

breathe in

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/68039641) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/68039641>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Original Characters
Additional Tags:	Kid Fic , Fluff , Established Relationship , Married Life
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-07-23 Words: 1,588 Chapters: 1/1

breathe in

by [LJ_sunny](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov was very much enjoying retirement.

Notes

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

Ilya Rozanov wasn't on the ice at the moment. He was leaning against the boards, watching intently, ready to jump in if something were to go wrong.

He wasn't *allowed* to participate. That had been made very clear to him when his daughter, all of five years old ("Five and three quarters. I'll be six soon.") and reaching his hip in height, stared him down like her dad used to do (still did, sometimes, though at their kitchen table instead of the face-off circle), and declared she could "do it on her own." So now his job was holding the backpack with snacks and occasionally yelling out encouragements when appropriate. He was very much enjoying retirement.

Ilya had to press himself into the boards to avoid two hurricanes rushing past him and bursting onto the ice. One of the children immediately spotted his own and tried to cross the ice as quickly as he could to get to her.

"Hello, Ilya," came the exhausted voice to his left.

"Danielle. Happy to see you and the boys." He'd first met her when their children shared a kindergarten class, and several years and many playdates later, they knew each other pretty well. "How is the breweries article coming along?" Danielle worked for an Ottawa paper and especially liked highlighting local small businesses. She'd been delighted when he'd put her in contact with Harris, who had a personal anecdote to tell about most local business owners. He and Danielle got on like a house on fire.

Danielle shrugged and rubbed her hands together to shake off winter chill, adjusting the little hat on the head of her youngest, who was happily sleeping strapped to his mother's chest. "Should be ready for publication right on time. Unless the boys fall sick again, that is."

They'd all gone through it, in that kindergarten class – one Friday Katya came home with a runny nose and next week all of them except for Ilya himself went down with the flu. Ilya had had to almost wrestle Shane to keep him in bed while checking their children's temperature and changing their sweaty sheets. Eventually, he'd given up trying to keep all his patients separate and just let them share the bed in the master bedroom. Shane had certainly been calmer when he could check how the children were doing for himself, even if their coughing kept him awake. By the time the illness had caught up to Ilya as well, the children had gone back to school and he'd been left miserable in bed, though with his amazing husband fussing over him, so he couldn't complain too much.

"Hopefully we'll avoid that. How is Alex?"

Ilya remembered the relief he'd felt the first time he'd heard Danielle talk about her wife. He'd met Shane's eyes over her head briefly and saw the same emotions in them. *Good, we're not the only ones.*

"She's great. Busy, but when is she not. We'll go visit her parents in Alberta next week, if nothing goes wrong. Where is your better half?"

"Well, you see, it is a big day today."

"Oh?"

"Yes. Shane is driving Misha to his first ever sleepover."

"Is he nervous?"

"Misha? Not at all. It's all he's been talking about for a week."

"And Shane?" Danielle asked with a smile.

"Oh, you know." Shane had spent forty minutes on the phone with Misha's classmate's parents, ironing out minute details of what was essentially just "my kid sleeps over at your place, we pick him up before noon the next day, hopefully you feed him somewhere in between." When Ilya woke up in the middle of the night, he'd found him on the other side of the bed, staring at the ceiling in the dark. It had reminded Ilya of the nights early on after bringing Misha home — they'd both been so exhausted, but Shane spent the time when he could've been resting checking on the baby — *Was he breathing? Sleeping soundly?* — and when finally convinced to go to bed, he'd lie there just like that, unable to find rest. Ilya had had to take Misha out of the house often, so that Shane could take naps in the middle of the day without worrying too much. Worried about Shane's sleeplessness returning, Ilya had snuggled closer, putting his cheek on Shane's chest.

"Go to sleep," he'd said, his sleep-rough voice scratching his throat.

"Yeah," Shane had replied, but he'd still been awake when Ilya drifted off again, running a hand up and down Ilya's back absentmindedly.

"Well, I'm sure it's gonna go just fine," Danielle said.

"Yes, I'm sure." He would just have to convince his husband of that.

The baby on Danielle's chest wiggled and started to get huffy. "I'm gonna walk around with him," she said, gesturing in a circle. "It was nice seeing you, Ilya."

"You as well," he said, reaching out to poke the little boy on the cheek. He was very happy with his reasonable quantity of children — though may Jackie Pike be blessed for providing four skilled babysitters for them — but he did sometimes miss when his children were this size. Not the sleepless nights, no, and he could still pick them up just as easily as he had back then (who knew how long that would last — despite his urging to do otherwise, they kept getting bigger and he kept getting older) but the first milestones. The first time Mishka had smiled at him, he'd cried. He remembered being frantically called up from doing the laundry by his husband to witness Misha's first steps. And then they'd gotten to do it all over again with Katya, knowing what they were doing a bit more but still just as caught off-guard sometimes. He would cherish those memories until the day he died.

Danielle wandered off, whispering calming words to her youngest, and Ilya was once again left alone, watching his daughter skate. He judged it about the right time to offer a snack, but Katya just shook her head when he'd called to her and skated off. Tough crowd, he'd cut the apples into little bunnies himself.

A few minutes of contemplating his snack-making skills later, hands enveloped him and his husband's head, hair streaked through with silver, came to rest on his shoulder.

"Hello."

"Hi," Shane said, leaning into him for a moment before straightening up and looking out to find their daughter's pink and purple jacket in the crowd of skaters. "Did she eat anything?"

"No, she even spurned my amazing bunnies." Ilya had gotten into reading historical romance books lately, and his vocabulary suffered the consequences. Spurn was a nice word, though. Appropriately dramatic for the situation.

Shane seemed to think so, too, making a shocked face and kissing Ilya's cheek. "But you'd worked so hard on those." His earliest attempts hadn't looked like bunnies at all, but his lovely husband had only said "no, I can see it, those do look like bunnies" (this was after he'd been told what the apples were meant to look like, so Ilya hadn't put much stock in the claim) and then eaten all of the misshapen lumps without complaint when Ilya deemed them too subpar to present to the scrutiny of their too-honest children. But now his bunnies looked very bunny-like, please and thank you.

"I know! She will not give me the time of day, only focused on skating. She got that from you," Ilya accused. Shane only shook his head, smiling.

"What are you doing out here, anyway?"

"I've been exiled," Ilya said, with all the gravitas of a medieval lord who must leave his true love behind because the king decrees it. "My superior bunnies aren't needed and my help skating isn't either. No one in this family appreciates me."

"No one?" But Ilya stood his ground and shook his head, even in the face of Shane's sparkling eyes, which was a romance book cliché and shouldn't be happening in real life, dammit. And then he ruined it completely by putting his arm around his husband and pulling him to his side.

"How did it go with Misha?"

"I'm not allowed to call. I'm also not allowed to have you call and ask the questions I want to ask."

"Ah, he's seen through your loophole."

"I'm allowed to text, but if he doesn't respond immediately, I'm not allowed to call Chris's parents to check on him."

"And what do you get in exchange?"

"One text before bed and one in the morning, maybe, but if he forgets one of those, I'm not allowed to freak out."

"And did you remind Chris's parents—"

"Three times, they know not to give him anything with gluten in it. I went inside for a little bit, they bought gluten-free bread. Chris's dad double-checked every meal with me, too. And I packed Mishka some safe snacks in case he was hungry."

"The snacks he told you not to give him?"

"Yeah, I put them in his backpack and texted him about them after I drove off so he couldn't give them back to me."

Ilya tightened his arm around Shane and kissed his temple. "He's gonna be fine."

Shane let out a breath, his eyes following Katya. "I know. I'm just gonna worry anyway."

Ilya shook him a little. "Yes, sweetheart. Want to go see if queen Katya will have mercy on me and let me skate now that you're back?"

Shane pressed a quick kiss to his mouth. "Let's go."

End Notes

I will definitely write more with my child OCs.

I believe Shane and Ilya would give their children Russian names that wouldn't be too out of place in Canada, so I went with Michael and Katerina, called Misha and Katya by their parents but Mike and Kat/Katie by their English-speaking peers.

Also, editing on my phone is so damn annoying.

Hope you enjoyed this fic! Please let me know if you did, comments and kudos always appreciated!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!