

Silent and Dark

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Silent and Dark

by [youweremovingyourfeet](#)

Summary

Shane has a meltdown.

Ilya tries to understand, and figures out how to help.

Notes

Two days ago, I had one of the worst meltdowns I have had in a while. Today I posted this.

This is the first thing I've written and published in 7 years. The effect this show has had on me is indescribable, and I'm so so grateful for it!

This is very very self-indulgent and inspired by my own experiences, but I hope it does these characters justice.

I have several more drafts in the pipeline, including one I've spoken about on my tumblr. If you want to yell at me about this show, come do it [here!](#)

Ilya is watching a garbage American reality tv show, one that Sveta watches religiously and texts him about. He doesn't understand why she enjoys watching people figure out whether their mail order spouse is really in love with them is fun, but she gets mad enough when he criticizes it that he keeps watching, just so he can be specific in his chirps about it.

He hears the door to their Ottawa house shut, very quietly. Shane must be home. He had a long day today, with photoshoots and promotional videos for Reebok and Gatorade, and an interview with press and Montreal management. Ilya wouldn't have liked a day like that, but Shane always overthinks these things.

He waits for Shane to come into the living room, to crash into Ilya and complain about every person who made the shoot less than perfect. Shane likes everything to go smoothly, and a photoshoot almost never does. Ilya loves to watch the little furrow form between Shane's brows when he talks about this and loves to kiss him in the middle of a rant just to cut him off and refocus him onto Ilya instead.

But instead, he sees the lights in the hallway turn off and hears the door to the bedroom close, just as nearly silent as the front door. Ilya pauses the show, stands, and walks over to the door.

"Shane?" He hears a muffled hum from behind the door, but nothing else.

He opens the door, and the hum gets a little louder. Ilya thinks he sounds a bit like the Пчела, the fuzzy insect that warns you not to get closer. He doesn't follow that warning though. Shane is stripping frantically in a slightly disorganized way, still folding his clothes in the way that makes Ilya's heart clench a little, but not in his usual order. He doesn't have any of the lights on and he doesn't look up when Ilya comes in.

When Ilya closes the door behind him, cutting off the light from the hallway and plunging them into darkness, Shane's hum quiets down again. Ilya pads forward slowly, in the gait that has Shane calling him a panther, but this time it's to be really quiet. He's not sure why Shane wants everything quiet and dark, but he can try to be that for him.

Shane is still humming as he gets down to his boxers and slips beneath the covers, on the right side of the bed as always. He starts shuffling his legs in that way that's worn a hole through the last three sets of sheets. Shane looks embarrassed every time he has to stop his careful 5-step laundry routine to throw out another set of sheets. Ilya makes jokes about how they fuck so hard they're destroying them and then catches a fitted sheet to the head and Shane's smirk for his troubles.

Shane is fully bundled in the sheets now, and he looks cozy even in his distress. Ilya thinks it might be time to try and join him, to break the strange silent spell that's fallen over them. He pulls off his shirt and climbs into bed next to Shane, careful not to disturb his little burrito.

Shane is still humming, muffled a bit by the blankets. When Ilya tries to touch his shoulder, to pull him back into his body the way Shane likes best, the humming gets louder and Shane starts to breathe strangely. Ilya moves away again, feeling the rejection like a stab in his chest.

Ilya listens to Shane starting to cry, feeling cold and upset himself. If Shane doesn't want him when he's this upset, what is he for? Why can't he help?

He starts to think about what could have happened, how Shane could have been hurt to make him this upset and untethered. Maybe someone said something shitty and awful to Yuna again at the shoot? But the last time that happened, Shane came home furious and immediately picked a fight with Ilya. Or maybe something worse? Maybe Coach Theriault said something about Shane's captaincy? Or maybe it's him? Maybe Shane is upset with him and won't tell him why? Maybe he is here, trying to work up the courage to tell Ilya to go.

Ilya's chest tightens with worry, and he tries to breathe out slowly. If he could just be sure that Shane was fine, would be fine...

He sits for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, checking his phone surreptitiously and constantly so the time doesn't feel like forever. Shane stops crying. His head pokes out from the blankets a little. Ilya can see the shine on his face in the moonlight. He looks so beautiful it hurts.

Ilya reaches a hand out, afraid he'll just be pushed away again. If that happens, he'll probably have to go for a run, or just a workout in their gym or something. Just so he doesn't start a fight with Shane that will just have them both more upset. He's tried to do that since they moved in together and did nothing but fight with each other for the first two weeks, both in a sexy and not sexy way. Ilya finally broke down and called Yuna, swearing her to secrecy and asking her how to stop when all he wanted to do was push at Shane.

Two weeks after that, Shane admitted he'd called her too. They cried about that a little, and then things were easier.

He reaches his hand out, touches at Shane's shoulder through the blankets, and Shane startles a little, turns towards him, and shuffles into Ilya's arms so quickly he lets out a little 'oof' and falls onto his back.

"Shane. Are you alright?" Shane nods, continuing his quest to move himself into Ilya's armpit permanently.

Ilya lets out a heavy breath.

"Did I do something wrong?" A head shake. Shane snuggles in closer, breathing into Ilya's skin. His face is still a little tacky, and the skin under his eyes pulls a little. Ilya breathes out completely.

They sit there for a while. Ilya stops checking the time. He still hears Shane humming, soft, inaudible, loud, no pattern in when or why. His legs are still shuffling, back and forth against each other and brushing against Ilya every other second. It could be annoying, but Ilya is still so relieved that everything is going to be okay that he's endeared by it instead.

Eventually, Shane stirs a little. His hand comes up to touch Ilya's face. Then he seems to stiffen a little.

"I'm sorry." It comes out hoarse, and even flatter than his usual tone.

“You did nothing.”

“I’m being weird.” Shane moves to sit up, but Ilya pulls him back down.

“Nooo, it’s comfy.”

Ilya looks down at Shane and tries to see if he really needs to get up, or if he’s just pretending like he likes to do. He thinks Shane is pretending. Shane is looking at him but more like at his left ear. When Ilya moves a little, Shane moves his attention to Ilya’s forehead.

“I don’t know what happened. I just-” Shane is speaking like each word costs him money, hoarse and flat and precise. Ilya wants to tell him to stop talking and that he doesn’t need to hear this if it’ll hurt Shane to tell it. But Shane also has that cute little brow furrow that says ‘I’m going to be honest about my feelings’, so Ilya thinks he’s going to say what he wants to say regardless.

“The photographer was late to the shoot, so they told me I had to come back in an hour, which meant I had to call Gatorade and tell them I needed to move that shoot back, which made me miss lunch and I had to call Mom and tell her that because she was going to meet me for lunch and then head over to the rink with me and I had to cancel the reservation. And- this just sounds so unbelievably stupid when I say it all out loud. Never mind. I’m fine.”

Despite the fact that Shane’s tone hasn’t changed at all, Ilya can see the tears start to build up under Shane’s eyes again. He’s never seemed aware that Ilya can see those tears even if Shane refuses to let them out. It was the last straw in those first few weeks of fighting that made him call Yuna, when he saw that extra shininess in Shane’s eyes.

Ilya knows how Shane is about a plan. He also knows how much Shane would rather pretend that change is easy for him, that he is a chill guy who never gets upset or anxious.

“I don’t think it sounds stupid. I think you had hard day, where everyone wants you to smile and be perfect, and nothing goes right. This is harder for you than me, yes? When things change and you don’t know plan anymore?”

The relief on Shane’s face is instant, and he looks Ilya right in the eyes for a moment, even though he winces and immediately moves his eyes to Ilya’s mouth. This, at least, Ilya is used to.

“I don’t know why this is so hard for me. I do all of these things individually all the time, and I’ve practiced how to respond to the schedule changes that always happen. It should be easier by now.”

“You cannot be best at everything, Shane.” This, Ilya says with a smile.

Shane smiles too, the real one and not the one from the ads, where it looks like his face is pulled too tight over a mannequin.

“I can try.” The slight smile falls away. “This was really weird, though, right? My mom used to remind me all the time to stop the humming. I didn’t even know I was doing it until a

coach yelled at me to shut up when we were traveling to an away game when I was 8. And the leg thing, I can stop that too. I hate when I tear through the sheets like an animal.”

Ilya thinks about little Shane then, trying to calm down before a game, being yelled at in front of everyone for being strange. He thinks about Yuna trying to help him fit in by training him all the time, not just in hockey but in being Shane Hollander. Even though he cares about her, even though he just asked her for help she happily gave, he can’t help but think she was wrong. That Shane should be able to just be when he’s not in front of people.

“Shane, I love you. Я люблю тебя. You will always be strange to me, but in good way. I don’t want you to be like robot, the way you are for photographers and coach and interviewers.” Ilya feels constrained by this stupid language the way he always does, the way it takes his feeling and makes it sound childish.

“I want you to relax. I like that you only do it with me.”

“I love you, Ilya. моя любовь.” His pronunciation is atrocious. Ilya has to kiss him immediately.

He pulls Shane close, closer still. He feels they can never be close enough, even when they’re fucking hard enough to shake the bedframe. Shane still kisses just how Ilya taught him. It makes his chest ache.

Ilya knows that Shane has never said anything about this strangeness he feels to anyone else before. He mentally catalogues the things that made Shane feel calm: dark, quiet, bundled up, touch after a little while. He will know for the next time. He feels precious, special, that Shane feels safe enough to just be, untethered from The Idea Of Shane Hollander he embodies outside this house. Ilya actually likes playing Ilya Rozanov most of the time, but he is glad for the reprieve too.

Maybe this is what it’s like to be married, he thinks not for the first time. To know someone more and more each day, to twine your lives together. He saw a pair of trees once, when he had first moved to Boston, that seemed to flow into and out of each other with no separation, that had grown into each other over decades, or even a lifetime.

Maybe that’s what he and Shane are building together.

He hopes so.

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