

you've always been who i needed

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

All Shane needed was physical comfort. He cried in Ilya's arms, just as Ilya had. And both of them knew the fact that they were still there—both times—meant way more than they could've imagined.

Ilya needed Shane to be okay.

Shane wanted that for him, too.

Each other's anchors.

In which Shane has a panic attack the night before his first game back.

Notes

this was my first time writing for heated rivalry so pls be nice if you comment!!!

this show has taken over my life

Shane was back.

It's been months. Months of fucking recovering. Rehabilitation sessions, training, everything built to this moment.

To *Boston*.

Their team flew out yesterday. Everyone was pumped—his parents a little worried. He appreciated their concern, he really did, but he knew he could do this. Months of missing the game you've played your whole life, watching from the sidelines as the season flew by.

It was hell.

But nothing could compare to the way his mind has been spinning for hours. He was supposed to sleep by twelve at the latest for tomorrow, but. . .

The clock flashed 3:02 am.

Not only was he screwed because of that, but his chest grew tight. He couldn't *swallow*—throat too dry.

It was *too* late.

Too late to sleep.

Too late to back out. . .

Trapped.

Everyone was expecting him tomorrow. *Shane Hollander is back in the game after missing the playoffs.*

All eyes on him.

He flew up where he lay, biting his cheek, fiddling with his fingers—he needs to sit up straighter to get a breath in.

But one breath turns to two, then three, *four*—

All in seconds.

None of them is taken in. He wheezes, eyes watering as his heart picks up. He hadn't felt this rush of panic before. He couldn't *breathe*.

Fuck, fuck, *fuck*—he felt like he was going to die. He couldn't die. *No*—no one died from hyperventelation before, right? *That wasn't a thing.*

After every nagging voice ringing in his ears these past months, Shane needed one. They didn't call *much*. There was nothing to say, just sweet check-ins Shane admittedly gushed over.

Shane's looking at the night sky, watching the faint stars flickering through the polluted night sky and the next—he's hovering over Ilya Rozanov's number.

Lily.

Ilya picked up after the second ring. Shane's breath is short. Why did it have to be *now*—he thought he could do this seconds ago. Fuck, he *couldn't*.

Ilya let his guard down with him once. After years, Shane held the man in his arms. He wasn't someone he could particularly call *his*—but it felt like it the minute he wrapped his arms around him.

Because Rozanov was stern. He was cocky, an arrogant asshole—as he's *supposed* to say.

Ilya was his.

Shane wanted him to be.

He tried so fucking hard to fight whatever that feeling inside him was. After Rose, he'd gained more clarity, yet Shane was left slightly confused whether Ilya's few comments about the girl were playful annoyance or actual jealousy.

He was hard to read sometimes.

That's why when Shane saw the tear roll down his face, reflecting the only dim lamp lit in Ilya's hotel room, his instinct to protect him surged through his bones. Protect him from the troubles that he slowly revealed to him. He didn't — *basically never* — talk about his father. Shane got a hint of that, so he treaded slowly with his questions, which Ilya hated and called boring.

Yet when Shane felt vulnerable—no matter who it was with—he couldn't even gather the strength to protect himself. He can't reach for the help he needs; he can't let someone look at him at his worst.

He couldn't handle it.

So yeah, he isn't fucking sure *why* he clicked Lily. Or why his hands shakily click the call button.

Second ring.

That's all it took for Shane to catch his breath again—hear Ilya's voice—maybe that could help.

Help him fucking *breath*.

He visited him twice in the hospital. Other than that, they hadn't met. They *couldn't*. There was no good excuse to leave the house for hours doing runs anymore. He stayed with his parents while he recovered, and no travelling meant no secret hook-ups.

He hadn't seen him in forever.

Tomorrow would've been the first.

If he fucking *made* it to tomorrow—*oh god*—

“Shane?”

Shane. His heart leaps, and suddenly he's aware of his feet touching the carpeted floor beneath the bed he sat on.

He cleared his throat. “Ilya.”

He was here—*trapped*. In this hotel room, like many times before. His leg could give out on him in the middle of the *fucking* game. It shouldn't, he's trained for months.

He didn't want to disappoint his team, whom he had anointed for months—his parents *watching* from home.

Why the fuck did he have to feel like this? *Pathetic*, that's what it was.

“You call at three in the morning, been thinking bout me, weren't you?”

Shane knew his tone—playful, mischievous as his voice drags grittily on the other end. Shane takes a breath that should fill his lungs, but no, it doesn't. He takes another—*fuck*.

“I—”

Yup—*pathetic*. He couldn't say anything. His hands shake, the name ‘Lily’ trembling on the screen before he staggers back on the bed. He gripped his hair, blinking and trying to come up with an excuse for why his brain took him here, but *nope*—

He hangs up.

The buzzing against the mattress masks the beat of his heart thundering in his ears.

Lily.

He messed up bad. The screen was blurry with tears as he pressed the button from where it lay on the sheets.

“*Shane*. You are scaring me.”

“Fuck.” Shane trembled, lips quivering. “I can’t do it—I don’t know if I can do this. Ilya I can’t, I can’t *breath*—”

He couldn’t say more. It was too much; Ilya was hearing *too* much of his mind.

“What is your room number?”

He wasn’t quiet. His voice was in demand, concern lacing his tone contrary to the usual tone the words held.

“*Uh*—2636—”

Shane’s phone flashed white again.

Fuck.

He wasn’t sure if he needed Ilya or if he was terrified. Both—possibly?

Each breath felt like nothing.

Pathetic.

The sound of the door knocked the breath he didn’t even have out, and Shane instinctively wiped his tears across his eyes with the back of his hands.

His legs barely supported his shaking body—breath heaving in and out of his lungs as he made his way to the door.

“Hollander——” Ilya says, almost instinctively. His eyes are confused, brows pinched as he studies Shane in front of him.

Ilya blinked before rushing inside, placing his hand on Shane’s back. His whole body was shaking with nerves, and the minute he looked back up at Ilya once the door closed, he lowered his head, unsteady on his feet.

His unsettling breaths were even more evident with the absence of a shirt, and Ilya frowned, moving his hand to the back of Shane’s neck. He still wouldn’t look at him—*he couldn’t*.

Shane shook his head. *Once*, then *twice*, and the more he did, the more the pressure behind his eyes built. Just when he’s about to cover his face, covering the shame he knew Ilya was seeing, the man brought his arm around Shane’s neck. His face immediately tucks into the crevice of Ilya’s neck.

He was tense, he didn’t melt into his touch—Ilya wasn’t sure if the contact was too much.

“*Shane*. Is okay. I’m here? Yes?”

His shoulders slumped.

And his arms wrapped around him.

“Hey—*hey*.”

They stood exhausted. Shane was barely present, so Ilya led them to the bed, Shane unresponsive in his embrace.

He let go so the two could sit, and a part of Ilya knows he was trying to hide himself. *Become small*.

Like how Ilya always did, talking to his father.

Ilya's hand remained at his bare back, cold to the touch. "I'm here."

Slowly, Shane's chin tilted.

"Talk to me."

Those words seemed to set him back, Shane shaking his head instinctively as his face crumbled again.

A million different assumptions formed in Ilya's mind—*terrifying ones*. If Shane was hurt again, if he's been covering up the fact that his arm hadn't healed the way it should've, and he was watering down the pain he still felt.

But all Shane needed was physical comfort. He cried in Ilya's arms, just as Ilya had. And both of them knew the fact that they were still there—both times—meant way more than they could've imagined.

Ilya *needed* Shane to be okay.

Shane wanted that for him, too.

Each other's anchors.

The anchor the two didn't realize they could use to ground them—*not until now*.

Once Shane's breathing slowed, Ilya moved back a little. He scanned Shane's face, stained with tears, but he was breathing properly again.

"I'm okay." He said.

Ilya's lips curved the tiniest bit as he threaded his hand through the hair at the nape of Shane's neck. "Yes. You are going to be."

"I'm *scared*." He admitted, blinking, watching the night sky out the window. "Everyone is counting on me."

"You do training."

Shane blinked from his bluntness but nodded soon enough. He still hadn't looked at him, not really.

"You are fast learner, you get back in the game tomorrow better than some of your teammates, even with time off."

Shane snickered a little, glossy eyes meeting Ilya's. "Asshole."

There it was.

"That is why we beat you last season."

Instead of a retort, Shane just smiled again. His face fell a little, clenching. "I haven't played since. There's more pressure than ever."

“Yes. But you do what you’ve always done. Shane Hollander is brave, he is amazing, that’s what got him to this point—best in the league—well, *one of best*.” He chuckled. “No one will expect anything more or less. You be *you* out there.”

Shane blinked, taking in Ilya’s words. His eyes softened—he was present now. He could focus on each breath he took. The way Ilya’s hands absentmindedly drew circles on his bicep.

“I can’t get hurt again. It will be worse—I could be off for even *longer*—”

“You won’t.”

He wouldn’t let that happen, *not if he could prevent it*. His teammate hadn’t meant to hurt him last time; it was a complete accident. Although Ilya may have had some harsh words for him to pay more fucking attention.

“You become stronger because of it.” Ilya hums softly, squeezing his bicep and moving his hand down his back.

Shane chuckled, in a way Ilya knew he was about to say something he found weirdly funny—yet so stupid.

“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

“Yeah, or that—*boring phrase*.”

Shane placed his own hand on the back of Ilya’s neck, mirroring the caress of his thumb against his warm skin. *More comfortable*, he was looking at him, eye to eye.

They sat like that, Ilya’s eyes moving back and forth, caught on the freckles splattered perfectly across the bridge of his nose.

He was so pretty. How could he be so perfect? Shane didn't think he was at this moment, and Ilya wished he could see himself through his eyes. Rivals—yes. But he can put credit where it's due—in *his mind*.

Shane nodded as he settled, the tension in the air fading as he took another breath. "It's so late now."

Ilya shushed him, leading him towards the pillows and cradling his head to his chest.

"We can't—you can't just sleep here, *Ilya*, what about *tomorrow*?"

"Tomorrow is another day." Ilya groaned.

"We have the *game* first thing."

Ilya shifted, turning so he could look down at him. He was exhausted, and he was easily able to sneak out before six to get back to his room. He just wanted Shane to get some rest—Ilya had gotten more anyway before he got woken from his phone call.

"Rest, Hollander."

Shane groaned into his chest, all pouty and adorable. "*Okay*, fine."

His chest slowly rose and fell against Ilya's as he ran his hand through his hair. He stayed doing that until Shane fell asleep, and soon enough, Ilya's own eyes felt heavy.

Yes, they had their game tomorrow, but it did not matter with Shane in his arms like this. There was a reason why he called him—Ilya wanted to be that support for him. Shane's drugged self even wanted him to go to his cottage. They've gone years unable to

communicate, and they've both come to realize they cared more than they even realized. When Shane was with Rose, all Ilya felt was a form of betrayal—*anger*.

That didn't matter anymore. Nothing mattered as long as they were together, and they hadn't been for a long time.

They'd been aching to touch. To kiss, to feel the way they felt the minute the other walked through the door, hiding themselves away as they always had.

That could go on forever.

But it didn't matter.

As long as they were together.

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