

## Piece by Piece

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| Relationships:   | <a href="#">Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov</a> , <a href="#">Yuna Hollander &amp; Ilya Rozanov</a> , <a href="#">David Hollander &amp; Ilya Rozanov</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Characters:      | <a href="#">Ilya Rozanov</a> , <a href="#">Shane Hollander</a> , <a href="#">Yuna Hollander</a> , <a href="#">David Hollander</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Additional Tags: | <a href="#">Spoilers for Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers)</a> , <a href="#">References to Depression</a> , <a href="#">Suicidal Thoughts</a> , <a href="#">Dysfunctional Family</a> , <a href="#">Family Issues</a> , <a href="#">Loss of Parent(s)</a> , <a href="#">References to Suicide</a> , <a href="#">Mother-Son Relationship</a> , <a href="#">Father-Son Relationship</a> , <a href="#">Found Family</a> , <a href="#">Bonding</a> , <a href="#">Missing Scene</a> , <a href="#">Emotional Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">One Shot</a> |
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# Piece by Piece

by [celestineblue](#)

## Summary

Yuna and David reach out to Ilya in the aftermath of the Centaurs' emergency landing.

## Notes

This story references Irina's suicide, Ilya's father's abuse, and Ilya's depression and suicidal thoughts.

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

## *January*

There were palm trees in the parking lot.

Ilya had been to Tampa enough to know they were pretty common here. It was the first time he'd really listened to the breeze flowing through the fronds, though. Now he understood why Shane sometimes used recordings of ocean waves or whale mating calls to fall asleep. (Okay, so he didn't actually use the whale sounds. But still, relaxing shit. And he called them "soundscapes," like a total dork.)

Ilya's phone buzzed with a FaceTime request. **Yuna Hollander**, it said. His heart leapt into his throat as her face filled the screen.

"Ilya!" she gasped, like she couldn't believe he'd actually picked up.

"I am here," he said. The words hung between them for a moment, like he couldn't believe it either.

"Jesus, honey, we're so glad you're okay," Yuna said, blowing out a sigh of relief. Her glasses were a little crooked; she quickly adjusted them. Her eyes glistened behind the frames. "Dave, he... saw something on his phone about your plane, a-and Shane was still playing, and we had to make sure you were alright."

"I am OK," Ilya heard himself say. The humid Florida air hung off his shoulders like dead weight. It was hard to breathe.

Yuna searched his face. "The medics checked you out? You're not hurt?"

If she were here, she'd fuss over his clothes to check for any injuries, turn his face in her hands. Protective, like when Shane got h—

"No," he said, stiffly shaking his head. A scoff slipped out from between his lips. "My—my Coke fell on the floor. That was the worst of it."

It was the first thing that popped into his head, which was pretty fucking stupid. Then came Chouinard's yell that the wing was on fire. The screaming that bombarded him from every direction. Troy and Harris huddled together in the terrified silence. Ilya shoved his free hand into the pocket of his suit, carving four angry crescent moons into his palm.

"Next time you come over, you can have all the Cokes you want," Yuna said, using a soft voice that reminded him of a daycare teacher. "Dave will make all your favorites."

"You bet," David called out off-screen. Ilya mustered a weak smile as Shane's father poked his head into view beside Yuna's. "And I think we're just about due for another Yahtzee rematch, don't you? Double or nothing. And I won't go so easy on you next time."

"You never do! Either of you!" Ilya protested. It felt good to share a laugh, a bright spot in the gloom.

David's smile sobered. "Ilya, we're so glad you're safe," he said.

Ilya felt a pang in his chest, like a rubber band snapped against his heart. He forced himself to nod.

He tore his eyes away from the screen to look back at the hotel. His teammates were all crammed inside the bar, speaking in hushed tones to their moms and dads and wives and babies.

*I'm okay, they reassured them. I'm here. I love you so much.*

Their words washed away their families' worst fears, answered their most desperate prayers. His brother never gave a shit what happened to him as long as he got the money he wanted; Ilya had admitted that to himself a long time ago. Still, being confronted with the cold, hard reality of it made his stomach sour.

Alexei didn't have a reason to pick up the phone with their father dead. Ilya knew he should change his emergency contact. Would Yuna and David agree to it? Probably. Still, the same worries that dictated everything else in Ilya's life right now came flooding back: *Too risky. Would stir up too many questions.*

There was Sveta, maybe, but they hadn't talked in years. Based on all the star-studded, champagne-popping pictures he spent way too long scrolling through on her Instagram, she was living her best life and seemed perfectly fine without him around.

~~(They'd be fine without him around.)~~

"Have you talked to Shane?" Yuna asked, distancing him from the thought.

"Texted," Ilya murmured. "He is on team bus. Will call when he is at the hotel."

He ached to hear Shane's voice. He was spiraling already, Ilya knew. He thought about sending him a voice message to hold him over until they could talk freely. Something that reassured his boyfriend he was alive, he was okay, and he loved him more than anything.

"Alright," Yuna said, nodding solemnly. David wasn't in view anymore. "We'll give you a breather, then. Try to relax, okay? Easier said than done, I know...but don't go scrolling on your phone all night. Eat something. And drink some water. Or Gatorade."

"Okay," Ilya replied, lying through his teeth. After he spoke to Shane, he was going to go back to the hotel bar and drink until this night was blotted out of his memory forever.

Maybe Yuna sensed this—David and Shane always said she could be scarily *per-cep-tive*—because her expression grew very serious. "Call us if you need anything, Ilya. I mean it."

*Please don't go*, a small voice inside him begged.

"Yuna," Ilya managed, voice drawn taut.

"I'm here." She leaned closer to the camera, eyebrows knitted together. "Talk to me."

A hot tear rolled down his cheek, and he pawed it away.

“Thank you,” he said, “for everything.”

*For inviting me to your game nights. For taking me on your Costco trips. For checking on me all week when Dykstra gave me that terrible stomach bug. For buying me clothes I don't really need, just because you think I would look nice in them. For coming to my games and cheering so loud I can hear you all the way in the back.*

*For making me feel like I am part of your family.*

He clamped down on his lower lip to stifle the rest of his tears. He never cried in public. That had been silenced by The Colonel when he was a kid, shuttered away by disgusted sneers and drunken rants that left Ilya recoiling from the stench of his father's breath. Mama always wiped his tears in the safety of his bedroom, wrapped him up in her arms and rocked him even when he thought he was way too old for it, whispered “Iliushen'ka, is okay” into the mop of golden-brown curls that matched her own.

~~(He should've been consoling her.)~~

~~(Consoling her more.)~~

~~(Consoling her better.)~~

~~(Maybe things would be different now.)~~

“I did not tell you enough,” he cried, curling his fingers around Mama's cross. “Thank you.”

“You have. I promise,” Yuna said, her gentle voice curling around him like a hug. She nodded encouragingly, quickly wiping her own tears away. “Oh, Ilya, honey. I wish I could hug you. You mean so much to Shane, and to us.”

“You, too,” Ilya said, giving her a crumpled smile. There was so much more he wanted to tell her, but it was hard to string all the right words together, and he needed to reserve some of his brain power to talk to Shane. But one day — one day soon — he would find the strength.

Yuna gave him a long look. “You'll be okay?”

“Yes.”

“...Okay. Goodnight,” she said. “You need anything, you call me.”

He nodded and ended the call, letting the quiet, balmy night wash over him. He sucked in a couple of breaths and rubbed his eyes. His face buzzed. He hadn't cried this hard in years, and now all of a sudden this season he was Mr. Waterworks. Fuck. He eyed the lobby and willed his feet to move, but ignoring the familiar itch in his fingertips had only made it worse. He dug around his pockets for his cigarettes and came up empty. Stupid New Year's resolution. He bummed one off a bald guy in a Tampa Bay Thunder t-shirt before Shane's lecture got too loud in his head. Of course, right when his name finally lit up Ilya's screen, he'd just taken a long drag.

(He sniffed it out in record time. Good thing Ilya was used to Shane breaking records.)

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The night before Ilya's homecoming dinner, David announced in the group chat that he'd picked up two new jigsaw puzzles over the weekend: dog breeds and birds on a lake, 1,000 pieces each. Both excellent choices, in Ilya's opinion. He couldn't decide which one they'd tackle first.

Shane held his hand as they walked up to his parents' front door. Ilya grinned, his engagement ring burning against his chest. He knew they knew, but god was he excited to actually say the words out loud.

They didn't even get to ring the doorbell. Yuna threw the door open, gathered up all six-foot-three-inches of him, and squeezed so tight his lungs nearly gave out. Ilya blinked helplessly at his fiancé, who only looked on in pure adoration.

"My boys! Home safe and sound!" she exclaimed. David strolled up the hallway wearing his signature blue apron and gave Shane a big hug.

Once Yuna had warmed up to Ilya, he found out pretty quickly that she was a hugger. He liked that. Each one pieced him back together a little more.

"Is good to see you," Ilya said, muffled by her shoulder. She was wearing her favorite perfume, something flowery and citrusy that Shane had picked out for Mother's Day when he was little. "We have big news for you."

Yuna laughed warmly as she herded them inside. "Tell me everything."

## End Notes

I really wanted to write about the bond Ilya's built with Shane's parents. And omg I LOVED episode 5!!! I wrote this before I saw it, so this is aligned with The Long Game canon re: Svetlana and Ilya, but I love how the show gave more depth to their relationship. Are we ready for the cottage next Friday?!

Edited to add: I was NOT ready for the cottage 🙄

Thank you for reading!! Let me know what you think :)

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