

Please don't take my sunshine away

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Please don't take my sunshine away

by [YellowTurtles](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya have been together for 5 months, and everything is seemingly going well
...until Ilya receives a phone call that leaves him overcome with emotions he tried to bury
...until Shane feels like he is being an awful boyfriend
...until both break down and help each other pick up the pieces.
Warning: Ilya calls Shane 'sweetheart' like twenty times and I am not sorry.

Notes

This takes place post-Heated Rivalry (both book and TV Show), and is definitely not canon-compliant with The Long Game, because Ilya's teammates in Ottawa know about their relationship already, and he talks to Troy Barrett on the phone. Other than that, there are no spoilers for The Long Game, though. Every hockey-related or timeline-related inaccuracy is accidental (note to myself: re-read the books)

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

The day starts as usual for Shane Hollander; he wakes up, has a protein shake, and works out. Even though it is the off-season, it makes him feel safe to still get all his nutrients in and maintain a good workout regimen. Makes him feel stable and more in control. Lately, over the last five months to be exact, he has found himself distracted more often than not, not always complying with his strict regimen. But his distraction came in the form of his old rival and new boyfriend, Ilya Rosanov.

"Good morning, Shane," Ilya's rough voice echoes through the living room. Shane's eyes immediately find his boyfriend's, his smile softening at the sound of Ilya's sleepy voice. "Morning Ilya", Shane answers, standing up from the couch, leaving his book and glasses behind and moving towards the Russian. Ilya, who has just woken up, knows that Shane, his little neat-freak and routine lover, already had breakfast, did his usual workout and moved on to reading a hockey-related book in their living room. Opening his arms and beckoning Shane closer, Ilya mumbles, "Sweetheart, why were you not in bed?" Shane melts at Ilya's chosen pet name for him. In the beginning, Ilya would only occasionally call him "sweetheart," but lately, he has been using it so often that every time Shane hears it, his heart melts. Sweetheart, he, Shane Hollander, is Ilya's sweetheart!

After a brief morning cuddle on the couch, with Shane continuing to read his book and Ilya trying to distract his boyfriend by poking his stomach and arms ever so often, Shane leaves to catch up with his parents. Both of them had just returned from a short trip to his aunt's place in Montreal, with the two of them opting out of the family dinner and leaving earlier. With a couple of hurried kisses and a hug from his boyfriend, Shane makes his way to his parents' place.

Ilya, on the other hand, has not scheduled anything. He knows that the Hollanders loved to have them both over, but he does not want to overstep. Every now and then, even though they always invite both of them and never exclude him, he tells Shane that he has something to do. He wants to give the Hollanders some time for themselves...time without Ilya. Maybe they would like to discuss things on their own, as a family.

Sometimes Ilya worries whether Shane's parents actually like him. In the last 5 months, he has spent most of his time at Shane's cottage or at his parents' place. The four of them regularly have dinner together, play games, and spend time at the lake. It feels very homey, and Yuna and David always make sure that Ilya feels comfortable; still, the Russian cannot help but feel like any minute, something bad will happen. Thankfully, the last couple of months have helped him feel less anxious about Shane's parents, but he remembers how terrified he was at their first dinner. On that day, he tried so hard to be there for Shane and not show how nervous he was. Thankfully, both Yuna and David reacted well and immediately welcomed him with open arms. Of course, to his shy boyfriend, this moment felt much worse, and Ilya tried as best as he could to be there for him. But the moment both of them listened to his careful correction of 'Ilya' whenever they called him Rosanov, he knew that they would be okay.

He remembers fondly how amazing the spaghetti David prepared tasted. When was the last time he ate something a parent had prepared before this moment? When was the last time he sat across from his father and felt comfortable laughing, kissing someone, or just being

himself? It felt so freeing to love Shane so openly in front of his parents; he never could have done that with his family. Not wanting to think more about his father and family, Ilya turns on the TV and starts searching for an ice hockey match. He sees that they are streaming the German league's last game of the day, and decides to watch it. Half an hour later, Ilya's phone starts to ring: an unknown number is calling him. Immediately thinking something bad has happened, Ilya picks up the phone and hears an unknown Russian man talking to him.

"Is this Ilya Rosanov?"

"Yes, who is this? Where did you get my number from?"

"Does not matter, asshole, do you know what the hell you did to your brother? How dare you not pick up his calls?" Ilya's heartbeat immediately picks up. It has been over six months since he last heard from his brother. Even though he made his position clear at his father's funeral, Ilya's brother had not left him alone and continued to text and call him. Especially since his drug problems got worse. There was nothing left to do but block his number, something Shane helped him do the moment Ilya shared his grievances with him.

"Who the fuck are you? And what is it to you what I say to my brother?"

"Listen, asshole, if you do not-" Ilya's shoulders tightened; he hasn't felt this tense in a long time.

"Who are you?" He asks with a rough voice, almost not recognising himself. When was the last time he actually got this mad at someone?

"You fucking asshole, you need to send money to your brother now-"

"Not that you deserve an explanation, but I am hanging up now, asshole-"

"Do you want your niece to suffer?" Ilya straightens his shoulders once more, stands up from the couch and starts pacing around the living room. How dare this asshole bring his niece into this?

"What the hell are you talking about? Nastya is with her mother, you don't know what-"

"Are you sure about that? She needs you, and you are leaving her all alone, do you-"

Ilya's heart feels like it's about to jump out of his chest, his breath getting quicker and quicker. He leans on the wall and slowly slides down until he sits with his knees spread out and his head between them. Deep breaths. Breathe in, breathe out, exactly in the way he tells Shane in stressful moments.

"You are such a bad brother, and uncle, and from what Alexei told me, a bad son as well, your father was-"

"Shut up, shut up!" His breath quickens even more as Ilya raises his voice at the strange man. The strange man who is telling him all the things he doesn't want to hear. Every single day in Russia, his father and brother would remind him of this. *You are useless, Ilya. You never do enough, Ilya. Man up, Ilya.* He was never enough, no matter how much he tries, he would

never be enough. Breathe in, breathe out. Deep breaths. As the stranger ends his sentence, Ilya's breath feels a bit more stable, calm enough to hear his brother Alexei in the background. Oblivious to how much his voice carries through, he says,

"Did you tell him about the money? C'mon, Sasha, I need the money for the drugs, tell him Nastya is ill or something, he won't know the truth-"

And with that, Ilya hangs up. He should have known; he should have known that his own brother would use his love for his niece against him. Nastya is safe and sound with her mother, far away from his asshole of a brother. Ilya made sure of that. He breathes out deeply and realises that his breaths are still coming in way too quickly. Breathe in, breathe out. How dare his brother do this to him? Why is it always him? He is tired of his family, tired of not feeling enough, tired of constantly worrying if he is providing enough, doing enough, loving enough. What if Shane also thinks the same of him? What if he left-

His spiralling thoughts are interrupted by another phone call, this time not from an unknown number but from his teammate and friend, Troy.

"Rosanov buddy, how do you feel about-"

"Barrett- I- I- can't-" Troy, surprised by the panic in Ilya's voice, immediately jumps into action, "Hey, Ilya, c'mon breathe with me buddy, one, two, three..."

Ilya does not remember much after that, trying to follow Troy's instructions so that he can breathe. Once Troy hears Ilya's breath slow down, he timidly asks him, "Are you okay?"

"I- Sorry Barrett, not fair to you-"

"Rosanov, are we not teammates and friends? C'mon, tell me what's going on." Ilya took a deep, shuddering breath, telling his friend about his insecurities and what this phone call had brought up wouldn't be the worst, right? After all, the Centaurs know that Ilya and Shane are a couple and have welcomed both of them with open arms. While he has to keep this secret in public, it makes Ilya happy that among his teammates, he can openly talk about his relationship and share this important part of his life.

"Yes, but- Promise not to tell anyone? I will kick your ass, Barrett, if you-"

"Yes, Rosanov, promise. You are allowed to kick my ass if I overstep. I just want to make sure my friend is okay." Troy promises Ilya.

"You know I have bad relationship with my brother, yes? It just- He called me again today. Not him, but friend of his asking for money. I guess- I don't know why, but it made me panic." Ilya slowly explains, hoping that what he is saying makes sense to his teammate.

"And what did this friend say to you? Maybe that's why you panicked?" Troy asks slowly, not wanting to scare his friend and teammate away. He knows how difficult it was for Ilya to open up. He is mister fun guy, always trying to cheer everyone up, but Troy knows that Ilya is sometimes hiding behind his jokes.

"Barrett, promise that you-"

"I promise Ilya, I will not tell anybody, promise." Troy's confident voice makes Ilya feel better.

"He said I was a bad brother, uncle, also bad son. I disappoint everybody. That I am not there for my niece-"

"He brought a child into this, what the hell!"

"Yes, and I- I think it did something to me. I feel- What if I am not good enough?"

"For who?"

"For Shane. He-he deserves the world, Troy, he deserves everything good, yes? What if I am not best?"

"Ilya, do you feel like this often? Where did this come from?" Troy is shocked by what Ilya is sharing with him. Surely, Ilya doesn't think that Shane doesn't love him?

"Yes, is insecurity, I think. I don't want to lose Shane. He is the only good thing in my life, what if-"

"Ilya, he loves you so much. I genuinely don't think Shane would ever leave you. Have you thought about telling him? Maybe talking about your family and all of your feelings, insecurities that come with that, would help him understand you better?" Troy tries to form his sentences carefully, noticing that Ilya's worry about Shane leaving him was not a new thought to the Russian.

"No, Barrett, no, I will not." Ilya pauses, not knowing what else to tell his friend. Of course, he cannot tell Shane. What if he told him the entirety of how his brother and father treated him, and Shane realised how broken Ilya is? What if he told him how insecure he feels in their relationship because he has everything to lose? What if Shane realises how fucked up Ilya is? No, he cannot tell his boyfriend.

As Ilya tears up more, and he listens to Troy reason with him about sharing his struggles with his partner, Shane walks in. He had a great chat with his parents, discussing how the four of them will spend Christmas together, and Shane is excited to share the plans with Ilya. Ilya loves Christmas, and he is sure that he will create the most magical holiday for his boyfriend. As Shane sees Ilya's teary eyes and the phone in his hand, his 'hello' gets stuck in his throat, and he takes a quick step back. Immediately, his stomach clenches around nothing, and anxiety fills his whole body. He does not know what to say.

What happened? When he left, everything was okay; something serious must have happened. Why is Ilya crying, and who is he talking to on the phone?

"I- Barrett, I do not want to tell him. Is not good for him to think I am insecure." Ilya feels insecure? But he is the most secure person Shane knows, the person who makes him feel safe and stable. Shane should really move closer to his boyfriend, comfort him, and maybe hug

him first. But something makes him stand still, not move an inch further into the room, listening to Ilya talk.

"I- What if- I need to prove. Prove that he should stay. Prove so he does not leave." Leave? Who is leaving Ilya? What is he-

And in that moment, it dawns on Shane; Ilya is talking about their relationship. He is scared that Shane would leave him. But he would never, ever-

He hears Ilya take a deep, shaky breath, "I love him, what if he-", Ilya is interrupted by the person he is talking to. What did his boyfriend say earlier? Barrett? Was it Troy Barrett's voice that Shane was vaguely hearing from Ilya's phone? "I know, I know, Barret, but-" Ilya takes another shaky breath, and Shane's thoughts begin to spiral even more. Should he tell him he's here? He just wants to show Ilya that he is there. He wants to hold him and make sure that he is not the reason his boyfriend is in tears.

"Yes, is right, he loves me. But what if is not enough? I was terrified first time I had dinner with his parents..." Even though Ilya continues talking, Shane does not hear anything after this. *First time I had dinner with his parents?* First time, as in 5 months ago? First time, as in the first time Ilya spent time with him at his cottage? First time, as in Shane spiralling and Ilya supporting him through everything? Shane didn't even notice Ilya's nerves. He is such a bad boyfriend. How did he not see how nervous he was?

"...I need them to like me, so Shane stays." How can he think that he would ever leave Shane? David and Yuna absolutely love Ilya; they even call him their bonus son. Why would Ilya ever believe that he would leave him?

As Shane's thoughts are spiralling, Ilya moves his head around in an attempt to relax his muscles, and their eyes meet. The Russian's eyes widen, and all Shane hears is, "Sorry, Barrett, I have to go- I can't- No, no thanks. Is okay, Shane's here, promise. Okay, bye."

Both ice hockey players look at each other with glassy eyes and tense bodies. No one says a word as the silence surrounds them.

"Shane, sweetheart, when did you-" Ilya starts, but is immediately interrupted by his boyfriend.

"Ilya, what- what is going on?" This is a good way to start, right? Is this okay? Is Ilya upset with him for listening to his phone call? Shane tries desperately not to hyperventilate, but at the moment, all he can think about is the worst-case scenario. What if Shane hadn't noticed how unhappy Ilya is? What if Ilya feels like-

"Sweetheart, everything is okay. Nothing is wrong." Ilya exclaims, putting on a fake, strained smile and slowly walking to his boyfriend, curious about how much his partner heard of the phone call. Once he is close enough to touch Shane's hand, Shane moves a step back and meets Ilya's surprised eyes.

"You- You think I would leave you?" Even though he tries so hard, Shane can't help but sound betrayed.

"I- is not true, Shane. Why don't you-"

Ilya attempts to touch his boyfriend once more, but Shane moves out of the way. His thoughts blur; he does not remember all the questions he asks his boyfriend in this moment.

"I-I heard what you told Barrett, and I didn't even know, and I didn't realise that you were so stressed and terrified of the talk, I- I was so up in my head, I didn't even notice-"

"Sweetheart, is okay, it is not your fault."

"Ilya, I- You know they love you, right? They would have never said that I should leave you, but even if they did, I would have convinced them, and I would have-"

"Please, Shane, let's sit down and-"

"I would have shown them how much you mean to me, and how much I love you-"

"I know that, of course, I know-"

"But do you? I- We said we would be honest."

Ilya did not have an answer to Shane's last sentence. His boyfriend is right, they did promise at the cottage, and Ilya hasn't been honest with Shane. Well, he hasn't lied to his boyfriend, but he also hasn't told him about all the dark places his mind sometimes goes to. He hasn't told him about how insecure he feels all the time because Shane is so perfect, and how can he keep up with such a perfect human being and his perfect family? Ilya never had anything perfect; everything in his life has been messy, unexpected and gruesome. How can he tell his boyfriend that he feels like he is putting a stain on him and his family?

"Why didn't you-, Ilya, why am I hearing about this for the first time?" Shane asks quickly, not trusting himself to continue talking nor to hold Ilya's gaze. He quickly moves a couple of steps away and tries to control his breathing.

"I did not want to make it about me, Shane. Sweetheart, you were so nervous, and I wanted to be there for you. Was not too bad moment for me, promise. I was just little insecure. I know how hard it was for you; that is why I didn't tell." This does not make Shane feel better. He can't believe that Ilya, even though he was also worried, did not once mention this to Shane before or after dinner. They promised they would be honest with each other. Not once has Ilya mentioned anything about being scared that he would leave. That Shane would actually leave him if his parents disapproved.

"I just-, Ilya, I don't know why-, I-I I don't know what to say." Shane's eyes were quickly filling up with tears, overwhelmed once more and incredibly aware of how this is exactly what he does not want to happen right now. He doesn't want to make it about his feelings...again. "I'm sorry," Shane whispers, as Ilya moves two quick steps towards him and hugs him to his body. Shane finds himself in his boyfriend's embrace, and now the tears are actually falling, and that makes him feel even worse. He does not want his boyfriend to feel like this. Has he been feeling like this all along? "I'm sorry, Ilya. I-I promise I am sorry, I didn't mean-", as Shane says this in a choked up voice, his breath quickening, Ilya interrupts

him and hugs him tighter, "Shh, sweetheart. Breathe for me, okay? Deep breaths, shh. Is okay. We are okay." In. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Out. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. With Ilya hugging him tightly and counting his deep breaths for Shane's breaths to match his, Shane's breaths slow down. With every deep breath, Shane feels more like himself.

"I-I think I'm good, Ilya."

"No, deep breaths still." Ilya insists and does not let Shane out of his embrace.

"I-I promise, it-it is okay," Shane mumbles. "I-I...-"

"Sweetheart, you are still stuttering, and your breaths are still not regular. Please, for me, deep breath, okay?" Shane tries to match his boyfriend's deep breaths once more. He does not know for long that they have been standing there; it could be 5 minutes, it could be 2 hours. All Shane feels is Ilya's warm body and his deep breaths. All he can think about is how he failed the person he loves the most. He failed Ilya already at the start of their relationship.

"How are you feeling now, my love?" Ilya gently moves Shane out of his embrace and searches for his eyes. Finding his boyfriend's glassy eyes, he moves his fingers gently over his cheeks, trying to dry the tears as much as he can.

"I'm okay, I think."

Always the caretaker and fixer, Ilya softly asks, "Sure? Maybe I can make tea, or maybe-" This time Shane interrupts Ilya. Now that his breathing has come back to normal, or as normal and calm as it will get in this moment, Shane needs to make Ilya understand.

"Ilya, I will never leave you. You know that, right?"

"Sweetheart, please-"

"No, no, you need to understand, Ilya, I will never leave you. Even if you want me to, I will be stuck to you. I know how much you sacrificed to be with me. New team, new country, we cannot tell the world even though I want to scream it at the top of my lungs, I know this is a lot, and I am a lot, and sometimes I am up in my head and easily overwhelmed and panicked, and that must be so annoying-"

"Not annoying-"

"But I love you, and I will not leave you because you are *it* for me."

"It?"

"You are my person, Ilya. I do not want this life without you. Now that I've got a taste for what life with you means, I never want to go back."

"Shane..."

"No, you need to believe me. I love waking up with you every morning, and I love how competitive you get even when we are playing board games with my family. And I love how

every day you try to make me laugh through your bad jokes and how much you care about everything, even though you try not to show it." Ilya's soft gaze meets Shane's. "I love you so much, and I don't want to imagine my life without you. Do you not believe me?"

"Of course I do, sweetheart"

"Then why would you-, Then why would you think I would ever-"

Shane feels his breath quicken again and, in an attempt to calm himself, moves away from Ilya's touch to the couch. "What did I do to make you feel like this? I- I didn't even realise how selfish I was, and now-, now I don't know what to say." He says in a slightly muffled voice, head between his knees. He can feel his breath getting quicker again.

"Shane, please."

"No, you don't get it-"

"I get it, sweetheart. I do not want to see you hurt. You need to breathe, please." Ilya says softly as he steps closer to Shane and sits next to him. He slowly starts rubbing Shane's back and says, "I believe you, of course I believe you. And you were not selfish, you were just overwhelmed."

Shane looks up to Ilya, and he takes both of his hands in his.

"I was scared because I love you so much, and sometimes it feels too much, but in good way. I wanted your family to like me, too; I wanted to deserve you. I did not tell because I did not want to worry you."

"But Ilya, I want to worry about you. I want to help, too. You always support me, let me do that for you, too."

"You already do. You, Yuna and David have given me family, and I want to be worth it." Shane's gaze sharpens as he hears the word 'worth'. He wishes he could stop Ilya's brain from ever even thinking that he could be anything less than perfect, and that he is not worth enough. "Ilya, you are worth everything-"

"Sweetheart, you are best thing in my life. I just want to make sure-"

"You do, you love me exactly the way I need to be loved. You take care of me, support me. Please, Ilya, please let me be there for you, too. Even if it is something you know will upset me, please let me know so we can work together to find a solution. Whatever it is, please, I want you to say what you need to."

Ilya's smile softens, and he puts his forehead on Shane's as he closes his eyes.

"I did not know it would be this easy."

"Easy?"

"Yes, easy. I'm not used to conflict ending in nice words." Ilya knows that he and Shane still have some talking to do. In the next couple of days, he will tell his boyfriend how dark his thoughts get sometimes. How the phone call triggered something that he does not know yet how to place. He will share with him how much his own thoughts sometimes scare him. But in this moment, this is enough. Just him and his Shane, *his sweetheart*, the best person he knows, sitting and talking, reassuring each other. In this moment, Shane gives him the comfort that Ilya so desperately wanted to ask for in the last months, but didn't.

"Ilya-"

"I didn't want you to feel bad because it is not your fault."

"I know, but you are also allowed to break down and share your worries with me. Even if they are not rational."

"Rational?"

"Like something having a real reason. Me leaving you is not rational, I would not do that." Ilya's gaze leaves Shane, overwhelmed by his boyfriend's words.

"I want you to take up space and tell me how you feel. Sometimes I'm not the best at immediately understanding. I know speaking is hard sometimes, but I am learning Russian right now, so that-"

"You are learning Russian for me?"

"Yes, for you. I thought maybe it would be easier for you to tell me how you feel in Russian and-"

His sentence is interrupted by Ilya hugging Shane tightly to his body. "I-. Thank you, sweetheart." He says in a choked-up voice, trying not to cry at how attentive his boyfriend is being.

"You deserve the world, Ilya Rosanov. You deserve all the good things."

"Shane-"

"Solnyshko, you are the best thing that could have happened to me. You are worth everything, do not ever question that, okay?"

"Okay." Overwhelmed by the pet name and Shane's words, Ilya does not know what to say. Did Shane know that his mother used to call him her little sunshine? As their gaze meets, Ilya gives Shane a quick kiss and holds his hand gently, slowly caressing Shane's hand with his thumb.

"Ilya, promise that next time you feel like this, you'll share it with me."

"Promise." Shane's eyes sharpen at Ilya's nonchalant tone. "I promise, sweetheart." He repeats more confidently after seeing Shane's angry kitten-like expression.

"I believe you, solnyshko." Shane grins at Ilya's soft expression and blushing cheeks, and quickly adds, "never thought a single word would leave 'the' Ilya Rosanov speechless." Shane feels giddy at the prospect of using this pet name more often, especially if it's gonna make his boyfriend blush so prettily.

Ilya responds with his own grin, "Liar, Russians are never speechless. We like to talk."

"Okay solnyshko, if you say so." Shane responds with a big grin, soft eyes and a full heart.

"But I'm serious, Ilya, we need to tell each other these things, okay?" Ilya nods. Satisfied with this response, Shane adds, "Because I need you to realise how much I love you and how I would also do anything for you."

With a soft smile, Ilya pulls Shane closer, and their lips brush against each other in a soft kiss. Shane slowly moves over Ilya's body, straddles his lap, and kisses both of his cheeks, his forehead, his cupid bow and finally his lips. Slowly, taking his time with his boyfriend. One. Two. Three times. Better. Everything is so much better with his sunshine by his side.

*Solnyshko, солнышко = my sun, little sun, sunshine

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

It's been quite comforting writing this and I hope it also brought you some comfort.

That being said, Heated Rivalry is the best thing that has happened to me in the last few weeks and inspired me so so much! Wohoooo; I feel aliveeeee!

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