hit me where it hurts

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hit me where it hurts

by residentrookie

Summary

Ilya takes a nasty hit on the ice, but it's nothing he hasn't brushed off before. Or at least, that's what he thought.

Off the ice, Shane finds himself overwhelmed with the unexpected complications of Ilya's injury.

Notes

WELCOME HOLLANOV NATION!!!! i have been trapped here for days and days and i can't find the exit please someone send help. seeing no release from the torment these two losers have inflicted on my sanity, i decided to take matters into my own hands. please enjoy the most hurt and the most comfort imaginable in the following fic.

in my mind, this fic takes place between heated rivalry and the long game. if you have not finsihed heated rivalry or the long game, there will be some minor spoilers in this, so beware.

OK THAT'S IT!!! read the tags. peace and love.

See the end of the work for more notes

Ilya hadn't seen the hit coming, but then again, he rarely does. It typically goes the same way every time. One second, he's flying across the ice and the next, he's laid out flat on top of it, staring up at the rafters and wondering how long it'll take for the air to return to his screaming lungs and the ringing in his ears to shut off. But Ilya always gets up. Sure, some hits are dirtier than others, some days he's slower to rise, slower to shake off the sudden aches assaulting whatever body parts got the worst of it, but he always manages to get his skates underneath him and finish what he started.

"Roz?" Troy skates into view, looking down at him with concern. "You good, bro?"

Ilya groans. "Fuck."

"Bad one, huh? That jackass fucking plowed through you. I'm surprised you're still in one piece."

Ilya just groans again. He can still feel the hit reverberating through each and every one of his bones.

"Come on, let's get you up."

A hand stretches down toward him and he considers it for far longer than he should. He knows he needs to get up now or risk even more intense scrutiny from the media about his *age* and his *spark* and his overall *merit* as a player. At this stage in his career, exhibiting resiliency is almost as crucial as skill. Every single game, he has to prove he isn't suddenly breaking apart. With a deep grunt, he reaches for his teammate's hand and hauls his battered body up off the ice.

Just to promptly keel over and vomit his guts up.

Well, so much for exhibiting resiliency. The entire country just watched him lose his dinner on live TV. *Fuck.*

"Oh *shit*!" Troy cries. "Hey, medics!"

"Fuck the medics," Ilya grumbles, but notes that he can't quite seem to stand up straight at the moment. Whatever that fucking means. He shakes his head to clear it, but the dizziness only intensifies.

Jesus, something is seriously wrong with him. He's never done anything like this, not even when he fractured his forearm struggling or the puck against the boards with some prick who apparently had elbows made of steel. He'd simply gritted his teeth and played out the period, no tears shed, no drama or fanfare.

Now, though, his body seems intent on humiliating him. The hit was hard, but fuck, hard enough to make him vomit? He's losing his grip on himself.

The medics swarm in seconds later. "Rozanov, talk to us, man. You took a pretty nasty hit. Tell us where it hurts."

He shakes his head, knowing his silence appears as stubbornness to the medics when in reality, he can't seem to suck in enough air to verbalize anything at all.

"Look, let's get you off the ice where we can take better stock of the situation, okay? Vomiting could mean lots of things. The game is delayed now anyway, so don't worry about missing anything important, alright?"

"Delayed?" Ilya wheezes.

"To clean the ice."

Ilya hangs his head, humiliation seeping all the way down to his core. God, there was no smooth way out of this now.

"Do you think you can skate off the rink?" one of them asks. When he hesitates, he hears them call for a stretcher. This of all things seems to do the trick of snapping him back into reality.

He can't leave on a stretcher. Absolutely not. Shane is watching this game tonight from Montreal. If Ilya's hurt bad enough that he needs to be hauled off the ice on a stretcher, Shane will worry. And the last thing Ilya wants right now is for Shane to worry about him.

"No, no stretcher," he manages, straightening up slowly. "I can do it."

The medics field him off the rink while the refs announce a cut to commercials. He hears applause as he steps off, but he can't bear to even glance towards the rows of concerned fans. He's focusing extremely hard on not blacking out and embarrassing himself further.

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The medical examination doesn't turn up anything unusual. Ilya didn't have a concussion, didn't break any bones or sprain any muscles. Like he would after any hit, he has some bruising along his ribs from where he collided with the boards, but nothing more. Still, he was ruled out from playing the rest of the game for observation, just to be on the safe side. His adverse reaction to the hit seemed to subside as soon as he hydrated and got his heartrate under control. At the moment, he feels fine, which is a relief to the medics and anything but to Ilya. At least if something was wrong, he'd have a good excuse for his stunt on the ice, but no. Now he could just add "spontaneous vomiting" to his resume.

Fucking clown shit, he shakes his head, disgusted.

"Here, Roz," a physical trainer says, handing over the phone Ilya had requested someone retrieve from his locker. No concussion meant he was approved to be on it while his team did the job he should be doing and played out the period.

Immediately, his screen lights up with missed texts from Shane. Well, from Jane, anyway.

6:09 *Jane*

I know you won't see this until after, but call me as soon as you can. I think I saw your soul leave your body after that hit and I really need to make sure it gets back okay.

6:11 ***Jane***

Jesus, seriously, are you okay!? You've never thrown up on the ice.

6:14 ***Jane***

Quit playing the fucking tough guy, Rozanov. Do what the medics say.

(Undoubtedly, that one was in response to Ilya refusing the stretcher.)

6:36 ***Jane***

No updates on ESPN yet, but I keep refreshing the page. Feels faster to go straight to the source even though I know they won't give you your phone if you're concussed. Shit. Call me ASAP. I'm worried about you.

7:45 ***Jane***

Still nothing. I'm sending my mom to the arena.

7:45 ***Jane***

Sorry if you're fine and that's annoying.

7:46 ***Jane***

Love you.

Ilya can't help from grinning at his phone. Concerned-Shane was ridiculously adorable, even if he somehow managed to be overbearing from 100 miles away. Ilya couldn't bring himself to be annoyed that Shane had instructed Yuna to run interference on the situation, even if heads would likely turn at the Captain of the Montreal Metros' mother showing up out of the blue to check on him. He was far from upset. The fact that Shane was worried enough to do something so risky was more romantic to Ilya than the text expressing his love. Besides, a familiar face would be welcome right about now.

He starts typing his response.

8:09 ***Ilya***

Stop worrying, I am fine. Everything is clear. Just getting old, I guess. I love you, too.

His phone lights up seconds later.

8:09 ***Jane***

Call me? Need to be sure.

Ilya glances around, suddenly dismayed at the number of people in the room with him. The sound of Shane's voice would be the best medicine imaginable. Alas, he isn't alone. With a sigh, he responds.

8:10 ***Ilya***

Still under observation, or I would in a heartbeat. I promise, though, I am fine.

8:10 ***Jane***

They did the concussion test? Nothing broken?

Ilya rolls his eyes. Fucking obviously. What did Shane think he meant by "everything is clear"?

8:10 ***Ilya***

Yes, Hollander. Relax.

8:11 ***Jane***

Can't. Not until I can see you with my own eyes.

Ilya closes his eyes for a moment and sighs. He tries not to think about what a comfort it would be to return home and find Shane there, waiting anxiously for him. How Shane would check every inch of him for damage, tutting and fretting while his hands roamed over Ilya's body with the expertise earned from a decade of exploration. How Shane, after ensuring every piece of Ilya was intact, would pull him to the couch and place Ilya's head in his lap and stroke his hair the way he loves, those strong fingers sliding softly between his curls. How Ilya would fall asleep there and Shane wouldn't move an inch until morning, wanting Ilya to rest so badly he'd endure a night of sleeping upright and getting a crick in his neck. How Shane would cradle him and shield him and love him, wordlessly. Effortlessly.

Ilya opens his eyes and blinks back the sudden tears forming. He wouldn't see Shane for at least three weeks, and it was no use dwelling on what would not be. His phone lights up again.

8:12 ***Jane***

They didn't say what caused the vomiting? Do you have food poisoning or something?

Ilya frowns at the reminder.

8:12 ***Ilya***

Overexertion, they think. You are worried for nothing. Take a deep breath. Do some yoga or something.

8:13 ***Jane***

Asshole.

“Rozanov?” a voice says, calling his attention towards the door. A staff member stands at the entrance and a concerned-looking Yuna peeks over his shoulder.

Ilya grins.

“You’ve uh, got a visitor,” the staff member says hesitantly, glancing between the two of them and likely wondering what the hell the connection between them could possibly be.

“As the *treasurer* of the Irina Foundation,” Yuna says pointedly, pushing past him into the room, “*and* a concerned Ottawan, I wanted to check in on Mr. Rozanov myself.”

Ilya didn’t miss the way she called herself an Ottawan and *not* an Ottawan Centaurs fan. That of course, would be sacrilege to her Metros-loving heart.

“Thanks for taking the time, Mrs. Hollander,” Ilya tells her warmly. He hopes his smile is conveying everything he can’t say.

Yuna hurries over to him, trying and failing to smooth over the clear worry on her face. God, she looks so much like Shane sometimes. He’s known for a while that Shane gets his protective streak from his mother, but it’s quite another thing to experience up close. And directed at *him.* His throat feels thick suddenly, and he swallows to clear it.

“Concussion?” she demands off the bat, scanning his face. “It would explain the vomiting.”

Shane’s mother, indeed.

“No, no concussion,” Illya assures her. “Nothing broken either. Just a freak accident.”

“Hm.” Yuna looks skeptical. “How are you feeling?”

“Peachy,” Ilya says with another grin. Yuna allows herself a small smile in return. “I am fine, Yuna. Truly.”

Without hesitation, she reaches out a hand, stroking his hair once, as if to be sure his head is still firmly connected to the rest of him and in fine shape. It was a thoughtless caress any mother would offer her son. Ilya’s scalp tingles from the contact long after she removes her hand.

“Well… good. Good, I’m glad to hear it, Ily-Mr. Rozanov.”

He smothers a laugh at her clumsy professionalism.

“Sorry you made the trip for nothing,” he pauses, raising his brows. “*Some* people worry too much.”

He winks, knowing she’ll understand that he isn’t referring to her.

Yuna laughs. “Maybe. But, between us,” she leans in and lowers her voice, “I was already on my way when he called.”

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In the end, the Centaurs manage to scrape by with a 2-1 win against Detroit. Ilya’s pleased at the news, but disappointed in himself, so the victory only does so much to lift his spirits. After being cleared by the medical staff, he takes a quick shower to clean up, then gathers what he needs from the locker room and heads out to his car.

A dizzy spell hits him when he’s about halfway to the parking lot. He blinks and shakes his head. Shit. Must have taken a hotter shower than he realized.

He slows his pace, a little more aware of where he’s placing his feet than usual. The dizziness subsides once he’s been driving for a bit, but the drive isn’t exactly comfortable. His left shoulder and side hurt like a bitch in this position. It’s nothing new after all these years though, so he pushes down his discomfort and focuses on getting home.

The road is almost a blur before him by the time he finally pulls into his culdesac— and slams on the brakes. He grunts as his side sharply protests the quick movement, but he’s too busy blinking stupidly at the Black Jeep Cherokee parked in his driveway.

He didn’t. He *didn’t.*

Ilya’s eyes fill with tears as he scrambles to put the car in park and get his stupid fucking door open, his heart beating out an alarmingly fast rhythm in his chest. The front door opens as he makes his way up the steps and absolutely nothing matters in the world except for the fact that Shane Hollander is standing on the other side of it.

Ilya doesn’t pause to consider his injuries. He just launches himself into Shane’s arms, his head already buried in the familiar nook between his neck and shoulder that Ilya secretly believes was designed just for him.

“I told you I wouldn’t be able to relax until I could see you with my own eyes,” Shane says breathlessly, stroking Ilya’s back. “And three weeks seemed like a really long time to be such an uptight prick.”

“Is a permanent condition for you, I think,” Ilya murmurs, but without any heat. Instead of sarcastic, he sounds like a sap who’s out of his mind in love.

“Shut up,” Shane says. “Come in. I need to look at you.”

Ilya reaches behind him to shut the door. He turns and his lips find Shane’s— soft, warm and ready for him.

“Stop,” Shane grunts between kisses, “trying to distract me. I’m here for business reasons, not pleasure.”

“Oh is that so?” Ilya smiles against Shane’s mouth with the satisfaction of a man who knows exactly what’s in store for the two of them tonight. A rare opportunity had fallen right into

Ilya's lap, and he wasn't one to waste the chance to fuck Shane senseless, even if he was feeling somewhat worse for wear.

"I'm serious," Shane insists. "Take off your clothes. Now."

Ilya smiles devilishly. "Mm, I am getting mixed messages here, Hollander."

Shane pulls back, fixing him with an adorably scathing look. "You took a nasty fucking hit tonight and I had to watch it from a screen over 100 miles away. I'm not convinced you're completely okay, and until I am, you're just going to have to deal with me being a little intense about it. Got it?"

"You are a doctor now?" Ilya asks, one brow raised. He enjoys this, pushing playfully back at Shane, working him up. Even though this is exactly what Ilya dreamed of happening to him tonight, he can't stop himself from being a little shit about it. "You have degree you forgot to mention to me?"

Shane rolls his eyes with a huff.

"What will you be able to tell that medical professionals can't, hm?"

Shane lifts his chin. "I know you better than they do. I know your body better than my own."

This, Ilya can't argue. In fact, he feels a little gut-punched by Shane's sincerity. He's pretty sure it shows on his face, because Shane's expression softens.

"Let me look at you, please. For my peace of mind."

"Whatever you need," Ilya murmurs, reaching for the hem of his shirt. He winces as he lifts his arms, and Shane quickly intervenes, removing the garment himself.

Shane hisses as he takes in the nasty bruising on Ilya's side. He runs a curious finger down his ribs, feather-light and tender. Even the slightest of pressure is excruciating, but Ilya fights to keep his face as neutral as possible.

"Jesus. They're sure you didn't crack one? Or two?"

"Yes, Shane. They are sure."

Shane's eyes flick across his face, searching for any giveaway that Ilya isn't perfectly alright. "And your head? Did you hit it on anything?"

Shane's fingers run through his hair and rest on his crown, cupping his head gently.

"No," Ilya whispers, luxuriating in the sensation. "I was never unconscious. No headache."

"Good," Shane manages a small smile. "I'm very fond of your head."

"And the rest of me? Are you fond of that as well?"

“You know I am.”

Ilya smiles, then winces at a twitch in his side.

“What?” Shane asks, on guard again.

“Is nothing. My side hurts, but,” he gestures at it, “no shit, right?”

“Hm. What did they give you for pain?”

“It is in my bag. I— ah. Left it in the car.”

“I’ll get it. Go sit down.”

Shane is out the door before Ilya can even blink. When he does, his exhaustion seems to hit him all at once. He feels shaky, unsteady on his feet as he staggers towards the couch. They do say the body keeps the score, and his seems to be counting pretty fucking high tonight.

He closes his eyes for a moment and when he opens them again, Shane is kneeling on the floor before him, reading the bottle’s instructions.

“Two pills twice a day for the next week or until pain subsides,” Shane says. “Seems fair enough.”

“Mm,” Ilya hums, closing his eyes again. “Mmm,” he repeats, this time with a frown.

“Are you going to tell me what you’re humming about over there or stay mysterious?”

Shane’s dry tone doesn’t escape him, but Ilya is suddenly less concerned about taking the piss out of him and more concerned about not vomiting on his expensive sneakers.

“Nauseous again,” Ilya mumbles. “Shit.”

“Well,” Shane begins with a smug smile, “it’s a good thing your boyfriend has a preference for soda with natural anti-nausea properties, isn’t it?”

Ilya groans as Shane disappears into the kitchen, no doubt gone to fetch a can of his precious ginger ale. “Did you mean to say addiction?” Ilya calls weakly, shutting his eyes.

“Ha ha.”

“What about obsession?” he offers.

“You’ll thank me later when your nausea goes away. Here.” Something cold is pressed against his fingers resting on the arm of the couch.

Ilya looks from the can to Shane’s earnest face.

“I love you, Hollander, but I truly can’t imagine drinking that shit right now.”

Shane seems torn between being pleased that Ilya said he loves him and frustrated that Ilya won't drink his disgusting soda.

"It will help, I promise."

"Just want to sleep, I think," Ilya mutters, closing his eyes again.

Curious fingers lay flat against his forehead, checking his temperature.

"What is your diagnosis, doctor?" Ilya croaks without opening his eyes.

"Shut the fuck up. You feel a little warm to me… I'm going to get the thermometer."

"Be my guest." Ilya isn't even sure he said these words aloud. He feels a deep sort of heaviness, like a black hole is sucking him down into a bottomless sleep. It feels more threatening than relaxing, like his body is on its way to well and truly crashing, but the gravity is pulling him more forcefully than he can resist.

"Shane," he slurs. "Help me to bed."

"Ilya?" Shane calls from the kitchen. "Did you say something?"

"Bed," he repeats. "Please."

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Shane barely gets Ilya up the stairs before he collapses on top of his bed, his clothes and shoes still fully on. He looks down at his boyfriend's unconscious body with concern, breathing hard after hauling it all the way up here with little to no help from Ilya himself.

Shane tries to tell himself that Ilya's just tired, exhausted from a hard game and a grueling hit. It was natural to want to sleep it off.

But.

But a very small, very selfish part of Shane was sure Ilya would try a little harder than he did to have sex tonight. And not just because Shane is a self-centered slut, but because that's how *Ilya* normally gets. Cocky and flirting even when he's hurt too badly to admit it. And it's not like Shane would have *let him* do anything in his condition, but he did sort of expect to have to try a little harder to ward him off. To talk some sense and reason into him.

Shane scoffs at himself, appalled. Here was his boyfriend, totally fucking beat, and he was feeling snubbed Ilya didn't try to fuck him.

But he wasn't just feeling snubbed though, was he? He was truly concerned that Ilya was so quick to pass up an opportunity he seemed keen on cashing in when he'd first walked through the door. At the very least, Shane thought he might get to coddle Ilya for a little longer, stroking his hair the way he liked and kissing the nape of his neck until he fell into a blissful sleep. This sleep looked like fucking death, the way Ilya went from being aware to senseless in minutes.

Was that normal? Or was Shane being an overprotective freak?

Impulsively, Shane reaches out his fingers to feel for the pulse at Ilya's neck. It's strong, if not a bit fast, and Shane instantly feels ridiculous.

Ilya is fine. He's tired and he's sleeping it off. Nothing more.

He sighs, wondering if he should be worried about the levels of impulsivity he reached tonight. Shane can't get into the habit of running off to Ottawa every time Ilya flinches on screen, especially when he has mandatory practice the following morning. There's not a single part of him that regrets coming here, making sure Ilya was okay with his own eyes and hands, but he knows he should exercise more caution in the future. And maybe trust his mom when she tells him Ilya is completely fine and there's really no good reason for him to come all this way. Yuna would never lie to Shane about anything, but especially not about Ilya's health. And she'd be just as worried if something *had* happened to him.

Whatever. It was one time, and getting up at the ass-crack of dawn tomorrow to drive back to Montreal will suck, but it won't kill him.

Not knowing if Ilya's okay would have.

He bends down to take off Ilya's shoes and socks, then pulls off his pants and removes his shirt. When Ilya has nothing on but his briefs and his crucifix, Shane rolls him gently to one side and covers him with the duvet. His heart warms just watching Ilya sleep like this, unguarded and peaceful and completely his.

Shane spends the next few minutes readying himself for bed before climbing in next to Ilya and flicking off the light on his nightstand.

"Goodnight, *moy lyubimy,*" Shane murmurs into the darkness, curling around Ilya and sinking into sleep.

***

Shane doesn't know how long he's been asleep for when he hears the noise. His eyes crack open in the darkness as the confusion hits and he wonders groggily if he was dreaming and woke himself up.

But then he hears it again. A long, drawn out moan from beside him.

Ilya.

Shane shoots upright, reaching for the light with such speed the whole lamp almost topples from the nightstand. He flicks it on and gets on his knees, crawling closer to Ilya.

"Hey! Ilya? Can you hear me?" Shane says, shaking his shoulder a bit. At his touch, Ilya's eyes shoot open and another awful groan escapes his lips.

"Fuck, Ilya. Talk to me. What hurts? What the fuck is going on?"

“H-Hollander?” Ilya says, squinting at him like he can’t quite believe he’s there. “You are… you are here?”

“Yes,” Shane says breathlessly. “Yeah, I drove over from Montreal, remember? I wanted to make sure you were alright. Are you okay?”

Ilya continues to stare at him, and something in his gaze is… not right. It’s almost like he’s looking through Shane completely, like he’s a ghost or a hologram, as insubstantial as smoke.

“But… but Boston is so far from Montreal. You drove all the way? For me?”

Shane reels backwards. *Boston?*

“Ilya, what the fuck are you talking about? We’re in Ottawa. You live in Ottawa.”

The words are tractionless for Ilya— he doesn’t seem able to absorb them at all.

“You slept here? W-with with— you can’t stay— they’ll see, they will find out—”

Ilya’s babbling becomes more and more nonsensical as his slurred words turn from English to Russian and Shane loses all hope of understanding what he’s trying to say.

Instead Shane tries to clear his head and focus on what the fuck to do. His eyes scan over Ilya for any indication of distress and he’s struck instantly by the terrifying state he’s in.

Ilya looks pale and weak, his lips bloodless and his face lacking color. He’s clammy too, and his sweaty skin has soaked through to the sheets. Was this a fever then? An infection of some kind? Shane’s mind reels and hot tears fill his eyes at his own helplessness. Ilya needs him and he’s fucking useless.

“Shit, shit, shit,” he curses, diving across the bed for his phone. He has to call 911. Ilya needs an ambulance. Right fucking now.

He opens his phone app and presses out the numbers before his actions catch all the way up with him. If he calls and the ambulance arrives, they won’t see a distressed boyfriend calling for help in the middle of the night. They’ll see professional hockey player Shane Hollander at the house of his rival, Ilya Rozanov, and at an hour far too late to be friendly.

They’ll know. Everyone will know.

Shane hates himself for hesitating. He doesn’t know what the fuck is happening to Ilya and every fucking second counts right now but… he hesitates. Would Ilya forgive him for revealing their secret when he’s too far out of it to know what’s happening? Will he wake up in a completely new world of pain than the one he’s in now, one where he and Shane are publicly shamed and scorned for doing absolutely nothing but having enough courage to love each other with all that they have, all that they are?

But at the same time…Will Ilya wake up *at all* if Shane does nothing?

Enough. There was nothing to decide. Shane stops fucking hesitating and presses the call button.

***

The ambulance ride is a fucking nightmare. Shane's worst nightmare, specifically. One in which Ilya is laid out on a stretcher, prone and unmoving with a swarm of people crowding around him, attaching him to machines and asking Shane a billion questions he doesn't know the answer to.

"Sir, do you know if the patient is taking any medications? Can you describe the injuries the patient sustained earlier today? When did he begin to decline? Does he have any major illnesses or a family history of heart failure? Any allergies you know of?"

Shane answers what he can, shaky and unconfident, never taking his eyes off of Ilya's ashen face. The questions directed towards Ilya directly are even more painful to endure, since absolutely nothing seems to rouse him enough to answer.

"Sir, are you experiencing any pain right now?" one EMT asks, just to be met with a deep groan.

Shane wants to tear his hair out and scream in their faces. No fucking shit, he's experiencing pain! Was the moaning not indication enough?

"You have to help him," Shane mutters to no one. "Please. Please fucking help him."

When they arrive at the hospital, Ilya is carted off to God knows where and Shane is left behind.

He isn't related to the patient, they inform him, so he cannot go back with Ilya. They'll let him know when they have updates on the patient's condition, but for now there's nothing more they can do.

'We're sorry, Mr. Hollander."

At that, Shane lifts his eyes to look at the sympathetic EMT who knows exactly who the fuck he is, even if she doesn't know what he's doing here. The woman doesn't look judgemental, just worried. Maybe a little curious. Shane doesn't have the wherewithal to feel any kind of way about that now.

"Would you like to wait somewhere a little more… private?" she offers and Shane takes in his surroundings for the first time. The waiting room is fairly empty at this hour, but it was only a matter of time before heads would turn at Ottawa's own Shane Hollander sitting among them. For a brief second, he wonders hysterically if someone would be cruel enough to ask for his picture. Even if they weren't brave enough to ask him directly, pictures of him would no doubt be taken anyway and circulated online and the connection would be made in seconds when the news broke that Ilya Rozanov had been rushed to the same hospital—

It didn't matter. Nothing fucking matters to Shane right now but Ilya, and Ilya has never felt farther from him.

"Okay," is all Shane can mange. "Sure."

***

Yuna and David arrive sooner than Shane would have thought possible, but time is pretty fucking warped for him right now. He feels like he called them only seconds ago, but that couldn't be right.

"Oh my god," Yuna says when she enters the room and sees him. He's in her arms before he can even blink. "Honey, what happened? Are you alright? How's Ilya?"

"Ilya—" Shane starts, then seems to choke on the words. "He's— I don't—"

"Shh, it's okay. It's okay. We're here now, and we're going to figure this out. Have there been any updates?"

Shane just shakes his head. Yuna pulls back to look at him and the concern and love and worry on her face is what finally makes him break. He sobs into his mother's shoulder and she holds him tightly. His father's arms wrap around him from behind and for a moment, the two of them are the only things keeping Shane from shattering altogether.

Sometime later, Shane comes back into himself enough to hear Yuna speaking in her no-nonsense voice to his dad.

" — doesn't matter, David. We're the ones here, we're the ones who care about him. All this next-of-kin-only bullshit shouldn't be applicable in this scenario."

"I'm just saying, we don't even know who Ilya's health care proxy is. Without a legal connection to the patient, they won't be lenient about sharing information with us."

"And I'm just saying, I don't give a rat's ass. They'll tell us what we need to know. Ilya's *family*," she points to Shane with emphasis, "is sitting in this room."

David doesn't seem to have a reply to that, so Yuna turns her attention to Shane.

"Honey, have you thought about a plan for tomorrow yet?"

Shane blinks slowly. Does she mean damage control for when the media gets tipped about the situation?

"Tomorrow?" he asks.

"Didn't you tell me you have practice in the morning?"

Shane swears. They both check the clock on the wall that reads 4:21 AM. The practice Shane had forgotten about entirely started in less than four hours. *Fuck.*

“I’m not fucking leaving,” Shane says with probably more venom than his mom deserves to hear right now. “I can’t. Not until—”

“Shane, I wasn’t suggesting you leave. Of course not. But you’ll have to tell someone you won’t be there, won’t you?”

“Shit. Yes.” He should call his coach, but… the thought of speaking to Theriault right now makes him nauseous. He doesn’t want to explain anything to anyone, much less his coach who will no doubt exacerbate this situation astronomically.

“Hayden, maybe?” Yuna offers softly. “He can spread the word.”

“What do I even tell him to say?”

“There’s been a family emergency in Ottawa and you will not be attending practice,” his mom says easily. “It’s the truth, honey.”

The truth, they both know, is a bit more complicated than that. But Shane appreciates her confidence all the same.

A knock sounds on the door before opening. “Excuse me. You’re here for… Ilya Rozanov, correct?”

Shane’s head whips towards the door where a tall, speckled doctor is standing. Without thinking, he shoots to his feet.

“Yes. Yes, we— is he—?”

The doctor looks between them all, clearly confused as to why the Hollander family is all gathered here, waiting anxiously to hear the status of a man they famously loathe.

“Mr. Rozanov has been taken to surgery. He’s currently undergoing a splenorrhaphy—”

“A *what*?!”

“Shane,” his mother whispers. “Let him finish, please.”

“A splenorrhaphy,” the doctor repeats. “It’s a procedure to repair a ruptured spleen. An ultrasound confirmed our suspicions that Mr. Rozanov may have suffered an injury to his spleen early today that went undetected for several hours. He’s been bleeding internally for some time, which explains the symptoms you described to us earlier, Mr. Hollander. Nausea, dizziness, confusion, fainting. These are all signs of a ruptured spleen.”

“How does someone rupture their fucking spleen and not know about it?” Shane demands, reeling from this information. “He was fine for hours.”

“The more alarming symptoms can sometimes be delayed, which seems to be what happened in Mr. Rozanov’s case. But the bruising and tenderness along his left ribcage was an early sign that was regrettably missed by medical staff earlier today.”

“Okay, so…” Shane blinks rapidly. “So, what does this mean? Is he going to be alright?”

“We have every reason to believe so. The procedure should only last an hour or so. Maybe two. Recovery time can take anywhere from four to eight weeks, but strenuous exercise and contact sports are off the table anywhere from three to six months to prevent the spleen from rupturing again.”

“Three to six *months?”* Shane repeats, stunned. Ilya wouldn’t play hockey again for *months.* He might even miss the playoffs. This was bad. So fucking bad.

“Mr. Hollander,” the doctor begins tentatively. “I know this all seems rather severe but, it feels important to add that had you not been present to call for help, it’s possible Mr. Rozanov wouldn’t be here with us now. If nothing else, that’s something to be… grateful for, I believe.”

Shane doesn’t exactly know what happens to him next because all color seeps from his vision and the ringing in his ears rises to a deafening volume. For a moment, there’s nothing but blackness and a wave of nausea threatening to drown him. His senses return to him slowly, one after another.

“Shane?” Someone is saying. “Put your head between your knees. There you go, just like that.”

“You’re okay. Just breathe, honey,” another voice says soothingly. “It’s been a long night for him, as I’m sure you can imagine.”

“Of course. I’ll have a nurse grab some ice.”

Shane moans, squeezing his eyes shut tightly. “*Fuck.*”

“Shane, everything’s alright. You heard what the doctor said. Ilya’s going to be fine.”

But he wouldn’t have been. If Shane hadn’t given into that whisper of impulsivity urging him to see Ilya for himself, if he hadn’t gone against his usually steadfast rationality, Ilya might have… he might have…

No, Shane was going to fucking throw up if he thought about that for a single second longer. But he couldn’t help himself.

I almost didn’t come. I almost talked myself out of driving here.

Because of fucking hockey, because of his loyalty and commitment to a sport that couldn’t be more inconsiderate of his personal life if it tried, he almost lost the person that means more to him than anyone in the world. How fucked was that? How utterly fucking fucked.

“He’s going to be fine,” Shane murmurs to himself. “He’s going to be fine.”

“He is, Shane. Everything’s alright.”

“When can I see him? Did he say?” Shane’s head is still firmly stuck between his knees, but he feels his mom’s hand on his back as she rises to her feet.

“I’ll go ask someone right now. Keep an eye on him, David.”

The room falls quiet. Shane focuses on the sound of his own breathing, slow and deep.

“You know,” he dad says from somewhere to his right, “you could always get married.”

Shane whips his head around to gape at his father.

“Dad, what the fuck?”

“To Ilya, I mean.”

No shit.

“Why are you—?”

“As his husband, you’d have more say when it comes to medical decisions. You wouldn’t feel as helpless in situations like this, that’s all.”

“I mean, that’s the plan. Eventually,” Shane replies weakly. “We both want to.”

God knows when they’ll be able to, though.

After a long pause, his dad starts to speak again.

“There’s a common misconception out there,” David begins, “that mapping out the rest of your life will give you more control over it. But it won’t, Shane. Plans aren’t guaranteed. Your hopes and dreams aren’t promised to you. You’re like your mother, Shane; you have such a strong will I sometimes think you have more power than the rest of us to bend and shape your life how you please. But tonight is proof that… well, that you can’t go through life with the *intention* to start really living it somewhere down the line.”

Shane’s eyes begin to water and his father smiles softly.

“Down the line doesn’t actually exist, you know. We only have the present. And you and Ilya deserve to live in it, too.”

***

Ilya doesn’t know where he is or *when* he is, but he’s positive he hasn’t moved his body in a very long time. Judging by the sluggish state of his brain, he’s not sure when the last time he was actually awake either.

His eyes flutter open, blinking in his surroundings. The room is dim, but daylight is peaking in from the corners of the closed blinds. This isn’t a room he recognizes. He squints, confused. Where the fuck—

“Hey, asshole,” a nearby voice croaks. “Nice of you to finally wake up.”

Ilya’s heart skips a beat in his chest.

Shane! That was Shane’s voice. Shane is here. Shane is…

Sitting upright in a chair next to him, looking more exhausted than Ilya has ever seen him. For a moment, Ilya’s so alarmed at the state of him— clothes disheveled, hair askew, dark circles etched deeply under his eyes— he can only blink in surprise.

“You are sick?” he asks stupidly. “Shane?”

The corner of Shane’s lips twitch. “No, stupid. *You’re* fucking sick.”

And then, without warning, Shane collapses forward onto his forearms and starts *sobbing.*

Shane’s words are nonsense to Ilya until he takes a proper look at himself and things start clicking into place. The bed, the machine beeping somewhere behind his head, the needles poking into his arms, the floaty, disconnected feeling he had from the rest of his body that likely had something to do with said needles. Oh, shit. He *was* sick.

“Please do not cry, sweetheart,” Ilya says, his hand reaching over the bury itself in Shane’s hair. “*Moy lyubimy*. I am fine. Just fine.”

Shane lifts his head with a glare. “Tell that to your stupid fucking spleen,” he seethes.

Ilya frowns incredulously. “My what?”

“You ruptured your spleen yesterday, asshole! And then you tried to act like nothing was wrong and you were completely fine and you weren’t about to fucking *die* on me!”

Die? he thinks blankly. And also, *What the fuck is a spleen?*

“Who said anything about dying?” he asks.

Shane doesn’t seem to hear him. “You can’t die, Rozanov. You can’t fucking die. I won’t let you.”

“Shane, be calm, please. I am very worried you will burst a vein in your head.”

Shane huffs loudly, wiping his face with the back of his hands and glaring down at Ilya.

"What has happened?" Ilya asks. Because his brain is having a hard time recalling anything before five minutes ago.

“You—” Shane starts, clearly at a loss, “I—fuck it, there’s no good way to tell you any of this. But here goes nothing.”

Ilya soon discovers just how right Shane is. No hockey for three to six months. Likely no chance he’ll get to compete for his team in the playoffs this season, much less lead them there

as their captain. All because some asshole pushed him into the boards at the wrong angle just a little bit too hard and ruptured his spleen in the process.

“Fuck,” Ilya curses, tossing his head back against the pillow. "Fucking *shit."*

*"*I'm so sorry."

Shane, of all people, understands the kind of blow this is to Ilya. For this reason, his aplogy doesn't sound pitying, only empathetic.

"Did not even know I had a spleen to rupture," Ilya muses darkly.

This gets a small smile out of Shane. "Russia must have pretty bad anatomy courses."

There's a short moment of silence between them. Then, a sudden laugh bursts out of Ilya and he quickly realizes how bad of an idea that is. "*Fuck."*

"Jesus, Ilya, don't fucking laugh! What's funny about any of this?"

"I just-" Ilya looks at Shane's disgruntled face with overwhelming fondness. "I cannot believe you thought your stupid ginger ale would cure my ruptured spleen."

Shane groans, dropping his face in his hands. "I didn't *know* about your spleen, okay? You just said you were nauseous and I- oh, shut the fuck up. You're gonna bust your stitches."

“What happened after that?" Ilya asks. "I remember sitting on the couch and falling asleep. Nothing else.”

“‘Fell asleep’ is a really nice way to say you passed out from undiagnosed internal bleeding, but sure, whatever,” Shane grumbles, then winces. “God, Ilya, it was… it was horrible. You were crying out and hurting and I didn’t know what to do.”

Shit. Well, so much for not worrying Shane. His small display of bravado on the ice by refusing the stretcher was totally negated by what Ilya put Shane through in the last several hours. And now Shane is looking at him with big, pleading eyes, as if to ask *Ilya* for forgiveness. What for, Ilya doesn’t know.

“And then what happened?” Ilya asks gently.

“I called an ambulance. I didn’t have a choice, Ilya, I swear.”

Ilya isn’t sure why Shane is being so tense about this reveal, but then. Ah, yes. There it was.

“They saw us together,” Ilya says, finally understanding where Shane’s distress is stemming from. “People will know now.”

Shane hangs his head, defeated. “Farah will call soon and release a statement for the press about you being here. I don’t even know what intel news outlets have already. But I know I was seen here and I’m sure it won’t take long for people to put two and two together.”

The two of them sit in silence for a moment, trying to measure the weight of this revelation and what it will mean for their futures.

Future, Ilya mentally corrects. Just one future they'll share together.

"If the whole world knows about us now," Ilya says slowly, making sure Shane can hear every ounce of sincerity in his voice, "then so be it, Hollander."

Shane swallows. "You mean that?"

"I think you know I do. I am not ashamed to love you and you are not ashamed to love me. Is simple, really."

Shane lifts his hand to stroke Ilya's cheek. "You're not upset with me?"

Ilya rolls his eyes. "No, idiot. Pretty sure you saved my life with that call. Are you upset with yourself?"

"I can't find it in myself to be," Shane admits. "I'd do it again a million more times. There was no other way."

"Perhaps my spleen did us a favor, then," Ilya adds with a smile. "We will not have anything left to hide."

"Your spleen is on my hit list," Shane says.

"Leave it alone. It has been through enough."

Ilya smiles when Shane's lips meet his. The kiss is gentle and tender and rare— rare in the sense that Ilya is usually forbidden from kissing Shane before he's brushed his teeth. He supposes this must be a special occasion, what with him almost dying and all.

"You scared me," Shane says after pulling away. They same words Ilya told him over a year ago now in a different hospital room the day after Shane had been knocked out on the ice.

"Scared myself," Ilya responds with a coy smile. Judging from the heated look on Shane's face, he remembers this conversation too. "But we will be okay. I know it."

And by saying the words aloud, Ilya knows in his heart they are true.

End Notes

that fucking spleen, man. causing all kinds of issues. i actually can't decide which one of them i tortured more in this one.

hope u enjoyed!

i have a few other hollanov fics you can find here!

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