

We can make it if we try

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76943886) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76943886>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - College/University , Alternate Universe , Getting Back Together , Angst and Romance , Second Chances , you will see a heated rivalry callback or two though , Making Up , Making Out
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-05 Words: 4,774 Chapters: 3/3

We can make it if we try

by [learnthemusic](#)

Summary

College AU.

They say you should ring in New Year's Eve with who you want to spend the rest of the year beside. Shane is trying to make peace with the likelihood he's going to spend it alone...until a knock in the middle of the night changes everything again.

OR: a Hollanov one-shot where Shane gets into multiple law schools; Ilya gets into vet school somewhere else and is too scared to ask for what he wants; and months later, he admits he fucked up.

Even in a foreign place, surrounded by the detritus of Shane's unfulfilling life, Ilya still fucking fits.

Throat closing up, Shane leans his head against the door to look at the ceiling. If he can keep his eyes off Ilya for a bit, maybe he can dredge up old anger and let it fuel him into turning Ilya away. That's what everyone would encourage him to do. Everyone would say he shouldn't...

"I'm sorry is so late."

...that he shouldn't be drawn to look back at Ilya. That he shouldn't be affected by the hesitation in Ilya's voice, or his hands balling at his sides, or his light eyes shining under the moonlight streaming through the cracked blinds.

That he shouldn't have already let Ilya in.

Notes

happy new year! this came to me too late to post on nye but i wanted to do it anyway. please read chapter one with creators style enabled if you can. you'll be able to differentiate who's texting without it, but it won't look very clean.

title from "you and i" by one direction, my beloveds.

Chapter 1

Rose Landry

Today 4:15 PM

Rose: Are you sure you don't want to come with? It could help

me: I'm not really in a celebrating mood.

Rose: But we're good at getting you into one!

Rose: I bet Miles would love to 😊

me: Rose...

me: I can't do that.

Rose: But you know what they say about getting over someone!

me: What do they say?

Rose: You get under someone new!!

me: This conversation is over now.

Rose: Fiiiine. Happy almost new year. I love you!

Hayden Pike

Today 4:42 PM

Hayden: Everyone's bringing friends!

me: So?

Hayden: So maybe one of them will interest you!

me: That sounds like my nightmare.

Hayden: You need to get outta the house tonight dude

Hayden: You can't keep watching When Henry Met Sally

me: It's Harry. And I'm not.

Hayden: Fine, then you can't keep watching Lord of the Rings. Get your ass over here!!

me: I hate driving late at night.

Hayden: I don't want you to drive, the point is for you to get black out! I'll pay your taxi

me: I can afford my own taxi. But no thanks. I'm going to stay home.

Hayden: SIGH

Hayden: Fineeeee. No new years kiss from me then.

me: Wow. What a shame.

Read 5:03 PM

Mom & Dad

Today 5:35 PM

Mom

Mom: Hey hon, are you sure you don't want us to come over? It's not too late to make the drive. We are happy to!

Dad

Dad: We have everything to make chicken parm!

me: Dad...

Dad

Dad: What? It's your favorite!

me: It's not my favorite.

Mom

Mom: Oh David, I should have said something. That's my bad, sweetie. We can make something else. Whatever you want!

me: That's all right. I'm probably just gonna go to sleep early.

Mom

Mom: All right, Shane. We understand. Love you. Talk tomorrow?

Dad

Dad: Love you, kid! HNY

me: Love you too

J.J. Boiziau

Today 6:11 PM

me: Hey, are you home?

J.J.: Whats up? You coming to Hayden's?

me: Not this year.

J.J.: Noooo you need to come out!

me: Not really up for it, man.

J.J.: You really not gonna pick up?? I know you have your phone!!

me: I texted for a reason.

J.J.: Loser. What do you need?

me: I couldn't get to SQDC. Can you bring me something?

J.J.: I got you bro

me: Do you have any of the Snickers ones?

J.J.: Haha you know it. On my way

It takes Shane an hour to open the package J.J. dropped off. He isn't one for self-medication, but he's pretty fucking tired of being wound so tight that every other breath feels like a stab to the chest.

The last week has frayed his nerves. He was dangerously close to hitting a wall by Christmas. Having to endure lunch that day as though nobody was missing from the table was enough to send him crashing right through the Sheetrock.

His parents meant nothing by reverting to their old traditions. Neither has anybody else who's treated Shane like he's moved on. They've all been trying, in ways they don't know are misguided, to lift his spirits since the summer.

They're only treating him the way he's encouraged them to. He figured out early on that the less often he shows he's hurting or conflicted, the fewer questions he's asked. So he's spent the better part of the last seven months hiding just how poorly he's keeping himself together.

It's easier, anyway, pretending he wasn't senselessly hollowed out and left behind to desiccate by someone he privately thought he'd spend the rest of his life with.

But clearly he's overdone it. Keeping up the pretense during the holidays has been more difficult than he anticipated. Impossible in a lot of ways, even. He can't cut through the noise in his brain long enough to focus on his reading for school, so he fails to keep himself distracted. Then intrusive thoughts about picking Russian up again just in case creep back in, and he has no productive ways to combat them.

The cycle is brutal.

Plus, it feels like everyone around him has found some form of happiness in post-university life: Rose recently landed her first leading role in a national theatre group; Hayden bought an engagement ring at the start of December for a woman he picked up at a bar last semester; and J.J. is on the verge of being promoted to sous chef.

Shane thought he'd find his own version of happiness if he went ahead with law school. If he kept at least one part of his supposedly-too-idealistic plan intact. All he's found as he's tried to dig his way out of mountains of coursework is the feeling of being stuck on a path that he wishes, more every day, he hadn't chosen to take.

It's his winter break. He should try to have fun. He *should* say to himself, "It's a breakup. Things are over. Move on." But he's not in the mood to pretend he's anywhere close to believing that.

So, yeah, he's pretty fucking tired.

Misery will follow him into January regardless of if he gets high. He might as well unload it for a few hours.

Ilya

June 15 8:12 AM

me: Happy birthday

Read 8:13 AM

Today 9:24 PM

Ilya: Are you having a good night? I heard you weren't going to Hayden's

Today 11:12 PM

Ilya is typing...

In August, Shane moved into a smaller apartment than the one he originally planned to rent. Apartment may actually be too generous a term for the box he begrudgingly calls home. His double mattress is shoved into the corner of a tiny bedroom, its left side blocked off. Almost the entire width of the wall adjoining the living room is taken up by the narrowest six-drawer dresser he could find. He had to downsize from a true nightstand to a table with just enough surface area for a lamp, a coaster and his phone. His bathroom is tragically undersized too. And the only pieces of furniture he could comfortably put in his living room were his old futon, coffee table and desk. Bookshelves and end tables returned to his parents' basement in Ottawa.

The kitchen is the least crowded room in the whole place, but its sparseness is out of necessity. He'd have a sliver of free space if he tried to fit anything but a knife block and a blender on the counters. Everything is stored in four cabinets and a tiny pantry. He doesn't even own bar stools.

On top of all that, the walls are so thin, he can hear the noise in the hallway outside his front door even when he's in bed, on the other side of the apartment.

Shane's become immune to most disturbances. But the edible that knocked him out around 9 p.m. proves insufficient protection from the loud *boom* that jerks him out of sleep some unknown amount of time later.

Through lingering brain fog, Shane assumes someone in the neighborhood has set off a round of late-night fireworks — until the sound doesn't cease. Its source, it turns out, is a lot closer than he initially thought, and the echoing doesn't resemble explosions at all. It sounds more like incessant thumping on wood.

It sounds more like knocking and his name being called through a door.

In his haste to find out who's come to his apartment in the middle of the night, he stubs his toe then traps his head in the hood of the sweatshirt he slides over his naked torso.

He calls, "Hold on," but the cotton muffles his voice.

The pounding continues, loud enough that if his neighbors have returned from their reveling, Shane's sure he's going to get a passive-aggressive email about the building's quiet hours.

"Jesus Christ, hold *on*," he whisper-shouts as he rights his clothes.

He's finally steeled himself for whatever New Year's Eve disaster might await him on the other side when he unlocks the door to —

"Ilya," Shane gasps.

Ilya's fist, poised to knock, drops to his side.

Chapter 2

The main thing Shane notices upon laying eyes on his ex-boyfriend for the first time in half a year is the slightly more pronounced hollow underneath each of his high cheekbones. Shane's never seen him so gaunt.

Maybe he should feel self-righteous, like *that's what you deserve for walking away*, but even at his angriest, he never wished ill on Ilya. Right now all he feels is sad that he doesn't know when Ilya started losing weight, or if it was the pressures of veterinary school that tipped it off, or something else he wouldn't have a single clue about.

Maybe Shane shouldn't want to, but he wishes he could fix it.

When Ilya asks, accent as gravelly as ever, "Can I come in?" Shane doesn't think to block his entry. He automatically says yes and lets Ilya sweep into this place he hates.

Shane closes the door and presses his back to it, wondering why the violent hammering of his heart is already slowing as he watches Ilya look around. He seems unbothered. If Shane were in his shoes, he'd find it strange to catalogue all the new ways old things he recognized were made to fit together.

Shit, Shane's lived here four months and even he's weirded out by the arrangements sometimes.

Shane doesn't say anything.

Ilya continues his exploration, dumping his backpack onto the floor by the futon on his way to Shane's desk. It's not until Ilya hangs his long winter coat over the back of the rolling chair, places his toque on top, and turns to face Shane again that Shane nearly breaks the silence.

It's not just the unruly mass of light brown curls Ilya has revealed that Shane finds familiar. It's also the blue sweater Shane knows from the countless times he tossed it into the washing machine at his old building.

Shane bites his tongue. It probably smells like a detergent he wouldn't recognize. Ilya made sure months ago that he wouldn't belong in this too-small apartment, and his commitment to the cause likely covered every possible contingency.

But, fuck. Even in a foreign place, surrounded by the detritus of Shane's unfulfilling life, Ilya still fucking fits.

Throat closing up, Shane leans his head against the door to look at the ceiling. If he can keep his eyes off Ilya for a bit, maybe he can dredge up old anger and let it fuel him into turning Ilya away. That's what everyone would encourage him to do. Everyone would say he shouldn't...

"I'm sorry is so late."

...that he shouldn't be drawn to look back at Ilya. That he shouldn't be affected by the hesitation in Ilya's voice, or his hands balling at his sides, or his light eyes shining under the moonlight streaming through the cracked blinds.

That he shouldn't have already let Ilya in.

"I texted but you didn't reply, and..." Ilya coughs into a fist, then crosses his arms in front of himself. "I just needed to see you."

Shane should try, even a little, to get mad. But he's still so tired of pretending.

Ilya's eyes are darting around now, desperate to land on something, and Shane doesn't want to see them harden if whatever Ilya intended this to be escalates into a fight.

What Shane wants is to know is if Ilya will look at him with the care he once felt for him. He wants to know if he knows, by instinct alone, why Ilya chose tonight, of all nights, to come back.

Against his better judgment, Shane takes a half-step toward finding out.

"How are you even here?" he asks, because the answer to that question is less likely to send him into a spiral.

"Bought plane ticket," Ilya says, shrugging.

"When?"

"Today."

Shane's breath catches in his lungs. It takes him a long second to say, "That had to be expensive."

Ilya looks at Shane, stare suddenly guarded, when he shrugs again. "Yes."

Shane sighs, trying to expel the tightness climbing from his chest into his throat. "You shouldn't have done that."

"I had to."

"Ilya, that's —"

"Let me talk first?" Ilya interrupts, striding forward but stopping before he's within range of touching Shane. "After that, you say whatever. But I have been wanting to say this for a long time."

Ilya's expression has cracked open, pleading, so unlike the shuttered look imprinted in Shane's memory.

Shane decides, once and for all, he won't stop himself from doing what some might think he shouldn't.

"Okay," he says. "What is it?"

Ilya nods, takes a deep breath...and says nothing. His eyebrows pinch together and he glances away.

Shane is sure Ilya wouldn't have flown across the country — and likely bribed someone for Shane's address — to deliver bad news. But the longer he takes to gather his nerves, the more convinced Shane becomes that whatever Ilya is preparing to say is going to devastate him.

Shane can't stomach more bullshit. He barely survived the last round; he's not done fumbling through the aftermath.

Still, he remains bolted to the doormat, waiting.

He doesn't expect the first words out of Ilya's mouth to be: "I fucked up."

Shane's eyes widen.

"I should have said what I was feeling," Ilya continues. "But I was afraid if I told you, you would make bad choice. Or not bad choice, but not the best choice, for you. You want to do a lot, Shane, and I did not want to make you choose between me and those things."

"Ilya, I wouldn't ha—"

"And McGill is better school for law. You would have hated if you went somewhere else. I thought all these things, and I knew that if I asked you to come with me you would not think about any of it. You would just come. And I did not want to be selfish. I could not do that to you."

"I wouldn't ha—"

"The law school in Calgary is not as good and you would resent me later. I thought it easier to break up. I thought this was the right thing. You needed to stay and I needed to get out of your way."

"I didn't want —"

"I would not have been able to deal with you hat—"

"Shut up!" Shane reclaims the distance Ilya has put between them in his pacing and clamps his hands onto Ilya's shoulders. Ilya freezes under his touch, almost recoiling, but Shane holds him tighter. When their gazes lock, he says, "You were wrong," as fervently as he should have spoken in May. "I wouldn't have looked at things like that. I wouldn't have thought you were being selfish. I didn't want you out of my way."

Ilya blinks rapidly, tears shifting in his eyes.

Before he can fully open his mouth to interject, Shane says, "It's my turn." He brings his forehead to rest against Ilya's, not because he doesn't want to look at him directly anymore but because he needs to feel grounded. This is the best way he can achieve that right now. "You wouldn't have forced me into anything. I was going to choose what I thought was right."

"You would not have applied if —"

"Stop." Shane lifts his head and puts a hand over Ilya's lips. The warmth he finds there spreads up his wrist, a minor balm, but a balm nonetheless, for the adrenaline coursing through him. "There are a lot of things I wouldn't have done if I hadn't met you. I wanted to consider doing this too, but you didn't give me time. I got the email, and you just — you shut me down."

Ilya mumbles Shane's name, but Shane ignores its vibration in his palm.

"You didn't let me choose. I stayed because it hurt too much to think about going out there if you really didn't want to even just be friends. But I..."

Shane gulps, his ribs squeezing all the organs underneath. He's barely admitted what he wants to say next to himself. But if Ilya hears one thing before he leaves again, Shane needs it to be the reason he hasn't been able to move on like everyone believes he has.

"I didn't want to stay," he whispers, hand dropping to Ilya's neck. "I would have gone anywhere with you. And even if we weren't anything anymore, I still would have been happier there than I can be here, on my own."

One beat passes, then two.

Shane is about to spill the rest of his secret when Ilya asks, "You are not happy?" on the third beat.

Suddenly weak, Shane shakes his head slowly. "I'm miserable."

"And you do not think you would have been miserable with me?" Ilya says haltingly, tentatively, like he's trying to make sure his accent doesn't muddle his words.

Shane's eyes fly open. Two things occur to him simultaneously: That Ilya hasn't tried to touch him yet. And that Ilya doesn't know Shane wouldn't misunderstand his English if he were talking through a mouthful of rocks.

He leans back so Ilya can read his lips when he says, enunciating as clearly as he can, "I could never be miserable with you."

For seven months, or maybe a little longer, Shane hasn't been privy to the machinations in Ilya's head. But not now.

He watches Ilya's walls come down as his face crumples and his shoulders sag. When he finally, *finally* leans into Shane, Shane knows they're thinking the same thing: They could have been trying to make things work all along.

"Fuck," Ilya groans into Shane's neck. He's already wrapped Shane tight, his hands on Shane's lower back for the first time in an eternity.

Shane clutches the fabric under his hands and pulls Ilya impossibly closer. A whiff of smoke reaches his nostrils, but he bats away the impulse to admonish Ilya. He just inhales more deeply, weaving the reminder of Ilya's worst habit with the relief he feels that Ilya hasn't taken up something worse.

When he becomes used to the stench of cigarettes, he notices another scent underneath it. It's stale now, but so familiar Shane could recite the ingredients perfectly without needing a hint. The same mountain air laundry soap he's used since his mom first sent him off to Montreal with it years ago.

He shuts his eyes against the pressure building behind them. He won't cry over his hasty theories about what any of this means.

But he will melt into Ilya's embrace. He will stroke Ilya's back as his breath hitches. He will shiver when Ilya's fingers find Shane's skin again.

And when Ilya asks whatever he wants to ask, Shane knows he'll say, "Yes."

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

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

It could be minutes or an hour that Shane stands like that, crushing Ilya against himself, waiting for their breathing to regulate. When he decides to break their silence with the original question he wanted to ask, he has to clear his throat to get it to work properly.

Still, his voice is barely above a whisper when he manages, "You could have come on any night during winter break. Why did you come tonight?"

Ilya removes his face from Shane's neck. The ruddiness of his cheeks is noticeable even in the dim light.

"It's New Year's."

Shane's heart pounds at the way Ilya says it — so uncomplicated, and sounding so much like his next words will be the ones Shane hoped to hear earlier.

The barest hint of a smile tugs at Ilya's mouth. "Everything changed for us on New Year's before. I thought we —"

Shane doesn't need to hear the rest. He already knows how Ilya, the one subject he's studied more faithfully than anything in school, will finish the sentence.

He takes Ilya's face in his hands and kisses him, with such surprising force they have to stagger to the nearest wall to not lose all their balance.

Shane's glad to have the solidness at his back as he relearns the topography of Ilya's mouth and what it takes to coax moans and groans and whimpers. He wants to spend as long as he can right here, all of his fingers in Ilya's curls, his teeth snagging Ilya's bottom lip, his hips straining Ilya's grip when he starts to rut against the thigh Ilya slips between Shane's legs.

He wants more of everything he's missed. He wants the desperate way they used to cling to each other, back when all they did was fuck whenever their first-year schedules allowed. He wants the restraint they both exercised one night before the start of year two, when Ilya agreed merely hooking up wasn't going to cut it anymore. He wants the laziness of the several hundred early mornings together that followed.

He wants the phone to ring in the summer when he knows Ilya should be sleeping back in Moscow, and he wants to stay up late enough to send his own "good morning" texts before he goes to bed eight time zones behind Ilya. He wants to celebrate their 23rd birthdays together, and next Christmas and New Year's Eve. He wants all the days he once dreamed of having.

He'll transfer, or make however many trips across Canada and back it'll take to ensure he gets it all.

"Don't," Shane gasps the next time Ilya halfheartedly tries to break away. "Don't stop touching me. Please."

Ilya leans back, regarding Shane intently as he carefully pushes hair off Shane's forehead with his free hand. His mouth is swollen and slick, his eyes bleary, his chest heaving. Shane is sure he reflects back the same debauched look.

"Never," Ilya whispers, the syllables gnarled in his throat. "I will never stop if you don't want."

Shane pulls Ilya's face to his again. He's going to chase away their wistfulness with everything's he got.

After long minutes pouring their emotions into each other's mouths, they gentle. Ilya's fingers on Shane's hips loosen their grasp and start stroking along the waistband of his stupidly tight boxers. Shane's fists in Ilya's hair turn into open palms that cup his nape and knead Ilya's shoulder. Their noses brush softly, their tongues quit dueling, and the noises wedging into the tight space between them are more like sighs and quiet pleas than frantic growls.

Now that Shane's got this, he wants more of this tenderness they've stumbled back into. He would lean against this wall forever if it meant he didn't have to go without Ilya or the reverence in his touch for so long ever again.

Still, Shane's desire rages. When Ilya starts kissing all over Shane's face, his knees shake and his resolve cracks.

"Ilya," he murmurs, so huskily he barely recognizes his voice, when Ilya noses under Shane's right ear. "Let's go to my room."

Ilya doesn't wait for Shane to point him in the right direction. He stoops to lift Shane into his arms, then carries him wherever he thinks Shane's bed is.

Remarkably, Ilya gets them there with barely a stumble, despite how steadfastly he keeps his mouth on Shane's throat and how distracted Shane is by the scrape of Ilya's teeth on his skin.

They're down to underwear and are entangled in Shane's mussed sheets what feels like seconds later. Their bare legs and arms are locked around each other, the electricity between them crackling like it did all those years ago on a night like tonight, and in every private moment since.

It's easy for Shane to forget how tired he's been and lose himself in the sensations of his body answering to Ilya the way it always has. His responsiveness mortified him once upon a time; he finds that hard to fathom now. He can't imagine loving anything more than the arousal that zips up his spine at Ilya's touch.

Even when they're sloppy to start — kisses unrefined, hips angled incorrectly and fingernails too close to drawing blood — Shane's entire being sings with pleasure. It intensifies when their hisses of discomfort eventually subside into quiet laughter. Before long, they're moving in perfect synchrony.

Shane gets Ilya onto his back and immediately dives toward the hollow of his neck, the metal of his gold crucifix warm under his lips. He traces its outline with his tongue, then does the same with the links of the chain it's attached to.

When he travels down Ilya's torso, kissing the width of his chest and the length of his sternum, Ilya clutches Shane's shoulders tight enough to bruise. He keeps moving lower, reveling in Ilya's squirming and moaning as he goes.

But Ilya doesn't let Shane linger when his lips reach Ilya's belly button. He hauls Shane up and flips their positions, pinning Shane to the mattress with a wicked glint in his eyes.

Four years have passed since they first fell into bed together, but Shane is no less astonished by the spots Ilya finds to put his mouth or his teeth or his tongue.

Shane can barely utter, "Fuck," before Ilya is pulling an obscenely breathy gasp from his lungs.

He begs for more, for Ilya to grab him harder, to pull him closer, to get the last of their clothes off. Ilya's big hands wrap around his thighs and Shane instantly covers one of them, eager to drag Ilya's fingers closer to his cock.

But when Ilya finally rolls his hips against Shane, the intense throbbing of his cock inside his boxers reminds him of one unfortunate fact. It's been ages since he's found satisfying release.

"Wait," Shane pants. It pains him to turn his face away when Ilya chases his mouth. "I'm not going to last. It's been a while. "

"Same," Ilya says, lips trailing wet kisses along Shane's collarbone. "Is fine. We come now, then again later."

Shane groans, distracted by the sharp points of Ilya's teeth under his jaw. Then, "Wait. Same?"

Ilya hums, not letting up.

Shane pulls Ilya's face away with a hand in his hair. "Ilya," he says, imbuing his voice with calmness he hasn't felt in months, "you haven't been with anyone lately?"

Shane didn't want to ask before he kissed Ilya earlier. It wasn't his business what Ilya had or hadn't done 3,600 kilometres away. He came back to Shane; nothing else mattered in the moment.

But the door's open now.

Ilya's head moves side to side in his grasp. "No."

"Like..." Shane swallows hard. "Like not since —"

"No, not since," Ilya says, failing to break Shane's hold when he tries to reach for Shane's mouth. "Shane, come on, can we please get back to—"

"Are you serious?" Shane interrupts, breathless again "You haven't been with *anyone* since we broke up?"

Ilya sighs. "No, I haven't."

Shane's heart stops. He assumed Ilya had returned to ancient habits, from when neither of them wanted to admit spending time together felt better and more important than time spent with anyone else.

But now he knows for sure he'd been right to hold onto the small shred of hope he felt after Ilya left.

"Holy shit."

"It's not a big de—"

"I haven't either." Shane frames Ilya's face with his hands and strokes his thumbs along the sharp cheekbones he's been obsessed with since they were paired up in their foundations psychology seminar. "I didn't try," he admits. "I didn't even think about it."

Shane doesn't miss the slight wobble of Ilya's chin.

Fuck. He'd been so stupid to keep himself from pushing for Ilya to admit they weren't finished.

He wraps his arms around Ilya's shoulders, pulling him down until their lips are centimetres apart again. "I missed you," Shane whispers, voice thick and eyes stinging with tears, "so fucking much."

A strangled sound escapes Ilya as he hides in Shane's neck. "Me too," he says, barely loud enough to be heard over the blood roaring in Shane's ears. If he says anything else, it's lost in the heavy air surrounding them.

Moisture seeps into Shane's skin and Ilya begins to tremble, his breaths coming in shallow puffs.

Shane squeezes Ilya as tightly as he dares. Even then, the hug isn't strong enough to convey everything Shane wishes he could say.

There will be time for talking, though; Shane will make sure of it.

Right now, he's content to settle for whispering, "We'll be okay," and murmuring assurances against Ilya's forehead between firm kisses. "We'll figure this out. I know we can."

Chapter End Notes

i should have been working on other things, but i really wanted to see this idea through and post it in one go. i hope you enjoyed it! I have already [revisited these two in a prequel](#).

[i made a poster for the story](#). i thought undergrad shane might have had a collage on his wall that he had to take down when he moved and never put back up. but now he's got a new photo to add.

i'm [over on tumblr](#) if you wanna chat.

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