

And I'll still see it, until I die

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And I'll still see it, until I die

by [hollzy81](#)

Summary

What if Shane was the one that almost died in a plane crash in The Long Game?

Chapter 1: The Crash

The first thing Shane noticed was the silence.

It wasn't gradual. There was no warning. One second the plane hummed around him, the familiar white noise he'd learned to tune out after years of travel, and the next second it was just gone. Like someone had reached out and muted the world.

The absence of sound pressed in on his ears, sharp and wrong.

Then something exploded.

The bang ripped through the plane with enough force to rattle Shane's teeth. The cabin shook violently, metal shrieking as if it were tearing itself apart. Shane's can of ginger ale flew out of his hand and smashed against the aisle, liquid splattering everywhere.

"What the fuck!" someone yelled.

The plane dropped.

Not turbulence. Not a dip. It fell.

Shane's stomach lurched up into his throat as gravity disappeared. His body lifted against the seat belt, heart slamming so hard it physically hurt. The scream ripped out of him before he even realized he was making it, swallowed up by the chorus of terror around him.

"Oh my God!"

"We're crashing!"

Shane clutched the armrests, fingers numb, knuckles already aching. His brain was screaming in useless, overlapping thoughts.

This isn't happening.

This is a nightmare.

Planes don't just fall.

The cabin pitched forward at a horrifying angle. Luggage compartments burst open, bags and jackets raining down. Something heavy slammed into the row ahead of him. A phone ricocheted off the ceiling and vanished under a seat.

The oxygen masks dropped with a sharp crack, yellow cups swinging wildly.

Shane fumbled for his, hands shaking so badly he missed it the first time. His breath came in shallow, panicked gasps. The air felt thin, wrong, like it wasn't doing its job anymore.

The plane lurched violently to the left.

Shane was thrown sideways, his shoulder slamming into the window with bone-jarring force.

Pain exploded down his arm, white-hot and immediate.

“Fuck!” he cried, stars bursting behind his eyes.

The plane kept shaking, rattling like it might tear itself apart midair. A flight attendant shouted instructions, her voice cracking with fear despite her training. Somewhere behind him, someone was sobbing uncontrollably. Somewhere else, someone was praying.

Shane squeezed his eyes shut.

Ilya.

The thought hit him with brutal clarity, cutting through the panic like a blade.

Ilya is going to get a phone call.

The image flashed into his mind uninvited, someone official, serious-voiced, explaining carefully, apologetically. There’s been an accident. Shane’s chest tightened so hard it felt like it might collapse in on itself.

No.

No, no, no.

The plane dipped again, steeper this time.

The scream that tore out of Shane’s throat was pure terror.

Fire burst into view outside the window.

Actual fire orange and furious, streaking backward along the wing, distorted by speed and wind. Heat shimmered against the glass. Someone several rows back screamed about an engine.

Shane stared at it in disbelief.

This is how it ends.

His heart hammered painfully against his ribs. His hands were slick with sweat, his whole body trembling so hard he couldn’t stop it.

The plane dropped again.

Shane was thrown forward as the seat in front of him jolted loose. His head slammed hard into something, armrest, metal frame, he didn’t know and pain detonated behind his eyes. His vision went white for a split second, then blurred horribly.

Something in his shoulder popped.

Not a clean sound. A wet, sickening one.

Agony ripped through him so intense it stole his breath entirely. He screamed, the sound raw and broken, and tasted blood.

“I’m not ready,” he whispered hoarsely. “I’m not—”

His phone was still in his hand.

He didn’t remember grabbing it, but there it was, screen cracked, fingers trembling so badly he almost dropped it. His brain latched onto it desperately, like it was the only solid thing left in a world that was falling apart.

No service. Of course there was no service.

But the Wi-Fi icon flickered weakly.

His heart stuttered.

Instagram loaded agonizingly slowly. Shane’s vision blurred, tears spilling freely now, dripping onto the screen. His thumb hovered, useless and shaking.

What do you say when you think you’re about to die?

He opened Ilya’s chat.

Shane:

Ilya

The plane shuddered violently again, throwing him sideways. Pain screamed through his injured shoulder, black spots dancing in his vision.

He typed anyway.

Something’s wrong.

Delete.

No. Not that. Not fear. Not chaos.

He swallowed hard, chest hitching.

You’re the best thing in my life.

His breath hitched on a sob.

I love you. I don’t say it enough but I love you so much.

The words felt small. Inadequate. Like trying to compress a whole future into a few lines of text.

I don’t wanna leave you.

The plane screamed around him, alarms blaring now high and relentless. Smoke crept into the cabin, acrid and burning his lungs. Someone yelled that the engine was on fire. Someone else screamed his name maybe his own, maybe God's.

Shane's hands shook uncontrollably.

If I don't make it—

He stopped, tears blurring the screen completely.

No. Don't leave him with that.

Please know I'm thinking of you until the last second. You've made my life better just by existing. I wish I had more time to tell you everything. I'm scared, but I'm thinking of you.

Whatever happens, I'm with you. Always.

He pressed send just as the plane dropped again, harder than before.

The descent felt endless.

The screaming around him rose to a deafening pitch. Shane clutched the seat in front of him with his good hand, bracing instinctively, body screaming in pain and terror.

Then.

impact.

The wheels hit the runway with a force that rattled his teeth and slammed him forward violently. Something tore in his shoulder with a sickening snap, pain blinding and absolute. His scream was lost in the chaos as the plane skidded, swerved, metal shrieking as it fought to stay upright.

His head slammed into the window.

The world went black.

Shane came back to sound first shouting, crying, the roar of emergency vehicles outside. His head throbbed violently, nausea rolling through him. He tried to move and immediately regretted it.

He couldn't feel his left arm.

Panic surged fresh and sharp.

"No" he rasped.

Hands were on him, steady and urgent. "Don't move," someone said. "You're injured. Help is coming."

Smoke filled the air now, thick and choking. Shane coughed weakly, head spinning.

“My phone,” he whispered. “Please.”

Someone hesitated, then gently placed it back in his hand.

The screen lit up.

Ilya Rozanov:
Shane. Please call me.

Tears slid silently into his hair.

He tried to type.

His vision swam.

His fingers slipped.

The last thing he remembered was clutching the phone to his chest, heart pounding painfully beneath it, and thinking.

Ilya is going to read those words and think he’s lost me.

Then everything went dark.

Chapter 2: Still breathing

Chapter Summary

Ilya receives messages he was never meant to read like this.

Ilya felt it before he saw it.

A wrongness. A tightening in his chest that had nothing to do with exertion, nothing to do with the drill he was running, nothing to do with the ice beneath his skates. His body reacted first, heart skipping, breath hitching long before his brain caught up.

His phone was vibrating somewhere on the bench.

Not a single buzz. Not a casual notification.

Over and over. Relentless.

Ilya skated off the ice without waiting for the whistle. He didn't even notice he was doing it. Muscle memory carried him forward while something colder and more terrified clawed up his spine.

He grabbed his phone with numb fingers.

Instagram.

From Shane.

Too many messages.

His chest constricted painfully.

No.

He opened the chat.

The first message was just his name.

Ilya.

Something inside him cracked.

The second message stole the air from his lungs.

You're the best thing in my life.

Ilya sat down hard on the bench, helmet slipping from his grasp and clattering to the floor. The locker room noise laughter, voices, the scrape of skates blurred into meaningless static.

This is wrong.
This is not how Shane texts.

His hands started shaking as he scrolled.

I love you. I don't say it enough but I love you so much.

Ilya pressed his lips together hard, a sharp sound escaping his nose. His vision blurred instantly, tears welling before he could stop them.

"Stop," he whispered, not sure who he was talking to. "Please stop."

But the messages kept coming.

I don't wanna leave you.

His heart slammed violently against his ribs.

Leave you.

Shane didn't talk like that. Shane didn't say things like that unless—

The next message shattered him completely.

Please know I'm thinking of you until the last second. You've made my life better just by existing. I wish I had more time to tell you everything. I'm scared, but I'm thinking of you.

Ilya sucked in a sharp, broken breath and folded forward, elbows braced on his knees, phone clenched in his hands like it might disappear if he loosened his grip.

Last second.

No.

No, no, no, no—

He scrolled again, desperately, like maybe there would be another message. Something casual. Something stupid. Something that said sorry for freaking you out.

There wasn't.

Just one final line.

Whatever happens, I'm with you. Always.

Ilya stared at it until the words stopped looking real.

That was a goodbye.

His body reacted before his mind did. His chest seized painfully, breath locking up as if his lungs had forgotten how to work. He stood abruptly, swaying, the room tilting sideways.

“Hey. Are you okay?” someone asked.

Ilya didn’t answer.

He opened Twitter.

The headline was already there, brutal and merciless.

BREAKING: Flight makes emergency landing after engine failure. Fire reported. Passengers injured.

His hands went completely numb.

He clicked the article.

Flight number.

Route.

Date.

Everything matched.

A sound tore out of him small and broken and humiliating. “Нет,” he whispered. “Нет, нет, нет...”

He called Shane.

Straight to voicemail.

Again.

Again.

“Ilya,” the automated voice said gently, and Ilya nearly threw the phone.

He paced the locker room, then the hallway, then the empty corridor outside the rink, his steps erratic, breathing uneven. His thoughts spiraled violently, dark and uncontrollable.

Had Shane been sitting by the wing?

Had he been thrown forward?

Had he been conscious when—

Stop.

He pressed his fist to his mouth, biting down hard enough to taste blood.

The article updated.

Passengers evacuated.
Multiple injuries.
Several transported to hospital.

No names.

Never names.

The waiting was agony.

Ilya slid down the wall until he was sitting on the cold floor, knees drawn up to his chest. He pressed the phone to his ear again, even though he knew Shane wouldn't answer.

"I'm here," he whispered into the dead line. "I'm here, sweetheart. Please. Please."

His phone buzzed suddenly.

He flinched so hard it hurt.

Unknown number.

"Yes," he said immediately, voice shaking. "Yes, this is Ilya."

"There's been an incident involving the flight Shane Hollander was on," a woman said gently. "He's alive."

Ilya broke.

He sagged forward, forehead hitting his knees as a sob tore out of him, raw and uncontrollable. His whole body shook as the relief crashed into him, sharp and overwhelming.

"Alive," he repeated hoarsely. "He's alive."

"Yes," she said. "He's injured, but stable. He's been taken to a hospital."

Injured.

The relief twisted instantly into fear.

"What kind of injuries?" Ilya demanded.

"I'm sorry, I don't have details. But he's conscious. He's being treated."

Conscious.

That meant Shane had known.

Ilya's chest ached violently.

"Where," he said, already scrambling to his feet. "Tell me where he is."

She told him.

The moment the call ended, Ilya moved.

He didn't think. He didn't hesitate.

Bag.

Passport.

Wallet.

Shoes.

He told the coach in one flat sentence: "My partner was in a plane crash. I am leaving now."

No one argued.

At the airport, the world felt obscene in its normalcy. People laughed. People complained about delays. Someone spilled coffee and cursed loudly.

Ilya wanted to scream at them that none of this mattered.

On the plane, he couldn't stop shaking.

He reread Shane's messages over and over, memorizing them like scripture. Each one felt like a confession Shane had been too afraid to say until he thought he was dying.

I don't wanna leave you.

"You won't," Ilya whispered fiercely. "I won't let you."

He typed back even though there was still no response.

I am here.

I am coming to you.

You scared me half to death.

I love you more than anything.

At cruising altitude, Ilya pressed his palm to his chest, feeling the crucifix beneath his shirt. His lips moved silently, prayers spilling out in broken Russian, unstructured and desperate.

Please.

Please let me get there in time.

Please let me hold him.

Somewhere below him, Shane Hollander was breathing.

In pain.

Alone.

Alive.

Ilya closed his eyes and held onto that truth with everything he had, counting every second that carried him closer.

Chapter 3: Here

Chapter Summary

They finally see each other again.

Shane woke up to the sound of a machine counting him alive.

Beep.

Beep.

Beep.

It was steady. Unconcerned. It didn't care how close he'd come to disappearing, didn't care that just hours ago the world had been fire and screaming and falling. It simply kept time, marking each heartbeat like it expected there to be another one after it.

Shane wasn't sure he agreed.

His mouth felt like cotton. His head throbbed dully, pressure building behind his eyes every time he tried to think too hard. When he shifted, pain exploded through his shoulder, sharp and immediate, like his body was reminding him firmly that he didn't get to forget.

A broken noise tore out of his throat.

"Easy," a voice said quickly. "Hey, don't move."

Shane squeezed his eyes shut, chest heaving as nausea rolled through him. The memory hit him in fragments: the drop, the fire outside the window, the impact so violent it had stolen the world out from under him.

And then—

Ilya.

The panic was instant and total.

"Ilya," Shane rasped, the name scraping his throat raw. "My phone, please."

There was a pause. Then gentle hands. A nurse, maybe. Shane barely registered her face.

"You're safe," she said softly. "You were unconscious for a bit. You've got a dislocated shoulder and a concussion, but you're stable."

Safe.

The word felt like a lie his brain refused to believe.

“My phone,” he repeated, desperate now. “Please.”

She relented, placing it carefully into his good hand like she understood it mattered more than morphine or reassurance.

The screen lit up.

So many missed calls.

Texts stacked on texts, all from the same name.

Ilya.

Shane’s chest hitched violently.

I am here.

I am coming to you.

Please be alive.

Please.

I love you.

A sob ripped out of him, sudden and uncontrollable. Tears slid down his temples, soaking into the pillow. His hand shook so badly he nearly dropped the phone.

He tried to type back.

His vision swam. The letters blurred.

Before he could manage even a single word, the door opened.

Shane felt it before he saw him.

The air changed. Tightened. Like the room itself had inhaled.

Ilya stood in the doorway.

He looked wrecked.

His hair was a mess, curls flattened in places from sleep or stress or both. His eyes were red-rimmed and hollow, skin pale beneath the freckles. He still wore travel clothes, jacket half-unzipped, like he’d come straight from the airport without stopping to think.

For one frozen moment, they just stared at each other.

Then Ilya’s gaze dropped to the sling, to the bruising already blooming dark against Shane’s skin and something inside him shattered.

“Shane,” he breathed.

The sound of his name in Ilya's voice did it.

"I'm here," Shane said, voice breaking completely. "I'm here. I didn't—" His breath hitched. "I didn't die."

Ilya crossed the room in three strides.

He stopped short of the bed, hands hovering uselessly, like he was afraid that if he touched Shane he might hurt him or that Shane might disappear.

"I thought," Ilya said, voice cracking wide open, "that I lost you."

Tears spilled freely now, no attempt to stop them. His shoulders shook with the force of it.

Shane reached out with his good hand. "Hey. Hey. I'm here."

Ilya grabbed his hand like he'd been drowning.

He squeezed too hard at first, then softened immediately, thumb brushing over Shane's knuckles with reverent care.

"I read your messages," Ilya whispered. "On the ice. I couldn't feel my legs. I thought my heart stopped."

"I'm sorry," Shane said immediately, panic flickering. "I didn't want to scare you. I just—I thought I was dying. I didn't know what else to do."

Ilya shook his head fiercely. "No. No, don't you dare apologize."

His voice wobbled, thick with emotion. "You told me the truth. You told me everything. And I was sitting there thinking—I wasted so much time."

Shane swallowed hard. "You didn't."

"I did," Ilya said softly. "We both did."

He brought Shane's hand up and pressed it to his chest, right over his heart. Shane could feel it pounding fast, uneven, alive.

"I thought I would never feel this again," Ilya murmured. "I thought this was it."

Shane's eyes burned. "I kept thinking you were going to get a call. That someone official was going to tell you—" His voice cracked. "I couldn't do that to you. I didn't want that to be the end."

Ilya leaned down carefully, pressing his forehead to Shane's.

"Don't," he whispered. "Please don't finish that thought."

They stayed like that, breathing each other in, grounding themselves in the reality of warmth and touch and here. Ilya smelled like airport coffee and cold air and something familiar that

made Shane's chest ache.

"I love you," Ilya said, like a confession and a promise and an anchor all at once. "I love you so much it scares me."

Shane let out a broken laugh through his tears. "Good. Because it scares me too."

"I am not losing you," Ilya said fiercely. "Not to planes. Not to secrets. Not to anything."

"You scared me too," Shane admitted quietly. "When the plane started dropping, all I could think was—I never said enough. I never said it the right way."

Ilya kissed his knuckles again, slow and careful. "You said enough. I heard you. Every word."

The monitor beeped steadily beside them, grounding and insistent.

"I flew here without thinking," Ilya said after a moment, a faint, shaky smile appearing. "Didn't even pack properly."

Shane huffed weakly. "You never do."

"I will stay," Ilya said immediately. "As long as you need."

Shane squeezed his hand. "Good."

Silence settled between them not empty, but full. Full of everything they hadn't lost.

Ilya brushed his thumb gently under Shane's eye, wiping away a tear. "You are not allowed to scare me like that ever again."

Shane nodded solemnly. "Deal."

"I am serious," Ilya added, voice soft but unyielding. "You almost broke me."

"I know," Shane whispered. "I'm sorry."

Ilya leaned down and pressed a careful kiss to Shane's forehead, lingering there longer than necessary.

"I am here," he murmured. "I am not going anywhere. Ever."

Shane closed his eyes, chest finally loosening, the weight lifting just enough for him to breathe.

"Good," he said quietly. "Because neither am I."

Outside the hospital room, the world kept turning.

Inside, they held onto each other like proof.

Chapter 4: Aftershocks

Chapter Summary

Shane has a nightmare.

Shane dreamed of silence.

Not the peaceful kind. The wrong kind the kind that pressed in on his ears until they rang, until his head felt like it might split open from the absence of sound.

Then the silence broke.

A bang, violent and sudden ripped through the dream, and the world tilted.

Shane was back in the plane.

His body jerked violently against restraints that bit into his hips and chest. The cabin screamed around him, metal shrieking, alarms blaring too loud and not loud enough all at once. The air smelled like smoke and panic and something burning.

“No,” he whispered. “No, no—”

The plane dropped.

That stomach-lurching, soul-stealing freefall that told him exactly what was happening before his brain could catch up. Gravity disappeared. His heart slammed into his throat.

Ilya.

The name tore through him like a lifeline.

“Ilya!” he tried to shout, but his mouth wouldn’t work. His voice vanished into the chaos, swallowed whole.

The window beside him flared bright orange.

Fire raced along the wing, licking and furious, heat shimmering through the glass. He could feel it now too real his skin prickling, lungs burning.

This is it, his brain screamed. This is where you die.

The plane lurched violently to the side.

Pain exploded through his shoulder again, fresh and blinding, the sickening pop echoing through his bones. Shane screamed, the sound ripping out of him raw and broken.

“I’m not ready,” he sobbed. “Please, I’m not ready—”

His phone slipped from his hand, clattering uselessly to the floor. He lunged for it, fingers scrabbling, desperate.

Ilya’s name glowed on the screen, just out of reach.

“No,” Shane begged. “Please—just one more second—”

The plane dropped again.

The impact came—

Shane woke up screaming.

“NO—!”

His body jerked violently against the bed, pain detonating through his shoulder and chest. His heart hammered so hard it felt like it might break his ribs from the inside. His breath came in sharp, panicked gasps, air tearing in and out of his lungs like it wasn’t enough.

Hands were on him immediately.

“Shane—hey—Shane, you’re okay.”

Ilya’s voice.

Real. Here.

“Look at me,” Ilya said urgently. “You are safe. You are in the hospital. The plane landed. You are alive.”

Shane thrashed weakly, eyes wild, vision unfocused. “Fire,” he gasped. “The wing—”

“I know,” Ilya said softly, one hand braced against Shane’s chest, the other cradling his good arm. “I know. But it’s over.”

Shane’s eyes finally locked onto his.

Ilya was right there hair mussed from sleep, eyes dark with concern, face drawn and pale in the dim hospital light. He looked exhausted. Terrified.

Real.

Shane’s breath hitched violently, and then he broke.

“I thought I was dying,” he sobbed, the words ripping out of him. “I thought I was going to leave you.”

Ilya leaned in without hesitation, pressing his forehead to Shane's temple, careful of injuries, holding him steady.

"You didn't," he murmured. "You stayed."

Shane clutched at Ilya's sleeve with shaking fingers. "I couldn't breathe. I couldn't—every time I close my eyes I'm back there."

"I know," Ilya said. His voice shook too. "I am here. You don't have to go back alone."

Shane's breathing was still uneven, panic buzzing through his veins like electricity. His heart refused to slow, every muscle wound tight like he was bracing for impact all over again.

"I kept thinking," Shane whispered, voice hoarse, "that you'd read those messages and think that was it. That I was gone."

Ilya swallowed hard.

"I thought that," he admitted quietly. "For a little while, I thought that was all I would ever have left."

Shane let out a broken sound and buried his face weakly against Ilya's chest, careful of the sling, desperate for the contact.

"I'm sorry," he whispered. "I'm so sorry."

Ilya wrapped his arms around him as best he could, holding him like he was something fragile and precious and irreplaceable.

"Don't apologize for surviving," he said softly. "Don't ever apologize for that."

They stayed like that while the adrenaline slowly drained away, while Shane's breathing evened out and the world stopped spinning quite so violently. The monitor beside the bed kept up its steady, reassuring rhythm.

Beep.

Beep.

Beep.

Eventually, Shane pulled back just enough to look at him. "Are you staying?"

Ilya didn't hesitate. "I am not leaving this room."

Shane nodded weakly, eyelids heavy now, exhaustion crashing down on him all at once.

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