

## close my eyes and count

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77108856) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77108856>.

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rating:          | <a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Archive Warning: | <a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>                                                                                                                                                      |
| Category:        | <a href="#">M/M</a>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Fandom:          | <a href="#">Heated Rivalry (TV)</a>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Relationship:    | <a href="#">Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov</a>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Characters:      | <a href="#">Shane Hollander</a> , <a href="#">Ilya Rozanov</a> , <a href="#">Yuna Hollander</a> , <a href="#">david mentioned but he gets no lines</a>                                                         |
| Additional Tags: | <a href="#">Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Trauma</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a> , <a href="#">Suicidal Thoughts</a> , <a href="#">Canon-Typical Mentions of Suicide</a> , <a href="#">The Long Game Spoilers</a> |
| Language:        | English                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Collections:     | <a href="#">Anonymous</a>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stats:           | Published: 2026-01-05 Words: 2,109 Chapters: 1/1                                                                                                                                                               |

# close my eyes and count

by Anonymous

## Summary

*You are the most important thing in my life. I'm sorry if I ever made you feel like you weren't enough.*

Plane crash reversal where it's Shane on the plane instead of Ilya

## Notes

finished heated rivalry yesterday afternoon and saw this au tweet an hour later. entered a fugue-like state and found this staring back at me. please forgive any glaring canon divergences <3

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

The words on Ilya's phone screen burn. The burn of vodka is harsh but clarifying, desiccating his hollow insides until he's no longer bogged down by wet sentimentality. The burn of ice is freedom, a flash against his skin that leaves him sharp and alert.

The words on Ilya's screen *burn* worse than fire, searing into his eyes as he stares so that even when he blinks, he still sees them, white against the darkness he craves.

*I wish we had more time.*

Time? They have all the time they could possibly want. They have weeks left in the season, years left in their careers, *decades* left to grow closer until they can finally reveal themselves to the world.

Ilya closes his eyes. The messages from Shane—*his Shane*—stare back at him even as he tries to hide, even when he opens his eyes and everything around him is blurred with the angry tears rushing down his cheeks.

*Ilya, I'm sorry. I love you. I love you so much.*

The burn in his eyes snaps through his body. White-hot rage and anguish fill him in an instant. He hears the crack of his phone hitting the wall before he even registers that he threw it, which only strengthens the churning in his chest. Stupid, *stupid*.

*You are the most important thing in my life. I'm sorry if I ever made you feel like you weren't enough.*

His hands find one of the cushions on the couch Shane's designer picked out, and he *rips*, but the strain in his muscles and juvenile pleasure of destruction doesn't purge the words from his eyelids.

*Loving you was the best decision of my life. If this is the end, please know that I was happy. I was so happy because I had you and got to call you mine.*

The end, the end, the end, ringing in Ilya's head like the bells at his father's funeral. He reaches blindly for worthless trinkets and pitches them across the room as if breaking the correct one will end this nightmare. A vase, books, a lamp, then—

He catches sight of this last one before he can throw it: a framed photo. Shane's head rests against his shoulder, his expression as sweet as a milk-drunk kitten, and the Ilya in the photo looks down at him, not knowing how good he has it. Not knowing how soon it would all be ripped away.

*I wish we had more time.*

Something like a scream bursts from Ilya's mouth. The glass covering the photo cracks under his hands as he doubles over, hot tears splattering onto the floor like blood from a deep wound. Those awful words swirl in his head—*I love you, I'm sorry, I wish we had more time, if this is the end, you are the most important thing, I was happy, I was, I was, I was, this is the end—*

It's as if all the years between this moment and age twelve are ripped away from him in an instant, and suddenly he's standing in a doorway again, frozen in shock, staring at the only person who's ever loved him, dead in a pool of her own vomit.

*There won't even be a body this time.* The thought strikes him and nearly sends him into hysterics as he stumbles into movement, still clutching the photo hard enough that his fingers go numb. There won't be a body. They won't be buried beside each other. He'll never get to see that sweet face again, not even in death.

Bile rises in his throat as his thoughts turn to the last time he saw Shane's face: twisted in frustration after their final argument. Ilya hadn't even told him that he loved him. He vomits on the floor, careful to spare the cracked frame in his hands, and another sob rips from him. Anger. The final emotion he shared with the person he wanted to spend his life with was *anger*.

His feet carry him to the kitchen as a horrible numbness smothers his thoughts. It needs to go away. Everything needs to go. He fumbles in the fridge, plastic meal prep containers bouncing against the floor, until his fingers close around a familiar bottle.

Everything needs to go.

He uncaps it with his teeth, unwilling to release the photo for even a moment, and chugs half a bottle around broken sobs and gasps. It burns, but this burn isn't stronger than the one that already charred him, the one that claws up his throat and forces its way out of his mouth in a cacophony of pained whimpers. He sounds like a wounded animal. He doesn't care.

Is this his life? He drinks the rest of the bottle, then lets it shatter on the floor as he reaches for another. Is he destined to lose everyone who's ever seen him—really, truly seen him, and loved him despite that?

Something in the back of his mind tells him to call Svetlana, but his phone is little more than twisted metal somewhere on the floor.

He drinks again, and those horrible noises coming from his mouth begin to quiet.

For a moment, he thinks of the medicine cabinet in the bathroom and wonders how much of it he could empty into his mouth before he—

His hip hits the counter as he staggers back, and he tumbles to the floor in a heap, the mostly-empty bottle in his hand spilling its remaining contents onto the floor.

Clarity burns, almost worse than those awful words on the back of his eyelids. He looks around the room and sees the angry, drunk outbursts of his father. He looks in his hand and sees the depressed, final comfort of his mother.

No wonder God took Shane from him, if this is all he is.

Another sob breaks from him. He doesn't have the energy to rise from the floor, so he doesn't. Instead, he lets the bottle slip from his hand and cradles the photo to his chest and cries until his eyes ache and screams until his throat bleeds.

He's dying. He has to be. No pain could be worse than this.

Time doesn't exist anymore, not when his future has been snuffed out. He measures minutes in the sobs between breaths until even those collapse into little more than heavy sighs. If he still had the capability to feel anything except grief, he would be glad that the vodka dulled his thoughts enough to only think of Shane.

A voice calls for him out of the darkness. He doesn't answer at first, too afraid of what its presence means, but the calls grow more insistent, more desperate. She wants him at her side, and how could he deny her?

"Mama?" he croaks. He hears her stumble. Then, a different face than the one he expects appears before him, and he can only sob all over again. "Ms. Hollander—"

"Oh, thank god, thank god," she says as she falls to her knees next to him. Her fingers wind through his hair, and he soaks the knees of her pants with his tears. "Shane thought you would... Ilya, it's going to be okay. You hear me?"

"Nothing will ever be okay," he cries. He clings to her legs, a mockery of comfort. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry...." His English dissolves into Russian babbling, sorrow and guilt overwhelming his senses.

"*Ilya*." Her hand grips his hair, as if he were little more than a small, wounded animal to be scruffed. "Listen to me. Did you take anything besides vodka?" He shakes his head with a whine and doesn't say that he wanted to, but he wasn't strong enough. She sighs. "Good, that's good. You're okay, alright? Shane called me. His plane was able to make an emergency landing...." A harsh ringing in his ears smothers her words.

“Alive?” he asks hoarsely, barely daring to believe it.

She nods.

Relief strikes him, so potent that it dizzies him. He clings to her and sobs all over again, Russian hymns of thanksgiving pouring from him like lifegiving water. *Alive*. His Shane is alive.

Yuna bundles him into her car minutes later. He holds a bottle of water in one hand, and a handful of pills in the other. He doesn't quite know how he got from the floor to here, but he's that much closer to Shane, so he doesn't question it.

“Drink,” she says, voice clipped. Guilt and lingering grief slow his movements, but he does as she asks. The pills slide down his throat. Once the water bottle is empty, she speaks again, “It'll be a long drive. You should sleep.”

“Can't,” he murmurs. He exhales and rubs his hands over his face. “My heart still... fast. Would not help.” She doesn't say anything in reply, but he sees her hands tighten on the steering wheel. “He call you? What he say?”

“He gave me the name of the hospital he was taken to,” she tells him. “He wanted me to pick you up before I went to see him.” He nods. She sighs, then turns on the radio to some sports station. Were he more himself, he would note that there's something she isn't telling him. As it is, he leans his head against the window and watches the scenery go by.

By the time they arrive at the hospital, he feels more awake but less like himself. Some part of him whispers that Yuna is lying, or that Shane died while they drove, or any other horrible truth that would leave his future empty. He follows as Yuna leads him across asphalt and into sterile white halls. The nurses speak quietly, as if Ilya is the patient, their care-worn hands pointing further into the labyrinth. Yuna navigates the halls expertly. Ilya imagines a tether pulling him inexorably towards an uncertain future.

They stop at a door.

“David?” Yuna calls as she opens it. “He’s here, can you let them—?”

“Ilya?”

Nothing else matters. Ilya squeezes past Yuna, past David as he leaves, doesn’t give either of them his thanks or apologies, because the beautiful voice that he never thought he would hear again is coming from that room. A curtain blocks his view until he flings it open, and....

His Shane is alive.

“Ilya,” Shane says again, when Ilya doesn’t immediately throw himself at the foot of the bed. Ilya manages a single step forward before his legs give out, and he walks on his knees like a penitent to the bedside of his reason for life. He clings to a pale hand, more familiar than his own, and sobs.

“I love you,” he manages. He could pull down every star in the sky for Shane, the least he can do is speak in the language they share. “I love you, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I—I *love you*. Never again. Never angry again. I promise. Do not leave. I love you.”

“Ilya,” Shane says, voice wet with tears. Ilya crawls up onto the bed and kisses his Shane’s face again and again. “*Ilya*, oh my god. I love you.” Shane cups his face as he pulls away, holding him in place, searching for something hidden in his eyes. After a moment, his face crumples. “I was so scared.” Ilya tucks his head into Shane’s shoulder and inhales for the first time in hours.

“Me too,” Ilya cries. “I’m so sorry. We argued. All I could think. I never said—”

“I knew, okay?” Shane forces him to look up. His brow is scrunched with that same frustration, and Ilya nearly sobs all over again before Shane grabs his chin, a mirror of Ilya’s affection. “I knew the whole time. I never doubted you. We argued because I was scared, not because I didn’t think you love me.” Shane exhales, and a tear slips down his face. “I’ll always love you.” Ilya can only whine and tuck himself against Shane’s side.

What Ilya doesn't know, what he won't know until he gets a new phone, is that Shane texted him once the plane landed safely. What he won't know until months later is that Shane tried to call him half a dozen times before he called Yuna in a panic.

*“Mom, I’m okay. I need you to go to Ilya’s. Please. He isn’t answering me, Mom. I texted him as we were going down. He doesn’t know I’m okay. What if he—?”*

But he didn't. Instead, he lays on the bed beside Shane and drifts off into a relieved sleep as Shane combs his fingers through golden curls.

## End Notes

massive thanks to nish @qiansjiaer for the texts from shane to ilya which I took heavy inspiration from, and massive thanks to @shaneswomb for the original au idea

<https://x.com/qiansjiaer/status/2007169775538188481>

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