

Safe in Your Heart

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Safe in Your Heart

by [Maximoff_Wanda](#)

Summary

Through the haze of his fear, Ilya tried desperately to remember the last time he had kissed Shane. The last time he had said I love you to him. He let himself live in the memory as a tear slid down his face.

Ilya didn't even have a photo of Shane that he could look at because they always delete them. For a brief moment, he thought about googling Shane just to look at him one last time.

Then, just as quickly as their descent had started, the plane leveled out. Distantly, Ilya heard an announcement echoing throughout the cabin. He could barely translate it through the panic, catching words like "engine," "emergency landing," and "brace for a rough impact."

Or: What if the plane incident in The Long Game was more serious and Ilya got hurt?

Notes

I read all six books in the Game Changers series and watched all of Heated Rivalry in three days and unfortunately have not thought about anything else besides Ilya and Shane since.

Immediately started thinking about what could happen if the plane incident in the Long Game was worse and Ilya got hurt.

Fourteen pages in my google docs later and here is baby's first Hollanov fic! Hope you enjoy!

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

We're going to crash. I'm going to die. I'll never see Shane again.

We were going to have dogs and kids.

All Ilya could think about as the plane fell from the sky was Shane. About his boyfriend waiting for his game to start, not knowing Ilya was about to fall to his death. About a tired, sweaty, *gorgeous* Shane skating off the ice just to learn of Ilya's death.

How would he mourn? Would he be okay? He hoped Shane would not... what is the word... *isolate* himself, would allow himself to lean on friends, on Yuna and David.

Fuck, Ilya was going to miss Yuna and David too. They had become like family to him... his only family left.

At least he would get to see his mother again.

Ilya wished he had told Shane about his depression.

Through the haze of his fear, Ilya tried desperately to remember the last time he had kissed Shane. The last time he had said I love you to him. He let himself live in the memory as a tear slid down his face.

Ilya didn't even have a photo of Shane that he could look at because they always delete them. For a brief moment, he thought about googling Shane just to look at him one last time.

Then, just as quickly as their descent had started, the plane leveled out. Distantly, Ilya heard an announcement echoing throughout the cabin. He could barely translate it through the panic, catching words like "engine," "emergency landing," and "brace for a rough impact."

His hands gripped the sides of his seat as he tried to focus on his breathing, tried to remember the techniques he had used to help calm Shane down from his own panic attacks. It was much harder to be on this side of it, especially because he did not have Shane next to him to help him through it.

Then again. He would never want Shane to be here with him through this. If he was going to die, he would rather Shane be miles and miles away and safe rather than in danger at Ilya's side.

Ilya looked at Troy and Harris again, who were staring intently at each other and clasping their hands tightly together. Ilya's heart broke for them for a moment, thinking about all the time lost, all the time stolen. The time they would never get together after this.

Fuck, Ilya was never going to see Shane again.

A few rows back, Ilya heard Nick Chouinard yelling about a fire. *Shit*. Ilya couldn't force himself to look, couldn't make himself turn around to face what would certainly be his death.

Fuck... this was really happening.

They were going to die. He was going to die.

He would never get to kiss Shane again, never get to tell him how much he loved him. They would never get married, get a dog, have kids, start a family, grow old together.

Ilya would never get to tell him everything he was really feeling, what he was really hiding in his heart.

He wished Shane wasn't playing a game right now. Even though Ilya couldn't call him, he wished he could talk to him somehow. He wished he could text... but he did have Wi-Fi... he got an idea.

He pulled out his phone and opened up Instagram, navigating to Shane's page and clicking the message button.

Shane, he typed before pausing and letting out a deep breath as he thought about what to write. How could he possibly portray all of his feelings for Shane in one single message, possibly the *last* message he would ever send him. How could he be expected to say goodbye to the love of his life.

His eyes filled with tears and he shook his head, reminding himself that the plane was on fire and he did not have time to waste. He could only write from the heart.

You are the best thing in my life. I love you. Always. Maybe from the first time I saw you.

Ilya paused as he thought back to that first time in that Saskatchewan rink parking lot. He wished he could remember exactly what Shane had said to him that cold day. He could only remember the beautiful freckles covering Shane's rosy cheeks and how warm Shane's hand was when he shook it, when they touched for the first time.

He remembered looking into dark, earnest, *beautiful* eyes and thinking he could stare at them forever.

Ilya's heart had never stood a chance against Canada's golden boy.

He hated thinking about Shane seeing these messages after Ilya's... after. But he knew he would rather send this message than send nothing at all. He knew Shane would keep them, would save them forever. He had to say something really good.

I am thinking only about you right now. A million memories. Thank you for those.

Whatever happens, I am with you. Safe in your heart. I believe it.

He sent the message and tried hard to not think about dying. He only had vague ideas of the afterlife, but he knew his soul would stay here, would stay with Shane. He felt his mother with him all the time. He knew Shane would feel him just the same.

Ilya grasped at the pendant around his neck, gripping it tightly. He might see his mother again soon. He hoped she had been watching him, hoped she was proud of him.

Well, he guessed he would find out soon.

He closed his eyes and sent out prayers, messages, requests, whatever they were to whoever was listening that Shane would be safe, would get to live a long, happy life, even if it was without Ilya.

He squeezed his necklace harder as he sent out another request to the universe to let him live. For the plane to not crash, to let Ilya walk away from this so he could stay with Shane, so he could *love* Shane. No more hiding. Only love.

He let out a deep breath before the plane jerked even harder than it had before and Ilya's heart rose in his chest as the plane descended faster and faster. He heard screaming all around him as the team, his team, his *family*, fell toward what Ilya could only assume would be their doom.

The plane hit the ground hard and Ilya went flying out of the seat, the belt holding him down snapping roughly.

He barely had time to think about how devastated Shane would be before he felt a sharp pain on his head and everything went black.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Shane sank down onto the bench in front of his locker after his shower, letting out a sigh. Montreal had lost pretty terribly to Washington and Shane was not looking forward to Ilya gloating about his own win against Carolina earlier that day.

Speaking of Ilya, he should have landed in Tampa about an hour earlier. Shane wondered if his boyfriend had watched Shane's frankly terrible performance on the ice that night.

He couldn't put a finger on what exactly it was, but something had been off all night and he hadn't been able to fully concentrate during the game. Maybe it was because of how it went the last time he was with Ilya. Their argument over a party of all things.

He needed to shake himself out of it before their next game.

Shane furrowed his brow as he noticed an Instagram notification: a direct message from Ilya. That was weird. They typically kept their interactions to texts. Shane couldn't even remember the last time that Ilya had sent him a message on any social media app. He clicked on it, angling his phone toward himself so no one else could look over his shoulder and see it.

There was one single message on the screen, broken into three lines. Shane's brain flooded with confusion as he read over the beautiful words Ilya had sent.

Shane, You are the best thing in my life. I love you. Always. Maybe from the first time I saw you.

I am thinking only about you right now. A million memories. Thank you for those.

Whatever happens, I am with you. Safe in your heart. I believe it.

No one had ever said such lovely words to him before. Sure, Ilya had said wonderful things to him before, but nothing like this... this was.... This was *poetry*.

It was intense. Romantic, definitely. But intense. And kind of weird.

“Holy shit!” J.J. exclaimed from across the locker room. “The Centaurs’ plane crashed.”

Ice flooded Shane’s veins. “What?”

“Yeah it looks like one of their engines went out when they were just about to Tampa... they had to make a really rough emergency landing, but it was more like a controlled crash into the runway.”

Shane’s heart was no longer in his chest. It had dropped all the way through his body and was racing toward the Tampa runway. Shane needed to follow it.

“Is everyone okay?” Hayden asked J.J., his hand reaching out and patting on Shane’s back in an attempt to keep him calm. It wasn’t working.

J.J. thumbed at his phone screen, clearly scrolling through an article of some kind. “It says a few people were taken to a local hospital... unknown injuries. The news says there was no word on any fatalities yet.”

Other players jumped into the discussion, but Shane wasn’t listening anymore. All he could focus on was that message from Ilya... and the fact that there was no message saying he was safe.

He read the message again. *Holy shit*. These were meant to be Ilya’s last words. His plane was going down and he used his time to send his *last fucking words* to Shane, to make sure he knew how much Ilya loved him.

Dread clawed its way into Shane’s heart as he realized that Ilya could be dying.

Ilya could be *dead* and Shane was playing a fucking hockey game.

He navigated his phone to the recent calls, seeing Ilya’s name at the top of the list and jabbing his finger on the call button so hard he thought his phone might break. He didn’t even care that he was in the locker room, surrounded by his teammates who didn’t know about him and Ilya.

He just needed to hear Ilya’s voice *now*.

But the call went straight to voicemail.

“Hi. This is Ilya. I will never listen to your voicemail.” Shane had once found that voicemail funny, found it to be very *Ilya* but he hated it now. Hated that it could be true.

He hung up and dialed again, hoping desperately for a different outcome.

“Hi. This is Ilya. I will-” Shane hung up again, closing his eyes and clasp his hands around his phone as he bent his head down and tried desperately not to cry.

“Oh, fuck,” J.J. said. “Rozanov was hurt.”

Shane felt Hayden’s hand on his back once again as he heard his worst nightmare coming to life in the room around him.

“Yeah, I’m seeing that he’s in critical condition. I guess he was unconscious when they took him to the hospital,” Drapeau said.

Shane collapsed, falling to the ground in front of the bench, tears finally streaming down his face.

“Woah, what the fuck?” Shane distantly heard J.J. exclaim.

Hayden slid to the ground next to him, rubbing his back, leaning in to whisper in Shane’s ear. “Hey, hey, Shane, buddy, it’s okay. He’s gonna be okay.”

Later, Shane would look back at this and appreciate how much Hayden was helping him, even though Shane knew he still didn’t really like Ilya.

“Hayd...” Shane breathed out, gasping for air. “I need to get to him. Please get me to him. Get me to Ilya.”

“Um, what the fuck, Hollz?” Drapeau’s voice dripped with disgust, but Shane ignored him, instead turning to meet his best friend’s eyes.

“Hayden... please.”

“Okay, buddy. Let’s go,” Hayden stood up, pulling Shane with him. Shane started grabbing his stuff, shoving it haphazardly into his bag, a task he was normally extremely careful about, but all he cared about right now was getting to Florida.

“Did you just call Rozanov *Ilya*? Hollander, what the fuck?” J.J.’s eyes met Shane’s across the locker room.

“I’m sorry,” Shane said looking at his team across the locker room, seeing looks of surprise, shock, anger, and disgust. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you guys... I just... I love him.” He felt a tear slide down his face and he roughly brushed it away. “He’s everything... I’m sorry.”

Hayden bumped his shoulder. “Shane, buddy, we gotta go. I looked it up. There’s a flight from here to Tampa leaving in an hour, as long as it doesn’t get canceled.”

Shane tensed up at the thought of getting on a plane so soon after what happened to Ilya, but he knew it was the only practical way to get him to his boyfriend quickly. Driving would just take too long.

He looked at his teammates and apologized one last time and then they were gone. One minute, Shane was in the locker room, the next he was in Hayden's car on their way to the airport, tickets for the next flight to Tampa already bought on his phone.

He couldn't stop reading the message Ilya sent. A million memories was not enough. Shane needed more. He needed so much more.

His phone rang as he was reading it over again (*You are the best thing in my life.*) and his mom's face took over his screen. He rushed to answer.

"Mom..."

"Shane, honey, we just heard. Are you okay? Where are you?"

"I'm on my way to the airport. Hayden's driving," He paused for a second. "I got both of us tickets to Tampa. I have to be there, mom, I have to."

"I know honey," his mom's voice soothed him over the line. "I understand. We should try and get ahead of this though. You showing up to visit Ilya in Tampa hours after the crash when you just played a game in Washington is going to be suspicious. Even if you are publicly friends."

Shane was already shaking his head. "I don't care, mom. I don't care anymore. I just want to be with him."

Yuna let out a breath on the other end of the line, but Shane interrupted before she could speak.

"I told the team. About me and Ilya. Or... I guess they figured it out because of my reaction. But I don't want to hide anymore. For a second there... I thought he was dead, mom. I thought I lost him forever. I can't do it anymore."

Ilya's message flashed in his mind again. *I am thinking only about you right now.*

"Okay. Okay, Shane. I... Your dad and I will start drafting a statement for after someone inevitably takes a photo of you at the hospital. A statement confirming that the two of you are-

"Together," Shane swallowed roughly. "Boyfriends. In love. Probably engaged by the end of the week if I have any say about it, but you... you probably don't need to include that in the statement. Might ruin the surprise."

Yuna laughed wetly on the other end. "Okay, Shane. We can write something up. You just get yourself to Florida and check on our boy. I love you."

"I love you too, Mom."

Shane hung up and went back to staring at the message from Ilya before navigating to Ilya's Instagram page and pulling up his favorite photo of the other man. He was in Ottawa's arena,

wearing a Centaur's sweater and holding the smallest little puppy Shane had ever seen. Chiron. Ilya loved that dog.

And Shane loved Ilya.

Fuck, Shane was going to have to get Ilya a dog once this whole nightmare was behind them.

"So... engaged, huh?" Hayden asked and Shane buried his head in his hands.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

If Shane could barely remember the drive to the airport, then the flight to Tampa was even more distant. He must have blacked out the entire trip while panicking because the next thing he knew, Hayden was pulling the rental car into the hospital parking lot.

Shane rushed to unbuckle his seat belt and practically fell out of the car in an attempt to get to Ilya quicker.

He burst through the hospital doors and a room full of heads, including what looked like most of Ilya's team, turned toward him, but he only had eyes for the person at the desk. He walked up confidently, his heart pounding knowing that he was finally in the same building as Ilya.

"Hi, I'm here to see Ilya Rozanov," Shane said calmly to the woman behind the desk.

She looked up at him, then glanced behind him, clearly looking at the room of *other* people in the room to see Ilya.

"Please, I..." Shane let out a breath, knowing everyone in the room was probably trying to subtly eavesdrop on him. He was sure someone was probably taking a photo or a video of him too, but that was a problem for later. "My name is Shane Hollander. I should be his emergency contact."

She typed something into her computer, clearly seeing that Shane was telling the truth because she handed him a visitor's sticker and told him Ilya's room number: 1221.

Shane nearly sobbed at the familiar number.

He hastily wrote his name on the sticker and stuck it on his chest before turning toward the elevators. He made direct eye contact with Troy Barrett and Harris, the Centaurs' social media manager and saw a knowing look in their eyes.

Shane's eyes darted down to where Troy and Harris were holding hands and he smiled softly. Ilya had told him about how close the two had gotten, about how he thought there was something there between them.

Ilya was going to be so smug about being right.

"Hey, Hollander," Troy said softly. "Let him know we're all thinking of him."

He nodded at the other player, tears filling his eyes as he thought about this great team that Ilya had formed around him. “Thanks, Barrett. That uh, that means a lot. I’ll um, I’ll send you guys updates when I can.”

Hayden walked up and joined Harris and Troy where they were standing, passing Shane his phone that he had apparently left in the car during his rush to get in. He made his way to the elevator, leaving behind a mix of his friends and Ilya’s, hoping the next time they were all together it would be a better occasion.

Who knows, maybe a wedding.

Shane hurried down the hall and found the door marked with 1221 and found himself stopping in the doorway as he finally laid his eyes on his boyfriend.

He let out a breath and stepped into the room slowly. He walked up to the side of Ilya’s bed where Ilya lay with his eyes closed.

Shane could almost pretend that Ilya was just asleep, but he knew better.

This wasn’t fair. Ilya shouldn’t be silent. He should be full of life and sunshine and happiness and *love*.

Grabbing Ilya’s hand felt like a weight was lifted off of his chest, but Shane knew he wouldn’t fully be able to breathe until his boyfriend was awake.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Fuck, his head hurt. Was Ilya hungover? Did he get hit on the ice? The last thing he could remember was getting on... the plane.

Holy shit.

He cracked his eyes open and instantly his vision was flooded with the bright lights and colors of a hospital room. Holy shit. He survived. He survived a fucking plane crash.

Ilya looked around the room in disbelief, his heart stopping when he spotting Shane asleep in the chair next to his bed, his head resting on Ilya’s stomach and Ilya’s hand cradled in his.

He was horrified to feel tears flooding his eyes as he looked at Shane, at the man he loved more than anyone else in the world. Shane, who must have been so scared when he heard the news about the plane crash. Shane, who the last Ilya knew was all the way across the country and must have come running just so he could be with Ilya.

He squeezed Shane’s hand lightly and jostled a little in an attempt to get his boyfriend to wake up. “Shane,” he said softly, lifting his other arm and running his fingers through Shane’s hair. “Shane. Moya Lyubov. Wake up, sweetheart.”

He felt Shane shift in his lap, his breath changing the way in a way that Ilya recognized as Shane waking up. Shane groaned and Ilya tightened his fingers in Shane’s hair for just a moment before gently running them through the strands again.

“I’ya...” Shane said softly before lifting his head.

Ilya had never felt a joy like watching Shane’s eyes light up when he noticed Ilya was awake. “Baby!” Shane gripped Ilya’s hand even harder. “You’re awake.”

Ilya shifted his hand from Shane’s head and caressed the side of Shane’s face longingly. “Hello Moya Lyubov. How long I have been sleeping? You were in Washington, no?”

Shane nodded. “You’ve been out for about a day. The doctors say it was a pretty bad hit to the head...” Shane turned his head and pressed a kiss to Ilya’s palm. “Thank God you’re awake now.”

Ilya grabbed Shane’s face and pulled him towards him, forcing his boyfriend to stand from where he was sitting until he was leaning over Ilya. Ilya searched Shane’s eyes for any signs of distress or hurt before his eyes flicked down to Shane’s lips.

Shane seemed to understand, leaning down to press a soft kiss against Ilya’s lips. Shane leaned back but Ilya followed, once again tangling his fingers in Shane’s hair to pull him back against him, kissing him again, once, twice, three times.

The last kiss lingered and Ilya licked into Shane’s mouth to turn the sweet kiss into something slightly filthier. He never wanted to leave this moment.

He could not believe he almost lost this forever.

Their kiss was interrupted by a pointed cough from the doorway to the room. Ilya and Shane pulled apart to see Yuna and David entering the room with soft smiles on their faces when they realized Ilya was awake.

“Ilya! It’s so good to see you up!” David exclaimed.

“We were all so worried about you,” Yuna added, placing a comforting hand on Ilya’s leg on top of the hospital blanket.

Shane leaned back to settle in his chair, pulling it just slightly closer to Ilya’s bed, still grasping Ilya’s hand tightly in his own.

“How are you feeling, son?” David asked him.

Ilya nodded. “Okay. My head still hurts but I am here. I am alive.” His eyes slid to Shane like they were magnetized. “Shane is here. Could not be better.”

Shane smiled at him softly and lifted their conjoined hands to press a soft kiss to the back of Ilya’s hand.

Yuna nodded. “I hate to jump right in to business, but did Shane already tell you about what happened?”

Ilya frowned. “The plane crash?”

Yuna and Shane shook their heads at the same time and Ilya turned his attention to Shane. “What has happened?”

Shane squeezed Ilya’s hand again. “We uh... someone took a video of me showing up at the hospital. You can pretty clearly hear me ask for your room number and say that I’m your emergency contact.”

“It’s a pretty damning video,” Yuna added. “Shane looked...”

“Devastated.” Shane jumped in. “I looked devastated. Because I was. I also had to tell my team before Hayden and I came here... couldn’t really hide how much I cared about you. Didn’t want to.”

Ah. Ilya understood.

They had been outed. That was... tough, but was definitely not the worst thing that could have happened. Ilya was just happy to be alive. He was only worried about Shane and how he felt about it all.

It must have been written on his face because Shane was already shaking his head.

“No, I don’t even care about keeping it a secret anymore... Ilya... I thought you were dead.” Shane leaned up and kissed Ilya again. “I would rather everyone knew than to have to lose you.”

“To be fair... we haven’t technically confirmed anything yet,” Yuna said. “Not to the public. The Metros know and the Centaurs who were here when Shane got here probably know, but no official statement has been issued.

“Why don’t we just tell them now?” Ilya whipped his head back to stare at Shane when he said that.

“What?”

“Why not just... confirm it? Confirm everything.” Shane shrugged. “I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Nothing else matters.”

Ilya swallowed roughly, searching Shane’s face for any sign of panic or resignation. But no. There was nothing. Just hope and happiness and peace and *love*.

“Okay.”

“Okay?”

Ilya nodded. “Okay.”

Later, one Ilya was able to look at screens and his head was feeling a little better, two matching posts would show up on Shane and Ilya’s instagram, confirming that they had been in a long-term, committed relationship. That they were in love. That they were happy.

The photo showed Ilya still in his hospital bed with Shane laying on his side in the bed next to him. Their hands were clasped together tightly across their chests. Ilya's other hand was resting on the back of Shane's head while Shane pressed a kiss to the side of Ilya's face, both of them unable to hold back their smiles.

It was Ilya's new favorite photo.

And he was never going to delete it.

End Notes

I just love them so much.

Kudos and comments are always appreciated.

Let me know if you want to see more Hollanov from me, I had a lot of fun writing them!

[Scream with me on Twitter!](#)

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