sweats, body swaying.

“Thank you,” Ilya breaths, standing so still while Shane closes the distance between them, “for inviting me.”

Shane’s eyes track his face, the moles and skin colored scars there, the wrinkles by his eyes. Unconsciously, his hand comes up and his fingers touch Ilya’s cheek and the part of him that’s been aching to feel this man again finally soothes. Ilya’s next breath shudders in his chest and he shakes, his own hands coming up to rest on Shane’s hips like Shane’s a grounding rod. He bends his head the two inches of height difference between them to rest his forehead against Shane’s and Shane closes his eyes, hand falling to Ilya’s neck, feeling the chain of his necklace, the crucifix that hands over his chest all the time.

In that moment just before he tilts his chin up and sighs, silently begging Ilya for the chance to kiss him, he wonders if this is what religion feels like. He didn’t grow up with church, or hymns of worship but he feels something close to reverence now as his thumb traces the shape of Ilya’s lips.

And because his brain is fucked, he thinks talking is what he should do in this very moment, “the tap water here is actually really good. I have a well nearby—,”

Ilya kisses him.

He kisses him and everything he’s been questioning since he woke up at the hospital starts to make sense. He makes a sound that’s a cross between a moan and sob of relief against Ilya’s mouth and Ilya grips him tighter like he’s scared Shane might be taken away from him.

Maybe he feels like in some way he was.

But Shane feels like he’s coming home, and it has nothing to do with the cottage and everything to do with the fact that Ilya is here with him and he’s not handling him like he’s fragile and might break. He’s kissing him breathless, dragging his tongue along Shane’s and gripping his hair and Shane remembers him. Even if sometimes his head can’t put all the pieces together, his body knows him.

“Come.” He drags Ilya up the stairs when they break for breathing and Ilya stays close to his back, mouth over his pulse point where Shane wonders if he can feel his heart skipping beats. His big hands are under Shane’s shirt, feeling his abs and squeezing his chest and Shane’s head falls back on his shoulder, giving Ilya’s mouth more space to lick on his neck.

“This is your room.”

“Yes.”

“As expected. Boring.”

Shane’s laugh is breathless, “Fuck off.”

He sits at the end of his bed and Ilya settles between his legs where Shane can't help but put his mouth on Ilya's abs since they're right there. He licks at the ridges and valleys there, painting Ilya's tanned skin with his tongue and grinning when Ilya moans and runs his fingers roughly through Shane's hair. He tugs at the waist of Ilya's joggers as Ilya rids himself of his shirt, pausing on the way to his destination for Ilya to take off Shane's too. Then his hands are everywhere, on Shane's back, his shoulders, his neck. He touches him like he can't get enough of him and Shane grows heady at the attention.

He frees Ilya's cock from its cotton confines, taking him in, hard and uncut, just at the level of his mouth so it's easy for him to dart his tongue out and taste the moisture beading at the head.

"Fuck, Hollander." Ilya groans, his voice getting impossibly deeper as Shane takes him into his mouth, sucking him down eagerly. He does something with his tongue that has Ilya tugging sharply at the strands of his hair and he can't help but wince, the pain is smothered over quickly though with pleasure but Ilya doesn't see that, immediately pulling back to fuss over him, "fuck I'm sorry. Your head is okay?"

"Yes, it's okay." Shane mumbles, his mouth shocked from being emptied so suddenly. He wants Ilya's cock back, but Ilya shoves him onto the bed instead, climbing onto his lap and giving him his tongue as a replacement. And as far as replacements go, Shane thinks it's a good one.

"I did not mean to hurt you."

"You didn't." He did, but it was just a little and he liked it. He tilts his chin up and takes Ilya's mouth again, canting his hips up to rub his stiffened cock against Ilya's and hating that he still has his pants on. Ilya must read his mind because he snakes a hand between them, panting against Shane's tongue and pulls his cock out, lining them up so they're bare skin to bare skin, "fuck, Ilya."

"You're beautiful, Hollander."

"So are you." Shane doesn't know if he could ever get tired of kissing Ilya but for right now, he thinks no. Ilya's mouth is hot and wet against his and his tongue feels so good in his mouth that he holds him tight and tries to keep him there forever. But Ilya has other plans. He sits up and Shane makes a desperate sound, wanting the weight of Ilya's body back on him immediately.

Ilya smirks at him and it's the sexiest expression on his devastatingly gorgeous face, he makes quick work of pulling Shane's pants and underwear off as he balances on his knees. He's fiddling with his socks until they're gone too and his struggle makes Shane laugh, bringing some levity to their heated moment. "You too." Shane says and Ilya tuts at him, standing up and getting naked himself.

Fuck he's so beautiful it hurts. Shane wants him here all the time, he wants to have Ilya's clothes on the floor of his closet, his toothbrush by his in the bathroom. He wants Ilya to think of his bed as their bed, he wants to wake up in his arms, fall asleep to him snoring, hear him making tuna melts in his kitchen. He wants their gear to be set up next to each other in

Shane's trophy room, wants Ilya's cups next to Shane's. He just wants. He wants so much so badly and he doesn't know what to do with any of it so he gets up onto his knees at the edge of the bed and draws Ilya back to him with a soft come here.

He kisses him so thoroughly he gets lightheaded, lining their bodies up so every dip and crevice comes together and not even heaven or hell could tell them apart. Ilya breaks the kiss and his first instinct is to curse him out or cry but Ilya immediately makes up for it by laying him back down and settling between his legs, taking his cock into his mouth and sucking him down.

Shane sinks into the mattress behind him, tossing his head back and giving himself to the feeling of Ilya's hot throat swallowing around the head of his cock. He has him in so deep, his tongue working some sort of magic and Shane grabs him by the hair, the back of his neck, ruts his hips to get him to move until Ilya does, "holy— shit, Ilya. I won't last."

He pulls off to say, "not new," before swallowing him back down, bobbing his head up and down the length of Shane without help this time. Shane watches him until his vision gets so bleary that his eyes threaten to cross then he squeezes them shut, feeling his balls tighten in Ilya's palm as the other caresses his muscular thighs.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck." Is the only warning Ilya gets before Shane is coming down his throat, the aftershocks of his orgasm pulsing through him, leaving him feeling boneless. Ilya's smiling like a canary when he comes to, his hands pressing into the mattress by Shane's head as he holds himself up and his crucifix dangles between them.

"You came so hard, sweetheart." Shanes heart flutters at the term of endearment, he flushes at being the object of all of Ilya Rozanov's attention, squirming under him a little.

"Yeah, well. It's been a while."

"How long?"

Shane glares at him but there's no heat behind it, "months."

"Same."

"Yeah?" Shane takes a deep breath to settle and cups Ilya's face with both hands. He kisses him once, twice, then eagerly drags his tongue against Ilya's to chase the taste of himself on it. He flips them over so Ilya's on his back and now it's his turn to take care of Ilya.

His throat isn't as talented, his movements are less practiced, but he loves sucking Ilya's cock. He loves how Ilya's accent gets thicker, how he loses his English altogether the moment he gets closer and closer to coming. He'll curse in Russian and say Shane's name in that sexy way he does where Shane thinks he'll change his name for everyone else so that only Ilya will get the privileges of saying it outloud.

Ilya comes onto his stomach and chest when Shane pulls off to finish him off with his hand once he felt him get close. He watches the white paint Ilya's skin, leak into the coarse hairs of his happy trail and is momentarily mesmerized.

Ilya sits up to kiss him soundly before he moves to head to the bathroom to clean up.

He comes back to find Shane warm and cozy in the center of his kingsized bed, under the covers. Deftly, he slides in with him and Shane turns to give him his back so Ilya can slot in behind him, hold him to his chest with his big strong arms. Shane settles against him easy, his lids heavy all of a sudden. He gets tired frequently since his accident, having Ilya surround him in his bed with his body and his scent does not help him fight the fatigue.

“Is okay. Sleep, lyubimyy.” Ilya says when he senses Shane might be fighting it, “I’m not going anywhere.”

“What does that mean?” Shane murmurs, his body growing heavy.

“Later. Sleep now.”

Shane does.

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Ilya wakes up with his face buried in Shane’s hair.

He smells like fancy shampoo and warmth, his body completely lax where it’s cradled against him. They’re wrapped together so tight like Shane got afraid he’d try to sneak away in the night. Ilya drags Shane’s hair off his forehead and places gentle kisses on the bare skin there.

Ilya’s scared. He’s terrified at how precious Shane is to him now, how much the thought of losing him freezes his core and leaves him dysfunctional. He can’t lose anyone else.

The endearment slipped out last night, but he knew it to be true. He loved Shane, probably loved him from the second the 19 year old version of him approached him outside that building trying to tell him where he could and couldn’t smoke. He’d been so young then, they’d both been. But Shane hadn’t been weighed down by the pressure and realities of the world then, not like Ilya was. He’d already lost his mom by then, his father was old and losing his head and his brother was an asshole that only saw Ilya as a blank check.

He looks like that now, soft and curled up against Ilya’s chest. Unencumbered, even if Ilya knows now that Shane carries so much on his shoulders than he thought before. Even if they had very different struggles, it didn’t make Shane’s more or less important than his. Maybe the beauty of their connection was that together, they could lay bare and love each other through those struggles, in spite of them.

Shane blinks awake and Ilya immediately dips in to kiss him. He gets a few strokes of his tongue in before Shane remembers himself and darts away from him to run to the bathroom babbling something about brushing his teeth like Ilya gives a fuck.

He follows behind the crazy man he’s so fucking in love with and they get ready for their day together, showering, brushing their teeth side by side at the sinks and getting dressed in soft

cotton clothes. And if they take turns getting each other off before they put on their outfits for the day, it's just because it makes sense.

"Can you pass me the— uh," Ilya blinks at Shane, watching as he points to something on the counter but can't think of what it's called.

"The yogurt?"

"Yes, sorry. I lose words sometimes. Yogurt, please."

Ilya feels his heart tug as he walks over to the other side of Shane's ginormous island and hands him the tub of yogurt. He goes back to chopping his fruit into cubes, pineapples and melon, "stop apologizing to me, Hollander."

"S— mmh." Shane dumps dollops of fat free greek yogurt into two bowls and slides it over to Ilya to top with nuts, seeds and fruit. Ilya puts honey on his and Shane goes without.

They eat in comfortable silence and Ilya feels so, so light. He wants this forever, the time to feel this free and weightless, the time watch Shane get yogurt at the corner of his mouth and reach over to wipe it with his thumb and lick it off with his tongue.

Shane's eyes go dark and Ilya loves knowing that when they fall together and lose themselves in each other, there will be no running away or sleeping alone. He'll have Shane today, and the next day and the day after that. And he knows that eventually this fairytale will come to an end, but for now all he knows is that he'll revel in every second of this.

End Notes

posting this before next week’s episode because i might not survive it

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