

Still, With You

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77240276) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77240276>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Established Relationship , Soft Ilya Rozanov , Anxious Shane Hollander , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Domestic Fluff , Caretaking , Post-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , Canon Compliant
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-07 Words: 2,976 Chapters: 1/1

Still, With You

by [jp_ruzu](#)

Summary

Winning their first game together should have felt simple.

Notes

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

The locker room noise had followed them all the way home, clinging to Shane like a second skin. The clang of sticks against concrete, the sharp laughter, the overlapping voices still rang in his ears long after the door to their house shut behind them. Even in the quiet, his body stayed tense, shoulders drawn up, jaw tight, as if he were still bracing for impact.

They had won.

Not just a win—but a good one. Clean plays. Solid chemistry. The kind of game analysts loved to dissect frame by frame. The Ottawa Centaurs' first win since Shane had officially joined the roster. Since he and Ilya had stepped onto the same ice wearing the same colors, their names stitched side by side on the lineup sheet instead of separated by rivalry and distance.

The headlines would be kind tonight. Shane already knew that. He could picture them forming, feel them hovering at the edge of his thoughts: *Power Couple Delivers*, *Husbands Dominate Home Ice*, *A New Era for Ottawa*.

The fans had cheered—really cheered. Not the polite applause Shane had half-expected, not the strained silence he'd been preparing himself to endure, but full-bodied noise that rolled through the arena and rattled in his bones. It should have felt reassuring. It should have settled something inside him.

Instead, it made everything louder.

Shane's mind replayed the game in fragments, moments looping without permission. The way the crowd had surged when Ilya stepped onto the ice. The way phones had been raised higher when Shane followed, lenses already trained on him. He remembered the way his heart had started to race before the puck even dropped, not from nerves about the game—but from everything surrounding it. From the knowledge that tonight wasn't just about hockey.

It was about them.

The final buzzer had cut through the noise like a blade, sharp and final, and relief had flooded him so hard his knees nearly buckled. He remembered skating toward Ilya without thinking, momentum carrying him forward, the grin on Ilya's face bright and unguarded. They'd collided at center ice, gloves still on, helmets knocking together as they laughed, breathless and triumphant.

The cameras had loved that moment.

Shane remembered realizing it a second too late—the flash of lenses, the way the jumbotron lingered on them, the crowd's cheer shifting in pitch as recognition spread. He hadn't pulled away. He hadn't wanted to. Ilya's joy had been infectious, grounding, his hand squeezing Shane's arm like a promise: *We did this*.

But later—walking off the ice, down the tunnel, the noise closing in again—Shane's chest had tightened. He'd felt exposed in a way he hadn't since the early days of coming out. Not

unsafe. Just... watched. Measured. Interpreted.

And the cameras hadn't looked away.

Too long.

Shane fumbled with his keys, fingers still stiff, adrenaline refusing to fully drain from his system. The door barely had time to close behind them before Ilya was there, hands warm and familiar, crowding Shane back against the wood.

Ilya kissed him like they'd just won something worth celebrating—slow at first, then deeper, a smile pressed into the corner of Shane's mouth. Shane melted into it despite himself, hands curling into the fabric of Ilya's jacket, breathing him in like oxygen.

"We did it," Ilya murmured against his lips, forehead resting against Shane's. **"First Ottawa win. Together."**

Shane nodded, heart still pounding. **"Yeah."**

Ilya pulled back just enough to look at him properly, thumbs brushing over Shane's jaw, his cheeks. **"How was it?"** he asked softly. **"Your first game as Centaur."**

Shane hesitated. The truth was complicated—but not bad. He swallowed, grounding himself in the steadiness of Ilya's gaze.

"I had a great time," he said honestly. **"I loved it. I loved playing with you."**

Ilya's grin was instant, brilliant. **"Yeah?"**

"Yeah," Shane repeated, more certain now. **"On the ice... it felt right."**

Ilya kissed him again, quick and exuberant, then finally stepped back so they could shed jackets and shoes. He tossed his keys onto the counter, energy still crackling through him, already pacing like the night was far from over. Shane moved more deliberately, kicking off his shoes and lining them up by the door—heels flush, toes straight—his body going through familiar motions to keep his thoughts from spiraling.

Their phones buzzed at the same time.

The sound made Shane's shoulders tense instinctively. Ilya was quicker, fishing his phone out of his pocket and glancing at the screen. His smile widened as he read.

"Team chat," he announced. **"They're going out."** He laughed. **"Bar. Club. Somewhere loud with bad music."**

Shane exhaled slowly, chest tightening before he could stop it.

Ilya was already animated, buoyed by the idea. **"We should go out,"** he said immediately. **"Team will be there. We celebrate."**

The words echoed too closely to everything Shane had been trying not to think about. The looks. The noise. The way his name felt heavier now that it was attached to Ilya's in a way the public could see.

He focused on the shoes by the door, adjusted one by a millimeter.

"I don't really want to," he said carefully. **"I'm... tired."**

It wasn't a lie. Just not the whole truth.

Ilya frowned, not upset—just genuinely confused. **"Tired?"** he echoed. **"We just won. First game together."** He crossed the space between them again, reaching for Shane's wrist, smiling in that teasing, affectionate way Shane usually loved. **"Come on, baby. Don't be boring."**

And the word landed wrong.

It always had been a joke. A fond one. Shane knew that. Ilya called him boring the way he called their dog dramatic or their couch sacred. Affection wrapped in teasing. Usually, Shane rolled his eyes and kissed him anyway.

But tonight, after weeks of bracing himself for the noise of fans and pundits and strangers dissecting their marriage like it was a trade deadline gamble, the word slid straight under his ribs and lodged there.

Shane went very still.

Ilya noticed it too late—the way Shane's shoulders locked, the way his hand slipped free. Shane's smile didn't quite hold.

"Maybe you should've married someone less boring, then," Shane said quietly.

He turned toward the bathroom before Ilya could respond.

The shower started almost immediately, steam fogging the mirror, water pounding against tile. Shane leaned forward, palms braced on the wall, and let the sound swallow him. His breath hitched once, then again. He hated this part—hated how easily his mind betrayed him, how one word could unravel hours of careful composure. He blinked hard, but tears still spilled, mixing with the spray.

In the kitchen, Ilya stood frozen, replaying the moment over and over. Shane's eyes. The way his voice had dipped. That wasn't teasing hurt. That was real.

"Shit," Ilya muttered.

He didn't hesitate. He stripped where he stood, clothes abandoned in a careless trail, and pushed into the bathroom. Steam curled around him as he stepped into the shower, bare feet slick against tile. The air was already warm, heavy with water and soap, the kind of enclosed quiet Shane usually found comforting.

Shane didn't turn around.

Ilya moved closer, slow, deliberate, and wrapped his arms around Shane from behind, pressing his forehead between Shane's shoulder blades. Shane gasped, the sound small and broken, and Ilya tightened his hold immediately, grounding, anchoring.

"Hey," Ilya murmured, voice low, reverent, as if the moment demanded gentleness. **"Shane. Sweetheart."**

Shane's hands trembled where they rested against the wall. **"I'm fine,"** he said automatically, reflexively, even as his voice cracked on the words.

Ilya kissed the damp skin at the base of Shane's neck, then lingered there, breathing him in. **"No, you're not,"** he said softly. He swallowed. **"I'm sorry. I didn't know. I swear, I didn't know it hurt you when I say that."**

Shane let out a shaky laugh that dissolved into a sob before he could stop it. His shoulders hitched. **"It usually doesn't,"** he admitted. **"I just—my brain won't shut up lately. Everything feels... louder."**

Ilya loosened his hold just enough to turn Shane gently, careful not to rush him. He cupped Shane's face with wet hands, thumbs brushing along his cheekbones, steady and deliberate, until Shane had no choice but to look at him.

"Listen to me," Ilya said, his voice firm but tender. **"I love you. All of you."** He pressed their foreheads together. **"Your boring is my favorite thing in the world."**

Shane huffed weakly, a broken sound caught between laughter and tears. **"You don't have to —"**

"I do," Ilya interrupted immediately. **"I want to."**

He brushed his thumb under Shane's eye, wiping away water that wasn't all from the shower. **"I love when we sit on couch for six hours and you fall into YouTube rabbit hole about animals being friends,"** he said, fondness lacing every word. **"You explain it to me like it is very important research."**

Another kiss followed—slow, unhurried, pressed into Shane's temple this time.

"I love when you line up groceries by category," Ilya continued, smiling softly. **"When you make same breakfast every morning because it feels right. When you get upset if I move spoon from its place."**

Water streamed down their backs as Ilya rested their foreheads together again, letting the moment breathe.

"I love when we walk Anya same route every night," he went on, **"and you point out same tree like it is landmark. Like if we ever get lost, tree will guide us home."**

A ghost of a smile tugged at Shane's mouth despite himself.

“I love when we don’t talk for long time and it’s still good,” Ilya said quietly. **“No pressure. No noise. Just us.”** His voice softened even more. **“I love boring nights because they are with you.”**

Shane’s shoulders sagged as the tension finally began to bleed out of him. **“Ilya…”**

“I don’t care if world thinks you’re boring,” Ilya said firmly. **“I don’t care if you think you’re boring.”** He kissed Shane’s forehead, lingering there. **“You are my favorite place.”**

Shane pressed his face into Ilya’s shoulder, crying freely now, the kind of crying that came when it was finally safe to let go. **“I’m sorry I snapped.”**

Ilya shook his head, fingers threading gently through Shane’s hair. **“No,”** he said. **“Don’t apologize.”** A kiss to Shane’s crown. **“Your feelings are real. They are valid. I want to hear them—even the messy ones.”**

Shane pulled back just enough to look at him, eyes red but steady. **“Being out… playing together… it’s messing with my head,”** he admitted. **“I keep waiting for something bad to happen.”**

Ilya leaned in and kissed him—slow, grounding, unhurried—like he was reminding Shane of something solid and real. **“Я знаю, солнышко,”** he whispered against his lips. *I know, sweetheart.* **“And I am here.”**

The kiss deepened, unhurried, as if neither of them wanted to be the first to move too fast. Ilya’s hands slid up Shane’s back, warm and grounding, palms pressing him closer until there was no space left to worry in. Shane’s fingers curled into Ilya’s shoulders, holding on like he needed the reminder that this—*this*—was real.

Their foreheads brushed, noses bumping softly, breath mingling as the water continued to pour over them. Ilya kissed him again, slower this time, like he was mapping Shane’s mouth, relearning something he already knew by heart. Each kiss felt like a reassurance, wordless but deliberate: *I’m here. I’m not going anywhere.*

Shane melted into it, tension easing with every quiet press of lips, every gentle shift of hands. He kissed back with more certainty now, chasing Ilya’s mouth when he pulled away, a soft sound escaping him before he could stop it. Ilya smiled into the kiss, thumb brushing along Shane’s jaw, tilting his face up just enough to keep him close.

They swayed slightly under the spray, bodies fitting together with practiced familiarity. Ilya rested his forehead against Shane’s, their noses touching, lips brushing with each breath.

“You okay?” Ilya murmured softly, the words barely audible over the water.

Shane nodded, eyes fluttering shut as he leaned into him. **“Yeah,”** he whispered. **“I am now.”**

Ilya kissed his forehead, then his temple, then the corner of his mouth—small, deliberate touches meant to soothe rather than ignite. He held Shane there, arms firm around him, until

Shane's breathing slowed, until the tremor in his hands faded.

For a while, they just stayed like that—pressed together, breathing in sync, the outside world reduced to nothing more than water and warmth and the steady presence of each other. The noise in Shane's head dulled, thoughts loosening their grip one by one, replaced by the quiet certainty of being loved exactly as he was.

Eventually, Ilya shifted slightly, hands sliding down Shane's arms in a way that felt purposeful rather than restless. Shane frowned faintly.

“Илья—”

Ilya hummed softly in response, reaching past him for the shampoo. **“Relax,”** he murmured, already pouring some into his palm. Then, with unmistakable fondness, **“Расслабься, моя принцесса. Я с тобой.”** *Relax, my princess. I've got you.*

Shane snorted weakly. **“Don't call me that,”** he protested, though there was no real heat behind it.

Ilya only smiled and stepped closer, fingers threading into Shane's hair before Shane could argue further. Shane rolled his eyes once in token resistance—then let them fall shut as Ilya began to massage shampoo into his scalp.

The touch was slow and deliberate, thumbs pressing gently in small circles, like Ilya knew exactly where Shane held his tension. Shane felt himself sag into it, shoulders dropping another inch, breath evening out without conscious effort.

“You always do that,” Shane murmured faintly.

“Because you always forget to relax,” Ilya replied fondly.

He rinsed Shane's hair carefully, shielding his eyes with one hand, then reached for the soap. The lather spread warm and slick over Shane's skin as Ilya washed him with quiet attention—arms, shoulders, back—every touch gentle enough that it never crossed into anything sexual. It felt intentional in a different way. Protective. Almost reverent.

Too gentle to be mistaken for desire. Too tender to be anything but care.

Shane swallowed, emotion tightening his throat instead of anything else.

When Shane's hands drifted instinctively toward Ilya, ready to return the care, Ilya caught his wrists lightly and shook his head.

“No,” he said softly. **“Tonight, I take care of you.”**

There was no argument in his voice, just certainty.

Shane hesitated—then nodded, letting his arms fall back to his sides, trusting him.

Ilya finished quickly after that, washing himself with efficient, almost distracted movements that stood in stark contrast to the care he'd taken with Shane. When he was done, he stepped back into Shane's space, resting his forehead against Shane's once more.

They stood there a moment longer, water cascading over them, neither rushing the end of it.

By the time they shut off the shower, the ache in Shane's chest had softened into something warm, steady, and survivable—something that felt a lot like peace.

Wrapped in towels, Shane leaned back against the counter, eyes half-lidded, while Ilya fussed over him with quiet focus. He dried Shane's hair carefully, fingers gentle as he worked the towel through damp curls, pausing now and then to smooth them back into place like he couldn't help himself.

Shane watched him through his lashes, warmth blooming low in his chest.

"You're staring," Ilya murmured, amused, though he didn't stop.

"You're being very thorough," Shane replied softly.

Ilya huffed a quiet laugh and pressed the towel once more at Shane's temple before finally stepping back. He met Shane's gaze, expression shifting into something softer, more deliberate.

"What do you want to do now?" he asked carefully. **"After."**

The question lingered between them, open-ended, no pressure attached.

Shane hesitated. He looked down at the tiled floor, then back up at Ilya. **"We could..."** He swallowed. **"We could go out. With the team."**

Ilya didn't react right away. He searched Shane's face instead, reading him the way he always did.

"We don't have to," he said gently. **"If you don't really want to."**

Shane took a breath, deeper this time. **"I want to,"** he said again—firmer now, steadier. **"I really do."**

Ilya paused. **"Really?"**

"Yeah." Shane smiled, small but certain. **"I've always imagined us going out like this. Together."** His voice softened. **"I'm sorry it took me so long to get there."**

Ilya crossed the space between them in two quick steps and kissed him—bright, warm, full of something like pride.

"We go when you're ready," he said against Shane's mouth. **"Always."**

They dressed together after that, moving easily around each other in the familiar rhythm they'd built over time. Ilya passed Shane his shirt without being asked. Shane tugged Ilya's sleeve straight, fingers lingering there for just a second longer than necessary.

The apartment felt calm in a way it hadn't earlier, humming with the quiet promise of the life they were building—messy, public, imperfect, but theirs. Shane watched Ilya pull on his pants, the simple normalcy of it grounding him. All the noise outside, all the chaos in his own head, felt distant in that moment.

He reached out suddenly, catching Ilya by the wrist and tugging him close for a kiss.

Ilya laughed softly into it, smiling when they pulled back, foreheads touching.

Shane didn't say it out loud—but he hoped Ilya knew. Knew how much he loved him. Knew how much this care meant. Knew that even when Shane's mind turned against itself, Ilya was the constant he held onto.

They shared one more quiet smile before heading for the door, hand in hand, ready to step back into the world together.

And for the first time, Shane didn't feel like he had to brace himself.

End Notes

Thank you for reading!

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