

confess my love

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confess my love

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Summary

Ilya glances towards the window in the door of Shane's hospital room, hyper-aware that anyone could walk by, interrupt them at any moment.

He should let go of Shane's hand and leave. A brief visit from the opposing captain is understandable; an extended stay is less so.

Of course, this is when the door opens and Yuna Hollander steps in.

Or, the hospital scene, if Yuna had been to one to walk in on Ilya visiting Shane, featuring a Shane that is a little more high and prone to spilling secrets.

Notes

High!Shane is a darling who should be protected at all costs and also get everything he wants.

I spent like 20 minutes trying to figure out where Shane's cottage is because in episode 4, the documentary says its on a private lake in eastern Quebec 10 minutes away from his parents' cottage. In episode 5, the Hollander house has a location card setting it in Lanaudière, which appears to be central southern Quebec. In episode 6, Ilya flies into the Ottawa airport so Shane can drive them 2 hours to the cottage. I've chosen to set the cottage in Lanaudière, Quebec.

Title from Fall Out Boy song *Church* lyrics, "If you were church, I'd get on my knees // Confess my love, I'd know where to be // My sanctuary, you're holy to me". Thank you to my beta [Celira](#) (who also has HR fic)!

At the beginning, I reference my own fic where [Scott knows about Hollanov](#) (which will have a proper sequel that this fic is not in the same timeline as). All you need to know is that Shane and Ilya have already decided to claim they are friends.

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

Ilya glances towards the window in the door of Shane's hospital room, hyper-aware that anyone could walk by and interrupt them at any moment.

He should let go of Shane's hand and leave. A brief visit from the opposing captain is understandable; an extended stay is less so.

But Shane smiles up at him, blissed out from the lingering anesthesia and flowing pain medication, and asks, "Stay? You said your flight to, to, to Winnipeg is in the evening. We are... *pretending* to be *friends* now!" Shane references the plot they've hatched to transition their public rivalry to one of friendly rivalry—a suggestion from Scott Hunter of all people. It should work better to hide the truth of their relationship. "You *stay*. I will tell you *all* about how *nice* my cottage is."

Ilya is helpless to deny Shane anything he asks for in this fragile state.

They have so few opportunities to just be together, and after an entire night spent in frantic fear over Shane's condition, Ilya just wants to soak up whatever he can have of Shane's time. It's also true that Ilya doesn't have anywhere to be for the next few hours and had originally planned to have a lazy morning in Shane's condo until his evening flight for the game in Winnipeg tomorrow.

He holds Shane's left hand gently, hoping that anyone who might come in won't immediately notice from the entering angle. Shane's hand is cold when he normally runs hot, so he presses it between both his own to warm it up, careful not to disturb the monitor clamp on his index finger.

Shane, having just told Ilya about the triple-glazed glass walls at his cottage—*kind of like what you have in Boston, Ilya*—is taking a pause, smiling with his eyes closed, facing Ilya still.

Of course, this is when the door opens and Yuna Hollander steps in.

"Oh," she says, pausing in the doorway. "Hello."

She is visibly taken aback by Ilya's presence, blinking in confusion.

Yuna Hollander is a beautiful woman with good genetics that she passed down to Shane, and has always maintained an air of effortless grace that is probably actually well-practiced and effortful. Ilya is versed in such tactics.

It's a shock to see her hair without its usual sleek styling and to notice she isn't wearing any makeup, which lets the freckles she shares with Shane stand out on her weary face.

The night must have been even longer for her, and she probably doesn't have the energy to spare to mask her confusion about why Ilya is in her son's hospital room.

Ilya is reminded of the last time he can recall being directly face-to-face with Yuna—Toronto, summer of 2010, in a hotel elevator.

There's an almost funny throughline here.

Back then, he was going to what he thought would be a clandestine one-time hookup, fueled by curiosity for Shane Hollander, the Canadian teenage phenom, who was beautiful on the ice and off. It is foolish in hindsight that he ever thought a quick tryst could satisfy his need for Shane.

This time, he is in the midst of leaving his long-time secret lover as Yuna catches them together. There's no door to automatically close in between them and no elevator to whisk Ilya away to safety.

The throughline would be funny if Ilya weren't literally being caught red-handed right now.

He lets Shane's hand slip gently out of his hands as he walks briskly around the bed and towards Yuna, hoping the overall movement will mask how he had been holding Shane's hand. He can explain away his physical presence, but not such physical familiarity.

He smiles stiffly, extending his arm out for a handshake. "Hello, Mrs. Hollander. I am Ilya Rozanov."

The words are correct, his accent is clear, and his posture is straight.

She knows who he is, and he knows she knows who he is, but in his silent panic, he defaults not to the media swagger he uses to charm reporters—which could be something Yuna might expect from him—or the seductive charm that pulls in a woman from across the bar—which would have been altogether wrong—but an older mask: the deferential politeness used to greet the Russian officials he had been trotted in front of ever since he began to show promise for hockey.

It's a familiar mask, but one he hadn't anticipated needing, and he feels brittle, like any movement might cause him to shatter. It might have been better to be caught with his pants down than to be caught holding Shane Hollander's hand.

Luckily, she doesn't seem to have noticed, too distracted by his very presence.

"Rozanov. Hello. Yuna Hollander." She lets the door close behind her and she returns his handshake with a firm grip, defaulting to match his politeness.

"I came to represent the team, as captain. We all wish Hollander a full recovery. I was just about to leave."

"Of course. Thank you," she says, and seems to mentally dismiss him as she approaches her son.

Ilya might have even made it out the door, except then Shane says, "*Mom*, tell Ilya about how *nice* it is at the cottage."

Ilya pauses, turning back to where Shane lies on the hospital bed. Shane looks directly at Ilya with a pout. It's an innocent expression, unguarded by all the mental walls Shane is too high to hide behind.

“Oh, honey.” Yuna interrupts. “Are you already planning your off-season? He goes to his cottage for the summers.” She turns back with an apologetic smile, unaware that Ilya has watched the TV special about Shane Hollander’s cottage several times over.

Shane continues trying to sell Ilya on the Lanaudière wilderness, like a travel infomercial. “The lake will feel so nice... and I have jet skis! Veeerooom, vroom, splash. *You* like fast cars.”

While Ilya does like fast cars, and genuinely would enjoy going jet skiing with Shane, he is more endeared by the way Shane is moving his good hand to mimic the bobbing of waves. What other mannerisms might he be able to observe from Shane, if they had more time than a quick fuck?

“Rozanov is a busy man. I’m sure he’s got somewhere to be.” This is a clear dismissal from Yuna as she tries to keep her son from embarrassing himself in front of his years-long arch-rival.

“I see they gave him the good stuff,” Ilya says, trying and probably failing to inject some humor into the situation.

That’s normal, friendly commentary, right? Perhaps it can assuage any concern Yuna might have about him spreading rumors of her son’s behavior while coming off an anesthetic high.

Ilya’s words are drowned out by Shane barreling his way through the conversation.

“Nope,” Shane says with a pop, denying Yuna’s polite attempts to allow Ilya to leave. “He’s got...an evening flight! And he *already promised* to stay with me.”

Yuna turns back to look at Ilya again, raising a sharp eyebrow to ask a question that Ilya has no desire to answer.

Ilya chooses to avoid her stare, instead focusing on Shane, who sort of swivels his head and waves his good hand over at Ilya.

“No take-backsies,” Shane says, making a sort of grasping motion.

Shane, in this state, makes the situation seem so simple. Ilya said he had time to stay, said he would stay, and so therefore he must stay, even though Shane’s mother is now here. Perhaps even his father will soon arrive.

But regardless of what Ilya said, he’s not supposed to be here.

Their whole relationship, every single iteration of it, hinges on the fact that nobody knows what they get up to with each other, whether that’s sex or this frightening foray into emotional intimacy that they’ve been diving into these past couple of weeks.

He’s certainly not supposed to be demonstrating any of the tightly reined-in affection he holds for Shane in front of Yuna Hollander of all people.

When Ilya doesn't respond, Shane calls out further, "*Ilya. I-ly-aaa.*" He's even louder the second time.

"Hey, shhhh." Ilya glances back at the door, which remains closed but not for much longer if Shane continues to make a ruckus. He doesn't need Shane's mother and a concerned nurse witnessing this.

He walks towards and back around Shane's bed, each measured step seeming to echo loudly as Ilya continues to ignore the looks Yuna gives him. Each step is a step closer towards Shane, towards a secret he will be unable to contain, towards a truth waiting to burst out.

Ilya takes Shane's hand in his again. "Okay, I'll stay. "

"Mm, good." Shane wriggles, settling into his pillow again.

Maybe time can just stop now, freeze frame forever on this exuberantly loving Shane who beams at Ilya, and they can stay in this little peaceful bubble that won't be disturbed.

No such luck for the physics of time and space to suddenly stop working. Yuna, perhaps momentarily baffled into silence by the way Ilya complies with all of Shane's demands, finally asks, "What's going on here?"

"Shhh. It's a *secret*." Shane shushes her in clear mimicry of Ilya from moments ago. "The *cottage*. It will be so *private*. Just the two of us."

Shane is so earnest in the way he accidentally spills his secret that Ilya can't help but let out a nervous chuckle even as he tenses up in fear.

He doesn't know much about Yuna Hollander, has never directly interacted with her, even though they have been in the same room many times since the first time he saw her up in that Saskatchewan ice rink next to Shane, studying his team's practice—studying him, even.

Shane often attributes his success to her in interviews. He is the perfect Canadian son, who loves his loving mother.

Yuna is responsible for putting her son in his first pair of skates and has supported him at every stage of his hockey career, from all the children's leagues into juniors, then into the major league. She also manages Shane's frankly ridiculous number of endorsements and sponsorships.

She has enough of a reputation that guys on his own team have called her things like Mrs. Hockey Mom and tiger mom and momager. Cliff, when asked, had to stammer through an explanation that a tiger mom is not a cougar or a MILF like Ilya assumed, but some secret third option that is wholly unrelated to an older woman's attractiveness.

Ilya thinks it is maybe one of those many words and phrases he's not supposed to use outside a locker room. America has a lot of those.

"Momager" he looked up on his own, and it is apparently like the mother of those reality TV ladies with too much contour.

Knowing Yuna is a lifelong Montreal Metros fan and can negotiate multi-million-dollar contracts with Rolex does not tell Ilya what she thinks about gay men. The U.S. just legalized gay marriage two years ago, but Canada had it much earlier, as he understands.

Even if Yuna is a nice Canadian lady who is generally accepting of gay people—and Ilya cannot know whether she is or not—how she would react to her own son being gay?

Yuna asks, “Rozanov, what is happening?” She glances very pointedly at where he holds Shane’s hand.

Perhaps she thinks that Ilya, not under the influence of drugs, will have a sensible explanation for why Shane is magically friendly with him now.

Ilya does not.

This is already beyond what can be explained with the canned lie about becoming friends at All-Stars last month.

Fortunately, Shane interrupts again, turning towards his mom to correct her.

Unfortunately, it pushes them further towards the edge of no return.

“*No*, mom,” Shane says, getting a little bit sassy, like the teenage girls in the romantic comedies St-Simon pretends he doesn’t watch on flights. “We get to call him *Ilya* now.”

Ilya never wants to stop hearing Shane say his name, whether it’s whiny and desperate as Shane begs Ilya to fuck him or it’s soft and sweet like he says it now. He wants all this and more, wants to teach Shane Russian like he asked, wants to hear Shane say Ilyusha, Ilyushenka even.

When Shane looks back at him and sighs, “Ilya,” what is Ilya supposed to do?

Not reach out to trace his finger across Shane’s freckles?

Not cup Shane’s face in his hand and make small, sweeping motions across his cheek?

Impossible.

Not even Russians are so cold-hearted as to ignore a lover’s yearning plea.

“Okay, seriously? What is happening?” She asks a third time, sharper. Yuna glances around, as if there might be hidden cameras present, or some signage she missed that would provide an explanation. She is likely used to being answered promptly and has probably never had someone take so long to answer her before.

Ilya can picture her walking around a banquet room, glass of wine in hand, in perfect control of a conversation with any number of people, be they an NHL team owner, media representative, or prospective sponsor. She is probably ruthless on business calls, any person on the other end of the line following her demands exactly and immediately.

Ilya still does not have an answer for Yuna, and this time, Shane doesn't interrupt.

Instead, Shane closes his eyes again and turns his head so he can sort of nuzzle into Ilya's palm like he is a giant kitten. The world's biggest, cutest kitten.

Ilya draws in his breath and holds himself still.

He is not going to say that they've been fucking for the last seven years—because he is not saying that in front of someone's mother, especially not the intimidating Yuna Hollander—and he does not have the words for the maybe something more they are becoming, when even he does not know what that is.

Maybe Ilya does know more about the Hollander parents, though.

He knows the shape of them from the way Shane has asked after Ilya's own family, year after year, constantly souring their already fleeting moments. It's only recently that Shane has understood family is much more fraught for Ilya than it is for Shane.

He knows Shane has never shied away from the topic, when asking would naturally open himself to return questioning. Shane treated the subject as innocuous when it was anything but.

He knows they do not weigh on Shane the way family weighs on Ilya.

Ilya shrugs his stiff neck, feels the subtle shifting of the chain that holds his mother's cross. The only good part of Ilya's family that he would ever want to share is buried and gone.

What would his own mother want to know in this situation?

He can picture her beckoning him—still bigger than him, in his mind's eye, when logically he knows he has eclipsed her in size years ago—to place his head in her lap, so she can pet his hair and ask the important questions.

Does he make you happy, Ilyushenka?

He does. Shane makes Ilya so, so happy. Shockingly so—devastatingly so. Their little moments, brief texts, and fleeting encounters make him the happiest he has ever been. Having just one more second with Shane is more addicting than the cigarettes Ilya can't quite quit. Ilya will stay at Shane's side for as long he is asked for, consequences be damned.

Ilya thinks—hopes—he makes Shane happy too. That it's the same for him, and why they keep coming back to each other, season after season.

Do you love him, Ilyushenka?

Yes, a thousand times over, yes. It is an answer that Ilya has denied himself for years now—it is an answer that terrifies Ilya. Not the consequences of them being found out, but how out of control it makes him feel, the way this bone-deep love feels so ready to burst out of him.

Every time he speaks, he is afraid he will give too much of himself away. And didn't he, not so long ago, in his quickly vacated Boston house?

But then in Tampa, Shane had said *different* and *nice* and *I like you maybe a little too much*.

Does a *little too much* equate to love?

Ilya is tired of lying.

Maybe he can try hoping.

He catches Yuna's eye for a moment. He thinks: *What is happening is that I love him. Even if he is not mine, I am his.*

But that is not for her to hear first.

Ilya looks down at Shane, his darling Shane, who is still sleepily nuzzling into his palm, to say the confession that will save him or damn him. He steps off the edge of no return. "Ya tebya lyublyu. I love you."

Shane's eyes snap back open, suddenly alert. "Holy shit."

If Shane doesn't love him back, Ilya can just... walk out of the hospital, avoid Shane and also Yuna and even the absent David Hollander for the rest of his life, at any and all non-ice events.

It would be the hardest thing he'd ever do.

The room stills as the most agonizing few seconds of Ilya's life pass by, only the beeping and thrumming of machines in the background to keep Ilya company as he holds his breath, stomach swooping as if in freefall.

"I love you too." The brightest smile blooms on Shane's face.

"Thank fuck. Shane." The breath—the *tension* Ilya didn't even realize he was holding releases. Ilya does not splatter on the ground and into a thousand pieces that can never be put back together whole again. He lands safely in Shane's love, and knows that this is exactly where he belongs.

"Oh my god," Shane says, "I love you so much. So, so much. Holy shit." Shane tries to pull Ilya closer, slipping his good hand out to wrap around Ilya's waist and awkwardly waving the arm that's in a sling.

Ilya bends over, gently pressing down to keep Shane still. "Don't hurt yourself." But he feels it too, the desire to be closer. He gives in, resting his forehead on Shane's good shoulder.

Shane smells like sweat and antiseptic chemicals and wonder.

For a moment, it's just them, just Ilya smushing his face into the coarse fabric of Shane's hospital gown, whispering "ya tebya lyublyu" as Shane pressing kisses into Ilya's hair.

The moment breaks when Shane turns his head away from Ilya's so he can say, "Mom! He loves me! Ilya loves me!"

Ilya feels himself shake with barely-suppressed laughter as he kisses a trail up Shane's neck and jawline. Shane is the one with a concussion, but Ilya feels lightheaded from the adrenaline rollercoaster he has been riding.

Of all the ways to do this.

He doesn't need to look at Yuna to hear the strain in her voice as she says, "And... you love him?"

"Yes! Yessss. I love him. And..." Shane tugs on Ilya's jacket. Ilya leans back just enough so he can look at Shane properly again. "And he'll *come* to my *cottage* this *summer*?"

The smile on Shane's face is infectious. Ilya brings Shane's good hand up in a very poor attempt to hide his smile by pressing kisses onto the back of it.

"Okay. Okay, moy lyubimyy. I'll come to the cottage." Ilya presses another kiss into Shane's skin.

"Yay! We'll have so much *fun*. All of our time, *together*. We'll be completely *alone*. *Nobody* will know."

"Well, I think somebody will know." Ilya finally chances looking back at Yuna.

She is focused on Shane, blinking still, opening her mouth and then closing it, as she visibly tries to figure out what to say next.

"Whoops. Whoopsies," Shane says, quieting down. "You're not mad, are you? Or disappointed? I'm sorry." That last part is whispered.

"No!" This breaks Yuna out of her stupor. "Sweetheart, of course not. You have nothing to apologize for. Don't ever apologize for loving someone. I'm just... surprised."

In the ensuing silence, Ilya leans forward to kiss the top of Shane's head, getting a pleased hum out of Shane.

"Ilya Rozanov," Yuna says.

"Yes," Ilya says. He straightens up so he can meet her eyes directly.

"This is serious?"

"Yes. Very serious."

Yuna nods. "Okay, and—"

"—mhm. We're *serious*." Shane bobs his head in a wobbly nod.

Ilya adds, “Maybe we can, uh. Do you know when he will stop...” Ilya gestures in a circling motion.

Yuna answers immediately, like she is grasping onto something she can say with certainty. “The doctors said it would be another hour or two for him to come down from the post-surgery high. Some amount of nausea can be expected. He can then be discharged.”

“Maybe we can hold off on more questions until then.” Ilya feels like he’s fending off media personnel with that line, but it works.

“Oh, of course. Yes.” Her focused stare at him is very reminiscent of Shane’s—like mother, like son. She must be full of questions, held back by extreme levels of restraint.

“Ilya. My head hurts. You should kiss it again. Kiss it better.” Shane’s eyes are closed again as he smiles up at Ilya, the trickster face of a liar who has plenty of pain medication in his system.

“Oh, your head hurts?” Ilya plays along.

“Mhm,” Shane nods.

“You do not want me to call the doctor? You think kisses are medicine?” Ilya fails to sound at all serious, fails to keep the grin off his face.

“*Yes. Kisses will make it better.*”

Well. Who is Ilya to disagree with such sound medical expertise?

Ilya will stay at the hospital for the next few hours and wait for Shane to come down enough that they can answer his mother’s burning questions together.

In the meantime, he will provide as many kisses as Shane asks for.

End Notes

David is going to walk in like ten minutes later so confused. (Edit: there are no plans for a sequel with David; it would go basically the same as canon but in a hospital room) Once Shane is less high, he will be embarrassed but relieved that he no longer has to hide Ilya from his parents.

Thank you for reading! Every kudos is appreciated and every comment is read <3

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