

& when i was shipwrecked (i thought of you)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76120836) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76120836>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , background Rose Landry
Additional Tags:	Hurt/Comfort , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst , Angst and Feels , AU , PR manager Shane Hollander , hospital setting but nothing graphic , mention of prescription painkillers
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-21 Words: 3,673 Chapters: 1/1

& when i was shipwrecked (i thought of you)

by [netfixing](#)

Summary

This isn't him.

He's hidden his heart under buttoned-up shirts and professionalism for the last four years, every step a calculated risk.

He can't exactly waltz over to the hospital wing and proclaim he's Ilya's - what?

His partner/boyfriend/whatever the hell they were?

It's a conflict of interest to the absolute highest degree. He'd likely be dismissed from the team, without pay, or worse.

And *Ilya*.

or PR manager shane hollander is in love with nhl superstar ilya rozanov, after an accident on the ice, someone says 'i love you' and nobody is entirely sure if it even counts

Notes

this is an AU! (where mostly everything is the same except Shane is the PR manager for the Raiders),

this is somewhat modelled after 1x5 & wanting to write something about the reverse if Ilya was injured,

but this is not canon gospel, this is simply just an extremely self-indulgent fic bc watching heated rivalry was the thing that lit the spark to get me out of a writing funk after literally the longest time. I also made up a team name & other players from the team, (so again, this isn't meant to be canon compliant at all)

He'd reviewed the play no less than seven times before he had to physically chuck the tablet across the room.

Call it superstition, or intuition, or something in between, but it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven times.

Ilya had the puck, long intentional strides to shuffle it where he wanted it to go, long dirty blonde hair swiftly moving with the intentional effort. He'd faked a pass, choosing rather to rush towards the goal line himself, inching along the side of the rink, the audio mainly the scratch of blades under ice and the general murmur of an arena's audience, alongside the commentators switching between French and broken English.

He was always amazed at just how fast the other could skate, Shane was only just a month or so over older, a card pulled to his advantage on rare occasions, but even before his draft he couldn't skate like that.

He dragged a hand over his eyes, the rough and calloused pads of his fingers scraping against eyelids. He'd been in the media room too long already, his inner saboteur liked to remind him that people would talk, if they weren't gossiping behind his back already.

With a bit more force than was necessary to the mouse and the keyboard, he cued up the last thirty seconds of the play.

From there, things started to move fast.

Ilya won the next face-off, taking the puck for an easy sprint from centre ice, to curve around the back of the net, fighting for every second of its possession.

A slide around the front side of the net and an attempt at a shoot, just above the goalie's right hip that's caught in the glove and saved. The backing commentary is somewhere between a mutter, and an almost curse in french, the groans of frustration echoing across the ice.

Then, it's the team's rookie Madison with the puck, and he's laid out with no warning two minutes into the play, a blatant miss by the refs for a tripping and slashing penalty.

It's a sea of colours as the Michigan Daggers and the Boston Raiders clash around and almost on top of Madison, who'd crumpled like a playing card.

A player for the Daggers, Canard, in their trademark dark green and black jerseys, decisively just hurls himself forward in a nasty, borderline illegal hit on the way to the centre of the action, sending Ilya flying- no flailing, towards the nearest board, his arm instinctively folding back to protect himself from the impact, but getting lost in translation somewhere along the way and it twists at a borderline sickening angle.

Shane feels borderline like a voyeur for even watching and it almost makes him feel nauseous.

The commentary becomes more anxious as the realization sits in for the commentators that this wasn't like any other Thursday night game where he'd get to his feet and shake it off.

The remaining Raiders who were on that side of the ice launch viciously towards the Daggers player who delivered the hits in something resembling a dogpile, the refs springing into action to pull elbows off of ribs, screaming to get their point across, all the while the arena erupts into borderline disarray in the background.

Through all the chaos, Ilya was still there, flat out on the ice, his helmet hanging half-hazardously off his head.

Sportsnet decided that then was a *great* time to capture a prime-time moment of a zoomed-in shot of Ilya, forehead twisted in pain, pressed against the ice, eyes screwed shut from the outside world, and all the noise.

Shane hated that he knew how loud it probably all was for him.

He couldn't force himself to watch the post-commercial break coverage of Ilya being loaded on to the backboard, he'd already had to watch it live from his couch once and that was enough for him for a lifetime.

"Oh *motherfucker*- goddamn *bullshit*-" He cursed easily, kicking deftly at the office chair at the media room's conference table and watching it careen across the room with a hollow clatter.

"Shane-? You're still here?" A familiar head of long strawberry blonde curls poked its way into his cubicle, brows furrowed tightly in worry.

It was Rose, the team's social media manager - the likely hypothesis that her car was also one of the only cars left in the lot other than Shane's was that she was editing and prepping Instagram stories and Tik-Toks to be queued for the next few days while the team travelled to their next away game.

"It's almost ten, I would've thought you'd been home by now, or at least.." She trails off, but Shane knew what she meant.

He should be at the hospital, with Ilya, feeling his legs go numb from some shitty plastic hospital chair. He could've prevented this, somehow. He knows it, feels it stashed in the back of his brain somewhere, just out of his reach.

"You should go, get some sleep, get out of here at least - it gets creepy here at night." Rose shoved at his shoulder blades with the heel of her hand in a weak attempt at getting Shane to leave.

"Wha - now you're telling me this place is haunted? Ghosts? Now I know you've been listening to too many of those horror podcasts." He crosses his arms over his chest with a loud exhale, the force just about breaking him in half mentally.

"Seriously though, you doing okay with all of this?" Rose's tone is tender, painstakingly careful, the tone of voice you might use when you're trying to get your friends not to panic.

"I haven't heard anything from anyone yet, no one will tell me shit and it's dead silent, and I don't know if that's worse or if it means-" Shane's voice catches, a stray syllable creaking its way up his throat, his own emotions going rogue.

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It's a conflict of interest to the absolute highest degree. He'd likely be dismissed from the team, without pay, or worse.

And *Ilya*.

He wouldn't put his career openly on the chopping block like that, to essentially offer up his head to the metaphorical guillotine that was NHL fan insanity on social media.

It'd be socially damning either way.

Which is why Shane had no idea whatever demented spirit that must've possessed him in the media room, had him rushing down the highway to the hospital exit.

That had to be the only reasonable explanation as to why he so seriously changed his tune from absolutely not going, to finding himself pulling his Jeep into the visitor's lot and forking out an absolutely brutal 25 dollars for a parking pass.

Shane hated hospitals.

He didn't exactly have a valid reason for it either.

There was something specific about hospital air even, or the smell of antiseptic and sterility, that made every cell in his body want to scream.

Maybe it was the unsaid undertone of death in the building, or the creeping realization that they were truly a place of the unknown, of blood and gore and guts and -

"Sorry, you're *who?*" The nurse asks from the other side of the plexiglass station, lowering her rhinestone-ladybug rimmed glasses to properly judge Shane's dishevelled appearance, coffee-stained sweatshirt, uncombed hair, red rimmed eyes and all.

"I - uh - Shane Hollander? I, well, uh might not be on the list but I'm employed by the team and-"

There's something about saying his full legal name that feels wrong, heart dropping clear out of his chest whenever he truly heard it, something weirdly official and about letting people in.

"Wait here a minute," The woman clacks her acrylic nails over the keyboard of the computer, the printer behind her whirring to life.

To his utter dismay, the nurse prints him off a stickered name tag bearing his full legal name, in ALL CAPS and a horrible quality photo that was taken of him at the *exactly* wrong time.

"Elevators are on your right, fifth floor."

"I should have been there," Shane's voice feels like pure gravel when he walks into the room, the sharply lit overhead lighting making his skin itch.

"No, no, what would have you done? Nothing, yes? It was freak accident, you know this, we know this."

Shane's boyfriend takes on a tone that surprises him for a man he'd seen nearly deck a nurse during a yearly flu shot, so he surmises his IV drip likely held a nice cocktail of hydrocodone and something similar to vicodin.

"God, you're so incredibly high and probably concussed as anything right now. You are going to be such a treat when they wean you off these painkillers." Shane mutters affectionately, moving the one chair in the room to the side of the bed, taking Ilya's hand in his and running his thumb over the split knuckles unceremoniously. "What'd they say?"

"Broken." No niceties, no lead-in, just simple data, it was what Shane was used to hearing working in PR, but hearing it from Ilya didn't floor him any less.

"Oh, baby.." Shane's tone is gentle, and vulnerable, his face crumples a little, against his better efforts to keep it unmoving. He knew first-hand how much injuries sucked as a professional athlete and how much of a literal *clusterfuck* rehabilitation and physical therapy were and would be.

"No, no, none of that," Ilya murmurs, waving his hand in the air as if it was simply just a scratch above his eyebrow instead of a literal bone being cracked in his shoulder.

"Hollander, it is not your fault."

"I should have been there - it should've been me with you."

Ilya's fluffy brows crumple somewhere in the middle of his forehead, something unwritten behind the glow of his eyes. “

"Better me than you, yes?" He concurs simply, as he picked up Shane's hand, currently wrapped around the one not housing the IV line and pressed a solid kiss to the back of the other's hand.

“Jesus Ilya, when I saw that hit live - I thought you were- *fuck*,” There’s a crack right down the middle of the spoken syllable, as if the weight of everything finally caught up to him and the adrenaline was finally wearing off.

Ilya’s grip tightens instinctively, thumb brushing over Shane’s knuckles, a grounding action more than comforting, a heavy sigh rattling through his chest with the effort. “Hey,” he says softly, the word stretched by his accent, vowels rounding, “It will take a lot more than that to break me, Hollander,”

Shane huffs out a laugh on a shaky breath, “You’re such an *idiot*,” he mutters, still nothing heated behind his words.

Even though Ilya had an entire hospital room to himself, Shane still craned his neck to briefly survey the window behind the door, as if someone would bust in and catch them red-handed. “Do you need anything? More meds? I can go harass the nurses for extra blankets?”

“Stay, yes? That is all for now.” Ilya murmurs softly, tilting his head to the side to look at Shane,

Against his better judgment, he scooches his chair further towards the bed, the chair producing a terrible screeching sound with muttered apologies. Shane folds forward onto the mattress, forehead notching against Ilya’s good shoulder, before he pulls away, as if petrified it might hurt him even more.

“I’ve grown up around this my whole life, I’ve seen injuries, hell, I’ve even managed injuries in sport before - but *god* Ilya, you don’t know how much I felt like I was *dying*, having to see that happen to you live, in an arena across the city and not being able to do anything and then I called Rose and she-”

He’s rambling relentlessly, Ilya knows him too well and just lets it happen, a snowball of tangled word after word.

Ilya’s arm that’s not currently immobilized crosses over, his hand finding space to card through Shane’s black locks, smoothing the longer strands of hair out over Shane’s forehead, tutting softly, mumbling strands of something in Russian Shane couldn’t focus on long enough to attempt to pluck out and translate.

“You know what I thought of? When I was out there, on ice, waiting for medics?” Ilya mumbled again, in English this time, the edges of his vowels a little warbled and rough, his accent always a little thicker when he was tired, or in pain, or this now sudden combination of both.

“I thought of you - at that after party, in that stupid patterned shirt, didn’t fix, but made me feel even a little better. If I closed my eyes-” Ilya grumbled softly, “Which medics did not like at all by the way, had to stay awake for them, but it was almost like you were there, even if you weren’t.”

At that, Shane had to laugh, even though it’s muffled and wet through a sniffle, but still there, shoving lightly at his chest, dragging the sleeve of his sweatshirt under the side of his eyes.

“You motherfuc- that’s not fair! You don’t get to do that! You can’t fluff my ego while *you’re* the one in the hospital bed.” He says with a shake of his head.

Shane’s shoulders drop again, forehead bowing towards where their hands were clasped.

“I keep replaying it in my head, like some demented version of ESPN, I keep rethinking I should’ve got an earlier bus with the rest of everyone, or I should’ve been there that night-”

“Shane,” Ilya’s words cut through his thought spiral like a knife, and there’s a hand pressed solidly to the curve of his jawline, “Do not,”

“Stop thinking so much, you will hurt your brain, yes?” As if to illustrate, Ilya’s knuckles rap lightly against the plane of Shane’s forehead.

“And you are going to rocket out of the ceiling if you keep bouncing your foot like that.” He points out softly with a knowing nod that Shane was still virtually shaking in his chair, the heel of his shoe still rapidly tapping out staccato patterns.

“I’m not-” Shane mutters in defence, taking the time to intentionally will his frame to still, his heart rate to slow, because even if he wasn’t coherent of it, his body hadn’t caught up to the rest of his brain yet.

“I am not dying, not *yet* at least, no need to panic.” He says with a sort of half-shrug.

“You’re not funny, don’t joke about that, and not for a good *long* time, until you’re very old and grey and retired in our time share in the French Riviera” Shane adds with a soft mutter, “I still can’t believe you’re treating this like just a day at the spa.”

“Ah, job hazard, McAvoy had wrist tendon surgery last summer, Lyons is getting robot knee this winter. We all start to fall apart eventually, like cheap action figures.”

Shane presses a kiss to Ilya’s forehead, his hands itching to do something useful, like trying to fix his pillows or something. He felt like he was going to go stir-crazy just from sitting there, so he couldn’t imagine how Ilya felt.

“Hollander, you are thinking again,” Ilya said softly.

Was it really that obvious on his face?

“God, sorry, I just - my brain is going into PR overdrive, I can’t help it, they’re going to be asking the team for a statement like *yesterday* and I’ll have to be the one to draft and publish it.”

“Will be fine, I am a very good liar, I think you told me that once.”

“Ilya, you might be out on injured reserve for *months*, they’ll be hounding.”

“Let them be hounds then,” the word isn’t one he’s familiar with in this tense, but he uses it anyway, eyebrows scrunched, “We will do many pressers, we will post pretty and shirtless

sweaty photos from physio appointments to make them have something to put on headlines and for media to talk.”

He was drawing patterns on the back of Shane’s hand with his thumb as he talked to ground himself, some were simple characters, some were their initials, together, like the scrawls on a bridge or the wall of a seedy dive bar “*SH + IR*”

“You will come pick me up with those very bad iced coffees you like so much, and I will pretend to like them so you don’t break up with me.” Ilya says

“I pick you up coffees usually, y’know you could’ve always told me you didn’t like them, so I could get you something different, instead of suffering in silence this whole time” Shane replies with a huff of a laugh.

“Nice photo by the way, very cute” Ilya snorts, nodding to Shane’s terrible badge still stuck to the chest of his sweatshirt. He was blindly hoping Ilya would be too high to take notice of it, which had just failed spectacularly. “Want that as my new contact photo for you, very perfect.”

“You’re such a menace to society, but I’m not leaving, so be prepared for me to sweet-talk the nurse in a few hours with promises of floor seats and lounge access to your next home game for her to bring me in a cot.” Shane says, head tilting upwards again to anxiously survey the window.

“Bribe?” He repeats the words incredulously, Ilya’s eyebrows shooting up in a reaction that has him wincing instantly with soft-sided regret, “Shane Hollander, PR genius extra, you are going to *bribe*?”

“You say it like I’m going to scam them out of their life savings like some sleazy loan shark or something like that, - it’s just a little gift in exchange for their professional courtesy to not run to TMZ and tell them that Ilya Rozonov is sleeping with his team’s lead public relations director - and because the two of us are *not* fitting into that.”

Shane shrugs, “Worst case, I fall asleep in this chair, I’ve gotten used to sleeping in very weird spots with the job, airport terminals, radio stations rooms, parking lots, that one time in your car when I was waiting for you, and you insisted you weren’t tired and then knocked out in the weight room. Compared to the airport chairs, a cot will be Hollywood”

“That was *one* time,” Ilya protests in vain, “And it was very long practice. Do not sleep in chair, you will wake up with fucked up back and neck and all your joints will be crackle-pop, then you cannot be my sexy nurse at home, and so it will all be lose-lose, and I will cry.”

“I basically almost wrapped my jeep sideways around a stop sign to get here, and *that’s* what we’re worried about here?” Shane says with a soft-sided laugh. He squeezes Ilya’s hand again, grounding himself in the scratch and edges of his rugged palm.

“Have to keep my priorities in order, you know,” Ilya replies simply, “And top priority is you,”

Shane swallows the bowling ball-sized lump settling itself unwelcomingly in his chest, eyes slightly stinging at the corners.

“You are so *very* high right now, that you won’t remember any of this.” Shane says softly, maybe a bit sadly, patting the side of Ilya’s cheek with his hand, “You should sleep though, get some rest.”

Ilya scoffs lightly, “You are going to leave me to flirt your way by with the nurses?”

Shane hummed his disagreement, shaking his head, “Nope, you’re stuck with me Rozanov, I’m staying, unless they truly do try and kick me out once visiting hours are over, and then I’ll have to pull out the big guns.”

“*Big guns?*” Ilya repeated, his face attempting to relay his confusion, blanching slightly, “Hollander, tell me you did not bring guns to the hospital.”

“Ah yes, how could I forget, it’s just tucked into my boot, right over her- God, of course not! It’s a figure of speech, probably should’ve explained that one earlier, that one’s my bad. But as I was saying, I’ll tell them you’ll donate some signed sticks or jerseys or something, they go crazy for that kind of stuff, and it’ll make your image look better after you cursed out that Daggers player on Instagram Live last week.”

“And what if he deserved it, hm?”

“The rest of the PR team, myself included, would pretend they didn’t hear that, attorney-client privilege or whatever bullshit.”

“Ah, yes” Ilya nods solemnly, his head dropping to the side as he drifted somewhere between awake and nodding off, “Does PR client privilege apply if I say I love you?”

The words hung solidly in the air, and it was like someone took a sledgehammer to the back of Shane’s heart because *what the fuck* just happened.

He couldn’t tell if it was real or just all the drugs talking, and for a second, panic bloomed solidly at the edges of his chest, willing himself to breathe normally, to act calm, cool and collected.

He let it go. Let the words hang there. Let Ilya’s fingers curl possessively around his hand. Let the quiet settle in between them against the grain of the shitty background daytime TV and buzzing overhead lighting.

“Uh, yeah, mhm, totally.” Shane nods, a little too quickly for his liking.

For a moment, neither of them speaks. Life outside the hospital room continues to hum and bustle around them. Then Ilya closes his eyes, murmurs, quieter,

“You’ll stay?”

Shane squeezes his hand once, “Yeah, I’ll stay, I’m not going anywhere, not anytime soon, okay?” Despite the steady beat of background monitors, Shane’s heart felt like it was clawing

its way up his throat because god did he ever *want* to say it back, but it wasn't the right time, or the right way to.

“Okay,” Ilya nods softly.

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