Because We're Getting Married

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77009976.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
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:	Communication, Love, Established Relationship, Discussion of depression and anxiety, Takes place during the long game, Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers)
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-03 Words: 1,415 Chapters: 1/1

Because We're Getting Married

by flowerfan

Summary

Towards the end of *The Long Game,* Ilya talks to Shane about being depressed. This is a conversation that comes after that, when Shane shares his own struggles with mental health.

Notes

TW for discussion of mental health issues including depression and anxiety.

See the end of the work for more notes

Ottawa loses the series against New York, and gets knocked out of the playoffs. Ilya comes home to Shane, who is waiting for him in Ilya's house, and sobs in his arms. He tells Shane that he's depressed.

It scares Shane. He doesn't sleep much after that. In the early hours of the morning, Ilya is still curled up against Shane, snoring softly while Shane strokes his hair, but Shane's thoughts are going a mile a minute.

The next day, Shane manages to wait until after they've had breakfast. He's trying his best to act normal, but that's never gone well for him, and he knows Ilya can tell he's got something on his mind.

But just like always, Ilya makes room for Shane to be Shane, to follow the path he's worked out for how he wants this to go. Ilya touches his shoulder as he walks by, putting his coffee cup in the sink, and sends him a gentle smile when Shane doesn't take more than a sip of his awful protein smoothie.

Finally Shane nods at Ilya, and without having to say more, they both go sit on the couch. Ilya takes his accustomed spot at one end, and Shane almost sits down at the other, but then changes his mind and scoots over until he's in front of Ilya, mirroring him with his legs crossed. Their knees bump, and Ilya wiggles his toes until they press against Shane's.

"So," Shane says, after a long moment of focusing on his breathing. "Because we're getting married, there are some things I want to say. About me."

Ilya gives Shane that crooked smile. "*Because* we're getting married," he confims. "Yes. I am listening."

Shane stares at his hands in his lap, thinking that they look weird, and then Ilya takes them in his own. Shane feels his breath calm.

"Is okay. I am here. Tell me," Ilya says quietly.

And isn't that the whole point. The whole reason this works. The reason is it so important that they have this conversation, the other half of what Ilya shared with Shane.

"You told me yesterday that you are sometimes… that you have depression."

Ilya nods, mouth tight, but eyes fixed on Shane.

"I think you probably know that I've got… mental health stuff too." Shane looks away, lets himself focus on the rug for a minute. Ilya gently squeezes his hands, and Shane relaxes again. "I have anxiety. Pretty bad, sometimes. There's a lot I have to do to make myself…" He can't quite figure out how to say this part, but Ilya doesn't seem bothered, just sits in front of him, solid and strong.

"It's like I'm arguing with my own brain," Shane goes on. "There are times when I know how to do something, obviously, I know it shouldn't be a big deal, but it is. And I have to

figure out how to make myself do it."

"You are very brave," Ilya says. "I have known this, for long time."

"What? No, no I'm not."

"Is not the right word? 'Brave' is doing something even though you are scared, no?"

"I'm talking about normal shit, like asking a friend if he wants me to get him a coffee, or calling to make a doctor's appointment. It's not brave to do that."

"It is, if you have to argue with your brain," Ilya says matter of factly.

Shane shrugs, shakes his head. He's uncomfortable. This wasn't the point he was trying to make. But at least it wasn't news to Ilya. He knew it wouldn't be. Ilya sees him too clearly.

"When you told me about… how you felt," Shane says, and then corrects himself. "Feel. You said it wasn't something that can be fixed. I guess I just wanted to let you know that I understand. I mean, it's different, but…" This is just how Shane is. It can't be fixed either. Coped with, strategized with, but not fixed, at least not in any way he's figured out.

"I argue with my brain too, sometimes," Ilya says. "Sometimes, I say, there is no reason to be feeling so bad, Ilya. You are the best hockey player of your generation, most good looking. You have best boyfriend in the world. Why can't you just snap out of it." There's a tinge of bitterness to his words, and Shane reaches up to touch him, his hand against Ilya's cheek. Ilya presses a kiss to Shane's palm. "Thank you for telling me, about you," Ilya says. "I know this about you, I think, but it is different hearing you say how you feel."

"Thank you for listening," Shane says. It sounds dumb to say, but it's true.

"I always do what I can to help, when I see you are… anxious," Ilya says. The word sounds strange in Ilya's mouth. Shane's not sure he's ever heard him say it before. He wonders if Ilya was maybe going to say something else. "But if I do not notice, if there is more I can do, you will tell me. Yes?"

"Yes." Shane agrees.

"I will love you always, Shane. You, as you are. No matter what your brain is doing. You can always talk to me about you, you understand?"

Shane can feel tears welling in his eyes, but he ignores it. "Yes." He sucks in a long breath. "It's hard for me to talk about. But I'll try."

An expression Shane doesn't quite catch flickers over Ilya's face. "I should have said something sooner," Ilya says. "About me. I thought about it many times. I talked to my therapist about it. I knew it was important to say to you. But… I could not. I was…"

"Scared?" Shane asks.

"Ashamed."

“There’s nothing to be ashamed about,” Shane says quickly. It’s terrifying, really, to realize Ilya feels this way. Strong, confident Ilya. It shakes him. It’s so far from what Ilya presents to the world. “It’s nothing you did. It’s chemistry.”

Ilya shrugs. He sits up a little straighter, rubs his face and stares out the window. “People say that to me. My therapist. ‘Is chemistry.’ That is why medication might help. I also read that it might not be good, it is hard to find what works. I am nervous about it being… not right. But I think I am ready to try.”

“Brave,” Shane says, and Ilya shoves his shoulder.

“Do not use my words back at me. Is unoriginal.”

“Boring, even.”

“Oh my god, I cannot believe I am going to marry this ridiculous person.”

“But you are,” Shane says.

“I am.” Ilya’s voice has gone low, and it feels like he’s reaching straight into Shane’s chest. But he’s not flirting now. He’s baring his heart, but in a different way. “We are going to do this together, yes? Even though we are who we are. It does not matter. Perfect hockey players, maybe, but not perfect in every way.”

Shane feels like he should correct Ilya, insist that they are perfect. But instead it’s such a relief to acknowledge that he doesn’t have to get everything right all the time. That Ilya will love him even if he’s anxious, and probably autistic, and all the other things he still isn’t ready to talk about. That Ilya will love him even if Shane stayed up most of the night trying to figure out how to talk to his husband-to-be, and still stumbled through half of it.

“And that’s okay,” Shane says, trying to make it a statement, not a question. “Not perfect.”

“Ah, who wants perfect? Perfect is so boring.” Ilya smirks at him, all the force of his charm shining through, and Shane beams right back. “So, what’s next? We are clearly very good at important conversations.”

Shane squirms a little under Ilya’s gaze. “I’m not sure I have any important conversations left in me today.”

If anything, this just makes Ilya’s eyes dance brighter. “I can think of something else we can do.” Ilya leans forward, weight on his arms, face almost touching Shane’s. “Gimme kiss?”

That, Shane can do. He opens his arms and Ilya reaches for him, pulling Shane close and covering his face with kisses. Shane giggles. They’re both smiling too hard to even kiss properly, but it’s wonderful. Shane knows his worries are still there, but for now he can let them go. Ilya’s got him, and he’s got Ilya, and nothing has ever felt as good.

End Notes

It's my first Game Changers fic... I have been enthralled by these characters lately, as I know so many fandom folks have been. Kudos and comments are most welcome!!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!