

Game 7

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Game 7

by [peiceabread](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya are finally on the same team and in the playoffs however an injury means that Shane is out for the the championship game

Notes

THIS MAY CONTAIN MILD SPOILERS FOR LONG GAME BUT HOENSTLY
NOTHING MAJOR NGL OTHER THAN THEM PLAYING FOR THE SAME TEAM

also if anyone has any fics they want to be written I need some more ideas, ik everyone loves the WAGs fics but I didn't plan on making that a series so honestly don't have many ideas so feel free to comment any ideas for that series or in general

database of all my fics -

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K05xfC0cJCv7ujHKqze_KhG5l0KMbPKriZjNNvM4EWI/edit?usp=sharing

Chapter 1

The noise in the arena was a physical thing, a wall of sound that vibrated in Ilya's chest, but on the ice, the world narrowed down to vectors and velocity. Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Final. One win away from the Stanley Cup Final.

Ilya moved through the neutral zone, the puck on his tape, sensing Shane before he saw him. It was a gravitational pull they had perfected over years—first as enemies, then as secret lovers, and now, finally, as partners in the light. He knew Shane was cutting toward the slot without looking. He knew the exact angle of Shane's blade.

They were flying. The Senators were up by one, five minutes left in the third.

"Watch the drop!" Shane shouted, his voice cutting through the roar.

Ilya dropped the pass. Shane took it, wound up for a shot, but fainted, sending the Panthers' defenseman sprawling. It was beautiful hockey. It was perfect.

And then the play broke down.

A turnover at the blue line. The puck skittered loose. Shane, ever the defensive conscience of the line, pivoted to backcheck. He threw his body in front of a slapshot that would have tied the game. The puck hit his shin pads—a sting, nothing more—but the momentum carried him awkwardly into the boards.

He was tangled with the opposing winger. They went into the dashers fast. Too fast.

There was a sound—not the clean *thwack* of sticks, but a dull, sickening crunch.

Shane dropped.

He didn't scramble up. He didn't curl into a ball. He just lay there, motionless on the white ice.

The whistle blew. The arena went from deafening to dead silent in the span of a heartbeat.

Ilya was there before the trainer. He skidded to a halt, snow spraying over Shane's jersey. The Captain in him knew he should check on the ref, check the clock, rally the bench. The man in him felt his heart stop beating.

"Shane," Ilya said, his voice sounding strange in his own ears. "Hey. Get up."

Shane's face was pressed against the ice. His eyes were squeezed shut, teeth gritted so hard his jaw muscle jumped. "I'm good," he wheezed, the lie transparent. "Just... give me a second."

"Don't move," Ilya ordered, hovering over him, terrified to touch him.

"Arm," Shane gasped. "Shoulder."

When the trainer finally helped Shane up, the arm hung wrong. Dead weight. The angle of the shoulder was nauseatingly unnatural. Shane was pale, sweat beading on his upper lip, but he waved off the stretcher. He skated to the bench on his own two feet, head held high, though Ilya could see the tremors racking his frame.

Ilya watched him disappear down the tunnel. The door clicked shut.

The game restarted. Ilya played the last four minutes with a cold, jagged rage in his chest. He didn't celebrate when the final horn blew, securing their spot in the Final. He didn't smile when the crowd erupted.

He just got off the ice.

In the medical room, the air smelled of antiseptic and sweat. Shane was sitting on the edge of a table, his jersey cut open, his arm immobilized in a heavy sling. His eyes were red-rimmed.

"Dislocated," the team doctor said, voice grave. "Tore the labrum. Significant structural damage. We're scheduling surgery for next Tuesday."

"No," Shane said immediately. "Strap it up. I can play."

"Shane," the doctor said gently. "You can't lift your arm. You're done for the season."

Shane looked at Ilya then. The devastation in his eyes was absolute. "Ilya, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

"Shut up," Ilya said, his voice cracking. He stepped forward, ignoring the doctors, and pressed his forehead against Shane's good shoulder. He turned his face, pressing a desperate, hidden kiss to the fabric of Shane's jersey, right over his heart. "Don't apologize. Just don't."

Outside, the team was celebrating the Prince of Wales Trophy. Inside, it felt like a funeral.

The locker room was strange after that. Usually, a Conference win meant music blasting, champagne spraying, chaos. Today, the music was low. The boys stripped off their gear quietly, glancing at Shane's empty stall.

"He'll be okay, Cap," the rookie goalie ventured, looking at Ilya.

Ilya slammed his skate into his locker, the sound echoing like a gunshot. "He is out," Ilya said, his voice devoid of inflection. "Pack your bags. We have a Final to play."

He didn't tell them it would be okay. He couldn't lie to them.

The press release went out the next morning: *Shane Hollander, out for remainder of playoffs. Shoulder surgery pending.*

The media descended like vultures. *Can Rozanov lead alone? Is the Senators' run over before it starts? Hollander's injury: Career-defining or career-ending?*

Ilya stood in front of his locker, surrounded by microphones. He wore his usual scowl, but it felt brittle today. A reporter from a national network pushed a microphone too close to his face.

"Ilya, be honest," the reporter pressed. "Without Hollander to cover your defensive gaps, do you think your line is a liability?"

Ilya's eyes narrowed. The air in the room seemed to drop ten degrees. "My defensive gaps?" he repeated softly. "Shane is not a crutch. He is a partner. And if you think this team is one man, you have not been watching."

"But the statistics show—"

"Next question," Ilya snapped, turning his back. He felt a hand on his shoulder—it was the alternate captain, stepping in to block the cameras. Ilya walked away before he could punch someone.

Practice was worse.

Coach put Gagnon on the top line. Gagnon was good. He was fast, he had hands, and he listened. But he wasn't Shane.

"You're drifting too wide!" Ilya barked during a power-play drill. He slammed his stick against the ice.

"I was open!" Gagnon argued, frustrated.

"You were open two seconds too late!" Ilya shouted. "Shane would have been at the hash marks already! He anticipates the cycle! You are just reacting!"

Silence fell over the rink. Ilya stared at the spot where Shane usually stood, leaning on his stick, chewing his mouthguard, analyzing the play with that calm intelligence Ilya relied on more than oxygen. The spot was empty.

Ilya turned and skated hard to the bench, ripping his helmet off. He threw it. It clattered against the boards, a lonely sound in the quiet rink.

When he got home that night, the penthouse was quiet. Shane was on the couch, laptop open with game footage, a heavy ice pack strapped to his shoulder. He looked tired, lines of pain etched around his eyes that he tried to smooth away when Ilya walked in.

"I heard practice was rough," Shane said, not looking up from the screen.

"Who told you?" Ilya kicked off his shoes, the agitation vibrating under his skin.

"Everyone. Coach texted me. Said you nearly took Gagnon's head off." Shane paused the video. "You have to trust him, Ilya. He's not me, but he's good."

"I don't want good," Ilya snapped, pacing the living room. "I want you."

"Well, you can't have me," Shane said, his voice sharpening. "So you have to figure it out."

"It's not the same!" Ilya shouted, the frustration finally boiling over. "The timing is wrong. The ice feels wrong. I look for you and you're not there!"

"I am trying to help you!" Shane stood up, wincing violently as the movement jarred his shoulder. He gasped, clutching his arm. "I'm sitting here watching tape of Vegas's forecheck with one arm so I can give you something, anything, and you're acting like I'm already dead!"

"Because when you fell..." Ilya stopped. His chest heaved. The image of Shane crumpled on the ice, the silence, the terror, it all crashed into him. His voice dropped to a whisper. "When you fell, I thought hockey took you away from me."

The anger drained out of Shane's face. He crossed the room, slow and steady, and caught Ilya's hand with his good one.

"It didn't," Shane said firmly. "I'm right here. Hockey can't take me. I'm still choosing you. I always will. Even if I never played another shift, I'm yours."

Ilya didn't just accept the words; he needed to taste them. He surged forward, capturing Shane's mouth in a kiss that was less about romance and more about survival—hard, bruising, and terrified. He pulled back only when they were both breathless, burying his face in Shane's neck, careful of the sling.

"I hate this," he mumbled against Shane's skin.

"I know," Shane said, kissing the top of his head. "Me too. But we have a Cup to win."

The dynamic shifted. The apartment became a quiet fortress.

Usually, Ilya was the one being managed—reminded to eat, reminded to sleep, talked down from his adrenaline highs. Now, Shane couldn't drive. He couldn't tie his own skates. He couldn't cut his steak.

But the intimacy of it changed them. It wasn't just chores; it was an act of devotion.

One evening, Ilya found Shane struggling to get his shirt off before a shower. The fabric was caught on the sling, and Shane's face was flushed with frustration.

"Let me," Ilya said quietly.

He stepped in, his hands gentle. He unbuttoned the shirt, sliding it carefully over the immobilized arm. Shane wouldn't meet his eyes, humiliated by the helplessness.

"It is okay," Ilya murmured. He helped Shane into the shower, turning the water on, testing the temperature. He washed Shane's hair, his fingers massaging the scalp slowly, washing away the tension.

Shane leaned into the touch, closing his eyes. "You don't have to do this."

"I want to," Ilya said. He kissed the wet skin of Shane's shoulder, just above the bruising. "I want to take care of you."

It was a different kind of partnership. Not built on goals and assists, but on water temperature and pain medication schedules.

Shane, being Shane, found a way to lead from the kitchen island.

"Eat," Shane said the morning before Game 1, sliding a plate of eggs toward Ilya. He was wearing sweatpants and one of Ilya's t-shirts, his arm strapped tight to his chest. "And I packed your suit bag. The blue tie."

"You are invalid," Ilya grumbled, eating the eggs anyway. "You should be resting."

"I'm injured, not an invalid. And I need you focused." Shane tapped a notebook on the counter. "I noticed something about the Vegas goalie's glove hand. He drops it slightly when he's screened. Tell Gagnon to stand two inches to the left."

"I'm the Assistant Captain," Shane said simply. "I'm doing my job."

Ilya sighed, the fight draining out of him. He leaned across the counter, cupping Shane's jaw, and kissed him—soft, lingering, a silent apology for his mood. "You are too good at your job," he murmured against Shane's lips.

Shane started coming to practices. He didn't go on the ice, but he stood behind the bench in a tracksuit, watching. At first, Ilya hated it—a reminder of what was missing. But then he saw the other players drifting over to Shane during water breaks. Shane would point at the whiteboard, murmuring instructions, calming nerves.

He was still the anchor. The boat was just rocking a little more violently than usual.

That night, lying in the dark, the fear crept back in. Ilya stared at the ceiling, listening to Shane's rhythmic breathing.

"Shane?"

"Mmm?"

"What if..." Ilya hesitated. "What if the shoulder doesn't heal right? What if this is how it ends for us? On the ice?"

Shane shifted, turning to face him. "Then it ends."

"Don't say that."

"Ilya, listen." Shane's hand found Ilya's in the dark, lacing their fingers together. Ilya brought their joined hands to his lips, kissing Shane's knuckles, then his wrist, feeling the steady pulse there. "We built our lives around this game. It gave us everything. But if one of us has to leave it first... if we lose the thing that built us... then we build something else."

Ilya swallowed past the lump in his throat. "Something else?"

"Yeah," Shane whispered. "Something just for us."

Two nights before the final game Yuna and David Hollander had flown in, renting a house in the city, and they insisted on dinner.

Ilya tried to decline. He was a wire pulled too tight; he didn't want to make small talk, and he certainly didn't want to face Shane's parents while Shane was broken because of a game Ilya was still playing.

"Mom made galbi," Shane said, fastening his own shoes with one hand before Ilya could help. "You're going. You need to eat something that isn't protein bars."

When they arrived, the atmosphere wasn't somber. It was warm. The house smelled of sesame oil and garlic. Yuna didn't hover over Shane's injury; instead, she zeroed in on Ilya.

"You look thin," she chided gently, piling short ribs onto Ilya's plate before he could even sit down. "David, pour him some water. He looks dehydrated."

"I am fine, Yuna," Ilya protested, though he accepted the plate.

"You're carrying the team," David said from the head of the table. He poured a glass of water for Ilya and a glass of wine for himself. "That's heavy lifting. How are you holding up, son?"

Ilya froze at the word. *Son*.

He looked up, expecting to see David looking at Shane, but David's eyes were fixed on Ilya. There was no blame in them, only a profound, steady pride.

"I... I am trying," Ilya managed. "It is hard without him."

"We know," Yuna said. She reached across the table, covering Ilya's hand with hers. Her palm was warm. "But we watch every game. We see you out there. You aren't just playing for yourself anymore, Ilya. You're playing for both of you. And we are so proud."

"You're part of this family, Ilya," David added, his voice gruff with emotion. "Whatever happens in this game, whatever happens with the surgery next week... we're in your corner. You know that, right?"

Ilya looked at Shane. Shane was smiling, looking between his parents and his partner, his good arm resting on the table.

"Yeah," Ilya whispered, his throat tight. "I know."

He ate the galbi. He let Yuna fuss over him. For the first time in weeks, the crushing weight on his shoulders felt shared.

The day before Game 7, the media availability was mandatory. Ilya sat at the podium in the bowels of the arena, a microphone in front of him, a bottle of water he hadn't touched

sweating onto the tablecloth. The room was packed. Every major sports network, every local beat writer, bloggers, international correspondents.

The flashbulbs were a constant, disorienting strobe.

"Ilya," a reporter from *The Athletic* started, standing up. "You've averaged twenty-eight minutes of ice time this series. That's a career high. Are you worried about fatigue going into Game 7?"

"No," Ilya said. He leaned forward, elbows on the table. "It is the Cup Final. If you are tired, you are in the wrong sport."

"Follow up," the reporter pressed. "Without Hollander to distribute the puck, your zone entries have changed. The analytics suggest you're carrying the puck in 80% of the time now versus the 50-50 split you had with Shane. Is that sustainable against Vegas's heavy forecheck?"

"We adapt," Ilya said, his voice flat. "Vegas is heavy, yes. But we are fast. If I have to carry the puck, I carry it. If Gagnon is open, I pass. We do what wins."

A reporter from the local beat raised his hand. "Ilya, the power play is operating at 10% since Game 3. You guys are struggling to set up the umbrella without Shane on the half-wall. What's the adjustment for tomorrow night?"

Ilya took a slow breath. "We simplify. We have been trying to make the perfect pass, but the perfect passer is not there. So we shoot. We crash the net. We stop looking for pretty goals and we look for garbage goals. Rebounds do not ask who shot the puck."

"Ilya, regarding the Golden Knights' aggressive defensive pinching," another journalist interjected, consulting her notes. "They've been catching your wingers high in the defensive zone, leading to extended shifts in your own end. How do you plan to counter that forecheck without icing the puck constantly?"

"It is about support," Ilya answered immediately. "When the D pinches, our centers need to be lower. We need short passes, five-foot passes, not fifty-foot hail marys. If we support the puck carrier, their aggression becomes a trap for them, not us. One pass beats two guys, then we have numbers the other way."

"One more hockey question," a writer from *Hockey Night in Canada* called out. "Your face-off percentage is down significantly in the circle against Eichel. Is there a specific change in technique you're looking at, or is it just a battle of strength?"

"He is strong on the stick," Ilya conceded, nodding once. "But face-offs are not just about the center. It is about the wingers jumping on the loose puck. If I tie him up, my wingers must win the race. We have practiced this. We will be better on the dot."

A reporter from a Toronto paper stood up next. This one always dug for drama.

"Ilya, Shane is thirty-two now. We saw him leaving the clinic yesterday looking... less than optimistic. Is there a concern that this injury could be career-threatening given his age? And if it is, how does that impact your future with the Senators?"

Ilya's jaw tightened. He could feel the pulse in his neck. "Shane is thirty-two. He is in peak condition. He dislocated a shoulder; he did not die. He will have surgery, he will rehab, and he will be back."

"But let's talk about the personal side," the reporter pushed, not letting go of the mic. "It's no secret at this point that you two are in a relationship. You live together, you're partners on and off the ice. This is the first time since going public that you've faced a crisis of this magnitude separately. Has the emotional toll of his injury impacted the pair of you? Is the stress at home bleeding into your performance?"

The room went quiet. It was the question everyone wanted to ask but usually danced around.

Ilya stared at the reporter. For a second, he thought about flipping the table. He thought about the nights Shane spent pacing because the pain meds hadn't kicked in, the way Shane looked at his skates in the closet like they were artifacts from a lost civilization.

"My focus," Ilya said, his voice dropping an octave, deadly quiet, "is on winning a hockey game. Shane's focus is on helping this team win. What happens in our home is our business."

"But is it a distraction?" another voice piped up from the back. "Can you honestly say you're 100% focused when your partner is facing a potential career-ending injury?"

Ilya turned his gaze to the new heckler. "I am motivated. Shane is the best two-way forward in this league," Ilya continued, unprompted. "He is the reason we are here. Every shift I take, I take for him. Every hit I make, I make for him. So do not ask me if I am worried about his career. Ask Vegas if they are worried about facing a team that is playing for its captain."

He stood up abruptly, the chair scraping loud against the floor.

"We are done," the PR officer announced quickly.

Ilya walked off the podium without looking back, the cameras clicking furiously at his retreating back.

Chapter 2: The Championship Game (Chapter 2)

Game 7. Ottawa. The city was vibrating.

The series had been a bloodbath. Trading wins, trading blows. It all came down to sixty minutes.

Ilya sat in the locker room, taping his stick with surgical precision. The room was tense. The young guys were bouncing legs, staring at the floor, the pressure of a Game 7 suffocating them.

Then the door opened.

Shane walked in. He wasn't in a tracksuit. He was wearing his game-day suit, crisp and sharp, the sling black to match the fabric. He looked every inch the NHL star, despite the injury.

The room went quiet. Shane walked to the center of the room. He didn't look injured; he looked dangerous.

"They think we're broken," Shane said, his voice carrying without him raising it. "They think because I'm not out there, we're missing a piece. But they don't know this room."

He looked at the rookie goalie. He looked at Gagnon. Finally, he looked at Ilya.

"I have watched you guys battle for two weeks. You are faster than them. You are hungrier than them. And tonight, you are going to bury them." Shane paused. "I can't skate with you tonight. But my heart is on that ice. Don't leave anything out there. Not a single drop."

The roar that went up from the team shook the walls.

The trainers started to protest. "Shane, you shouldn't be on the bench—"

"I'm sitting on the bench," Shane said. His tone brooked no argument. It was the voice that commanded locker rooms. "I'm not playing. But I'm not sitting in the press box while my team plays for the Cup."

He walked over to Ilya.

"You look good," Ilya said, his heart hammering.

"You look ready," Shane replied. He leaned in close, his breath ghosting over Ilya's ear. "Lead them, Ilya. You don't need me out there to be the best player on the ice. You already are." He pressed a quick, fierce kiss to Ilya's jawline, hidden from the room by the angle of his body. A secret transfer of strength.

The puck dropped. The noise was deafening.

Vegas struck first, silencing the arena before the anthem singers had even left the building. Four minutes in, a turnover at the blue line—Gagnon forcing a pass that wasn't there—sprung Eichel on a breakaway. He didn't miss. Backhand, forehand, shelf. 1-0 Vegas.

Ilya felt the bench deflate. He looked down the line. Heads were hanging.

"Heads up!" Shane's voice barked from behind them. "It's one goal! Get it back!"

They got it back with three minutes left in the first. Ilya took the puck in his own zone, gathering speed. He didn't look for the pass this time; he used the space Shane usually occupied to fake a drop pass, freezing the defender. He cut to the middle and ripped a shot that rebounded off the goalie's pads. Gagnon, crashing the net like Ilya had told him to, banged it home. 1-1.

The second period was a war of attrition. Bodies flew. Sticks shattered.

Midway through, Ottawa took a penalty—a slash from the rookie defenseman. Vegas's power play was lethal. They cycled the puck with maddening precision until Stone found a lane. A one-timer from the circle beat the goalie cleanly. 2-1 Vegas.

Ilya came off the ice after the penalty kill, chest heaving, furious. He slammed his stick against the boards, the frustration of being down, of not being able to do enough, boiling over. He sat heavily, water bottle crinkling in his grip. He was seeing the game in fragments—errors, missed opportunities, the gaping hole where Shane should be.

He felt a presence at his shoulder.

"Ilya."

He didn't turn. He stared at the ice, jaw clenched tight enough to snap.

"Look at me," Shane whispered. It wasn't a command; it was an anchor.

Ilya turned. Shane was leaning over the bench divider, his good hand resting near Ilya's shoulder. His eyes were calm, a stark contrast to the chaos in Ilya's head.

"You are trying to play my position and yours," Shane murmured, low enough that only Ilya could hear. "Stop trying to cover for a ghost. Trust the kid. Just play your game. They can't stop you when you're you."

Ilya exhaled, a long, shuddering breath. "They are pinching high."

"I know," Shane whispered. "So chip it past them. Make them turn. You're faster."

Ilya nodded. The red mist cleared. The impossible weight lifted, just enough.

The third period began with Ottawa trailing. The clock ticked down. 15 minutes. 10 minutes. 5 minutes.

The equalizer was ugly. It wasn't a highlight-reel play. It was desperation. Ilya won a battle in the corner, muscling two Vegas players off the puck. He threw it blindly toward the net. It hit a skate, bounced off a shin pad, and landed on the stick of the third-line center, who swatted it in.

2-2. The roof nearly blew off the arena.

Then, late in the period, Ilya took a heavy hit in the corner. He went down, winded. The world spun. For a second, the doubt flared. He was tired. He was alone.

He looked at the bench. Shane was leaning over the rail, face contorted with intensity, shouting Ilya's name.

Get up.

Ilya got up.

Overtime.

The most terrifying word in sports.

The play started in the defensive zone. Ilya picked up the puck behind his own net. He saw the ice not just through his eyes, but through Shane's—the lanes, the geometry.

He skated. He burst through the neutral zone, splitting the defense. He didn't look for the pass this time. He looked for the shot.

Top shelf. Bar down.

The sound of the puck hitting the metal was the loudest thing Ilya had ever heard.

Then the horn.

The bench emptied. Gloves flew into the air. Ilya was mobbed, crushed under the weight of his teammates, screaming until his throat tore.

But he needed to find him.

Ilya shoved through the pile, ignoring the cameras, ignoring the jubilant tears of the rookies.

Shane was standing near the gate. He had stepped onto the ice in his dress shoes, looking slightly unstable but grinning so wide it looked like it hurt. His eyes were wet.

Ilya didn't skate to him; he sprinted.

He crashed into Shane, mindful of the shoulder but desperate for the contact. He grabbed Shane's face with both gloved hands and kissed him.

It wasn't a quick peck. It was a collision. Ilya devoured him, pouring every ounce of fear and adrenaline from the last two weeks into the contact, tilting Shane's head back as he claimed

him in front of twenty thousand people. It was fierce and possessive and relieved. A promise kept.

The crowd, realizing what was happening, roared even louder. The cameras flashed, capturing the moment the tough-as-nails Russian captain kissed his Canadian counterpart at center ice.

"We did it," Ilya gasped, pulling back, resting his forehead against Shane's. "We did it."

"You did it," Shane corrected, laughing, tears spilling over. "You were unbelievable."

"Shut up. Come here."

The Commissioner handed Ilya the Stanley Cup. It was heavy, gleaming under the arena lights. The greatest trophy in the world.

Ilya lifted it, screaming his joy to the rafters. He took a lap, the cold air burning his lungs.

Then he skated back to Shane.

"Lift it," Ilya said.

"I can't, Ilya. My arm."

"I got you."

Ilya moved behind him. He placed Shane's good hand on the silver stem. Then Ilya reached around, his hands covering Shane's, taking the weight.

"Ready?" Ilya whispered in his ear.

"Yeah."

Together, they hoisted the Cup. It was awkward. Shane's suit jacket was bunched up, Ilya was covered in sweat, and the balance was all wrong.

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