why are we always stuck and running from the bullets?

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77462646.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid, Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Angst and Hurt/Comfort, Crying, Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, Autistic Shane Hollander, Shane Hollander Needs a Hug, Soft Ilya Rozanov, Arguing
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of it's a sign of the times
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-10 Words: 3,294 Chapters: 1/1

why are we always stuck and running from the bullets?

by godlightilya

Summary

Right now, Ilya and Shane were running from the bullets that would probably catch up to them if they stopped. But Ilya wanted to stop running. He would take bullets to the chest a million times over if it kept Shane safe. He would stand in front of Shane and protect him from every bullet fired in their direction. He would take the hit because he knew how to deal with it.

OR, Shane and Ilya can't stop arguing over telling the world about their love. Ilya is scared of being outed. Shane is scared of what people might say.

Notes

hello !!! this is part one of a two-part fic!

contains a bit of hollanov arguing, but mostly filled with soft shane and soft ilya (eventually).

there's a little bit of russian throughout, but all translations are in text (i hope google pulled through).

i love them so so so much. and i am a sucker for this shit.

See the end of the work for more notes

“This is fucking exhausting, Ilya,” Shane buried his face into his hands. “I’m so tired of this. It never ends.”

Ilya stepped backwards, feeling deflated, his entire body turning as cold as the ice he’d just come from this evening. Even colder than that. And Shane’s words felt like the blade on his skate, slicing through the ice with each movement.

He looked at him, speechless, feeling like his entire world was crashing down. Like his heart was slowing in his chest, everything was turning black and his life was fucking ending.

“Shane,” Ilya wanted to take his lover’s hands into his own, but he was scared. Scared that he would be denied and that would send him into a spiral he was certain he’d never come out of. “Shane, *moya lyubov*.”

“No, Ilya,” Shane sat down on the sofa, unable to make eye contact with Ilya and focusing solely on placing his head in his hands, using his elbows to steady him on his knees. “This is all we do. We argue. We fight. Every day.”

“So what?” Ilya could feel the tears building in his eyes. “You will leave? We will be over?”

Shane didn’t respond, and that silence was the blade which shattered Ilya’s ice cold heart. Because no answer was the answer Ilya didn’t want.

“Shane,” he didn’t want to cry. “I love you. I don’t want us to be over.”

Shane was rocking back and forth in his seat, his mind running at a million miles an hour. He wanted Ilya to shut up. He wanted to tell him to be quiet and stop being so stupid, that only over his dead body would they be over, that in no lifetime would he want him and Ilya to no longer be each other’s.

Shane and Ilya had been together - officially - for one year. Unofficially, they had been together - on and off - for over a decade. This past year had been the best of Shane’s life, and the best of Ilya’s. They finally had each other. No other people involved. No second guessing. Just each other.

Stolen moments at every opportunity. On the ice when they were playing against each other. Every night Ilya was in Montreal or Shane was in Ottawa, even though they were few and far between. Time at the cottage, whenever they had a break for longer than two nights which aligned, they drove out of Ottawa and to the place where they could just be.

The cottage was once just Shane’s. Now, it was theirs. Their place away from all the noise. Where they weren’t the two biggest hockey players in the league. They were just Shane and Ilya. They were each other’s.

And now, Ilya was terrified that it was all falling apart.

“Tell me you love me back,” Ilya had never asked for this before. He’d never had to. “Please, *moya lyubov*. Sweetheart. Tell me.”

Shane lifted his head so that their eyes would meet, and Ilya had to hold himself upwards to prevent his body from collapsing at the sight of the tears staining Shane's cheeks.

"Of course I love you," Shane said those three words to Ilya like it was the easiest thing in the world. Like it was easier than breathing. "I love you so much. I love you more than anything else in this world, Ilya. But we keep arguing. We keep going in circles."

It was true. They did keep arguing. And they did keep going in circles.

Whenever Shane let himself into Ilya's house in Ottawa after a game, they would argue. Whenever Ilya let himself into Shane's house in Montreal after a game, they would argue. They'd only come up for air when Ilya had Shane pressed up against the wall or pinned down against their bed, and even then, the air between them was thick.

Their arguments began exactly two months ago.

Every time, it was always about exactly the same thing.

Their arguments were always about them getting caught. About them being outed. About the world finding out about their big secret, their careers demolished in seconds, and their relationship falling to pieces.

It all started one night in Montreal, when Ilya was about to let himself into Shane's house, and someone drove past, whistling from an open window in their car. Ilya couldn't be sure, but he thought it was at him, outside Shane Hollander's house, blatantly letting himself in through the front door.

He'd entered the house in a state of panic. Shane, who was upstairs waiting for him to get to bed, heard the heavy breathing of his boyfriend from his bedroom. Ilya, who always knew how to bring Shane out of a panic attack, was having one himself. And Shane flew down the stairs faster than ever before. Ilya had his back against the wall by the front door, his hands trembling and his chest heaving like he'd just spent half an hour on the treadmill in the gym. But his breathing sounded different. It was more shallow. He was struggling to take air into his lungs. And Shane felt helpless. All he could do was take Ilya's things and push them away, take his hands and talk to him to distract his brain.

It wasn't until they were in bed, over an hour later - after Ilya had calmed down and they had showered together - that Ilya told him what happened. That he couldn't be sure it was at him, but Shane's street was hardly a hotspot, so Ilya was certain that he'd been followed.

Shane held Ilya and told him it would be okay. That they would get through it. But inside, he was angry. He was scared. And the following day, as bad as it was, Shane started the first argument. He didn't set out to. It just escalated. And he hated himself for it.

But once the idea was out there, they returned to it more than they wanted to.

"*We never learn*, Ilya," Shane had softened a little. "We can't stop and if we want to be okay, to be fine, we need to stop."

“If they find us out, we will be honest,” Ilya said. He didn’t know what he was saying. “We will tell them that we are together and that we love each other.”

“And what if we lose our places on the team?” Shane created a fist with his hand. “What if we lose everything we ever worked for?”

“Scott Hunter did not lose his place on the team,” Ilya pointed out, but Shane only shook his head and hung it backwards as he let out a groan.

“Scott Hunter hasn’t been fucking his arch fucking nemesis for a decade, Ilya,” Shane could feel his blood pressure spiking. “He might be an openly gay hockey player, but he is nothing like us. He has less to lose than we do.”

“I don’t care if I lose hockey,” Ilya just wanted to be in his fucking arms. He just wanted Shane to touch his skin, hold him close and tell him everything would be okay. “Hockey is not as important to me as you are. Is not the same for you?”

“You are the most important thing in my life, Ilya,” Shane stood up now, feeling agitated and on edge, needing to burn off some energy because of how worked up he had become. “Yes, I worry about losing my spot on the team because I love what I do. I have sacrificed too many things in my life to let hockey go that easily.”

“Oh, and I have not made sacrifice?” Ilya wanted a cigarette. He fucking *needed* a cigarette. “I have not moved my entire life from Russia to play hockey? I have not been back to my mother’s grave for years? Fuck, like I did not leave one of the best teams in the league to play for fucking Ottawa, so I could be closer to you? Is that not sacrifice, Shane?”

“That’s not what I meant,” Shane was becoming frustrated. His frustration was building up inside of him so quickly that he was beginning to feel dizzy. “That’s not what I meant, Ilya.”

“You want us to split up, Shane? So you can focus on being Montreal’s perfect fucking captain?” Ilya felt like his world was ending. He felt like his lungs were caving in, and not as a result of the amount of cigarettes he’d been smoking, even though he hadn’t done that in a while, no matter how often he thanked about it. “So you can be the best hockey player in whole league while I am stuck in shitty fucking Ottawa? Sounds like good plan for you, Shane.”

“That’s not what I fucking want,” Shane wanted to cry. He wanted to scream. He wanted to wake up from this fucking nightmare. “I want none of that.”

“So what the fuck do you want then, Shane?” Ilya wanted to *cry*. He wanted to *scream*. “I am not mind reader. So you must tell me what you want.”

“I want you!” Shane never raised his voice in any of their arguments. Not until today. “I want this. I want *us*.”

“This is my fault, yes?” Ilya tugged on his curls. He wanted to pull his hair out. “This is my fault because I was followed and I got, how do you say, paranoia?”

“Paranoid,” Shane’s voice was softer now. It always was when he was helping Ilya with his English. “It’s not your fault, Ilya. I think we were always going to hit this bump in the road.”

“But we always argue, you are right,” Ilya was so fucking deflated. “We have beautiful life together, and we can have more beautiful life together if we stop arguing.”

“I know,” Shane wanted to hold Ilya. “I know, Ilya.”

Ilya couldn’t hold it in anymore. If he couldn’t have a cigarette, he needed to cry. And he couldn’t stop the tears from falling. They weren’t quiet tears. They were uncontrollable sobs that had his entire body shaking and almost collapsing to the floor.

“I’m here, baby,” Shane caught Ilya, pulling him into the soft hoodie he was wearing, and caressing his cheek. “Shh, stop your crying, baby. Just breathe.”

“*Ya tebya lyublyu*,” Ilya’s words caught in his throat, but Shane could make it out. “I’m sorry.”

Ilya wanted to ask Shane if he would think about telling people, but deep down, he knew Shane would say no. And they’d start this vicious cycle again.

Their time at the cottage was supposed to be calm and peaceful. The outside world was supposed to be the furthest thing from their minds, the one thing that didn’t exist. But right now, it was the only thing.

Ilya knew that nothing would ever make him change his mind about Shane. He grew up with his father and his brother, and even though he was vulnerable and soft and desperate to be loved like he was by Shane, he could take the backlash. He could take the comments that reduced him to nothing but a piece of shit. Because he knew that no matter what, Shane would always have his back.

“I do not want to argue with you anymore,” Ilya felt Shane’s hand brushing his tears away. “It is all the time. It is, how you say, constant. Tiring. Telling people might change how they see us, but not how I see you. And not how you see me, I hope.”

“Nothing would ever change how I feel about you, Ilya,” the argumentative Shane from before was gone. Ilya felt like he could breathe again. “But it might change how I feel about myself, and I don’t know how to deal with people hating me. Being kicked off the team would hurt me, but not being able to love you would ruin me.”

Ilya saw how people reacted when Scott Hunter came out after he won the Stanley Cup. He saw how people supported him and told him that his actions had changed their lives. He saw how people told him that hockey felt like more of a safer place now. But he also saw the other side of it, the people who called him worse than shit, the people who wished death upon him, all because he loved a man. If anyone ever, eversaid anything like that to Shane, Ilya would serve prison time.

Their words - their *slurs* - were like bullets. Bullets that were being fired with no reprieve. With no consequence.

Right now, Ilya and Shane were running from the bullets that would probably catch up to them if they stopped. But Ilya wanted to stop running. He would take bullets to the chest a million times over if it kept Shane safe. He would stand in front of Shane and protect him from every bullet fired in their direction. He would take the hit because he knew how to deal with it.

“I can’t tell people yet, Ilya,” Shane sounded like he was about to break down and cry. “I’m not ready for people to know. I’ve not come out as gay yet, never mind as gay and in love with the man who has been positioned as my rival for the entirety of my hockey career. The same man I was falling in love with during the majority of said hockey career. I can’t do it.”

“I understand, sweetheart,” Ilya’s pet names for Shane usually came in Russian, but he loved calling him *sweetheart* in his first language. He loved watching the way his cheeks turned pink and the colour rose all the way to the tips of his ears. “I really do. I am just terrified that people will find out from someone that isn’t me or you.”

Ilya felt Shane’s entire body falter then. It startled him, actually.

Shane felt sick to his stomach when Ilya put those words into the universe. Sure, it was something he’d thought about and they’d talked about before, but there was something about the way Ilya spoke that scared him.

Being outed was Shane’s worst nightmare.

Scott Hunter got to shout about the man he loves in front of the world when he wanted to. He didn’t have to do it because someone else had shared something. He didn’t have to do it because he felt pressured. He did it because *he* wanted to. Because he wanted to share the love he felt with Kip Grady with the whole world. On his own terms.

Sure, it was a little different for him and Ilya. Kip was a barista in a smoothie place in New York, so he came to learn from Scott at this year’s All Star Game.

Ilya, *well*, was Ilya Rozanov. Like, the Ilya Rozanov. The best hockey player in the league, behind Shane, of course.

The world probably wouldn’t be as accepting of him and Ilya as they were of Scott and Kip.

But maybe, being outed by some random stranger on the internet would lead to more pain and heartache than it would if Shane and Ilya said something themselves. Maybe an Instagram post, or a more professional statement. Or maybe a press conference. Shane could kiss Ilya at centre ice.

Shane wanted to say they didn’t have to decide on any of that yet, but it was quickly dawning on him that they’d brushed with being outed once, so it could happen again. And, it could be worse.

“Sometimes I wish I could be someone else,” Ilya whispered, his voice cracking in the back of his throat. “Someone you could love freely, without this pain.”

“No,” Shane cupped Ilya’s face, a warm tear seeping into the hot skin of Shane’s thumb. “I wouldn’t want you to be anyone else. I want you, Ilya. Not someone else. Nobody else in this world is Ilya Rozanov.”

“Is correct,” Shane saw the slight smile tugging at Ilya’s perfect mouth. “I am best hockey player in world. And I was made to love you, but that is not as important.”

“Asshole,” Shane rested his forehead against Ilya’s, who was now sat in Shane’s lap, legs around his waist. Shane wanted to kiss Ilya. Ilya wanted to kiss Shane.

“Hm,” Ilya muttered, shaking his head. “I am not asshole. I am love of your life.”

“You’re right,” Shane ran his hands down Ilya’s sides, his fingers resting on his waist, lingering around the hem of his hoodie. “You are. And I will do anything for you. I will tell the world I love you, Ilya, I just need a bit more time.”

Ilya nodded. He was tired. English was becoming too much. But he understood.

“We’ve got to get away from this vicious cycle,” Shane slipped his fingers beneath Ilya’s hoodie and pressed them up against his warm, soft skin. “I know it’s on me. That I need to work on things. I’ll do it, for you. For us. So we can live a little easier.”

“It might not be easy,” Ilya warned, and Shane swallowed, knowing that was a fact he needed to accept. “They might shoot at us with their words. They might call us worse than shit. They might say we are disgusting and we should be ashamed. But we are none of those things, and they do not need to see our love, they just need to know it exists.”

“Your English is so good,” Shane was rubbing his thumb against the smooth skin on Ilya’s torso. “And you are right. Every time we almost argue, I need you to remind me of that.”

“I can do that for you, *moya lyubov*,” Ilya kissed Shane softly, a delicate kiss that shattered his earth every single time. The world didn’t need to see this. They just needed to know it existed. “*Ya tebya lyublyu*, Shane. *Ya lyublyu tebya vsem serdtsem*.”

Shane couldn’t take it any longer.

I love you with all my heart. Shane learned that from Ilya a while back. He felt so overwhelmed with love that his heart was aching. He felt stupid for keeping this from the world.

“Shane, *moya solnyshko*,” Ilya rubbed his nose against Shane’s. *Little sun*. Ilya’s sunshine. *Fuck*. This love was too delicate to be broken, too meaningful for anyone to destroy. “*Ya tebya lyublyu*.”

Shane knew they would be okay. Nothing would ever get in the way of what they had, not even people who didn’t agree with their relationship.

He also knew that Ilya was tired, that English words were like mush in his brain, that he just wanted to be held. So he held him. Shane pulled the love of his life further towards his chest, allowing him to bury his face in his neck and rest there.

“I’ve got you,” Shane whispered into Ilya’s curls. “I will learn how to deal with this, Ilya. To stop the arguments. To tell the world about us. We will do it before anyone else does, okay? We’ll figure it out, like we always do.”

Ilya nuzzled his face into Shane’s neck even further. Shane stood up, Ilya still wrapped around his body, and carried him to their bedroom in the cottage.

They would figure it out. Telling the world. Loving each other in public. Living their lives.

Nobody would do it before them. They wouldn’t. They *couldn’t*. This was Shane and Ilya’s story to tell.

So Shane made a promise to himself. The same promise he made to Ilya.

He’d learn. He’d get better. He’d stand in front of the world, proudly holding the hand of the man he loved, and tell the story of how he fell in love with his rival.

And nobody would beat him to it.

End Notes

comments + kudos always always welcome <3

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