

The Drive North

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76040976) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76040976>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Hayden Pike
Additional Tags:	Concussions , Hospital Visit , Soft Ilya , Hurt/Comfort , Secret Relationship , Jealous Ilya , Protective Shane , Shanes parents adopting ilya , Sleep Deprivation
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-19 Words: 3,745 Chapters: 1/1

The Drive North

by [peiceabread](#)

Summary

When Ilya texts Shane that he's in the hospital with a concussion, Shane drops everything—including sleep—to drive from Montreal to Ottawa to spend a few hours making sure his boyfriend is alive and surviving. He arrives to find his parents already on watch, a drugged-up Ilya speaking Russian, and a night nurse who seems a little too interested in the concerned "friend" by the bedside.

Notes

database of all my fics -

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

The vibration of the phone against the metal bench was loud enough to cut through the locker room chatter, but Shane was the only one who jumped.

He snatched it up, his heart already doing that stutter-step thing it always did when Ilya texted him during the season. Usually, it was trash talk. Sometimes it was a nude that Shane absolutely could not open in front of the Metros' equipment manager.

This time, the text was brief. Typo-ridden.

Ilya: *Head hit hard. Hospital. Is fine. Do not worry.*

Shane stared at the screen. The words swam. "Is fine" in Ilya-speak usually meant "I have not been decapitated, but everything else is on the table."

"You look like you're about to hurl," Hayden's voice came from his left. The goalie was untying his skates, looking unbothered until he saw Shane's face. "What is it?"

Shane turned the phone screen toward him. He didn't have to explain. Hayden was the vault. Hayden knew everything.

"Shit," Hayden muttered, reading the text. "Did you see the hit?"

"No. We were on the ice." Shane's fingers were trembling as he typed back.

Shane: *WHICH HOSPITAL? I'M COMING.* "He's in Ottawa. They played at home tonight." Shane muttered under his breath googling which hospitals Ilya could have been taken too.

"That's a drive," Hayden said, already shifting into problem-solving mode. He looked at the clock on the wall. "Morning skate is at ten tomorrow. Coach is already on a warpath about the power play lines."

"I don't care," Shane said, standing up. He felt unmoored. Ilya was invincible until he wasn't. Ilya was the one who bounced back. "I have to go. I can't... I can't let him be there by himself."

"Go," Hayden said firmly. He stood up and slapped Shane on the shoulder pad. "I'll cover for you. I'll tell Coach you ate some bad sushi or you've got a migraine. Just get out of here before anyone else asks you to do media."

Shane nodded, gratitude clogging his throat. "Thanks, Hayds. Seriously."

"Just text me when you get there," Hayden said. "And tell that idiot to stop blocking shots with his face."

The drive to Ottawa was a blur of gray highway and white-knuckled anxiety.

Shane broke several speed limits. Somewhere around the halfway mark, his phone lit up in the cup holder. It was his mom.

Mom: *We're at the Civic. He's in Room 412. They just got him settled.*

Shane let out a breath he felt like he'd been holding for an hour. He tapped the voice-to-text button. *I'm an hour out. Is he okay?*

Mom: *He's asking for you. Just drive safe, honey. We're right here with him.*

The knot in Shane's chest loosened just a fraction. His parents being there changed everything, he knew Ilya wasn't alone and that at least meant something.

He spent the remaining miles cycling through worst-case scenarios, but at least he knew Ilya wasn't alone. Concussions were tricky. They were ghosts that haunted players for years. Ilya played a fast, reckless game, and Shane spent half his life terrified that one day Ilya simply wouldn't get back up, at the same time he knew his boyfriend had that same fear when it came to him.

By the time he pulled into the hospital parking lot, the sky was pitch black and the air was biting cold. He pulled a generic beanie low over his forehead, turned up the collar of his coat, and kept his head down. He wasn't Shane Hollander, captain of the Montreal Metros right now. He was just a guy whose partner was hurt.

He headed straight for the fourth floor, bypassing the nurses' station thanks to his mom's intel. When he turned the corner toward Room 412, he stopped dead.

Sitting in the uncomfortable plastic chairs guarding the door were his parents.

David was reading an old magazine, and Yuna was knitting something that looked like a scarf. They looked so out of place in the sterile Canadian hospital hallway, yet completely right.

"Mom? Dad?" Shane whispered.

Yuna looked up, her face softening instantly. "Oh, honey. You made good time."

"What are you doing here?" Shane asked, hugging her tight. He smelled her perfume—the same scent that filled their house just a few miles away—and felt his heart rate finally drop below triple digits.

"We were at the game, of course," David said, standing up to clap a hand on Shane's back. "We saw the hit live. Beat the ambulance here by about two minutes."

"You were at the game?" Shane asked, pulling back.

"We try to make it to most of the Centaurs' home games," Yuna explained gently, smoothing Shane's collar. "Since we can't get down to Montreal to see you play as often as we'd like, and Ilya... well, he doesn't have anyone in the stands for him. We like to be there."

The lump in Shane's throat got bigger. His parents knew. They knew everything about him and Ilya. More than that, they understood what Ilya didn't have. Since Ilya had left what little

family he had back in Russia to chase this dream, his parents had quietly stepped in to fill the gap. They loved him like he was their own difficult, charming stray cat.

"How is he?" Shane asked.

"Groggy," his mom said. "The doctors said it's a grade two. He needs rest and he's sensitive to light, but he's going to be okay. We were just waiting for you before we headed back to the house."

"Go," Shane said. "Thank you. Just... thank you."

The room was dim. The only light came from the monitors and the crack under the door.

Ilya was lying in the bed, looking frustratingly small. The hospital gown washed him out, and there was a dark bruise blossoming along his jawline. His eyes were closed, but they fluttered open when Shane clicked the door shut.

Ilya blinked, his pupils blown wide. He looked drugged to the gills.

"Вам не следует здесь находиться.," Ilya mumbled, the Russian thick and slurred. He tried to lift his hand but gave up halfway. "Это опасно.. *Hollander*..."

Shane let out a wet, breathless laugh. He walked to the side of the bed, abandoning all caution. "English, Ilya. I don't know what you're saying, but I know that tone. You're scolding me."

Ilya frowned, struggling to switch languages. "Shouldn't... be here. Practice. The... the reporters."

"Screw the reporters," Shane whispered. "And Hayden covered practice."

"Hayden is good guy," Ilya decided, his eyes drifting shut again. "But you... risk too much."

"You were hurt," Shane said, his voice cracking. "You think I was going to let you be on your own? In a hospital only a few hours?" he paused, "Besides I can make it back for morning skate as long as I leave here by 6am" he looked at his watch, it was already 12:20am.

He reached out, his hand hovering for a second before he gently cupped Ilya's unbruised cheek. Ilya leaned into the touch instantly, a small, pained sound escaping his throat.

Shane leaned down and pressed a soft kiss to Ilya's forehead, right at the hairline. Ilya smelled like antiseptic and sweat, but underneath that, he smelled like Ilya.

"You are stupid," Ilya murmured, but he turned his face to kiss Shane's palm. His eyes opened again, hazy and full of a drug-addled softness that he usually kept hidden behind sarcasm.

"Last time," Ilya whispered, his words slow, dragging out. "Last time... you were the one in this bed. In Montreal. Remember?"

Shane smiled, his thumb stroking Ilya's cheekbone. He remembered. He remembered the blinding headache, the fear, and Ilya sitting in the dark of a hotel room, refusing to leave his side, risking his entire career just to make sure Shane drank water.

"Yeah, I remember," Shane said softly. He pulled the visitor chair close to the bed and sat down, lacing his fingers through Ilya's. "Well, now it's my turn to look after you."

The night was measured in two-hour intervals.

That was how often the night nurse, a woman named Patrice who wore pink scrubs and too much eyeliner, came in to check Ilya's vitals.

The first time the door clicked open, the shift in the room was instantaneous. One second, Shane was leaning over the rail, his thumb tracing the line of Ilya's knuckles, murmuring soft nonsense about the Metros' power play stats to keep Ilya grounded. The next, as the handle turned, Shane yanked his hand back as if burned, straightening in his chair and crossing his arms over his chest. Ilya, despite the concussion, smoothed his expression into something bored and detached.

They were masters at this. The sudden transformation from *Shane and Ilya* to *Hollander and Rozanov*.

Patrice bustled in, checking the monitors. She shined a penlight into Ilya's eyes, ignoring his groan and weak attempt to swat her away.

"Pupils are reactive," she noted, scribbling on her chart. Then she turned to Shane, and her professional demeanor melted into something decidedly warmer. She looked him up and down, lingering on the broad set of his shoulders under his coat.

"You're a dedicated friend, driving all this way," she said, her voice dropping an octave. She offered a smile that was all teeth and batting lashes. "Most teammates wouldn't bother."

"We go way back," Shane said stiffly, shifting in his seat. He kept his hands visible, resting innocently on his knees. "Just wanted to make sure he wasn't dead."

"Well, he's lucky to have you," Patrice said. She stepped a little closer to Shane's chair than necessary to adjust the IV drip. "I'm at the station right down the hall. If you need anything... coffee, a blanket, someone to talk to... just come find me."

"I'm good, thanks," Shane said, forcing a polite smile.

She lingered for another second, eyes trailing over his jawline, before finally turning back to the door. "Ring the call button if he gets sick. Or if *you* need anything."

The moment the door clicked shut, the silence returned, but the tension was different now.

Ilya let out a huff, staring daggers at the closed door. "She wants to climb you like tree."

Shane snorted, the "bro" posture dissolving as he reached for Ilya's hand again. "She was just being nice, Ilya."

"She was undressing you with eyes," Ilya grumbled, his voice rough with pain but sharp with jealousy. "If you need anything, come find me," he mimicked, pitching his voice high and breathy. "Please. She did not even look at my chart. I could be dying."

"You're not dying," Shane said, rolling his eyes. He squeezed Ilya's hand, feeling the calluses against his palm. "And you don't have to worry about her."

"Why? Because I am prettier?" Ilya asked, sounding genuinely offended.

Shane laughed, a quiet sound that wouldn't carry into the hallway. "Because I'm gay, you idiot. And I have zero interest in women, no matter how much eyeliner they wear."

Ilya blinked, the drug-haze clearing enough for a smug smirk to pull at his mouth. "Right. I forgot. You are gay for me."

"Exclusively," Shane agreed, leaning forward to brush a lock of hair off Ilya's sweaty forehead. "So stop pouting."

"I am not pouting," Ilya lied. "I am suffering. From concussion. And from witnessing terrible flirting."

"Go to sleep," Shane whispered, the affection thick in his voice.

"Fine. But lock door. In case she comes back for 'coffee'."

Shane chuckled and settled back into the chair.

It turned out Ilya's paranoia wasn't entirely unfounded.

At 1:45 AM, the door clicked open again.

Shane had been dozing lightly, his head resting on the mattress near Ilya's hip, while Ilya drifted in and out of a restless sleep. The moment the latch turned, Shane bolted upright, smoothing his hair and adopting a posture that suggested he was merely a vigilant sentinel rather than a worried partner.

Patrice breezed in, this time without the cart. In her hand was a steaming styrofoam cup.

"I figured you might need this," she said, her voice a soft purr as she extended the cup toward Shane. "Hospital coffee isn't the best, but I brewed a fresh pot in the breakroom. It's the good stuff I keep for myself."

Shane blinked, taken aback. He accepted the cup because refusing felt rude. "Oh. Uh, thanks. You didn't have to do that."

"It's no trouble," Patrice said. She didn't retreat to the door. Instead, she leaned a hip against the footboard of Ilya's bed, ignoring the patient entirely. "It must be lonely sitting here all night. Not much to do in Ottawa at 2 AM, is there?"

"I'm fine," Shane said, gripping the cup a little too tightly. "Just watching the game tape on my phone." A lie. He'd been staring at Ilya's eyelashes for forty minutes.

"Dedication," she hummed. She reached out, her fingers brushing lightly against Shane's bicep, lingering on the fabric of his coat. "You know, my shift ends at seven. If you're still here... maybe I could show you where to get a real breakfast? There's a diner down the street that makes amazing omelets."

It was bold. It was terrifyingly direct.

Shane froze. "I... I have to get back to Montreal. For practice."

Patrice pouted slightly, retracting her hand but holding his gaze. "Shame. You Metros are always in such a rush." She winked—actually *winked*—and straightened up. "Well, enjoy the coffee, handsome. Call if you need... anything."

She turned and sauntered out, the rubber soles of her shoes squeaking slightly on the linoleum.

The door clicked shut.

For three seconds, there was absolute silence.

Then, a sound erupted from the bed—a choked, wheezing noise. Shane whipped his head around, panicked. "Ilya? You okay? Nauseous?"

Ilya wasn't nauseous. He was laughing. He was shaking with it, clutching his ribs with one hand and his head with the other, his face scrunching up in a mix of hilarity and concussion-induced pain.

"Ow," Ilya gasped, tears leaking from the corners of his eyes. "Ow, my head. But... *wow*."

"Stop laughing," Shane hissed, feeling the heat rise up his neck. He set the coffee down on the table with a decisive thud. "That was... uncomfortable."

"She winked at you!" Ilya wheezed, his voice climbing an octave. "She touched the arm! 'You Metros are always in such a rush.' Hollander, you are—ow—you are like magnet for bad decisions."

"It's not funny," Shane groaned, rubbing his face with his hands. "I'm wearing a beanie and I haven't shaved in two days. What is wrong with her?"

"You are big. You are rich. You have jawline," Ilya listed, still giggling weakly. "She wants to be future Mrs. Hollander."

Shane looked at Ilya, who was currently high on painkillers, sporting a magnificent bruise, and laughing at Shane's misery despite the pain it caused him. The affection that welled up in Shane's chest was so sudden and overwhelming it almost knocked the wind out of him.

He stood up and leaned over the bed, effectively silencing Ilya's laughter.

"Hey," Shane said softly, his voice dropping low, stripping away the awkwardness of the last few minutes.

Ilya blinked up at him, the mirth fading into something softer, hazier. "What?"

"She can flirt all she wants," Shane murmured, bracing his hands on the mattress on either side of Ilya's head, caging him in. "She can bring me coffee. She can offer me omelets. It doesn't matter."

"No?" Ilya breathed, his eyes tracking Shane's movement.

"No," Shane said. He leaned down, capturing Ilya's lips in a kiss that was deeper than the last one, possessive and slow. It tasted of fatigue and relief. When he pulled back just an inch, their foreheads were resting together. "I'm all yours, Ilya. You know that, right? Nobody else stands a chance."

Ilya let out a shaky breath, his hand coming up to tangle loosely in the collar of Shane's coat. "I know," he whispered, looking dazed and incredibly pleased with himself. "But was still funny."

Shane huffed a laugh and kissed the tip of his nose. "Yeah, yeah. Laugh it up. Just go back to sleep before she comes back with a bagel."

Around 3:00 AM, the silence stretched out again, heavy and peaceful. The only light was the glow of the vitals monitor.

"You are staring," Ilya whispered. His voice was rough, dry from the hospital air.

Shane smiled in the dark. "I'm watching for trouble. You have a hard head, Rozanov, but that was a nasty hit."

"Saw it on replay in head," Ilya muttered. "Should have kept head up. Rookie mistake."

"Even vets get caught sometimes," Shane said soothingly. He reached for the plastic cup of water on the bedside table and guided the straw to Ilya's lips. "Drink."

Ilya took a few sips and let his head fall back against the pillow with a sigh. "Your parents... they are good people. Yuna brought me soup last week. David texts me about hockey stats."

"They love you," Shane said, feeling that familiar warmth in his chest. "I think they like you more than me sometimes. Dad definitely prefers your slap shot."

Ilya smirked, though it looked pained. "Is better slap shot. Everyone knows this."

"Go to sleep, asshole," Shane laughed softly, squeezing Ilya's hand.

"Shane?"

"Yeah?"

"Thank you. For driving." Ilya's eyes were already closing again, his breathing hitching into a slower rhythm. "Is long drive."

"I'd drive further," Shane promised, the truth of it sitting heavy in the quiet room. "Rest now."

When Shane's phone alarm vibrated at 5:45 AM, it felt like a gunshot.

He groaned, rubbing grit out of his eyes. His neck was stiff, and his legs felt like lead. The window was still dark, the Canadian winter morning showing no mercy.

Ilya was awake. He was watching Shane with clear, if tired, eyes.

"You go now," Ilya said quietly. It wasn't a question.

"Yeah," Shane whispered. He stood up and stretched, his joints popping. "If I leave in ten minutes, I can make it back just before Coach blows the whistle. Hayden said he'd stall, but I can't push it."

"Go," Ilya said. "I am fine. Parents will be back soon, I think. Yuna threatened to bring breakfast."

Shane walked to the bed. He hated this part. He hated leaving Ilya here, vulnerable and bruised, while he went back to the flashy, loud world of the NHL where they had to pretend to be enemies.

"Call me if anything changes," Shane said, leaning over the rail. "I mean it, Ilya. If you get dizzy, if you puke, if you just feel like shit. Text me."

"I will text you to tell you we beat you in playoffs," Ilya countered weakly.

Shane grinned. He checked the door to make sure it was closed, then leaned down and pressed a firm, lingering kiss to Ilya's lips. It was chaste, careful of the concussion, but it said everything Shane couldn't say out loud.

"Love you," Shane breathed against his mouth.

"Love you," Ilya whispered back, his hand coming up to squeeze Shane's wrist one last time. "Drive fast. Don't get ticket."

"No promises."

Shane pulled away, grabbed his coat, and slipped out of the room before he could convince himself to stay. The hallway was cold, and the drive back to Montreal was going to be hell, but as he walked to the elevator, he checked his phone.

Mom: *I'm bringing pancakes at 7. Go play hockey, we've got him.*

Shane smiled, pocketed his phone, and headed for the exit.

The drive back to Montreal was less about anxiety and more about sheer, brutal survival against exhaustion. Shane drove with the window cracked open, letting the freezing wind slap him awake every time his eyelids started to droop. He fueled himself with gas station coffee that tasted like battery acid and the lingering warmth of Ilya's goodbye.

He hit the city limits with twenty minutes to spare. Traffic was mercifully light, but every red light felt like a personal insult.

He skidded his car into the player lot at the practice facility, not bothering to park straight. He grabbed his duffel bag from the trunk, slung it over his shoulder, and sprinted for the back entrance. He swiped his access card with shaking hands, the beep sounding like a starter pistol.

He burst into the locker room just as the clock on the wall ticked to 9:50 AM. The room was already buzzing with activity—tape ripping, skates being tightened, the loud, echoing banter of twenty guys waking up.

"Sorry! Sorry, I'm late!" Shane gasped, dropping his bag onto the bench in front of his stall. He was breathless, his chest heaving. "Slept in. Alarm didn't go off. Phone died."

He started stripping off his coat and sweater with frantic speed, kicking off his shoes.

A few of the guys chuckled. "Hollander sleeping in? That's a first," one of the rookies chirped.

But Hayden, sitting two stalls down, wasn't laughing. He was already fully dressed in his goalie gear, mask resting on top of his head. He turned slowly, his eyes scanning Shane's face with clinical precision.

"You look like shit, Hollander," Hayden stated flatly, his voice cutting through the noise.

Shane paused, one leg halfway into his compression pants. He looked up, meeting Hayden's gaze. "Thanks, Hayds. Appreciate the support."

"No, I'm serious," Hayden continued, leaning forward on his stick. There was a knowing glint in his eye that the other guys missed. "You have bags under your eyes the size of pucks. It looks like you haven't slept in twenty-four hours."

The room went quiet for a beat. Shane froze. He could feel the exhaustion pulling at his bones, the grit in his eyes, the phantom feeling of Ilya's hand in his.

Then, a laugh bubbled up in his chest—a tired, slightly delirious sound.

"Yeah," Shane said, a lopsided grin breaking across his face as he pulled his gear up. "Well, I haven't."

He didn't offer more. He didn't have to. He saw Hayden's expression soften, a silent acknowledgment passing between them. *He's okay. I made it.*

"Well, get your pads on, Sleeping Beauty," Hayden said, whacking Shane's shin guard with his stick as he stood up. "Coach is going to skate us into the ground today, and I'm not carrying you."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Shane shot back, grabbing his helmet.

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