

How Will I Know (If He Really Loves Me)

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How Will I Know (If He Really Loves Me)

by [dabforpalermo](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov is a natural caretaker. Shane Hollander is a natural clutz who keeps getting into situations where he needs taking care of.

Or: 5 times Ilya took care of Shane, and 1 time the favour was returned.

Chapter 1: Poked and Prodded (and not in a hot way)

Chapter Notes

Every time I feel awful about life I just start writing about sad gay boys from sad gay media... this is a curse.

TW for medical discussion, and description of needles if you're scared of them (like me!)

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

Shane Hollander is sitting in the waiting room of the clinic, legs bouncing in front of him, and is doing everything in his power not to throw up. Or pass out. Or *look* afraid- really. There's a small girl, can't be any older than five, who's staring at him with wide, curious eyes.

"*Hollander*," Rozanov breathes next to him. He can't place his hand on Shane's thigh and squeeze like he wants, but he knocks his knee into his and keeps it there. "You give me headache."

"Sorry," Shane squeaks. He tears his eyes away from the kid in the corner and leans forward on his knees, bringing his palm up to his mouth so he can *really* get a good bite down on the inside of his cheek, chewing the torn up skin there already. Rozanov sighs quietly and flips through his magazine.

Truthfully, he's not even sure why Rozanov is here. Well- it was all a blur, really. They were about to hook up, shirts torn off and pants discarded next to the bed, when Shane's phone had started buzzing aggressively on the nightstand.

"*Ignore it*," Rozanov had said, but it kept ringing, so Shane angrily grabbed it and clicked accept.

"*Hon, you have your appointment in an hour. You can't get out of it this time.*"

“My- *what?*” Shane had asked, confusion in his tone. His mom clicked her tongue at him.

“*Blood work, sweetheart. They want to see your baselines before we start you on those meds-*”

Shane had hung up, staring at Rozanov, who was looking at him with a bored, amused expression. He was frantically apologizing, telling Rozanov that they could reschedule, but the Russian must have seen something in his gaze, in the way he carried himself, because all he did was grip Shane’s shoulder and shake his head.

“*I drop you off.*”

It doesn’t help that they were in Boston, anyway. Shane has a primary care physician back home- a kind, old woman who may or may not have been his pediatrician. It’s a stupid phobia, *white coat syndrome*, but it’s overpowering. Especially when it’s a new doctor, a new clinic, and the idea that a needle will be in his veins in no time, sucking the blood out of him.

It *especially* doesn’t help that Shane’s trying to look cool, look unaffected, in front of Rozanov. He’s not sure why, because the other man definitely knows what’s going on, but he doesn’t want to go through his regular routine when he gets blood work: cry, hyperventilate, pass out, repeat. It’s been a year or so since he last got this done- it’s a regular thing in the league, and Shane thought he’d be over it by now, but he’s just not.

“Stop biting,” Rozanov says. He peeks around the waiting room, spotting only the little girl and her distracted mother, and carefully slides a hand up Shane’s spine, stopping at the nape of his neck and squeezing.

It’s something he does during sex that drives Shane insane. *Scruffing*, he had told Rozanov, when he’d asked what it was called. *Something someone does to a baby animal.*

Anyway- the effect is immediate. Shane releases the bloody skin from his teeth, his shoulders relaxing, and tries to breathe. He’s so distracted that he doesn’t even notice they have company until a small tap is felt on his knee.

He whips his head up, panicked, and tries to chill the fuck out when it's just the kid. She looks at him, then up to Rozanov, then gracefully pulls a stuffed animal from behind her back.

"My mom gives me this when I'm scared," she explains, full of confidence that Shane wishes he had. She gently places it in his lap.

"I'm not--"

Rozanov squeezes his neck again. "Thank you," he says to the girl, who giggles at him.

"Your voice is funny."

Shane's eyes dart to Rozanov, expecting him to look annoyed as he always does when someone comments on his accent, but instead, he has a soft look in his eyes.

"I come from different country," he explains, keeping his hand on Shane, who has begun to run his fingers through the soft fur of the stuffed bunny. He can't tell if it's this, or the smooth drawl of Rozanov's voice, but he's starting to relax. "Far away."

The kid nods seriously. "I come from down the street."

"Ah, must have been long travel day," Rozanov jokes. She doesn't seem to get it, but laughs anyway, if only at the way he speaks. Shane looks up, making eye contact with the girl's mother, who gives him a gentle smile.

"My mom says needles don't hurt if you don't look at them," the kid says to Shane. "And if someone who loves you is with you and blows on the needles so they aren't itchy." She directs this to Rozanov, who blushes slightly and removes his hand from Shane's neck. He instantly misses it.

“Olivia?” A nurse calls from the desk. Shane goes to hand her back the stuffed animal, but she shakes her head.

“I’m not a baby anymore.” *Ouch*. She walks herself up to the nurse and reaches up to hold her hand, her mother coming over to them quickly before stopping.

“She has cancer,” her mom says quietly. She watches as Olivia follows the nurse into the room. “Doesn’t get to see many people. Sorry about that.”

“No need for sorry,” Rozanov says. He’s tense, tense in the way he always is when someone talks to him around Shane, but he can tell he’s forcing himself to be normal, as if *this situation* is normal. You do not go to the clinic with your arch rival who you’re casually having sex with because he’s scared of needles.

“Keep it,” Olivia’s mom says to Shane. “We have a million of them.”

As soon as they’re alone, Shane starts to panic again. Rozanov watches him for a long moment before leaning in closer.

“Look,” he says, tapping on the magazine. “This place has good taste.”

Shane looks over at the paper, scoffing when he sees himself posed up with his Rolex on display. He fidgets with the one on his wrist, eyes fluttering shut as the breath gets stuck in his chest, and his lungs are burning, aching as if he can’t actually get any oxygen-

“Breathe,” Rozanov’s voice is there, the magazine discarded. He takes a breath for courage and reaches over, grabbing Shane’s hand, squeezing it tightly. “You will pass out before they bring you inside.”

“I- I should just go,” Shane says, standing up. He shakes his hands out, trying to expel the anxiety in his body, and begins to pace. “I don’t need the medication, I’m fine, everyone’s just dramatic-“

“Clearly.”

Shane glares at him, expecting Rozanov to be looking at him with judgement- amusement. Instead, his eyebrows are pitched together, a frown on his face, and if Shane wasn’t so freaked out, he would notice that it’s a look of pure concern etched across his stupidly handsome face.

“Hollander,” he stands as well, taking Shane’s hands again. “You will be fine. Needle will not hurt you. Big strong man, right? You make fifty-one goals last season. Needle is scary for small man, like Pike, but you are brave.”

Shane scoffs again, but stops when he finds himself close to tears. He wants to whine, wants to walk out, wants to bury himself in Rozanov’s chest and inhale his scent-

“Shane?”

He practically jumps out of his skin, flinching away from Rozanov and letting his trembling hands drop down to his sides. The nurse is looking at him expectantly, but Shane’s feet aren’t moving- they *can’t*. He feels like he’s waiting for his execution.

“Come, take bunny,” Rozanov says softly. He reaches down for the stuffed animal, holding it up to Shane’s chest, and does a stupid little *wiggle* with it. Shane brings his hands up to hold it tightly. “Let’s go.”

Shane forces himself to take one step, then another, and soon, the nurse is right in his face. She walks him back behind a curtain, into a separate room, and Shane realizes his mom must have mentioned his phobia over the phone when she booked the appointment. He’s taken back into a single room with a clinical bed.

“Ah, you go to lay down room,” Rozanov speaks from behind him, and Shane jumps again, not having expected him to follow.

“Your mother mentioned you have a history of fainting. Is this correct?” The nurse asks, no judgement in her tone, as she reads off of a clipboard. Shane nods, standing far too close to Rozanov. “Alright, have a seat.”

He waits for Rozanov to give him a nod, and makes his way over to the bed, laying down. The moment his back hits the paper, his chest tightens even more, and he feels as though someone is pressing down on his heart with all their strength. It sort of feels like when Rozanov pins him to the bed, but it’s far less sexy than that. Perhaps the least sexy thing on the planet.

He doesn’t even realize he’s crying until he chokes on a sob, humiliated in a way he’s never felt before. The nurse is moving around, narrating her actions as she grabs the supplies, but Shane can’t *fucking breathe*-

“Sit him up,” Rozanov’s voice cuts through the panic. He reaches for Shane, grabs him by the armpits, and hauls him up into a sitting position. Rozanov rests one of his big hands on Shane’s chest, the other coming to his back, holding him in place. “Come, breathe, you are okay.”

Shane coughs, his fingers white from where they’re clenched in the fur of the stuffed animal. He thinks of Olivia, hopes she has someone to comfort her while she gets injected, and the thought only makes his chest hurt more.

“*Hollander*,” Rozanov pleads. “Deep breath.”

Shane squeezes his eyes shut, trying to work through it, trying to think positively. He wants to ask Rozanov to choke him out- *not like that*- to press against his throat and cut his airway off so he can be unconscious for this.

Shane flinches when something soft touches his nose. He opens his eyes, spotting the bunny right in front of his face, and he can’t help the weak, wet laugh that escapes his lips. Rozanov

looks fucking ridiculous, bent down next to the bed, a 6'4, nearly 300 pound man holding a stuffed rabbit by its neck and making it press kisses to Shane's face.

He realizes then that the nurse must have stepped out to give them privacy. He lets out a shaking breath, his nose scrunching up when Rozanov nuzzles his cheek with the stupid thing.

"You look like bunny," he comments.

"What's- what's it in Russian?"

"*Krolik*," Rozanov says. Shane repeats it, clunky with his Canadian accent, and whispers it over and over again as the nurse reenters the room.

"Think you can hold onto him if he faints?" She asks, and Shane looks at her in confusion before realizing she's talking to Rozanov. The man nods, and she motions at him, and soon, Rozanov is at his side, one arm around Shane's waist, the other holding onto his right wrist.

"Okay, Shane. We're just gonna tie the band around your arm. Can you make a fist?"

Shane tries, but his hand is trembling too much- he's too weak. Rozanov's large palm slides over his knuckles, holding his hand into a fist, his grip tight and overbearing. She ties the band tightly around his bicep, the pressure making him squirm, and he flinches roughly when she rubs the alcohol swab over his vein, trying to pull away.

Rozanov keeps his grip on him, his other hand rubbing soothing circles into his side, and it feels more intimate than anything they've ever done in bed.

"Breathe," he reminds Shane. He ducks his hand under Shane's shirt, knowing skin-to-skin helps soothe him whenever he's too worked up, and squeezes the soft tissue around his waist. "Is okay. I am here."

Shane squeaks in a *very* manly manner when she inserts the needle, once again trying to pull away, but Rozanov holds him tight. Shane cries softly, turning his head and pressing it into the junction of Rozanov's neck, inhaling him deeply.

"So good, you are doing so good," Rozanov says quietly. Shane starts to relax the more time that passes, but they need multiple vials, and as his adrenaline wears off, he starts to feel the discomfort of the needle in his arm. He must make a noise, or shift, because Rozanov ducks his head and blows a cool breeze of air across his arm, dulling the sensation.

The nurse takes the needle out, holding a cotton pad to him, and Shane feels like his world is spinning. He pulls his head out of Rozanov's neck, blinking the dizziness away, and makes a little *hm* noise before his eyes roll to the back of his head.

Before he passes out, he can feel Rozanov's tight hold on him, one of his hands coming up to hold onto his neck as he keeps him steady.

Shane's universe fades into darkness, but he's not scared- Rozanov is here, and when he's here, nothing bad can happen.

He wakes up in the car, Rozanov slightly out of breath, and the stuffed bunny buckled neatly in the backseat.

Idiot.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you guys think!! I am so in love with each and every one of you, thank you all so much for your constant love and support. It genuinely keeps me going

<3

Chapter 2: Hazy (Not In A Hot Way)

Chapter Notes

Hi! Some major TW for this chapter include drink spiking and attempted assault (no physical assault is done, but it almost happens)
stay safe and never ever ever take drinks from people if you don't see them being made!!

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

It's Shane's twenty-third birthday. This is, apparently, a huge deal to everyone else, but to him, it's a death sentence. So many eyes, so many people, so many noises. He's overstimulated before they even walk into the club.

"Come *on*, Holly," Hayden chastises. "One drink?"

Shane shakes his head, trying to keep a polite, content smile on his face. He sips his ginger ale and taps his finger against the table, leg jittering under him, and pulls his phone out.

Lily:

And how is birthday boy celebrating tonight?

Shane clicks his phone off with a scowl. *Fuck Rozanov*. He's been strange ever since that day in the clinic. Shane's decided he's done with him- if he wants to be all *boyfriend-y* with him one day, then wants to ghost him the next, that's on him.

"What's wrong, Shane-r?" Carter asks, cuffing him on the shoulder. "Girlfriend pissing you off?"

"I don't have a girlfriend," Shane corrects, shoving the other man off.

“Well, we can fix that tonight!”

Shane watches as his friends line up shots, downing them all at once, and waits until they're distracted to slip away. He's never liked clubs, never liked doing anything but relaxing on weekends- until he met Rozanov. He shakes the thought out of his head.

“You look like you'd rather be anywhere but here.”

Shane jumps, turning the source, and finds himself inches away from a man. The guy's not unattractive- he's got a cool, artsy vibe going for him- flannel shirt, baggy jeans, 5 o'clock shadow. He smells good, a bit *too* good, like he doused himself in cologne prior to approaching Shane.

“Huh?” Shane says elegantly. The man laughs a little and moves impossibly closer.

“I said, you look like you don't want to be here.”

“I don't,” Shane responds. He's not sure why he's entertaining this- he knows he'd be over if anyone turns in his direction and he's chatting it up with a guy. But his friends are shitfaced, and he's miserable, and he's trying to get a certain Russian off of his mind.

“Then why are you here?”

Shane blinks. Why *is* he here? He could slip away, could go home, *could go to the hotel he knows Boston is staying at*- “It's my birthday.”

The man's face splits into a wide grin. He really is cute. “Well! Happy birthday, then!” He leans back against the wall, sizing Shane up. “Let me guess- you're the type of guy who hates his birthday.”

Shane shrugs. His phone buzzes in his pocket. He purposely ignores it. "I don't like being the centre of attention."

"Well," the man says. "You're certainly cute enough to be the centre of *my* attention."

Usually, whenever Rozanov speaks kindly to him- praises, compliments, orders- he blushes. Today, he cringes a little at the pickup line. The man doesn't react to whatever face he must be making, just slides his hand out.

"Elliot," he introduces. Shane habitually looks around, trying to see if anyone's eyeing him up, before he reaches out and shakes his hand.

"Shane."

"Well, Shane," Elliot doesn't let go of his hand. "How about I buy you a drink?"

"Oh, no, thanks," Shane pulls his hand back. Elliot's hands aren't nearly as big or warm as Rozanov's. "I don't drink."

Elliot raises an eyebrow. "What's in the glass, then?"

"Ginger ale." Shane shimmies the glass a little bit. His phone buzzes again twice.

"Let me buy you a ginger ale then, birthday boy."

Shane doesn't argue, just watches as Elliot disappears in the crowd. He takes the moment alone to check his phone.

Lily:

Probably something boring like doing taxes.

Come over for special present ;^)

I give him nose do you like

Shane puts his phone back in his pocket, blush creeping up his neck, and looks up just as Elliot reapproaches, glass in hand. Shane takes it with a quiet *thank you* and downs half the cup in one go, his throat dry.

“So, *Shane*,” he says. His name sounds weird coming from his mouth- with no accent. “Who are you here with?”

“Just some friends,” Shane replies, shooting the rest of the glass. His mouth is only dryer. “Don’t know where they went.”

“Well, I guess we’re friends now, aren’t we?”

Shane nods stiffly. “Hah. Yeah. Sure.”

Elliot starts talking to- *at* him, ranting about something or another, and Shane is trying hard to be an active listener, something Hayden tells him he’s very bad at, but he’s starting to feel weird. Off. He leans back against the wall, his knees a little weak, and clenches his fingers at his side.

His chest is starting to feel a little tight when Elliot notices. Maybe it’s just a panic attack- Shane’s pretty overdue for one of those. It’s been half a year since he got back on medication, and he’s been feeling alright. Something was bound to happen.

“You okay, man?” Elliot asks, amusement in his tone. Shane opens his mouth to answer, but his tongue feels too heavy. He stumbles a little again, but Elliot wraps an arm around his waist, holding him up. “Come on, let’s get you to the bathroom.”

“Don’t feel good...” Shane slurs. His head is pounding, his vision spinning. He stops walking with Elliot, trying to shove him off, trying to find Hayden, or Carter, or anyone who looks like they could help. Every minute he’s standing adds to his dizziness.

“Come on, you’re okay,” Elliot coos. He reaches for Shane’s waist again, but this time, Shane can’t push him off. He leans against him, trying to stay balanced, and allows Elliot to pull him toward the exit, although every bone in his body is screaming at him to stop.

“Hey...” Shane mumbles. “M’ friends are g’nna worry...”

“It’s okay. Your friends left. I’ll take care of you.”

“St’p...”

Shane is saved when a heavy body slams into him. He stumbles, Elliot losing his grip, and quickly hits the floor. The cold, sticky tiles of the club feel amazing on his burning skin.

“Shit! Sorry, dude, let me just- Shane?!”

Shane blinks his eyes open, and through the haze, sees the concerned look of Hayden.

“What the fuck did you do to him?” Hayden yells at Elliot, who’s already running out the door. Shane whines quietly and reaches for Hayden. “Shit, come on, buddy. You’re okay.”

“Call Lily,” Shane mumbles, eyes slipping shut. Hayden manages to grab him off the ground and carry him outside. “Please...”

“Yeah, yeah, hold on, kiddo,” Haydne soothes. He gets him out of the club and sitting on the ground, crouching in front of him. “Shit.”

Shane bats his hands away when he tries to cup his face, pressing his wrist against his forehead and wiping a bead of sweat away.

“Lily...”

Hayden looks conflicted, but reaches into Shane’s pocket, pulling his phone out. “What’s your password, bud?”

“Mmm...” Shane mumbles. He snuffles and rolls his head to the side. “8124.”

Hayden sighs, muttering under his breath as he clicks his texts. He purposely doesn’t read the open chain of messages, though he really wants to, because he needs to get Shane situated while he figures out if he needs an ambulance or not.

He presses the call button, listening to it ring twice before it clicks as connected. He starts talking instantly, filled with nerves, hoping that Shane’s mystery girl will be able to help.

“Hey, look, sorry to- uh, sorry to bother you. I’m Shane’s friend. Hayden. Uh. He... fuck, I don’t know. He got drugged or something. He’s really fucked up, and he’s asking for you, and I- uh, I don’t know what to do.”

It’s silent for a long moment. Hayden winces, hoping he hasn’t fucked this up, before the person on the other end clears their throat.

“Where is he?”

And maybe Hayden’s been drugged, too. He wiggles his toes, follows his finger with his eyes, shakes his head to see if he’s dizzy. Classic concussion protocol he’s been aware of for years. Maybe there’s been a gas leak, a carbon monoxide poisoning, and Hayden’s been just as affected as Shane.

Because *Lily* certainly doesn't sound like a woman. *She* sounds like a man. In fact, one specific man.

“Rozanov?!”

“Where is he, Pike?”

Hayden pinches himself. He looks at Shane, whose eyes are practically rolled to the back of his head, and mutters out the name of the club they're at. The line clicks dead instantly.

“Lily...” Shane cries again. He's completely slumped, body dead weight, and is even starting to drool a bit. Hayden curses under his breath as he opens up safari and starts typing in symptoms.

Classic date rape.

He doesn't necessarily *need* to go to the hospital. All he needs is to rest, and have some water, and he'll be good as new tomorrow. Plus, it might stir some headlines if Shane Hollander is spotted in the ER the night of his twenty-third birthday.

“You're okay, kiddo,” Hayden soothes. He's barely able to blink before Shane starts sobbing. “Shit. Or not.”

Hayden is about to kick his rational thinking aside and call for an ambulance when a car pulls up, brakes squeaking loudly as the front door opens. He supposes he may not be drugged, after all, because *Ilya Fucking Rozanov* exits the vehicle in his *Hello Kitty Fucking Pyjama Pants* and rushes over to Shane.

“Lily,” Shane mumbles, drooling even more on himself. Rozanov doesn't even think before reaching out with his bare hand, wiping the line of drool away from his mouth.

“Who?” Rozanov asks, and Hayden jumps when he realizes he’s being addressed. “Who did this to him? Where were you?”

“He- uh, I don’t know. Some guy. I don’t- I didn’t get a good look at him.”

Rozanov *growls*, tugging his sweater off and pulling it over Shane’s shivering body. “Come. I get you home.”

Hayden helps him stand up, his mind still completely reeling. He deposits Shane into Rozanov’s car and blinks up at the tall man. “Uh.”

“You will not say shit, Pike,” Rozanov threatens. “I fucking *kill you* if I hear this gets out from your big mouth.”

Hayden mimes zipping his lips. Rozanov is about to walk away, get in the driver's seat, when Hayden reaches out and grabs him by the wrist.

“Look. Uh. Can you- can you text me how he’s doing? Please?”

Rozanov rolls his eyes but nods, pulling his arm away from Hayden and getting in the car. Once he’s inside, he reaches over and grabs Shane’s hand, holding it gently.

“How do you feel?” He asks. Shane whines, tugging his arm closer, and rubs his face all over his forearm. “Do you need hospital?”

“No,” Shane mumbles. He’s so far gone. He pulls Rozanov’s hand up to his mouth and sucks in two of his fingers.

“Jesus, Hollander. Fuck.”

Shane promptly passes out, and Rozanov removes his hand from his mouth, taking them back to Shane's home. He shakes him awake when he parks, digging through his pocket for his keys, and grunts when he finds a paper with a phone number shoved inside.

Elliot

(514) xxx-xxxx

He shoves it in his own pocket. He'll have some calls to make tonight.

He eventually finds Shane's proper key (how many keys can one guy fit on a set?) and drags Shane inside, the half awake boy mumbling vividly the whole time.

"Okay, okay, is okay," he repeats, and he's not too sure who he's trying to comfort. He grabs a bottle of water from the fridge, uncapping it and handing it to Shane, but the boy only curls up on himself further. "Hollander. You need water."

"C'mere," he whines, holding his arms out.

"Only if you drink full bottle."

Shane grabs the bottle defiantly, chugging it all, and throws the empty plastic on the ground. He's still shaking, can't really stop it, and grabs at Rozanov again.

"Roz," he whispers, and his name sounds so good coming out of his mouth that Rozanov wants to record it and play it forever. "I missed you."

"I know," he says, trying to play it cool. He sits down next to Shane and winces when the boy throws himself in his lap. "Easy..."

"S my birthday."

“I know,” Rozanov repeats, because his brain isn’t working. He runs a hand down Shane’s spine. “I am sorry you have bad night.”

“I w’nted it to end like this,” Shane mumbles, digging his face into Rozanov’s neck and mouthing at the skin there. “I wish you were mine every day.” Ilya tilts his head back, lets him kiss and lick as much as he wants, and soon, Shane is snoring on top of him.

“Very romantic,” Rozanov whispers. He presses a kiss to the top of Shane’s head. “I will be yours every day, if is what you want.”

He carries Shane up to bed, stripping his sweaty clothes off and tugging clean, comfortable sweatpants over his hips. He pulls the blanket over his chin and climbs into bed next to him, pulling his phone out. He grabs Shane’s as well, digging through his contacts, and sends himself Hayden’s phone number before plugging Shane’s phone in.

Ilya:

Hey, is Rozanov. He is ok. Sleeping.

The response is instant.

Hayden Puke 🤔:

Good, good. I’m glad.

I’m gonna talk to the staff tmrw about that guy, see if anyone saw anything

Ilya:

No need. I have phone number

Hayden Puke 🤔:

Send immediately pls

He stays up an hour longer, making plans with Hayden to bring this man to justice, when Shane whines loudly next to him.

Hayden Pike:

Pls don't actually bring a knife

Ilya:

No promises. Good night.

He turns his phone off and snuggles into Shane.

Chapter End Notes

I am blown away once again by all the love and support in this fandom. You guys bring a smile to my face every time I read a comment!!! I love u all xoxoxoxo

Chapter 3: Pounded (Not In a Hot Way)

Montreal vs. Boston- the talk of Saturday Night Hockey. They're playing a good game. Correction- Shane's playing a good game. His team is sluggish, slow with their reflexes, dragging feet over the blue line and getting more offsides calls than ever before.

Shane saves this as a reminder for the next time the guys try to drag him out on a Friday. Everyone's practically too hungover to play. Shane doesn't know how they live with themselves- this isn't *their* game to play. This is the thousands of people who paid hundreds of dollars to watch, support, cheer.

It's Shane's game, anyway. That's why they thought they could let their guard down. The broadcast is practically stuck on Hollander vs. Rozanov- every time one of them gets a play, the camera clicks to the other. Shane's glad he's good at keeping his face together, because as much as he wants to smile when Rozanov dangles the puck between his feet and shoots top right corner, he can't.

"I'm dying," Hayden groans as they slide down the bench. He leans against Shane and closes his eyes. "I'm not gonna make it. Tell Jackie I'm sorry. Tell the kids I love them."

"Get your shit together," Shane says, though not unkindly. He's too busy staring at Rozanov on the other bench, trying to catch his attention. When the Russian catches his eye, he winks, and Shane looks back down at Hayden. "Come on. Half a period left."

"Hollzy, you're on," Coach calls, slapping him on the shoulder. Shane pushes Hayden off and jumps the bench, coming to face off, smelling Rozanov before he sees him.

"2-1," Rozanov comments. "I can fix that."

"In your dreams."

Shane wins the face off. He thinks Rozanov lets him. He's one goal away from a hat trick, and Rozanov knows how much he loves getting those. There's only ten minutes left of play, but Shane clicks the imaginary switch in his brain, weaving around Boston's defense and getting deep in their zone. It's a half-assed pass from Pike, but he manages to tip it, sending it flying into the net with a resounding whoosh.

"Let's go!" Shane screams, getting jumped by his teammates. He meets Rozanov's eyes, his smile weakening into something softer, and heads toward centre ice.

"Was good," Rozanov drawls, getting an inch too close to his face. "My turn."

Shane has the horrifying thought that he would love to do this every day for the rest of his life. Stand across from Rozanov, in a fake competition, and be aware that no matter what, they're going home together at the end of their game. The only thing better would be if they were on the same team, but that's impossible.

Things changed after the accident at the club. Shane had woken up the next morning, mouth dry as the Sahara and body weak, barely able to lift his arms. Rozanov had explained what happened, held him close when he freaked out about Hayden, and then helped him into the bath. There, they did something they haven't done yet in the many years of their casual relationship-

They talked.

Rozanov talked first, believe it or not. Mentioned something in the safe sanction of the bathtub that last night was the first time he ever felt wanted, ever felt *needed*. Shane, weak from the night prior, had turned to him and blinked.

I've needed you all along.

So- something shifted. No more six months with no communication. Good morning and goodnight texts. Phone calls in different cities. They hadn't put a name on it yet, but decided to be monogamous, and Shane thinks he's just about as happy as he's ever been.

He's mulling this thought over as he loses the face off, allowing Rozanov to slide past him and enter his zone. Hayden groans loudly, sending after him, and Shane fights back a smile as he swoops in, stealing the puck and sending it back to Shane.

It's your game, a voice, sounding suspiciously like his mom says in his head. He knows she's up there in the stands, waved at her during warm up, and all he wants is to make her proud. And his father. And Rozanov. Oh- and... maybe his team.

He's slowing down as he enters the Boston zone, feeling a little winded, but he's got a clear path to the goalie, and all he needs to do is wind back and shoot-

"Shane!"

He looks up, hearing the whizzing of skates next to him, and before he knows it, he's being thrown to the ground by the neck, head cracking back on the ice and world going black.

-

Ilya's always been good at keeping himself calm. Through his father's sickness, through his mother's death, through his brother's attitude. He's not an *angry* person, regardless of what the headlines say. He's collected, cool, unbothered.

That is, of course, until Shane Hollander is flattened on his back, body limp, not moving.

Ilya skates faster than he ever has before. Faster than he did during the Cup. The All-Stars. The Olympics. He's across the ice in barely a second, but in his mind, it takes him hours to reach Shane.

"No, no, no, no," Ilya murmurs, dropping his stick and gloves and ripping his helmet off as he falls to his knees. He's afraid to touch, afraid that Shane's neck is broken, but the boy

below him starts to stir, twisting his head from side to side. “Shane. Shane- eyes open. Look at me.”

Shane doesn't listen. He *always* listens to Ilya's commands. He moves impossibly closer, pulling Shane's head in between his legs, and uses his trembling hands to pet Shane's face.

“Look at me, Shane. Come on. *Please.*”

“Out of the fucking way, Rozanov!” Someone yells. Ilya doesn't even look up. The medic comes through, falling in place next to Ilya, and begins talking to himself.

“Limited range of motion in the neck, pupils non responsive, uneven pulse.”

“Shane,” Ilya begs. He leans down, pressing his lips to Shane's helmet. “Open eyes. Look at me.”

Distantly, he can hear an argument happening behind him. The only voice he can make out is Hayden.

“- him alone, let him be there, it's okay, they're friends, it's alright-“

“Keep talking, Rozanov,” the medic says. “He can hear you.”

“Fucking Marlow,” Ilya exhales. “I am going to kill him. You are okay, Shane. Just need eyes open. Be good boy and open your eyes, sweetheart.”

Shane carefully cracks an eye, looking up at Ilya, and closes it again. “... can see us...” he slurs. Ilya runs his thumbs along Shane's cheeks, his forehead, any part of his face he can reach.

“I do not care,” he bites. “I will deal with it later.”

“Ilya...” Shane mumbles. “Can’t feel my legs. Am I- am I okay?”

Ilya’s head shoots up at the medic, eyes wide. The man doesn’t look back at him.

“Yes,” Ilya decides. He *will* be okay. If Shane is in a wheelchair the rest of his life, unable to move, Ilya will drop everything to push him from room to room. “Yes. You are okay.”

“Did we win?” Shane asks. Ilya lets out a wet laugh. *When did he start crying?*

“Yes, you won. You did it.”

The paramedics come on the ice with a spine board, and Ilya has to be physically ripped away from Shane, fighting back against Hayden as he holds him tightly. He’s weak with panic- there’s no way he’d let *Hayden Pike* restrain him on a normal day.

“Get your shit together,” Hayden says. It doesn’t sound like his words. “There’s thousands of people here. You’re being too obvious.”

“I’ll fucking-“ Ilya shoves him off. “I will scream it for everyone to hear. I do not care.”

Ilya follows the stretcher out, slamming his shoulder into Marlow’s on the way, frantically untying his skates as they load Shane into the ambulance. He climbs in, barefoot and dressed in his gear, and glares at anyone who tries to kick him out.

“Ilya,” Shane whines. Ilya is closer to him in a second, holding his hand, bringing it up to his mouth and kissing his freezing skin.

“He is too cold,” Ilya says, snapping at the paramedic. “Give him- give him blanket.”

They wrap Shane in a trauma blanket, and Ilya rubs his hands down his arms, trying to keep him warm.

““S the game finished?”

“Yes,” Ilya responds. “Is over. You play good. Best.”

“Wh’rs my mom?”

“She is coming.” Ilya kisses his hand again, moving away as the paramedics start to work. “Is okay. I am here.”

Once they get him inside, Ilya tries to come into the room, but he’s frankly ushered out. His heart is pounding in his ear. He wants to scream, wants to punch everybody in his way and bring Shane back to health with his own two hands, but the only thing that comes out of his mouth is a weak protest.

“Let me go in with him! He is scared of needles!”

He is ignored, and the door shuts in his face, a security guard gently pulling him away.

Some time later- could be five minutes, could be five hours- Ilya is sitting in the waiting room of the ER, looking absolutely ridiculous in his gear as he stares blankly at the wall. He looks up only when someone sits next to him.

“Rozanov.”

Ilya sighs, feeling none of the usual anxiety he feels at the idea of someone discovering their relationship. Instead, his worry for Shane is overpowering.

“Hi.”

Yuna smiles at him gently, but warily, like she isn't quite sure what to make of the situation. “Did you hear anything?”

“No.”

Shane's father slides into the seat next to Yuna. “... is now a good time to ask?”

“David.”

Ilya looks away, staring down at the ground. “I...”

“You love him, don't you?” Yuna asks, her voice soft. Ilya blinks a few times at the floor. “Join the club.”

“I can't say I'm not surprised,” David exhales. He gently nudges Ilya with his shoulder. “Thought you two were supposed to be rivals.”

Ilya can't think about the beginning of their relationship. Can't reminisce, can't think of everything he did wrong. If he had said what he felt, asked for what he needed, begged Shane to stay all the times he let him walk away- maybe they could have done things differently. A doctor appears in the waiting room.

“Family of Mr. Hollander?”

Ilya stands first.

He makes his way over to the doctor, hands trembling. “He is okay?”

“Shane’s going to be alright,” the man says. Ilya nearly collapses with relief. He feels Yuna wrap her hand around his arm, squeezing him tightly through his equipment. “He has a major concussion, a shattered collarbone, and will be off the ice for a long time. But he’s going to be okay.”

“He is... he is...” Ilya exhales in frustration. “He is not... not moving?”

Usually, when he looks to the side for help with an English word, Shane chimes in without hesitation. It’s like he can read Ilya’s mind- always knowing what he means, and giving him the words to say it. The doctor blinks at him in confusion. *Stupid fucking language.*

“Paralyzed,” David suggests. Ilya nods. Sounds right.

“No, he’s not paralyzed.”

“He said- he said he couldn’t feel legs,” Ilya snuffles. He brings his shaking hand to his cheek to wipe away the fresh tears. “You run all tests, da?”

“Yes. We ran all the tests. His body went into shock, and with the impact on his spine, he lost feeling in his legs momentarily. He has regained all movement, and he will be okay.”

“And- and-“

“Rozanov,” Yuna cuts him off. “Ilya. He’s okay.”

“He’s awake now, but still pretty out of it. We gave him some morphine to help with the pain.” He looks at Shane’s parents, then gives Ilya a pitiful look. “Family only right now, unfortunately.”

“When- when can I see him?”

“Visiting hours open at 8 tomorrow-“

Ilya gently removes Yuna’s hand. “Go see him. I will go tomorrow.”

-

Yuna takes a deep breath before toeing open the door to Shane’s hospital room. So many doctors appointments, broken bones, overnight fevers, but it never gets easier. Her head is spinning, and she barely stops the relieved sob that exits her lips as she spots her son.

“Oh, honey...” she exhales. David closes the door behind her, and they both rush over to Shane’s bed side. “How do you feel? Do you need water?”

Shane blinks a few times. It reminds Yuna of when he was six, and fell out of a tree.
“Ilya...?”

Yuna sighs. “No, honey. Ilya can’t come in right now.”

““S he here?”

David steps forward. He puts his hand over Shane’s. “Don’t worry about that right now, buddy. Just get better.”

“Want Ilya...”

Yuna grabs the cup of water off the nightstand, holding it up to Shane’s mouth, but her boy only whines childishly and moves his head away.

“Where is he?”

“Shane,” David starts, but Shane’s heart monitor starts beeping aggressively. “Shane, you gotta relax, pal. It’s okay.”

The nurse comes in, pumping some more medication through his IV, and Shane looks at it, eyes wide. He holds it up to Yuna. “Gotta blow on it.”

“I’ve got to- what?”

“Blow on it. *Woooooshhh*. Cold air.”

She follows his request, and he settles down, his eyes slotting shut as he attempts to get comfortable.

“I won, mom,” he whispers, a small smile on his face. “Hat trick, they said.”

“You did, baby,” Yuna replies, brushing a strand of hair out of his face. “You did so well.”

“Did Ilya see my hat trick?”

David thinks he’s about to combust. He drags a chair over to the side of the bed, rubbing his hand down his face. “Yeah, bud. He saw. I didn’t know you two were so close.”

“‘M gonna marry him,” Shane says sleepily, words slurred around the edges. “He’s the best.”

An hour or so later, well into midnight, Yuna and David make their leave. They’re both sluggish on their feet, exhausted from worry, and David holds onto her hand tightly as they make their way to the waiting room.

“I just- *Ilya Rozanov*? Seriously?”

“Maybe it’s not that serious,” Yuna tries to comfort, rubbing her thumb over his knuckles. “Maybe... I don’t know, David. Maybe they’re just figuring things out. They’re young, they’re not actually going to get married-“

She stops in her track, jaw dropping open at the sight of Ilya Rozanov, number 81 for the Boston Bears, Shane’s *mortal enemy*, curled up in a chair, still dressed in his bulky hockey uniform, fast asleep. His neck is craned awkwardly, and Yuna can only imagine what kind of pain he’s going to wake up with tomorrow.

“Looks pretty serious to me,” David whispers, but he’s got a smile on his face.

-

“Jesus, Roz, you slept like this all night?”

Ilya jolts himself awake, wiping his mouth, and darts his eyes around the room. “Shane? Is okay?”

“Yeah,” Hayden responds, sighing. He throws Ilya’s backpack on the ground. “How’s the neck?”

“Ah, is fine,” Ilya says, though he winces horribly at the tug he feels when he sits up. “Am Russian. We do not get sore.”

Ilya looks around, spotting nobody in the waiting room but him, Pike, and the busy receptionist, and starts to tug his uniform off. He tugs on his sweater over his compression tank, stepping into his sweatpants and pulling them over his shorts, and tries to stretch his neck out.

“They let you see him yet?” Hayden asks, pointedly looking away from Ilya as he changes.

“You can look, Pike. Gay is not catching.” He runs a hand through his sweaty hair. “No. Family only.”

“And you didn’t think to go back to the hotel and shower? You smell like shit, man.”

“If something happens, I am here,” Ilya dismisses. He grunts as he bends down, grabbing his phone, wincing at the 300+ missed texts from his teammates. “Yikes.”

“Yeah, uh, the internet is kind of blown up. Yuna’s been on it with Shane’s PR manager, but there’s not much to do.”

Ilya watches as the clock strikes 8. “Hold the thought, Pike.” He walks up to the receptionist. “*Now* may I see Shane?”

She rolls her eyes but leads him into Shane’s room, knocking on the door quietly, and Ilya lets out a breath he didn’t know he was holding at the sight of him curled up in bed. His hair is a mess, his face scrunched up in discomfort, and he’s got a little sling over his shoulder.

“Shane,” Ilya exhales, stepping toward the bed.

Shane blinks his eyes open. He smiles softly at Ilya and holds out his uninjured hand. Ilya doesn't even hesitate before grasping it.

"How do you feel?"

"Like shit," Shane mutters. "Like I got flatted by Cliff Marlow."

"I will kill him--"

"Ilya." He squeezes his hand and brings it to his mouth, kissing it. "You look terrible."

"I look handsome," Ilya says, though it's weak. He sits down in the chair at his bedside and buries his face in Shane's lap, if only to smell him. "Do not ever do that again. Never."

Shane's hand falls into his hair. He starts untangling it gently. "Everyone knows."

"Is fine. Let them."

"No, Ilya," he tugs gently. Ilya looks up. "Everyone *knows*. It's out. It's done."

Shane's watching him carefully, watching his reaction, like he's going to decide to storm out and never talk to him again. Ilya shifts, leaning up in his chair, and kisses him softly.

"No more hiding," he says against Shane's lips.

"And no sex for three weeks." Shane grins, kissing Ilya's nose.

“I will have no sex forever if it means you are okay.”

Shane moves over so Ilya can lay next to him, the two of them nearly falling off the bed, and snuggles into his side.

“They gave me so many needles,” Shane complains.

“And you did not even have bunny,” Ilya adds, kissing his forehead. “You were brave boy all by yourself.”

Shane’s eyes flutter shut. “I love you.”

Ilya feels his heart pound harder. All the times he thought it but didn’t say it- he’s loved Shane Hollander since the beginning. He closes his eyes and sees him on the ice, unmoving, not knowing how Ilya feels.

“I love you. So much. More than life.”

Shane’s smile doesn’t fade as he begins to fall asleep, Ilya following shortly after. A few moments later, Hayden appears, his eyes soft as he takes in the scene. He takes a photo of them and sends it off to Rozanov.

He’s surprised to see it posted on Ilya’s Instagram the next day.

Still cuter than you in a hospital gown.

Chapter 4: Screaming in Bed (And Not In A Hot Way)

Chapter Notes

Feeling a lil blue tonight so here's a nice chapter... it's quite short but hopefully that's ok!

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

Shane is no stranger to nightmares. Night *terrors*, as is childhood therapist used to say. She told Shane that because he has so much anxiety, it sticks with him overnight, and comes to haunt him. She wasn't that great of a therapist, now that he thinks of it.

Still- he's used to it. Dreams of monsters and clowns and having to give a speech naked in front of his grandparents. Losing the cup and his friends and his life. Dying at the hands of his mother (this one only happened twice, both times being when Yuna was angry at him for something so small, but Shane made himself sick over it)

Things are different now. After the accident, after the whole world found out about his and Ilya's relationship, his universe shifted. He and Ilya were put on the Centaurs. They play together every day. They spend the summer in Shane's cabin and the rest of the time in a home in Ottawa or a hotel on away games. He's been stressed- of course Shane's been stressed- but he's been okay.

He's having a hard time falling asleep tonight. It's a few weeks from Christmas, their last game of the calendar year is tomorrow, and Shane's mind is abuzz. It's him and Ilya's first Christmas together. Does Ilya have any traditions? Does he mind coming to Shane's parents house? He's tossing and turning in bed, Ilya asleep soundly next to him, before the man subconsciously realizes his distress, reaching out and laying a heavy arm over his waist to settle him.

Ilya nuzzles into the back of his neck, letting out a soft sigh, and Shane can't help but relax, feeling his lips against his skin, his breath tickling his hair, his strong bicep holding him tight.

It was only a matter of time before Ilya saw this side of him.

-

Ilya is dreaming of sex on a beach, a watermelon margarita, and Shane in a bikini, when he's forcibly ripped out of his paradise. He blinks the sleep out of his eyes, looking over at the clock.

3:43AM

Far too early for anyone normal to be awake. He's always been an early riser, especially on game days, but anything before 5 is madness. He sits up a bit, yawning, and tries to figure out what scared him from his sleep when it happens again.

A sharp gasp. Shane.

He looks over, watches as his boyfriend squirms and shakes his head, face scrunched together in fear and tears streaming from his eyes. He's grasping at the bedsheets, mumbling to himself, and Ilya briefly thinks he's being possessed before he realizes what's going on.

"Shane," Ilya whispers, hand on his chest. Shane only fights harder. "*Shane*. Wake up."

Ilya turns, grabbing his arm, and barely has time to react before a fist is flying, nailing him directly in the eye. He pulls away, hissing, and holds his own hand up.

"Shit! Wake up, Shane," he shakes Shane, a bit more aggressively, and manages to block the hit when he swings again. Shane sits up, gasping, and immediately places his hands over his face. "Shane. Is okay. Breathe."

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," Shane pants. He brings his hands to his hair and rips at it. "Shit, shit, fuck--"

Ilya takes the risk and moves closer, pulling his hands out of his hair, and holds them tightly. “Shane, breathe.”

“You- you were gone- you left, you left me, you left-“

“Am right here, Shane,” Ilya soothes. He watches as Shane’s eyes close, his knees up to his chest, as he tries to desperately suck in his breath. “Come on. You are okay.”

“You left,” Shane repeats, shaking his head. He doesn’t look up, doesn’t want to, doesn’t want to see Ilya leave. “You left.”

“I did not leave,” Ilya’s hand comes up to his chin, pulling his head out of his knees. “Look. I am here.”

Shane finally peeks open his eye, before noticing the blood on his face. His own panic morphs into concern, then confusion, then further panic- this time for Ilya.

“What- what happened?”

“Fell,” Ilya responds instantly. “Is okay. I’m here.”

Shane nods, brain a mess, and falls into the warm solitude of Ilya’s chest. “Fuck. You-you...”

Ilya runs his hand through his hair, cautious of his other hand with blood on it. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Shane shakes his head, inhaling him deeply, and swallows thickly. He must reconsider, because he takes a deep breath and pulls back. “You- you left me, you said I was- I was too

much, and left, and- and I had to watch you leave- after- after everything.”

Ilya presses a firm kiss to his head. “I would never.” He knows it’s the truth, Shane knows it’s the truth, but Ilya is no stranger to nightmares and way they seem *so damn real*. “Never.”

Shane relaxes a bit. “I- fuck, I don’t think I can go back to sleep.”

Ilya hums. He presses another kiss to Shane’s head for good measure and stands, using the baby wipes next to their bed to wipe the blood away from his eye. He slightly regrets teaching Shane how to throw a punch properly. There’s a small cut under his eye, and he hisses softly as he wipes it clean.

He tosses the wipe away and heads for his closet, pulling out the hoodie Shane loves the most, and brings it back to the bed, where Shane is watching him like a hawk. He pulls it over the boys head and pulls him into his arms.

“What- what are you doing?” Shane asks, voice still weak. Ilya shushes him quietly and brings him downstairs, grabbing all the soft blankets off the couch and the cushions and creating a little bed next to their Christmas tree.

“Come.”

Shane obeys- *of course he does*- and warily sits next to Ilya. His posture is still too straight, breathing still a bit quick, but his eyes soften as he looks at all the ornaments on their tree. Gifts from friends, family, teammates, fans. Every piece on there has its own story. There’s two gifts underneath, wrapped messily by Ilya, and the other man hooks his chin to Shane’s shoulder.

“Is our first Christmas together,” Ilya says softly. Shane can’t help the smile that appears on his face. He brings his hand up, cupping the side of Ilya’s face, and carefully maneuvers them so they’re laying down. He tucks himself into Ilya’s chest and takes a deep breath.

“I’m-“ Shane starts, then stops. He clicks his tongue as he tries to find the words. “I’m scared.”

“Of Christmas?”

“No,” he scoffs. He moves impossibly closer to Ilya. Sometimes he wishes he could cut him open, crack his ribs, and live inside of him. A normal thought to have. “I’m scared that- that one day, you’re gonna realize that... I’m not what you want.”

Shane can feel Ilya’s breath hitch under his ear. He keeps going while he still has the courage.

“I’m not... not easy to love. I know I’m not. I’m boring, and I’m neurotic, and I’m clumsy, and I keep getting myself in trouble. You shouldn’t have to spend your whole life pulling me out of situations.”

Ilya, though it pains him, lets him talk. He knows Shane needs to get it out.

“I’m just scared, I guess. That you’re gonna come to your senses one day and leave. There’s a million people out there who- who don’t have the same issues I do, who would be better for you.”

“Shane,” he interrupts. His voice is shaky. “Why would I ever want anything but you?”

Shane goes to scoff again, but Ilya squeezes him as tight as he can. He takes a minute to find his words.

“I spend whole life hiding. I spend whole life wanting to be with you, wanting to show everyone we are together. Why would I want to leave?”

“You were eighteen when we met-“

“My life started when I met you.”

Shane feels like someone punched him in the gut. He deflates on top of Ilya.

“Shane, I never want to spend a second away from you. Every time I cannot be at your side, I feel myself go crazy- more than I already am.” He runs a hand down Shane’s back. “I understand fear. I am scared too. But you- how do I say- there can not be love without fear.”

Shane twists his fingers in the material of Ilya’s shirt, eyes closing.

“I will take the fear every day of my life if it means I can love you.”

“When did your English get so good?” Shane asks, because the air is starting to feel too thick, and he doesn’t want to cry again. Ilya pinches him. “Fuck, Ilya. I love you so much.”

“I love you most.”

“No you don’t.”

“Well, I am the best at hockey, so I am the best at loving, da? Is how it works?”

Shane bites down on his chest lightly in retaliation. He settles back down. “Did I really punch you?”

“No. Is fall. I am clumsy. You know this.”

“Ilya.”

“Shane.”

Shane sighs. “I’m sorry I hurt you.”

“Ah, you can not hurt me. You have tiny baby fists. Like little kitten trying to scratch.”

“Meow,” Shane jokes with a straight face. Ilya’s hand returns to his hair, scratching at his scalp, and the quiet buzz of the home fills the air. He falls asleep a few moments later, lulled by the gentle rise and fall of Ilya’s chest.

15 hours later, in the change room of the Ottawa Centaurs, someone cracks a joke about Ilya’s developing black eye. Ilya only grins, winking with it, and claps Shane on the shoulder.

“I take million and one black eyes. He is still as beautiful only seeing with one.”

The groans and complaints only add to Shane’s blush.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed <3

Chapter 5: Gagged (Not In a Hot Way)

Chapter Notes

Silly ducks!!

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

The first thought Shane has as he hears somebody banging on his front door is, *shit, I must have missed practice*. He drags himself out of bed, ignoring the spinning as he shuffles downstairs and toward the door, having to hold onto the walls to avoid falling. He thinks he yells something back, a hold on! or otherwise, and opens his hockey bag sitting next to the couch, tugging on his chest plate and shin pads before making his way to open the door.

Huh. Rozanov. And he looks... *concerned*?

“Hi,” Shane says dumbly. He steps forward and out the door, closing it behind him. “I’m late for practice, so....”

Ilya’s face twists into confusion. He puts a hand up, coming to rest in the middle of Shane’s chest, halting him from moving any further. “You are not.”

“I am,” Shane says. He tries to push past him, but he’s too damn strong. “What are you doing here?”

Ilya sighs, reaching out with his free hand and opening the door. He gently directs Shane back inside. “You do not answer phone.”

“Phone?” Shane questions. He watches as Ilya starts to undo his Velcro, taking the chest pad off and dropping it on the ground. “Wait, wait, wait. I have a game at five.”

“You do not,” Ilya replies, getting down on one knee to undo his shin pads. He looks good down there. “You are sick.”

“I’m- what?” Shane asks, baffled. He doesn’t feel sick. He feels fucking *great* actually, if you don’t mind the dizziness and shakiness of all his extremities. “No I’m not.”

“You are trying to leave house without pants on.” Shane looks down. *Oh*. When did his pants come off? “Come. Bed.”

“I have that award show,” Shane whines as Ilya directs him back up the stairs. “Need to do the speech.”

“You will do speech after you sleep,” Ilya humours him. He sits him down on their messy, unmade bed, and finally looks him in the eye. “When did you eat?”

Shane thinks. Then thinks some more. He must be thinking too hard, because Ilya sighs quietly, bringing his wrist up to his forehead and pressing against it.

“You are burning,” he says, his hand moving down to the nape of his neck. He squeezes slightly, and Shane lets his jaw drop open as he inhales deeply through his mouth, suddenly hit with a wave of exhaustion.

“I have the banquet,” he mumbles, eyes half lidded. In his mind, he shoves Ilya away, hops out of bed with grace, and throws on his suit, running out the door. In reality, he lets out a low whine, falling back against the mountain of pillows at the head of his bed while Ilya begins to tut over him. “The important one.”

“I will wake you for banquet,” Ilya says softly. He looks at Shane’s messy t-shirt, covered in sweat, and gently takes it off his body.

“Cold,” Shane whines childishly. “Get- get the suit. For the kids visit.”

“When is kids visit?”

“At the hospital,” Shane mumbles. Ilya grabs one of his own crewnecks instead, finding it folded neatly at the bottom of Shane’s drawer. “Have to go meet them later.”

“Ah,” Ilya says, trying to go along with his nonsense. He tugs his sweater over Shane’s head, trying not to smile at how cute he looks in his clothing. “Not to worry. I will get you ready.”

“But it’s the All-Stars,” Shane protests as Ilya pushes him back down, pulling the blanket over his chest.

“Go to sleep, *krolik*,” he says, because Shane really does look like a bunny, his little nose all scrunched up in dismay. “I will be here when you wake up.”

“I have a boyfriend,” Shane mumbles as Ilya tries to sit down on the bed next to him. He weakly pushes at him. “Don’t...”

“Shane,” Ilya laughs, avoiding his little shoves. He rests a hand on Shane’s chest and rubs gentle circles, pulling his stuffed bunny up to his face and tickling his burning cheek. “Go to sleep. I deal with the rest.”

Shane is out half a second later, mouth open as he already begins to snore quietly. Ilya stays there for a few moments, admiring him, before making his way down to the kitchen. He digs through their fridge, trying to find enough ingredients to put together a nice pot of soup.

Halfway through cooking, Ilya’s phone begins to ring. He pulls it out of his pocket, spotting Shane’s contact, and cautiously accepts the call.

“You are alright?” He starts. He hasn’t heard any movement upstairs from Shane’s bedroom.

Shane sucks in a shaky breath, and, across the phone, begins to sob. It's so loud that Ilya can hear it from the kitchen. *"I did something bad..."*

"What is the matter?" He asks, brain beginning to panic. Shane only cries harder.

"There- there was a man, and- and he made me go to bed, and he was touching me like you do, and I- I cheated on you, and you're going to leave me, and- and-"

Ilya swears under his breath, turning the heat off of the stove and running upstairs. He throws open the bedroom door to find Shane still bundled up in bed, not having moved from where Ilya tucked him in less than an hour ago. He quickly makes his way toward the crying boy.

"Shane," he stops his panicking, gently grabbing his face and moving his gaze to him. "You are okay."

"I cheated on you," Shane sobs. Ilya knows that the words are spoken only in a paranoid, feverish fake-reality, but he still hates the way they sound coming out of Shane's mouth. He shakes his head and moves closer.

"No you did not," he says. He leans in and kisses Shane on the cheek. "You are sick."

"I'm not sick," Shane cries, then coughs directly into Ilya's mouth. "I never get sick."

Ilya wipes the others saliva from his own face. Who said romance was dead? "You spent too much time with little Pike's, they give you flu."

"Hayden has a kid?"

"He has four."

Shane sucks in a breath and stops crying. “Woah.” Then, he sits up straight and begins to sob even harder. “I want a baby.”

“Jesus, Shane,” Ilya pulls him into his chest, rubbing his back gently. “We need to get fever down.”

“I want to be pregnant,” Shane cries into Ilya’s pecs. “I want to give you a baby.”

Ilya presses a kiss to the top of his head. “Okay, we can keep trying. After you feel better.”

“Really?” Shane looks up, his eyes red rimmed and his face wet. Ilya brings his sleeve over his thumb and wipes at his cheeks and under his nose.

“Really. But you have to feel better first.”

Shane nods quickly, the motion making his head spin, and clings onto Ilya when he tries to move. “I don’t feel good...”

“I *know*, sweetheart,” Ilya coos. “I make soup. Come downstairs with me.”

Practically carrying Shane down the stairs, he seats him on the couch, watching as he melts into the back of it. He hands Shane a bowl of the soup and winces when it nearly spills all over Shane’s lap, his hands too shaky to hold it properly.

“*Help*,” Shane whines. He’s never so forward in admitting when he needs help. Ilya nods, sitting next to him and holding the bowl. He brings the spoon up, blowing on it gently, before sticking it in Shane’s mouth. They get through half the bowl together before Shane pushes him away. “N’more.”

“You should have bath,” Ilya says. He places the bowl on the coffee table and runs a hand through Shane’s sweaty hair.

“Can’t have bath,” Shane mumbles. His eyes slip shut as Ilya’s fingers card through his curls. “I have the rookie award.”

“You won the rookie award,” Ilya reminds him. He cups the side of his face and frowns at him. “You beat me.”

“No I didn’t.”

Ilya sighs, standing up and helping him to the guest bathroom. He runs the water in the bath and gently deposits Shane inside, scrubbing the sweat and germs away from his body, much to his avid protests.

“I’m a grown man,” Shane whines.

“Sure you are, sweetheart.”

“I pay taxes.”

Ilya dunks his head under the water just for his own satisfaction. Shane snorts in displeasure and tries to splash Ilya.

Finally, he gets Shane back in bed, with a set of clean sheets. He tries to let go of him once he’s laying down, but Shane grabs onto him, pulling him down into his embrace.

“Stay,” Shane requests, digging his burning forehead into Ilya’s neck. He rubs a hand down his back and replaces into the pillow.

“Okay,” Ilya whispers. He kisses the top of his head and closes his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

One more chapter!!! Who's excited!!

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

TW for depression and depressive episodes
Merry Christmas come get yall food

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

Shane Hollander is a man of facts. He's quick to make assumptions, quick to jump to the worst case scenario at any given time, but when it comes down to the serious things, he relies on facts to get him through it.

The death of his grandfather was the first time he truly felt this. His mother, stone faced to hide her tears, had sat him down and laid down the facts: *Grandpa is gone. He is not coming back. You will be okay.*

Since then, Shane has tried to be rational. He goes through plays in his head, calculates the way certain players act, knows their next move before they do it. Facts have helped him with hockey all his life. And now, entering his home to quiet nothingness, Shane is left to state the facts.

1. Ilya did not greet him at the door. This is unusual, as it's currently 4 pm, and he was still asleep when he left. This is *also* unusual, as Ilya is an early riser.
2. The microwave door has been left opened. Ilya always closes it after he leaves, knowing it bugs Shane greatly, but sometimes he simply is rushing out the door and doesn't have time to close it. Ilya always shuts it for him.
3. Ilya has not left their bed. The bathroom is still as neat as Shane left it, the blanket on the couch untouched, and there's no sign of life.
4. Ilya turned him away last night. He had said once, many years ago, *If I ever say no to sex, I am clone*. But last night, when Shane tried to straddle him, he only gently squeezed his hips and turned around, claiming he was tired.
5. Ilya hasn't answered a single text all day.

These facts run through Shane's head as he walks up the stairs, biting down on his lip nervously. He knocks on their bedroom door- doesn't know why he knocks, but it feels polite.

"Ilya?"

No answer. Shane's irrational brain starts its usual course- *he doesn't love you, he left, he found someone new*. He pushes these thoughts away as he slowly toes the door open. There is a vaguely Ilya-shaped lump under their messy covers.

"Hey..." Shane says quietly. He walks toward the bed, sitting next to Ilya, and lays a hand down on what he assumes is his back. He starts rubbing gentle circles. "You okay?"

A small hum is heard. It doesn't sound good, or bad. Just a small *hm*. Shane moves closer and pulls the sheets away. Ilya looks like a wreck.

"You're not feeling good?" He asks, voice soft. He wipes the little crusty pieces away from Ilya's eyes. "You should've texted me. I could have got some cold medicine or something."

Ilya keeps his eyes shut, dark circles deep, and twists his head away from Shane.

"You're not hot..." Shane comments, pressing his wrist to Ilya's forehead. "Have you had anything to eat?"

Ilya doesn't answer. He shakily grabs the duvet, pulling it back over his head, and rolls away from Shane.

"Okay..." Shane says, trying not to be offended. Maybe he lost his voice. He squeezes Ilya's shoulder and stands up. "I'll- uh, I'll go make soup. Or something. Uh. Just- text me if you need anything."

Again, the *hm* is back. Shane exits, leaving the door open, and goes back down the stairs. He can't help but feel like this is something else- something *bigger*. His fingers are reaching for his phone before he understands what he's doing.

"Hi, honey! How's things?"

The sound of his mom's voice always relaxes his shoulders. They moved back to Ottawa when Shane and Ilya did, and they've all grown much closer as a little family. He takes a deep breath.

"Uh. Good. I think?"

"Sounds convincing," Shane's dad says. He realizes they must be in the car, on Bluetooth. He peeks up at the stairs and then moves farther away.

"I just- uh, I don't know. Ilya's being weird."

"Is he okay?" David asks, voice worried. Shane shakes his head immediately.

"He just- I don't know. He's being different. I thought he was sick, maybe, but he doesn't have a fever, and he was breathing fine through his nose, so I don't know."

Yuna hums across the line. *"Maybe he's just tired?"*

"No. He doesn't- he doesn't just get tired. Always says *Russians do not get sleepy*. This is weird. Somethings wrong."

"Well, honey. We're just going out for the evening, but we can swing by later tonight and see what's going on if you want?"

Shane considers. He huffs out a bit of air and shakes his head. “I’ll- uh, I’ll call you if I need you. Maybe Hayden knows.”

“Okay, sweetheart. Let us know. We love you.”

“Love you too.” Shane hangs up, scrolling down to Hayden’s contact, and hits the call button. Instantly, the sound of screaming children fills his ear.

“Ruby! Put her down! I- Jesus. Sorry, Shane. Hi!”

Shane smiles a bit, though it doesn’t feel right. “Hey.”

“You alright, kiddo? Sound a bit down.”

“I’m just- I’m worried about Ilya. He’s acting weird. Distant.”

“Distant? Like... like cheating?”

“No! Jesus, why would you- nevermind,” Shane huffs. He brings his hand up to his mouth and starts biting his nails. “I just- ugh. He’s been in bed all day, and he’s not talking, and he looks like a wreck.”

Hayden is quiet for a moment. *“I mean, I don’t want to assume anything, but Jackie was like that for a while after she had the kids.”*

“Well, Ilya didn’t have any children.”

“Yeah, dipshit. I know,” Hayden teases softly. His voice drops a bit more seriously. *“It was postpartum depression.”*

“Depression? I’d- I’d know if Ilya had that.”

“I don’t know, man. Only thing I can think of.”

“What... what did you do to help?” Shane asks, pacing around the living room. Hayden hums.

“Just, like, being there for her. Letting her know she wasn’t crazy, her emotions were valid, all that jazz. Not letting her hide herself.”

Shane nods, taking note. He sits down on the couch. “Maybe you’re not such a bad husband.”

“Shut up, Hollzy. You’d be lucky to have me.”

They talk a bit more before Shane hangs up, fingers flying over to Google. He searches how to help depressed person and memorizes the most important facts. He makes his way back upstairs and enters the bedroom again.

“Ilya?”

Again. No answer. Ilya hasn’t moved in the last half hour. Shane sighs, walking over to their window and opening the blinds, letting some sunlight in. Ilya only wraps himself up more in his duvet.

Shane goes back to the bed, pulling the blanket back. He pokes at Ilya lightly.

“Sit up. You’re too heavy for me to lift.”

Ilya grumbles something in Russian. Shane sighs.

“Okay, fine, but then you’re gonna have to listen to me complain about having a sore back.”

Somehow, that gets through to him, and Ilya pulls himself up on his elbows, leaning back against the headboard. His hair is a mess, curls flattened against his scalp, and he can’t look Shane in his eyes.

“Here,” Shane says quietly, reaching for his water bottle. He holds it out to Ilya, who takes it without complaint, weakly taking a sip. Shane rests his hand on Ilya’s leg. “I- uh, are you doing okay?”

Ilya looks down at the water bottle in his hand. He inhales slowly through his nose. “Am fine.”

Shane could cry in relief at hearing his voice, although it sounds broken. He squeezes Ilya’s knee.

“You- you sure?”

“Sure.”

“Ilya,” Shane says quietly. He moves even closer and reaches up to cup his face. Ilya flinches slightly but lets him. “I’m... I’m worried about you. Talk to me.”

“Nothing to talk about, Hollander.”

The use of his last name slices through Shane’s heart like a knife. He tries to keep his face positive, not let it show, but he’s starting to panic.

“Ilya.” He rubs his thumb over his cheek. “You don’t- you don’t have to be okay.”

“I am okay.” It sounds weak. Shane doesn’t believe him for a second.

“But- but you don’t *have to be*,” Shane whispers. “I... I love you no matter what. If you’re upset, if you’re tired, if you’re... if you’re *depressed*.”

Ilya’s eyes dart to him. He looks scared.

“You just... you gotta let me in. I’m here for you.”

“You should not have to be,” Ilya says. Shane moves even closer and pulls Ilya into his chest.

“I am. You’re stuck with me. Get used to it,” he tries to joke, but it falls flat. Ilya collapses against him and digs his face in his neck. “I’ve got you. You can let go.”

Shane tries not to flinch when wetness hits his skin. Ilya snuffles once, quietly, then his back starts shaking, sobs wracking through him. Shane moves so he’s straddling him, holding him as close as he can to his chest, running his fingers through his hair, down his back- anywhere he can reach.

“You’re okay, you’re okay, I got you, I’m here,” Shane comforts. He feels completely out of his depth- this is always Ilya’s doing. He wracks his brain for everything Ilya does that makes him feel better. “I’m right here.”

“Fuck,” Ilya sobs. He reaches around Shane’s waist, hands splaying on his shoulder, and holds him tighter than he ever has before. “I’m sorry...”

“You have nothing to be sorry for, Ilya,” Shane says. He feels his own eyes sting with tears. “Not one thing. You’re okay.”

“I hate-“ Ilya chokes. “I hate being like this.”

“I love you,” Shane reminds him. “I love you like this. Like anything.”

After a few minutes of crying, Ilya’s sobs settle down, and he relaxes his hold on Shane, breath still hitching every once in a while. Shane holds onto his face, runs his thumbs along the tear tracks, and presses kisses to every inch of his skin that he can reach.

“I’m sorry,” Ilya repeats. “I’m sorry.”

“No,” Shane stops him, hands coming into his hair and holding him there. “Stop apologizing. I just- I need you to talk to me, so I can help.”

“Is not your job,” Ilya snuffles. He wipes his face aggressively.

“Yes, it is,” Shane argues. “I’m your husband. That’s literally part of the job description.”

“No, I-“ Ilya huffs. “I am supposed to be one who takes care. Not you.”

“Ilya, it’s not... it’s not assigned roles,” Shane tries to explain. “You- you often take care of me, yes, because I’m crazy and have lots of problems-“

“Not crazy.”

“Okay,” Shane huffs out a little laugh. “Okay. Because I need help more than you do. But- but that doesn’t mean you aren’t allowed to ask for help.”

Ilya flops back against the headboard. He wipes his face again. “I am feeling stupid.”

“You’re not stupid.” Shane runs his hands along Ilya’s biceps. “You’re mine. And I’m here to take care of you, whether you like it or not.”

This gets a small, weak smile out of Ilya. His eyes are cloudy, far away, but they still look at Shane with a hint of fondness.

“Okay, here’s the plan,” Shane decides. “We are gonna go outside, get some fresh air, and go to that cafe you like. And I’ll hold your hand the whole time, and- and you can pay, because I know you don’t like it when I pay, but just know I really want to pay for you.”

“Mister planner,” Ilya teases. He still doesn’t sound the same. Shane leans in and presses a soft kiss to his lips before he drags him out of bed, helping him change into a new outfit, and then interlocks their fingers so tight that Ilya thinks he won’t ever let go.

Shane leads them outside, into the cool spring air, and watches carefully as Ilya takes a deep breath. His eyes are still red rimmed, and he’s awfully quiet as they walk, but Shane doesn’t mind. He chats, filling the silence with stories about his childhood, about his goals for the summer, about how excited he is to spend every moment with Ilya.

After they eat, Shane walks them back, but watches as Ilya’s eyes linger on the park next to their house. Shane leads him there instead, sitting on the swing set, looking absolutely ridiculous, and Ilya can only laugh quietly before sitting next to him.

“Is... how do you say, time of year?” Ilya starts.

“Anniversary?”

“Yes. Anniversary of my mother passing. I-“ his voice cracks. He looks down at the ground, kicking at some of the wood chips. “I keep thinking about how much she would love you. Love us.”

“I would have loved her too,” Shane says softly. He reaches over and grabs Ilya’s hand again. “I would- I’d thank her. For having you.”

Ilya’s eyes meet his gaze. He gives him a soft smile.

“She would be upset I did not marry a Russian.”

“I can learn,” Shane says. He squeezes Ilya’s hand. “*Hollander, on your knees.*”

Shane’s chest lightens at the sound of Ilya’s laugh. “That is how I sound to you, da?”

“Da.” They fall into comfortable silence before Shane speaks again. “She- I mean, I don’t know her. But she would be so fucking proud of you, Ilya. So proud.”

Ilya snuffles quietly. He keeps his eyes down. “She wanted to be grandmother.”

“And she will be. One day. We’ll tell our kids about Grandma Rozanov, and how she would have loved them.”

Ilya squeezes his hand. “You are good at this.”

Later that evening, laying in fresh sheets, stomachs full from a yummy dinner, and bodies still warm from their shower, Shane curls into Ilya’s side.

“I do not like feeling like this,” Ilya says quietly. Shane hums. “Weak. Like- like I can not talk to you.”

“You can always talk to me,” Shane reassures. “Always. About anything. About- about how many backhands I’ve missed. Anything.”

Ilya runs a hand through his still damp hair. “I get like this sometimes. Is not pretty.”

“Everything about you is pretty,” Shane says. He kisses Ilya’s bare chest. “How do you normally deal with it?”

Ilya inhales slowly through his nose. “I wait. I keep busy.”

Shane shakes his head, looking up at Ilya. “No more. As soon as you start feeling like this, you talk to me. We work through it together. Deal?”

Ilya’s smile is real this time. He gently rubs Shane’s cheek. “Deal.”

There will be more hard days. Days where Ilya can’t get out of bed, where Shane needs someone by his side, where the world around them will appear to be crumbling. But in sickness and in health, in needles and in nightmares, Ilya and Shane have one another- and that’s all they need.

Chapter End Notes

And we’re done!! I’m sad to see this one go :(((

I hope you guys liked this series, it was so fun to write, and I’m so excited to keep up with these stories!! Please let me know what you think and please please please let me know if you have any ideas for future fics, I love getting recs!!

Thank you guys so much, happy holidays!

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