

to leave a mark

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to leave a mark

by [wildmiracle](#)

Summary

Shane felt a hot tear drip from Ilya's face onto his own and shuddered under the weight of it. Of causing it. Of being loved enough to make someone hurt with your hurt. To be worthy of it.

Or, Shane has an autistic meltdown after they fight. Ilya helps.

Notes

set after the events of The Long Game, in a world in which they live together and are on a team together, the whole shebang.

inspired by my real-life autistic experiences, so if anything doesn't line up with the autism in the DSM, just know that it came from whatever the hell else is going on with me.

TW: self-hatred, self-harm, autistic meltdown

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

Sometimes Shane felt like he was too full of feeling to breathe. It would come on all at once, with what seemed like no warning. Later, Ilya would ask, always very gently, if *this* thing might have been what had upset him. No? How about this thing? And eventually, once Ilya had run through enough reasons, and Shane started to feel silly, he would just say yes to one.

On occasion, there *would* be a reason that he could pin down. It was too loud in the media room, too many voices overlapping at once until he couldn't pick out any of them. He messed up in a game. He said the wrong thing to Ilya. But for a long time, he lived what felt like one step away from a meltdown. He walked around like a raw nerve.

It was stupid. Ilya had come back late from going out for dinner with Wyatt and Troy and left his dirty clothes strewn about. Shane didn't *try* to wake him up while he was getting ready the next morning, but if he was being honest, he hadn't put a lot of effort into *not* doing it. So when he heard Ilya yawning loudly from the bedroom, he wasn't too surprised. He poked his head out of the bathroom that was attached to where they slept.

"Ilya. Seriously. The hamper is right here. It's almost *more* difficult to miss it."

"Good morning to you, too."

Shane sighed and raised his eyebrows at him, flicking his eyes between the shirt lying in a pile next to the doorway of the bathroom and his partner.

"It was late when I came home. I was tired. I'll pick it up right now." Ilya stood to do so, but Shane was already picking socks up off the floor. He tossed it in the basket, making eye contact with Ilya all the while.

"I have never once been too tired to not throw my shit everywhere."

Ilya rolled his eyes. “That is so great for you. You can never remember that we are not all you, Mr. Perfect.”

He brushed past him and left the room, muttering in Russian, leaving Shane standing in the bedroom alone.

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

Shane slipped silently back into the bathroom, hands shaking as he shut the door. He wanted to scream, to cry, to release some of the pressure that had built so quickly in his chest. But Ilya was in the next room, and he wouldn't, he *couldn't* let him know that he was this weak. Having a meltdown. Again. An ass of epic proportions, as always. Not worth loving, not worth keeping around.

He sat down hard on the floor and tipped his head back against the wall. *You never fail to disappoint, do you, Hollander?*

Without warning, he felt like he was choking on it. The feeling of being too much all the time, the thought of having pushed Ilya away yet again with his stupid, stupid rules. He raised his bare arm to his mouth and sank his teeth in. Not hard enough to bleed, no, never. That would mean there was something wrong with him. But to leave a mark, to see the imprint on your flesh for an hour or two afterwards. That was just enough of a feeling to tether him, to keep him from losing it.

Ilya knocked on the door.

“Shane?”

Shane opened his mouth to answer, and then shut it again. What was there to say? I'm sorry your boyfriend is an anal-retentive fuck up. I'm sorry you picked the wrong one. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

“Shane. Come out. I need to talk to you.”

This was it. Ilya was going to leave him. It was over.

Shane moved from his position sitting up against the wall to lying curled on the ground.

The door creaked open. Shane, the idiot that he was, hadn't locked the fucking door.

“Ебать,” Ilya said under his breath.

His footsteps were quiet as he moved towards Shane, who curled up even tighter.

“What has happened?”

Ilya reached out and pulled Shane upwards until he was sitting up again. He reached out a thumb and drew it under his left eye. It came away wet.

Shane wasn't sure when he had started crying, but the tears were flowing down his cheeks fast now. His breath was coming in short gasps.

“What is happening?” Ilya repeated, holding Shane by the shoulders.

“Do...do you hate me?”

“Of course I do not. I could never hate you.”

“I hate me.” It came out as a whisper, and he hated himself even more for admitting it.

Ilya closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“Angel. Please. Do not say that.”

“I’m sorry,” Shane choked out.

“No, no, no. You do not have to be sorry. I just...I want you to see the you I see when I look at you.”

Ilya stood, reaching for the washcloth sitting on the counter. He started the tap, running a finger under it to test the temperature. Meltdowns didn’t come as often these days, now that their life had settled down and they didn’t live in the pressure cooker that they had spent so many years in. They still had a routine, though. Or, Ilya did. Ilya had come up with a routine for caring for Shane early, after seeing him do this for the first time. Shane did not like to think about how many times he had done it since.

Here you go again. Making Ilya care for you. Making everyone care for you. Even when it’s your fault. You can’t do anything right, can you?

Shane’s hand came up, fisted, and he started to bang himself on his forehead. Over and over again, until he could feel it reverberate through his skull.

Ilya turned around with the damp washcloth, saw Shane, and dropped to his knees in front of him. He reached out a strong hand and grasped Shane’s wrist, holding it in place. Shane’s other hand came towards his head, and Ilya snatched that one too, lightning fast.

“дорогой. Please. Stop. It is not worth this. Nothing is worth this.”

Shane couldn’t help it. He started to sob, squeezing his eyes tight so he didn’t have to see Ilya see him like this.

Ilya dropped Shane's hands and leaned forward to wrap his arms around him. He kissed him over and over again, on his forehead, on his nose, all over his cheeks.

"You are okay. You are safe. You are with me. And I love you. I will love you forever. Even when we fight, even when I am mad. You are my love forever."

Shane felt a hot tear drip from Ilya's face onto his own and shuddered under the weight of it. Of causing it. Of being loved enough to make someone hurt with your hurt. To be worthy of it.

Ilya took a deep breath and pulled back to look Shane in the eyes. Shane shivered, feeling the adrenaline start to leave his body. Ilya tsked.

"Come. We will lie down."

As Ilya guided him to their bed, as he covered him up, as he turned off the light so it could be dark like he knew Shane liked it. Through it all, Shane kept thinking about Ilya's stupid fucking socks.

They lay next to each other in the quiet darkness, Ilya holding Shane's hand. Shane tried to hold it back, but couldn't manage more than a limp, sweaty imitation of it.

"I'm sorry," Shane whispered into the sound of their breathing in tandem. "I'm sorry I was a jerk."

Ilya was quiet for a second, and then let out a long, low breath.

"Is...not okay? But I forgive you. I know you like things the way you like them. And I am messy. I know I am not easy to live with always."

Shane felt himself well up, but refused to let the tears fall. “I know I am not easy to love always.”

Ilya let go of Shane’s hand and rolled onto his side to bore a hole into the side of his head with a heavy gaze.

“Shane. Nothing in my life has ever been easier than loving you. Even when everything else has been very hard. Knowing you, loving you. It is easy.”

Shane had nothing to say to that. He reached out and squeezed Ilya’s hand properly. Ilya smiled a bit and rolled back over, returning to the slow, steady breathing that Shane had come to depend on.

It is easy. It is easy. It is easy.

End Notes

russian guide-

Ебать - fuck

дорогой - sweetheart

Hope reading this doesn't fuck you up as bad as writing it fucked me up!!! Sending my affection to all my autistic baddies - despite everything, you are always easy to love.

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