

deeply, madly, truly

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/44363407) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/44363407>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander
Additional Tags:	Ilya Rozanov Character Study , Ilya Rozanov-centric , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Happy Ending , Canon Compliant
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-01-18 Words: 1,102 Chapters: 1/1

deeply, madly, truly

by [meidui](#)

Summary

There are a few ways to tell the story, but Ilya's favourite goes like this: he lays eyes on Shane when he's seventeen years old, and he's the rest of his life.

Notes

i blame jules.

There are a few ways to tell the story.

There's the one that goes like this:

A twelve year old boy with hazel eyes finds his mother dead in her bed next to an empty pill bottle. His father tells him *she had an accident, Ilya, you understand, yes?* and it's the first time he hates him. He puts her gold crucifix on a chain around his neck and never takes it off. The crosspiece of the crucifix looks like a pair of wings or arms spread wide open, like she's watching over him, like she's haunting him.

His affinity for bad ideas starts when he's fifteen and eyeing his coach's son, and the high he chases on the ice isn't enough anymore, so he chases his brother's girlfriend and his teammate's sister and he's pretty sure it's going to kill him someday, but then he meets Shane Hollander in the parking lot behind their hotel in Regina in the dead of winter. He's beautiful, a constellation of freckles across his nose and cheekbones, but 2009 was always the year Ilya was meant to burst starbright onto the world stage and he remembers lighting his cigarette in the bitter cold and thinking, *no Canadian pretender is going to change that.*

He's only seventeen years old and he never wants to go back to Russia. He wants to be rich and famous and *loved*, and he wants to live in big American mansions and wear expensive clothes and drive flashy sports cars and take gorgeous women to bed. He's nineteen and has sex with the boy he tells himself he doesn't like, and that's the only thing that stays the same for the next seven years because he's twenty six in the blink of an eye and he cannot believe how much fucking money they're paying him to play this game.

He says *I'm in love with you* in Russian and the beautiful boy on the other side of the phone doesn't understand it. They trade hotel room numbers using names that aren't theirs and it will never be enough. He's twenty nine and he's as sad as his mother used to be and the plane is going down, and he finally admits that he has loved him since the day they met.

There's another one that goes like this:

Rozanov has been a star on the ice since he was seventeen years old. He has a tattoo of a snarling grizzly bear on his chest that he says is for Russia, that he had before playing for the Bears. It's obvious he loves being loved and equally obvious that he loves infuriating home crowds from one end of North America to the other, grinning like the devil when they shout insults at him from their seats. He's the media's wet dream.

The press is obsessed with him because he talks a big game and plays up to it. He's cocky and brash and loves ticking off the other guy in the face-off and they eat up his perfect rivalry with Hollander.

They're obsessed when he stands in front of the camera, a rookie, and says he's going to score fifty goals for the Bears by the end of February; they're obsessed when he shares the story behind the Irina Foundation, more vulnerable than he's ever been, and when a mishap blows up his years of hiding and the world finds out that he's dating none other than Hollander.

People burn their jerseys like they had after Scott Hunter won the Stanley Cup and pulled his boyfriend out of the cheering crowd, and an uncomfortably familiar kind of noise rears its ugly head online, and it isn't the NHL's best kept secret that the league commissioner hates the whole thing, but Rozanov has been the cameras' darling since he was seventeen and they have never captured him as blindingly happy as *this*, in this thirty second video he posts on Instagram announcing his engagement, bathed in warm golden light and bumping shoulders with Hollander, who can't seem to help smiling ear to ear.

This one, though, is Ilya's favourite:

He lays eyes on Shane when he's seventeen years old, and he's the rest of his life.

He likes to tease and he likes to be tough, but Shane finds his soft spot and makes a home there.

He always thought he would find himself standing at the summit alone. He thought it would always be like winning the Stanley Cup at twenty three, heaving the gleaming trophy over his head as tears streamed down his face and he *roared* because he made it and fuck his father and fuck his brother and fuck his father's wife, fuck them all, he did it. Winning had tasted the slightest bit like blood in his mouth and the salt of his tears, but it's sweeter because he knows Shane has been right there on the ice with him at every single game since the first time they looked each other in the eye, challenging him and pushing him to be better and giving him something worth proving.

He used to hate the way his Russian accent wrapped around English words, but for some reason, Shane loved it. Ilya's still leaving out his articles thirteen years later and the right words are impossible sometimes, but Shane smiles at him and says *я люблю тебя* because he's learning Russian for him and Ilya doesn't mind any of it anymore.

He never thought he would share his mother with anyone, but he shares her with Shane and there are not enough words in English or Russian to explain the emotion that wells up in his chest when Shane says, ever so softly, that they could start a charity in her name. He has been carrying his mother's weight around with him all these years, keeping it locked up in the dark behind the crucifix he wears on a chain around his neck, and Shane showed him that he didn't need to bear it by himself anymore. Ilya slides Shane's ring onto the chain and lets it rest side by side with the cross, as if Shane and Irina are meeting for the first time.

He never thought he would have a family again, either, and he'd been so bitterly envious of Shane, but now he helps Yuna cook dinner and she kisses him on the cheek and David asks him about hockey and offers him Cokes, and it all comes down to this—

Ilya Grigoryevich Rozanov has never lived anywhere warm, until he fell in love with Shane Hollander.

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