

Belonging

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76859371) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76859371>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , David Hollander , Yuna Hollander
Additional Tags:	Fluff , Family , Family Feels , Family Bonding , POV Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov-centric , Unbeta'd we die like Shane's boner when he realized his dad caught him making out with Rozanov
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-01 Words: 2,378 Chapters: 1/1

Belonging

by [heartsmadeofbooks](#)

Summary

Belong [verb]: to be in the right or suitable place / to feel comfortable and happy in a particular situation or with a particular group of people.

In which Ilya Rozanov learns the true meaning of a word he only knew in theory.

Notes

Hi. Happy New Year.

So, for fifteen long years I've written exclusively for the Glee/Klaine fandom. I've never tried to write about any other pairing.

But Shane and Ilya have taken over my life lately (as it seems it happened to everyone else) and I just had to write something.

I don't know if I'll write more about those two, but here's this one-shot for now.

It takes place shortly after The Cottage and before the events of The Long Game.

Hope you like it.

The fire crackled in front of them. For as much as Ilya had made fun of Shane for thinking sitting there and simply watching a bonfire was entertaining, he had to admit it was nice. Ilya could feel the heat of the fire in his legs and the heat of his boyfriend's body pressed against his side.

This had to be one of the most perfect nights in Ilya Rozanov's entire life.

Across from him, David laughed at something Shane had said. He seemed to have recovered rather quickly after the shock of seeing his son being kissed and groped against a glass door by none other than his arch-rival earlier that week. There was a light in his blue eyes, and Ilya wondered if that was what happiness looked like: shining eyes and easy smiles.

Well, he should know, right? He was happy now. Happier than he had been... well, maybe ever.

Ilya's belly was full of the delicious dinner, the chicken and salad that Yuna had brought, and he was now sipping on a beer David had offered him. He hadn't expected things to feel quite this easy. If he'd known how easy it was, maybe he would have...

What? Told Shane sooner, about how he felt? No. Maybe they had truly needed all this time. It wasn't a waste, not really. They had built their love little by little over the past ten years, with little secret touches and passionate kisses, and silly texts and phone calls that had felt, some times, like the only thread Ilya had left to his own sanity. He remembered that phone call when he was in Russia, after his father had died. How he had ranted in Russian, a language Shane didn't speak a word of, and yet he had felt more understood than ever before.

He glanced around now, the fire making Yuna's skin look almost golden and reflecting on Shane's smile and on David's wedding ring as he reached for his beer. Everything was... everything was...

Nothing in Ilya's life had been perfect so far, no even his career, which he was quite proud of. But this? This seemed close enough.

"Oh, you have to send me that picture we took at dinner, Ilya," Yuna said then, breaking through Ilya's thoughts.

"Okay. I send it to Shane, he sends it to you," he replied, already fishing his phone out of his pocket.

"That's silly and unnecessarily complicated," Yuna shook her head. "I'll just give you my number, and you can send it directly to me."

It was such a simple thing and yet it made Ilya pause. It was probably just so he could send her the picture, but still, that she wanted contact with him, even if briefly, felt... felt...

Ilya didn't have an English word for it. Maybe he had never even learned the Russian word for it...

After adding Yuna's number to his contacts, he searched for the photo in his files. He took a moment before sending it to look at it. It was a lovely picture. They had set Ilya's phone against a glass on a table and sat together, all four of them, the dying daylight still shining in the horizon and making it all look a bit golden. He and Shane were pressed together in the middle, and Shane smiled bigger than Ilya had ever seen him. Come to think of it, his own face had an unusually large smile, too. Yes, happiness, he thought. This was what it looked like.

David sat next to Shane, one arm around his son's shoulders, while Yuna sat next to Ilya, her left hand pressed gently to Ilya's arm.

It almost looked like he belonged there, with them. With this happy, loving family.

He sent her the picture and cleared his throat. He stood up and walked a few steps towards where the trees met the lake, needing a moment to himself. There were tears clinging to his eyelashes, but he wasn't going to cry. There was no reason to, right?

The text message was waiting for him when Ilya went into the locker room. He sat heavily on the bench and reached for his phone. Sitting down made pain flash through his body. He'd taken a hard hit in the last five minutes of the game, but since they had been losing, he hadn't wanted to bring attention to it. He had managed to tie the score and then make a lovely pass that gave them a much-needed victory.

Now he was regretting it, a bit. Everything hurt. He let out a little groan as he checked his notifications.

He had expected the message to be from Shane, until he remembered he was probably still playing his own game against the Admirals. It surprised him to see it was Yuna who had texted him instead.

[From: Yuna]: *Hey. That looked painful. How are you feeling?*

Oh. She had been watching. Not only that, but she had *noticed*. Ilya pressed a hand to his side – it wasn't the first time he bruised his ribs. It didn't feel worse than previous times, but it certainly made him wish for some ice and maybe some painkillers. Or a shot of vodka.

He began to type a response.

[From: Ilya]: *I'm okay. Probably looked worse than it was.*

He paused after he had sent it, and then added, quickly: *Thank you for asking.*

Her next text didn't take long. Ilya hadn't even moved to try to take his clothes off and head to the showers.

[From: Yuna]: *Glad you're well. Make sure to talk to the doctor before you head home, though, okay? And congratulations on your victory x*

Something seemed to thump in his chest, and it took a little moment for him to realize it was his heart. He had gotten used to Shane saying things like that, to showing concern whenever he got hurt on the ice, but aside from him... who cared? Svetlana, probably. It was a very short list. Not really a list at all.

Someone clasped his shoulder, hard, and Ilya winced in pain.

“Good job today, Rozanov!” One of his teammates said.

He had been on the ice with Ilya and yet had not noticed he got hurt. Yuna, watching the game on television, had seen Ilya was not okay.

He couldn’t explain why that mattered, but it did.

Whenever he woke up in a hotel room, it took a little while for Ilya to remember exactly where he was. He blinked his eyes open at the ceiling and tried to remember what the schedule had been like lately and where he was supposed to be. Ah, yes. Florida. He could see the edge of palm trees through the curtain and the glare of the sun.

He reached for his phone to check the time. He had a morning practice today that he needed to get ready for. He was surprised to see the notification that waited for him there: David had added him to the Hollander family group chat.

There were already a few messages from Yuna and a quick reply from Shane, about the next long weekend that was coming up, in which they were both going to be free, asking them if they were planning to head to the cottage, so they could all get together for dinner. Ilya didn’t realize he was smiling as he read each message. The way in which she had included him, like it was the easiest thing to do in the world, still blew his mind.

He typed a quick message, saying he would be there, and wondered if they could see right through his response, just how much it meant to him.

That night, after the game, when he and Shane were talking on the phone, he said: “It was nice of your parents, to create group chat and include me.”

Shane’s voice was soft in his ear. “Oh, no, they just added you to the group chat we’ve always had. They said it was silly to have to text you separately each time they wanted to talk to you or make plans.”

How could he explain to Shane, who had always had this, who probably took for granted every little interaction he had with his parents, who didn’t realize how special the bond they had was, that something as small as being added to a family group chat made warmth spread through Ilya’s chest, that he could feel a knot of emotion in his throat that made it hard to say anything else?

But Shane knew him well by now. He interpreted Ilya’s silence immediately.

“Hey. They love you, okay?” He said, and his voice was even softer now, which Ilya hadn’t thought was possible. He wished they had chosen to FaceTime instead of a regular call. He wanted to see his face, his eyes, his beautiful freckles. “You’re part of this family now. You’re not getting rid of us that easily.”

His teasing tone was giving Ilya a way out, if he wanted it. He could reply with a joke and move past the awkwardness of getting this emotional for something as simple and boring as a fucking group chat.

But he didn’t want the easy way out. Not this time.

“I…” he started. He always hated when English failed him, and it always happened when he felt like this, a little raw and overwhelmed. But Shane knew that, and he was patient, so he didn’t interrupt or try to fill in the blanks of what Ilya wanted to say, didn’t try to help by offering words that might be the ones Ilya was trying to find. “I will try. To be a good part of family.”

It was as close as he could get to saying what he wanted to say: that he would be there for them, that he would always make sure they had everything they needed, that he would work hard at deserving this spot they had given him.

Once again, Shane knew exactly what he was truly saying, even when he hadn’t found the right words. “You don’t have to try or change anything. You’re already a perfect part of this family, Ilya. All you have to do is be yourself.”

Ilya felt the burning of tears building in his eyes. “Okay,” he said, because that was all he could manage.

Being himself had never be enough before, not since he had lost his mother, at least.

Maybe not even then – if Ilya had been enough, would she have not swallowed all those pills? Would she have been able to push her misery away, for him?

He closed his eyes.

“I love you,” Shane whispered. “So much.”

A single tear made its way down Ilya’s cheek. He didn’t bother wiping it away – he was alone. No one could see him.

“I love you, too,” he replied.

Sometimes he wished he could back in time, to that day Shane had introduced himself to him as he stood outside smoking. He would tell himself to pay attention, to focus not just on how pretty this boy was, but also how beautiful he was inside. He wanted to tell himself that Shane would become the most important person in his life.

That he was meeting the man he would want to marry one day.

The man who would give him the family he had never quite dared hoping for.

The day Ilya finally moved to Ottawa, Yuna was waiting for him at the airport.

Ilya had reassured her a million times that he could just get a taxi to his new home, but she had insisted on picking him up. She and David had been such great help during this move, and Ilya felt wrong accepting more from them, but Shane had told him it was just better to let them do this. They wanted to be there for him, Shane said. They wanted to make this transition easier.

She wrapped her arms around her in a tight, warm hug. Ilya let his eyes fall close and inhaled the comforting scent of her perfume. He had the odd feeling of being home as Yuna hugged him, a feeling he couldn't quite explain.

"Ready for this new adventure?" She asked him as they drove out of the parking lot.

Ilya let his head fall back against the seat and turned just slightly so he could look at her. "Yes. Is exciting to start on new team. I'm happy I will be closer to Shane, too."

"It was hard not getting to see each other often enough, I bet," she commented. "Being two hours away is going to be a huge improvement."

Ilya nodded. "It'll be nice. We will take turns driving back and forth."

"Well, now that you're going to be in the same town as us, you have got to come to dinner every week," she said.

Blinking at her as if he hadn't grasped the meaning behind those words, Ilya told himself he should have probably gotten used to Shane's parents wanting him around by now. They demonstrated that constantly, but Ilya couldn't help but be surprised every single time.

He wondered if they understood, just how much it meant. They had talked about his family a few times, about his mother, but not as deeply as he had talked about it with Shane. He couldn't shake off the sensation that people would judge him for walking away from his family yet, for not being enough for them, even if he knew he had been right to stop talking to his brother since his father's death.

"Thank you for picking me up today," he said. He had already said that at the airport, but found that what he truly wanted to say now got stuck in his throat, too big and emotional to truly let it out.

She looked at him. There was something in her dark eyes that told him she knew. Her smile was sweet when she said: "That's what family's for, honey."

Ilya looked away, the outside world blurring past his window.

Yes. This was what family was for.

And Ilya was so, so happy to be a part of it.

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