

promise i'll always be there

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77153576) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77153576>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Rose Landry , Yuna Hollander , Svetlana Vetrova
Additional Tags:	Post-Season/Series 01 , Established Relationship , Hurt/Comfort
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-05 Words: 7,427 Chapters: 1/1

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by [alljustrunaways](#)

Summary

“...Big hit from Buffalo defenseman Nate Ryland, and Rozanov is down.”

His head spins around when he hears the commentary, his heart clenching immediately when his eyes land on the horrifying sight of his boyfriend down on the ice with obvious pain on his face.

“Not looking good for Ilya Rozanov, who seems to be in a fair bit of pain at the moment. This injury could put an end to Boston’s winning streak and their hopes of another cup this season...”

Or, the first time Ilya gets injured after they make their relationship official.

Notes

Just like pretty much everyone else in the world, I’m obsessed with Heated Rivalry. I can’t get these two out of my head so I had to write something for them!

I haven’t read the books yet so this is only compliant with the end of season one (set a few months after the cottage). I hope you enjoy!!

Title is from The Cure by Lady Gaga which felt appropriate lol

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

It starts out as a pretty good night for Shane Hollander.

The Metros beat the Guardians 5-1 earlier today, destroying them on their own home turf, with a hat trick from Shane.

He has a free night in Toronto before going back to Montreal, and instead of spending it in a hotel room with Hayden, listening to him FaceTime his wife and kids without being able to freely call the one person he really wants to talk to, he's in a luxurious penthouse with none other than his movie star ex-girlfriend-turned-best-friend.

Rose is filming a movie here for a couple months, and Shane has been looking forward to this night ever since the Metros' schedule was released and she excitedly texted him that her day off filming coincided perfectly with his game against Toronto.

"This place is insane," Shane says as Rose gives him a tour of her temporary home, already sipping the glass of champagne that she insisted upon to celebrate his win today. He doesn't usually indulge like this mid-season, but he figured one won't hurt.

"Netflix money, baby," Rose grins, refilling her own glass and taking another sip. "It's way too big for one person, though, and I don't know anyone in Toronto. It's so nice having you here."

"It's nice being here," Shane smiles as he settles next to her on the huge, plush white couch. "What do you wanna do? We could order food, watch a movie..."

"Shane, we both know there's no way in hell we're doing anything other than watching your boyfriend destroy Buffalo."

Shane can't help but blush when Rose refers to Ilya as his boyfriend. It's true - and has been true for a few months now, since the magical two weeks at his cottage when they finally put a label on things after years of repressed feelings for one another.

The list of people that know about them, or even that Shane is gay, is still incredibly short - just his parents, Svetlana, and Rose.

After they came out to his parents, they stayed in their little bubble of new relationship joy for another few weeks before agreeing to tell at least one more trusted person each.

Svetlana was the obvious choice for Ilya, and had apparently had her suspicions about them for quite some time.

Shane's decision was a bit harder. He really contemplated telling Hayden, but something about telling a teammate - even if he's one of his best friends - felt a bit too real for him yet. It was easier to tell someone outside of the hockey world, and someone who already knew he was gay.

He wasn't sure if Rose would even care that much, considering he was already out to her, but he was dead wrong. She screamed "YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ILYA ROZANOV AND

YOU DIDN'T TELL ME?!" so loudly on their FaceTime call that Shane was concerned about hearing loss.

Since then, it's been very nice to have someone to actually talk to about his relationship with Ilya. It's nice talking to his parents, too, but Rose has been his go-to for the stuff he doesn't necessarily need to share with them - for example, the fact that during their weekend off last month, they didn't leave Shane's bedroom for the first 14 hours straight.

"Okay, yes, please," he says to Rose now. "Let's order food and watch the Raiders game."

Rose just smiles knowingly and turns on the TV, already set to ESPN, before grabbing her phone to start their dinner order. The game hasn't started yet, but the highlights from today's earlier ones are playing - which happen to include Shane's three goals.

Shane can't help but smirk a bit, and Rose lightly shoves his arm. "You narcissist."

"I'm not the one with a cardboard cutout of myself," Shane retorts, referring to the one she showed him in her house in LA.

"I told you, the studio sent me that! I had no choice!"

An hour later, they're eating sushi that Rose ordered as the first period comes to an end. Ilya's been playing incredibly well, with one goal already under his belt and another surely on the way.

Shane can't resist texting him during the break.

Jane

Watching the game at Rose's fancy apartment. Good game so far. I mean, it's only Buffalo and not a hat trick but...

To his delight, Ilya responds right away.

Lily

Only first period, will be hat trick by time I'm done. Say hi to Rose.

"Ilya says hi," Shane says.

"Tell him he could've had a second goal already if he hadn't passed to Dubek," Rose says with her mouth full of a spicy tuna roll. "And that he's my third-favourite sexy gay MLH player." Shane raises an eyebrow at that. "What, Scott Hunter is gorgeous!"

He laughs as he types his response.

Jane

She says hi back. Have a good rest of your game. We play Buffalo next, so it would be nice if you can try to tire them out a bit.

Lily

Would rather tire you out. 3 more weeks.

He can't help if his cheeks redden again at that. Even after all these years, and even now that they're exclusive and have professed their love for one another, Ilya still knows how to drive him crazy with anticipation.

Jane

Can't wait 🤔

Shane puts his phone back in his pocket and continues chatting with Rose as the second period begins.

She tells him about some of the drama on set right now with one of the older actresses who's unhappy Rose is first on the call sheet. Shane's never had many friends that aren't from hockey, so it's nice to talk about something else for a change. He wouldn't have it any other way as a diehard fan who has committed his life to the sport, but considering his mom is his manager, his boyfriend is a fellow player, and most of his best friends are his teammates, it does consume most of his life.

He's engrossed in her story, but he does get a bit distracted when the Raiders score again - assisted by Ilya, this time - and the camera focuses on his incredibly attractive, grinning boyfriend celebrating the goal with his teammate. God, he's gorgeous.

"Aww, you're totally swooning," Rose notices, her eyes flicking from the screen to Shane's face. "I've never seen you this happy watching another team score a goal."

"I wouldn't be if they were scoring against the Metros, or any team that stands a chance of winning," Shane defends himself. "They were always gonna win this game, Ilya might as well have fun doing it."

“What if he has so much fun that he beats your scoring record this season?”

“Oh shit, I hadn’t even thought of that,” he mutters, shaking his head.

“Shane Hollander stopped thinking about hockey accolades for thirty seconds?” Rose faux-gasps. “You *must* be in love.”

Shane just rolls his eyes - he is in love, but he’s still going to find a way to beat Ilya this season. He’ll make sure of it.

They resume talking about Rose’s work drama as play continues.

Shane is so invested that he’s not even watching the screen when it happens.

“...Big hit from Buffalo defenseman Nate Ryland, and Rozanov is down.”

His head spins around when he hears the commentary, his heart clenching immediately when his eyes land on the horrifying sight of his boyfriend down on the ice with obvious pain on his face.

“Not looking good for Ilya Rozanov, who seems to be in a fair bit of pain at the moment. This injury could put an end to Boston’s winning streak and their hopes of another cup this season...”

Shane feels like he’s frozen in place, watching Ilya clutching his ankle and shaking his head as the medics ask him something - most likely if he’s able to stand. He’s seen him play with bruised ribs, a sprained wrist, even a mild concussion, so he knows this has to be bad.

“Shane. *Shane.*”

He doesn’t hear Rose talking to him until she grabs his shoulder and squeezes firmly. He glances at her briefly before looking back at the TV. Ilya’s being helped up onto one leg now. He probably refused a stretcher, the stubborn idiot.

“He’s gonna be okay,” Rose assures him, her voice calm. “It’s not a concussion, nothing life-threatening. Probably just a sprain or a break at the worst. He’ll be okay.”

Shane knows from a logical standpoint that this is true, that it’s very unlikely this is career-ending and may not even be season-ending, but it’s still a bad enough injury that Ilya is currently being helped off the ice by two trainers and not pretending he’s fine like he normally would.

The cameras show him sitting on the bench for a moment, his helmet now off as he waits for one of the trainers to get something - a wheelchair, probably - and Shane’s heart feels like it’s going to snap in half. Ilya’s face is in his hands, and his eyes are rimmed with red when he lifts his head to respond to one of his teammates. Said teammate - fucking Marleau of all people - seems to be trying to comfort him, but he shouldn’t be the one doing that.

Shane should be there.

“I-I need to-I need to go,” he blurts out. “I need to be there.”

Rose just nods, immediately ready to help him spring into action.

“Of course,” she says softly. “I can help you book a flight, whatever you need.”

He knows it’s going to be a bit of a logistical nightmare. He’s supposed to fly back to Montreal with the team in the morning. He’s got a meeting with Reebok that afternoon, then he’s supposed to have dinner at the Pikes, and practice the morning after that.

He’s can’t think about any of that right now, though. He can only think about Ilya and the immediate steps he needs to take to get to him.

“I-fuck, I need to get my stuff from the hotel,” Shane says quickly. “And book a flight and call my mom. And my coach.”

“Okay, okay, let’s do the flight first,” Rose says, her thoughts much more coherent right now. “I’ll start looking.”

Within five minutes, she’s booked him on a flight that leaves in less than three hours, which doesn’t give him much time to get to the hotel and then to the airport.

“Take my car,” she insists. “My driver is very discreet, so you can talk to your mom about whatever you need to on the way and nothing will leak, I promise. He can get you to your hotel in less than ten minutes, and traffic shouldn’t be too bad this time of night.”

“Okay,” Shane exhales, trying to regulate his breathing. “Thank you, that’s - shit, I’m going to have to tell Hayden something. My mom can help me think of a cover story for my coach and the media and whatever, but I’m gonna have to see Hayden if I’m getting my stuff.”

He would gladly go straight to the airport with nothing but the clothes on his back if it weren’t for the passport currently sitting in the hotel safe.

“Can you just say it’s a family emergency?” Rose suggests.

“He knows all of my family, it would be too big of a lie and he would ask follow up questions.”

“Okay,” Rose says, the gears in her brain clearly turning. “Okay, tell him it’s my emergency then. Say I’m having some big personal crisis, and then you and your mom can come up with a story and Hayden will just think it’s a cover to protect my privacy. That works, right?”

Shane has to pause to wrap his head around it, but then he nods.

“Yes. Yeah, that works. Thank you so much, Rose. You’re - you have no idea how much I appreciate this.”

She calls her driver before walking Shane down to the lobby, where the car is already waiting just outside. She pulls him into a tight hug, and Shane returns it, needing a bit of comfort right now.

“Go take care of your man,” Rose says. “It’s gonna be alright. I sent you the flight info, and my driver already has your hotel address.”

“Thank you,” Shane says again. “Text me what I owe you for the flight, okay?”

“No way, it’s on me,” she grins. “Just promise me I finally get to have dinner with you guys and properly meet Ilya when he’s recovered, okay?”

“Of course,” Shane breathes, hugging and thanking her one more time before getting in the car.

Less than 30 minutes later, he’s on his way to the airport, after very quickly throwing his crap into a bag and giving Hayden a half-assed explanation of Rose’s fake family emergency that requires him to fly to Boston tonight. He made him promise not to tell anyone, that he would call their coach and give an official statement on his reason for not traveling with the team tomorrow, and gave his apologies to Jackie for missing their dinner.

Hayden was understandably a bit confused, but he agreed in his already half-asleep state and said he hoped Rose was alright. Shane felt a pang in his chest lying to his friend like that, using his other friend as a fake cover story within another fake cover story, but he knows he doesn’t have a choice. Not yet, anyways.

Now that he finally has a moment to catch his breath, seeing as he’ll be in the car for at least the next half hour, he pulls out his phone.

There are already several missed calls from his mother, but none yet from Ilya. He knows he can’t do anything to help him yet and that he should deal with more of the logistics first, but he can’t stop himself from opening their chat.

Jane

I’m on my way. Please text or call if you can. I hope you’re okay. I love you.

He knows he’s not likely to get a text back yet, since he’s probably at the hospital getting examined by now, so he calls his mom next. She answers on the first ring.

“Shane, honey-“

“I’m going to Boston,” he says before Yuna can say much of anything, not wanting to beat around the bush. “I need to be with him right now.”

There's a pause, and he's not sure yet if his mother is going to support this choice or try to talk him out of it. His parents have grown quite fond of Ilya already in their limited time together, but he can't imagine his mom would be thrilled about him missing a meeting with a sponsor and potentially a day or two of practice. Not to mention the PR strategy that would be required if any photos of him in Boston leak.

"Of course, honey," Yuna finally says. "How can we help?"

Shane sighs a breath of relief before launching into a full explanation of what's going on, that he's on the way to the airport already and the lie he told Hayden.

By the time he's approaching Pearson Airport, his mom has already crafted a plan for what they're going to tell his coach - that a family member who lives in Boston is sick and he has to fly out for a couple of days, three or four at the most. She's going to push his Reebok meeting to next week, and she's drafted a PR statement they can use if it gets out that he's missing practice. Thank god for Yuna Hollander.

"Thank you so much, Mom," he breathes, closing his eyes for a moment. "I'm sorry this is so much...hassle. I just - he looked like he was really hurting. I know how that feels and how scary it is and I-I can't let him be alone."

"I understand, Shane, he's your person," she said gently. "And you're his. You should be there with him. I'm just sorry we live in a world where you can't do that without a cover story."

So am I, Shane thinks. If one of his teammates' wives or girlfriends got sick or hurt, none of this would be necessary. They would have nothing to worry about except supporting their partner.

"I'm almost at the airport," Shane says. "I'll text you an update once I see him."

"Have a safe flight, honey," Yuna says. "Remember to breathe. Ilya will be okay, and you'll be with him soon."

He repeats that like a mantra as he moves through the airport, trying very hard to stay under the radar. Thank god, he doesn't seem to get recognized by anyone - a true miracle for a major Canadian airport. The only acknowledgement he gets is from the gate agent who congratulates him on the hat trick as he looks at his passport. Shane just smiles and nods, even though he truthfully couldn't care less about that game anymore.

He's finally settled in his seat - first class, god bless Rose Landry - when his phone vibrates.

It could've been a text from anyone, but he's beyond relieved that it's the one person he really needed to hear from before his flight took off.

Lily

At hospital. Probably broken but don't know. Hurts bad

What do you mean on your way?

Shane's heart begins to ache again at the thought of him all alone at the hospital, waiting for confirmation on what's likely a broken ankle.

Jane

I mean I'm coming to Boston. I'm already on the plane

I'm sorry. I hate that you're in pain and I'm not there

Lily

You don't need to come. Will be ok. Just my ankle Hollander

Jane

I don't care, you're hurt and I'm coming. I'll be there in 2 hours

Lily

Ok. Good. Thank you.

I love you too

Jane

See you soon ❤️ hang in there

By the time Shane arrives at Ilya's house, it's well after midnight.

He had a few more texts from his boyfriend by the time his flight landed, informing him that his ankle is in fact broken, that Svetlana came to take him home and would stay until he got there, and that Shane shouldn't worry too much. He accepted two out of the three to be true.

He lets himself in with the key that Ilya gave him the first time he came to Boston after the cottage trip. Shane returned the favour when he came to Montreal two weeks later.

The house is mostly dark when he walks in, except for one lamp on in the living room. Svetlana is sitting on the couch, curled up with a book and a mug of what seems to be black coffee. She stands up when she sees Shane, and lets out a sigh of relief.

“It’s good that you’re here,” she says.

“Why?” Shane asks, eyes wide. “Is he not okay? Is he-“

“No, silly,” Svetlana cuts him off, rolling her eyes. “Because he loves you and needs you right now.”

Shane’s only met her properly once, but he’s noticed a few things about Svetlana. Her accent isn’t as strong as Ilya’s, and her English is better. She seems like the stereotypical cold Russian woman, but she’s actually surprisingly warm. And she cares a lot about Ilya, which is the only thing that really matters.

There’s still some lingering jealousy on his end, knowing how many times she probably kissed or slept with Ilya before they were together, but he’s starting to be able to look past that. Ilya was able to do with Rose, and even if it’s a little different since Shane isn’t into girls, he can accept when Ilya tells him he never loved Svetlana in the way he loves him.

“I’m going to go now that he’s in good hands,” she continues, grabbing her purse and walking over to Shane. She squeezes his arm. “Good luck with the patient. He’s in bed, probably asleep from the pain meds. I left the instructions from the doctor and the rest of his meds on the dining table. He doesn’t love taking them, because…you know. But he should.”

Because his mother died of a pill overdose remains unspoken, the sad truth that Shane still can’t believe he only learned this year.

Shane nods. “Thank you. I’ll make sure he takes them.”

He waits until Svetlana closes the door so he can lock it behind her, and then heads straight to Ilya’s bedroom. He stops just before he reaches the door and opens it slowly, trying not to wake him.

Ilya must have not been in a very deep sleep, because he wakes up anyways. His eyes blink open sleepily as Shane approaches the bed, the lamp on his end table still turned on.

“Shane?” he calls out weakly, clearly still groggy from the meds.

“Yeah,” Shane exhales, walking over to him. “I’m here. Sorry I woke you.”

He takes in the sight in front of him as he approaches the bed - Ilya is wearing one of his comfiest Raiders hoodies and black gym shorts, his leg elevated on a stack of pillows with his ankle encased in a grey medical boot. He looks paler than normal, his curls messier. There are crutches leaning up against the wall, likely placed by Svetlana so they would be within

his reach if needed. Shane doesn't intend to let him move a muscle more than is absolutely necessary.

"Shane," Ilya says again, sounding a bit irritated now. "Come here, please."

Shane realizes he's still hovering just out of Ilya's reach, his poor injured boyfriend now reaching out a hand to him.

He immediately closes the distance between them, taking his hand and sitting close enough on the bed that he can kiss his forehead.

"Are you okay?" he asks softly, his free hand moving to run through Ilya's hair. "I was so worried. It looked really bad."

"Was not good," Ilya says, leaning into Shane's touch. "Broken in two places."

Shane sighs, grabbing his hand tighter and bringing it to his lips.

"I'm sorry, Ilya," he says softly. "That really sucks."

"Yes," Ilya agrees. "But I get to see my hot boyfriend three weeks early, which really does not suck. All I had to do was break ankle."

Shane rolls his eyes. "I'm not ready to joke about you being hurt yet. That was awful."

"Now you know how I felt last season," Ilya says. "Awful. Terrified."

Shane thinks back to his own injury, before they had fully confessed their feelings for one another. He knew at the time that it was scary for Ilya to see him like that, and that he cared enough to come see him in the hospital. Now he knows that Ilya was just as in love at the time as he was. But he didn't fully comprehend until tonight how shitty it actually feels to watch the person you love get hurt and not be able to do anything about it.

"I wish I had been here," he breathes, his hand now combing through Ilya's curls once more. "I could tell you were in pain, and Rose was trying to calm me down but all I could think about was how badly I wanted to hold your hand."

"You came very fast, Shane."

Shane raises an eyebrow at that, and it takes Ilya's sleepy and slightly drugged brain a second to catch up.

"I did not mean like that, but that will be priority number one when I am better," Ilya teases. "I mean you got here very quickly. I know you must have practice, meetings, other things to do."

"None of that matters right now," Shane says. "And you can thank Rose for helping me book the flight and get to the airport on time, and my mom for dealing with everything else."

“Hmm, I will send them both flowers,” Ilya hums thoughtfully, and probably sincerely. “I am very tired now. Please kiss me and come to bed.”

Shane can’t deny that request, realizing just now that he still hasn’t even properly kissed him since his arrival. He immediately presses their lips together softly, cupping his face.

He still can’t believe his luck that he gets to kiss Ilya like this whenever he wants now, without it leading to anything more. He just gets to kiss him and show him how loved he is.

When they pull apart, he excuses himself for just long enough to run to the bathroom and brush his teeth, strip down to his boxers and t-shirt, and climb into bed with Ilya, who is fighting sleep to stay awake.

Shane flicks off the light and pulls him into his arms as carefully as possible, letting Ilya bury his face in his neck. He strokes his boyfriend’s back and shoulders, murmuring words of comfort - mostly in English, but also the few Russian ones he’s learned.

“Goodnight,” he whispers. “I love you.”

“I love you too,” Ilya murmurs before drifting off once more.

The next morning, Shane wakes up before Ilya does.

This isn’t unusual for them, but Shane usually either stays in bed until Ilya wakes or rouses him himself with kisses or cuddles.

Today, though, when he’s recovering from an injury, he needs all the sleep he can get.

So Shane carefully creeps out of bed and heads to the kitchen. He makes himself a coffee with Ilya’s fancy espresso machine and then gets to work immediately, reading all of the medical information Svetlana left out for him. He does some googling, too, learning everything he can about broken ankles - which he’s been fortunate to avoid so far in his career - and what Ilya might need for his recovery.

It’s only after he feels fully prepared to take care of his boyfriend for the next few days, including making a ridiculously big Postmates order, that he remembers he has his own life to deal with.

He already has texts from Hayden and his mom when he takes his phone off do not disturb.

Hayden Pike

Hey man, hope everything is ok with Rose. We're on the plane now, I told coach you had a family emergency but he's gonna expect a call if you're missing practice

Mom

Good morning, honey. How is Ilya doing?

I'll keep an eye on social media, but it seems like nobody spotted you. I rescheduled with Reebok, so don't worry about that.

If you're sure about missing practice tomorrow, you should call your coach and tell him. The media statement I've drafted says you have a sick aunt in Boston, so you can tell him that.

Shane types a quick response to Hayden first, telling him thanks and that he'll be back for the Buffalo game Monday night. It's Saturday now, and the thought of leaving Ilya even two days from now feels far too soon.

He then responds to his mom, confirming that there's no way he's flying back in time for practice tomorrow and that he will call his coach.

It takes him another few minutes to work up the courage to actually make the call. He's not sure why - it's not like the man is going to put the pieces together about why he's in Boston. Even if he knew Shane was gay, which he doesn't, nobody would ever suspect that he's actually in love with his arch rival.

Coach Thériault answers on the first ring, and Shane braces himself for having to lie to his coach.

"Hollander, what's going on?" he asks without a greeting. "Pike told me you had a family emergency."

"Yeah, sorry Coach, I - everything happened so quickly last night, and I had to get to Boston right away."

Well, no lies required so far.

"Is everything okay?"

"My aunt is sick," Shane says. He's glad Coach can't see his face, because he's not a great liar. "I just, uh, had to come help out."

"Alright," Thériault responds, slowly. "I'm sorry to hear that. Will you be back for practice tomorrow?"

Shane is interrupted by the sound of crutches clacking against the floor. He whips his head around and sees Ilya coming down the hallway toward him, looking adorably sleepy with a

small smile on his face.

“Hello? Shane?”

Shane nearly drops his phone as he rushes to bring it back to his ear.

“Sorry,” he says quickly. “No, unfortunately, I don’t think I’ll be able to make it back to Montreal until Monday morning. Don’t worry, I won’t miss the game.”

There’s a pause on the other end. Surely, his coach can’t really begrudge him for missing one practice for a sick relative. He never misses practice.

“Okay, that’s fine,” Coach responds. “I’ll see you Monday. I hope your aunt gets better soon.”

“Thanks, Coach.”

The call ends, and Shane wastes no time tossing his phone on the couch and rushing over to his boyfriend’s side.

“You should be resting,” he insists, placing his hands on Ilya’s shoulders. “Come sit down.”

“I rested,” Ilya grumbles, reluctantly allowing Shane to steer him to the couch. “I slept ten hours.”

Shane helps him sit down, taking his crutches from him and setting them to the side. As soon as he’s comfortably situated with his leg elevated, Ilya grabs Shane’s hand and pulls him down next to him.

“You are missing practice.”

“It’s fine, I made up a family emergency,” Shane says, cupping Ilya’s face. “How are you feeling? You’re overdue to take more pain meds. Svetlana left me the note from the doctor with your prescription.”

“Don’t need them,” Ilya shrugs. “I am fine. You are not fine, clearly, if you are skipping practice the day before game.”

“Ilya,” Shane sighs. “Of course I am. My boyfriend is injured, that’s a pretty good reason to miss practice.”

Ilya doesn’t respond, but he does lean in to kiss Shane firmly. It takes him a second to switch from worried caretaker mode to their typical reunited-after-several-weeks-of-long-distance vibe, but Ilya’s hand on his thigh quickly reminds him just how much he missed this.

It continues for longer than Shane should probably allow it to given the circumstances, but he’s really missed Ilya in the few weeks since they played each other in Montreal and had a glorious weekend together at Shane’s apartment.

It's been harder than he expected being separated so much of the time since the season started. He thought he knew what it felt like to miss Ilya back when they were just hooking up, but that feeling has grown exponentially since this summer.

After being together - really together - for the first time, it feels like torture being apart.

Shane is so lost in their kiss that he doesn't notice Ilya trying to move to get closer to him, and awkwardly putting pressure on his bad leg in the process.

Ilya immediately lets out a string of Russian curse words, grabbing his leg just above the boot.

"Shit, Ilya," Shane says, shifting back into worried mode within an instant as he sees the expression on Ilya's face. "I'm sorry. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Ilya mutters, shaking his head. "Just bent wrong. Give me few seconds, then we can keep going."

"No, you need to take your pain meds," he insists once again. "I'm serious."

Ilya sighs, leaning back against the couch cushions and closing his eyes for a moment. He's never been one to admit when he's hurting or needs help, and having to take the meds is another issue entirely given his traumatic history, but Shane hopes he'll make an exception for a broken bone that is clearly causing him far too much pain.

"Please, baby, they'll help," Shane pleads, reaching out to grab his hand. "I know you don't like taking them, I get that, but you'll feel better if you do."

There's another brief pause, and Shane is worried he's going to have to keep this up all day, but then Ilya turns to him with a small smirk on his face.

"Only if you call me 'baby' again."

A blush creeps onto Shane's face as he realizes how easily that word slipped out. He doesn't think he's ever actually called Ilya any pet names before, except maybe once or twice in the heat of the moment when they were making love, so this is a new development for their relationship.

"Shut up," he mumbles, "I'm worried about you, okay?"

"I know," Ilya says, his face softening now. "I will take the meds."

He's not supposed to take them on an empty stomach, so Shane gets to work on breakfast right away. He's not much of a cook, but he manages to make pancakes for Ilya and a protein smoothie for himself with the limited ingredients in the fridge. He would normally try to insist that Ilya eat something with some nutritional value, but he figures he deserves a treat today.

After Ilya quickly eats the pancakes - and takes the pills with his coffee, much to Shane's relief - he grabs the remote and turns on ESPN.

Naturally, they're currently showing the highlights from last night's games, and the pundits are in the middle of speculating about the severity of his injury.

Shane winces as they show the replay of him crashing into Ryland and getting helped off the ice.

"Are you sure you want to watch this?"

Ilya shrugs. "Want to know what people are saying."

It occurs to Shane that he doesn't even know the full details yet, given their very limited conversation before Ilya passed out last night. He knows what the x-rays said and how he's supposed to be taking care of him, but that's about it.

"Do they know how long you'll be out yet?" he asks softly. "Or if you need surgery or anything?"

"Not yet, need MRI tomorrow to be sure," Ilya responds, his eyes still glued to the screen. "With no surgery, probably two months. If MRI is bad, then surgery and longer."

Shane nods, reaching out to wrap his arm around Ilya and gently encouraging him to shift closer. He obliges, leaning in until his head is on Shane's shoulder. He lets out a soft sigh as Shane presses his lips to his forehead.

"I'm staying until Monday. I wish it could be longer, but I can't miss a game - I really wish I could."

Ilya nods. He knows Shane well enough to know that he means that, and it's a pretty big deal for Shane Hollander to want to miss a game of professional hockey.

"And I want to drive you to the MRI tomorrow," he adds. "I know I can't, like, actually go in with you, so maybe Svetlana can come too, but I want to be there when it's done. If that's okay."

"Is okay," Ilya smiles, kissing Shane's shoulder over the fabric of his sweatshirt. "*Spasibo, lyubimyy.*"

Shane knows enough from his Duolingo lessons and what Ilya has taught him to understand what that means - *thank you, my love*.

He presses another kiss to Ilya's forehead in response, then grabs the remote and changes the channel to a mindless sitcom.

Ilya falls asleep pretty quickly, tired from the meds and soothed by Shane's presence and warmth.

Shane remains awake, watching over him protectively and cursing the entire sport of hockey every time he so much as flinches in discomfort.

Ever since the cottage trip this past summer, every trip they've taken to see each other has ended the same way - with them almost entirely in bed together, making up for lost time and already dreaming of the next time they'll get to have this.

This particular Sunday looks a little bit different. They do start the day in bed together, which is always a nice feeling, but they only get a few minutes of sleepy cuddles before Ilya needs to take his meds and Shane has to leave him in bed so he can go make breakfast again.

After that, Ilya really needs to take a shower so he can be somewhat presentable for his MRI and subsequent meeting with the team doctor and his coach. Shane has to help him since he can't put any weight on his leg, and it's decidedly the least sexy time they've ever had while both being naked.

Ilya is so sore from the exertion of bathing and getting dressed afterward that Shane gets him set up in bed with the fancy new ice machine he ordered for him. He almost asked Hayden for the brand he recommended after his own ankle injury last year, before remembering how suspicious that would be when he's supposed to be taking care of his sick aunt. He just ordered the most expensive one and hoped for the best.

Shane returns his mom's many calls while Ilya rests. It's a testament to how much his parents have grown to love Ilya in such a short time that Yuna's first question is not pertaining to Shane or his hockey career, but her asking for an update on Ilya and how he's doing.

They pick up Svetlana on their way to the hospital, and it kills Shane even more than he thought it would to watch her help Ilya inside while he waits in the car and does nothing. He should be the one helping his boyfriend, standing by his side and comforting him and asking the doctors a million follow up questions.

They confirm that there's some ligament damage, but nothing major enough to require surgery, so he should be back on the ice within three months if all goes well and he's diligent about physio.

Later that night, after a quiet dinner with Svetlana and a movie of Ilya's choice - he opts for a Pixar movie that Shane hasn't seen since he was a kid but was apparently one of the first English movies Ilya ever saw - they're curled up in bed again.

"Is unfair that I had you all weekend and we didn't even fuck," Ilya grumbles into Shane's chest, muffled by the material of the Boston hoodie he's currently wearing, both because he's out of clean clothes and because it made Ilya smile for a second.

Shane knows Ilya's not really asking for anything - if he was feeling up to sex, he would've made that clear already. And even though Shane desperately missed him and can't wait until the next time they get to make each other come apart, it hasn't even crossed his mind to try anything this weekend.

“We still can when I’m back in three weeks, like we planned,” Shane promises. “It will suck not being able to destroy you on the ice first, though.”

Ilya rolls his eyes. “Yes. Must really suck that you will win scoring race now.”

Much like it hadn’t when Rose brought it up the other night, the scoring race hasn’t even crossed Shane’s mind since Ilya got hurt. Of course, his toughest competition being out for months means that Shane basically has that title secured. He should be excited about that, but he’s not.

If all goes to plan with Ilya’s transfer to Ottawa, this will be his last season with Boston. They’re a much better team, so this could also be his last shot at a cup and who knows what other career accomplishments. He’s giving up so much for Shane already, and now he has to miss out on even more.

“Shane? You okay?”

Shane blinks quickly, his eyes filling with tears as he looks down at his sweet boyfriend’s concerned expression.

“I’m sorry, Ilya.”

“Sorry for what? You did not cause this injury.”

“No, I know, but...this is probably your last season with Boston,” Shane says quietly. “And now you’re missing a huge chunk of it and the team is gonna suffer without you and-and you just deserve a better send-off than that.”

Ilya appears to be lost in thought for a moment before he props himself up on his elbows, shifting away from Shane slightly so they can look at each other properly.

“Is okay, Shane, really,” he says. “I love winning, yes, but I love you much more.”

Shane’s heart skips a beat, just like it did the first time he heard those words from him in July.

“And for the record, I am good enough to still beat you this season when I come back,” Ilya adds, a teasing glint in his eye. “And next season, no matter how bad my team is. I will score more goals than you even if I play goalie.”

Shane scoffs, shaking his head. “You’re ridiculous.”

Ilya smiles as he leans in to kiss him, reaching up to cup Shane’s face, his thumb stroking the stubble that has started to grow after a few days without shaving.

“I love you so much,” Shane says when they pull back, his hand tangled in Ilya’s golden curls. “I missed this.”

“Me too,” Ilya murmurs, kissing his chest, then his neck.

They hold each other, exchanging more soft kisses everywhere their lips can reach, for a few more minutes.

“When is your flight in the morning?”

“Too early,” Shane sighs. “Seven.”

Ilya holds him a bit tighter, soaking up every bit of their short time together as much as he can.

“I hope you know I’m gonna be super annoying for the next few months,” Shane says.

“What else is new?”

Shane smacks Ilya’s shoulder lightly, making him laugh in response.

“I’m serious,” he says. “I’m gonna be texting you and calling you, like, every hour to make sure you’re taking your meds and icing and eating *healthy* food that will help you get better.”

“Chipotle is-“

“No, Ilya, a burrito from Chipotle doesn’t count just because it has some vegetables on it,” Shane interrupts. “And I’m gonna call Svetlana too, to make sure you’re actually doing all this.”

“Very scary,” Ilya says with another eye roll, but the smile creeping on his face betrays him.

“And I...” Shane pauses, trying to picture his schedule in his head. “I’m going to try to come sooner. I have a day off after we play Detroit next week, I can probably switch my flights and come here for a night or two.”

He knows it will complicate things, since he’ll have to give another explanation to his coach and teammates, and that any time he touches down in Boston without a hockey-related reason for being there, it risks their exposure. But he doesn’t really care right now.

Ilya looks like he’s about to point all of those things out to Shane, but he doesn’t say anything - probably realizing that his extreme overthinker of a boyfriend has already weighed the pros and cons and decided it’s worth it if he’s making an offer like this.

“That would be nice,” Ilya says simply, laying his head back down on Shane’s chest. “Thank you. For all of your help. I have not been taken care of like this for...long time.”

Shane didn’t really think about that until now, and he curses himself once again for forgetting how different their life experiences have been. He can’t even think of a time he’s been injured or sick that his parents didn’t immediately fly out to take care of him, but Ilya probably hasn’t had that kind of support since his mom died nearly fifteen years ago.

“Of course,” Shane breathes, a bit shakily. “I’ll always take care of you, okay?”

Ilya nods against his chest. He doesn't say anything, but a few moments later Shane can feel his tears soaking through his hoodie. He holds him impossibly closer and kisses his hair until he falls asleep.

The next evening, Montreal beats Buffalo 4-0, two of the goals from Shane. This isn't anything out of the ordinary, but the way Shane celebrates the goals - and the trash talk he directs toward Nate Ryland - is.

He's not surprised to already have a text from Ilya when he gets to the locker room.

Lily

You looking like you want to kill Ryland is not very good for keeping our relationship secret, you know. Is very obvious that you love me.

Jane

It's not obvious why I want to kill him, he's a dick. I could hate him for lots of reasons.

It just so happens that I hate him for hurting you and I wanted to give him hell tonight

Lily

You are very cute when you are protective, Hollander

Please FaceTime when you get home?

Jane

Of course. Love you.

End Notes

Please let me know your thoughts  I might write more for them very soon!

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