

what's in a muse

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77300356) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77300356>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Rose Landry , Hayden Pike , Svetlana Vetrova , Yuna Hollander
Additional Tags:	Musicians , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , less lowborn because they are in a less masculine field , still a 6 year situationship , wouldn't be hollanov without it
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-08 Words: 2,571 Chapters: 1/1

what's in a muse

by [ca_oc03](#)

Summary

In which Shane Hollander is the lead singer in the band Letters to Neptune, and Ilya Rozanov is a Russian-born singer, and they are competing for an AMA

Notes

deeply so excited about this

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

Shane should be thinking about his AMA nomination. Should be focused on his bandmates and their nerves. He should be nervous about winning the Video of the Year and Best Pop Group. The only thing on his mind is the blonde a few rows in front of him. Curls that he can still feel on his fingertips. A face he'd just seen a few days ago, that he wishes would look back at him now.

Three days ago, he had Ilya Rozanov in his hotel room. It started no differently than past meetings. Ilya came into his room, they kissed, and moved on to the bed. They did what they always did in hotel rooms before. After, he had lain with his head against Ilya's neck and jaw. He had his arm under Ilya's head and was combing his fingers through curls on his neck.

Things changed when the dreaded question was asked. Ilya Rozanov asked him what they were. On any other day, Shane believes it would be him asking the question, but instead, it was Ilya who broached the subject.

Shane did not know what to say. They weren't datin', but they were far more than rivals with benefits. He didn't want to say there was nothing, but he wasn't prepared to slap the boyfriend label on their arrangement.

So instead, he went silent, then ran to the bathroom and locked the door. Heart racing, the sound traveling to his head. Every other sound goes murky. He threw up, out of anxiety or fear, he wasn't sure. He sits with his head over the bowl, the grossness not mattering in the moment.

Ilya knocked on the door, asking him if he was alright. Shane assured him, claiming food poisoning and saying he'll see him later.

Ilya was silent for a few moments, no sound of movement. But after 30 seconds, he had thankfully left.

Now that brings him to this moment. In a Las Vegas theater, as he had many times before. The American Music Awards were happening right in front of him. Someone just finished a performance, and Shane can feel himself clapping on autopilot. All he can think about is his

long-term situation. The one who is most often the inspiration for his songs. He wonders how many of Ilya's songs are about him. Are any of them?

Should he text him? Would he answer? Is pulling out your phone at the AMAs weird? He looks around, and everyone either seems engaged with the performance or quietly engaged in conversation.

He feels a hand on his arm and sees his best friend and guitarist, Rose. She looks at him, concerned. He must have been too obviously spaced out.

"You okay, Shane?" She asks, rubbing her thumb comfortingly on his forearm.

"Yeah, just lost in thought."

"We got this in the bag, this is like our 5th award," chimes in Hayden on his left.

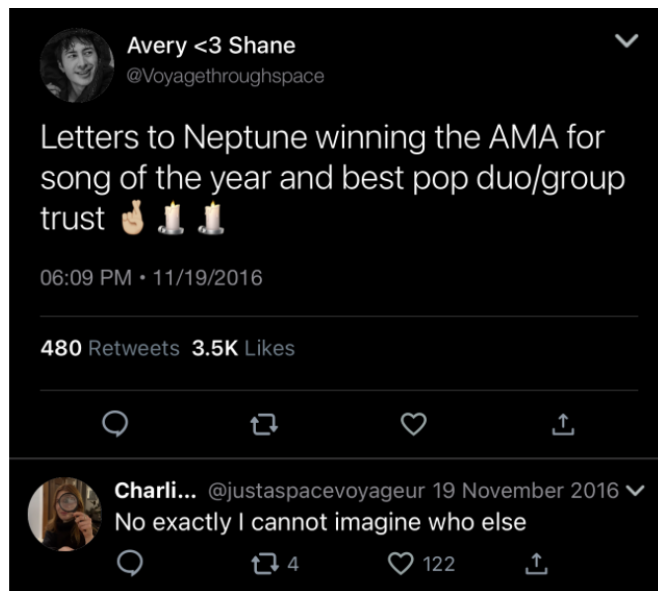
Shane nods and smiles at his friends, his bandmates. "Yeah, of course, you know me, I'm an overthinker."

"And we love you for it," Rose responds, nudging him with her shoulder, hand still on his arm.

He should tell them. They are his best friends, his family, and they deserve to know about the years-long relationship he has with Ilya.

If they win, he'll tell them he assures himself, especially because it's probably over. They haven't spoken since the meeting on Thursday. Shane ran away from a serious conversation; it's definitely over.

Rose breaks his train of thought once again. Showing him a tweet of their fans wishing them luck.



It's great to see they have so much support. Their space voyageurs were incredible. He never felt discouraged throughout their musical journey, thanks to their fans.

“Aren’t they so sweet?” Rose says, turning her phone towards Hayden.

“Yeah, definitely,” Hayden adds, then smirks, “You guys always have way more fan accounts than me.”

“You’re hidden behind the drums most of our shows,” Rose teases.

Shane tries to think of something to say and contribute to the conversation. Something about Hayden not being cool enough for fan accounts dedicated to him. Hayden shouldn’t worry because he’s happily married and has Jackie as his biggest fan. He says nothing for a few beats. Finally settling on a ribbing/

“Is Jackie not enough for you?” Shane says with a small smile and eyes flashing teasingly.

Hayden widens his eyes, “Of course she is, but I’d also like attention from our fans.”

“I’ll be sure to tell her that,” Shane replies

It occurs to him that it had been a commercial break these past few minutes; there was not much movement on stage after the performance by Bruno Mars. People around them are still chatting, and there are some workers clearing up the stage. He continues joking with his friends, trying to remember which award was first.

His question is not left unanswered for too long, as the commercial break ends, and three celebrity women came on stage to introduce the first award. Favorite Duo/Group for Pop/Rock. A category they are nominated for. How could he forget that it was the first award? Was he too caught up in Ilya to pay attention to the program of the award show?

He looks up at the stage, anticipation building. As the announcers read out the names, and get to theirs, Rose grabs his hand, and Hayden has his hand on his shoulder.

“Now, the AMA for Favorite Duo or Group in Pop or Rock goes to,” exclaims one of the women he recognizes as the lead actress in Empire, a show his mom watches. “-Letters to Saturn.”

Applause and cheers surround him, and he gets up along with his bandmates, overjoyed. He smiles as he walks up alongside Hayden and Rose. They are beaming as the applause continues. They walk up the stairs to the stage. Shane stares into the audience, looking for one person.

Blinded slightly by the lights, he can barely see him. He squints and can see the face he searched for. Ilya is smiling at him, proud. He is clapping alongside everyone else. Shane saves the image in his mind.

On stage in front of the crowd and podium, he knows he must make a speech as the lead singer. He is eternally grateful for his mother, who made him memorize a speech for the awards he was nominated for. He thanks the fans for voting, he thanks his family, and he thanks his bandmates. It is a perfectly normal speech.

They leave the stage award in hand, he passes it to Hayden, and as they walk down the stairs and back to their seats, he goes to catch Ilya's eye. The Russian is looking at him as well; he smirks. Shane looks away and continues the trek to their seats.

Once seated, Niall Horan comes on stage to perform. He listens politely, even though he is itching to text Ilya or do anything. The Irish singer finishes his song, This Town, which Shane honestly can relate to a little.

Rose leans towards him, "We should say something to thank the fans".

He nods, pulling out his phone. Wondering where to go first or what to do.

"I'll post something on the band's Instagram story if you tweet something."

He agrees, writing up a tweet. After he's done, he will retweet it with the band account. He did it straight from his own account to make it more personal, he supposes. Once the tweet was out, Rose and Hayden replied immediately, and so did their fans.



He lingers on Twitter, seeing Ilya's tweet from this morning.



His unwavering confidence has always been something Shane admired. Ilya does not doubt his own abilities. He is also continuously growing, gaining more traction by the year. Shane and Ilya, since their first Kids' Choice Awards, have been seen publicly chatting or going out to lunch sometimes. They have been public friends (friendly rivals) for just as long as they've been private, whatever they are.

He can still remember the day they met. Backstage at the Kids' Choice awards, about to be covered in green slime. He had introduced himself and was given a curt response. He'd thought the Russian was being a dick. Turns out Ilya was still learning English and was nervous about speaking.

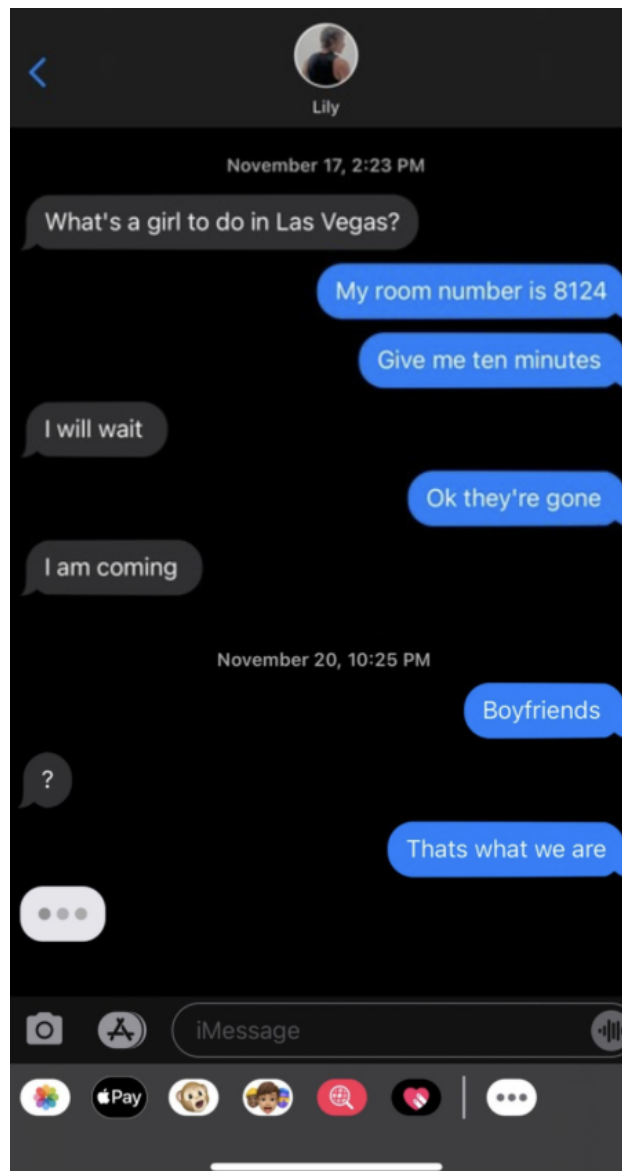
After they were slimed, alongside Shane's bandmates, they were pictured together. It got a lot of attention in the media for the two up-and-coming musicians. People loved the image of Canadian Sweetheart musicians Letters to Neptune and Russian bad boy musician Ilya Rozanov being friends.

His mom thought it was perfect for PR. Ilya's manager thought Shane's sweet guy image was good for Ilya, too. So Shane and Ilya hung out publicly. Shane's bandmates were along for

the ride for the first year. Joint lunches and excursions were the norm when they were in the same city. They did all become real friends pretty soon after the first lunch, and the sex part (for Ilya and Shane) came alongside that.

After that first year, 2010, the media enjoyed the platonic chemistry between Shane and Ilya more. Their management capitalized on that, too. Joint magazine covers and interviews followed. It allowed Shane and Ilya to grow closer, but there was always the barrier. The masks they put on in public, of the perfectly opposite, totally platonic, best friends. Nothing more, nothing less. It caused them to hide true feelings from each other until Ilya finally said something.

The reminiscing gave him the answer to the question Ilya had asked him a few nights ago. With Ilya smiling at him, Shane had the reassurance he needed. The moment most definitely caught on camera, chalked up to platonic support, but Shane knew what it meant. He is still on the high of winning an award, and has nerves for the next award he is nominated for. He sends the text.



Shane waits for Ilya's answer. Will he agree? Will he be against it? Will they have to end it all? His mind races in the 15 seconds it takes for Ilya to answer him.

One word. "Ok".

It happened, it was real. Kinda anticlimactic. Ilya Rozanov is his boyfriend. Shane doesn't respond, but lets it show he read the message.

He is still at the AMAs. There will be a few more performances and awards. He can't get caught texting Ilya. His boyfriend.

It felt great saying it in his head. It will feel better when he can say it out loud. To his family, to his bandmates, and eventually to the world.

There isn't a reason not to tell them... Well, there is. His circle knows he's gay. The issue is that he kept the sexual part of their relationship secret from them for six years. They will be so upset that he kept it a secret for as long as he has. The lack of trust would break their hearts. Meaning he should say it sooner rather than later. Not extend the secrecy. Maybe tomorrow.

As if summoned, his phone buzzes with a text from his mother.



He resigns himself to paying attention before he gets caught on camera on his phone so rudely. The event carries on without a hitch. Artists perform, he claps. People win awards, he claps. Shane watches as people he respects come and leave the stage. He smiles at the cameras when they take PR shots of the crowd.

Generally, if he is attending any performance or event, he studies what his peers in the industry do. No matter what, he is focused on the growth of his craft, constantly wanting to be better. Today, he does the same. He watches the performers, studies how they engage the crowd, or hold a note. The anxiety makes it so he hyperfocuses. Shane is sure he will be pictured with an analytic gaze throughout the performances.

As Lady Gaga finishes and Rose cheers, Shane joins her. He always admired the woman's vocal abilities and songwriting. The crowd cheers alongside them. As they quiet down and the singer exits the stage, an actress Shane recognizes comes on stage. She was in that new superhero movie that came out that year.

The actress announces the category. Video of the Year. She reads out the names, and Shane listens along.

"...Ilya Rozanov for Young Thrilling Love," she states, a camera panning the man. "Letters to Neptune for Eternal Night"

Shane smiles, holding hands with his bandmates, as the camera pans to them. He can hear a clock ticking in his head. Ready to hear the winner.

"The winner of the AMA for Video of the Year is Ilya Rozanov for Young Thrilling Love," says the actress.

Ilya gets up and begins to walk to the stage. Shane does not feel as much disappointment as anticipated. Obviously, he worked hard on their video alongside his bandmates and their team, and he preferred it if they won. But the pride he feels that his boyfriend won an award is overpowering any other emotion.

The actress passes Ilya his award. Ilya looks into the crowd, most likely looking for Shane. At least Shane hopes so. Ilya catches his eye, and he smiles and gives him a thumbs up.

His boyfriend approaches the mic. In that pressed suit. Tailored to his body. A satisfied grin on his face as he holds up the trophy. He is so attracted to this man.

"I want to say, I am very grateful for this award. I am grateful for my fans. For those who helped me develop my music. Most of all, I am grateful for my muse. They know who they are," Ilya says. Shane can feel his gaze directed at him; he knows no one else can see it, but it almost feels like there is a spotlight on him.

Shane's question was answered. Ilya does write songs about him. "Young Thrilling Love" might be about him. The same way "Eternal Night" is about Ilya. He should've guessed "Young Thrilling Love" was about a fast-paced secret relationship, but underlying feelings were there. It explains them perfectly. Denial can be so overpowering sometimes.

Ilya wasn't finished with the speech, though, and Shane heard as he continued. "You inspire me every day. I hope it can be understood in my songs. Ya tetya lyublyu"

Applause fills the theater, and Shane tries to process what he heard. He joins the applause, standing up. He knows he has to figure out what Ilya said in Russian at the end. Honestly, the fans will probably do it for him. So he checks Twitter once he sits back down.



So it was, "I love you". He can hear himself internally screaming. He squeezes Rose's hand. She probably thinks it's disappointment. Shock is an understatement, joy is another. He feels nauseous, like his emotions are trying to escape him.

"We should probably tell him congrats after the show," Rose says.

Right, he was their friend. Friends tell each other congratulations after they win an award. What do boyfriends do when your secret lover confesses his love to you on stage? This is uncharted territory.

He doesn't say any of that, just nods weakly and says, "Yeah, I'm happy for him".

What is he supposed to do with that? All he knows is, he has to tell his family and friends about Ilya tomorrow.

End Notes

Young Thrilling Love- vibes of up at night by Kehlani, fOol fOr YoU by ZAYN, and Amor Prohibido by Selena

Eternal Night- vibes of Waste the Night by 5sos, Just Like a Movie by Wallows, and Still into You by Paramore

More social media stuff to be posted later today

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