

## Lovers of the Sun

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| Characters:      | <a href="#">Ilya Rozanov</a> , <a href="#">Shane Hollander</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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# Lovers of the Sun

by [OpalApparition](#)

## Summary

*“Shane,” Ilya tried again, savouring the snap to attention it earned him, “Take off your clothes. I want to swim with you.”*

They’ve spent years hiding what they are to each other in hotel rooms with locked doors and stolen hours in the dark. But at Shane’s lake cottage, there’s no one watching and nowhere to hide. When Ilya dives in and calls Shane to follow, it’s the first time they’ve ever done this in daylight, and everything about it feels like stepping off a cliff.

## Notes

All credit and adoration for this oneshot's art belongs to my incredible friend [@Mimimaru](#)! ♥  
♥ ♥ Forever in awe of your work 🥺♥

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

Ilya dropped his shorts and dove.

Behind him, the dock's sun-warmed planks disappeared as cold lake water closed over his head, shocking the breath out of his chest and scattering thought in a clean, brutal rush; baptism and breaking open in one plunge. Tiny minnows scattered in silver flashes between the rocks below him, and lake water filled his ears and pressed tight against his skin before buoyancy hauled him back toward the surface. Breaking through with a sharp gasp, the laugh that burst from him rang across the lake, bright as a struck bell. Ilya blinked against the light, wiping water from his eyes, and above him the late summer sky stretched wide and cloudless, holding steady as if it had been painted there al fresco and left to dry.

Shane stood at the dock's edge, surrounded by Ilya's abandoned clothing, one hand still reaching. As if he'd meant to stop him.

As if he could.

"What?" Ilya called up, treading water. He swept his wet curls back from his forehead with one hand. "You have seen me naked many times, Hollander."

Shane's face flushed, roses rising the trellis of his throat to bloom in his cheekbones. "We're *outside*."

"*Da*." Ilya flipped onto his back, let himself float, a bit of floating duckweed sticking to his bicep before he brushed it away. The sun hit his chest, his stomach, his thighs, warming every inch of exposed skin. "And the water is perfect. Come in."

For a moment Shane did not move at all, and in that pause the world made itself heard, the steady lap of water against the dock's pilings, the distant cry of a loon carrying from somewhere across the lake, the faint rustle of leaves stirred by a breeze that barely reached the surface. Beneath it all, Ilya could hear the hush of Shane's breathing.

"No one can see," Ilya said. "Is private here, yes? All this time you have been telling me this, how no one will bother us. This is your cottage. *Your* lake. We can do what we want."

"Still, I'm not sure if..."

"Shane," Ilya tried again, savouring the snap to attention it earned him, "Take off your clothes. I want to swim with you."

Shane went still, his pupils widening. *He wants this*. Ilya could read it in Shane's body language, the way his breathing changed when Ilya gave him direction, and he knew the signs well, having learned each one over years of hotel rooms and stolen hours. It was the same response Shane gave when Ilya pushed him against walls, when Ilya's hands found his hips and held him exactly where Ilya wanted him.

Shane's throat worked around a swallow, still considering...

... and then his hands went to the hem without another word, fingers curling into the fabric. The surrender in the gesture sent heat through Ilya's chest—Shane choosing this, choosing to let Ilya lead, even out here in daylight where everything felt new and enormous. He pulled the shirt over his head in one motion, quickly, like ripping off a Band-aid, then folded it to set down on the dock beside his feet. Ilya watched the way Shane's shoulders loosened once he stood bare in the afternoon light, the tension leaving his jaw. In hotel rooms, Ilya had learned what Shane needed: a hand at the small of his back, guiding him into position. A quiet command that let Shane stop overthinking and carrying the weight of being captain, leader, perfect son, golden boy, *the* Shane Hollander.

Instead, like this, Shane could just be wanted.

*His.*

And Shane, despite his protests, loved to misbehave. The thrill of being 'bad' only serving to drag both of them deeper into each other's depths. Shane's thumbs hooked into the waistband of his shorts, and paused there, looking at Ilya—really looking, searching his face—and held his gaze as he pushed them down over his hips, fabric catching briefly before he stepped free of them and kicked them aside, bare and exposed at the end of the dock with nothing left to hide him.

*Krasivyy.* Beautiful.

... and in either language, the words fell short, so Ilya said nothing.

He had seen Shane's body countless times over the years, and memorized it in fragments and partial views in dark hotel rooms and cramped showers, pressed close in urgency or half-hidden beneath sheets and shadow. In complete darkness he would know the curve to his lips, the jut of his elbows, the soft skin of his thighs.

But daylight changed everything.

Now, instead of recognition, there was only awe.

Rays of gold from the overhead sun reached for Shane like a lover; eagerly, possessively, gilding every plane. Freckles scattered across his skin formed their own constellations, each mark a deliberate touch, as if some artist had studied him for hours and known exactly where each point belonged. They dusted his shoulders, traced the slope of his chest, gathered at the bridge of his nose.

Sunshine licked at his angles, allowing shadows to pool in the hollow of his throat.

Aurum ran down his ribs in bright rivers.

Painters could study him for centuries, waste their entire lives, trying to perfect the right warm ochre for his skin, what glacial white to use for the highlights along his collarbone and the curve of his shoulder, the subtle architecture of muscle built for speed rather than show.

They would fail, Ilya knew. He was failing right now just to think in any way that made *sense*.

Shadows pooled in the hollow of Shane's throat, and Ilya could map the chiaroscuro, light against dark. Shane Hollander was a vision if only now in this moment as the sun loved him openly, tracing every angle, because—for once—Shane allowed Ilya to love him in daylight.

Ilya wanted to put his mouth everywhere the light touched and paint him with his tongue.

Shane dove—a clean line barely disturbing the surface—and emerged a few strokes away. Water sheeted down his face, his hair slicked back dark and sleek. The afternoon sun caught every droplet on his skin and turned them to diamonds. Shane's eyes were wide and shocked.

"I—fuck, it's cold," he said, wiping his face. And then: "I can't believe we're doing this."

Ilya swam toward him, crossing the water between them in a few strokes. "Is nice, yes?"

"Yeah." Shane's voice roughened. "This is—yeah. This is nice."

They hovered a short distance apart, water lapping gently against their chests, Shane's lips parted and his gaze fixed on Ilya with a hunger that was usually so carefully contained it barely surfaced at all. In the past, there had always been restraint in Shane, a specific distance he maintained even in their most intimate moments, even when his body betrayed him, a part of himself kept carefully back, guarded behind a door Shane kept locked.

That door was open now. Ilya could see straight through to Shane's wanting.

Ilya closed the distance between them and pulled Shane against him, their legs tangling beneath the surface, as Shane's thigh slid between his and they sank together in an awkward, laughing tangle before kicking back up. When they resurfaced Shane laughed—a startled, joyful sound—and Ilya wanted to keep that sound forever.

Wear it like his mother's cross.

So he caught it with his mouth instead, swallowing the joy whole.

When they broke apart, Shane was breathing hard, his eyes blown wide. "We shouldn't—" he started.

"Why not?" Ilya asked, gesturing broadly with his arm to the empty treeline, "Who is watching?"

"No one, but—"

Ilya kissed him again, swallowing whatever protest Shane was going to make. This time Shane made a sound against his mouth, something between a gasp and a surrender, and his fingers tightened in Ilya's hair like he was afraid of drowning.

"Race you to the rocks," Ilya murmured against Shane's lips.

Competitive to a fault, Shane kissed him instead of answering, then pushed away and started swimming. His strokes were efficient and strong, body cutting through the water with focused intensity. Ilya followed at his own pace, watching the play of muscle across Shane's shoulders, the way light broke over his back and glittered in his wake like long brushstrokes.

At the rocks, Shane hauled himself up first, water sluicing off his body in rivers. He sat with one knee drawn up, the other leg extended, dangling into the water...

Ilya pitied everyone who would never see this. Who would never know what it meant to witness beauty and call it yours.

"You let me win." Shane tilted his head, smug in a way that would irritate Ilya on anyone else. Water dripped from his hair onto his shoulders. "I saw you slow down."

"You are imagining things." Ilya shrugged, more interested in looking at Shane than arguing.

Shane sat haloed in late-afternoon gold, drops running down his spine to gather in the small of his back, in the twin dimples Ilya obsessed over and had traced with his tongue a hundred times in darkness. More freckles scattered across his chest, his arms. Ilya had tried to count them once, in a hotel room in New York, once, and lost track somewhere around Shane's collarbone.

He'd wanted this for years. Shane in daylight. Shane's body warm from sun instead of hidden under hotel sheets. Shane looking back at him without checking the door first, without fear etched into the set of his shoulders. This was what it meant to be in love, *lovers*, and not just men who loved in secret.

Stripped bare and cleaned, perhaps now, *please* now, they could exist together in bright water and brighter light.

Ilya pulled himself up beside Shane. Sat close enough that their shoulders nearly touched, close enough to feel the sun-warmth radiating from Shane's skin. He wanted to touch, to taste, to start counting freckles again and actually finish this time.

"What?" Shane caught him staring.

"You look like painting," Ilya said. His accent thickened when the words mattered, when he forgot to be careful with his consonants. "Like someone made you for museum. All this light on you, the freckles, the way the sun..." He gestured at all of Shane, helpless, lingering on the impossible perfection of his collarbones. "Is very nice. I am enjoying the view."

They sat in the golden hour light, legs dangling in cool water. Shane's skin had already begun to dry in patches—the sun loving him, claiming him. Ilya watched a bead of water travel down Shane's spine and thought of the care painters took with water, the way they built it drop by drop, glaze over glaze, until it looked wet enough to touch.

"You're *staring*."

"Da. I am artist now. You are my subject."

Shane's mouth twitched. "I thought you played hockey. What do *you* know about art?"

"Hockey is also art." Ilya shifted closer, shoulders knocking fully. "But you, Hollander, you are masterpiece."

"I—ah." Shane's ears went pink. "You're ridiculous. Don't say strange things like that."

"Is true, though. You are—" The Russian came first: "*Krasivyy*. I think this every time."

Brows scrunching, Shane tilted his head to the side. "And... what does that word mean?"

"Beautiful."

Shane's flush deepened, spreading down his neck. He looked at Ilya for a long moment—something tender and uncertain flickering across his face—then he broke the tension the only way he knew how.

He splashed Ilya directly in the face.

Water hit Ilya's eyes, his mouth, ran down his chin in cool streams. He blinked, sputtering—and then lunged.

Shane yelped and tried to dodge, but Ilya was faster. He got an arm around Shane's waist, dragged him under for half a second before Shane twisted free, gasping and laughing.

"You—" Shane tried to say, but Ilya sent another wave of water at him, and whatever he'd meant to say dissolved into breathless laughter.

They traded splashes like blows, graceless, uncoordinated, nothing like how they were on the ice. Water flew everywhere. Ilya's hair dripped into his eyes. Shane dove under and grabbed Ilya's ankle, nearly pulled him down. Ilya kicked free and caught Shane around the waist when he surfaced, both of them breathless and grinning.

"Truce?" Shane gasped.

"*Nyet*. No truce. You started this."

"That's rich, because *you*—"

Ilya kissed him to shut him up.

Shane's mouth was cool and tasted like the lake; his fingers slid into Ilya's wet curls, tilted his head to change the angle, and Ilya gripped Shane's waist and pulled him closer. The sun beat down on their shoulders. Water lapped at their thighs. The world felt very far away—the league, the secrets, the years of hiding—all of it distant and irrelevant against the immediate reality of Shane's mouth and the warm weight of his body and the glorious, impossible fact that they were *here*, together, in daylight.

When they pulled apart to breathe, Shane was smiling; that small, private smile he saved for when they were alone, and then glanced back to the pebbled shoreline with its green tufts of

plants and the dock with their abandoned clothing. “We should probably swim back.”

“Why? Is nice here.”

“Because if we stay much longer, I’m going to want to—” Shane’s eyes dropped to Ilya’s mouth, then lower. “And we’re kind of exposed out here.”

“No one can see.”

“So?”

“... I... this is already pushing it for me.” Shane’s ears had gone red again. “If you want more than this, then you’ll have to get it *inside*.”

Ilya laughed and kissed him again, brief and hard. “Okay. We go back. Then we do other things.”

They slipped back into the water and swam toward the cottage, slower this time. The sun had dropped lower, gilding the lake’s surface. The water felt cooler now against Ilya’s skin. He matched Shane’s pace, watching him cut through the water—each stroke economical, nothing wasted.

At the dock, Shane climbed the ladder first. Ilya stayed in the water a moment longer, watching—water streaming off Shane’s body, the late sun gliding where it touched him, the whole impossible sight of him standing there backlit and beautiful.

*Ya lyublyu tebya*, Ilya thought. *I love you. I love you.*

Ilya admired the curve of Shane’s ass from this angle.

“You are aware,” he called up, “that this view alone should be illegal.”

Shane snorted and shook his head, extending a hand. Ilya took it and let himself be hauled up onto the sun-warmed wood where the rough planks burned the soles of his feet, and they stood there dripping, bodies close, taking each other in without hurry. Ilya was slow with this explorations, enjoying the mineral-tang smell clinging to Shane, the few flecks of lake algae stuck to his ribs. Water droplets clung to Shane’s eyelashes, and beneath them that dark-eyed gaze moved over Ilya just as slowly: shoulder to collarbone, lingering at his mouth before lifting back to his eyes.

“See something you like?” Ilya asked, eyebrows waggling.

“Obviously.”

Ilya closed the small distance between them and cupped Shane’s jaw. Shane’s breath caught, lips parting, and Ilya kissed him. Lake water and warmth, Shane’s mouth cool from the swim but heating quickly under Ilya’s. When Shane’s fingers slid into his wet hair, water ran down the back of Ilya’s neck in thin streams. Shane’s thumb found the hollow of Ilya’s throat and pressed it there. Ilya’s palm slid down to the small of Shane’s back, to those twin dimples he could finally see in daylight instead of just tracing in the dark.

The lake behind them caught the lowering sun, its surface turning honeyed and sweet.

“Come on,” Shane said against Ilya’s lips, and tugged him toward the cottage. “Before *really* start misbehaving out here. Inside.”

“You say this like we are not already misbehaving...”

Shane swatted his shoulder, laughing, and Ilya caught his wrist and pulled him close again, both of them grinning like idiots as they stumbled toward the cottage steps, still dripping, still touching, unable to let go even for the short walk to the door. Grass slid wet and cool past their ankles. Shane’s fingers were wrinkled from the water and cold when they found Ilya’s hand.

If someone had painted them then, two figures at the water’s edge, nude and unashamed, the sun lowering behind them and the whole sky turning soft, it would have looked like joy.

It would have looked like love.





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A little one. I hurt my hand the other day and it sucks to type right now, but I powered through finishing this oneshot because I yearn for more soft moments of these two. This oneshot was inspired by the painting ["Lovers of the Sun" by Henry Scott Tuke](#).

2/16/2026 UPDATE: This fic has been updated, and now is ILLUSTRATED!

Not sure what to say? Comment anxiety? How about...

- ❤️ "I liked/loved it!"
- 🌌 "this wasn't my favorite"
- ☀️ "In love under the sun!!"
- 🏒 "dumb hockey boys make me happy"
- 🗡️ "this usually isnt my thing... and yet"
- 💀 "how dare you (affectionate)"

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