

Young and Hopelessly Smitten

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/75757186) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/75757186>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Yuna Hollander , Yuna Hollander & Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander & Shane Hollander , David Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Fluff , Light Angst , Alternate Universe - Childhood Friends , Pre-Relationship , Pre-Canon , Both book reader and show watcher friendly , Childhood Friends , Friends to Lovers , The sweet innocence of your childhood queer crush , Mild Hurt/Comfort , Childhood Friends to Lovers
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-15 Words: 8,769 Chapters: 1/1

Young and Hopelessly Smitten

by [jukoist](#)

Summary

“Ilya Rozanov,” Shane repeats slowly, letting himself taste the words. He grins. “Wow. You’re, like, a really good player. How come you’re in Canada for summer camp? Is that weird to ask? Sorry if that’s weird. I just meant-”

Shane is cut off by a hand on his mouth. He flushes.

“Too fast,” Ilya says. “My English... not good.”

“Sorry,” Shane mumbles into Ilya’s hand. Ilya grins and shakes his head, curls dancing, as he pulls his hand away.

“Is okay. Slow words. Okay?”

This year marks thirteen year Shane Hollander's third summer at Coach Marakov's elite hockey training camp. In attendance for the first time: Ilya Rozanov, visiting from Russia. Shane isn't the most sociable, and Ilya's English isn't the greatest, yet the unlikely duo soon become the best of friends.

It's just one summer, but it makes a world of difference.

Notes

[Translation into Russian available on ficbook \(external link\)](#) thanks to [andianpanda](#)

Quick note before we hop in: this fic mixes TV and book canon. We’re sticking with book team names here (Boston Bears, Montreal Voyageurs). Svetlana’s backstory is a mix of both canons. In the books, she meets Ilya when they’re both adults and she’s the daughter of an unnamed former Boston Bears player. In the TV show, she’s Ilya’s childhood friend and the daughter of Vitali Makarov, Russian Minister, who is friends with Ilya’s father. Here, Svetlana’s father is Makarov, who is a friend of Ilya’s father, but is also an ex-Boston Bear.

Huuuuge thanks to my beta Anna ([@buckdownbad on twitter](#)) who I love very dearly.

- Translation into Türkçe available: [genç ve umutsuzca aşık](#) by [stroketan](#)
- Translation into 中文-普通话 國語 available: [【翻译translation】Young and Hopelessly Smitten \(年少心动无可救药\)](#) by [jokerli](#)

June 2003 — Ottawa

This summer is going to mark Shane's third year at the Makarov Elite Development Programme, and he couldn't be more excited. He'd been at a couple of different kids' training camps that were way too easy for him before receiving the invite for Makarov's.

"And you're sure you want to go to Makarov's again this year?" Yuna asks. She's sorting through the mail at the kitchen table while David prepares breakfast.

Shane rolls his eyes. "*Maman*," he sighs, flopping down in the chair adjacent to his mother. "Makarov's camp is good! Two of the coaches were NHL players!"

"Yeah, from the *Boston Bears*," Yuna scoffs. "You've got more options this year! Everyone's heard of how good you are. Munroe has a camp—"

"Ah, yes, Munroe," David says. "The ex-Voyageur." He presses a kiss to the side of Yuna's head as he sets down a plate of pancakes on the table. "No work at the table, please."

Yuna huffs, but she presses a quick kiss to David's lips. She pulls the letters together, tapping them on the table like they're a deck of cards so that they're neatly arranged before setting them back in her letter organizer. "I just want the best for Shane," she says.

"And that's the camp run by the former Captain of your favourite team?" David asks knowingly as he sets up the breakfast table with eggs and maple syrup.

"I'm just saying," Yuna shrugs. "Between former Voyageurs and former Bears, I know what I'd prefer."

"I like Makarov's," Shane says firmly. "I mean, I like the Voyageurs more than the Bears, but I like Makarov more than Munroe. I mean- Vitali Makarov! He has the second highest number of hat tricks in the NHL! And the kids there are, like. Cool."

"Makarov's is a larger camp," Yuna concedes.

"And they do figure skating there too," David points out, sitting down. "Maybe Shane will learn some tricks off of his buddy Joe, gain better control over the ice or something. Serve yourselves, please."

Shane serves himself two pancakes and an egg. At a pointed look from his mother, he serves himself a second egg. Right. Protein.

"Well, I, for one, am happier the closer we are to home," David says. At the look from his wife, he raises his hands in surrender. "What? I'm just saying, it's convenient that Makarov's is in Ottawa! I don't wanna spend the summer at a hotel in Montreal. I'm sure Shane doesn't either."

Shane doesn't. He doesn't really mind travelling, but he likes the comfort of home.

Yuna smiles, shaking her head. “Alright, alright. I can’t put up too much of a fight against my cute boys.” She pinches Shane’s and David’s cheeks in quick succession. “Thank you for the breakfast, David, it looks lovely.”

Shane smiles. “Mmhm, thank you!”

Honestly, he’s not sure why he likes Makarov’s so much. Sure, Makarov himself was a hockey superstar, but it’s not like Munroe was bad. It’s probably that Makarov’s camp is bigger, which means more kids, which means less individual attention. The coaches give him direct feedback, but they also let him do his own thing. It’s all very structured, which Shane likes. He doesn’t want to have to start from scratch — there’s a rink and gear and kids that are semi-decent to play with. It’s all Shane needs.

There’s a new kid Shane’s age at Makarov’s this year. He introduces himself with a thick Russian accent and a serious-looking face: Ilya Rozanov. Thirteen years old, like Shane, but he looks a lot older because of the furrow of brows. Shane assumes Ilya is in boarding; Shane’s glad he lives close enough to do day camp, because he’s heard they share four a room at boarding.

Rozanov is also really good at hockey. Really, *really* good. Almost as good at Shane.

The two of them are almost immediately pit against each other in a 3v3. Coach Makarov believes in getting right into it; everyone here is trying to make it pro. Shane’s team wins, but only just barely. Shane has a feeling if Rozanov could communicate with his teammates better, Shane might have been the one that lost. Maybe.

It’s a bit of a thrill. Shane’s usually only challenged when he’s pitted up against the older kids, which he doesn’t mind, but he likes having a challenge his own age.

Shane decides that he’s gonna talk to Rozanov. His mom’s always saying that he needs to make more friends, that hockey is a *team* sport and that ‘rapport’ is important. And there’s just... something about the guy that gets his attention.

Maybe he can say hi after the game. At the snack table. So that he can stuff his mouth with an apple or something if he can’t think of anything to say.

Shane’s not the best at the whole ‘making friends’ thing.

When Shane makes his way to the break room, he’s not surprised to see Rozanov alone, seemingly zoned out. He looks... sullen. Uninterested in the cheer of all the other kids, even though it’s a nice summer day and the first day of camp and he’s in a whole new country.

It must be hard to make friends with people who don’t speak the same language. Shane is all the more determined to befriend him.

“Good game,” Shane says, walking up to the kid and sticking his hand out, ramrod straight. He’s breathless, which is weird, because he has long since cooled off from the game. He hopes his palms aren’t sweaty.

Rozanov blinks. Then his lips curl into something a little amused. Like he’s trying not to laugh. “Yes,” he says. “Good game.” His accent is thick, and Shane *really* has to focus to parse his words.

“I’m Shane,” Shane says. “Um. Hollander. Shane Hollander. That’s my name,” he stammers out. God. What is he doing? He wishes the ground would just swallow him up. “Uh, you’re Ilya Rozanov, obviously. I mean. You introduced yourself earlier.”

“Ilya Rozanov,” Ilya says, correcting Shane’s pronunciation. *Rose-anne-nov*, not *Ross-a-nov*.

“Ilya Rozanov,” Shane repeats slowly, letting himself taste the words. He grins. “Wow. You’re, like, a really good player. How come you’re in Canada for summer camp? Is that weird to ask? Sorry if that’s weird. I just meant-”

Shane is cut off by a hand on his mouth. He flushes.

“Too fast,” Ilya says. “My English... not good.”

“Sorry,” Shane mumbles into Ilya’s hand. Ilya grins and shakes his head, curls dancing, as he pulls his hand away.

“Is okay. Slow words. Okay?”

“Okay,” Shane says. He’s even more breathless now, for some reason. “Um. You play very well.” He makes sure to speak slowly and clearly.

Ilya grins. “Yes,” he agrees cockily. Shane rolls his eyes. Looks like Ilya isn’t feeling *too* out of place. He can’t stop smiling back, though, so it probably doesn’t look too annoyed.

“How come you’re here?” Shane asks. “I mean why come to a camp here in Canada?”

Ilya hums, frowning as he hunts for the words. “Coach Makarov, you know?” He mimes the claws of a bear.

Shane nods. Everyone here knows Coach Makarov. The camp is named after him.

“He is... my father friend. Makarov. I... come here to play.”

Shane nods. “Cool,” he says. He wonders why Ilya would come all the way here. Surely there are good camps in Russia? But he doesn’t know how to communicate that question in a way Ilya could understand it.

He shifts on his feet awkwardly. He doesn’t want the conversation to die, because he *really* wants to get to know Ilya. He also doesn’t know what to say to keep it going.

Usually, he grabs some fruit and spends his break in the library. They have a *lot* of books on hockey. There are probably some in Russian, right? Coach Makarov is Russian. Maybe he has some. Maybe Ilya would be interested.

“Uh... do you want to come to the library with me?” Shane asks.

“Where?” Ilya blinks.

“Um... the library? Like, uh, books- uh, *la bibliothèque*. No, wait.” Why is he speaking in French? How is that supposed to help? Though with the way he's stammering and stumbling over his words, he doubts *anyone* could parse their meaning. He still can't seem to force his mouth to stop. “It's, like, where you keep-”

Shane is cut off by Ilya grabbing his hand. Ilya places a hand on his own chest and takes a deep breath before indicating that Shane should do the same. Shane follows, laughing nervously.

“Is okay,” Ilya says. “Slow. Don't know, but I come. Okay?”

Shane smiles shyly, tangling his fingers with Ilya. Ilya looks surprised, but he doesn't pull away, so that's- good, right? “Okay,” Shane says. He pulls Ilya along, and Ilya follows, laughing under his breath.

Wow. Ilya has a really nice smile.

Shane can't help noticing how warm Ilya's hand is in his. He keeps his head determinedly forward, afraid that if he turns back and sees Ilya's crooked smile he'll... he's not sure. He'll explode with embarrassment, probably. He leads Ilya down the hallway at the back of the break room, up the stairs, to the little green door on the left.

Shane opens the door to the small, messy library. Calling it a library is a stretch, because it's really just a bunch of bookshelves and a couple of tables and chairs. The room was probably used to store gear at some point.

“Library,” Shane says, waving at the space. “This is usually where I come on my breaks.”

Ilya doesn't look impressed. He raises his eyebrows as if to say — *Seriously? This is what you wanted to show me?*

“It's quiet!” Shane defends. “And, look, this window has a great view of the lake!” He kneels on the bench propped under the single window in the room, pointing. Ilya rolls his eyes, but comes to stand by Shane's side anyway.

“*Ty takoy skuchnyy*, Shane,” Ilya says. *You are so boring.*

Shane doesn't understand the words, but the teasing tone comes across pretty well. He's about to fire back — with what, he isn't sure yet, but it'll definitely be good — when Ilya is distracted and walks to one of the bookshelves, sitting down on his haunches, to peer at the lowest row of books.

“*Kotenok!*” Ilya coos. “Is cat!”

Shane hops off the bench and turns to watch Ilya, who’s petting the grey tabby draped over the hockey autobiographies. “Oh, you found Sonya! Yeah, she’s always here too.”

“Sonya,” Ilya repeats, sounding endlessly fond. He scoops up the cat easily before making his way to the bench, holding her like she’s a baby. Shane feels a little jealous of the cat, if he’s being honest. Just because, like, he’s a human being. Surely he’s more interesting than a cat? Then Ilya scooches to the side and pats the space next to him, which mollifies him a little.

Ilya *does* look cute cuddling a cat. He’d seemed so serious and sad when Shane had seen him before. Now he looks like there’s nowhere he’d rather be.

“You like animals, huh?” Shane asks.

“Yes,” Ilya says fondly. “Like animals lots. Like cat.” He scratches Sonya behind the ears. She purrs and stretches out over Ilya’s lap, baring her belly and flexing her paws. “And dog.” He pats at Shane’s leg.

Shane makes an affronted noise. “I’m *not*—”

“Yes,” Ilya says firmly, shooting that crooked smile at Shane. He bumps their shoulders together. “You are small dog. Baby dog.”

“Puppy?” Shane guesses.

Ilya nods. “Is you. Puppy.” He seems proud. Shane groans, realizing he basically handed Ilya the ammunition himself.

“I’m *not*,” he grumbles, but he shifts closer to Ilya anyway. Just so he can pet Sonya too.

They sit like that for a while, the room silent except for Sonya’s loud purrs. Their shoulders brush the whole time. Shane’s ears feel hot.

“Break’s probably over soon,” Shane mumbles, checking his watch. He shows it to Ilya — they have 5 minutes left. “We should head back.”

“Yes.” Ilya sighs, reluctantly setting Sonya down. He pets her, and she leans into it before padding off to find a new nap spot. “You... come, learn my hockey. I am best. I make you good.”

Shane snorts as he stands up, kicking at Ilya’s shin. “You’re so mean,” he says with a grin.

Ilya just shrugs. “Is true. I am best.” He quickly books it when Shane makes an affronted sound and tries to tackle him, and their laughs echo all the way down the hallways and stairs.

By day three, Ilya and Shane are inseparable.

No one else seems to get their friendship, because they can't communicate all that well yet. No one else seems to *like* their friendship either. The latter is mostly because when allowed to choose, they will always choose to play on the same team. And when they do that, they win. It's almost a guarantee.

Unfortunately, they aren't allowed to choose too often anymore.

Ilya is peering at a mini dictionary in his hands. "S... scared," he sounds out. "Yes." He snaps the dictionary shut. He gestures towards the coaches. "Scared of us. We are too good."

Shane had used up most of his allowance on a mini English to Russian dictionary for himself and its Russian to English counterpart for Ilya. Ilya had very begrudgingly accepted the latter, but he uses it all the time, so Shane maintains that it was a good purchase.

"To be fair, we barely let anyone else play last game. It was a total shut out." Shane tries very hard not to be selfish with the puck, but sometimes he forgets himself. When there's a goal he knows he can make, he just *has* to make it. It doesn't help that Ilya is the same, and they just make each other so much worse.

"If other team want to win... play better." Ilya shrugs.

Shane snorts and shoves Ilya in the shoulder. "You're mean," he informs Ilya.

"Mean," Ilya sighs dramatically. "Annoying. Only two words you teach me. I ask you teach me bad words. No. Just 'mean', 'annoying'."

"I'm not teaching you bad words," Shane says firmly. "You're good enough at being annoying on the ice as is."

"Is useful," Ilya says. "Make other team lose."

"Yeah, until we play ten year olds and you make them *cry* or something. And everyone will get on *my* case for being a bad influence!" Shane huffs.

Ilya smiles beatifically. It's that angelic smile and those golden curls that let him get away with half the stuff he pulls, Shane thinks. What a menace.

Shane can barely hide his smile when Ilya just winks at him and drags him back onto the ice to practice backhands.

Some breaks, they sit together in the library and Shane painstakingly attempts to translate his favourite plays and hockey facts. Ilya doesn't help much. He pets Sonya, and he points out funny words in the dictionary. Like sex. Shane's thirteen, so he'd *totally* known the word before. He'd just hissed and shut the dictionary shut because it was *embarrassing*.

Other times, they eat as fast as they can before taking to the ice again. It's nice to have the whole place to themselves. They're technically not allowed, and Shane would never dream of breaking the rules, but Ilya says it's fine, so...

Today is an ice day, but there's someone already on the rink.

"Joe!" Shane calls out happily. He hasn't seen Joe much this summer. They've staggered break timings this year, and the two of them are on different break schedules. He's not surprised Joe is breaking rules to be on the ice. Joe's always been the kind of guy to do whatever he wants to irrespective of who wants to stop him.

"Shane!" Joe skates up and hugs him, before waving at Ilya with his arm still hooked around Shane's shoulders.

"This is Ilya," Shane says. "He's from Russia, so his English isn't the greatest. He plays hockey with me, he's great."

"The best," Ilya says stiffly. His brows are drawn together.

"Second best," Shane snips back easily. He turns back to Joe. "Are you learning anything cool?" He wants to see Joe pull off a triple axel one day. Probably not anytime soon, but he bets Joe's gonna be the first of the kids their age to pull it off.

"Practicing a routine," Joe says. "For exhibition day. I'm working on rhythm."

"Wow," Shane says. "Rhythm. I, like, don't even listen to music, so I'm so bad at stuff like that. Can we watch?"

"I thought we practice," Ilya says, sounding tetchy. Shane blinks. Ilya's usually the more social of the two of them, language barrier or not.

"Well, I wanna see Joe's routine," Shane says. "That's okay, right? I think it's cool how different figure skating is."

"Fine." Ilya skates away to the bench, sitting down glumly.

"Wow," Joe says once he's gone. "What's with him?"

Shane shrugs. "Maybe he was just looking forward to running drills? I don't wanna take up all your time, your breaks end earlier than ours this time, right?"

"Yep. I'd love any feedback."

"I'll probably be useless at that, but I'll try anyway!" He skates back to Ilya, taking a seat next to him.

Joe doesn't seem self conscious at all. Shane thinks he would be, if he was alone on the ice. Hockey's different, because he's so focused on the game. But all alone, knowing the whole audience is judging your every move? Insane.

"He's so cool," Shane sighs as he watches Joe. "He's always so graceful, thinking about form and composition and rhythm. We're, like, skating on the same ice but we just shove people around."

Ilya scowls. "Is not that cool. Just..." he holds a finger up and flips through his dictionary. "Spinning. Yes. Spinning. Even animal can do."

Shane bites back a smile. "I don't think that many animals spin."

Joe leaps and lands gracefully, in time with the music he's playing. Shane's tempted to clap.

"You can teach dog," Ilya insists. "Is not that cool."

"I don't think you can teach a dog to do an axel with knives attached to their feet, dude."

Ilya goes silent. It's a few seconds before he speaks. "You like him?"

Shane blinks, looking away from Joe to meet Ilya's eyes. "I mean... yeah? He's my friend."

Ilya looks frustrated by the answer. "No. I mean..." he gestures vaguely. Shane has no idea what he's getting at.

"I was pretty nervous when I first came here," Shane says. "And he was very nice to me. Showed me around the camp. It made me feel better."

Ilya nods, looking miserable at this. "Like you and me."

Shane frowns. He guesses that that's true in a sense. Joe was to Shane what Shane is to Ilya, maybe. But... "I don't think so," Shane says. He turns to face Ilya fully. He feels kinda bad about it, because he's missing Joe's routine, but he can catch it on exhibition day before camp ends. "Joe's my friend, yeah," he says. "But you're my *best* friend. I think I'd like being friends with you the most even if I had a million other friends."

Ilya swallows and just stares at Shane, lip trembling. For a moment, Shane's worried he said something wrong. He does that a lot. Then Ilya pulls him into a tight hug, basically crushing Shane's ribs.

"Best friend," Ilya agrees, his words muffled in Shane's neck. Shane smiles and hugs him back. Then he pulls away. "Okay, now focus. I don't know *anything* about this stuff so you're gonna be the one giving Joe his feedback."

“We're gonna be late!” Shane calls out, bouncing on his feet. He's been ready for *ages*, with his backpack packed and ready to go, but his parents are *still* getting ready.

“We're not going to be late,” David says, coming down the stairs. Yuna is right behind him, putting her earrings on. “*Calme-toi.*”

“We *are*,” Shane insists.

“Do we remember him being this excited about camp last year?” David asks Yuna as he slips on his sneakers. “Because we took him to camp yesterday, and he’s acting like he hasn’t been in weeks.”

“I remember being able to sleep in last year,” Yuna says, hiding a yawn behind her hand. David hands her her sneakers, which she takes with a smile. “Before this Ilya joined.”

“I'll go start the car,” David says. He grabs Shane's backpack on the way out, lifting it up with an ‘oof’. He pauses. “Jesus, kid, what do you have in here? Bricks?

“Skates!” Shane says easily.

David blinks. “Didn't you put yours in your locker at the start of camp?”

“These are my other ones,” Shane says, like it's obvious. “For Ilya.”

“Ah. Right.” David sets the backpack back down. Looks at it consideringly. “Hm. Honey, he's all yours,” he tells Yuna.

Yuna raises an eyebrow at her son. “Shane,” she chides.

“*Maman, Ilya n'a même pas ses patins à lui ici.* He couldn't bring them from Russia. And he has to borrow the skates from camp, and those are so *bad*,” Shane defends.

“I'm sure they're not that bad,” Yuna says, hands on her hips.

“You straight up can't even skate in them,” Shane insists.

“Yeah, *maman*, you straight up can't skate in them,” David repeats, biting back a smile. Yuna whacks his arm lightly.

Yuna sighs. “You know, all I hear these days is Ilya this and Ilya that.”

“Ilya is the best,” Shane says. He pauses. “But don't tell him that. His ego is big enough already.”

Yuna sighs, smiling fondly. “Well, I suppose it's my fault for asking you to make friends. Alright. Ilya can borrow them for camp. *Borrow*, do you hear me, Shane?”

“Yes!” Shane cheers. He's immediately half out the door, leaving his backpack for his parents to bring.

“I’m serious, Shane, *borrow*. He’s not allowed to take them back to Russia!” Yuna calls after her son as he rushes to the car.

“Okay!” Shane calls back. “C’mon, we’re gonna be late!”

Yuna shoots a look at her husband. David shrugs, hands raised. “Don’t look at me. He gets the whole hockey thing from you.”

She huffs, kissing his cheek. “Yeah, but he gets the bleeding heart from you. C’mon. If we stall too long, I’m worried he might try driving himself to camp.”

Coach Makarov’s daughter, Svetlana, comes by to say hi sometimes. She’s fluent in Russian, which means Ilya can actually talk to her. It’s sweet, Shane thinks. That she seems to genuinely care that Ilya is comfortable.

Shane wraps his arms around his knees where he’s sitting on the bench. The second, shittier bench, not the nice one by the window. Because Ilya and Svetlana are sitting on the bench by the window, where they’ve been chatting away the whole break.

Shane doesn’t feel left out. Not at all. He was the one that had *encouraged* them to speak in Russian, because he wanted Ilya to be comfortable too. And he knew a few words! Like — ‘*papa*’, that definitely meant ‘father’.

Whatever.

Maybe he should go?

It’s just, he has the sneaking suspicion that Svetlana has a little bit of a crush on Ilya. What if he leaves and they *kiss* or something? It’s not that he doesn’t think they should kiss. Ilya was all charming and cool and he’d probably kissed plenty of girls already. He could do what he wanted. And Svetlana was really pretty, so good for him.

But- this was camp. It just wouldn’t be a good idea to kiss at camp, especially not if you were kissing the Coach’s daughter, and Shane was just looking out for Ilya.

Yeah.

Shane checks his watch again. They have ten minutes of their break left.

He clears his throat. Both Ilya and Svetlana turn to look at him.

“Sorry,” Shane says. “Uh, break’s up.” He raises his left hand to show his watch, knowing they’re too far away to see the face of it. “We’re, uh, we’re actually running a little late.”

Svetlana turns to look at a clock on the far end of the wall that Shane had never noticed before. "Ten minutes left still, Hollander," she says.

Embarrassment crawls under his skin. "Uh, well..." Shane trails off. Maybe if he just runs away really fast, everyone would pretend this never happened?

"Shane likes being early for things," Ilya says smoothly. "Ten minutes before is late for him."

Svetlana laughs, a hand over her mouth. Shane tries not to scowl. Ilya wasn't *that* funny.

"Well then," Svetlana says. "I should go, let you two get back to practice. See you around, Ilyusha." She hugs him and kisses his cheek before she leaves, patting Shane's shoulder sweetly on the way out. God, and after he was just so rude to her. He must be the worst person alive.

"Bye, Svetlana," he says weakly as the door closes behind her. When he turns back, Ilya is looking at him with an eyebrow raised.

"What?" Shane asks defensively.

Ilya bites back a smile. "She is nice girl, and you talk to her like opposite team."

"I wasn't-" Shane tries, before sighing. "Sorry. I know you probably wanted more time with her. She's all... pretty and cool and popular and stuff."

Ilya gives up on fighting his smile. "Ah," he says, like Shane has just clarified something for him. He walks to Shane, leaning against the desk in front of him. "You are... hm. I do not know English word, one second." He rifles through his dictionary. Shane looks up at him, and tries not to melt into a pile of embarrassed goop.

"You are jealous," Ilya says finally.

"What? No, I'm-"

"Yes. Why? You think I like her more than you?"

"No! I just- I mean. She speaks Russian, and she's a pretty girl, and I just thought..."

Ilya snorts. He pushes Shane aside to sit on the bench with him. "You do not speak Russian," he agrees. "But is good. I learn English with you. And you are not girl, but you are also pretty."

Shane blushes furiously. Jesus, was Ilya an idiot? He'd meant Svetlana was a *girl*. A girl that was probably interested in Ilya. But if Ilya didn't know, Shane wouldn't be the one to tell him. "I'm not pretty," he mumbles out.

"You are." Ilya taps Shane's nose. "These spots," he says, like it explains everything. "You are also best friend. Okay? Svetlana is friend, but you are best. Just like you are good at hockey but I am best."

“Oh my god.” Shane pushes Ilya off the bench. Ilya just laughs at him from the floor. It’s stupid, but Ilya’s assurance does make him feel better.

Shane stands up and offers Ilya his hand. “C’mon,” he says with a soft smile. “We better go, or we really will be late.”

“Hey, Ilya, you stay at the camp, right?” Shane asks. Ilya hums while continuing to try to steal the puck off of Shane.

“I heard that you’re allowed to leave overnight if you get your parents’ permission,” Shane says.

“Yes.” Ilya manages to nab the puck. Shane tries to steal it back.

“Well, what if you wanted to stay somewhere else for the night?”

“Have to ask Makarov,” Ilya says.

Right, that makes sense. Makarov was probably Ilya’s guardian while he was in Canada. “Do you want to?”

Ilya looks up. Shane steals the puck.

“Well?” Shane asks, a little flushed.

“Stay with you?”

Shane shrugs. He hopes he doesn’t look as eager as he feels. “Sure. I mean, I’d have to ask my parents, but they’d probably be fine with it. It’ll be fun, right? A sleepover.”

Ilya shoots Shane a small smile. “Maybe,” he says. “I ask Makarov. Is not Artek, so maybe is okay.”

“Artek?”

“Is Crimea summer camp. Very famous. Many stories. There is...” Ilya pauses, thinking.

“Scary stories about Artek. I tell you at your house in night.”

Shane frowns at that. “Uh, no thanks,” he says. He doesn’t want to hear weird Soviet horror stories.

Ilya grins. “You are scary?”

“Scared,” Shane corrects. “And no. We’re just, uh, not kids anymore. So we don’t need to be doing the whole, you know, scary stories thing at sleepovers.”

Ilya laughs. "Wow. You are bad liar."

"I'm not lying!"

"Okay. I ask Makarov. Then I come to your house and tell you scared stories we tell at home in Russia. Artek. Hovrinskaya. Many many stories."

Shane huffs. He steals the puck and takes off with it, biting back a laugh as Ilya chases him with more threats about all the horror stories he'll tell Shane when they have their sleepover.

Shane's not surprised his parents agree to the idea of a sleepover. He is a little offended that they're as excited about it as they are, though. Clearly they'd given up on the idea of Shane ever bringing friends home.

He watches as his mother adjusts the knick knacks on the mantle for the fifth time.

"Just so you know, Ilya won't care that the house looks ready for a photoshoot," Shane says. "The guy barely puts his gear away in the right locker, I don't think he'll notice whether the photo frames are at perfectly equal distances from each other or not."

"Oh, leave her, Shane," David says. "We're just happy you're making friends."

"I have friends!" Shane defends. "Friends I've brought home, even! Like Erin Moore!"

"That was for a school project, so that doesn't count," Yuna says. Shane huffs. His mom is so *mean* to him. Why are all the people in his life like this?

"Okay, time to leave, I think," David says, checking the clock.

Yuna adjusts the decorative plate on the mantle so it's a little more centred. "Okay, okay. I'm done, let's go. Shane, I'm going to pick you and Ilya up from camp at 5:00, yes?"

"I thought dad was picking us up?" Shane asks as he jobs down from the sofa to follow his whirlwind of a mother.

"No, your mom is gonna pick you up after she's done with her work for the day so that I can get started with dinner," David says. "I was thinking of roast beef and veg, and some poutine. Might be nice for Ilya to get a taste of Quebec."

"Ugh," Shane says. He knows his dad loves poutine, and that it reminds him of home, but Shane's never been a huge fan. "Ilya will probably love it, though. Double ugh."

Ilya does, unsurprisingly, love poutine.

He also loves Shane's parents, which surprises Shane, because Ilya is usually pretty indifferent to their coaches. Ignores them all the time. But now Ilya is preening under the attention Shane's parents give him and doling out heavy praise for everything from the food to the furniture. He's the best behaved Shane has ever seen him.

“The way Shane described you, I'd have thought you were a troublemaker, you know,” Yuna says as she serves Ilya a second bowl of ice cream. Shane has to bite his tongue to stop himself from pointing out he *never* gets a second bowl this close to bedtime.

“Me?” Ilya asks, lashes fluttering innocently. “I make no trouble. I do not even know the word, not in English or in Russian.”

Shane snorts. “You're so full of bull,” he mutters lowly to Ilya, and Ilya elbows him.

“Well, Yuna and I are happy to host you any time, kid,” David says warmly, ruffling Ilya's curls. “You two can head on up to Shane's bedroom after you're done, leave the dishes to me. Don't stay up too late. Bedtime's at 9.” He pauses, before leaning forward and whispering loudly: “But if you do stay up later, make sure to keep it quiet so the parents don't hear.”

Yuna bites back a smile, comically turning away to pretend she hasn't heard her husband's words.

Shane's not sure what time it is. They had decided – okay, Shane had decided — that it was probably time for lights out at 10 p.m. They switched off the lights, got into Shane's double bed, pulled the duvet up and over their bodies.

Then Ilya had started speaking. Apparently, his threats of regaling Shane with Russian horror stories were real.

Shane blinks into the dark night. He can still picture it... the ghosts of Hovrinskaya hospital... the head-less, hand-less, victims of the Artek maniac... At least these stories all take place in Russia, right? It's not like he's gonna visit Ilya in Moscow anytime soon. He won't have the money for that until he actually starts playing professionally, and by then Ilya would have probably moved to Canada to play in the NHL together like they had planned.

Besides him, Ilya is still snickering.

“You're horrible,” Shane informs him.

Ilya laughs harder.

“How do you even know half of those words?” Shane asks.

“Learned to tell you story. You should be happy.”

“Well, I'm not,” Shane grumbles. Ilya laughs harder. Unfortunately, Shane can't stop joining in, even as he shushes Ilya because they *cannot* wake his parents up this late.

It takes a while for them to calm down. Shane takes a deep breath once they've fallen into silence, just enjoying Ilya's presence.

“I am... very happy,” Ilya says.

Shane turns to peer at Ilya's moonlit form. “Because you know I won't be able to sleep tonight?”

“No.” Ilya turns to face Shane too, and he looks serious. “I did not think I love hockey again.”

Shane blinks. “You stopped loving hockey?” he asks curiously. He can't imagine ever not loving hockey. Ever.

“Yes. I did not want to play. Is why my father send me here.” Ilya swallows, and he bites his lip. “Last year... my mother died.”

“...Oh.” It takes a moment for the words to actually sink in. When they do, Shane's heart breaks. He can't imagine- if his mom ever- “Oh, Ilya. I'm so sorry.” He pulls Ilya into a hug, holding on as tight as he can.

Thinking back, it makes sense why Ilya had been so quiet and sullen at the start of the camp, even though the Ilya that Shane knows now is bright and cheerful.

“Is okay,” Ilya mumbles into Shane's neck. He tries to pull back, but Shane just holds on tighter. Eventually Ilya gives up and melts into the hug.

“I miss her,” Ilya admits softly. “I become sad. Did not like anything. Not even hockey. But now... I think I like things again. I miss her still. But. I am able to smile.”

“I'm glad,” Shane chokes out. “She would want you to be happy.”

“...Yes,” Ilya agrees. “Always she told me. Ilyushenka, you are happy boy. I love that you are happy boy.” He swallows. “I miss her so much.”

“I'm sorry.” Shane doesn't know what to say. This isn't something he can help fix. He can't bring Ilya's mom back.

He pets Ilya's head, like his dad does for his mom when she's upset. “You're so strong,” he whispers.

Ilya shakes his head. Shane's neck feels wet, and with horror, he realizes Ilya is crying.

“You *are*,” Shane insists. “You're so strong. And- and brave, and- *klyovyy*.” *Amazing*.

Ilya is quiet in his arms. Shane hopes that even if he doesn't believe it, Ilya knows that Shane believes it.

Finally, Ilya pulls back a little. Not far, but enough that Shane can see his wet, red face. He lays on Shane's arm. "Irina," he murmurs. "My mother name. She... if she met, she would like you."

"I'm sure I would have loved her too," Shane says earnestly. She was probably really cool to have raised a son like Ilya. "Do you want to talk about her?"

Ilya thinks about it, then shakes his head. He presses his hand to his chest. "Hurts. Still. Maybe... not today."

"Not today," Shane agrees. "You can tell me in the future. If you want to. Any time."

"We will be friends still? I will go back Russia. "

Shane feels like his heart hurts. Both at the idea of Ilya leaving and how vulnerable he looks. Ilya's usually so full of confidence and bravado. He looks so small now.

Shane nods. "We will be friends," he says, determined. "Always. Besides, we're both gonna be in the NHL, right? Maybe we'll be on the same team, you never know. There's no way we won't get to see each other again."

Ilya smiles a little. "Yes," he agrees. He reaches out and holds Shane's face, wiping at it. Shane hadn't even realized he was tearing up.

"Sorry," Shane mumbles.

"Is okay." Ilya pushes Shane's bangs off his face. "No worry. I will work hard. Best player. You can be second best."

Shane laughs wetly, shoving at Ilya's shoulder. "Shut up. I'm gonna be the best."

"In dreams," Ilya says, and Shane whacks him with a pillow. Then he tucks it back under himself, his arm folded under the pillow. Ilya settles down too, on his own pillow. He closes his eyes, so Shane guesses this means they're going to actually sleep now.

"Goodnight," Shane says softly.

Ilya smiles. "Yes. Good night, Shane."

There must be a couple of feet between them. Shane kind of wants to get closer, and maybe hold Ilya until he sleeps. That's weird, though, right? But it's just... he's never seen Ilya cry like that before. He's never seen *anyone* cry like that before. He wants Ilya to know that maybe Shane doesn't get it, but he is here, and he wants to help.

He shifts in place. No, he decides. It would be weird. Sharing a bed with another boy is one thing. *Cuddling* is probably too far. They aren't kids anymore.

Ilya opens his eyes by a small fraction. "What."

"Hm?"

“You are... like puck. Sliding all over ice.”

Shane huffs a laugh. Ilya has some inventive ways of getting around his limited vocabulary. “It's nothing,” Shane assures.

Ilya sighs loudly. Then he reaches over and drags Shane close, dropping a heavy hand over him. “I am okay. Stop worry. Sleep.”

Shane swallows, flushing. Carefully, like he might get told off for it, he wraps his arm around Ilya too.

Ilya just sighs, tucking Shane under his chin. Shane smiles. “You're the best friend I've ever had,” he whispers.

“Yes,” Ilya murmurs. “You too. Also most annoying.”

Shane laughs softly and closes his eyes. Ilya's breaths are slow and soft against his hair, and Ilya's hand is softening where it's around Shane too. Between one breath and the next, Shane finds himself falling asleep.

The three weeks of camp pass by far too quickly.

Shane could swear it must have been two days ago that he first saw Ilya Rozanov, sullen and rough-spoken as he introduced himself. How is it already time to say goodbye to him? To the best friend Shane has ever had?

Shane swallows and shakes himself out of it, realising he's managed to completely zone out while getting his gear on. He has to stay focused. He has a game to play in.

While practice games are most often 3v3 at camp, they always make sure to end the year with a full roster. Exhibition day is a big deal— the stands are filled with friends and family to impress and scouts to entice. For the ones that make the team, at least.

Ilya and Shane obviously do. It's Reds vs. Blues, and the two of them are on the former.

“Hollander!” Ilya says, swinging an arm around Shane's shoulder. “We will win. If you get your gear on in time.”

“I'm literally ready,” Shane huffs. He is! He has everything but his helmet on, the same as Ilya. He wears his own helmet. Then he takes Ilya's from his hands and stuffs it over Ilya's unruly curls.

“We will kick ass, yes?” Ilya asks.

“Shut up,” Shane snorts. Then he bonks his helmet against Ilya's. “But yes. Poor Blues, we're going to wipe the floor with them.”

Ilya shoots Shane a wide grin.

It's go time.

They get off to a good start, sort of. Their team clicks, they're making good plays. Red definitely has the stronger offensive

However, Blue has a much stronger defense. This makes a difference, a pretty damn good one. Red's goalie, Roy, is decent. Blue's goaltender, Kim, on the other hand... he's agile, a quick thinker, and also has great instincts.

They get a good start, with Ilya netting a quick goal right at the start, and Lawson managing another soon after. However, as the game continues, Shane can see his teammates' energy waning.

Sitting on the bench, he bounces his foot, agitated. “How are Blue's defensemen still so full of energy?” He mutters to Ilya lowly.

“They are elder,” Ilya shrugs. It's true. A couple of years of training makes a huge difference this young. “We can get past them though. We are smarter.”

“Sure,” Shane agrees. “Martin and Smith will shift in with us, and we can get past them with a bit of effort. It's Kim I'm worried about.”

Ilya hums, still watching the ice carefully. “He is very smart,” he says. “Very good at seeing where puck is coming from. And also has long arms.”

Shane groans. He wants to win so bad. He knows Ilya has to go back to Russia after camp, so he really wants to send Ilya off with a good memory. He wants Ilya to think of this summer and smile, and remember it forever. He wants Ilya to remember *him* forever.

There's three minutes on the clock.

He needs to win this. He *needs* to win this. He takes a deep breath. They're gonna shift in soon, him and Ilya. Martin and Smith are

He could... it would be risky, but if he pulls this trick off...

There's no way Ilya would ever forget him then.

“I have a plan,” Shane tells Ilya when they're getting ready to shift in. “Assist me, okay? Get defense on you in front of the net and pass me the puck, if you can.”

Ilya shoots him a questioning look, but he nods. Shane smiles. Ilya always has his back.

They don't need to even talk to communicate.

They've got the puck. *Ilya* has the puck. He makes his way towards the goal, Martin and Smith on him. *Ilya* has an opportunity to make a shot, though.

Don't, Shane thinks. *You won't get it past Kim. Let me.*

Ilya makes to score - no, it's a feint. Kim falls for it, protecting the left of the goal. Instead, *Ilya* passes the puck to where Shane's positioned near the left of the goalpost.

Yes. Shane's heart beats faster in his chest. He might be able to do this. He might actually be able to pull this off.

He makes as if forced to give up on scoring, skating past and behind the goal. Quick, quicker than he thinks he's ever moved, he skates around the back of the net, to slide it into the right side of the post before Kim can center himself again.

He hears cheers from the stands. There's seconds left on the clock. They've won it.

Shane pumps the air. "Let's go!" He's quickly hit by the full force of one *Ilya Rozanov* and he laughs, exhilarated, gripping *Ilya* so that he doesn't fall as they spin around on the ice.

The clock hits zero.

"Hollander!" *Ilya* cheers. "You are- wow! You are so wow!"

Shane grins widely as *Ilya* shakes him.

"In English?" *Ilya* asks, pointing at the goal.

"A wraparound goal!" Shane says, delighted.

Ilya shakes him harder. "Wrap goal! Wow!" He smacks a big, wet kiss on Shane's cheek, the way Shane has seen some of the guys do. No one's ever kissed him though. No one's ever celebrated with him this hard, like they're not just happy for the goal, like they're also happy that it's Shane who scored it.

They're soon buried by the rest of their teammates, and Shane is patted and shaken and hugged from all directions. He doesn't think he's ever been this happy in his life. He feels like he's won the fucking Stanley Cup.

The feeling soon fades.

There's always a party after the game. They set up a canopy on the field just outside that they usually use to exercise in, and there's tables of food and punch. Everyone's mingling.

Shane watches it all from the library window. He's seated on the bench just under it, hands folded on the sill, chin digging into his forearms.

His parents are out there, somewhere, talking to the other parents. Maybe his mom has found a scout to brag about him to. Ilya is probably with them. He loves them, and they love him.

Which is why it's so difficult that Ilya has to leave.

He startles when the library door creaks open, swinging around to see a familiar head of curls.

"Tuk-tuk," Ilya says, knocking on the doorframe.

"Sonya isn't here," Shane grumbles. "So if you're looking for her, you're better off checking with Svetlana. It's her cat."

Ilya raises his eyebrows at the attitude.

Shane sighs. "Sorry. Did my parents send you to find me?"

"Yes," Ilya says walking in. "But was my idea." He sits on the bench next to Shane. "You run away."

"I just..." Shane trails off. "I dunno. Needed a minute."

Ilya nods, studying Shane's face. Then he pokes a finger into Shane's cheek.

Shane huffs and swats Ilya's hand away. "Stop that."

"You are angry," Ilya says.

"No," Shane mumbles. He isn't. He's just. Upset. And he doesn't want to look at Ilya right now, even though he should be trying to spend all of their last minutes together, because he's scared he might just start crying.

It sucks.

"You are angry," Ilya repeats. "Or sad. "Why? We have won. Very good game."

"I'm not angry, idiot!" Shane snaps. He looks up at Ilya, fists clenched, eyes watery. "I'm just! I just!" He makes a frustrated sound. When he speaks again, his voice mumbled and mulish. "I just wish you weren't leaving."

Ilya's face softens. "Ah," he says softly.

"Russia is so far away," Shane says.

"Yes," Ilya agrees. "But we will see each other again, no? NHL. We will play for Montreal, I think, because your mother will want that."

Shane swallows. Yeah, they'd talked about playing together in the future, but... "I mean, it's not really up to us. And- and we don't even know if- I mean what if you join the RSL instead like your father wants you to?"

"I will not," Ilya says easily.

Shane huffs, looking down at his own lap. "You say that now. In a couple of years you'll have forgotten all about me, and like, obviously your father's opinion is gonna matter more than mine."

"Shane." Ilya grips Shane's chin and forces him to look up and meet Ilya's eyes. "I will not. Okay? We will see each other again."

Shane swallows, and his eyes water. "You won't forget me?" he asks softly. It sounds pathetic even to his own ears.

Ilya's lips twitch, and he pulls Shane into a hug. "No," he says, pulling back. "Best friends, yes? I will remember the boring Hollander who score wrap goal at camp."

"Wraparound goal," Shane corrects.

"The boring Hollander who correct my English all the time," Ilya says. "I will hear your voice any time I try to speak this language."

Shane snuffles and laughs a small, watery laugh. "I'll keep up with learning Russian."

"Yes," Ilya agrees. "Then we will be able to talk secrets on ice. If there is no other Russians."

"I'll send you emails," Shane promises.

"You have email?" Ilya asks, surprised.

"Yes. I mail hockey players sometimes. About their plays."

"Wow." Ilya's eyebrows rise higher on his forehead. "You get email back?"

"Uh," Shane says. "Well. Not yet."

"You are so..." Ilya shakes his head fondly. "Maybe good for you to have friend like me. Teach you how to be not boring."

Shane smiles, and he shoves at Ilya. "Yeah well maybe you need a friend like me to make sure you don't get into *too* much trouble." Then he drops his head on Ilya's shoulder. "I'll miss you."

"Miss you too," Ilya says softly. "But will not be long. Come. Your parents say we have dinner at your house now, and then I go to camp." He wipes at Shane's face with his sleeve. "So keep crying for after dinner. We will get more... uh..."

“Dessert?” Shane guesses.

“Yes.” Ilya grabs Shane's hand and stands, pulling him up too. “Come, Hollander. I will email every day and write everything to you. In Russian. Be good practice for you. And then soon we will see each other again, yes?”

Shane nods, pulling Ilya into a tight hug. Like if he can squeeze Ilya hard enough, he can absorb a piece of him to keep right in his chest all the time. Ilya hugs back just as hard, and Shane wonders if maybe Ilya is just putting up a brave face for him.

He sighs softly before pulling away. “Okay,” he says with a small smile. “Okay. And I won't forget you too, you know? I'll email you every single day, every boring detail of my life.”

“Yes, thank you,” Ilya says sarcastically, but Shane thinks he might be a little grateful for the assurance.

Yeah. They'd be alright.

December, 2008 — Regina

After the practice, Ilya showers and dresses quickly. He heads back out into the rink to stand behind the glass and look at the stands. Shane and his parents were gone. The Slovakian team has taken to the ice for their practice.

Damn.

Ilya shrugs and makes his way to a vending machine. He buys himself a bottle of Coke and wonders if he could slip outside for a quick smoke before getting back on the bus.

He zips his Team Russia parka up to his chin and slips out a side door. It's cold as fuck outside. He presses himself against the wall of the brick building, stuffs his Coke into his coat pocket, and pulls out a cigarette and a lighter.

“You're supposed to smoke over there,” someone says. The voice is a familiar one.

He turns to see the person that he now definitely recognises as Shane Hollander. He has a very distinct look. Jet black hair, dark eyes. His skin is flawless, distractingly so. Smooth and tan with—and this is his most striking feature—a smattering of dark freckles across his nose and cheekbones.

He knew this face, once. Now it is so much more grown. Of course, he has seen pictures since, but it's not the same as seeing him — seeing his freckles — in person.

“What?” Ilya says. Even the single word sounded stupid with his accent.

“The smoking area is over there.” Shane points to a far corner of the parking lot, next to a large snowbank. It looks very windy there.

“You are such a dick,” Ilya says roughly.

Then he smiles, and Shane grins back widely, and Ilya pulls him into a hug. He picks Shane and swings him around, and Shane hits his back.

“Put me down! Oh my god, Ilya-”

“No,” Ilya says, but he puts Shane down anyway. He wants to see his face again.

“Sorry for disappearing. Mum and dad wanted to grab — well, they've got a present for you back at the car. It was meant to be a surprise.”

Ilya snorts. He cannot stop smiling. “Will not be a surprise now.”

“No,” Shane agrees, grinning back. He looks so beautiful.

“I have gift for you too,” Ilya says.

Shane's grin fades a little, eyes darkening. “Yeah,” he says, voice a little hoarse. He wets his lips, looking around them to make sure they're alone. “You, uh. You did promise me something when we met in person.”

“Yes, I said I will bring you special vodka from Russia,” Ilya says. Shane scowls immediately, nose scrunching and pushing his freckles together.

Ilya laughs softly. Then he wraps a hand around the back of Shane's neck. “Come here,” he murmurs, and he tugs him into a sweet, slow kiss, the one Ilya has been dreaming of giving Shane for years.

It's definitely worth the wait.

End Notes

This fic was inspired by [this baby Hollanov art @Verlierer_exe on twitter](#). Please check it out, it's adorable.

The horror stories Ilya tells Shane are from [Zhunya ASMR's Scary Soviet Urban Legends video](#).

Thank you for reading! I'd love to hear what you thought of the fic. I had a lot of fun writing a hollanov that was younger and a lot more vulnerable. Feel free to point out any flaws, particularly in regards to hockey and the Russian language because I have zero familiarity with either.

If you're in the mood for something that's a little more angsty, I have a hurt/comfort fic where Shane loses his memories after the Marlow hit: [Signs of Life](#).

Oh also I'm [@jukoist](#) on twt and [@beforejuko](#) on tumblr come say hi

Edit: now with ADORABLE [fanart by @aitanizz on twitter!](#)

Works inspired by this one

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