

It's always you (though I may deny)

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by [liz_t0w3rs](#)

Summary

After their reconciliation in Tampa, Shane decides to face his fears and tell Ilya his true feelings, but when things don't go the way he wants to, Ilya finds he felt it too all this time.

Or Ilya's too scared to confess but after Shane's accident he can't risk ever losing him again.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1: The aftermath

Shane had had enough. Enough of sneaking around not even knowing the definition of their arrangement was , enough of pretending he didn't care—when all he did was care—enough of acting like he hadn't been staring into those blue eyes like his life depended on it. He had made a decision. A decision to confront Ilya with the truth: that he loved him. And if he didn't respond—which a part of him thought he wouldn't—he'd know then to end whatever was going on between them. His heart got too involved in the blink of an eye, but Shane had accepted it. Either way, he wanted to see how Ilya felt before it went even deeper—to points Shane knew would be impossible to escape from.

He would be seeing him tonight, right after their teams met in the second round of playoffs. They had always agreed not to meet up during such a time, but as they grew closer—or as Shane's heart entered the mix—they couldn't help but steal the usual hour or two like they always did during the regular season. They had already made plans to meet up in Ilya's house. Somewhere the Russian he loved couldn't escape, Shane thought. And somewhere Shane could if it got too embarrassing to stay. But he hoped that night could be spent with freckled arms around him.

Once the game was over, Shane was quick to shower, change into clean clothes and head out the arena. He'd call an Uber because he didn't have his own car here in Boston, and after a bit of traffic exiting the arena as waves of fans emptied the stadium, Shane was dropped off a couple of streets away from Ilya's penthouse. He hadn't wanted the driver, who had definitely recognised him, to know where he was going and Ilya's penthouse was in a rather quiet part of town, one filled with families whose kids had most likely gone to bed now—no one would be out at this hour.

It didn't take long before he was at the door, like countless times in the past couple of years. Still, he had yet to know what the code was so he knocked hoping Ilya had made it home before Shane. Luckily, Ilya had made it and did not waste a second as he opened the door, grabbing Shane by his shirt and pulling him in for a kiss.

Shane let the warm feeling of Ilya's tongue wash over him until he realised Ilya had closed the door and was moving them towards the bedroom, hands travelling throughout Shane's body, he stilled—Ilya immediately noticing, backing up and studying his face. Shane wanted to speak to him, but Rozanov hadn't understood the initial interruption. Shane backed away from his body and made his way towards the living room. Rozanov followed but continued to carry a puzzled look on this face.

"I thought we may talk." Shane said as he sat down, patting the seat on the couch right next to him.

"This looks serious." Ilya said, not taking Shane's invitation to relax.

"It is." Shane took a deep breath in and prepared himself for the way his heart was about to split open. "Do you feel it too?"

"Feel what?" Ilya said, staring at the floor, avoiding Shane's gaze.

"This." He said waving his hands between them signaling to the both. "The aftermath."

"Hollander, it is too late and I am very tired, what is this English word?"

"Like... after we meet. Do you feel the way I feel too?" Shane said, terrified Ilya wouldn't understand.

"I do not know how you feel, Hollander." Ilya said, moving from the place he was standing to finally sitting down next to Shane, still avoiding looking at him. "I feel satisfied."

"Yes, that too. But..." Shane lingered, choosing the right words to try to not spook him out. "I also feel happy."

"Hollander, what does this mean?"

"Do you like me?" Shane suddenly bursted out.

"I like your mouth." Ilya said with a grin moving closer to Shane.

"Ilya." He said, creating distance between them. "This is serious."

"Ugh, fine." Ilya backed up following Shane's rejection. "Sure, whatever."

"Because I like you. A lot." He said as if Ilya had driven the conversation there, as if somehow this was totally fair to say out of nowhere after being nothing more than a casual hookup for more than seven years.

"Hollander." Ilya stood abandoning his spot on the couch, creating space between them.

"C'mon, I can't be the only one. You have to feel it too." Shane stood as well following Ilya's trail.

"It doesn't matter what I feel." He stopped, back facing Shane, unable to turn.

"It matters to me." Shane advanced until he reached where Ilya had been standing and attempted to put a hand on his shoulder to try to turn him around, to force him to look at him.

Ilya immediately shook Shane's hand off, like a flinch. That touch that had been so comforting once now felt like he was a stranger. "What you think is not enough." He paused. "I can't do this right now."

"Ilya, please."

"Shane, unless you let it go, please leave." He stated, still unable to look anywhere but the floor.

“I can’t let it go. Not when there might be a chance. Not when I lo—”

“Leave. Now!” Ilya lost his way as soon as the words flooded out of his mouth. He couldn’t hear him say them. He couldn’t because if he did... he did not want to think about all the things he had to sacrifice, because he would sacrifice everything he could if it were possible, but his life was too much chaos to formally fit Shane into it, even if sometimes it is all he could want.

Shane, horrified by his response, dropped his arms to his sides and wasted no time in rushing towards the door, grabbing his bag along the way. Right before he was about to leave, he could feel Ilya’s gaze linger on him, Shane paused as his hand reached the handle. “Goodbye, Rozanov. Please don’t try to contact me again.” And gone he was.

As soon as the words came out of Shane’s mouth, Ilya felt one thousand daggers stabbing him right in the heart. He could not allow himself the freedom of loving Shane, which he suddenly knew he did, but the last thing he wanted was to lose the one thing in this life that was not balancing from a tightrope. Even if at times it seemed like they were about to get too tangled—about to fall—it felt like Shane had some kind of magical umbrella that made them be stable again, made Ilya feel like he was floating. Ilya couldn’t risk it, but what if he did?

Chapter 2: Please

Chapter Summary

Shane refuses to speak to Ilya, and Ilya does everything he can to face Shane.

Chapter Notes

This is longer than the last and I promise the angst ends soon. Also I don't know anything about hockey so I apologize if there are inconsistencies throughout the hockey scene.

thank you so much for the support on the last chapter! hopefully you enjoy this one. Kudos and Bookmarks are highly appreciated!!

Ilya hated Shane. He hated him for a lot of reasons, but the more he wrote them down, the more he realised all those reasons were outweighed. Outweighed by an aching feeling sitting in his chest that disappeared every time he breathed Shane's air, by the overwhelming feeling of being accepted every time he was rewarded by Shane's hands on him, by the feeling that he hadn't wanted any of it to ever stop. That instance, however, he hated Shane for a complete different reason. He couldn't do this to him during the playoffs. There were already risking so much by continuing to meet up, but now Shane had left Ilya—or Ilya had left Shane—devastated and with his head a thousand miles away from the game, only being able to concentrate in freckles splashed over rosy cheeks that had been covered by tears the night before.

As soon as Shane had left, he realised he had committed the biggest mistake of his life: letting Shane walk out the door. Even though he himself had thought about ending it before it got too complicated, now it had and Ilya wanted nothing more than to forget about the playoffs and jump into Shane's arms—whispering I love yous until Shane had heard enough of them to open the door again.

But it wasn't going to happen, Shane was on a plane headed to Montreal and Ilya was finishing packing up his suitcase to go to that very same place. He had to fix it. He didn't know how but if he let Shane walk away he'd be the biggest idiot ever known to man. The thing was, it was impossible for him to reach Shane outside of their messages, and he had been ignoring the hundreds Ilya had already sent. He thought he could simply text him how he felt, but he knew better than that and he needed to have Shane with him when he did so he could be rewarded with kisses and caresses instead of voices through phones separated by miles of distance. He had simply been texting "Shane, please", or variations of "Shane, come

back, I can explain”, hoping Shane would get it—would immediately understand what Ilya had been trying to say and wasted all his time in going back to him.

The plane ride wasn’t easy either. His mind kept travelling back to memories of Shane, like it always did, especially during turbulence where Ilya felt as helpless as he did during his childhood. He’d grown to know he would be happier if he knew everything that would happen next, and while falling in love with Shane Hollander happened without him even realizing, he always tried to plan ahead so terrible things wouldn’t catch him by surprise. Of course, when good things came—though it was rare—he was relieved and was able to stop twisting his head around for once.

Cliff was sitting next to him. Usually they’d be talking by now, but Ilya couldn’t bring himself to say anything, afraid he might spill too much of what he felt and expose himself in the process. Cliff hadn’t seemed to notice because he played away on his phone, something similar to Candy Crush. The rest of his teammates were either sleeping or chatting along, he wished for a distraction from all his thoughts, but he accepted his faith and sat deeper into the padded seat, looked out the window and drifting off to the happy memories he had had with Hollander, and the ones he would have if he gathered the courage to ask.

He knew the power was in his hands now. Shane had almost said it—almost declared his love. Ilya swore he had heard it, but he had been too afraid. What if Shane had actually finished the sentence? What would Ilya have done? His irrationality had taken over and was going down a hill with no brakes, not aware of what truly was happening and how much happiness could be encountered behind it. But, God, what would Shane think of him now? All of the messages obviously do not equate to a revelation. He probably hated him, though he loved him. He wondered what Shane was doing at this very moment. He wished there was something good of Ilya left in his mind, that it hadn’t been tainted with whatever Ilya had said. Good God, why had Ilya even said what he had? He didn’t mean it, he had known he didn’t, and now they were in a sticky situation that Ilya could get them out of, at least if Shane would listen.

When the plane touched land, all teammates exited the plane and Ilya was the last left, thanking the flight attendants as he walked past them, finally setting his foot in the place he always looked forward to the most. Once he had made it out of the airport, on the team bus, he gathered the courage to open Shane’s chat, but he found all of his messages read with no response. Ilya tried again: “Can we talk before the game? Please?” He saw Shane immediately read it. The message bubble popped up and down like a tennis ball, Ilya waited impatiently, praying the answer would be yes. He swore he had some time before having to make his way into the rink.

Shane’s bubble bounced for a full minute before the message actually arrived and read a simple “No.” Ilya promised he wouldn’t cry but tears had already started to form in his eyes. He tried again. “Please”, he wrote, but this time the message wasn’t even received. Had Shane blocked him?

Ilya was fully crying now, luckily there was no one sitting next to him and the bus had just arrived at their hotel. He had to go to Shane, but he didn’t know where to go. Only the stupid fucking building they had been meeting up in for the last several years. He didn’t know where

Shane lived and finding that out would only make it worse; what if in asking someone else he outed them? What if he was too desperate that his tone could let out the truth? He had to see Shane but going to the building was pointless, why would Shane be there? It wasn't his home, Ilya wished he could see his home. So he made a plan to see Shane before the game. In the arena, maybe as they got prepared with the equipment he could slip out and call Shane from his own changing room. It would be suspicious, especially to Shane's team, but he would do it. He couldn't think of having to play against Shane, or during a face-off where he'd be inches away and Shane wouldn't be looking at him. Because he knew Shane wouldn't look at him. He barely did when they were on good terms.

Once they had made it inside of the building, Ilya made it his mission to get ready as fast as he had gotten ready throughout his entire NHL career. Marlow had looked at him weirdly.

"Why the hurry, Roz?" He had said taking off his own shirt.

"Bathroom." Ilya knew Marlow knew he was full of bullshit but he left before Marlow could ask further questions. He made his way into the hallway and spotted the visitor's locker room. He hesitated for a brief second but strode with confidence towards the door. He opened it and was found by more than twenty men staring at him in disbelief. Some started to yell at him to get out, some even stood, others simply watched, but he remained still. He looked around the room and saw each and every player until his eyes landed on Shane, who was staring at him with a mix of agony, despair and surprise.

"Hollander," he said. All men turned to Shane. "Can you come out for a second?" The irony of Ilya's words hit him when he realized he should've phrased it differently, especially when Shane's face changed completely into a murderous expression.

"What do you want, Rozanov?" He said not budging.

"Outside, please." Ilya hoped Shane could see what was being said behind his eyes and not through his mouth or expression.

"Why?"

"Because I need to discuss something with you and I do not want to do it in front of your team. Can you please stand up? It will only be one minute, I promise I won't kill you." He said adding a wink to ease everyone else in the room with his usual playfulness.

Shane hesitated, of course. He didn't want to, but his teammates were there and Ilya wouldn't obviously leave with a simple no. Before nobody else could say anything else or before Shane could even stand, Hayden Pike added "Just go, Shane. He'll leave sooner that way." It got laughs from everyone else, even Shane who now stood and faced Ilya.

Ilya left the door and walked over to a more private section of the hallway, away from any door. Shane exited his door and spotted him. His face was back to the one of the day before.

"I told you not to talk to me." He said pacing around, arms crossed and looking towards the floor.

"You didn't respond."

“You didn’t either.” Shane said coldly, avoiding eye contact.

“Please, Shane. Just let me explain.” Ilya tried.

“Explain what? That you don’t want to be whatever this is anymore? You don’t need to.” Shane said, walking away. Ilya walked after him and held his arm. “Let go.”

“Shane, just one minute please.” He said, arm not moving from where he had put it.

“Let go.” Tears started to make their way into Shane’s eyes, Ilya could see them. And his voice was growing louder.

“Let me go to your house after the game. Let me explain myself.”

“No, Ilya!” Shane shook his arm out of Ilya’s grip and pushed him off. Their screams must have been heard because Pike opened the door, visually worried. Ilya finally let him go and watched as he made his way back into the room walking past Hayden who was now looking at Ilya like he had hurt Shane. He had, but not in the way he thought.

After, out on the ice, Ilya made every effort to get close to Shane. During face-offs he’d try to talk to him, but Shane wouldn’t answer, wouldn’t even look at him. Shane won every single one of them. The truth was that Ilya had been playing a horrible game and he knew that, but he couldn’t find it in himself to care. He’d spent the entirety of the game chasing Shane around to the point where the rest of the Metros had started to guard Shane like dogs protecting the herd.

In the last few seconds of the game, Shane had just stolen the puck from Ilya. Ilya immediately went to Shane with the excuse that he was trying to get the puck back, after all, the Raiders had been losing 4-1, it was pointless either way. Shane skated quickly towards the net, Ilya blocked him forcing him towards the plastic walls. Hayden tried to step in the middle but Ilya kept saying “Please, Shane” over and over again, enough that he was probably heard by everyone on that ice rink. Shane escaped and attempted to score again dodging Ilya. Ilya skated towards him, he was faster than Shane, he could reach him, but something in Shane seemed like it wanted to run away from him.

Tired of Shane not listening, he got close enough that someone else wouldn’t hear, but not so close that it would be inappropriate and said “Please, I love you”, this finally got Shane’s attention. He looked back at Ilya, eyes lost in what he had said. Ilya finally had said it, and he saw the faint smile growing on Shane’s mouth. However, all his nightmares came true the second Shane had lost his focus on the game to set it on Ilya. Shane had been too busy looking at Ilya to see Cliff staking towards him at full speed.

The impact was brief but replayed on Ilya’s mind as Shane laid on the floor unconscious. “Shane!” He yelled. He wasted no time in getting to him, crunching down looking at whether he was okay as the rest of the players in both teams fought each other. “Can you hear me? Shane!” He said desperately. He couldn’t lose him, not now that they both knew. He had seen Shane’s smile and now that smile was gone.

The medics rushed in and Ilya was pushed away at some point. “Is he okay?” He kept saying. The game had ended, the hit happened at the same time as the last whistle blew, knocking the Raiders out of the playoffs, but Ilya didn’t care. He only cared about his lover, laying cold on the ice, with medics surrounding all of him. “Someone tell me!” He kept screaming as the rest of the players abandoned the rink.

“Rozanov! Back the fuck up.” Someone said—it had been Hayden, pushing him towards the door.

“Stop.” Ilya said, pushing back.

“No, dude. Leave!” Hayden kept pushing.

“Let me go, Pike, or I will hit you.” He warned.

“Then hit me.” He stated. “Leave now Rozanov, he doesn’t want to talk to you even if he were conscious.” Ilya wanted to hit him, right in the face, as hard as he could. But he sighed, pushing him again until he fell on his own ass and walked away as he saw Shane being put on a gurney. He was crying. Ignoring all of his teammates, and fully dressed in his hockey gear, he made his way outside, where he knew the ambulances would be. He caught sight of a medic. “Is he okay?” He asked, wiping his tears away.

“We are taking him to the hospital now.” The medic said, barely looking at him.

“But is he alive?”

“We are taking him to the hospital now.” He repeated, closing the door to the ambulance.

“Товно.” Ilya cursed. “Which one?”

The medic eyed Ilya up and down and then said “I do not think I can disclose that information with you, Mr. Rozanov.”

Ilya was about to stride towards him and hit him when someone said “Montreal General.” Ilya turned around. It had been a woman, Shane’s mom, he assumed due to her Japanese features.

“Thank you.” He said. He made his way inside. He was going to see Shane whether anyone wanted to or not, but he needed to get out of these clothes and pull himself together first.

Chapter 3: Forever and ever

Chapter Summary

Ilya visits the hospital.

Chapter Notes

Hello!!

This is probably the last chapter I'll write, though I may write a little epilogue about the media's reaction, but if that comes it will take a couple of days, or even a week, sorry.

Thank you so much for the support!! As always Kudos are so incredibly welcomed and Happy New Year!!

When Ilya finally arrived at the hospital it was exactly 6pm. Not 5:55 or 6:02, 6:00—exactly two hours after the game had ended. He'd been nervously pacing outside the hospital's main entrance, not entirely sure whether he'd thought through what he was about to do. Sure, captains often visited other team's players if they got hurt, but this one was different. So incredibly different that Ilya wasn't sure he'd be able to speak to the nurse without crying, or without his voice breaking. He'd try to gather himself, but, for all he knew, Shane was still unconscious—maybe even dead. No, Ilya couldn't think like that. He was okay—he had to be okay, otherwise Ilya believed he himself would probably never be okay again. If Shane were dead, would he even be able to breathe? He would for sure quit hockey and lock himself in the misery of the loss of the only person he's ever been in love with but had never had enough time to be able to share it with the world.

He breathed in and out one last time and finally stepped foot inside the hospital. He walked past the main lobby, directly towards one of the desks at the right side. The woman behind the desk was a redhead, she had her hair up in a bun and she couldn't be a lot older than Ilya. He swore he noticed her cheeks reddening as soon as Ilya made his way into her sight. She knew who he was, and she most likely knew why he was there which was a relief, Ilya wouldn't have to explain himself further that way.

A nurse that had been called by the woman—Melody said her name tag—quickly called Ilya. "Follow me, Mr. Rozanov. He is right through here." She said. Ilya could have waited until tomorrow morning, to give Shane the time to rest, the tabloids time to get the stories out of their chests...but the thought of only knowing how Shane was through ESPN news made him turn in his stomach. It wasn't long until Ilya was standing right in front of Shane's room—1221, ironic. When the door opened, the woman held it for Ilya to walk in. Shane was lying

in the hospital bed, eyes closed and completely still. It was a horrifying image, Ilya wanted to look away as much as he wanted to rush and hold his hand. “He’s still unconscious. He’ll probably take a few hours to wake up, but you are free to wait here or outside on those chairs,” she said pointing to the group of four chairs directly in front of the door, “Or if you want to leave, of course. Shane’s parents were here a moment ago. I’m sure they’ll be back soon.”

“Thank you.” He said. Melody took it as a sign to leave—which it was—and Ilya was left alone with Shane. All he had ever wanted for days, but now that he finally found the time, Shane was nowhere or everywhere at once. Ilya sighed and walked over to Shane’s unconscious body. He held his hand, rubbing his thumb on the outside. “Ya tebya lyublyu.” He said. “Please wake up.” A tear fell from his eyes and landed directly where their hands joined. He let himself sit down right next to Shane’s hip and cry. At that moment, he didn’t care if anyone walked in. He was going to hold the love of his life’s hand and mourn every single moment that led to that one.

After what felt like two hours but were probably thirty minutes, Ilya wiped his tears with his sleeve and stood. Not a single ounce of his body planned to leave Shane’s side until he was fully conscious and speaking to Ilya, but Ilya knew someone else would probably come in, and as lucky as he had been—having a moment to process by Shane’s side, alone—it wouldn’t make sense to anyone for Ilya to be that close to Shane. His feelings wouldn’t make sense either but Ilya wasn’t that of a fool to know he would never be able to hide what he felt for Shane, especially not now.

Ilya squeezed Shane’s hand once before letting go. He walked over to the door and before opening it, he looked back at Shane hoping he would wake up at that very moment. When he hadn’t, because why would he, Ilya opened the door with a disappointing look on his face. As soon as he had, he had two separate sets of eyes staring at him, one with more surprise than the other. Shane’s father was stunned, mouth wide open, but Yuna Hollander remained calm, after all, she had been the one to give Ilya the name of the hospital. Ilya decided not to speak up and simply sat two chairs away from them.

“Why are you here?” He heard Yuna say after a few beats of silence.

“I wanted to see how he was. Marlow hadn’t meant to hit him as hard.” Ilya said, trying to remain composed and professional, like his motives were ulterior.

“And that couldn’t have waited until the morning?” Fair point, Ilya knew it.

“I needed to see him now.” He said. One part of him hoped Yuna would understand and drop the subject, another part of him wanted her to think of him as a great sportsman and not someone on the brink of tears.

“Why?” She repeated. To this, Ilya only turned his head and gave her a look. A look that said *I love your son and I don’t think I can breathe without him*. “Oh.” She said, quickly understanding.

“Yeah.” Ilya responded.

After about ten minutes, David stood saying something to his wife about getting coffee from the cafeteria. As soon as he turned the corner, she stood and sat in one of the chairs right next to Ilya’s. “Since when?” She asked, looking ahead, not wasting any time.

“You probably don’t want to know.” Ilya said, staring at the space between his knees.

“Please.” She said, this time with her full attention towards Ilya. Ilya sighed, straightening himself. He didn’t want to say it, to out them both like this, but the cat was already out the bag, so he may as well just be honest for once.

“Summer before rookie season.” This had to have shocked Yuna, because she was not saying anything about it. Her gaze had returned to Shane’s door.

“Do you love him?”

“I do.”

“Does he love you?” She asked calmly.

“I hope he does.”

“Has he not told you?”

“I wouldn’t let him.” His voice broke on the last word and tears began falling down his cheeks again. Yuna put one of her arms around him as a sign of comfort. He hadn’t had any mother comfort him like that since he was twelve. It felt nice, but it only made him cry more, and louder. “I’m sorry.” Yuna didn’t say anything. She only held Ilya until his tears started to subside. When David had come back, Yuna stood—giving him one final hug before she did—and went back to her seat.

Every hour or so one of the three would go inside the hospital room to be with Shane. Shane’s parents would spend between ten and fifteen minutes, but Ilya would forget about time. After five or six hours, they had fallen under an unspoken agreement where David would go in first, then Yuna, then Ilya. A nurse had tried to get Ilya out of the waiting room claiming that visiting hours were over, but Yuna defended him and asked if it would be okay if he stayed. Ilya had been tremendously thankful towards Yuna. He couldn’t believe Shane’s mother wanted him there, that she understood why he needed to be there.

It was Ilya’s turn to see Shane. Like he had done the past couple of times, he sat on the chair next to Shane’s bed and started talking about things he wished he had told Shane. Things he wished he had been brave enough to say aloud before. “I wish I had told you about that time in Boston. I wish I would have just asked you to stay. I wanted you to stay all night. And not just because I wanted sex, that too, but because I wanted to know what it was like to sleep next to you.” He confessed. He stood and made his way to Shane’s bed—sitting where he had

sat before and holding Shane's hand. "I wasn't sleeping well during that time. My father was sick and sometimes he would call me in the middle of my night. I couldn't sleep after, sometimes I didn't sleep for entire nights." He was looking at Shane's hand as he tried to remember all the curves and prints his skin had, making a mental note to say everything again once Shane could hear. "I knew I loved you then, I knew I would probably sleep better next to you. But I was so stupid. So stupid." Tears started to form again. "I was afraid you would hate me if I am honest, and then you left. So I thought I couldn't ever let that happen again." He wiped tears with his free hand. "I wasn't ready when you wanted me to tell you. When you almost said it." He paused. "But I did feel it." He said barely in a whisper. "I love you so fucking much, Shane."

Ilya started crying again and he couldn't help but put his head in Shane's chest, needing the comfort, his own torso rising up and down from the lack of oxygen that his tears provided.

"I love you too." A voice said. Ilya immediately looked up to see Shane smiling at him, fully conscious, fully aware. Alive. A weight in Ilya's chest disappeared as fast as lightning.

"Shane!" He said forcing himself to Shane's body, hugging him tight. "Oh God. I love you so much." He took his free hand to caress Shane's cheek and finally kissed him, careful not to break him. "You scared me. I am so fucking sorry."

"It's okay, it doesn't matter now." He said. Ilya knew Shane was probably in a lot of pain, but his smile was as wide as ever. Ilya kissed him one last time and took a second to look into his eyes. To fully process that he was right there, alive and talking, before he went to open the door suddenly remembering Ilya hadn't been the only one worried sick for Shane.

"He's awake!" He said way too happily, he was crying as he said it too. He was crying because Shane was alive and he loved him too, and their future was so incredibly bright, and Ilya didn't need to be scared anymore. Yuna and David stood quickly and walked past Ilya who held the door open for them. David patted him on the back and Yuna gave him a warm smile, Ilya noticed the tear in her own cheek. They both wasted no time and hugged Shane tightly. They were both saying how much they loved Shane and how much they were relieved that Shane was okay, but Shane was looking at Ilya, and that was all Ilya would ever want from him forever and ever.

Chapter 4: Epilogue: Hayden finds out

Chapter Summary

After days in the hospital, Shane and Ilya return home. A few days later, Jackie and Hayden show up unexpectedly.

Chapter Notes

Hello!! I apologize for the break, I'm in the middle of exams and I've been so busy.

This will be the last addition to this story. I know I said it be media reaction but I changed it to Hayden and Jackie's reaction.

Enjoy and thank you so much for the support!!

Four days later

After the hit Shane took, the thought of seeing Ilya as soon as he woke up had felt like a dream. Just like Ilya's words *before* he got hit. He couldn't believe that after all—Shane opening up, Ilya rejecting him, Shane storming out, Ilya following, Shane refusing to hear him out, shutting him away after—Ilya had been feeling the same thing and he could've saved himself hours of misery. He could believe even less that Ilya had visited the hospital, as soon as he could, and had told his parents about them. Shane was a little pissed, but when Ilya explained his necessity to see Shane, he understood because he would've probably done the same thing if the roles had been reversed.

At last, Shane had been finally released from the hospital the day before and found himself at this moment resting on the couch, head in Ilya's chest, listening to his heartbeat. They'd been like that for what felt like minutes but what were, most likely, hours—or since they had returned home. Ilya had been kicked out of the playoffs so there was no hurry to return to Boston, and Shane—though his team was still in the game—was out as well due to his injury. Being out would've been a nightmare for the both of them and they would've been tremendously disappointed if the situation were any other, but now—breathing each other's air—Shane couldn't seem to care about it, and by the looks of it, Ilya didn't either.

He'd received texts from everyone in the Montreal Metro's organization, from teammates to even the social media manager, but no one had had the decency to actually visit him, though he supposed it was better now that Ilya was here. JJ had called, Hayden had called and promised he'd visit, but the rest had simply texted or sent an email. They were probably busy training for the upcoming game against the New York Admirals, even though the game was scheduled for the following week and Shane knew they wouldn't fly out until the day before.

"I can hear your head thinking." He heard Ilya say.

"Sorry."

"Are you okay?" He said worried, lifting Shane's head, forcing him to look him in the eye.

"Yes, yes." He lied.

"Is it a headache?" Now that Ilya had brought it up, Shane realized he *did* have a headache.

"Yeah." He sighed.

"I will get medication and water, stay here." He said, gently moving Shane's body away from him and departing towards the kitchen but only after kissing Shane's forehead. He heard Ilya moving around in the kitchen, the water running, the glass on the counter... Shane closed his eyes and listened to him, relaxing into the comfort.

—

After another long while, the doorbell rang.

“Those are your parents, probably. I remember they said they would come for dinner one of these days.” Ilya said while playing with Shane’s hair. Shane shifted to stand and walk towards the door but Ilya stopped him. “I will go, don’t worry.”

Shane stood as well, following Ilya towards the door to greet his parents. Ilya opened the door, but Shane’s parents weren’t there. It was a very shocked Jackie, Hayden’s wife, who looked like she was about to collapse to the ground.

“What the fuck.” is all she managed to say, mouth still wide open. Ilya backed up, giving her space to go inside. Once she was inside, following Ilya with her eyes, both men not saying anything, Ilya closed the door behind her. “What the hell.” She repeated. “What is Ilya Rozanov doing in your house?”

“He’s visiting.” Shane answered quickly. He realized that there wasn’t any indication that Ilya and him were nothing more, but a part of him suddenly didn’t want to lie anymore. “I mean, he’s staying with me because...we’re together.”

“What!?” If she was shocked before, now she was electrified. Ilya was also surprised at Shane’s honesty, but Shane could see the way his shoulders relaxed. He’d been honest due to the anesthesia these past couple of days, but there was no reason for him to be honest right now, just him choosing to love Ilya loudly.

“Yeah. Sorry I didn’t tell you sooner.” He apologized.

“Oh, honey.” She said, face softening into a warm smile. “That’s okay.” She hugged Shane tightly. “How are you?”

“I’m fine, better now.” Shane said. Jackie backed away and returned her gaze to Ilya. “He’s been helping.”

“I’m Jackie.” She suddenly said, making her way to Ilya. “I’m sorry for not introducing myself.” She gave Ilya a warm smile and Ilya returned it.

“That is okay. I’m Ilya.” Jackie laughed because she obviously knew who he was and had even acknowledged it already.

“Wow, oh my god.” She gave herself a moment to recollect herself. “Thank you for taking care of him.” This time she went to hug Ilya just like she’d hug Shane.

“Is Hayden with you?” Shane asked as they both parted from their embrace, looking at them with pure joy.

“He’s parking.” She said casually. “Oh my god, Hayden! He’s gonna freak out!”

Shane hadn’t thought about it, hadn’t thought about what it meant to reveal it right that second. He only saw Jackie and Ilya, and he didn’t feel like lying anymore. Suddenly, his smile dropped and the tension came back. A part of him had forgotten about his best friend who had yet to find out about it and panic arose quickly from this gut.

Before he was able to properly freak out for a moment, the door rang again. Ilya looked at him, and walked towards the door.

“No!” Shane said, shocking Ilya. “I’ll go.” He said quieter.

Shane breathed in and out and walked towards the door. He grabbed the handle, looked back and saw both Ilya and Jackie waiting for his next move, he turned back again towards the door and breathed in and out again, preparing himself mentally for the next few hours. He opened the door cautiously, slowly as if trying to defuse a bomb—a bomb that couldn’t be defused because he knew Hayden, and if he knew anything about Hayden, he knew he hated Ilya Rozanov, and he knew that he thought Ilya was the man Shane despised the most. He hadn’t even come out to him, but he had no time to chicken out.

Hayden was smiling widely, holding a bottle of wine that Jackie must’ve forgotten about because he was holding it out and shaking it. “Hey man!” He said, pulling him into a hug, clearly not having seen Ilya yet. “How are you?”

“Um...better.” He said. “Listen, Hayden—”

“Rozanov?” Well, the cat was out of the bag.

“Hello.” He heard Ilya say from the kitchen, Shane still facing Hayden.

“What are you doing here?” The look on Hayden’s face was growing angrier and it was clear he did not have a clue as to why Ilya would be here.

“Hayden, it’s fine.”

“No, it’s not fine.” He passed Shane and walked towards the kitchen. Shane, defeated, closed the door and walked behind him. His headache remained though he had taken his medication.

“Hayden—”

“What do you want, Rozanov?” Shane could see Ilya getting worked up as well. Nose flared, and fists clenching at his sides.

“Hayden.” He tried again.

“Look, Pike. I told you.” Ilya warned but Hayden kept walking towards him.

“Hayden!” Shane said, screaming now.

“What, Shane!” He said, matching Shane’s tone. “The man is in your house!”

“Exactly!” He said. “Why the hell do you think he’s here if it weren’t for me wanting him here?”

“What?”

“He’s my boyfriend, Hayden.” Shane had known Hayden for ages and ages and he never thought he’d seen that expression on his face ever. It was a mixture between the anger wearing off, and profound confusion. Shane walked over to all of them, Jackie giving him a sympathetic look and Ilya giving him a proud smile—which, in the end, was all he needed. He’d figured that ripping the bandaid would be better than slowing him into it, especially with how childish he was acting.

“What do you mean *boyfriend*?” Hayden cautiously asked.

“I mean I love him, romantically.” He paused. “I’m gay.” Time stopped. Everything was finally out, the whole truth. Hayden couldn’t look more puzzled.

“Since when?” He asked, not saying anything more. Rage coming back into his eyes.

“For a while.” Shane practically whispered.

“How long is a while?” Hayden demanded.

“Pike.” Ilya jumped in.

“Let him answer.” He warned Ilya.

“Officially very little. But we’ve been seeing each other longer than that.” Shane couldn’t look anywhere but the floor, unable to look Hayden in the eye with everything he’d been hiding from his best friend.

“Ok. How long?” Hayden still wasn’t satisfied with it, he wanted to know it: how long Shane had been keeping all of this from him.

“Hayden...”

“How long, Shane? Just answer it.”

“Since rookie season.” Shane heard Jackie gasp behind him, understandably so.

“I need to sit down.” Shane knew Hayden was mad. He knew he’d kept it for so long. He knew Hayden would be fine with him being gay. He just knew. Hayden had every reason to be mad, shocked, mortified... Ilya and Jackie remained quiet but Shane could see Jackie patting Ilya’s shoulder in comfort. He could also see Hayden trying his best to support him. He could see how mad he was, but he could also see his efforts to not let that rage take control.

“I’m sorry, Hayd.”

“You better be.”

“I can explain it. All of it.”

“You don’t have to, Shane.” He could hear the pain in Hayden’s voice, head low, defeated.

“Of course I have to. I lied to you, and I’m sorry.” He said.

“Then why?”

“I don’t even know myself. I just couldn’t help it.” Shane felt his voice cut short and his tears starting to take over. Ilya moved forward but Jackie stopped him, hand on his chest.

“Let them settle it.” He heard her whisper. Ilya nodded and backed away.

“Hey.” Hayden said once he noticed Shane crying. “Hey.” Hayden stood rushing towards Shane and hugging him tight.

“I’m sorry.” He whispered into his ear.

“It’s okay, man.” Hayden squeezed him tight before letting him go. “But did it have to be him?” This pulled a laugh out of everybody, tension dissipating. Shane wiped his tears with his sleeve as he laughed.

“Yeah. It had to be him.” Hayden was smiling now. He knew Shane would explain.

“So, does anyone want dinner?” Ilya said from a distance.

At that moment, looking at his best friend walking over to the kitchen, where his boyfriend and his other best friend were standing, Shane felt a warm feeling in his chest of relief, like the heaviest weight he'd been bearing for years had finally lifted. He finally had the man he loved, and could admit that he loved him to him and himself, and his favorite people knew about him, and seemed to be okay with it. Very little other things could make him feel bad right now, aside from his headache. But, there wasn’t anything in this world that could ruin his life right now. He just couldn't wait for the future.

End Notes

Thank you for reading!! Hope you enjoyed.
English is not my first language so bare with me.

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