it was heaven a moment ago

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it was heaven a moment ago

by writerbri

Summary

“I couldn’t.”

The words are spoken in a whisper so quiet that Ilya nearly misses it. Could convince himself they were never spoken at all.

“I couldn’t… go,” Shane says, still so quiet.

Ilya is looking at him now. Sees a tear slip free and wants nothing more than to wipe it away. He doesn’t dare touch. Doesn’t know what these rules are now. Nothing is the same, and he can’t undo what was done.

He tried. He said it right. Took back the mistake. *Hollander*, he said. A bandaid over a still bleeding wound. An assurance that nothing had to change when everything already did. *Hollander*. A second time. A plea. Don’t go. Stay. Stay now. Stay forever.

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Shane doesn't make it out the door.

Notes

This is my first attempt at writing Hollanov, but I'm sensitive so please keep your boos and hisses polite at least.

I know that the Rose arc is so important to their story, and I love how it plays out. But I've been stuck at the restaurant wondering what might have happened if Shane didn't leave. This is just a little, probably awful version of how that could look. Let it be known that writing from Ilya's POV terrifies me for some reason, so of course it's what I chose to do for my first Hollanov fic.

Title is from Repeat Until Death by Novo Amor.

See the end of the work for more notes

He sits there, still and silent with his hand still outstretched towards a man who isn't there anymore. A man who couldn't get away from him fast enough. There's a pit deep in his gut and a clawing need to outrun the emptiness coring out a hole in his chest.

It all went wrong so quickly that he can barely wrap his mind around it.

Ilya should have never said his name. The entire day was planned to the final detail. A casual suggestion of staying. A spontaneous meal. Ginger ale. Hockey game. Ilya did all he could to make it comfortable. No pressure. Just… them.

It was incredible until it wasn't. Isn't. Will never be again, maybe.

He aches with the loss of touch. Proximity. The briefest taste of something so far out of reach now that he can't even bring himself to move because moving is accepting the loss of one of the only fucking things in his life that doesn't hurt. Didn't hurt.

Will always hurt, now.

Shane.

Warm and sweet and so beautifully pliant in his arms. Dressed in Ilya's clothes. Fed by Ilya's hand. Gone by Ilya's doing.

One slip.

One breathless moan.

A name that's been on the tip of his tongue for months. Years.

His entire life maybe, before he even knew it.

He's lost before he can even have. Like smoke slipping through his fingers, impossible to hold onto. He's gone, he's gone, he's…

There's a realization tapping at the edges of his rapidly numbing consciousness, pulling him back from the brink of utter despair. A detail he's missed entirely, until this very moment.

Shane walked away. Easily provable. He's nowhere in sight.

Shane said he was leaving. Multiple times. Fear in his voice.

Fear and sadness and a hundred other unspoken things.

His footsteps were quiet but there, fading rapidly until he couldn't hear them anymore.

But the door never shut. Never opened at all. Never slammed with the finality of a closed book at the end of a long story. Ilya would have heard it. It's silent here, aside from his own ragged breathing. Even the quietest click would have echoed through this empty house.

He rises to his feet then. Needing to see. Needing to know. Turning the corner is among the hardest things he ever done, somehow, but the sight before him makes it worth it.

Not gone. Not gone. Not gone.

There.

Close to the door, but not through it. He's sat against the wall, Ilya's shirt a crumpled mess on the floor. His legs bent at the knee. His arms slung loosely over them. His eyes stay fixed forward on the wall, even as Ilya draws closer.

He doesn't say anything. Doesn't try to get those sad, pretty eyes on him.

Ilya sits too, mimicking his pose. They don't touch, but he can feel the warmth of his skin so near. A tangible thing, every bit as much as his quiet, hitched breaths and the scent of Ilya's soap on his skin.

And he *aches*.

Seconds pass, stretching into minutes. Ilya doesn't dare to speak. He barely dares to breathe. There's so much to say, and yet nothing at all. The truth can be both.

"I couldn't."

The words are spoken in a whisper so quiet that Ilya nearly misses it. Could convince himself they were never spoken at all.

"I couldn't… go," Shane says, still so quiet.

Ilya is looking at him now. Sees a tear slip free and wants nothing more than to wipe it away. He doesn't dare touch. Doesn't know what these rules are now. Nothing is the same, and he can't undo what was done.

He tried. He said it right. Took back the mistake. *Hollander*, he said. A bandaid over a still bleeding wound. An assurance that nothing had to change when everything already did. *Hollander*. A second time. A plea. Don't go. Stay. Stay now. Stay forever.

My heart. My joy. My refuge.

My Shane.

"It would be over if I left," Shane says, his voice trembling on the words. Certainty and anguish woven throughout.

I'm yours. Walk through the door. Stay. Never speak to me again. It makes no difference. I'm yours.

Ilya doesn't say it. He can't.

"Don't," he says instead.

Silence again. Seconds. Minutes.

They breathe together, in sync even now. Neither of them notice. They never do.

“When you said my name,” Shane says, his voice even less steady if possible. “I felt all this… this *want*. Things I never even knew I…”

He breaks off, hands scraping over his face. Wiping away fallen tears. Ilya doesn’t need to hear the rest. Knows it in his heart. Feels it every bit as strongly.

“We can’t, right?” Shane says, his voice smaller than he’s ever heard it. “We don’t… get to have that?”

It’s not a true question. More of a statement of fact, than anything.

A part of Ilya is inclined to agree. That bitter, lonely, wary piece of him that’s been warped and sharpened by all these years of never being enough. A weapon designed to hurt, even if he bleeds too. But he'd sooner tear himself to pieces than hurt Shane anymore than he has.

It wasn't just saying his name that spooked him. It was more. All that he said about Svetlana and other women. A conversation intended for clarity. To better understand the man beside him. To offer pieces of himself and hope for some in return, only for Ilya to resort to teasing and grandstanding when fear overtook brevity. A tried and true method that works to keep others at a distance, and that sent the only truly important person running.

Nearly running. He's still here. Ilya clings to that.

"I don't know," he says truthfully.

A choked, trembling sigh answers his words. Something close to a sob. Ilya feels his eyes sting too, but he doesn't dare to let the tears fall. They'll never stop, he's sure of it.

"I'm scared," Shane whispers, and Ilya is struck by the strength he has, to admit it out loud.

He wants to say as much, but it's a feeling he can't put into words.

"I'm scared to walk out, and I'm scared to stay," Shane adds, knocking his head back against the wall with a gentle thump. "What the fuck do I do with that?"

He feels alone in this, Ilya realizes. The words are a hand reaching out. A plea from a drowning man.

The least he can do is reach back.

"I still want you to stay," Ilya says, his eyes fixed on the wall and his words spoken carefully and slowly. Then softer, "That's all I wanted."

He feels Shane's eyes on him, and it takes all he has not to look back. He's afraid to see a decision take root. Afraid that it will go the other way, and all he'll ever get from this day on are brief glimpses and meaningless touches. Unspoken hurt woven through coerced jabs that

the media hounds feast on. A superficial rivalry playing out on the ice that brought them together, observed and devoured by thousands of onlookers who only see what they want to see. More bitterness. More loneliness. Sharper edges and this hollow fucking house.

"Okay," Shane breathes out, and that dreaded future disappears in an instant

Ilya inhales sharply, unable to quite contain his shock.

"Okay," he says after a handful of silent seconds.

They don't move, even though they should. Ilya needs to shower their mess from his skin, and the floor is far from comfortable.

Yet they stay, and stay, and stay.

Minutes pass and they simply breathe. Ilya shifts after some time only to offer out that same hand, testing out this new territory. It's something they've never done, and he's all but holding his breath out of his fear that it's a step too far.

Then Shane takes his hand, weaving their fingers together, and the relief that sweeps through him chases that fear away.

And they stay.

End Notes

I hope you liked it! If you did, I'd love to hear about it.

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