memento amoris

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77556876.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov, Hayden Pike & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander, Hayden Pike
Additional Tags:	Hurt/Comfort, Hurt Shane Hollander, Worried Ilya Rozanov, Mutual Pining, Light Angst, Happy Ending, Injury, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Good Friend Hayden Pike, High Shane Hollander, Idiots in Love, Flirting, Confessions, Hospitals
Language:	English
Series:	Part 5 of ejo + hr
Collections:	My favs to reread someday, *Heated rivalry melts my heart*
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-12 Words: 3,930 Chapters: 1/1

memento amoris

by beetlesandstars, kryptonian

Summary

A squawk, followed by an incensed, “Jesus! It’s Hayden! Hayden *Pike!* Shane’s *best friend?* A guy you’ve played against for years?”

Oh. This is… not good.

Ilya very slowly lowers himself down on the bed, spine straight. “Why are you calling?”

Pike huffs. “Trust me, I don’t want to be.”

“Okay, then, why? How do you know… Lily?”

A beat. Then, “You’re Lily.”

Protectiveness rears its ugly head. Severely, Ilya declares, “This is none of your fucking concern.”

“He’s asking for you.”

OR: when Shane gets hurt on the ice, Hayden Pike reaches out to Boston Lily.

Notes

hello hollanov divas, it’s cj and jo, back again. we have nothing to say. jo is back in the coldest country on earth. the distance between us is an ache that can only be soothed by gay hockey fanfiction created together in the dead of night (and mid-afternoon. fucking timezones).

Cw: shane is a little bit outed in this by hayden putting together some puzzle pieces. there is no homophobia we pinky promise

thank!
enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

Ilya is sitting in his hotel room, waiting by the phone. It's all he can do. He's doing his best ignoring Marlow's texts – there's only so much reassurance he can offer without snapping – and is instead scrolling through his news feed with trembling hands.

Captain Of The Metros Takes Major Fall

Marlow Ends Metro Star Shane Hollander On The Ice. What Happens Next Will Shock You

Hockey Whiz Shane Hollander Severely Injured On Ice

Rose Landry's Ex Shane Hollander Dead?

Shane Hollander's Career-Ending Injury [CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE]

Ilya really should stop scrolling. He doesn't.

Thumbing over to Messages, he opens his chat with Jane again. His earlier text sits there, unanswered and pathetic.

LILY: *Jane. Please be OK.*
Please.
Text me when you are awake.

Shane doesn't text him back. Realistically, considering the state he's probably in, Ilya should not have expected him to. But that doesn't mean he's not waiting.

Sleep eludes him for most of the night, head spinning with every worst possible scenario it can conjure. Shane, fading away in his sleep. Shane, alone and confused in a hospital room somewhere. Fuck, what if Ilya wakes up tomorrow to a single headline, announcing the end of Shane's career? The end of Shane's life?

When Ilya finally stumbles out of bed at seven in the morning, his stomach is rolling. He catches himself on the doorway to the bathroom, convinced he's about to throw up.

And then his phone rings.

Nausea forgotten immediately, Ilya runs back into the bedroom, snatching his phone up. It's an unknown number, but what if Shane's borrowing someone else's phone? What if–

He accepts the call. Holds his breath as he presses his phone to his ear.

"Uh—i-is this Lily?" A mildly familiar voice asks.

The nausea returns in full force. His stomach sinks, fingers gripping white-knuckled around his phone. Quietly, he asks, "Who is this?"

"Fucking—okay. Yeah. That's what I thought." The man takes a steadying breath. "Okay. Rozanov, I—uh…"

Panic flares, even worse than before. He glances around his empty hotel room, still choosing to whisper, as if the walls might be listening in. "*Who is this*?"

"Dude." The voice sounds somewhere between flabbergasted and irritated. Ilya feels like he should be the one irritated, and yet, he thinks he is being very patient considering the circumstances. "Do you really not know?"

Heart hammering, Ilya says, "Answer the question before I hang up. I will get your number traced and kill you. This is what you want?"

A squawk, followed by an incensed, "Jesus! It's Hayden! Hayden *Pike*! Shane's *best friend?* A guy you've played against for years?"

Oh.

This is… not good.

Ilya very slowly lowers himself down on the bed, spine straight. "Why are you calling?"

Pike huffs. "Trust me, I don't want to be."

"Okay, then, why? How do you know… Lily?"

A beat. Then, "You're Lily."

Protectiveness rears its ugly head. Severely, Ilya declares, "This is none of your fucking concern."

"He's asking for you."

The statement winds him, as exasperated as Pike sounds. The idea of Shane curled up in a hospital bed, injured enough that he's willingly asking for Ilya's presence—whether it's coherent or not. But more than that, the confirmation that Shane is okay, or okay enough to ask for anything, almost knocks him off his feet.

"He is alive?" Ilya asks, more breath than words.

"Yeah," Pike says, voice calmer now, like he's gentling a wild, frightened animal. "Yeah, he's alive, Rozanov. He won't stop asking for you. Only to me, and like, this one nurse, but he kept saying Lily and—I-I know about Lily. His Boston girl."

Shit. Shit, shit, shit–

"But I– I saw you. Last night. After he got hit. I just thought maybe—"

Ilya had seen clips of himself on the ice after the incident, standing there, hovering close, demanding answers that no one thinks he is owed. That maybe he wasn't owed. He had tried so hard to remember that he wasn't supposed to care, that he wasn't allowed to, but Shane was wiped out on the ice, looking like he might never stand up again. His heart had sunk so fast it had felt like it'd plunged through the ground, hurtling toward the core of the planet.

To anyone who doesn't know him, the reporters included, he just looks like an empathetic captain, worried about his long-time rival. But Hayden Pike has seen through it. Hayden Pike had seen Shane splayed out and battered on the ice and seen Ilya already one foot into grief.

Throat tight, Ilya grinds out, "You do not know what you are talking about."

"I got your number from his phone," Pike says carefully. "I saw your texts."

Ilya slams his eyes shut. He knows Shane scrubs his phone thoroughly, but he doesn't know the last time he did—doesn't know what Hayden might've witnessed other than last night's pleading. "That is private."

"Are you going to come?"

"This is none of your fucking business."

No one is supposed to know—not for Ilya's sake, but for Shane's. Shane, who keeps this secret like it's the only thing keeping his world from collapsing. Shane does not want Pike to know. The only person in the world that is supposed to know is Ilya Rozanov and Rose Landry—a weird club of people to have together, but Ilya is just following Shane's lead with that one.

He has to break it off with him, has to put distance between them to protect Shane and his career, has to—

"He's high off his ass, and he can't finish the season, and he's scared, Rozanov," Pike lists, voice barely above a whisper. He wonders if Pike is still at the hospital, huddled in a corner somewhere, knocked in the chest with information that changes his entire perception of his best friend. If it were anyone but Pike, perhaps Ilya would feel a little bad for him. "He doesn't want me, and his parents aren't here yet, and he keeps talking about how worried you must be. He's with the fairies, and he's still thinking about you."

Ilya opens his eyes, frowning. "Why do you call him fairy?"

"It's—listen," Hayden exhales. "Just come. To the hospital. I'll wait outside the door and make sure no one comes in."

Ilya does not understand. He does not like Pike, and Pike does not like him. Why would he extend any semblance of kindness to him? Even if it's for Shane's peace of mind? Has he forgotten who they are to each other on the ice? Has he forgotten that this very phone call, reaching out to Boston Lily, is a breach of trust?

Swallowing, Ilya says, "You are not supposed to know."

Pike sighs. He sounds tired, all of a sudden. "About you? Or about him?"

"Both. He does not want anyone to know." Ilya doesn't know how to explain the years of history between them in a phone call. Ilya doesn't want to. Can't. He can't tell anyone. This secret, as heavy as it is, must live under lock and key inside Ilya's chest. He is meant to protect it with his heart. "That we are *friends*," he clarifies, emphasis heavy.

“Rozanov—”

“We are fucking friends, okay? Shane and I are friends. We have a long, secret friendship. And if anyone asks, you tell them nothing. If Shane asks, this is all you know. Do you hear me?”

Voice wobbling, Pike says, “I don’t care that he’s gay.”

Suddenly, Ilya is in a hotel room in Florida again, avoiding eye contact with Shane Hollander, who is perched on his bed, telling Ilya that he’s gay, that he has to tell Ilya, because who the hell else is he going to tell?

Hayden Pike is not supposed to know. No one is ever supposed to know.

He’s hit by the image of Shane in his lap, Ilya weeping silently in his arms. He wants to hold Shane so badly his arms ache with it. He wants to press a kiss into his hair, to stroke his injured cheek, to clutch him tight to his chest until all the pain goes away.

Valiantly, he pushes that memory and the thoughts away, pressing them down, down, down where they belong, so deep they can’t hurt him anymore.

“I know nothing about this,” he insists. “And neither do you.”

Hayden’s voice is less soft now—irritation returning. “I *know* you’re his Boston girl.”

Jesus. He truly hopes Hayden is not in the damn hospital now. What if Shane’s nurses gossip? What if a reporter sneaks in and hears him? “I’m going to kill you. This way, you cannot say a word.”

“He’s *my* best friend.”

He is not surprised Hayden is devoted enough to Shane to keep his secret without Shane even having to ask him to. Ilya has been devoted since he was eighteen years old. He is hard not to care for that deeply.

There is silence for a heavy moment. Ilya hates this, hates that he’s in this position, making choices Shane has no say in when he should be the one calling the shots. But what can he do but steel himself for any possible reality? He has to see him. Has to make sure that Shane is okay.

“You will keep mouth shut?” He clarifies, hushed.

“Jesus. *Obviously*.” A shaky exhale. “Dude, you’re scarier than my wife.”

A beat passes. Ilya’s muscles are all wound tight. “I will come. Send hospital name.”

“Okay,” Pike says in a rush. “Okay. Good.”

“Just to check. I was going to anyway.” Not for another couple of hours, when he could be sure that Shane’s parents wouldn’t be around, at least. But now he knows they’re not there

yet, and he just needs a brief few minutes to confirm Shane is alive and breathing, and then—

Then he has to deal with this. Has to figure all this out. It's getting too serious. Too dangerous. Too many people are involved. It was never supposed to be like this. How did it get so tangled up? How did he get so wrapped up in the world of Shane Hollander? Why does he want nothing more than to curl up in a shitty hospital chair, sleeping by his side, hand draped over the railing and fingers tangled with Shane's? He just wants to stay. To hover. To help. To *hold*.

But he's not allowed. That kind of intimacy is not for him. Not for them.

On the other line, Pike makes a small, mournful noise. "Why did he never tell me?"

They're toeing a dangerous line. "You know why."

"Because it's you."

"Because he loves hockey." Ilya swallows convulsively. "And because it is me."

If Ilya were anyone else, things could be so much more simple. Not easy, not pleasant, but simpler. If he were not Shane's career-long rival. Him being a man, from Russia, a hockey player is all one thing—but him being Ilya Rozanov means their happy ending, whatever that could be, is an impossibility. They are an impossibility.

But still, you want him, his brain offers.

Want does not mean anything. Ilya does not get to have him. He just doesn't. It is a fact of the universe, undeniable.

Pike sounds almost angry when he says, "But you care about him."

Ilya presses his thumb to his right eye. "Pike."

"I saw you on the ice," Pike continues, almost accusatory. "You looked like you were going to throw up. You were just as scared as I was."

"This is none of your *business*."

"Shane's business is my business."

"You are so annoying," Ilya bites out.

"And you're an asshole," Pike says.

"Jesus Christ." Ilya tilts his head back. "You even sound like him."

"Be here in the next hour, Rozanov. Just remember he's flying high right now."

"He is—*flying high*?"

"He's on a lot of drugs," Pike clarifies.

Ilya hesitates. “Maybe I should not come.”

“Rozanov,” Pike says, sounding more like a dad than Ilya’s ever heard him. He also sounds unbelievably, undeniably, Canadian. “Get your ass down here. Stat.”

Once, when Irina had taken ill, Grigori had refused to leave the hospital. His hair had turned white over the span of a week, like the sight of his wife suffering had sapped him of his own life.

When Ilya catches sight of himself in the reflection of a window on his way through the endless hospital halls, the harsh fluorescent lighting beating down on him, he swears he spots a few stray curls of grey dancing amongst the blond of his hair.

He looks away, head down as his footsteps land heavy against the bleach-scented flooring. Eventually, he spots Hayden Pike sitting in a hospital chair, hunched over with his head in his hands, hair pointed every which way and exhaustion hanging his shoulders low. He looks devastated.

Ilya halts, horror spreading through his chest like acid spilled, burning and bubbling as it scorches flesh.

Then, he hears it, soft, barely there, *snoring*. Fucking—

“Pike,” Ilya hisses.

Hayden snaps up, blinking. “W-What?”

“You are asleep.”

“I mean, I was.” Hayden’s jaw opens wide around a yawn he can’t seem to stop, running his fingers through mussed hair, smoothing it down. Almost as if attempting to spite him, the hairs stick straight back up the second his fingers are out of it.

Ilya shakes his head. “Okay. Is he—”

Pike glances around, checking for passers-by who might be listening in. There’s no one. Down the hall, a dozen feet away, a couple of nurses are congregating around a door, whispering to each other hurriedly, clearly paying no attention to the two of them. Other than that, the coast is clear. His gaze locks with Ilya’s. “Yeah. He’s up. Head on in. I’ll stand guard.”

“Do not fall asleep.”

“I wasn’t going to!”

“Okay, Pike."

Ilya is not sure what to expect when he pulls open the hospital room door, adrenaline rendering his movements jerky and uncoordinated. Shane is there, lying in the bed, a thin

sheet tucked around him. His arm is in a sling resting against his chest, and his face is battered, a newly-bloomed bruise stretching across his swollen cheek.

Shane's entire face changes when he spots Ilya, lighting up like a firework. He smiles, and it looks nothing like his normal smile, which often carries with it an air of surprise, like he wasn't expecting to smile. Like maybe he wasn't supposed to.

This smile is unreserved. Burden-free. It is so unlike Shane that Ilya's eyes burn.

"Dorogoy," he says.

"Hey," Shane draws the word out, teeth glinting in the awful light. "I know that one."

Ilya huffs a surprised laugh, pushing away from the doorway unsteadily, approaching Shane. "You do?"

Shane nods, raising his uninjured arm to make almost childlike grabbing motions in Ilya's direction. Helpless to deny him anything, his love, his heart, he steps up to the bed and takes Shane's hand.

Shane looks remarkably pleased about this.

"What does it mean?" Ilya asks him. "Dorogoy?"

"It means–" Shane squeezes his hand, three times in quick succession. "Sweetheart. Right?"

Swallowing around the lump in his throat, Ilya nods.

"Ilya," Shane says, pronouncing his name so carefully, drawing it out like he likes saying it. "Ilya. Ilya."

Ilya squeezes his hand. "Shane."

Shane blinks his big, hazy eyes up at him. "You're here."

"I am here," Ilya confirms.

I am here, and I love you, he wants to say. *I am here and I will not move until you ask me to.*

"How is… are you okay?" he says instead.

Shane makes an adorably annoyed noise. "My collarbone, like– snapped. And I have a concussion. But other than that…"

"You're okay," Ilya finishes for him, relief rushing through him like a herd of stallions.

Shane's hand lets go of Ilya's, skimming up his arm. "And *you* are tattooed."

Ilya looks down in surprise, only to find that, yes, he does have a tattoo on his bicep. A new addition, one he had gotten while in a very strange state of mind. He hadn't been unhappy,

but he hadn't been happy either. Svetlana had looked at him strangely when he had shown her, unsure of what to say.

M E M E N T O M O R I

Remember you must die. It had felt apt then, especially given the size of his own ego.

Now, though…

Carefully, Ilya perches on the side of Shane's hospital bed. He slides his hand back into Shane's. "I have heard it said– why should I be scared of death if death can only exist in the absence of me?" Ilya pauses, eyes flickering between Shane's. "But I am. I am scared, because death can take you away from me."

Shane's eyes grow wet, bottom lip wobbling. "Ilya."

"It is not a bad thing," Ilya says, voice unsteady. "I am– I do not know what I am to you, Shane. But I am scared to lose you because I …" Another pause. His every instinct tells him to shut up, to keep it in, to swallow it down. He pushes onward. "I need you."

Softly, unashamed, Shane tells him, "I need you too."

Silently, Ilya vows to change the tattoo. It will say:

M E M E N T O A M O R I S

Remember you must love.

He clears his throat, letting his free hand drift to Shane's cheek. He cups it, stroking the soft skin beneath Shane's eye with his thumb. "Marlow sends his apologies."

"It's okay." Shane's eyelids flutter, head tilting into the contact. "'S not his fault. I just—I just feel sad 'cause we had plans, you know?"

"I know."

"And I was gonna ask you something."

Ilya quirks an eyebrow. Shane's face breaks into a brilliant grin.

"Will you come to my cottage this summer?" The words hit Ilya in the sternum like a blade, the sharpness nestled in deep to the muscle there. He's rendered into silence, blinking once, twice, and swallowing thickly. His Adam's apple bobs with the motion.

Even when he doesn't answer, Shane is seemingly undeterred; he continues, voice airy and light as he says, "Don't go to Russia. Come to my house. We'll have so much *fun*."

The knife twists. His hands begin to tremble. "Hollander."

“Isso *private*. No one will know. We could have a week, or even two. We’ll be completely alone.” His voice drops to a whimsical whisper as he finishes it with a gentle, pleased, ”*together*.”

Ilya’s bowled over by the offer. He *aches* to say yes. Aches at the very idea of spending endless summer afternoons by Shane’s side, being able to reach out and touch him whenever he wants to. Being able to look at him unreservedly, unafraid that anybody might see him.

Loving him, however, privately, without the rest of the world watching.

“Maybe,” Ilya says, quiet and unsure.

Shane sighs happily, like Ilya’s just agreed. “Okay.”

Not long after, Scott Hunter kisses a man on national television in front of the entire stadium, the opposing team, and the rest of the world.

Scott Hunter has just won the play-offs, and as all great captains do, he’s gotten to kiss his love on the ice where all can see. A man. He kissed a *man*.

The man is standing by his side still, beaming up at him, looking thrilled, looking—in love. They’re still holding hands, fingers intertwined, a connection undeniable, tangible and physical for everyone to see, to witness. Ilya’s heart is jackhammering in his chest, slamming violently and uncomfortably against the cage of his ribs, trying to break free. He wonders, if he let it, if it would just crawl along the floor all the way to Shane Hollander’s feet.

What Hunter has done is not allowed. Not an option. Not a thing men like them get to have. And yet, there Scott is, defying expectations, defying the world, defying fear, for *love*.

Ilya dials Shane’s number before he knows what he’s doing. Shane picks up on the third ring.

“What the hell was—” Shane says—sounding somewhere half between ecstatic and shocked.

Ilya, feeling the bravest he’s ever felt, says, “I am coming to the cottage.”

Shane chokes on what sounds like both a breath and his own spit. “*Ug*—”

“...Do you still want me to come?"

“Yes!” Shane half-yells. “Yeah, yes. *Yes.* You’re coming. You’re coming to my cottage. For the summer.”

Ilya’s chest feels like it’s expanding with a glowing light. “Two weeks, you said?”

He can hear Shane grinning through the phone as he says, “Yeah. Two weeks.”

“Okay.”

“Is this because of Scott—”

“Shane, you know the answer to this.”

“I can’t believe he did that.”

“I can.” *I would do it for you. Do you know that? Do you know I would kiss you in front of the whole world? Do you know I have ached to?* In the distance, he hears light footsteps. Svetlana is whirling around the kitchen like she owns the place. A clink of glasses. A thump of a cupboard door closing. “I have to go. Svetlana is here. She is making cocktails.”

“Y-Yeah,” Shane breathes. “My parents are—they’re in the other room. We were watching together,” Shane explains, which also explains why he is speaking so hushed. He wonders if Shane is outside, or in the hallway, or tucked into his childhood bedroom. He wonders what his bedroom looks like. Wonders if there’s a world in which he gets to see the inside of it one day. A glimpse into little Shane Hollander’s world.

Ilya halts. “They—what did they say?”

Shane makes a small noise. “I mean, they were surprised, but I–we didn’t talk about it. You called.”

Ilya slumps against the hallway wall, staring at a piece of artwork he barely remembers buying. It’s a modern piece with two grey, uneven circles side-by-side. One is darker than the other, the light one larger and warping around the side of it, almost as if it’s being pulled in by gravity, orbiting the smaller one. He exhales, closing his eyes. “Okay. You should go.”

“Yeah.”

Without opening his eyes, he smiles, saying, “You will pick me up from the airport.”

“Yeah?” Shane says, a pleased little tilt to his voice. “I’m your chauffeur now?”

“Yes.” The smile turns into a fully blown grin. “And you will buy me breakfast. And tell me I look very handsome after flying.”

“A lot of demands, Rozanov.”

“I am high-maintenance. You should know this before you host me.”

“Okay.” Shane laughs, almost giddily. “Compliment you. Drive you. Breakfast. Anything else, Your Highness?”

Ilya raises a hand to his face, pressing his grin into the palm of his hand. “No, this will do.”

“Okay. Can I make a request?”

He pretends to think about it. “Just one.”

“Kiss me.”

Ilya opens his eyes. “...At the airport?”

“No, Jesus. Uh—fuck. It was so much smoother in my head. Just … at some point. Kiss me.”

Ilya shakes his head, smiling unbelievably fondly. “I will do more than kiss you, Hollander.”

“But you will kiss me?”

“Yes. I will kiss you,” Ilya promises. “Now go watch TV with your parents. I am going to get drunk because the Admirals won the Stanley Cup.”

Shane laughs, the sound staticy and breathy through the phone. Ilya can’t wait to hear it in person again. “Goodnight, Rozanov.”

Softly, Ilya tells him, “Goodnight, Shane.”

End Notes

thank you so much for reading :D let us know what you thought in the comments!

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