

i know my darkness will never go away

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77757766) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77757766>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Angst with a Hopeful Ending , Heavy Angst , Self-Harm , in the past tense but it's discussed , Depression , ilya rozanov is canonically depressed and i'm projecting , Post-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , not really spoilery if you've only seen the tv show , shane hollander is autistic , it's only briefly peppered in , But he is , love doesn't fix everything but it can help
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-16 Words: 1,554 Chapters: 1/1

i know my darkness will never go away

by [probsnothawkeye](#)

Summary

*It's hard when you're living / and you don't feel much / and you're down and you're hoping /
that things are gonna change*

Apathy wasn't quite the word for it; it was something much deeper than apathy was. It was like a numbness, like a void had taken root in Ilya's heart and swallowed him whole. He wasn't even moving on autopilot— no, he was incredibly aware of his every movement, every decision, every thought. It was inertia, pure and simple, that kept Ilya moving. There was no outside force to stop his motion, not when his brain was this empty, so he simply kept gliding along, wondering when the feeling would come back. If the feeling would come back.

Notes

Hello hello!

This one is definitely going to be heavier than my usual fair. My depression has been kicking my ass pretty fiercely as of late culminating in a close call that inspired this fic. I should note that I'm physically okay and that no relapse has occurred but things were a bit rough and I have projected my thoughts and feelings onto Ilya. Sorry, Ilya, your canonical depression makes you the perfect person to project onto.

This fic is based on my own thoughts and experiences-- I am by no means an expert on depression, just on my own. If you are also going through something like this, know that you're not alone and that there are people who care about you and resources you can turn to. The [International Association for Suicide Prevention](#) has some great resources and information on crisis lines if you need them <3 As for this fic, love doesn't fix everything but knowing that people are there who love and care about you can help, even if it's just for a moment.

Title and summary lyrics from *We Don't Know* by The Strumbellas

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

Ilya scared himself sometimes. He didn't like to admit that, but it was true. He could go from being fine— more than fine, even great— to feeling like absolute garbage without any notable rhyme or reason. If he were being charitable with himself, Ilya would acknowledge that that was just the way it went with depression; there were good days and bad days and eventually, with time and treatment, the good days would outnumber the bad. But Ilya wasn't being charitable with himself. Sometimes, the dark thoughts were so dark and so loud that it made it impossible to see reason— but this wasn't one of those days. No, this was something almost worse than that. Dark days were manageable with Shane and their family and friends by his side; they could slowly be cured with time and attention and care. This wasn't a darkness looming over Ilya's head, though.

It was a nothingness.

Apathy wasn't quite the word for it; it was something much deeper than apathy was. It was like a numbness, like a void had taken root in Ilya's heart and swallowed him whole. He wasn't even moving on autopilot— no, he was incredibly aware of his every movement, every decision, every thought. It was inertia, pure and simple, that kept Ilya moving. There was no outside force to stop his motion, not when his brain was this empty, so he simply kept gliding along, wondering when the feeling would come back. *If* the feeling would come back.

The thing was, everything had been *fine* recently. No fights with Shane, the team was doing well, Anya was being her adorable self. Everything was *fine*, normal and boring and stable in a way that Ilya had craved since he was a child. He should be able to relax and enjoy this, but it felt like lead had taken place of his skin and he found it hard to get out of bed. If it weren't for Shane, for the team, for Anya, Ilya might've stayed in bed forever— but he didn't want to disappoint anyone, didn't want anyone to know how bad things were feeling when everything around him was *fine*, so he said nothing. He felt nothing. He *was* nothing.

"Ilya?" Shane's voice cut through the fog that had taken over his mind. "Are you alright, sweetheart?"

Even after all these years, Ilya still wanted to hide all of this from Shane. It didn't matter that Shane already *knew*— that Shane had been there through the good days and bad days for *years* now— Ilya still wanted to protect Shane from the mess that was Ilya's mind. Ilya knew Shane fought his own demons— and Ilya would do *anything* to help Shane in that fight— but there was still part of him that couldn't stomach Shane knowing about his. There was still part of him that wanted to pretend that Shane didn't know him better than Ilya knew himself sometimes.

Calloused hands ran through Ilya's hair, bringing him back down to earth and out of the fog. "There you are, Ilya," Shane's voice was soft, gentle, almost too much for Ilya to handle. "You were really out of it, sweetheart, is everything okay?"

"I'm fine," Ilya murmured, leaning into the gentle hand that was carding through his hair. "Just a little tired."

Which wasn't a lie, not really. Ilya *was* tired— a bone deep exhaustion that weighed him down even though he hadn't *done* anything. They had a day off before their next game— no travel, no practice, just a day to reset and recover ahead of a busy week of home games. Shane had been talking all week about how excited he was to just stay in and spend time with Ilya, but Ilya couldn't even do that right.

"You don't have to lie to me, you know," Shane said almost casually; if Ilya hadn't known him for almost two decades, he would've thought it *was* casual. But he could see the tension in Shane's posture, could see his fingers tapping on his thigh the way he always stilled when he was nervous. "I'm here for you, no matter what, remember?"

"I'm not sure this is something you can help with," Ilya answered honestly. "I think it might just... Be me."

The hand that had been running through Ilya's hair stilled. "What do you mean by that?"

"What do you do when day gets so bad all you want to do is cut yourself open and let yourself bleed?" Ilya asked; he felt so far away from Shane despite being right next to him— like his body was here but he was gone. "I have done before, you know. Cut myself open, let myself bleed. Felt the sting of the water and soap as I cleaned them, felt the itch of my skin as they healed— only to be opened again and again and again. I don't want to be that person anymore, Shane," Ilya's voice broke at that, tears starting to slide down his face. "But I'm afraid that I don't know any other way to be."

Never mind that it had been almost seven years since he had done anything like that— that he hadn't felt a *need* to in almost seven years, up until last night— this might be all Ilya was. All he would ever be. He wasn't a star hockey player or great team captain or Shane's husband or Yuna and David's second son— he was a scared teen slicing himself open to feel something when the world became too much. He was a collection of scars on his thighs that he had tried to cover up with a tattoo but the clean line of scars still came through if you knew where to look. He was *sad*— empty, directionless, nothing but the fog in his brain and lead in his skin.

Tears— hot, plentiful, and not his own— hit Ilya's skin, pulling him out of his head once again. "I'm sorry," Shane said, pulling Ilya properly into his arms now. "I'm so sorry, Ilya. I'm sorry that you're feeling like this. I'm sorry that I can't help. But I need you to know I'm here, okay? I might not have the answers or any solution for you, but I'll be here for you— *with* you— no matter what happens. You don't have to hide from me, *especially* not something like this."

"What if things don't get better?" Ilya asked with a broken voice, the fear that had been settling beneath his bones for the past week spilling out of him. "I think I get better and then here I am again— numb, lost, scaring you. Scaring *me*. What if it is always like this?"

Shane kissed him on the forehead. "Then we get you the help you need."

"And if there isn't enough help for me?" Ilya had been seeing Galina for years now, had been on antidepressants for nearly as long, but he was still *here*, breaking down in his husband's arms while the void in his chest grew and grew and grew. "How can anyone help if I cannot explain why I feel like this? If I have no *reason* to feel like this?" Anger was bubbling

beneath his skin now— all directed at himself. “Things were okay! Nothing bad happened, no accidental outings or almost plane crashes, and yet I’m still being childish and breaking down! I am ruining our day off because it feels like there is nothing to me anymore— what if it’s always like this, Shane? What if there is no helping?”

Ilya hated the frightened look on Shane’s face. He hated that he yelled at Shane— who was just trying to help. Hate, at least, was an emotion— something breaking through the numbness that had settled around his heart. He hated himself, especially in that moment, and tired to hold onto that— tried to hold on to the one emotion that had sparked other than despair; but even that faded away almost as quickly as it had come, leaving Ilya empty once again.

“I don’t know how to help,” Shane said softly, his hands coming to rest against Ilya’s chest. “I don’t know how to make this better— *if* I can make this better. But I meant what I said before, Ilya: I’m here for you. I’m always going to be here for you. If that means figuring out a way to weather this storm, I’ll do it. You aren’t alone anymore, I promise— I’m not going anywhere, even if this is what it’s always like. You don’t have to *not* be depressed to earn my love Ilya— you already have it. There isn’t a single world out there where you won’t have my love, alright?”

Something in Ilya settled at that— he didn’t feel *better*, but he felt more grounded. The numbness was still buried deep in his bones, but it felt less permanent than it had before he started talking to Shane. And the thought of cutting himself open seemed further than it had been before— still there, but not as pressing as it had been.

“You know I love you, yes?”

Shane kissed him on the forehead. “I know, Ilya. I love you too.”

That didn’t fix everything. But for that moment, it helped.

End Notes

Thank you for reading! Comments and kudos are always appreciated but never required. I'm going to try to write something lighter for next time, but in the mean time if you want to hear more from me you can check out my podcasts *Tales from the Fringes of Reality* and *Forged Bonds* wherever you get your podcasts! You can also find me on tumblr @probsnothawkeye

A final reminder that if you're feeling anything like this, you're not alone and there are people who care about you. If you're reading this: I care about you and I'm glad you're here <3

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