

Oh, To Love Loudly

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Oh, To Love Loudly

by [acollectionofgravebutbeautifulmistakes](#)

Summary

Was this it? Is this how he was supposed to die? After everything he'd done, everything he'd tried to do with his life, this was all he got? A plane crash that would surely end in a fiery explosion? His parents wouldn't even have anything to bury. There would be no body left after this. He was their only child, and they wouldn't even be able to have a proper funeral for him.

Or, Shane is on the plane that is about to crash instead of Ilya.

Notes

Heyyyyy... So I haven't written anything in a while. And I don't usually write angst. Doing my best here! ANYWAYS... Felt inspired after reading The Long Game. Sorry if things aren't entirely accurate to the universe, or hockey in general. I did my best. I don't know if this is really anything but take it anyways! Hope you enjoy!

Oh, and come yell at me on twitter! <https://x.com/meowmeowlinoss>

The Voyageurs were on an absolute winning streak, and Shane felt like he was on top of the world.

Both literally and figuratively, that is. After back-to-back wins in Brooklyn and at home, the team was fired-up and ready to board their plane to Minnesota for another win. The team's chatter permeated an otherwise tranquil and quiet flight as they boarded, carelessly slugging their luggage into overhead bins. Shane spotted Drapeau helping an elderly passenger who was struggling to reach above her head to store away her suitcase. JJ was leaning over the seat across from them, obnoxiously trying to flirt with a brunette girl, who seemed to be at least entertaining the concept of flirting back.

Shane was trying to remain focused on what he was doing, ignoring his teammates and their antics in favor of settling into his aisle seat. Hayden didn't even need to offer it to him at this point, he knew that his best friend preferred to have a slight bit of extra leg room during their flight. Instead, he clumsily shuffled over Shane and sat on his left, sliding the window open to gaze outside at the sunset. Thumbing over the pages of his worn paperback on hockey history calmed Shane's senses while he prepared for yet another flight. At least this one wasn't *too* terribly long.

"Still as scared of flying as ever, Captain?" Comeau popped his head out between Shane and Hayden's seats, a wide grin on his face and a burgundy neck pillow already situated behind his head.

Shane rolled his eyes. It wasn't that he was *afraid* of flying, per se. He didn't really think much about the concept of being thousands of miles in the air. It was more about the discomfort. The air in planes was always so stale. His legs cramped if the flight was longer than an hour, which with these flights between games, they typically were. In-flight snacks didn't fit into his food regimen, so he had to pack his own, and oftentimes he'd rather just wait to eat than subject himself to any weird looks from his teammates about his food habits. Not to mention the feeling of your ears popping at high altitudes, the crying babies you couldn't escape, the fact that Hayden snored so loudly that it was even audible through Shane's expensive Beats headphones...

And sure, the slight fear of heights didn't help. But Shane wasn't about to divulge all of that to his teammates. So he just shrugged and said "Not my favorite thing, no. But this isn't too long of a flight. Might just nap or something." He never napped on planes. Waking up with a

crick in his neck was incredibly irritating. He'd probably just watch some shitty movie on the in-flight entertainment system or re-read his favorite hockey history novel.

Comeau lost interest in the conversation, leaned back, and promptly closed his eyes. Hayden leaned over to Shane, reading the title of his book and laughed. "Again? Man, I think you're due for a new copy of that book. I'll text Jackie and tell her to add it to your Christmas gift from us."

"Nah, won't be the same as this one," Shane smiled, waving the book in front of his best friend's face, but he was thankful that he had a best friend who paid so much attention to what he loved.

Speaking of those who knew him best, he needed to message Ilya that he'd made it on the plane before he lost service. Shane thought it was dumb, Ilya and the Ottawa Centaurs were about to take the ice against the Admirals and he likely wouldn't be on his phone anyways, but Ilya always insisted that his boyfriend let him know that he was about to take off when travelling by plane. And anything that brought comfort to the man that Shane loved, he would do.

Shane (5:38 pm): *Hi. Sitting on the plane now.*

Ilya (5:39 pm): *Was just about to text before putting my phone away. My good luck charm.*

Shane (5:39 pm): *Kick some Admiral ass for me.*

Ilya (5:40 pm): *Always. Speaking of ass... how sore is yours?*

Shane (5:40 pm): *Never mind. Hope you lose*

Ilya (5:40 pm): *Love you too, Hollander.*

The two of them had been able to meet up late the night prior, seeing as Ilya had flown in a day early to see Shane in Brooklyn after the game and driven to his own hotel earlier this morning. It was one of many stolen nights for them, especially since they hadn't been able to see one another for weeks beforehand. Falling asleep in Ilya's arms was everything Shane had needed and more. And the sex, of course.

As a flight attendant came into the aisle to demonstrate the proper way to secure their seatbelts, which Shane had already done, he connected to the plane's Wi-Fi. He wouldn't be able to text anyone, but at least he could read some articles on ESPN if he grew tired of his typical in-flight entertainment routine. Options were important.

Soon enough, Shane felt the telltale shift of the plane backing out down the runway. Hayden had closed the window, instead opting to watch some action movie on the screen in front of him. JJ had finally sat down, and based on the look on his face, he'd scored the brunette's phone number. Comeau was softly snoring behind them. Shane decided he'd open his worn novel and start his monthly re-read.

The ding of the seatbelt sign going off tore Shane from his novel, and he made it his mission to be the first one of many to use the restroom. He'd drunk almost an entire bottle of water before boarding the plane, and his bladder was screaming at him. Carefully making his way through the rest of the first class, he made sure to knock on the bathroom door before entering (just to be safe). Despite the smell, Shane took a deep breath of relief that he had even a second to unmask. It wasn't that he was uncomfortable around his teammates per se, but Shane was conscious of the fact that he constantly felt the need to "act normal" in public. Being a public figure meant a lot of eyes were on him, and though he didn't care too much about what the public thought of him, it didn't mean he wasn't aware that he was being watched by people who knew him and thousands of those who didn't.

On another level, Shane was almost sure that his teammates could see the love that he held for Ilya everywhere he went. Logically, it wasn't really any different from when the two of them were sneaking around and hooking up between cities. But after Hayden, the only teammate who knew about their "love affair," had referred to Ilya as having "heart eyes for Shane," Shane himself was worried that the love he held in his heart for Ilya was practically written on his forehead. It was as if he were always holding his breath but also trying to hold

himself up with a giant weighted vest on. The pressure and breathlessness he felt when he thought of the love of his life was tiring to hide.

Not that he *wanted* to hide. He wanted to scream from rooftops that he was in love with Ilya Rozanov. But they weren't ready yet. And he didn't think the world was ready yet, either.

Shane washed his hands thoroughly, as always, before exiting the bathroom. He expected someone to be waiting outside, probably JJ, who also drank plenty of water before boarding. But, oddly enough, the seatbelt sign was yet again glowing yellow and red like a warning sign. He hadn't been in the bathroom longer than a few minutes, hadn't he?

A sudden shaking feeling from the plane gave Shane his answer. Turbulence, great. Add that to the list of uncomfortable aspects of flying on a plane. Making his way back to his seat, he met eyes with Hayden, who took an earbud out to raise a questioning eyebrow at him. "What's up?"

After clicking his seatbelt and securing it around his waist, Shane shook his head. "Nothing. Just turbulence. Movie any good?"

Hayden shrugged, pausing it and taking out the other earbud. "Eh. Nothing to write home about. You checked ESPN? How's um.." He paused, clearly restraining himself from saying all of what he wanted to say. Shane grabbed his novel from the seat pocket in front of him, setting it on his knees. "Y'know. Score?"

Oh. Hayden was asking about Ottawa. He'd been making more of an effort lately to ask Shane about how Ilya was doing. Shane thought it was sweet, since even though he knew that Hayden still wasn't his boyfriend's biggest fan ("Feeling is... how you say... The same for me," Ilya had insisted), he knew how much Shane loved Ilya. And he had seen the love that Ilya had for Shane in return. Despite the initial shock of their coming out to him, Hayden hadn't given Shane too tough of a time. Sure, he'd had a similar reaction to Shane's dad David, who'd asked if there were any other nice guys in Montreal, but he knew how difficult this had been for Shane. That, and Jackie had welcomed them immediately, cooing over "how romantic" it was that Ilya had moved to Ottawa for Shane. She threatened Hayden that, if he didn't express the same thing, she wouldn't be in the same room with or touch him until he did, which was definitely the push that he needed.

Thanks to the plane's Wi-Fi, Shane could see that Ottawa was up 1-0. And of course his boyfriend had been the only one to score thus far. Despite being such a low-ranked team in the past and over the few years that Ilya had played there, the Centaurs seemed to be on the up and up this season. No doubt that the Russian had something to do with that, but Ilya insisted to Shane that the entire team was wonderful to play with and full of potential. It made Shane feel so hopeful that Ilya would be happy to call Ottawa home, not just because of their relationship, but also because of a team he could be proud of.

Hayden nodded at the score. "Nice. They've been surprisingly good this season." There was a pause before he whispered again. "Him especially, I guess."

A laugh erupted from between Shane's lips, surprising him and Hayden both. "I'll tell him you said that."

"Don't you dare." Hayden rolled his eyes. "Last thing I need is—"

The feeling of his stomach swooping down to his toes is the first thing that Shane noticed. The second is that his novel started to slide off of his lap, but he snatched it before it could disappear down the aisle out of his grasp. The third thing he noticed is that the seatbelt sign, despite still being on, dings again, as if to say *you'd better be in your seat right NOW*.

The fourth thing Shane noticed was that the plane was shaking worse than he'd ever felt it shake before.

Hayden's eyes widened, and his hand jerked out to grasp the handles next to their seats. "Jesus!" Distantly, Shane could hear the flight attendant, the same middle-aged woman who had given the demonstration earlier in the flight on how to properly fasten a seatbelt, was coming over the intercom to remind everyone to fasten their seatbelts and remain calm. Turbulence is to be expected on an airplane.

What wasn't to be expected, however, was the feeling of falling, which was the fifth thing Shane noticed.

“Holy shit, holy shit!” Distantly, Shane could register the sound of Hayden yelling. He wasn’t the only one yelling anymore. The brunette JJ had been flirting with was shrieking two rows behind them. More of their teammates were audibly panicking, profanities thrown around that Shane was sure he’d never even heard before. The flight attendant was once again trying to calm the plane, but even her voice was shaking and strained.

Shane’s throat was clogged. He wanted to scream, cry, panic, anything that felt normal to do, that *normal people* would do in this situation, but he couldn’t do any of it. All he could do was grip the paperback in his hands so tightly that the cover crumpled between his whitened knuckles. Tears pricked his eyes as he felt the plane continue to freefall.

Was this it? Is this how he was supposed to die? After everything he’d done, everything he’d tried to do with his life, this was all he got? A plane crash that would surely end in a fiery explosion? His parents wouldn’t even have anything to bury. There would be no body left after this. He was their only child, and they wouldn’t even be able to have a proper funeral for him.

And what would they say about him at his funeral? It would be publicised, and they’d surely mention his love for hockey, it was what made Shane Hollander who he was. He spent so many years of his life dedicated to nothing but hockey. Sure, Shane loved hockey, but he would have surely tried more if he knew how little time he had left on Earth. What else would they mention? The world would be watching his family grieve, would be watching—

Ilya. How was Ilya supposed to grieve properly? No one, outside of Shane’s parents, Rose, Hayden and Jackie knew that they were together. How could Ilya explain why he was so torn up about the death of his supposed “rival?” Would he even be able to take time off of hockey? No one on his team knew the true extent of his relationship with Shane. There would be no easy way to explain it. Why should Ilya have to explain that alone? He shouldn’t have to make that choice. How could Ilya continue to live after that? Would he move on? Love someone else? Marry someone else?

Shane, selfishly, almost couldn’t bring himself to imagine that. But Ilya was so full of love. Every inch of him was worthy of the love he expressed to Shane, the words of affirmation mouthed into Shane’s skin whenever they expressed their adoration for one another through touch. The playful jabs they made at each other on the ice during their face-offs. The winks Ilya threw his way whenever the Russian insisted on making him his “gross breakfast.” The way Ilya chased him up the stairs of the cottage, giggling whenever Shane inevitably slipped thanks to his socks and Ilya could throw him over his shoulder and onto the bed. Every bit of

Ilya Rozanov was full of love. And there was no way Shane could, or should, deprive the world of that. Even if he wouldn't be the lucky one who was on the other end of it anymore.

Freefalling through the air, surrounded by screaming and panicking, Shane oddly felt a sense of purpose. It washed over his entire body as he opened his cell phone. There was no way for him to text Ilya, after all, there was no service on the plane. He quickly opened Instagram and swiped to his DMs, typing in Ilya's name. The chat box was empty, since they had no reason to DM each other over the years instead of text. Shane had never typed so quickly in his life.

Shane (6:37 pm): *Ilya. I love you so much, more than I probably should.*

Shane wiped his eyes with his sleeve. He realized the tears had started to flow, and his breathing was unsteady. His hands shook so hard they could rival the turbulence in the plane right now, but he was on a mission. His ability to mask emotion was finally coming in handy right now, because he had to send these before he couldn't anymore.

Shane (6:37 pm): *I'm sorry. For all the fights, for all the hiding. I hope you can stop hiding and be loved loudly. You deserve it. I know my parents will take care of you. Please let them. You are their second son.*

Shane took a breath, thinking of all the people he'd be able to see again soon. His grandmother. His uncle who had died when he was young from cancer.

He'd be able to see Ilya's mother.

Shane (6:38 pm): *I'll be able to meet your mom. I want to talk to her about how much I love you. You are my other half, always.*

Distantly, Shane heard something about an emergency landing. He locked his phone, tucking it under his leg. He was still crushing the novel between his hands, listening to the yelling and crying around him. Nothing could come into focus, though. The tears in his eyes prevented him from seeing further than the seat in front of him, the stinging feeling of the paper cutting into his fingers was distant in the back of his mind, and the wailing coming from his teammates and the other passengers sounded muffled, like he'd stuffed his ears with

Styrofoam. If he were more aware of what was happening, he supposed he'd be having a full-blown panic attack. But nothing could come quite into focus enough for his body to allow him to panic to the extent that he should be panicking.

If this is it, Shane thought, then just let them be okay. Let my parents and Ilya be okay. Let them have a good life after I'm gone. Please.

The plane shook again, and Shane squeezed his eyes shut, preparing for the worst. When the plane's wheels thudded onto solid ground, he wheezed out a loud exhale and gasped, guttural and trembling. His eyes snapped open to the sound of his teammates cheering, screaming with joy instead of terror. With shaky hands, Hayden opened the window and proceeded to lean his elbows onto his legs, head in said hands.

Outside, Shane spotted emergency vehicles and lights. They began to slow down, the screeching wheels hardly audible over the relieved, joyous voices surrounding them. They'd landed. They were okay.

Thank you. Thank you, thank you. The look on Hayden's face told Shane he might be saying this out loud on accident, but he was so overwhelmed that he couldn't even tell. *I'm going to start living, I promise.*

The Ottawa Centaurs had won 2-1. Ilya had never been so happy in his life to beat the Admirals. This type of momentum was so good for a team that needed it, and Ottawa *needed* it. This was the confidence boost that Ilya was hoping they could get, especially since they'd lost the first few games of this leg. What could ever be better than ending on this kind of a high?

The team paraded into the locker room, and following Ilya's inspired victory speech, capped off with a bodacious, "Let's fucking party tonight!", his teammates were busy parading around young Luca Haas. Haas had scored the second goal (after Ilya's, of course) and was worthy of the royal treatment. Ilya smiled to himself, taking a look at his teammates. Sure, he liked his time in Boston. He'd won a cup with them, and they were the first team to sign him and kickstart his NHL career. But there was something so special about the men on this team and the journey they were going on together right now.

Ilya wished he could show the love and appreciation in this room to his eighteen year old self. The version of himself that had only known the cold “love” he received from his father and brother. He’d missed his mother so desperately, whether he even realized it or not at that point. She had been the only person to show him that love was meant to be unconditional. But at eighteen, after missing her for six years, Ilya was searching for a love that was unconditional. And he wouldn’t find it for ten more years, but the search was worth it.

It wasn’t just in this room, though. Ilya was too greedy just to settle for the love he and his teammates and friends showed one another. A huge piece of his heart was also unconditionally held by the man that the world considered to be his biggest rival. Shane Hollander had latched onto that section of his heart and Ilya never wanted him to let go of it. Those amber eyes, that strong body, his red and freckled cheeks, a laugh that rivalled every #1 song on the radio, and all of his weird little quirks... Well, Ilya needed to stop thinking about his beautiful, sexy boyfriend in front of his teammates before they wondered why their captain was both blushing and hiding a half-chub.

“Whoa,” Ilya heard Bood’s voice shake beside him. The two of them stood at their stalls, side by side, stripping off their gear. Well, Ilya was stripping his gear off. Bood had stopped, and was staring at his phone. His face looked unusually pale. Ghastly, even. “Holy fuck.”

“What is it? Your girlfriend not impressed with the assist or something? You need good lay, it helps you to play better. Before next game you better—” Ilya was cut off by the man next to him shaking his head and exhaling shakily. “What?”

“Dude, it’s Montreal. Voyageurs’ plane had to make an emergency landing on the way to Minnesota.”

Ilya felt his stomach flip upside down. He was going to be sick. He’d drunk so much liquor in his life, mixed every kind of alcohol imaginable and in combinations to purposefully make himself ill the next day, especially after losing his mother. He’d wanted to be sure he was still able to feel like a human being. But he hadn’t felt this kind of sick since Irina died. The kind of sick that meant he was panicking.

“What the fuck? Is okay, though, yes?”

“Yeah, they landed. Jesus, they could have—”

Ilya threw the rest of his gear off faster than he’d ever ripped it off before. He grabbed his cell phone from the top shelf of his stall to see a normal amount of notifications. Some from ESPN, with the same headlines that Bood had surely just seen. ***Montreal Voyageurs Plane Makes Emergency Landing in Michigan.*** But at the top of his notification wall was a text message from Shane.

Shane (6:45 pm): *Sorry about the messages on Insta. I’m okay. Call me when you’re able?*

Instagram messages? Shane never messaged him through Instagram. Ilya swiped to the app with shaking fingers and opened his DMs to see three new messages from his boyfriend. The content of said messages made his stomach flip again. All three of them were incredibly heavy. And Shane was talking as if he...

“Smoke.” Ilya snatched his phone and stumbled past Bood towards the door. “Need a smoke.”

“Roz? You didn’t even bring any—”

The door clanged shut behind him. Ilya may as well have been back on the ice at that point, with how quickly he made his way through the hallway towards the exit door leading outside. With trembling hands, he clicked on Shane’s contact and waited for him to pick up. After two rings, Ilya was pushing the door open and stepping outside by the time he heard the voice of the love of his life. “Hello?”

“Shane. My God, Shane.” Ilya was vaguely aware of how wrecked his voice sounded, but the sound of Shane sniffing through the phone was far more urgent. “Любовь всей моей жизни. You’re okay. Shane, you’re okay.” He tucked himself into the shadow of a nearby ally. It reeked of fresh trash, but Ilya couldn’t bring himself to care.

A long exhale graced his ears. “Yeah. I’m okay. Sorry I’m um...” Shane sounded like he was emotionally wrecked and exhausted, but there was no noise on his end aside from the faint

noise of a shower running. “Hayden and I are in our hotel room. He called Jackie on speaker because she wanted to speak to both of us. He’s taking a shower to give us some privacy.”

“Shane.” Ilya exhaled, rubbing a hand over his face. “Sweetheart. You’re... How are you...”

“Doing?”

“Question is stupid, I know.”

“Not stupid.” Ilya swears he can hear a tiny smile in Shane’s voice, which makes his heart feel slightly less heavy. “I don’t... I don’t think I really have words right now. It’ll um...” Ilya allowed Shane to take a deep breath and stayed silent. “It’ll register in my brain later, I’m sure. But I just needed to hear your voice, so badly.”

“Мой милый мальчик. I know, I know. Tell me you are sitting down. Did you change? Are you comfortable? Lay down in bed, it calms—”

“I’m okay, Ilya. Sitting down, I promise.” He’s definitely smiling now. It eases Ilya’s heart a little bit, which is still racing. “Did you um... Did you read...?”

“The messages? Yes, love.”

Shane groaned. “Embarrassing. I’m sorry, I-I just couldn’t...um... I couldn’t picture not saying—” A small, sharp gasp from his end of the phone told Ilya that Shane was trying really hard not to cry. “Not saying all of that to you.”

Ilya closed his eyes, making a futile effort to contain his tears. They escaped anyways, hot and traitorous on his freezing cheeks. “I know, love. I know. I want to...” Ilya cursed in Russian. He wished he could express his feelings about Shane and the content of those messages, but English was failing him. He told Shane as much.

“I understand. But I can... feel it, you know? I can feel that you have those... those feelings for me too. To the same extent that I have them.” Shane sighed again. “I miss you. I wish..”

“I know. Me too. I will see you soon, though. Just one more week. And I will hold you and not let you go until you beg me to leave you alone.” That got a laugh out of Shane. A wet, snotty one, but a laugh nonetheless. Ilya smiled despite the situation. “Did you call your parents yet?”

Shane groaned. “I texted them. Mom wants me to call. I will, in a second. But I had to hear your voice first. And I had to um... apologize for the dramatic messages first.”

“Not dramatic. You were scared. Your words came from the heart. Я даже представить себе не могу жизнь без тебя рядом. I never want to be without you.” Ilya’s voice was shaking now. The tears on his cheeks were dripping onto his undershirt. “Call your mother. Yuna will kill someone if you do not.”

“I love you. I’ll call my mom. Can you call me back when you’re back at your hotel? I can’t sleep right now, and I want to... I want to talk more. Not bad talk. But important things. And I want to hear you say more things in Russian about how much you love me. I think you’ve conditioned me to crave it.” Shane laughed breathlessly, and Ilya smiled despite it all.

“Of course. I will call as soon as I can. Я тебя люблю.”

Shane replicated the phrase as best as he could. *He’s getting better at that*, Ilya thought to himself fondly. When they hung up, he wiped his eyes furiously, taking a deep breath, watching as the exhale morphed into cold, white mist in front of his eyes. He had almost just lost someone else he loved. Ilya wasn’t sure how long it would take for him to come to terms with that. Right now, though, he knew he needed to go inside and act like he was doing okay.

One day, he thought to himself. *One day, I will shout from the rooftops and tell them all that I love you, Shane Hollander. That day will be sooner than later. You deserve it.*

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