

Dreams

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Dreams

by [peiceabread](#)

Summary

THIS CONTAINS MILD SPOILERS FOR THE LONG GAME HOWEVER NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PLOT

Waking up alone in the cottage is rare for Shane. Waking up to a cold bed is a warning sign.

A year after their first real off-season together, Shane finds Ilya down by the water, haunted by a dream that felt a little too real. What starts as quiet comfort turns into a desperate need to prove they are both still here, still real, and not going anywhere.

Or

What if Ilya told Shane about the dreams he was having in long game

Notes

database of all my fics -

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K05xfC0cJCv7ujHKqze_KhG5l0KMbPKriZjNNvM4EWI/edit?usp=sharing

Usually, mornings at the cottage were defined by a specific rhythm of sounds: the rhythmic, heavy breathing of the man beside him, the rustle of sheets, the faint, sleepy grumble Ilya would make if the sun dared to hit his face too early. But today, Shane Hollander woke to an unfamiliar, hollow stillness.

The room was bathed in the thin, watery gray light of pre-dawn, the kind that makes the world look washed out and fragile. Shane blinked, sleep still clinging to his eyelashes, and instinctively reached out. His hand swept across the expanse of the mattress, seeking the solid, warm weight of Ilya's back or the curve of his hip.

His fingers met only cool cotton.

Shane frowned, pushing himself up on one elbow. The other side of the bed was empty. The duvet was thrown back, and when Shane pressed his palm flat against the sheet where Ilya usually slept, the fabric was cold. Undeniably so. Ilya hadn't just gotten up to use the bathroom or get a glass of water; he had been gone for a while.

A dull, uneasy ache settled instantly in the center of Shane's chest. It wasn't panic, not exactly—they were safe here, miles away from the pressure of the league, the media, and the expectations of the world—but it was a sharp, jagged wrongness. The cottage was their sanctuary. In the year since they had first truly collided here, stripping away the rivalry to find the love underneath, it had become the one place where they didn't have to hide.

Ilya sleeping in was a staple of their off-season. Ilya waking up before the sun was a warning sign.

Shane rolled out of bed, his bare feet hitting the chilled hardwood floor. The air in the room was crisp, the residual chill of a Canadian spring morning seeping through the walls. He didn't think about it; he just grabbed the first thing he saw draped over the chair—one of Ilya's hoodies.

It was black, worn soft at the cuffs, and smelled faintly of Ilya's cedar body wash and that specific, indescribable scent that was just *him*. It was too big, the sleeves bunching at Shane's wrists, the hem falling low over his sweatpants, but pulling it on felt like armor. It felt like a tether.

He moved through the house like a ghost. The living room was empty, the furniture casting long, lonely shadows in the gray light. The kitchen was pristine, no coffee brewing, no evidence of breakfast. The silence felt heavy here, pressing against Shane's eardrums.

"Ilya?" he whispered, but the name just dissolved into the quiet.

He saw the movement through the sliding glass door. A single figure, dark against the mist rising off the lake.

Shane slid the door open, wincing slightly as the track rumbled, breaking the silence. The air in the room was crisp, the residual chill of a Canadian spring morning seeping through the

walls. He stepped onto the deck and walked down the sloping lawn toward the water.

Ilya was sitting at the very edge of the dock, his legs dangling over the water. He wasn't wearing a jacket, just a long-sleeved Henley that looked thin against the cold.

From behind, he looked entirely different than the Ilya Rozanov the world knew. There was no arrogance in his spine, no razor-sharp tension ready to snap into violence or brilliance on the ice. He was slouched forward, his shoulders drawn up tight toward his ears as if he were trying to make himself smaller. His dark curls were mussed, sticking up in chaotic tufts that betrayed a restless night.

He looked stripped down. Raw.

Shane didn't call out. He knew Ilya would have heard his footsteps on the wooden slats of the dock. He simply walked until he was standing right behind him, then lowered himself down.

He sat close enough that their thighs pressed together, a line of heat in the cold morning. Shane didn't speak; he just leaned his weight into Ilya, resting his head on the slope of Ilya's shoulder, wrapping himself around the tension in Ilya's frame.

The reaction was immediate. Ilya didn't stiffen; he collapsed into the touch. He let out a long, shuddering breath, turning his head to press a fierce, desperate kiss into Shane's hair. His arm came around Shane's waist, pulling him in so tight it bordered on painful, burying his face in the crook of Shane's neck where the oversized hoodie gave way to skin.

They sat like that for a long time, the only sound the gentle lap of water against the pilings and the ragged pattern of Ilya's breathing leveling out against Shane's chest.

"Why are you up?" Shane asked, his voice rough with sleep, vibrating softly between them.

Ilya shrugged, a jerky motion against Shane's body. He kept his face hidden in Shane's neck. "Couldn't sleep," he mumbled. The Russian accent was thicker than usual, heavy with exhaustion.

Shane didn't push. He knew better than to demand answers from Ilya when he was like this. He just hummed a low note of acknowledgment and moved his hand to rub slow, firm circles into Ilya's back, right between his shoulder blades. He let the silence stretch, comfortable and heavy, waiting.

The mist over the lake was beginning to swirl as the sun threatened the horizon.

Then, Ilya spoke. It was so quiet Shane almost missed it, the words murmured into his skin, vibrating through his collarbone.

"Моя мама бы тебя полюбила. (*Moya mama polyubila by tebya.*)"

Shane froze his hand on Ilya's back.

He wasn't fluent. God knew the grammar still baffled him, and half the time Ilya teased him mercilessly for his pronunciation. But he had been trying. For a year, he had been using apps,

listening to podcasts, trying to bridge the gap between their worlds.

He knew those words.

Mom. Loved. You.

The meaning landed in Shane's chest with the weight of a stone. Ilya rarely spoke about his mother. Shane knew the history, knew the tragedy of losing her when Ilya was young, but it was a wound Ilya kept wrapped tight, protected by sarcasm and deflection.

Shane lifted his head slowly, pulling back just enough to look at Ilya. Ilya's face was pale, his eyes rimmed with red, the dark circles under them stark in the morning light. He looked wrecked.

"Ilya," Shane said softly, his hand coming up to cup Ilya's jaw, his thumb brushing over the rough stubble there. "Why... why are you thinking about her right now?"

Ilya leaned into the touch, his eyes fluttering shut. His jaw worked, a muscle feathering under Shane's thumb as he clenched his teeth.

"I have dreams," Ilya admitted, his voice cracking. He opened his eyes, and they were glassy, wet with unshed tears. "Nightmares. But... not monsters. Not losing games."

He looked out at the water, unable to hold Shane's gaze. "In the dream, we are here. At the cottage. It is summer. It is perfect. You are happy." Ilya swallowed hard. "And she is here. She is alive. And I am... I am so happy, Shane. I am so excited. I am holding your hand, and I am bringing you to her, because I want you to meet. I want the two people I love most to know each other."

A tear escaped, tracking a hot line down Ilya's cold cheek. Shane caught it with his thumb, his heart breaking.

"But then I turn around," Ilya whispered, his voice trembling. "And you are gone. The deck is empty. And I turn back to her, and she is gone too. And the cottage is dark. And I am just... I am standing here. Alone. Completely alone."

Ilya let out a wet, frustrated sound, half-sob, half-laugh. "It feels so real. I wake up, and I can still feel the happiness, and then the... the nothing." He looked at Shane then, his expression crumbling. "It feels like my brain is punishing me. For having this. For having you. Like it is reminding me that the things I love... they leave. They just vanish."

The confession hung in the air, fragile and devastating. It was the terrified core of Ilya Rozanov—the boy who had lost his world too young, now the man terrified that his new world was just as temporary.

Shane didn't try to fix it with logic. He didn't tell him it was just a dream.

Instead, he moved.

Shane shifted, swinging his leg over so he was fully straddling Ilya's lap, facing him. The position was intimate, grounding. He wrapped his arms around Ilya's neck, pulling him in until their foreheads were pressed together, occupying the same breath.

"I'm here," Shane said, his voice low and fierce. "I am right here."

He kissed Ilya. It wasn't a tentative peck; it was slow, firm, and deliberate. He pressed his mouth to Ilya's with an intensity that demanded to be felt. He kissed him until he felt Ilya's hands grip his waist, holding on for dear life. He kissed him until the cold of the morning started to recede, replaced by the friction of their bodies.

Shane pulled back just an inch, his eyes locking onto Ilya's dark ones.

"I am not a ghost, Ilya," Shane said, his hands framing Ilya's face, holding him steady. "I'm not going to vanish. You wake up, and I'm in the bed. You walk into the kitchen, and I'm there. We're here. This isn't a dream."

Ilya let out a ragged breath, his hands tightening on the fabric of the hoodie Shane was wearing—*his* hoodie. The visual proof that Shane was wrapped up in him.

"She would have," Shane whispered, answering the Russian. "She would have loved me. Because I love you. And she would see that you're safe with me."

Ilya squeezed his eyes shut again, fresh tears spilling over, but this time he nodded. He buried his face in Shane's neck, the tension slowly bleeding out, replaced by the solid, undeniable reality of Shane's weight in his lap.

Shane held him close, stroking the back of his neck where the curls were growing long. "Have you talked to anyone about this?" he asked gently.

Ilya pulled back just enough to look at him, a flicker of genuine confusion crossing his face. "Talked about what? You? The dream?"

"No," Shane said, his thumbs brushing away the dampness under Ilya's eyes. "About your grief. About her. About feeling like the floor is going to drop out."

Ilya let out a sharp, dismissive huff of air, looking away toward the horizon. "I am Russian, Shane," he said, the words brittle. "Russians do not talk about feelings. We do not sit in circles and cry." He swallowed hard, the movement stark against his throat. "Besides, she died ages ago. I was a kid. I am not a child anymore. I will get over it. It is... it is done."

Shane shook his head slowly, refusing to accept the dismissal. "It doesn't work like that," he said softly. "It's different now, Ilya. You're happy. You're going through all these things—building a life, finding peace—that she should be witnessing. And she isn't." Shane's thumbs brushed over Ilya's cheekbones. "That brings it all back up. It's not about being a kid. It's about realizing what she's missing now."

Shane didn't let him deflect further. He leaned in, pressing a soft kiss to the corner of Ilya's mouth, silencing the bravado. "Well, you're here now. And you're with me." He pulled back

to look Ilya in the eye. "I think maybe you should. Talk to someone. A professional. Someone who isn't me."

Ilya stiffened slightly, his jaw tightening again. "You think I am broken?"

"I think you're hurting," Shane corrected firmly. "And you don't have to carry it all by yourself. It's too heavy for one person."

Ilya was quiet for a long moment, the fight slowly draining out of him as he searched Shane's face, looking for judgment and finding only steady, unwavering care. Finally, he gave a small, barely perceptible nod.

"Maybe," he whispered, his voice rough. "Okay. Maybe."

Shane smiled softly, kissing his forehead. He held him there as the silence stretched, but something had shifted. The grief was still present, but the desperation was fading, giving way to something warmer, something that felt like gravity.

Slowly, Ilya lifted his head. His eyes were still wet, but the fear in them had been replaced by a raw, burning intensity. He looked at Shane not as a ghost, but as the only solid thing in a spinning world. His gaze dropped to Shane's lips, dark and heavy.

"Show me," Ilya rasped, his voice barely a whisper. "Make me feel it."

Shane didn't hesitate. He leaned in, but this time, he didn't stop at comfort. He captured Ilya's mouth in a kiss that was starving, immediately deepening the angle to lick into Ilya's mouth. Ilya made a wrecked, needy sound in his throat—a vibration that went straight to Shane's core—and his hands moved from Shane's waist to tangle fiercely into the hair at the nape of his neck, dragging him closer.

It wasn't gentle anymore. It was wet and hot and desperate, a clash of teeth and tongues that tasted of salt and sleep. Shane ground his hips down into Ilya's lap, feeling the solid, hard ridge of him through the layers of sweatpants. The friction sent a jolt of electricity through them both, and Ilya groaned into the kiss, his hips snapping up to meet the pressure.

Shane tore his mouth away to trail hot, open-mouthed kisses down the column of Ilya's throat, sucking a bruise onto the sensitive skin just below his ear. "Real enough?" he murmured against the pulse point that was hammering frantically against his lips.

"No," Ilya choked out, his head falling back, exposing the line of his throat to Shane's mouth. "More. Closer."

Shane sat back just enough to shove his hands under the hem of Ilya's Henley. His palms were scorching against the cool skin of Ilya's chest, skating over ribs and muscle, feeling the frantic thud of his heart. He pushed the fabric up, bunching it under Ilya's arms, leaving him bare to the cold morning air and Shane's heat.

Ilya shuddered violently at the contact, his hands scrambling to get under Shane's hoodie in return. His cold fingers dug into the skin of Shane's lower back, scratching down the spine,

pulling Shane flush against his bare chest until there was no air left between them. The shock of skin-on-skin was intoxicating.

Shane kissed him again, swallowing Ilya's gasp, his tongue sweeping deep into Ilya's mouth, claiming him. He ground down again, slower this time, deliberate and heavy, rolling his hips against Ilya's erection. Ilya's fingers dug into Shane's hips, bruising in their intensity, anchoring him there. They were a tangle of limbs and heavy breathing, the quiet morning shattered by the wet sounds of their mouths and the friction of their bodies.

They lost time on the edge of the dock, teetering on the edge of something reckless. The sharp bite of the morning air was forgotten, replaced by the damp heat of sweat and the desperate need to be inside each other's skin.

Slowly, the gray of the morning began to shift. The sun finally crested the treeline across the lake, spilling gold across the water. The light hit them, warming Shane's back and illuminating the side of Ilya's face, catching on his eyelashes.

Shane pulled back slowly, his chest heaving, his lips swollen and red, slick with saliva. He rested his forehead against Ilya's again, opening his eyes to see Ilya watching him. The haunted look was gone, replaced by a blown-out, dazed hunger.

"Okay?" Shane whispered, his voice rough, wrecked. He brushed his thumb over Ilya's cheekbone, his other hand still flat and possessive against Ilya's bare heart.

Ilya let out a shaky breath, a small, genuine smile tugging at the corner of his bruised mouth. He leaned into Shane's hand, turning to kiss the palm, his eyes fluttering shut.

"Yeah," Ilya whispered back, his voice thick. "Okay."

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