

I Do Not Have Wings (Love, I Never Will)

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I Do Not Have Wings (Love, I Never Will)

by [Sea_Sea9000](#)

Summary

Ilya told Shane's family that he talked to Scott Hunter. He didn't tell them when.

Scott and Ilya and the times they met up on rooftops over the years.

Notes

Thank you for reading! My other fics will be updated soon; sorry for the delay, my brain has been on a heated rivalry kick recently!

Title from: I Carrion (Icarian), by Hoizer

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

The balcony's quiet. The slamming of the door that Shane just left from haunts the space. The chill adds a sense of cold that shouldn't be in the warm Vegas air.

But there's cold; he can feel it in his fingertips. The slight shake as they clench onto the railing—he was just caught staring over. He doesn't know what he would have done if Shane hadn't found him when he did.

That's not because of the award; he could give less of a shit that Shane won rookie of the year. Most of the time he could give less of a shit about hockey. But his dad cared. His dad, who calls him Alexei half the time, wonders why he's not home. His dad will suddenly remember his youngest plays hockey; he'll suddenly remember that his son didn't win an award.

Maybe it's shitty of him to only care about the sport because of how his dad reacts. He has teammates who care so deeply that they can't talk about anything else—Shane doesn't care about anything else. His dad, when he remembers him, doesn't care about anything else.

When he remembers, he doesn't care about Alexei or his wife; he cares about Ilya. It's the only time he cares about him.

The railing is cold. Like his fingers, the touch would shock someone else if they were to come up and grab it. The Russian in him didn't react when he grabbed it for the first time more than an hour ago. It's only gotten colder since, but Ilya's only removed a layer. His suit jacket was lying in a heap on the ground.

The second the door closed and Shane left, he went right back to the railing.

Going back to the railing was better than going back to Russia. He tries to act like that train of thought doesn't scare him. How close that train of thought must have been to his mother's. But he's not talking about dying, just dangling, hanging on and looking over for the thrill of 'what if.'

He wouldn't actually do it.

He couldn't.

As much as he hates it, his brother needs the money. Not just for the drugs and whatever else he puts into his body, but for his niece. For their dad. He's not an idiot; he knows how much he gives. Alexei always asks for more than necessary. He knows. But there's a guilt deep inside him telling him that their father is dying and that he isn't there. That's Alexei. He's the one taking care of him, not Ilya.

So his hands will hold onto the railing because he can't afford to fall. Not for his father, not for his brother, not for his niece, and not for Svetlana. Not even for Shane, who slammed the door less than ten minutes ago, found Ilya up here, and maybe just saved his life without even knowing it.

He keeps telling himself he won't fall, won't jump. But he's given himself a timeline of when he could. His excuses can only last while his father is still alive, and he's dying. Everyone knows he's dying, and once he dies, Ilya can as well.

He can be with his mother and father—well, probably just his father. His mother is definitely in a better place, somewhere that Ilya won't ever be able to get into.

Maybe he should just do it now.

His knuckles whiten as he shifts his grip on the railing. He goes from leaning against it to standing straight and staring down. In a weird way, it's less terrifying just looking down. A calmness he didn't have before slowly settles over his body as his eyes travel down the path of the skyscraper.

It would be so easy.

The door opens with a click. The sound is different than the one when Shane left. It's softer somehow, less dangerous. The juxtaposition between the softness of the door and the harsh grip of Ilya's hands on the rail is not lost in his head.

The softness alone tells him it's not Shane. For all the man pretends to be soft, he knows how to cut sharp and deep when he least intended it—when Ilya least expects it.

He doesn't turn around when the door closes with a click and whoever is now with him walks farther onto the balcony. He prays that it isn't a hockey player; he would rather it be someone who doesn't recognize him. He would rather it be someone who sees him standing near the edge and walks away.

"Rozanov." He knows that fucking voice.

"Дрисня." He tenses his shoulders but doesn't turn around. He keeps his eyes facing down, looking out to the streets of Las Vegas.

"Rozanov." The man walks closer to him. Ilya can feel his breath on his neck and the warmth in the air as a set of hands sets itself down next to his.

"Old man."

"I'm twenty-three, you little shit."

Hunter laughs as he comes closer to him. The man is swaying a little, clearly tipsy, but his eyes are moving up and down Ilya's body in a way he's never seen before. It's not with lust or want, but worry. Something he hasn't had since he was twelve.

"Sucks about Hollander."

"Fuck off—"

"I mean, it could have gone to either of you."

“You trying to piss me off?” He says with a scoff. His eyes slowly leave the ground to join Hunters, which are facing out to the skyline.

“I’m trying to get you to talk to me.”

“Why?” There’s genuine confusion in his voice when he asks. Hunter isn’t someone who would care about him. They’re not on the same team, nowhere close to the same age, and he’s been seen being friendly with Hollander.

“Because I was going to come up here and, I don’t know, take a breather. Instead of getting away from all the award bullshit, I find you standing near the edge of the fucking building looking like you want to jump over it.”

“I can’t.”

Hunter pauses and sucks in a breath. “Can’t?”

“Jump. To coward.”

“Is it because of the award?”

Why does everyone think that? He shakes his head and rubs his knuckles on his left hand with his right. “No. Could care less about stupid award.”

“Really?” Hunter mutters. “It seemed to me like you care a lot about hockey. You fight like it, at least.”

“My father cares.”

“Oh.” They sit in silence for a second before, for some reason, Ilya starts talking again.

“I go back in three days.”

“To Russia?”

“Yes.”

He doesn’t know what compels him to tell Scott Hunter of all people this. He still doesn’t fully understand what made him want to tell Hollander. Maybe he wanted to see what they would say; maybe he finally wanted someone to understand that he doesn’t want to go back. A part of him wants someone to stop him from going, to tell him it isn’t worth it to go back to his motherland, that his father isn’t worth it.

But Shane didn’t, and neither does Hunter.

“Not worth it, kid.” His hand moves to Ilya’s back. It’s clearly meant to comfort him, but it feels like he’s been stung by a thousand bees.

Despite the feeling, it pulls him away from the railing. And when Hunter walks away, he follows, the rail only existing in the back of his mind.

He's embarrassed.

That's not usually what he feels like when he plays hockey, but today he's embarrassed. They lost to fucking Latvia. He was supposed to take them all the way—they were supposed to win the gold medal in their home country.

He knows it's his own fault; he knows he's gotten softer playing in the NHL. That the players in the KHL no longer respect him and that the Russian team no longer respects him. His father—getting worse every single day—watches him with something akin to disgust. He knows all of this.

What he doesn't understand is Shane Hollander. How he comes up to him in the middle of a figure skating competition and tries to talk to him. The idiot should know how Russia works, how they shouldn't be seen together.

And he tried so hard to push him away without being cruel. He really did. But he ended up, like he always does, saying something that tears that poor boy's heart out and pushes him even farther away than he already is.

He doesn't know how to be anything other than cruel. And for some reason, he doesn't blame that on his father but on his mother. Who gave him this dread that consumes him at all times, because if she was the strongest person he knew, and she couldn't survive her mind? How can Ilya survive his?

He can't. He knows he can't. He knows the only reason he's making it through most days is by being cruel and an asshole. He knows the reputation he's achieved within the league. The mask that sits atop his face is there so often that he might as well use superglue to put it there.

Yet, there are four people that have seen him without this mask—well, four people that he isn't related to. Svetlana, Sasha, Hollander—Shane, a deep part of his mind thinks—and Scott fucking Hunter.

He's sitting on a roof again, he thinks with a laugh. He lost to Latvia, yelled at Shane, and almost kissed Sahsa, and he always goes back to the place where he feels the most comfort. A rooftop with a railing just stable enough that if he were to fall over, it would be of his own volition.

And when Scott fucking Hunter walks up behind him for the second time, he isn't even surprised.

“Rozanov.”

“Walking skeleton.”

“How the hell do you even know—”

“We find us here a lot.” Ilya mutters, his hands not clutching onto a railing this time. Instead of digging themselves into the ground that he is sitting on.

“Two times too many if you ask me, rook.” Hunter walks closer to where he’s sitting, his feet dangling over the edge with the only thing saving him being the railing that his body couldn’t fit through if he tried.

His feet swing against the side of the building, the tapping of his heel against the concrete being the only noise other than their voices. “Only saw me twice.”

Hunter’s mouth opens and then closes; it takes him a second to fully understand what he wants to say before he starts talking. “Are you in places like this a lot then?”

“You ask too many questions.” Yes. The answer is always yes. Anytime there is one available and he starts to feel that tiredness creep up into his joints, he finds the closest roof and, well, contemplates.

“You’re starting to scare me, Rozanov.”

“Nothing to be scared of.”

“Yes, I think there is.” He sits down next to him. It feels identical to the end-of-season awards from three years ago.

He pretends his body isn’t shuffling closer to Hunter’s. That his hand is starting to relax and not hold his entire weight from the way he was leaning before Hunter joined him. He pretends he’s not comforted by the older man’s presence.

“Said stupid thing.” His eyes meet the others. There’s a level of vulnerability there that wasn’t there five seconds ago.

The look he gets back is one of understanding. He knows Ilya is choosing to say what he is feeling right now because he feels like he has no one else to tell this to.

“Was to person I care for. To protect h-them.” He knows Hunter caught the slip, just like he knows Hunter won’t tell anyone. Out of the corner of his eye, he can tell the man nods once, an understanding.

“I’m sure that they understand why you said it.”

“They don’t.”

“How could you possibly know that?”

“I was cruel.”

“You’re always cruel.” He knows. He leans his weight back onto the hand, and his shoulders creep up closer to his neck. They’re on a roof, his feet are hanging over the edge, and the

only person stopping him from letting go still believes he's cruel. He's made his mask too well.

"Wasn't always."

"I'm sure you weren't."

There's a pause as they both let the silence carry their conversation. The heaviness of their situation felt real for a split second. Where they are feeling too important to not talk about. But they don't. They never do.

"What the hell did you say to Hollander? If I am cruel, you must have said something—"

Hunter huffs. "I told him he sounded like you."

Oh. Isn't that something? No wonder it got under Shane's skin. He knows that his worst fear is being found out. When he hears someone, even if it is Scott Hunter, insinuate that he sounds even remotely like Ilya, he will freak out. Even if there's no mention of them fucking.

"He definitely hated that."

"I mean, he fought me over it."

"He's never fought me on ice. Only you." Ilya grumbles in annoyance. "You boring old man, I am the best player in league, yet he fights you."

"I'm going to fight you if you keep calling me old."

"Maybe you push me off building." The words are out of his mouth before he even means to say them. He can tell by the way Hunter moves closer to him that it was the wrong thing to say, to joke about. For fuck's sake, his feet are still dangling off the edge.

"Would you want me to push you?" Hunter asks like it's a secret that no one else should hear despite the two of them being the only people on the roof.

"No. I want to myself if I fall." He says it with certainty. A confirmation more than anything to Hunter that he has thought about flinging himself over the railing before.

"I don't want you to do that." He says this louder than the previous statement he made, which, in a way, makes it more permanent.

Hunter stands up and starts to back away from the railing; before he starts to leave, he turns back to Ilya and reaches out a hand. "Come on, Rozanov, let's go back inside for the night."

Ilya stands and grasps the hand like it's the only thing keeping him alive. Some twisted part of his mind knows, in the slightest way, that that's exactly what the hand is doing.

The next time Hunter finds him on a roof, Rose Landry is dating Shane Hollander, his father is getting worse by the day, and he jerked off to the sight of Shane at the club.

Realistically, the last one isn't Shane's fault. Neither are the first two, but the only two things on his mind are Shane and his father; somehow, Shane is easier to think about.

The club had taken place a week before they played New York; he hadn't talked to Shane in months. Alexei keeps calling him. Every time someone talks, Ilya feels suffocated. He's not yelling in locker rooms; he's not going out with the team. He didn't even take the girl home from the club.

There are a lot of tall buildings in New York. There is a lot of railing to choose from. He doesn't use the one from the hotel—anyone could find him there. He doesn't want to deal with the repercussions of someone finding him on the roof. There could be press, and somehow it would get back to his father and his brother.

Would they call it a freak accident like what happened with his mother?

When he lands twenty stories below a building and there's blood pooling from his head, would they say he was pushed? That someone wanted revenge on the great Ilya Rozanov, not that that someone was himself.

If he did it after his father died, would there be anyone to mourn him? Maybe Svetlana.

He finds the perfect building after ten minutes of walking. The city that never sleeps still manages to be quiet at three in the morning. Or, he's too stuck in his head to hear anything around him.

He should have known, as he walked into the lobby of the building, that it seemed familiar. That a building this fancy couldn't have belonged to anyone who didn't have money. That he's been here before with past players.

It could have been his subconscious. He wanted to be caught, to be saved. He wanted Hunter's comforting hand on his shoulder, pulling him away from the edge.

New York skylines are always beautiful. While there are no stars, the reflection of the city along the river shines brighter than the moon ever could. It's cold enough that his slow breaths show in the air as white clumps of fog. That his arms get goosebumps from his lack of layers.

The railings are shorter on this building than previous ones; they only go to his waist. He has to pull his arm down to grip the cold metal. It would be easier to swing his legs over these ones than before. The thought rings in his brain.

It would be so easy to fall.

Now that Shane has Rose, he wouldn't care that much if Ilya died. He has people caring for him and watching him, and he has his team.

The only people who might miss him are the team, and that's only because they're looking like they might have a chance to win the cup this year. He could just finish it and win the cup. Then he could die; he could be with his mother once again.

But, right now, two inches away from death, the offer has never been more tempting. It's a short railing, he thinks, as he starts to move a leg over the metal. His body is moving subconsciously by the time one leg is fully swinging across the bar.

Then there's a cough.

To his surprise, he doesn't flinch. His head doesn't move swiftly to turn around. All he does is bring his leg back over the rail, feeling as it scrapes across the cold metal as it slowly makes its way over. He wishes he were more ashamed of being caught in this position.

Being shy was never something he was good at.

"Hunter." He laughs as his foot lands safely back onto the roof. The concrete felt worse for him than the cold air when his leg was dangling off.

Hunter isn't careful this time when he grabs Ilya's hand once his leg lands on the ground. The speed is second only to when he's fighting on the ice. He just grabs his arm and yanks him away from the railing. Right into his arms.

Hunter's giving Ilya a hug.

He hasn't gotten a hug in years. Not one from someone who is bigger than him. Not from someone he can bury his head into the crook of their neck and feel the warmth radiating from their body. He pretends Hunter can't feel the tear that lands on his shoulder.

"I need you to stop doing this, Rozanov." The older man whispers. His mouth is close enough to his ear that it sends a shiver down his spine.

"I don't think I'm capable of stopping." And he's not lying. Deep down, maybe from the time he was twelve when he found his mother's cold body, he knew he would end up the same way.

Hunter pulls away slowly and looks Ilya in the eyes. There's red around his eyes that he knows matches his own. There's a familiar shake in his hands as he pulls the Russian's body towards the door connecting to the stairs.

"Where are we going?"

"You're on my roof, aren't you? I'm bringing you down to my apartment; I can't stand being up here for another second."

Ilya huffs. "Less chance I throw myself over if I'm surrounded by walls, huh."

There's a pause, and he practically bumps into Hunter as they start to walk down the stairs. "Don't—don't say that."

“Why not? It’s true.”

“Because there are people that don’t want you dead, Rozanov. Me, surprisingly, being one of those people.”

They’ve continued walking down the stairs at this point, but the conversation hasn’t stopped. “You might be only one Hunter.”

“That’s just not true. Your team, Marlow, they care about you.”

“They will be fine.”

“Hollander, what will he do without his arch rival?”

“Has fucking Landry; he’ll survive.”

Hunter gives him a look at that one. He turns his head back and brings his arm out to Ilya’s surprise, opening the door to his floor. He hadn’t realized they had walked the five stories already.

“Your family: mother, father, sibling.”

He says it with such certainty that Ilya can’t help but snort when the statement ends.

“What?” Hunter says with the click of the stairwell door shutting behind them.

“You’ve done zero searches of me.”

They walk down a hallway for around thirty seconds. The silence from Ilya’s last words carried their steps. There’s a door at the end of the hall, and by the jangling of Hunter’s keys, it was safe to assume it’s his.

The man brings his keys up to the door and twists the handle, allowing them into the apartment. There’s silence when they step inside, and it clearly wasn’t what Hunter was expecting, by the widening of his eyes, then the quick check of his phone.

“Someone here?”

“No—no, I just thought they would be.” He pushes his phone back into his pocket. “Turns out they’re working late tonight.”

“You have a girl, old man?”

“Not old, and something like that.”

The jab warms up the atmosphere the tiniest bit, allowing them to reach the kitchen of the apartment. Ilya sits at the counter immediately, while Hunter goes and grabs a drink from his fridge. “Do you want anything?”

“Coke, if you have it.”

He nods and grabs a can out of his fridge, sliding it across the counter over to the Russian, as he goes to grab a glass for himself. “What did you mean when you said I clearly hadn’t looked you up before?”

“You ask about my mother. She’s dead.”

Hunter grips the glass in his hand tighter as he moves to the sink. “Recently or…?”

“Oh. God no. Thirteen years ago.” He laughs like he didn’t find her body. Like her hand does haunt his dreams at night. As if the coldness of her touch doesn’t send shivers down his spine whenever it gets a little too warm.

Hunter turns the tap on the sink and lets the sound of the water control the room. “How old were you?”

He can tell he’s trying to do the math in his head. How old Ilya would have been when his mother died and how long ago thirteen years was when the person talking to you is twenty-five.

“Twelve.”

He watches as Hunter turns off the tap in silence and moves to sit down next to him. “I was the same age when my parents died.”

“Car accident, right?” It’s phrased as a question, but the death of Hunter’s parents is common knowledge. When the league talks about him, when Crowell talks about him, all they talk about is ‘poor orphan’ Scott Hunter.

“My mother was also accident.”

“Really?” Hunter whispers the question, even though he is sitting right next to him. The vulnerability of the conversation is making the room feel smaller than the large apartment is.

“Accidentally swallowed a bottle of pills.” He doesn’t look at the older man as he says it, but he can see the moment the words register, how Hunter’s body goes still.

And as he watches the emotions thread through the fossil’s body, a part of his mind reminds him that this is the first time he’s ever said those words out loud. That was the first time he’s ever told somebody his mother killed herself.

“Do you—do you want to do what she did?”

Ilya laughs, and Hunter flinches. “You’ve found me about to throw myself off a roof three times. Thought it was pretty obvious, no?”

He downs the rest of his Coke and stands up. Hunter stays frozen in his seat, watching as the Russian pushes in his seat.

“Thank you for Coke, and pulling arm.” He taps the man’s shoulder and starts to walk out the door.

“Ilya.” He grips the handle of the door, takes a breath, and closes his eyes. The handle twists before Hunter starts talking again. “We play each other again in three weeks. I want you to be there.”

He knows what the man is telling him. What he’s asking, begging him not to do. He nods. “We’ll beat your old ass, Scott Hunter.”

He opens the door and steps out into the hallway.

“That’s all I’m asking, kid.”

The door shuts behind him.

“Reversing the roles, Hunter?”

Scott has a drink in his hand as he leans over the same balcony where they first had a conversation seven years ago.

“Are you coming to be a dick, Rozanov?” He grumbles. His hand taps the glass anxiously, not unlike the last time the two of them had a private conversation.

“About age, yes. I’m surprised dinosaurs could win trophies.”

“Dick.” Rozanov walks to join him at the railing, the coldness of the metal around his hands feeling like an old friend. “You know that’s not what I was talking about.”

Scott takes a sip of whatever is in his glass as he meets the Russian's eyes. “I’m up here to congratulate you. It’s brave. What you did.”

For the amount of times they talked and what they’ve talked about, this is the most serious he’s ever seen Rozanov. Maybe that’s what scares him the most about the conversation, because even if the kid were to call him a slur or mock him, there’s a part of Scott that knows he’s just hurting. But, when he’s being sincere, he never knows where the conversation goes.

“Thanks, Rozanov; it means a lot coming from you.”

“You think I am asshole, because Russia?” He says it so simply. He weaves his way into Scott's mind and utters the very fear that is trapped in the man's bones. It’s terrifying, but for someone like Rozanov, it’s just who they are.

With Scott’s nod, he continues, “Well, I am asshole, but about your brittle bones, not that boyfriend of yours, cradle robber.”

“Who the hell taught you the words ‘cradle robber’?”

The Russian smirks; there's a glint in his eyes that he knows Scott can see. "Not so different than you, am I, Hunter?" It's out of his mouth before he fully understands what he said. Gloating was always the intention; telling the New Yorker that it's okay that he's gay and Ilya is good with it was a part of the plan as well. But mentioning anything else—that wasn't part of the plan. I couldn't be.

"Ilya." Scott whispers with wide eyes. His head has moved from the drink in his hand to face him.

"Nothing worth mentioning." He scoffs lightly, but his hands are shaking, his eyes are wide, and Scott can see the pupil moving back and forth rapidly.

"Maybe it could be?"

"No. Not with Russia." The finality with which he says it breaks Scott's heart. Because, suddenly, this isn't just about who Rozanov wants to fuck in his spare time; it's about politics, about immigration and visas. It's about whether or not the twenty-six-year-old would be able to go back to his home country.

Rozanov takes the glass from Scott's hand and downs the rest of it. Then he spits it over the balcony, coughing and looking disgusted. "What the fuck is that, Hunter!"

The seriousness of the situation is pulled away from them instantly. Scott starts dying laughing, holding on to the railing for stability as his body folds over itself. Then, even with his tongue sticking out and his eyes squinting in disgust, Rozanov follows.

It takes them a minute for them to calm down; by the end of it, they're both wiping tears from their eyes. "You know, this is the first time I've laughed with you when we've ended up on top of one of these things."

Rozanov brings his body up to look at Scott. "'One of these things.' You mean roof, Hunter. No, I'm usually debating if I should jump over. So, no room for laughing."

"Are you still thinking of doing that?" It's a genuine question, but one that brings the mood down quickly.

Rozanov takes a second to answer, and Scott can tell he's debating whether or not to be honest. "I think I was never going to jump."

"What?"

He ignores Scott and keeps talking. "Or, at least, not while my father was still alive." Right, shit, because Rozanov's father died less than four months ago. "They would have brought my body to Russia."

"Would you not want that?" He wants to ask more. Wants to ask if that's the only thing that's keeping him from landing dead on the concrete floor sixty stories below the building?

Rozanov clears his throat. "The only way I want to be buried in Russia is next to my mother." He then taps the railing they are both leaning on. "Probably the only way I will die as well."

He says it like a statement, and Scott knows, in one way or another, that it is one. For the amount of times that they've met on a roof, eventually he couldn't be here for the Russian. One day he will fall.

"Anyway," he taps Scott's shoulder once, and as the man looks over to him, he smiles, "that day is not soon. You, Scott Hunter, did good. I care about someone." He starts to walk away from the man, slowly, as if he doesn't want to leave.

His back is facing Scott, but his shoulders are tense. "You've given me something I can't repay you for, Hunter."

There's a sting in the back of Scott's eyes as he watches the Russian walk away from the edge. "You've given me a chance to be with man I love." He pushes the door open and leaves the roof.

For the first time since he kissed Kip on the ice, he feels like he made an actual difference. He lets out a breath and starts to move away from the edge. Reaching the door, he pauses and looks back out to the Vegas skyline. He feels a singular tear roll down his face.

He opens the door and turns his head away from the railing. It feels like a goodbye.

End Notes

Please comment and give kudos if you enjoyed it!!!

Thank you for reading!

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