

Under Pressure

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77359131) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77359131>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry_(TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	collage AU , Hockey , Sports Med Student Shane hollander , Hockey Player Ilya Rozanov , Fluff , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Mentions of Blood , Minor Injuries , Romantic Tension , Hurt/Comfort
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-09 Words: 2,100 Chapters: 1/1

Under Pressure

by [quietR1OT](#)

Summary

“You're Lucky,” Shane murmured as he taped gauze over the gash in his knee. “Could've been worse, could've ended your season.”

Ilya huffed, staring at the floor. “Yeah.”

Ilya gets into a minor bike accident and shows up to Shanes house unannounced and ashamed. Shane patches him back up and sees him as a human, not a burden.

Notes

Thank you to my friend for editing this before I posted it and being super supportive! I love you Witten <3

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

Ilya hadn't meant to end up on Shane's doorstep.

He had meant to clear his head; that was it. A quick ride around town, helmet on, jacket half-zipped, the cold air biting at his cheeks. Just a loop around, a joyride, a moment to breathe. But the curve in the road had come up faster than he had expected, and his bike had skidded out from under him before he could correct it. Nothing dramatic—just enough to rip his jeans, gash his knee, bruise his pride, and send a jolt of panic through his chest.

Now he stood, white knuckles hovering a few inches from the door, head hung low as he knocked. He surely looked like he had been in a crash, which he had, blood drying in a thin line down his shin, clearly visible through the jean leg that was torn off. He was shaken.

Fuck what am I doing.

His voice barely worked when the door opened.

“Hey, uh, sorry, I didn't know where to go,” Ilya immediately tried to explain why he was showing up bloody at a doorstep—Shane Hollanders' doorstep.

Shane blinked once; his eyes widened at seeing Ilyas' face here, in his home, then widened further as he took in the rest of him. Shane stepped to the side and gestured for Ilya to come in. He didn't scold, didn't even look annoyed, more so confused and concerned for his well-being. He guided Ilya inside, grabbed the first aid kit his family kept in the kitchen, and had him sit down at the end of the kitchen table. Ilya's head was spinning a bit. The house was pretty bare, neutral tones and walls, the pillows on the couch with the Canadian maple leaf on them were some of the only pops of color in the space. He hadn't really seen Shane's house in the daytime, and only knew where it was because he'd been to a frat party there when Shane's parents were out of town, which was very rare.

He and Shane were not friends, not really, but their lives brushed against each other. Shane was a sports med student, the kind that lived in the training room with the hockey team. He taped wrists and ankles, checked for bruises, stretched out tight shoulders, reminded players to hydrate, and occasionally commented on their diets—especially Ilya's.

Ilya was the captain of the hockey team, a star forward, and so naturally, he saw Shane after every practice. Or at least, he tried to.

It was so easy to end up in each other's orbit; they often traded glances and eye contact, naturally gravitating towards each other.

There was also *that* night...

The party had been loud with too many people, cheap beer, and the kind of energy that made everyone a little more reckless than usual. Ilya hadn't planned on staying long; he was at Shane Holland's house, and it was weird, perfect, almost like a model home. After a few drinks, though, he felt like he could stay a little longer.

after a small stroll around to reset he told himself. But soon he found himself on a staircase away from the chaos, from everyone else. Frames took over the wall to his right, and he leaned against the opposite wall to take a look at them. Many of them were of Shane in hockey gear; one was of him in a graduation gown with his high school logo plastered across it; then a picture of Shane in the training room tending to someone with a smile on his face.

Ilyas' heart fluttered in a funny way.

“Hey... everything alright?”

The voice tore Ilya's eyes from the photos, immediately halting his brain and heart.

“So you're the favorite child?” Ilya smiled as he gestured to the wall of photos of him—Shane.

“I'm the *only* child.” Shane looked slightly amused, fighting a smile.

They had then talked for a while, exchanging smiles, and Ilya asked Shane about different pictures and medals in this secluded space. They were both tipsy and enjoying each other's company. Ilya had never planned to kiss Shane on those stairs, and for Shane to respond by running his hands through Ilya's hair and pulling him closer. But he did. He did, and then Shane pulled away, and Ilya, pathetically, chased his lips.

Shane had covered his mouth with his hand, and his eyes had gone wide.

“I- um-”

He was stuttering, face flushed, and when he moved his hand, his lips were slightly swollen, reddened, and damp. Ilyas' heart felt like it was beating for the first time in his life. It was short-lived though, as Shane turned and ran down the stairs, leaving Ilya dumbfounded and a little thrown.

They hadn't talked about it afterward. Not once. Not in the locker room, training room, passing on campus, never. Ilya had made flirty comments and quips at Shane the whole week since then, but usually Shane was strictly professional.

Needless to say, Ilya showing up unannounced, covered in dirt and blood, had to be very jarring. Ilya didn't really know why he even knocked; he could've just called an Uber or something, but it was like instinct; he crashed and immediately thought about how he was near Shane's house and didn't have any second thoughts. It seemed like Shane wasn't questioning it yet, either.

The antiseptic stung, but Shane's hands were steady, and he was thorough with cleaning the wounds. He was gentle, too gentle, in a way that made Ilyas' heart ache in a way the crash hadn't. In a way nothing else really could.

“You're lucky,” Shane murmured as he taped gauze over the gash in his knee. “Could've been worse; could've ended your season.”

Ilya huffed, staring at the floor. “Yeah.”

He didn't say the millions of thoughts suffocating his brain. He didn't say he had let people down again. He didn't say he just wanted to feel like himself for a bit. He didn't say he wasn't expecting to end up at Shane's house. His dad's voice pounding around in his head, he could already hear his dad yelling at and scolding him for daring to get injured when he's been getting scouts from all over coming to his games. Ilya thought about all the expectations crushing him and how he'd never be able to live up to any of them. A tear began to stream from his eye down his cheek.

Shane noticed, but didn't ask. He never pushed. He was gentle in that way, too.

When he had finished patching Ilya up, he grabbed his keys. "Come on. I'll drive you back."

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The truck's engine rumbled a little as Shane stuck the key in and turned, trying a few times before it roared to life. For a while, neither of them spoke. The world slid around them, and Ilya's jaw clenched. Halfway across town, he lost control of his thoughts, and his breath hitched. Before he could stop it, another tear slid down his cheek. Shane must have heard the rhythm of his breathing pick up, because he abruptly broke the silence.

"You ok?" He asked, again, much too gently.

Ilya nodded, too fast. "Yeah, I'm fine," he said, but his voice broke on the words. He swiped his cheek with the heel of his hand. The motion was embarrassing; it was a little too late to hide it from Shane..

"You don't have to pretend with me." Shane's voice was soft.

That did it. Ilyas's shoulders curled inwards; he felt like he should disappear. "I just..." his voice was unstable, and he shook his head. "I shouldn't have been out. I knew I shouldn't have, but I just—" He took a shaky breath. "I just needed to get out of my own head for a minute."

Shane kept his eyes on the road, leaving space for Ilya to continue if he wanted to. He didn't.

"That doesn't make you a bad person," Shane's voice was barely above a whisper after a bit of silence.

"It makes me seem reckless," Ilya spat, "It makes me stupid. My dad's going to lose it when he finds out. He already thinks I'm not focused enough, not disciplined enough. Not—" He breathed heavily, tears streaming from the waterline of his eyes. "Not good enough... ever."

Shane's hands tightened on the steering wheel. "Ilya..." He glanced at him for a second, worry, care, and a strange glimmer in his eyes before they focused back on the road in front of them.

“He is always... on me,” Ilya continued, voice raw, thumbs fidgeting in his lap before he ran his hands through his hair again. “Every game, every practice, every mistake. I’m always carrying the weight of him on my back.” His voice lowers. “If I mess up, even a little, it’s like I’m proving him... and everyone else... right.” He wiped at his eyes again, frustrated with himself. “I don’t want to let anyone down. Then I go and crash my stupid fucking bike, and all I could think was— great, another thing I ruined.”

Shane exhaled slowly, as if he wanted to release the pressure Ilya was feeling from his own lungs. “You didn't ruin anything.”

“Feels like I did.” Ilya lets out a shaky laugh, not just talking about his current situation, but also remembering the kiss he had shared with Shane.

“You didn’t,” Shane said, firmer this time. “You’re allowed to be human, to have bad days, to make mistakes.” He took a deep breath in. “You’re allowed to ask for help.”

“I didn’t know where else to go.” Ilya stared out the window, blinking hard and trying to clear his throat.

“I’m glad you came to me.” Shane’s voice was shy and Ilya turned to face him fully, eyes still wet, expression open in a way Shane had never seen. ‘Vulnerable, honest, a little scared, and something else.

Ilya sighed as the campus grew near. “Me too.”

The rest of the drive was quiet but not as heavy. Not anymore. More like the air had shifted, like something unspoken between them had finally been acknowledged. Ilya’s breathing had steadied, his eyes were rimmed red.

“Could I use your garage to work on my bike?” Ilya blurted into the calm silence. “I mean... I left my bike there, and I’m not sure how much damage was done to it in the crash—” It was rare for Ilya to ramble, especially in English, but he was really hoping for a chance to see Shane again soon. Maybe even a few times. “Is ok... I can just come get it tomorrow.”

“No, it’s fine, just let me know when.” Shane pulled into a parking spot and held out his hand. Which Ilya looked at in confusion.

“Give me your phone.” Shane clenched his fingers and then relaxed them in a beckoning gesture. Ilya pulled his phone from his back pocket, which he hadn't even noticed digging into him the whole drive. He opened it and went to contacts before placing it in Shane’s hand, who swiftly added his name and number in.

“There. Let's plan some time for you to come and work on your bike.” He smiled at Ilya, and Ilya’s heart did that weird fluttery thing it had in the staircase a few weeks ago on Shane’s staircase. He nodded and swallowed a bit while opening the door.

“Y'know,” Shane said lightly, “you didn't have to crash your bike to come to my house.”

Ilya huffed a small laugh—small, but genuine. “Yeah, that was the only reason I did it.” He chuckled with a glimpse of gratitude as he slid out of the truck, slightly defeated but less slumped than before.

“I’ll see you later,” he added, closing the door with a soft thud, the peace in his face flickering to worry just enough for Shane to see.

How am I going to explain this to my dad?

He headed for the dorm entrance.

Shane watched him go, smiling like an idiot. Was that an invitation? A promise? A *later*?

He couldn't help glancing back one more time as Ilya disappeared into the building, the door swinging shut behind him. He would be lying if he said he didn't regret running away from Ilya. He played that night back in his mind more than he would admit. It haunts him, the way he had just turned away. But now, he has a chance to make things right.

He pulled away from the curb with a thundering—but hopeful—heart.

Later...

End Notes

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