the edges of your soul, i haven't seen yet

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by only_the_golden

Summary

Shane experiences a shutdown after a tough game. Ilya is there to pick up the pieces.

Set sort of between Heated Rivalry and The Long Game (?)

Title from 'Forever' by Noah Kahan

Notes

wow okay the response to my last two fics has been a little insane for me so to everyone taking the time to read my work thank you so so much! it really means the world. i never thought i would even really post any fanfiction, but heated rivalry has completely consumed my life and shane hollander is a little toooooo familiar i have no choice but to project my entire life onto him. sorry not sorry xo

seriously, thank you so much for the amazing response to my last to one-shots. i will hopefully be expanding on all of my work in the future, but i have finals right now so the fact that i have the time to write anything is a miracle (i need a distraction, plus today i could barely keep my eyes open so no studying was happening. seriously, i wrote this whole thing half asleep so it's probably a mess but i needed to get it out)

See the end of the work for more notes

“Tough one today,” Hayden pats his arm. He sounds disappointed. He should be disappointed. It was more than a ‘tough’ game. It was shit. Shane was shit. And he knows it.

The energy in the locker room is heavy, hanging low and thick and threatening to suffocate Shane on the defeat. Everyone knows to leave him alone when he gets like this, face set in anger. Not at the team, this loss wasn’t on them. Just on himself. He was hardly on the ice tonight, not mentally anyways. His head was so far away from the ice he might as well have stayed home.

It had started earlier in the day. Right from the moment he woke up, Shane knew it was going to be an off day. His normal breakfast made him gag, just the thought of the texture enough to make him stray from his normal routine. He kept the lights low all day, even the warm lamp in the living room sending his system into overdrive. He was overwhelmed, overstimulated. One of those days where everything is too much, even something as simple as the brush of his collar against his neck as he got dressed to head to the rink for the game. All too much.

He dresses slowly, methodically, ignoring the rest of the room. Deep down, he feels bad. A good captain wouldn’t ignore his team after a crushing blow like that. A good captain wouldn’t let them lose so terribly. 6-0. Humiliating. Nothing he tried seemed to work today, his head too focused on the sweat he could feel gathering on his brow, dripping down his back, too focused on the way the cheering fans sounded like nails on a chalkboard.

Beyond a few apologies to his team, Shane is silent. There’s more he wished he could say, but the words are stuck too deep in his throat, his thoughts too clouded to form a clear sentence. Hayden has his back, finding just the right words for the team when their captain can’t. He’s a good friend like that, he may not always get it but he’d be damned if he didn’t have his friend’s back. The creases carved deep into Shane’s forehead are enough, a silent communication between the friends that Shane needs a damn *break*.

Once he’s finally changed and ready to go, Shane collapses into his car, the exhaustion hitting him a million times harder once he’s finally alone. There's a steady ache in his side from where he got slammed into the boards, a hit he easily should’ve dodged. Nothing serious, no broken ribs or anything, but the shades of yellow and purple decorating his side tell him the bruise will stick around for a few days.

His head pounds, not from the hit, but from the stinging of the rink lights. Usually he can handle it, handle the way they bounce off the pristine ice and burn his eyes. But not today, not on days like this. For a moment he considers sliding his sunglasses on, just to dampen some of the harsh city lights for his drive home, but he can’t bring himself too. Can’t accept the help, can’t admit he needs it, even as his eyes sting with unshed tears the whole way home.

The fact that he even gets himself inside the house is a miracle. Shane is *tired*, his limbs heavy and limp with that bone-deep exhaustion that can’t be cured with one night of sleep. He goes through the motions, not quite in his body. Shoes off and away, coat on a hanger and in the closet. He lets his bag land with a sigh in his rightful spot, right next to Ilya’s–

Ilya?

“Hey, baby,” his boyfriend says, voice just above a whisper. He wasn’t supposed to be here, had planned to watch the game with Yuna and David in their home. He never mentioned coming over tonight to Shane.

Shane opened his mouth to tell him that, but Ilya quickly cut in, knowing his boyfriend too much for his own good and seeing the way he struggled to find the words. “I had a feeling I needed to be here tonight. Your parents, of course, are very sad. They love me most. But I knew I needed to be here.”

At that, Shane chuckles. Or would, if he had the energy to get any sound out. His eyes soften as he takes in Ilya, dressed cozy in a pair of sweats and a hoodie Shane stole ages ago and never gave back. *Little shit must've gone through my closet*, Shane thinks to himself, more endeared than anything.

“You don’t need to talk, my love. Come here.”

Ilya doesn’t have to ask Shane twice. He collapses into the strong, broad frame of the man he loves, letting the tension seep out of him as Ilya wraps him in a tight hug, the pressure enough to clear a bit of the fog that had settled in his brain. He wished he could say something, thank Ilya for being here, tell him just how much he needed this, but he knows he doesn’t need to. Hayden may know him well, but Ilya knows him the best. He doesn’t need words or a look or anything to communicate with him sometimes. Ilya just knows, in-tune with Shane on a level that neither of them thought was even possible.

“I have everything on the couch already, whenever you’re ready.”

Shane nods slightly, Ilya feeling the movement where his boyfriend is tucked tightly against his chest. They walk together, no space between the two of them. On the TV, a rerun of a sitcom they both love but don’t like enough to bother to learn the name of is playing on silent. The spare comforter, thick and warm and only pulled out when one of them has an especially bad day, is laid out on top of the couch, nestled under Shane’s weighted blanket (a gift from Ilya, for when he couldn’t be around to deliver a bone-crushing hug). Two cold pop cans, cola and ginger ale, sit on the coffee table, dripping condensation down their sides. Shane’s headphones, his solace when the world gets too loud, are next to them. The only light in the room coming from the little tea lights Ilya insisted they needed last Halloween.

Ilya helps him into his favourite spot on the couch, and Shane’s heart melts. He can feel himself falling in love with Ilya all over again as he slots himself next to Shane, tucking the shorter man’s head down to rest on his strong chest. There, pressed against the man he loves, surrounded by silence and held down by the welcome pressure of the blankets and Ilya’s strong arms, he slowly comes back to himself. His thoughts begin to clear, slowly but surely. The words in his throat unstick, not quite ready to be spoken, but a little bit looser, letting him breathe that little bit easier.

Shane snuggles in a little bit closer, breathing in vanilla and tobacco and love. Ilya nuzzles into his hair, his lips soft against the crown of Shane’s head. They stay there all night, eventually lulling one another to sleep in each other’s arms. Here, together, everything is better. Not fixed, but better

End Notes

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