moon river, wider than a mile

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/76423206.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV), Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander, Svetlana Vetrova, Rose Landry
Additional Tags:	Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, basically what if shane can play the cello, and ilyas like wow! i am so in love with him, I Will Go Down With This Ship, ilya shane svetlana rose friendship vibes, Tooth-Rotting Fluff
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of from the sidelines
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-25 Completed: 2025-12-28 Words: 3,725 Chapters: 2/2

moon river, wider than a mile

by 17o2585

Summary

To Ilya's surprise, Shane climbs up onto the quartet's mini stage and sits down on the chair behind the cello. The other musicians disperse too, taking their rightful places in the semi circle. Shane adjusts his arms and picks up the bow, letting it rest on the body of the instrument. The cello is a little too big for him, but it's not too difficult to accommodate: he nods, satisfied.

They begin. Music fills the area, gentle in its melody. Shane looks a little apprehensive at first, if not nervous, as his arm trails back and forth with the bow, but by a couple lines into the piece, he eases, shoulders unwinding, body swaying loosely. He settles into the music, focus sharpening— it's clear he has years of experience behind him.

"Oh my god," Ilya says.

or: at a gala they're at, the cello player of the quartet playing live music never shows up. shane fills in for him

(now with ch 2: ilya asks shane to play something for him. naturally, shane picks 'can't help falling in love')

Notes

listen to moon river by henry mancini for best effect. i actually cried while writing this bc it was so beautiful

merry christmas to all who celebrate!

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

The public ploy of their friendship was by far the best decision they could've made.

Shane and Ilya are sitting at the same table. Talking openly, freely. Smiling at each other. When someone else walks by, they can be acknowledged together. In one sentence. *Ilya and Shane. Rozanov and Hollander.*

Ilya can't grab Shane's hand, but he can grab Shane's attention, and it's enough.

For now. It's enough.

The media seems fond of their "newly" kindled friendship. Brands have offered to do advertisements, sponsorships with both of them. Fans enjoy their camaraderie, and no longer are they pitted so against each other.

Ilya leans over and plucks a garlic green bean off of Shane's plate. The latter shoves him, rolling his eyes. A couple walks by them, but neither of them cease their antics.

It's good. A monumental relief, so— really good.

"I'm bored," Ilya says, around a quarter into the night. He huffs, checking his watch for the umpteenth time. "I could be doing so much better with my time."

"Like what?"

Ilya leans forward conspiratorially, lowering his voice. "You."

Shane shoves him. Ilya steals another green bean.

Svetlana and Rose, who are their plus ones to the event, share a look. "You guys are obvious," Svetlana says. "One look and they will know. It is disgusting."

"Hater," Ilya replies, scandalized.

Shane laughs at the look Rose sends him. *Children*, it reads.

It's a boring event— food, music, and conversation— and for the most part, they keep to their table. Shane thinks he should network, chat up with anyone who's remotely relevant to his career, but, well— it's a holiday party. He'll enjoy the holiday. And party.

Aaaand, that's new. It's Ilya rubbing off on him; Ilya, who basks in these events, sparkles under the soft, golden lighting. Ilya who's a smooth talker, who's smooth enough to wiggle

his way into brand deals (read: Rolex, back after they'd met each other for the first time.)

He's never been one for the aesthetics of wealth, but— it's nice. Pleasant, especially when he can sit at the same table Ilya's at.

There's something wrong with the quartet at the opposite corner of the room. One of their musicians, the cellist, had left in a hurry, looking a little unwell.

They're professionals hired by Rolex, so Shane has no doubt they'll be able to pivot to a trio. Regardless of this, and regardless of how well they're hiding it, they look a little nervous, and rightfully so.

"—Shane?"

"Hm?" He draws himself back towards the conversation at the table, towards Rose's inquiring smile.

"You look lost in thought."

Shane shakes his head, but his eyes still linger on the musicians. "I think the quartet's missing a person. They left a couple minutes ago."

The three of them— Ilya, Rose, Svetlana— turn their heads at the same time, following his line of vision. The musicians are now conversing amongst themselves, presumably reconvening.

Ilya purses his lips. "That sucks."

"Yeah. I hope he's okay." He squints. "They didn't follow after him, cause obviously, you can't lose another player too. I hope that means whatever it is, is mild."

Ilya's eyes soften. "I am sure he is okay."

Svetlana considers the group. "I always wished I could learn an instrument. It's so beautiful to be able to create music."

"I agree," Rose replies. "I used to play the guitar, but it never stuck."

Ilya glances at Shane, watching as he watches the musicians. The latter, feeling his gaze, makes eye contact, offering an almost imperceptible smile.

"I bought a Ukulele when I visited Cancun," Ilya says. "I displayed it. I do not think I have played it once."

Shane's lips quirk at that. He knows it: it's a wooden one, flowers carved in the body of it, hanging at the wall adjacent to Ilya's bed, sprinkled amongst other souvenirs.

"It's never too late," Rose continues. "You could still learn."

Svetlana nods. "Yes. This is true."

Gaze still lingering on the group in the corner, Shane excuses himself from the table. Ilya raises an eyebrow that reads, *networking time?* He shrugs, a little loosely, and makes his way across the room.

One of the musicians notices as he comes up in front of their mini platformed stage.

"Hello," she says. "Shane Hollander, right? It's so nice to meet you."

"Yes," Shane confirms. "Hey, look. I just noticed that your other player left. He didn't look that great, so I wanted to ask about him."

The woman looks a little surprised. "Oh. Wow, that is so kind of you. He's okay. I think he's just not feeling great, and the noise was making him a little nauseous."

"Ah," Shane replies, sympathetic. "I get that."

"Shane Hollander!" Another player from the group exclaims, joining their little huddle. "It's so nice to meet you."

"Hi. It's nice to meet you too." He's holding sheet music. Shane glances at it, and then pauses, bracing himself. "Well, actually. I also wanted to say I noticed you guys were switching to music better suited without a cellist." The woman nods. "I play the cello. I'm nowhere near as good as you, I'm not even remotely close to being a professional, but I've been playing since I was four, so I think I can hold my own, if you'd, uh, prefer that. I mean, I'd probably feel more comfortable with pieces I've already played, if you'd let me look at the sheet music and check. I know it's kind of stupid, but…"

He's rambling, feeling a little stupid at even suggesting it, but the woman's eyes light up.

"Oh, gosh," she replies, a little excited. "Wow. No, that'd be great!"

Shane blinks. "Really?"

"Yeah!" The other one agrees. He reaches out, taking Shane's hands, and bows, grateful. Shane laughs at this, finding himself smiling. "It'll be, like, a little immersion! When worlds collide. We'd love for you to play with us."

"Wow," Shane murmurs. "That's awesome."

Ilya squints at the quartet as Shane talks to them, his body language shifting from formal to animated as they discuss whatever it is they are.

“I think he’s asking about the player who left,” Rose says.

Svetlana takes a sip of her cocktail. “That is really nice of him.”

One of the musicians reaches over and takes Shane’s hands, bowing just slightly. He’s smiling widely, a little excited. Shane laughs, taking the sheet of paper given to him by the man.

As he flips through it, Shane moves. Just when Ilya thinks he’ll make his way back to their table, he climbs the platform in one step.

“What is he doing?” Svetlana asks, a little curious.

Ilya pauses. “I do not know.”

Shane adjusts the paper onto the stand in front of the cello, sits down on the chair behind it. He adjusts the instrument so that it’s a little more comfortable to his body, picks up the bow, and then swings his arms around it, letting one hand drift over the strings at the top.

“Holy shit,” Ilya says.

The three other musicians settle into their respective places, creating a semi circle with Shane as the second person to the left. Shane raises his arms enough that his white button up shirt and suit jacket loosen, takes a couple more moments to adjust himself, and then nods at the other musicians.

Music fills the area, slow at first. Shane looks a little apprehensive at first, if not nervous, but by a couple lines into the piece, he eases, shoulders unwinding, body swaying loosely. The way he settles into the music— it’s clear he has years of experience behind him.

It’s the tune of *Row Your Boat*. Even the Russian knows it.

“Oh, god,” Rose whispers, “That’s the best thing ever.”

They listen.

At some point, their warm up ends, and the music shifts. Ilya’s no musician, but it sounds more difficult, nuanced. Shane keeps up with the other musicians, face concentrated towards the sheet in front of him.

Rose takes her phone and points it at Shane, snapping a couple photos. “I’m sending this to his parents,” she says. She pauses. Blinks, focusing in on the music. Her eyes well up, just a little bit. “Oh,” she whispers, “It’s *Moon River.*”

Svetlana puts her arm around Rose’s shoulders. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Rose replies. She laughs, a little wetly. “It’s just so beautiful. I always cry at things like these, don’t worry.”

Whatever it is, it is breathtaking. Shane moves with the music, eyes fluttering shut momentarily, letting it soak over him. When he opens them again, drifting back to the sheet music, he’s smiling.

It’s a smile Ilya’s seen only scarcely. Only when he’s won a big game, or the times, when tucked against Ilya— sleepy, unguarded, warm— at the Cottage. It’s pure. Unfiltered. Genuine.

Ilya wants him to smile like that forever.

He wants to etch it onto Shane’s face— the unrestrained, doubtless joy.

Ilya realizes a little belatedly, gaze fixated on Shane, that he’s smiling too. Probably like an idiot.

Svetlana had mentioned it to him, a couple months ago, after the four of them had become an unlikely group. *Your eyes relax around him. I have rarely seen you like that.*

She has known him. His entire life.

For her to say that— God, it is true. Ilya loves him. Beyond words. Beyond what he can say in Russian or in English. Beyond what language can capture within its bounds.

Shane’s gaze drifts to Ilya. Their eyes meet across the room— for a moment, there’s no one else at the Gala. The world tunnels. It’s *Shane and Ilya*. *Ilya and Shane. Jane and Lily, Lily and Jane.*

His body sways against the cello, arm moving back and forth with the bow.

Shane mouths, with the music, *I’m going your way.*

I love you, Ilya mouths back.

People at the gala start catching wind of *Shane Hollander Playing The Cello In The Middle of a Rolex Gala*— a couple of the professional photographers have tucked themselves in front of the stage, capturing it.

When the quartet ceases their playing for a moment, in between pieces, applause verberates throughout the room. Shane, playing the bow on his lap, claps with them, towards the rest of the musicians.

Ilya snorts. Of course he’s humble about it all.

Shane plays with them for the rest of the night. He seems to be thoroughly enjoying himself. Though they circle through the same few songs again and again, no one seems to mind. Even the some of the top Rolex representatives, who are not generally to be fucked with, look more delighted than upset at the change to the original music they hired.

Eventually, the night fizzles out, and so does the music.

Though Ilya would've been long gone from the gala in normal circumstances, perhaps by now at a bar, he sits and listens. Shane would've been out of here, too. Ilya imagines he would've been sitting, tucked in his comforter, reading a book (and wearing his glasses). But, well— he's playing.

There's nowhere better to be.

As he ceases playing, Shane smiles across to their table, waving, a little sheepish. Rose makes a heart with her hands. Svetlana, though naturally more reserved, waves at him back.

Shane exchanges contacts with the musicians. The lady he was talking to in the beginning reaches out to hug him. He waves at him as he leaves, shrugging his jacket off as he walks back towards their table.

"Hi," he says, flopping down on his abandoned chair. Shane's sweating a little bit, cheeks pink from feeling hot.

Ilya cannot reach over and kiss him, so he throws an arm around his shoulders instead. It's the casual type, friendly. But it's proximity, regardless. "That was amazing, Hollander."

"Thank you."

Rose shakes her head. "Wow, Shane. I don't even have any words."

Svetlana nods towards her. "Yes. She cried."

A little alarmed, Shane sits up. It's not enough that Ilya's arms move. "Are you okay?"

"No," Rose clarifies, "Because it was so beautiful."

"Oh." Shane's nose wrinkles like he doesn't know how to go about receiving the sheer amount of praise coming his way. "Well, I'm glad you guys enjoyed the pieces. I couldn't do the ones they had originally planned, because they were nowhere near what I can play, but, yeah. I think they were fun." He huffs, letting himself lean more loosely, on the seat. "I forgot how taxing it is. I don't think I've played for that long since I was, what, fourteen?"

"That is incredible," Svetlana says. Coming from her, it's a high fucking praise. She and Rose share a glance, both of them getting up. "I think the two of us were going to go clubbing."

And though they know the answer, Rose adds, "Would you two like to join?"

Shane shakes his head. "Thank you," he replies, sincere. "I'm pooped. Have a great time!"

“Yes,” Ilya adds. “Have fun.”

When they are gone, Ilya tilts so that he’s facing Shane. “So, Shane Hollander, the cello player.” He nods at a couple lingering people. “They took pictures. It will be on the internet soon.”

Shane laughs. “I’m sure. And yeah. My parents put me in it when I was, like, four. They wanted me to be multifaceted.” At Ilya’s raise of an eyebrow, he clarifies, “having multiple skills. It’s kind of funny, because I never finished high school, so my chances at a *real* backup for hockey, in case that goes haywire, are kind of fucked. But who knows.”

“You can join that band,” Ilya offers.

Shane snorts. “I would need to practice really, *really* hard for that.”

They sit like that for a little bit. Shane closes his eyes, chest rising and falling, and sighs. “I thought I had good stamina from hockey, but jeez, I’m winded.”

Ilya snorts and lowers his voice. “No stamina left for later?”

“Oh, shut up.”

A beat passes.

Ilya says, “When you are not winded anymore, will you play for me?”

“Always.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

bonus little chapter where ilya asks shane to play something for him!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Have you seen Twitter?"

"No, not really. Why?"

Ilya plops down on the couch beside Shane, handing him his phone. Shane takes it. "I was right. You are on the trending page."

Numerous videos of him at the gala, taken on attendee's phone cameras, have been circulating the internet. Rolex, too, had published the stills of him playing, along with a more professionally taken video of Moon River. It had gone viral, and, for a good couple days, was talk of the town. People were singing high praise for Shane, commenting on, in rare occasion, something unrelated to hockey.

"They are saying that you are in love," Ilya adds.

Shane pauses, looking up from the phone and at him instead. "In love?"

Ilya grins, pointing at the phone. "This song. When you looked at me across the room."

"Oh." He smiles. "Well, I am, aren't I?"

"I love you." Ilya presses a kiss to his cheek. "I am so lucky."

He swings his arm across Shane's shoulders, pulling him towards his chest. "I screenshotted the best comments I found. Do you want to see?"

"Of course you did," Shane huffs, settling closer as he hands back Ilya's phone.

"This one is best."

It's a zoom in-ed video of Shane's fingers playing at the cello's base with the caption:

I can't have Shane Hollander but at least I can pretend I'm the cello

"Oh, wow," Shane murmurs, cheeks turning a little pink. "That's… something."

Ilya grins. "I did not understand it. So I searched it up. Playing the notes is called fingering."

"*Ilya*," Shane replies. "Yes. It is. It's a *normal* word."

"Mm. It is funny," Ilya says. "That person can pretend this. I don't need to pretend because I have Shane Hollander."

"Are you jealous?"

Ilya snorts. "No. I think it is funny. And I agree with what they say."

"*Ilya*."

"This one is funny too."

> *MARRY ME SHANE HOLLANDER I SCREAM AS THEY DRAG ME AWAY TOWARDS THE ASYLUM*

Shane blinks, a little concerned. "I hope they're not actually being dragged to the asylum."

"I think it is a saying. I have seen it before." He laughs, running a hand through Shane's hair. "Do not worry."

They sit there for a moment, Shane's head resting where Ilya's shoulder meets his chest. Ilya's hand is running up and down the length of his arm; the TV is playing a random action movie. Shane lets the noise drown out into the background, letting his eyes drift shut.

Ilya laughs, sporadically, at moments in the movie, his chest rumbling as he does. At some point, he gently shakes at Shane's arm, asks, "Are you asleep?"

"No," Shane replies. "Just closing my eyes."

"Of course, *lyubov moya*."

Another beat. "Mm, Ilya," Shane says. "Actually, go back to the video."

"Video?"

"The one Rolex posted. Of me playing. I want to listen to it."

Ilya hands him his phone again. Shane finds the video, turns up the volume, watching it through. He lets the video auto-replay, raising the volume again.

Ilya's a little amused when he rewatches the video for the sixth time. At some point, a frown forms across his mouth, deepening as the music continues.

"This," Shane hums, wincing a little, "part's shaky. I messed up on the timing of it. And this."

"I did not notice. I do not think anyone did," Ilya offers.

"The people I was playing with definitely did."

“Shane,” Ilya says, letting the name drag. “They were so happy. And you joined with no practice. It is okay that you mixed up the notes a little bit.”

“Yeah,” Shane sighs. “Yeah, you’re right.”

“Play something for me.”

Shane considers this. “I don’t have my cello. It’s at the cottage.”

Ilya nudges him gently. “Okay, then next time we go to the cottage, play for me.”

“Okay. I will.” He hesitates, a blush spreading across his face. It always happens when Shane says something he *thinks* is self-obsessed, though, Ilya always says, isn’t. “In the meantime, I can ask my mom to send over some recital videos. She has plenty.”

“I would love that.”

In the middle of the season, it’ll be a while before they’ll get a night or two at the cottage. As with all trending things, the attention on Shane’s performance dies down, and for the most part, shifts back to normal.

He and Ilya play hockey. They get their usual amount of media attention from it. For Shane, that means perfectly professional answers, a mild smile, and rehearsed gestures. Ilya finds it entirely endearing— for someone who’s one of the best hockey players of all time, Shane’s not the least bit egotistical about it. In fact, Ilya knows it would be the last thing he’d want to do.

His front door jiggles as it unlocks, and Ilya smiles. Giving Shane a key had, in their nine year *situation-? Relation-? We’re-fucking-but-we-kinda-are-falling-for-each-other-too?* ship, meant a lot to both of them. Ilya, in turn, had been given the keys to Shane’s Montreal apartment and Cottage too.

No more cagey lingering outside of each other’s places. Though, Ilya thought, amused, it was always Shane who was freaked out about being caught outside his place.

When Shane walks into the common area, he’s holding a large, black case, distinctly the shape of a,

“Is that a cello?” Ilya asks, delighted.

Shane smiles. “Yeah. I figured it would be a while until we’d get to go to the cottage, so I rented this one.”

“Rented?”

“Yes,” Shane clarifies, placing it down next to the island. “I have an emotional connection to my cello. I’m not buying another one.” He grins, a little sheepish. “I have a special piece for you. I practiced it.”

Ilya comes up and cups his chin, pressing him towards the island. He kisses him, slow and unhurried. “I am so lucky,” he says against Shane’s mouth.

Shane’s lips upturn. “I think I’m the lucky one.”

It takes willpower, but Ilya, with a last peck on his lips, and then one on his temple, steps back. “First dinner. And then you play.”

Shane adjusts the pegs of the cello, moving the bow incrementally across the body to hear the sound. When he’s satisfied, he adjusts his body again, letting himself shift towards the cello. He’s sitting on a random chair Ilya had scrounged up: the barstools had been too high to play from.

Speaking of. Ilya’s sitting on one of the barstools, facing towards him. He’s nursing a glass of sparkling water, eyes a mix of excited and inquisitive.

“Ready?” Shane asks.

“Always,” Ilya replies.

Shane breathes in and begins. The melody is slow at the start as his cello thrums a deep sound. His fingers twiddle up and down on the strings at the top of it, his other arm shifting the bow back and forth.

Ilya recognizes the piece almost instantly. It’s a known one— Swan Lake. A smile quirks on his lips: the composer was Russian. Shane had said it was a special piece for him.

Shane plays, eyes sharpening into intent focus.

It’s beautiful.

Maybe the most beautiful thing he’s ever listened to. His father has taken him to orchestras in Russia where the cheapest tickets were no less than ten thousand dollars. And yet— they do not compare to this. They do not compare to Shane Hollander, sitting right here, playing for him.

When Shane finishes, he’s smiling loosely, eyes twinkling. He sets the bow down on his lap, letting his shoulders relax.

“*Zahvatyvayushchiy*,” Ilya whispers. And then in English for Shane: “Breathtaking.”

Shane, a little bashful, says, “You mentioned your mom used to take you to Swan Lake when you were little.”

“Oh, Shane. That is— Thank you.”

“One more?”

Ilya smiles. “Always.”

He readjusts and begins. This one, Ilya recognizes straight away too.

The words ring out, phantom in the air, trailing after the music. Shane breaks his gaze from his sheet music just enough to make eye contact with him. Ilya’s eyes wet. He presses his hand over his mouth.

Shane tears up too. He smiles, a little watery, and then blinks the blurriness away, refocusing on the sheet music.

For I can’t help…

Ilya laughs, wiping his eyes. With the music Shane’s playing, he mouths,

Falling in love, with you

Chapter End Notes

i hope you enjoyed :)

End Notes

i have virtually no music knowledge except for the fact that i love listening to it... i know this is probably the least accurate turn of events that could ever happen but hey.... thats fanfic. also in this they've already said i love yous

i think i want to add a chapter where shane plays for ilya sooooo look out for that? maybe?

anywho, i really hope you liked this piece,

as always, comments feed my soul. its a little christmas present if you will :)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!