

Within Your Reach

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/80128216) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/80128216>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Cliff Marlow Cliff Marleau , Boston Bears Boston Raiders Team Ensemble (Game Changers) , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Canon Divergence , Panic Attacks , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Drunken Shenanigans , Shane Hollander is secretly/not so secretly funny , Shane Hollander is a Mess , Drunk Shane Hollander , Drunk Ilya Rozanov , a weird mix of angst and humour , sort of conversation about feelings but not quite , but they're getting there , Shane Hollander Needs a Hug , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane drunkenly gorging himself on junk food , maybe a bit mean to momager Yuna? , but she is definitely adding to Shane's issues (the show version at least) , happy/hopeful ending , light angst with a happy/hopeful ending , Humour , Banter , 2014 MLH Awards in Las Vegas (Game Changers) , mentions of past racist comment , Mention Of Homophobia , Anxiety Disorder , no beta we die like hayden pike's vas deferens (hopefully because poor jackie that is a lot of kids)
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Vegas Canon Divergence AU
Stats:	Published: 2026-02-23 Words: 6,829 Chapters: 1/1

Within Your Reach

by [Water_Nix](#)

Summary

Shane's hearing is muffled, sound bubbling in and out like he's swimming through the lake, dipping under the surface and back into the air. He can make out a word here and there, enough to know that Rozanov is trying to get him to breathe with him. He can feel the expansion of Rozanov's lungs against his hands as he takes deep breaths in and lets them out. Shane tries to copy him, he does, but every inhale carries the scent of him, his cologne, his skin, his hair products. The scents are so familiar to him, and he wants more than anything for them to calm him, make him feel safe, but they are doing the opposite. Why are they still so familiar to him after not being anywhere near Rozanov for half a year? Why does he still want to shove his face against Rozanov's throat and suck in every last last hint he can get?

-

Ilya takes longer to arrive in the bathroom after they present the award together, leaving Shane time to sink into a full-blown panic attack. This leads to a very different night in Vegas and an earlier beginning to Shane and Ilya's relationship.

Notes

Well this is my first foray into this universe. I tried not to but hyper fixations, am I right? Anyway, I hope someone enjoys! Please let me know. There will probably be a sequel if I can get my shit together.

I am a Canadian who cannot speak Russian, so the tiny bits of Russian might be wrong. If so, I apologize! Feel free to yell at me about it. :)

Thanks to Jeanne for reading this first and listening to me talk it out!

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

Shane can feel the beginnings of it crawling up his throat as he rushes away from the stage. He didn't look at Rozanov, didn't try to speak with him, just bolted like a coward. He gulps a lung full of stale air as he reaches the safe haven of the nearest washroom and pushes through the door.

Once inside and hidden from prying eyes, he paces the length of the small room between the sink and the stall doors. Back and forth and back again. He tries, he really does, to breathe evenly. He hasn't had a bad attack in months but he knows realistically that it's already too late to stop this one. It was too late the second Rozanov sauntered up behind him backstage with seconds left before they were meant to go on. If he's being entirely honest with himself, which he generally tries to avoid at all costs lately, it began the moment he was asked to present the award with Rozanov at all. Sportsmanship. The two of them. Like it was the biggest joke. The league, the players, the fans... they had no idea how big of a joke it truly was.

Shane's hands shake as he runs them through his hair, over the clammy skin at the back of his neck. His heartrate has picked up to a dangerous speed. He chokes on a breath, and then another. It's as though someone is squeezing his heart, punching him in the lungs. He doubles over, hands on his knees, tries to avoid the filthy floor.

He doesn't try hard enough, sliding down next to the bank of sinks without thinking it through. He rocks back and forth, the corner of the concrete wall coming up against his spine softly as first, and then more firmly as his rocking becomes more insistent. He tries to breathe in through his nose, then tries his mouth. There is not enough air getting in. There is not enough of anything.

He thinks the door opens, wants to hide. Soon there are hands on his face, and wide, frightened eyes glued to him. "Hollander?" *Rozanov*. He can't gather the fortitude to pull away from him. He doesn't really want to.

A breath shudders out of his mouth. He sucks in a new one. Rozanov is kneeling next to him, his designer tuxedo pants are touching the floor. They shouldn't be. This is bad.

"Why are you panicking?" Rozanov sounds like he's the one panicking. If Shane could manage to catch his fucking breath for one goddamn second he would probably laugh.

But Shane doesn't want Rozanov to think—to *know*—it's because of him—because he almost missed their cue, because he was so cold and vacant, because he wouldn't look Shane in the eye, because he'd fucked him so perfectly—had fucking *made love* to him—after begging for it for literal years and then stopped answering, stopped reaching out, like Shane was just a *thing* he'd had and discarded—whether it was due to the embarrassment of the strength of Shane's feelings or simply not wanting to increase the raw pain he could see in Rozanov's eyes, he didn't want him to know. "Have... fucking... anxiety... disorder..." he croaks out between gasps.

"Okay," Rozanov says quietly, lowering himself the rest of the way to the floor. He slides his long legs on either side of Shane's body, bracketing him.

Shane's hearing is muffled, sound bubbling in and out like he's swimming through the lake, dipping under the surface and back into the air. He can make out a word here and there, enough to know that Rozanov is trying to get him to breathe with him. He can feel the expansion of Rozanov's lungs against his hands as he takes deep breaths in and lets them out. Shane tries to copy him, he does, but every inhale carries the scent of him, his cologne, his skin, his hair products. The scents are so familiar to him, and he wants more than anything for them to calm him, make him feel safe, but they are doing the opposite. Why are they still so familiar to him after not being anywhere near Rozanov for half a year? Why does he still want to shove his face against Rozanov's throat and suck in every last last hint he can get? To smell and taste, to fucking *devour*?

He can hear his own breaths stuttering even more, the gasping, choking as his body tries to carry out the most instinctive act it's capable of, the one thing it's known how to do since he was cut from his mother and pulled harshly into the world.

"Shane, Shane!" Rozanov sounds even more panicked. Shane's vision is fuzzy, he can no longer make out Rozanov's eyes, just the rudimentary shape of him. He's glad in a way, not being able to see his reactions makes it easier not to care. "Breathe, please. Please breathe."

Shane has the inclination to laugh again. Instead he gasps out, "What do you care?" Or at least he tries.

Rozanov sounds frustrated in return, growling that Shane needs to fucking breathe, maybe something else in Russian.

Shane makes a noise that is sort of like a laugh. He manages to snatch a breath, and then two. He uses them to taunt Rozanov some more. "Leave me to suffocate in peace."

"Fuck, Hollander. Don't fucking *say* this!"

Hands squeeze the tops of his arms, tight, so tight. It grounds him, steadies him. He catches a breath, and then two, and then a few more. They slip out of him, tremulous but sure. The deep breaths from Rozanov's lips sound the same—shuddering, a bit wrong. He squeezes Shane's biceps so hard it hurts. Shane sucks in another deep breath and doesn't nearly choke on it this time. Another. And another. The room begins to come back into focus. The cold tiles are unforgiving beneath his ass, the corner of the wall behind digging into his spine. There is a steady trail of tears slipping down his cheeks and his palms are pressed flat against the hard planes of Rozanov's chest, feeling his lungs expand, the beat of his heart. His teeth begin to chatter, his body shakes like he's in the throes of a fever.

A wounded sound cuts through the hollow silence of the washroom and Rozanov pulls Shane fully against his body, into his arms.

He's muttering in Russian again. Shane had studied a few words, bought an English to Russian phrase book that he promptly hid in the back of his closet. He can only make out one phrase from Rozanov's whispers—прости меня. *Forgive me*.

They sit there in a desperate embrace for so long Shane's ass and legs feel numb, pins and needles beginning to stab. And then he remembers—where they are, *why*.

“The fucking award!”

Rozanov startles and drops his arms from around Shane’s body. “It is last,” he reassures. “There is time.”

To Shane it’s felt like hours have passed, but maybe it hasn’t been long at all.

Rozanov pets his hair back into place, runs his fingertips under Shane’s eyes and over the bridge of his nose. “You need water,” he says in a hush.

Shane shakes his head. “You should go. The award. You need to accept the Hart.”

“So sure I will win?”

Shane nods. “You deserve it.”

He hears Rozanov take in another quick breath. Shane still doesn’t look at him, staring at a black scuff mark on the white wall from over his shoulder.

“You must come too.”

Right. It would look really bad if Shane just simply didn’t show up to watch Rozanov win the Hart. Like poor sportsmanship. Like he wouldn’t be happy for him, when of course he is. His envy is a secondary emotion, far off and unimportant. People are probably already wondering where he is.

He hums what he hopes sounds like an affirmative. Rozanov slides his thumbs over Shane’s jaw, over his mouth. He closes his eyes, fights the urge to open up and suck the thumb between his lips. Instead he breathes, he nods his head. He clenches his fists only to realize his hands are still pressed firmly against Rozanov’s chest. Had he reached out, or had Rozanov placed his hands there so Shane could feel his heartbeat, his breath? He pulls them away and wraps his arms across his chest. He nods again and Rozanov pulls back and stands.

He helps Shane up from the floor, then sets to work wetting paper towels. He presses them gently to Shane’s eyes, to his cheeks, his forehead. Shane stays still and lets him, lets him rewet the paper and wipe it delicately over the sweat-damp back of his neck.

“Does this happen?” Rozanov asks quietly as he presses the cool wetness over Shane’s eyes again.

“Hmm?”

“You said... suffocate.”

He stretches out the word, as though he’s well aware of its meaning, but not quite sure of its pronunciation.

Shane shrugs. “Nah. Once you pass out, you start breathing again.”

“This happens to you?” Shane is glad his eyes are covered. He can hear the devastation in Rozanov’s voice. He doesn’t want to see it on his face.

Shane shrugs again. “Once or twice. Not for a long time.” The last time he can remember having a panic attack that bad he’d been fourteen and playing in Kingston.

Rozanov’s breaths sound ragged. “Is there not medication? If it is so bad?”

“Yeah,” Shane admits quietly. “Team doctor wouldn’t clear it. Said it might slow me down.”

Rozanov’s hand drops, Shane’s hiding place along with it. His eyes are wide, his mouth snarling. Feral. “What the fuck? They do not care about you?”

Shane huffs. “They care about what I can give them—hockey. Wins. That’s how it goes, right? Everybody wants something. Points, trophies, my heritage to tick some inclusivity box, photos of me in my fucking underwear for their ad campaign... sex.”

“Hollan—”

Shane shrugs him off and turns toward the mirror. He looks awful, but not as bad as he thought he would. He pinches the remaining tears off his eyelashes and wipes the back of his hand over his mouth. “You should go out. I’ll follow you in a minute.”

He can see Rozanov’s reflection shake his head. “You will go. I follow. I want to be sure you are—”

Right. Because Shane can’t be trusted not to freak the fuck out in a public washroom and maybe pass out on the floor.

He doesn’t bother to respond, just pushes past Rozanov, toward the door and out into the corridor. The area is deserted, but he can hear the hum of the presenters talking on stage. He can feel the phantom touch of Rozanov’s hand brushing the small of his back as he walked away.

“Where have you been?” his mother hisses at him as he slides into his seat beside her, body still trembling, guts still twisted into knots. “Your award is up in two.”

Your award. As if he is entitled to it. As if anyone but Ilya Rozanov has any right to claim it this year.

He catches his dad’s sad expression from the other side of his mother, clocking him as usual. Instead of answering her, he takes his glass of champagne and downs half of it in one go. It helps with his dry mouth; the glass in his grasp steadies his hand.

“*Shane—*” she tries again, but someone on stage begins speaking and interrupts her.

He doesn't hear what the presenters say, not really. He sees a player he doesn't know well from the Western Conference go up and accept the award, give a speech. He sips his champagne and tries to concentrate. Tries not to think about which table Rozanov has been seated at. Tries not to look around for him. He sees Cliff Marlow out of the corner of his eye and assumes Rozanov is with him.

There is another stupid skit before the names are called, his first with the alphabetical order. When they announce Ilya Rozanov, Shane can't help but smile. He tried to keep it hidden when he won the cup, tried not to show more pride than envy. Now he feels none of that envy. He watches as Ilya makes his way to the stage. How he grins: wide, toothy, beautiful. He catches a few side glances in his direction, checking for a reaction. He assumes the cameras are doing the same, broadcasting his face to the TV audience. Looking for drama. For disappointment. For anger.

Shane has none of that for them.

It's all so fucking stupid. Why does Shane have to let people think he hates Ilya? It feels like the biggest lie he's ever told. And he's tired. He claps loudly. He smiles his brightest, proudest smile. Ilya fucking deserves it, and Shane is proud of him. After the let-down of his first Olympics, he'd worked so hard. He'd played so well that he'd won his team the Stanley fucking Cup. He *is* the fucking MVP. He vaguely hears his mother whisper his name like a rebuke as she fakes a smile and claps halfheartedly along with the room.

Once Ilya has finished speaking and the hosts call the Boston team up to the stage to join him as the cup winners, Shane feels like he's safe from the looks and the cameras.

He hears his mother huff. "So we're just happy that Rozanov won?"

Shane lets a soft, genuine smile settle on his mouth and downs the rest of his champagne.

The party is as exhausting and boring as it always is. Shane drinks more champagne, ignoring his father's worried looks and his mother's annoyance. She keeps trying to coax him over to speak with potential sponsors until he flat out refuses.

"Shane, there are a lot of important people here tonight. You shouldn't ignore them, and why are you drinking so much?"

Shane sighs and finishes his fourth glass of champagne. He wonders if switching to beer will give him a terrible hangover. He'd heard something like that before—something about the bubbles?

"I've finished the season, Mom. As of right now, I'm officially on vacation. And I think I deserve to have fun for once, so I'm going to go do that."

He gives his parents a little wave as he walks away from his father's look of amusement and his mother's spluttering. He spots Ilya over by the bar and makes a split second decision—he is no longer going to ignore him outside of their stupid rivalry for the cameras or their stupid

sex games behind closed doors. Ilya is fun and Shane likes him. Why can't they be publicly friendly when they've literally known each other since they were teenagers?

"Hey," he greets, then asks the bartender for a beer. "Congratulations."

Ilya gives him a small smile and tilts his head, his eyes tracking quickly over Shane's face as if to check on him. "You are okay?"

"Of course. It was well deserved. I'm not a child getting angry that I didn't win a trophy, Rozanov."

"I meant..." His eyes are tracking Shane's face again. *Ah*. Not MVP. The bathroom.

"Oh, I... yeah. I'm fine now."

"Okay." Rozanov doesn't seem convinced. He continues to study him as he sips his drink—it smells sharp and chemically. *Vodka*.

They order another round and end up seated half-hidden in a corner. As Shane gets steadily more tipsy, his tongue loosens. The room is full of assholes, and he's currently seated beside the only one of them who he actually trusts to say almost anything to.

"Did you know when I got drafted, that piece of shit Kenny actually came up to me and said he was surprised I was so good at hockey, since *my kind* are usually only good at figure skating?"

He hears Ilya curse under his breath.

"At the time I thought he meant because I'm Asian and it was just another weird racist microaggression like I've heard all my life, but maybe it was a different kind of bigotry? Maybe Kenny has amazing gaydar." He waggles his eyebrows and Ilya barks out a sharp laugh. He sees people's gazes swing toward them in surprise. Surprise that they are being friendly, or that he'd made someone laugh? Boring, unsociable Shane Hollander actually amused Ilya Rozanov?

"How would you be a good figure skater?" Ilya asks. "You are big as a wardrobe."

Shane bursts into messy laughter. "What the fuck?"

"Is not expression in English? I translate from Russian. Здоровый как шкаф."

Shane chokes on another laugh. "No. It's not... maybe *built like a brick shithouse* is what you're looking for?"

Ilya screws up his face. "English is so stupid."

"Yeah," Shane agrees. "It really is."

"Hey guys!" Marcus Deby from Dallas slurs at them as he stumbles by. Shane hopes he doesn't look so obviously drunk as that prick.

Ilya flares his nostrils and Shane chuckles under his breath. “Ever noticed how Debly looks just like a hammerhead shark?”

“A what shark?”

“Hammerhead... because his eyes...” Too hard to explain. “Hold on.” Shane searches on his phone until he finds a good photo of a hammerhead shark and shows it to Ilya. Who promptly bursts into unrestrained laughter.

“Oh, Shane Hollander,” he says through his giggles. “You are an asshole.” He says it with so much fucking fondness that Shane can’t even be offended.

It takes two more rounds and Shane and Ilya bitchily tearing apart at least a third of the people in the room before they’re accosted by a group of Ilya’s teammates.

“What the fuck are you two laughing about over here?” Marlow asks. His wide, toothy grin makes him nearly as shark-like as Debly. “You’re the only fuckers having any fun at this dry ass party.”

“Do you think Sorenson’s mother and sister are the same person?” Shane asks him in a stage-whisper.

Marlow throws back his head and laughs loudly enough to draw the attention of half the room, and then points directly at Sorenson over by the hors d'oeuvres. It’s like he’s got a fucking megaphone attached to his face. And also that he’s a moron.

“Jesus, Marlow, be a little *less* discreet, would you?” Shane says with a tsk and finishes off his drink. He’s now lost count of how many he’s had.

Marlow claps him on the shoulder. “Shane Fucking Hollander, you absolute beauty.”

“So says *Cosmo*,” Shane quips back and the entire group of Boston players break up into laughter.

“I think I should have been named hottest player, don’t ya think, boys?” Turner asks.

“You look like an actual caveman,” Shane tells him. “Actually.”

Ilya laughs so hard he spills vodka on his tuxedo pants. Which might be a crime in Russia. Shane is sure it’s something.

“Hollander is fucking hilarious?” Marlow says with an amused shake of his head, his voice finally under a hundred decibels, if only just. “You’ve been holding out on us, man.”

“A terrible deception,” St-Simon agrees. “You can pay us back by coming out partying with us now, eh, Hollander?”

Which is how Shane finds himself at a Las Vegas club with half of the Boston Bears, who, he will admit in the privacy of his own head, are much nicer and more fun than the majority of his own teammates.

They had gone back to their rooms to change before hitting the Strip, and Shane had squeezed into his most form-fitting jeans. A good choice, if he's going by the fact that Ilya's hand is discreetly glued to his right ass cheek.

They dance a little and drink a little more. It's not very fun, really, and Shane is drunk enough to feel sure that if it was ever going to be fun, it would be now.

"Ilya?" he shout-whispers into Ilya's ear.

Ilya looks startled for some reason. But he recovers quickly enough. "Shane?"

"I want a cheeseburger. Like really, really. Can we leave?"

"Of course," Ilya answers. He says something in Russian in a sweet voice and cups one of his big hands around Shane's jaw. "Room service okay?"

Shane smiles at him and he goes soft around the eyes in the way that Shane likes best.

They don't bother to tell the guys they're leaving. Shane figures they're too far gone to notice anyway.

They make it all the way to Ilya's penthouse hotel room without running into any players or anyone else from the league. Or falling on their faces, which is probably an even bigger feat.

Ilya kisses him softly against the closed door for a while before Shane reminds him about the cheeseburger. With a laugh, he calls down to room service and tells them to knock when they arrive and leave everything outside.

During Ilya's preoccupation, Shane shucks off his jeans and socks. He catches Ilya watching as he folds them and places them on one of the chairs. "What?"

Ilya shrugs. "You are cute."

Shane flips him off.

By the time someone knocks on the door to let them know the food has arrived, both Shane and Ilya are lounging around in just their underwear, Ilya nuzzling gently against Shane's throat and pawing at his chest.

He whines when Shane pushes him away and towards the door. "Get my cheeseburger. I'm in my underwear."

Ilya stands, mouth open in indignation and making flappy hand motions up and down his mostly naked (and very fucking glorious) body like he's a lady on one of the game shows Shane used to watch with his grandmother when he stayed home sick from school.

"Cheeseburger," Shane whines.

Ilya rolls his eyes and makes a noise at the back of his throat like he's so put upon, but he comes back wheeling a tray full of covered dishes that definitely smell like cheeseburgers and other fried, forbidden things. He sweeps the shiny metal lids off the plates with a flourish.

Shane widens his eyes. Ilya is amazing. He might also be a mind reader, because Shane didn't even *know* he wanted a milkshake, but now that he sees one, he realizes he wants it even more than the cheeseburger.

He makes a grab for the vanilla one and Ilya mutters something in Russian.

"What?" Shane asks around the straw he'd slammed into the glass and immediately began sucking on.

"Vanilla. Very boring of you."

"Shut up. It's a classic." He tries to scowl over his milkshake, but he's too busy giving himself an ice cream headache.

The cheeseburger might be the best thing Shane's eaten since his dad bought him a Killaloe Sunrise Beavertail the first time he took him skating on the canal as a kid. He moans when he bites into it, the melted cheese and grease running over his fingers and dripping onto his chin.

He flicks his eyes upward when he hears Ilya make a choking sound. "Okay?" he asks with his mouth full, which he knows is gross but he just doesn't give a fuck when there are cheeseburgers to eat.

"Uh..." Ilya replies. It's not a word, but he's not choking so Shane goes back to his food.

He can concentrate on his company again after he's demolished three quarters of the burger and half a plate of fries. Ilya is eating much more slowly than Shane is.

"Do you like it?" he asks and motions towards Ilya's mostly intact cheeseburger.

"Yeah, sure," he replies with a shrug. "Pretty good."

"What's your favourite junk food? At home in Russia?"

Ilya shrugs again and nibbles on a fry. "No favourite."

"Nothing you look forward to every summer?"

Ilya shrugs again. “Not much to look forward to at all.” He looks a bit... blank. Staring at the wall.

Shane feels sad suddenly. He puts the rest of his burger down on the plate and wipes his fingers on a fancy cloth napkin. “So you only go because it’s, like, a family obligation?”

Ilya hums what sounds like an affirmative. “My family...” he starts. He runs a hand over his hair and down the side of his face. “They are terrible mostly. Is not a summer of fun.”

“I’m sorry,” Shane says stupidly. He thinks again of his dad, holding his hand as he wobbled on his skates over bumpy canal ice, blocking his small body from the boisterous skaters racing up and down.

Ilya shrugs and takes a drink of his milkshake. “Is same for a lot of people, I think.”

Shane nods. Maybe it is. Maybe Shane is just lucky to have been born into a family that treats him like a treasure. He suddenly feels an enormous sense of guilt for snapping at his mom earlier.

He plays with his straw for a minute, thinking about Ilya, miserable in Moscow with his terrible family. “If you need me,” he starts. “I mean, I’m here if you want me. When you’re...”

Ilya takes pity on him and cuts off his rambling. “I always want you.”

Ilya’s words feel sharp somehow, jagged. They stab at the raw wound inside Shane that has been growing more tender over the past few months instead of scabbing over. Always? He hadn’t though, had he? After the night they’d spent together, a night Shane had mistakenly taken for special, it had been radio silence from Ilya no matter how many times he’d reached out.

His thoughts must show on his face, because Ilya stretches across the distance between them and rubs a thumb along Shane’s chin, tilting it upward so he can look Shane in the eye.

“I hurt you.”

Shane nods once, embarrassed when a lone tear drips from his eyelashes and tumbles onto his cheek. “I thought... Maybe it was— but then you wouldn’t talk to me anymore, so I figured you just wanted to have sex with me, and once you did that was it.”

The grip on Shane’s chin tightens. Ilya’s jaw is working, flexing, and his eyes are bright. “No,” he says, shaking his head. “No, Shane. I was... scared. I did not use you. I did not mean to.”

“Scared?” Shane sits up straighter. Ilya is watching his own fingers clench against his bare thigh.

“It was scary, the way I felt... I was a coward. I am sorry, Shane. Hurting you is not—”

“Me, too. I mean, I felt—” He doesn’t know how to explain it, the feelings, the thoughts, the scenarios he’d imagined in his head. How much he wanted to be with Ilya all the time and how much he punished himself for even thinking about it. How he’d fought with himself before sending every text, before watching Ilya’s games and interviews.

“You are not scared now?” Ilya’s eyes flick up from their focus on his leg. He looks more vulnerable than Shane has ever seen him. The sharpness his gaze usually carries is completely gone.

“Terrified,” Shane admits. It feels important, *essential* that he does.

Ilya nods and sucks his bottom lip into his mouth. Shane has seen him do it a few times before. He wonders if it’s a nervous tic. “What do you want to do?”

Shane shrugs. He’s definitely made plans, but he’s not clear-headed enough to share them, or to even know if he should. He decides to stick with Step One. “Kiss you. A lot.”

Ilya seems to try for a smile, but it looks a little unsure, lopsided. “Maybe if you are finished making love to cheeseburger we can do this.”

Shane’s laugh comes out as a snort and he throws his dirty napkin at Ilya, but it just floats sadly onto the couch between them. He looks down at the last few bites of his sublime fucking cheeseburger and back up at Ilya. “Hmm...”

Ilya’s mouth falls open and he presses his hand against his chest in mock outrage. He jumps across the couch at Shane and pulls the plate out of his hand. “I will take this from you, Hollander. Tomorrow you will thank me.”

Shane puts up a token protest, but he’s soon in Ilya’s warm lap tasting the strawberry shake on his tongue.

He feels clammy, salty, like he’d sweat a lot and let it dry on his skin. His head hurts only a little—he’s shockingly not hung over too badly after how much he’d had to drink. He smacks his parched lips together and takes stock of the rest of his body. There is a club stamp on the back of his hand, a smeared phone number scribbled on the inside of his forearm, and a dark purple hickey just above his left nipple. He remembers the club, remembers Marlow writing his number on Shane’s arm with the declaration that they are now best friends, and he definitely remembers Ilya sucking that hickey onto his chest.

Ilya’s arm snakes around him from behind and he presses his morning wood against Shane’s ass. “Good morning,” he slurs.

Shane rubs his bleary eyes and focuses in on the room service cart piled high with dirty dishes covered in dried cheese and the remnants of French fries. It makes him feel sick. “Oh god, we ate that,” he groans.

Ilya shushes him and slips his long fingers over Shane's eyes. Shane chokes out a startled laugh. "I already saw the evidence, no point hiding it now."

Ilya pulls him over onto his chest so his back faces the greasy destruction on the plates. He shushes Shane again and smushes Shane's face into his right pec. The chest hairs tickle at his nose and make him sneeze. Ilya says something absentmindedly in Russian and pets his hair.

"You are okay?" he asks. "You did not forget... what is word...?"

"Black out? No, I remember everything. You?"

Ilya shrugs under Shane's face. "Of course. Russians do not do this."

"Uh-huh. Just like Russians don't get so wasted they spill vodka all over themselves."

"Is not my fault you are such a funny boy."

"Shut up," Shane says without heat. He rolls over onto his back, his shoulder still pressing against Ilya's chest.

Ilya smiles widely, but it dims after a short moment. "We are okay?"

Shane smiles at him, just a little upturn of his lips. "We are very okay, I think."

"Yes," Ilya agrees, nodding his head. "Please." He reaches for Shane, pulling his dirty, naked body back into his arms.

"Ugh, I'm so gross," Shane whines.

"Shut up," Ilya returns. "Is impossible."

Ilya's phone has been buzzing on the bedside table at a steady interval for at least the past five minutes. He takes a quick look at the screen and rolls his eyes. "My team loves you now. Will not stop texting me about it."

"Hmm... I guess everyone saw us. I mean, now they know we're friendly. So maybe we can hang out, you know, in public sometimes?" Shane finds he feels less worried about this outcome than he would have been just the day before. It would be nice to be able to see Ilya and spend time with him like it's normal.

"Yes, cat is out of the bag."

"That a new expression?"

Ilya rolls his eyes again. "Brady says it all the fucking time. So stupid. Why would the cat be in bag in the first place? Has nothing to do with anything."

Shane ignores the aside and continues on with his original thought. "Maybe next time we're out in public together don't grope my ass quite so much."

Ilya quickly forgets about stupid idioms and narrows his eyes. “Also impossible.” He reaches down and squeezes a handful of Shane’s ass. “Is a very nice ass.”

“Even still... control yourself, Rozanov,” Shane answers with a laugh, squirming away.

He is rewarded with a ridiculously exaggerated pout. “Ilya,” Ilya says. “No more Rozanov.”

“Okay,” Shane promises.

“Okay,” Ilya whispers back with a tiny, happy smile that makes Shane lean up to kiss him.

Which he instantly regrets. “Jesus, our breath is rancid.”

Ilya scoffs. “You are baby.”

“Rancid hamburger.”

Luckily Ilya has a spare toothbrush.

And also spare clothes that he tosses to Shane when they emerge from the shower an hour later.

“What time is your flight?” Shane asks.

“Afternoon. 3:00.”

“Mine’s around then, too. Want to share a car to the airport?”

When Ilya smiles he looks almost lit up from within. “Okay.”

Shane checks his phone on the way to pack up his suitcase in his own room and finds several texts and missed calls from his mother and a lone message from his dad.

Have a fun night, kiddo.

He sends a quick reply: *Meet you both at the airport. Don’t wait for me.*, and slips his phone into the pocket of his borrowed track pants. He throws his things haphazardly into his bags—probably the worst packing job he’s ever done.

Ilya waits near the door, smiling down at his phone. Marlow had posted a series of photos to his Instagram, weaving the tale of a wild night that surprisingly hadn’t ended in anyone getting Vegas-married to a stranger. Shane is in only one of the shots, laughing as St-Simon pushes Carmichael into a fountain, Ilya egging him on from Shane’s side. There are more comments on that photo than any of the others. Shane sees one accusing him of being a traitor and quickly closes the app.

Ilya orders them a car and they sit in comfortable silence on the short drive to the airport.

Shane gets through security screening sooner than Ilya does. He isn't sure where Ilya might come from, so he pulls out his phone to send a text.

Meet me in the first class lounge.

There are message notifications on the screen—several new ones from his mother. He answers *At the airport now.*, and palms his phone, keeping it close by in case Ilya calls or sends a text.

When he enters the lounge his mother is bent over her phone typing furiously at what is likely another message to him.

“Hey,” he greets his parents. At his dad’s smile, he motions toward his coffee cup. “Where did you get that?”

His mom goggles incredulously at him. “Shane? That’s what you have to say? Where have you been? I know you didn’t even stay in your hotel room last night.”

“Yuna,” his dad says in a quiet voice.

She whips her head in his direction and widens her eyes. “What? Am I wrong?”

“Mom, I love you,” Shane tells her. She snaps her mouth shut. “But I’m a grown man. And I really don’t think you want to know what I was up to last night.”

His dad smothers a smile.

Shane sees Ilya’s large frame in his periphery and nods at his parents. “I’m just going to...” He motions over his shoulder and turns away to go sit with Ilya. His mother is muttering something but Shane decides he doesn’t want to know.

They don’t talk much. Ilya finds them both coffee and they sip it in comfortable silence. As the minutes tick closer to Shane’s boarding time, he starts to fidget.

He knows they are in a good place, had even said as much, but they haven’t actually talked about what exactly that means. What they are. How they are going to do this. What *this* even is.

He doesn’t want to panic about it. He picks at the stitching off his borrowed track pants. He probably should have changed into his own and returned them to Ilya, but Ilya hadn’t asked and he didn’t actually want to give the clothes back. He can smell Ilya all over them.

“How long will you be in Boston before you fly to Moscow?”

Ilya takes a sip of his coffee. “One week.”

Shane nods. “If you’re not okay—”

“I’ll be okay.” Ilya’s voice is sharp. He swallows heavily and turns in his seat until his knee presses into the side of Shane’s thigh. Like an apology.

Shane nods again. He twists the fabric of the pants between his fingers. “Promise to text me?”

“I promise.” These words are soft, almost a whisper. “Shane, I won’t—” He swallows audibly again. “I promise.”

Shane takes a quick peek at their surroundings. No one is paying them any mind. He slips his hand over onto Ilya’s leg, cups his palm over the kneecap. When he looks up through his eyelashes, Ilya is watching him with what almost looks like awe.

“I’ll miss you,” Shane tells him in a hush. “I wish you were coming home with me.”

Ilya almost looks pained in response. Shane feels his palm begin to sweat against Ilya’s jeans; he drops his eyes back down and watches his hand curl around Ilya’s knee. Did he say something wrong? Was he being too much? The last thing he wants to do is chase Ilya away again when he just got him back.

“I will miss you, too.” A whisper. Ilya’s hand twitches like he wants to reach out and touch. After a moment he adds, “come with me?” and stands from his seat.

Shane looks up at him and follows obediently.

Ilya flips the lock when they enter the washroom and pushes Shane against the closed door. His mouth finds Shane’s, hot and insistent. Shane moans at the soft slide of his tongue, at the long fingers holding his face firmly where he wants it.

How can he want this so much? Need it? He feels possessed whenever Ilya touches him, looks at him, *breathes* in his direction. After spending the entire night together and staying together for the day—it’s going to kill him to go back to how things were. He doesn’t know how he’ll manage it.

The intercom in the washroom crackles before a bored voice announces preboarding for Shane’s flight. He pulls his face back, shifts his leg down from where he’s slid it up to hook his heel around the back of Ilya’s thighs. “I have to go.”

Ilya’s hands slip from Shane’s face.

“I will stay here until—” Ilya’s jaw tightens and he looks down at the floor. “I do not want to watch when you are leaving.”

Shane’s eyes fill with tears that he refuses to let fall. He closes them and takes a deep breath, then presses their foreheads together. “I’ll text you when I land.”

He feels Ilya nod.

“You too?”

Ilya nods again.

Shane opens his eyes and pulls away. Ilya is not looking at him. His jaw is still clenched tight, his fists the same. His entire body screams tension.

“Hey.” Shane slides his hand around Ilya’s jaw and rubs softly, then tilts his face up. His eyes are as wet as Shane’s feel. Shane leans in and presses a soft kiss to his lips, and then one of each of Ilya’s eyes. He rubs their noses together and runs his fingers through Ilya’s curls before stepping away.

He wants to beg *come back to me soon*. He wants to tell Ilya he won’t stop thinking about him until they are together again. He wants to say *I love you*.

In the end he says nothing. He can’t make his mouth form the words. Instead he presses them clumsily against Ilya’s cheek, unlocks the door, and steps out of the room.

When his plane lands in Ottawa six hours later, there is a string of messages from Ilya waiting on his phone.

You are too good a boy not to have your phone on airplane mode already as soon as you are on board. I wanted to tell you something before you left but could not

Did not want to cry in fucking Vegas airport

I will think of you every minute we are apart. I already do

I have for many years. Is like breathing for me

I am sorry I hurt you. I was trying not to hurt myself

Selfish. Stupid. I could never stop thinking of you no matter how hard I tried

I will call you from Moscow every day if it is what you want

It is what I want

And then one short message hours later:

Landed

He answers back as he waits for his luggage.

Also landed.

It is what I want. And I am always thinking about you too.

I forgive you.

In case you haven’t already figured that out.

Ilya is probably on his way from Logan Airport to his house, or else he's already made it home and passed the fuck out from exhaustion. Shane feels his own sink into his bones. He rolls his shoulders and pockets his phone, then walks out of the terminal and into the oppressive heat of the Ottawa summer, feeling optimistic about the future for the first time in a long while.

End Notes

There are now additional one shots in this universe! Currently working on more. xoxo

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