

Team Hollander vs. Bacterial Meningitis

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77240881) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77240881>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander/Yuna Hollander , Shane Hollander & Irina Rozanova , Ilya Rozanov & Irina Rozanova
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Irina Rozanova
Additional Tags:	Whump , Sickfic , Sick Character , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Sick Shane Hollander , Worried Ilya Rozanov , Major Illness , Hurt/Comfort , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Angst with a Happy Ending , Angst and Feels , Love , Hallucinations , Hospitalization , Hospitals , Illnesses , Anxious Ilya Rozanov , Good Parent Yuna Hollander , stupid Canadian wolf bird , Hurt Shane Hollander , Relationship Reveal , Established Relationship , Established Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Timeline What Timeline , after the cottage , Protective Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Soft Ilya Rozanov , Seizures , Fainting
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-07 Completed: 2026-01-14 Words: 3,890 Chapters: 3/3

Team Hollander vs. Bacterial Meningitis

by [PenPatronusAooO](#)

Summary

Shane collapses into Ilya's arms after a game! Ilya, who can only watch as his boyfriend slowly dies in the hospital, is beyond devastated and desperate for a miracle. Fortunately, a surprise ally comes to help both boys!

"Shane is strong," Ilya declared, snarling at the doctor like he was an opponent in a hockey game. "He will not die."

The doctor offered a kind, indulgent smile. "He's almost settled in a room. I'll send a nurse to get you when you can see him." The man went to leave but stopped just outside the door. "Just so you're not surprised... He's a little confused, probably from the fever. He's not making much sense."

"In what way?" David asked.

"He keeps talking to someone—a woman who's not actually there."

"Who?" asked Ilya.

Chapter 1: Licorice & Love

Ilya Rozanov was certain that Shane Hollander had never played so badly in his career—maybe in his life. He'd bet money on it (and not an insignificant amount). Ilya came to that conclusion not only because Shane scored zero goals the entire game they played against each other (though that was alarming enough) but because his passes were also sloppy, his footwork unconfident, and he was so slow with the puck that it got stolen within seconds every time it touched his stick.

Plus, he barely made eye contact with Ilya the entire night after—Ilya now realized—avoiding him the entire day.

Something was very, very wrong.

Traditionally the press held off until the players were behind closed doors. But the vultures were hungry for Shane. As soon as the buzzer sounded, announcing that Ilya's team had won the game, reporters and their cameras ambushed the captain. Normally, Ilya would skate right past the press (his contract said that he didn't have to speak to them on the ice), but for once he allowed a couple to stop and catch him. Not because he wanted to talk, but because he wanted to inconspicuously hear what Shane was saying a few feet away.

"We all have off nights," Shane said in a weak, strained voice while a reporter asked Ilya something about how thrilled he must be with the win.

"Da, yes, very happy," Ilya replied. His eyes, ears, and most of his attention remained on Shane who was rubbing his neck while the reporters grilled him. He was pale and perspiring more than usual.

Fuck—he's sick, Ilya realized, the thought clapping like thunder in his head. And the idiot still played. Ilya cursed under his breath in Russian.

The reporter was asking Ilya something about his next game when Shane suddenly tossed his helmet aside, bent over, and vomited. His reporters backed away, disgusted, but the cameramen held their ground. They were still pointing their devices at Shane when Ilya skated over in one long stride and grabbed him by both shoulders.

"Hollander!"

Shane braced his gloves against his knees and spat on the ice. He stuttered through an unintelligible sentence and then, to Ilya's shock, his knees buckled and he collapsed.

"Shit, SHIT!" Ilya sputtered as he carefully lowered Shane's limp body to the ice. He used his teeth to remove one of his gloves and plastered that hand against Shane's white cheek. The wildfire of a fever coming from Shane's skin made Ilya wince. His heart rate was galloping.

"Ilya," Shane whispered, eyes half closed.

Rozanov cradled Shane against his chest. “Hollander, talk now. Tell me what is wrong.”

“’s c-cold,” Shane whispered. “My neck...” Then his eyes widened, stared. “Wow, look at you,” Shane exhaled quietly. His freckles appeared extra dark on his pale skin. “So beautiful...”

“Shane...” The next words slipped from between Rozanov’s lips before he could catch them. “My love, tell me what you need.”

“’s so sparkly...” Shane said, the two words slurring together. He reached up and cupped Ilya’s cheek. “Why so sparkly?”

“Shane, you are hallu—halluci—seeing things that are not there.” Emotion clogged Ilya’s throat. He looked around for help, but they were surrounded by cameras and microphones. “Sweetheart, how long have you been sick?”

Shane honest-to-god giggled. And then his face fell—the remaining color dissipating, his brow furrowing, his mouth slack. “Ilya.”

“Shane?”

“You smell like—like licorice—”

Shane’s body suddenly went flat and rigid in Ilya’s arms. His eyes rolled backwards into his skull. He started to tremble, then to shake, then to spasm.

The news crews kept filming. Medical personnel finally descended. Voices shouted. The crowd went dead silent.

And Ilya Rozanov sat on the ice holding an unconscious Shane Hollander through a seizure.

Yuna and David Hollander found Ilya sitting alone and lonely in a private room adjacent to the emergency department’s waiting area. He wore gray sweatpants and red sneakers and a Boston t-shirt. No one and nothing but his phone and his mother’s crucifix accompanied him.

“Baby,” Yuna called.

Ilya looked up and his stoic, sharp, emotionless features melted into a lip-trembling grimace, a flash flood of tears pouring down his pale face. The three embraced and Ilya pressed his face against Yuna’s shoulder. “I am sorry,” he sobbed, entire body shaking. “I am so sorry. I should have – I should have told his coaches he looked sick. I should have walked him off ice. I should have taken him to hospital myself.”

“Shh, shh,” Yuna soothed, rubbing both of her hands up and down Ilya’s back. “Deep, deep breaths, baby. Tell us what happened. Tell us what you know.”

Ilya told them the whole story. “And I think... I think I called him ‘sweetheart’ on fucking national television. I may have even called him ‘love.’” A fresh shockwave of tears hit Ilya

and he bent at his waist, arms wrapped around his stomach as if he'd been punched there. "Within two minutes I outed us both to entire world. He will murder me."

"Ilya, listen to me." Yuna took his face in her hands. "Ilya, if this were the other way around—if you were sick and Shane outed you like that—would you be upset with him?"

The hockey captain shook his head. "No—I would not. In big picture all that matters to me is that he is ok. Everything else is... Nothing else matters."

"And that's how he feels about you." Yuna leaned forward and pressed chapped lips against Ilya's forehead.

Just then a man in a white lab coat knocked on the open door. Yuna grabbed both of Ilya's hands while David wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

The doctor—bless him—didn't beat around the bush. "It's bacterial meningitis."

"What—what is that—what does that mean?" Ilya asked, looking as confused as Yuna felt. She'd heard of meningitis but, for the life of her, couldn't remember a single detail.

"Special tissues around Mr. Hollander's brain are swelling because of an infection. We've started antibiotics and corticosteroids—hopefully soon enough to stop the swelling and prevent it from interfering with any blood flow."

Yuna felt pins and needles travel up her legs. "And if it's not soon enough...?"

The doctor looked down at the obnoxious mustard-colored carpet at their feet. "If the swelled tissues interrupt the blood flow, Mr. Hollander could experience paralysis, stroke, or even—he could die."

Yuna felt David and Ilya's arms lower her into a chair. Had her knees buckled?

"Shane is strong," Ilya declared, snarling at the doctor like he was an opponent in a hockey game. "He will not die."

The doctor offered a kind, indulgent smile. "He's almost settled in a room. I'll send a nurse to get you when you can see him." The man went to leave but stopped just outside the door. "Just so you're not surprised... He's a little confused, probably from the fever. He's not making much sense."

"In what way?" David asked.

"He keeps talking to someone—a woman who's not actually there."

"Who?" asked Ilya.

"He called her Irina."

--To Be Continued--

Chapter 2: Kisses & Tears

Shane woke up sore. Every muscle felt overstretched, overused. Like he'd played three hockey games in a row.

He was flying—no—someone was carrying him. Familiar arms braced him—one beneath his knees and the other under his back. A familiar voice barked, “Get the fuck out of my way!” before the arms eased him down onto something cushioned. Sirens started shrieking, then, and Shane opened his eyes halfway. He was in the back of an ambulance.

Strange hands touched his body and he winced, flinched. “Ilya,” he whispered. “Ilya?”

Then, warm lips kissed his sweaty cheek. Shane smiled and turned his head to the left—wincing at his stiff neck—and expected to find his boyfriend sitting on the bench beside the gurney he lay on. Instead, a beautiful woman in white with long blonde hair smiled down at him. Warmth that had nothing to do with the fever raced up and down Shane's body.

A familiar crucifix hung around her slim neck.

Shane smiled at her. “Are you real?” he whispered.

The woman grinned, delighted, like he'd just offered her a favorite treat. In English, but with a Russian accent she said, “I wasn't sure if they'd let you see me,” in a smooth alto voice. She drew three fingertips through his hair and then deeper against his scalp. “Hello, Shane.” She paused, beaming. “Thank you for loving my son.”

Shane swallowed and blinked sweat out of his eyes. His head felt both disconnected from his body and like it weighed a ton. “What's happening to me?”

Her pretty features softened and her lower lip folded into itself. “You're sick, sweetheart. But they're letting me stay with you through this. I'll be by your side the whole time, all right?”

Shane reached for Irina's hand. She took it, and they both squeezed. “Ilya told me you were beautiful.” Shane sighed, comforted. He shut his eyes.

“Shane?” a voice called from his right. Shane looked in that direction and right into a penlight. He winced, groaned. “Shane, you had a seizure. Try to stay awake, ok?” the paramedic encouraged.

Shane looked back to his left, but Irina was gone. The inside of the ambulance seemed to twist and melt. A buzzing-ringing in his ear made him wince. His uniform felt scratchy, his lungs bulky, and his hands empty. Blackness descended like a curtain.

“Ilya,” he whispered before he passed out.

From his seat at Shane's bedside, Ilya looked up at the clock on the wall. 5AM. The hockey captain sighed, took the thermometer off of the bedside table, and ran it across Shane's forehead. It beeped once.

"105.3 degrees Fahrenheit," he said out loud in Russian. "Fuck." Ilya tossed the thermometer aside, not caring that it hit the floor. A single, wet, strangled sob erupted from deep in his chest. Ilya folded arms together, laid them on the edge of the bed, and put his face on top of them. Tears dripped down his nose to his forearm.

Some amount of time passed. The days had gone by in a blur—all five of them. Ilya only left Shane's hospital room to shower and even then, he was back in an hour. He drank only because David gave him bottles of water. He ate only because Yuna threatened him.

Something scratched Ilya's arm. A fingernail? Ilya lifted his head and blue eyes met brown.

"Hey," Shane whispered, his eyes half open and his lips barely moving. "Ilya."

"Shane!" Ilya cupped his boyfriend's face between both hands. "Oh, my sweetheart."

"Hey," Shane repeated. He smiled with bleached lips. Even his freckles looked pale.

Ilya wiped the tears off his face and sniffed. "Shane, you have to stay awake now, do you hear me? The doctor said to keep you awake. Do you—do you know where you are? Do you know what is happening?"

Shane reached up and gripped Ilya's arm. "I'm with you," he whispered. "What's happening? I don't care. I'm with you."

Ilya exhaled hard—part relief, part frustration. "You have not been this... coherent... since the first night."

"Oh?"

"Da. You just mumble, you do not recognize us... Whenever you're awake you talk to... You talk to..."

Shane's gentle smile warmed Ilya's heart. "She's so beautiful. And funny. Like you said."

Ilya gulped. "Sweetheart... You have a fever. You are not understanding what is real right now."

"I'm supposed to tell you..." Water hovered between Shane's lashes. "She's not sad anymore, Ilya." Shane yawned loud and long.

"Stay awake, remember?" Ilya rubbed his eyes with his thumb and forefinger. "Shane, I wish... I wish I could believe... Your liver and your kidneys are—are bad. Turning off. The doctor said that there are only a few medicines left for them to try. I am..." Ilya sniffed and kissed the top of Shane's hand. "I am so scared, Shane. I am so scared."

“I’m scared, too.” Shane looked at his boyfriend’s face like he was memorizing it. “Do you remember what you said the last time I told you I was scared?”

Ilya snorted, wetly. “Yes. I told you it is scary, yes. But you are brave.”

Shane pressed his bent forefinger against Ilya’s cheek. “And so are you,” he whispered.

“I am not...” Ilya tried to corral his breaths. “I am not feeling brave right now. I do not understand why you are not getting better. I do not understand why you are imagining my mother.”

Shane stared at him. “When you were six years old,” he whispered, “your mother bought you glow-in-the-dark pucks. You loved the pond outside the mansion and that way you could play in the dark.”

Ilya’s jaw dropped like an anchor. “How...?”

“She’s watching over me,” Shane said. “And fuck, Ilya, she loves you so much. She’s... She’s sorry. That she left. So soon. And she wants you to know that she didn’t want to leave you but she...” Shane sighed. “She was so sad.”

Ilya recoiled—brought his hands and arms back to his chest, giving himself a hug. He clenched his eyes shut so tight that they ached. “Shane...” Ilya licked his lips and took three deep breaths. “Can you tell her... Tell her...”

A soft whimper. Ilya opened his eyes and saw that Shane’s were closed.

“Baby, no, don’t fall asleep again.” Ilya stood and—cautious of every tube and wire going in and out of Shane’s sweaty body—wrapped his arms around him. “Shane, no...” Ilya full-on sobbed. “Shane, sweetheart, please...”

Shane passed out.

--To Be Continued--

Chapter 3: Hockey & Anger

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ilya froze, his stomach and spirit in a knot, when the nurse hooked up the new bag of antibiotics and connected it to Shane's line. He watched as the medicine entered Shane's body and willed it, with all his might, to work. "Please," he whispered at it. "Please save him." Ilya gently tapped his forefinger against Shane's corpse-colored temple, then brushed away a stray black hair damp with fever sweat. "Please..." For the hundredth time that week, Ilya leaned over the hospital bed and kissed his boyfriend's flaming cheek.

Behind him, Shane's doctor was talking to Yuna and David. "This is our last shot," he said, sad eyes meeting their gazes. "The last medication that could possibly reduce the swelling in his brain. If this doesn't work..." The doctor shook his head. "I'm sorry."

Yuna's voice trembled as she asked, "How long before we know if it's working or not?"

The doctor sighed. "If he doesn't wake up in the next 12 hours, he may never wake up again."

Ilya took Shane's hand. He stroked each finger, massaged his knuckles, kissed his palm. "Mom," he prayed. "Help him."

Shane dreamed.

He was on ice—on a pond outside a big but unkempt mansion. Snow confetti-ed down from a gray sky. Skates, pads, helmet, stick, Metros jersey—he had everything he needed to play. To play who?

A puck bounced off his left blade. Shane turned and found Irina Rozanov dressed up just like him, her long hair in braids, her cheeks red from the cold. She wore a Boston jersey.

"You know how to play?" Shane asked.

Irina grinned. "Who do you think taught Ilya?" She slapped her stick on the ice, calling for him to pass the puck back to her.

Shane stared down at the black puck. Suddenly it looked so far away. His stick felt so heavy. I'm tired, he realized. I've never felt so tired in my... "What's happening to me?"

"You're dying." Irina bent her knees and slapped her stick again. "Come on, Shane. You have to play the game."

Shane snorted. "If I'm dying, why bother?" He shook his head, passed his stick slowly between both of his gloved hands. "This sucks. I'm a good person. I have a family. I'm

young..." Shane nudged the puck with the tip of his skate. It slid thirty yards before it stopped, halfway between the two players.

Irina immediately skated forward, swung, and sent the puck flying as fast as a bullet. It hit Shane square in the ribs and he yelled, "Ow! Fuck!"

"Don't whine!" Irina commanded. Shane tried to fire the puck back at her, but he could barely swing. Irina swooped in, nabbed the puck, and skated in circles around him. "Play the game, Shane."

"I can't." Shane's chin sank to his chest. "I'm tired. I'm so tired."

"Get angry." Irina nailed him in the shin with the puck. Before Shane could even think about grabbing it, she skated away with it and circled around some more. This time the puck smacked Shane right in the elbow. He yelled and rubbed the area with his gloved hand.

"Are you trying to make me angry?"

"You need to FIGHT, Shane." Irina glided like a swan. "And you can't fight unless you're angry. What pisses you off?"

"Losing. Losing a game."

"What else?"

"Losing a game to your son."

She paused, chuckled. "What else?"

Shane shook his head. "I... I'm dying. I'm angry that I'm dying. It's not fair—"

The puck bounced off the back of his knee, almost sending him down to the ice. "Stop feeling sorry for yourself! You need anger to play the game, Shane! You need anger to live! Find it!"

"I..." Shane gave into his wobbly legs. He collapsed down to his knees, fists braced on the ice in front of him. "Irina, I... I don't know how to fight. I'm..." His head hurt. He scratched at it, wincing. "I'm dying."

"Yes, you're losing the game, Shane." Irina slid to a hard stop beside him, sending flecks of ice streaming through the air. "If you don't get up, you're going to die." Irina suddenly threw her stick down and sat, legs folded beneath her, right in front of Shane. "Tell me about him," she whispered. "Tell me about Ilya. Why do you love him?"

Shane grinned. His muscles relaxed. He reached for her hand, and she took his in both of hers. "He's..." Shane shook his head. "He's different from anyone else I've ever met. He's amazing." Irina smiled. "He—He's so passionate and clever and so serious and so silly... So smart, so smart. He's an amazing player—an amazing leader. He's loyal, protective, practical, both simple and complicated. Both hard and soft. He's so good with kids. So considerate. I love his accent—when he yells, when he whispers... He's so beautiful—I love every mole on

his body. Every curly hair on his head. Every scar. I love..." Shane's throat briefly closed. Emotion started boiling deep in his stomach. "I love his heart."

"You'll lose him if you die." Irina squeezed his hands. "Doesn't that make you... angry?" Shane clenched his jaw and nodded. "Do you want to see him again?"

Shane's chest heaved. "Yes." The boiling anger started to rise.

"Do you want to kiss him again?"

His lips trembled. "Yes. Fuck, yes." His face turned bright red.

"Do you want to be his husband?"

"More than anything." Shane slammed his fists onto the ice. It cracked beneath his fury. "I want HIM!"

Irina stood and held one hand out. "Get up, Shane Hollander," she said with a smile. "Let's win this game."

Eleven hours and 17 minutes. Eleven hours and 17 minutes since they gave Shane the antibiotics, and he still hadn't woken up. As carefully and gently as he could, Ilya nudged Shane's body to the far side of the bed, took off his shoes, and crawled in next to him. He lied there with all four limbs wrapped around his boyfriend and his lips against his forehead.

"I love you," Ilya whispered towards Shane's ear. A tear slowly descended from his eye, down his face, down his neck. "I love you so much, Shane. Every minute I spend with you, I love. I love your beautiful freckles, your eyes, your smile. I love that you follow recipes like they are fucking laws. I love watching you drive and run and skate. You are so smart and so stupid and so adorable when you cannot take a joke. You are so patient and strong and brave and funny. I love how your brain works and I love how you see a future when I am too scared to look. I love how you fold your fucking clothes. I..." Ilya choked on his words. A minute passed. "I love how you love me."

Silence. Eleven hours and 26 minutes.

"Please come back to me." Ilya sobbed. "Please..."

Water soaked his lips, so Ilya mistook the gentle pressure against them for more tears. But then the pressure increased, and Ilya softly kissed back. Eyes snapped open wide, and he leaned back far enough so that he could see Shane's entire face. Brown eyes and a slight smile greeted him. A foreign squeak escaped Ilya's throat and he pressed his lips to Shane's again. Gently, they massaged each other's lips with their tongues—kissing for minutes on end. When they finally parted, it was Shane who spoke first—voice hoarse and hopeful.

"I f-fought," he whispered. "I f-fought so hard... F-for you. And I..." Shane cleared his throat and licked his lips. "I love how you love me, too."

“You heard me?” Ilya kissed Shane’s forehead, his ear, his cheek. “Fuck, Hollander. Oh my god, I must get doctor. Your parents. You are all right now—you are going to be all right.”

“Ilya.”

“Shane.”

“She’s here,” Shane whispered. “But she has to go soon. If there’s anything you want to say to her, now’s your chance.”

Ilya froze. “I c-can’t see her.”

“She’s right here.” Shane pressed his palm against Ilya’s heart. “She’s listening.”

Ilya took the deepest breath he could and exhaled as long as he could. He spoke three sentences in Russian, paused, nodded, and then buried his face in the space between Shane’s neck and shoulder. His tears soaked the collar of Shane’s hospital gown.

Shane sighed and slid his hands through Ilya’s curly hair. “You don’t have to tell me what you said...”

“I want to.” Ilya kept his face hidden. “I-I told her I forgive her for... For leaving. I told her how much I miss her. It is like a hole in me. I thanked her for helping you and I told her I love her.”

“She says she loves you, too. She says...” Shane gently chuckled. “She says ‘Don’t fuck this up!’”

Ilya laughed, too. He came out of hiding and kissed his boyfriend again. “I love you,” he whispered against Shane’s lips. “I swear I will not fuck this up. You are everything to me, Shane.”

“Mmmm,” Shane hummed. “You’re my everything, too.”

“I hope I still am after you see this.” Ilya reached for his phone on the bedside table. Shane watched as he clicked through the browser and went to the New York Times. Ilya’s finger hovered over the sports page, hesitating. He sighed, snorted, and – finally – tapped.

The headline above a picture of Ilya holding Shane’s body on the ice a million years ago read: ARE THE TWO BEST HOCKEY PLAYERS IN THE WORLD IN LOVE?

Shane’s eyes widened. “Holy shit!”

THE END

Thanks so very much for the kudos and comments! Check out my profile for other fics about Shane and Ilya!

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