

Delayed

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Delayed

by Anonymous

Summary

When a blizzard grounds their teams in the same small airport, Ilya and Shane are forced into the kind of proximity they've been avoiding for months. What follows is a series of half-spoken confessions, messy feelings, and a fragile attempt to stop hurting each other long enough to make it through the night.

Somewhere along the way, they begin to realize they're far more tangled up in each other than they ever meant to be.

Notes

Set after a late-season game in mid April, in the middle of a blizzard.

First part is all tension, second part is where things actually break., 3rd part is yet to be wrote

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

Chapter 1: First Part

Ilya Rozanov was used to endless hours in airports. Sometimes, they were the only part of a city he ever saw during the season.

He had seen them all, small, large, run-down or luxurious. But that night, the situation was especially frustrating.

They'd been stranded for nearly five hours in a backwater terminal barely large enough to hold the hundred-odd players, travelers and staff.. It was one of those once-in-a-decade storms that paralyzed everything in its path. The meteorologists had underestimated the strength of the blizzard that had suddenly hit, growing worse by the hour.

Ilya was slouched in a cracked red vinyl booth in the airport cafeteria. His team was scattered all over the huge hangar-like terminal, people drifting past in a constant buzz of laughter and arguments. Ilya and a few of his closest linemates had claimed the only cafeteria in the place and decided to ride out the storm there, waitresses weaving from table to table, from customer to customer.

Outside, things had only gotten worse. Planes that had first been held on the tarmac for a few hours of delay had all been canceled until the next day. Ilya stared out the window at a world gone completely white, buried under snow, no roads, no trees, nothing but blank. He half-listened to the boys bitching about the delay, about how this had to happen on the last game of the season, right before a well-earned break.

"...So what do you think, Rozanov?"

"Rozanov!" Cliff called.

Ilya snapped out and turned back to his linemate sitting across from him, messily tearing into a big, dripping burger.

"What?" Ilya said, half annoyed, half grossed out.

"Joe and me were thinking we should rent a yacht, head down to the south coast for a weekend during the offseason. See if the girls are more... open down there. What do you say?"

"Have things to fix at home. In Russia," he said, tired.

"Come on, you can join us later," Joe tried.

Ilya didn't bother adding anything. One look was enough to make them get it, there was no point pushing.

The automatic doors of the small cafeteria slid open. A few heads turned.

One shape stepped in, then two. Then a whole pack of six or seven big guys in dark colors. The Montreal Voyageurs.

They had gotten stranded too after the game a few hours earlier, the one that had ended in a brutal Boston Bears win, 7–2.

The noise in the room dropped.

A chill ran down Ilya's neck, nothing to do with cold outside. In middle of them stood Shane Hollander.

Ilya did not move. His elbow still hooked over back of booth, his face was calm, like nothing matter but Inside, it was a total mess.

He had spent whole evening trying to ignore Shane and his team, camped on other side of airport, not mixing with them, still hurt by their miserable loss of tonight's game...Not until now.

The newcomers scanned the room, hunting for a place to land, in cafeteria full of their rivals.

"Come on, come on, squeeze in," the diner manager called from behind counter.

The guys lined up along counter, taking the whole length of it.

The old blonde waitress moved toward them to take orders.

"Look what wind drag here." Ilya said then, with a lazy voice, aimed at his boys but loud enough for the Voyageurs to hear.

Shane turned his head at same time as rest of his team.

Their eyes locked.

For one second, the world around them, clatter of plates, voices, storm screaming outside, all of it disappeared. Ilya caught the flash of surprise in Shane's eyes, gone right away, replaced by that usual careful mask he used for cameras.

But Ilya knew difference. He could read small shift in Shane's jaw.

Before tonight's game, it had been weeks, months since they saw each other. No message. No call.

Only through screen, Shane doing interviews on TV.

They didn't get chance to talk before or after tonight's game. Just few hits on ice. Nothing else since the last time in his hotel room, more than six months ago.

In the five years since they first met, this was longest they ever went with no contact.

"One of you miss us or what?" one of Ilya's linemates added, pushing it.

The corner of Ilya's mouth pulled into a crooked, provocative smile.

He enjoyed the slight twitch in Shane's shoulder at the jab about their loss. The boys laughed, some of them piling on, but Ilya wasn't even listening anymore. His eyes stayed on Shane as he took a seat at the counter, on the stool that lined up almost perfectly with Ilya's in the mirror behind the bar.

"We just want some hot food," Shane's captain said. "You guys took best part of airport, and I don't see why we should be stuck with the vending machine crap."

The chirping went on for a bit, then everyone drifted back to their own talk.

Shane kept his face closed, unreadable. Ilya still had their last messages in his head, dropped at worst possible time, a little too vulnerable, a little too real. He hadn't known how to answer. Maybe because it wasn't first time, and Shane always forgave him next time they met.

He pulled out his phone and looked for Shane's number saved as Jane. The last message was from almost 2 months ago, at two in the morning:

[Jane] March 7, 2013 – 1:41 PM

> *So what's your problem??*

Ilya looked up at Shane, talking with his linemates, and typed fast:

> *You real cute when you sulk, Hollander. Loss give you nice color.*

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Shane pull out his phone. The glow lit up his tired face, the dark circles under his eyes. Shane read, but didn't blink, he didn't even look at Ilya's way. He just slipped the phone back into his jacket pocket, in one smooth move.

Ilya frowned. *Okay. We playing this game?*

He tried another angle, more direct, the one that usually cracked Shane's good-boy mask:

> *Soon as you walked in, my dick stand up like boat knowing it going home to port.*

Nothing.

Shane stared into his black coffee. He didn't even take his phone back out.

Frustration started to prick at the back of Ilya's neck. Around him, the noise of the cafeteria turned unbearable. Joe was telling some dumb story, waving his arms, almost knocking over Ilya's glass.

"Fuck, Yarsky, get your elbow out of there," Ilya snapped, eyes dark with irritation. "You can't sit still like normal human?"

The table went quiet. His linemates looked at each other, thrown by how sharp he'd been. Ilya

didn't care. His focus was already back on the counter.

Shane had just lifted his eyes from his phone. He looked toward the mirror behind the bar, finally catching Ilya's gaze in the reflection.

Ilya grabbed his phone again, went all in.

**> *How about you suck my 🍆? I wanna make up for last months.
Bathroom in five min ? You go first, I come after.***

He looked up at Shane.

Shane didn't look interested. Not even angry.
He looked... empty.

Like someone completely worn out.
And for Ilya, that was worse than if he had screamed at him.

Ilya got to his feet.

"I go get slice of pie from counter," he said.

"Hey, wait, we can call the waitress.."

"No, she already busy," Ilya cut in, already walking away.

He leaned into a small open spot at the counter, acting like nothing, and caught one of the waitress' attention.

"So, Rozanov, trying to make up for not being able to finish in front of the net with all that sugar?"

Ilya bristled and turned, ready to snap back, but the older waitress reached him first.

"What can I get you, blondie?" she asked.

"Your lemon pie. One slice, please."

But the younger server was already moving toward the plate, where only one slice remained.

"Oh... the other young man just asked for the last one," she said, a little awkwardly, nodding toward someone in Shane's group.

Ilya followed her eyes.

It was Shane.

"Any of you want a slice of strawberry cake Instead?" the older waitress offered. "It's much better."

She looked between the two of them. Neither spoke.

Ilya wasn't about to back down and let Shane have that pie. Pure pride. After those ignored messages.

"I don't like strawberry," Ilya said flatly.

"Well I'm allergic," Shane added.

"What? You not allergic to strawberry, you liar," Ilya shot back, turning fully toward him.

"What do you know?" Shane said, sliding off his stool.

"I know because... because-"

Ilya stopped. He couldn't finish. Couldn't bring up that night two years ago, in a hotel room, when Shane had devoured all his strawberry energy bars.

"Because what?" Shane asked, a small smile tugging at his mouth.

Ilya wanted to answer, but also he wasn't really angry. And Shane was finally talking to him. That, weirdly, felt like relief. There was almost something domestic about all of this.

Then he noticed the looks around them, Shane's teammates, the waitresses, and straightened up.

More serious now,

"I call waitress first...first ask,first served"

Which wasn't even true.

The older server glanced at her coworker, shrugged, lifted the cover, and served the last slice to Ilya.

He took the plate and went back to his booth, biting into the pie while shooting Shane a sulky look.

"What's going on with?" Cliff asked, following Ilya's stare.

Ilya didn't answer, still locked on Shane's group.

"Jesus, you two and your rivalry,"Cliff snorted.

"One day you're gonna tear each other apart," he added.

"You should just fuck it out and be done with it," Joe laughed.

The table burst out laughing.

The comment snapped Ilya out of his head. He shot Joe a dark look, barely stopping himself from punching him, then pushed up from the booth.

"I go to the bathroom," he said.

"What, you on your period?" Joe jeered, setting off another wave of laughter.

Ilya had to grab onto his self-control again.

"What's with him tonight?" Cliff asked, thrown by the tension.

Ilya was already walking toward the automatic doors of the terminal cafeteria. He passed by Shane's group. Neither side looked at the other.

He stayed in the bathroom a long time, maybe half an hour, sitting on the closed toilet seat in one of the stalls, listening to people come and go.

He didn't know if he was more angry at himself or at Shane for ignoring him. But if he was honest, he was the one who started it all, ignoring Shane first, for almost six months.

Why?

Maybe it was the timing of those messages, when pressure from his brother and his father back in Russia had been crushing him. Or maybe it was that small shift he had felt in Shane's tone.

He pulled out his phone and scrolled back through the last few of them.

[Jane] — November 3, 2012 2:13 AM :

> *It was really good to see you again. I missed you.*

[Jane] — Jan 1, 2013, 10:00 AM :

> 🎉🎊🎈 *Happy New Year. And I hope this year you guys finally manage to win at least one game!*

[Jane] — Feb 1, 2013, 4:35 AM :

> *I can't stop thinking about last time . Good night.*

[Jane] — Feb 11, 2013, 1:15 AM :

> *Maybe we could go away for a weekend. Just the two of us. Change of scenery?*

[Jane] — March 7, 2013, 1:41 PM

> *So what's your problem??*

Those were the last messages Shane-Jane had sent before going quiet, a month earlier. Ilya hadn't answered any of them.

At first he hadn't known what to say. Then he had let himself get swallowed by it, maybe hoping Shane would stop? maybe even stop talking to him altogether?

So why was he so angry now that he had what he wanted?...
Was it really what he wanted?

He stepped out of the stall and splashed cold water over his face.

"Чего ты хочешь, Илья Розанов?*" (**What do you want, Ilya Rozanov?) he muttered to his reflection.

When he left the terminal bathrooms, the noise had died down. Most of the guys were asleep on the floor or slumped in chairs. Some of the lights had been dimmed. It looked like a massive hockey sleepover.

He was about to head back toward the still-lively cafeteria when he spotted Shane, alone in a corner of the airport. He was sitting in a pair of chairs, arms crossed, head bowed. Ilya couldn't tell if he was asleep or not

No one was sitting next to him. The others were farther off, stretched out on the floor. Ilya hesitated, then walked toward him.

Chapter 2: Second part

Chapter Notes

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

Ilya walked over him without hesitation. Shane didn't move when he sat down in the chair beside him. His head was still lowered, eyes closed.

Ilya waited a moment before asking, a little unsure, under his breath,

"Are you sleeping?"

Shane opened his eyes almost instantly.

"No, I'm praying. What do you think I'm doing, Rozanov?" he said, turning toward him, irritated.

Ilya couldn't help but smile. Shane was irritated, but not hostile.

For a second, Ilya wanted to pull him into his arms, to kiss him, to have some kind of contact, any kind at all.

It was almost unbearable, but he couldn't admit it to himself.

He pulled himself together.

He glanced around. No one was paying attention, most people were sleeping or on their phones, and almost all the overhead lights had been turned off on this side.

He straightened up, sitting stiffly, staring straight ahead as if he wasn't even talking with Shane.

"Why aren't you answering? You sulking?"

Shane looked exasperated.

"Are you fucking kidding me?"

A little too loud for Ilya's taste.

"Lower your voice, please. Listen, these past few months have been complicated, with the season and-"

"And you think the season hasn't been hard for me?" Shane shot back, tense, also throwing glances around them.

"I don't know why you're getting like this." Said Ilya

Shane turned toward him, no longer able to hide the frustration on his face.

"You're unbelievable, Roz. What about respect?"

"I don't understand what you actually want. I thought we were clear."

They kept glancing around. The situation was beyond ridiculous, they were arguing in low voices in a space full of their teammates, liable to be caught at any moment, yet neither of them willing to back down.

"You could start by apologizing."

"Fuck, Hollander. I don't have time with your moods."

Ilya stood up and headed toward the cafeteria. Seething, he stopped halfway, hesitating about turning back. The whole thing felt absurd. He didn't owe Shane anything. Shane was acting like they were something more when he had never been promised anything, when everything had always been clear all these years. Why this sudden change now?

Then he just kept walking, frustrated.

The cafeteria was almost deserted now. Most people were asleep, slumped over the tables. Cliff and the others were nowhere in sight. Only Joe was still around, but Ilya chose two chairs by the window instead, sitting on one and propping his feet up on the other.

The snow had stopped, but the wind was still howling. He watched the treetops sway.

He hoped the flights would resume and get him out of this.

What did Shane actually want? He didn't owe him anything. Sleeping with him every twelve or fourteen months didn't give Shane some special status, or the right to demand explanations. And if that were the case, he'd owe the same to every woman he fucked. Who did Shane think he was?

Ilya turned his head and caught sight of him through the cafeteria window.

Shane was still sitting there, arms crossed, shoulders hunched.

Some of the frustration eased.

He wanted so badly to go back to how it was before, before the messages. It hadn't been so bad, back then.

They saw each other once a year, slept together, then spent months teasing each other over texts before the next time. It worked like that.

So why was Shane pushing for change?

He looked back out the window.

I don't care, I don't care, I don't care, he repeated to himself.

Just a few more hours and they'd all be free from this damn situation. He glanced at Shane one last time, the urge to pull him close flickering for a few seconds, heavier this time, before he pushed it away.

Ilya zipped up his hoodie, pulled the hood over his head, settled deeper into his chair, closed his eyes and tried to sleep. About fifteen minutes went by without him finding a comfortable position or drifting off.

He pulled out his phone. It was already 3:48 a.m.

On autopilot, his fingers opened his messages, then tapped Jane's name. At that exact moment, the little dots showing the other person was typing appeared.

He straightened slightly, waiting.

Then the dots vanished. His hopes dropped.

He was about to type when they appeared again, then disappeared once more.

What was Shane playing at?

Ilya turned slightly to look at him. He was far enough away, but he could see the glow of Shane's phone, his thumbs moving over the screen.

The three dots appeared. Disappeared. Came back again.

A crooked smile tugged at Ilya's lips.

Okay. So that's how we're playing this.

He set his thumbs on his keyboard. Typed a few random letters, just enough to make the dots dance on Shane's screen. Waited ten seconds, then deleted everything.

Across the terminal, he saw Shane's silhouette stiffen. The glow of the phone shifted. Shane had just sat up.

Ilya did it again. Type. Delete. Type. Delete.

It was stupid. It was the kind of thing two twelve-year-olds would do.

[Jane] — April 12, 2013, 3:56 a.m.

> ***What the hell are you playing at?***

That was the signal he had been waiting for. Ilya got up from his chair.

He walked off quickly, making sure Shane could obviously see him as he headed toward the hallway leading to the restrooms. Even in the dim light, he knew Shane was following him with his eyes, confused.

He tried one door in the hallway, locked, then another one farther down with LOC.TECH on it. He tested the handle. This one was open.

It was a small utility room, with cleaning carts and shelves of supplies. Two floor scrubbers stood against the wall. He glanced left and right down the hallway, then stepped inside and shut the door behind him.

The smell of bleach and warm metal wasn't romantic, but it would do.

He pulled out his phone and typed:

> Walk down the hallway where the bathrooms are, there's a door on the left marked LOC.TECH.

I'm waiting for you.

He sat down on a cardboard box, eyes fixed on the door, phone in his hand.

He checked the screen.

He had sent the message at 4:05 a.m.

It was 4:21. He had the double check marks, it had been received and read.

Still no Shane.

He knew then that Shane wasn't coming.

Ilya headed for the door, a little angry but mostly worn down. As he pulled it open and saw Shane right there behind it, they both jumped.

"What the hell are you..." Ilya started, grabbing Shane by the front of his hoodie and yanking him inside. After checking that no one else was around, he shut the door again.

"Fuck, you really know how to make someone wait," Ilya muttered, stepping closer and pinning Shane back against the wall.

They kissed. Shane let himself go for it, their mouths immediately falling back into that familiar rhythm they knew too well from all their reunions.

Ilya's hands slid over Shane's body, under his hoodie, touching, exploring.

"I want to fuck you so bad," Ilya murmured between kisses against his neck.

"Roz..." Shane tried, breathless.

But Ilya's hands were already searching for the buckle of his belt.

"You're already hard" Ilya said with a big grin on his face

"Wait... no..." Shane said, stopping his hands.

Ilya froze, then asked,

"You got a condom? I don't have anything on me,"

Opening Shane's belt, but Shane stepped a little back.

"Why? What is it?" Ilya asked, stopping right away and looking him straight in the eyes.

Their flushed faces were only inches apart.

"What is it?" he repeated. "What's the problem, Hollander?"

Shane pulled free from his arms.

"I'm not here for that, Roz."

"Then why are you here?" Ilya asked, his voice rising slightly.

"I thought we were going to talk."

"Talk about what, for fuck's sake, Hollander?"

The utility room was cold and dark. The only light came from a single bulb above the door. They stood there in silence, neither of them knowing what to say. A distant noise from the terminal filtered through the door, muffled, as if the world had been put on mute just for them. They both turned their heads toward the door at the same time.

"So talk," Ilya said at last. "I don't know what to tell you, Hollander. I don't know what you actually want from me."

They were standing just inches apart, yet they had never felt so disconnected.

"So that's it? You thought I'd show up, we'd fuck, and that would be the end of it?"

Ilya ran a hand through his hair, tense. He shrugged.

"Then why did you walk all the way across the airport?"

Shane looked at him for a long time before answering, like the words were stuck somewhere inside.

"To stop pretending it doesn't hurt when you ignore me," he said finally, simply.

Ilya shrugged again, defensive, automatic. "I never promised you anything."

"I know. That's the problem."

Silence settled between them again. Ilya could feel how hard it was to communicate, because neither of them really wanted to say what they were wanting to say.

"I think..." Shane went on. "That it's getting harder and harder for me..."

He was more and more uncomfortable, like every word cost him something.

"...to be okay with just being a detour in your life, with taking whatever you give me when it suits you."

Ilya opened his mouth to reply, then closed it. His eyes dropped to the floor for a second before lifting back to Shane. The urge to pull him into his arms, to hold him tight, hit him again.

"Please, Shane... You know I... can't do it any other way," he murmured. "It's complicated, okay?"

He wasn't making excuses, but in that little room, it was more than just the blizzard keeping them stuck. How could he tell him about his father, clearly slipping with age, the pressure from his brother, his team's performance, all of it? How could he make him understand?

Shane sighed.

"I'm not asking you for anything, Il-Roz... I just wish that sometimes, you know, we could talk without turning everything into a game or into sex the second it gets uncomfortable."

Ilya lifted his head, stung, but there was no real anger in his eyes. Just something raw, he felt exposed.

"And what if that's all I know how to do?"

Shane stepped closer, not close enough to touch him.

"Then at least be honest about it."

"I'm not promising you anything, Shane."

Shane smiled and simply said,

"Start by answering my messages."

Ilya made a small face.

They looked at each other for a moment. The desire was still there between them, obvious, impossible to deny. Ilya moved to close the distance, physical and emotional, both of their foreheads touching but Shane gently put a hand against his chest to stop him.

"Not now," he said but without moving "Not here. Not like this."

Ilya exhaled, frustrated, but didn't push his hand away either.

"You really know how to piss me off," he muttered.

One corner of Shane's mouth lifted.

"I know."

They stayed like that for a few more seconds, so close their breaths almost mingled. Then Shane leaned in and pressed a brief kiss on Ilya's mouth. Ilya deepened it, and this time Shane didn't pull away, and even one of his hands started sliding to the waistband of Ilya's joggers.

"If you go there," Ilya said, "I won't be able to stop this time..."

"Okay, okay, we stop here," Shane said, stepping back.

Ilya pouted again.

"I think we should go. Sounds like things are picking up again in the terminal."

There were indeed more voices and movement in the distance.

They left the room a few minutes apart, making sure no one was around. Ilya came out six minutes after Shane.

The terminal lights were back on. A small crowd had formed in the middle. It was the manager.

Ilya walked over to Cliff.

"What's going on?"

"Flights should be resuming within an hour."

"Alright, let's get ready!" a voice called out behind them.

It was the Montreal Voyageurs' coach gathering his players.

Ilya spotted Shane a little farther away, picking up his bag. He pulled out his phone and sent:

> ***We're good?***

He saw Shane take out his phone. He waited, glancing from his screen to Shane, watching for the three dots to appear. But Shane slipped his phone back into his pocket w

ithout replying.

"Fuck," Ilya muttered under his breath.

His phone buzzed. He grabbed it.

[Jane] — April 12, 2013, 5:11 a.m.

> ***We're good*** 😊

He looked over at Shane discreetly. Shane gave him a quick smile.

And for that night, it was enough.

End of part 1

Chapter End Notes

This was my first time dipping my toes into Hollanov. I found their dynamic unexpectedly compelling, and I don't feel like this is really a conclusion, more like a pause. Maybe I'll come back to them and explore this further someday.

End Notes

English isn't my first language, so feel free to point out any mistakes.”

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