I don’t like darkness (but you bring me light)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77897651.

Rating:	Teen And Up 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
Additional Tags:	Soft Ilya Rozanov, Soft Shane Hollander, Light Angst, Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Dual POV, Fluff, No Smut, Implied Smut, just them being mushy and soft, Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, Hurt Ilya Rozanov, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Happy Ending
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Hollonov written to song lyrics
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-18 Words: 2,766 Chapters: 1/1

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by stupidnephlim

Summary

> “Shane was his constant. His safety net. Because he knew that no matter how unpredictable his life at home got, he would always have Shane, ready to comfort him, ready to be whatever it was that Ilya needed.”
>
> Or Ilya needs Shane after his father’s death but doesn’t want to be a burden. But it’s okay because Shane knows exactly what Ilya needs.
>
> Loosely based on the song “I don’t like darkness” by Chase Atlantic.

Notes

> Hi… so this fanfic was the result of being obsessed with heated rivalry so much so that it’s led me to write fan fiction after years… 😂 hope you enjoy.

Ilya felt like he couldn't breathe. If he was honest with himself, he hadn't been able to breathe ever since he got the call from his brother telling him of his father's death. The burden of the endless responsibilities Ilya had been forced with, first with taking care of his father's deteriorating health after his brother refused to acknowledge that he was getting worse, then making sure he was the best hockey player in the NHL so his father wouldn't be disappointed in him, and now after his death, planning the funeral and making sure everything was in order. It all fell on Ilya, *always* on Ilya.

Everyone around him was looking at him, expecting him to act differently, more upset now that his father was gone. But that wasn't what made him upset. He didn't mourn his father, not really, he mourned what his relationship with his father *could* have been. He mourned a normal relationship where his father would love him for who he is and not what he wanted Ilya to be. He mourned for his childhood and what it should have been. What every child deserves, a loving home with both parents alive and happy. But that was a pain he didn't want to endorse, so he had tried to bury it.

He felt he had given his family everything he had, and yet they still asked for more, and despite being forced to be in control of all the arrangements after his father's death, Ilya's life felt more out of control than ever. His life felt sporadic and unpredictable, he felt like he was always waiting for something to push him further into the darkness, expecting it after all this time, as that was all he had known.

Until… Shane.

Shane was his constant. His safety net. Because he knew that no matter how unpredictable his life at home got, he would always have Shane, ready to comfort him, ready to be whatever it was that Ilya needed.

And it was Shane, whom Ilya needed right now, as Ilya sat in the alleyway after getting away from dinner after the funeral. He had just finished his call with Shane, confessing all his feelings, confessing his love to Shane, not that Shane had understood as he had said it all in Russian. Shane had been right, he did feel lighter after saying his feelings out loud, it made them feel *real* as if they now existed outside of his own head, so he didn't have to carry the weight of them by himself anymore. Once again, Shane had a way of knowing exactly what to be for Ilya, and right now he had been a listening ear, something Ilya hadn't realised he needed, just someone to simply *listen* to him.

Ilya began looking for flights to go back home, seeing the earliest he could get out of Moscow and back to Boston. But before he could go through with the purchase, Ilya realised he wouldn't be going home, he would merely be going back to his empty house in Boston. He realised with such clarity that it felt like it hit him right in the chest, his home was *Shane*, and where he was, that was where Ilya wanted to be.

But Ilya couldn't just go to Montreal, could he? Without telling Shane, without confirming with Shane. Ilya knew Shane liked to plan, liked to know things ahead of time. He couldn't do that to Shane. No. He didn't want to be a burden to Shane, not when he felt like he was a burden to everyone around him already. He couldn't handle the thought that Shane too would

resent him like his brother did. At the back of his mind, he could hear a voice that sounded much like Shane's, telling him he could never be a burden, but Ilya ignored it since all he could hear was the noise of his own feelings, of his own pain.

Ilya sighed and rubbed his eyes. He was exhausted and yet he couldn't sleep. He booked the flight to Boston and shut off his phone.

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Shane was nervous and kept bouncing his leg up and down as he sat at the Boston airport arrivals waiting area. After his call with Ilya, Shane had decided that he couldn't wait for their game with Boston to be with Ilya. The distance between them felt miles further than it usually did. He decided he needed to be in Boston when Ilya came back from Moscow. He needed to be there with him, to hold him, to touch him and to hear his heart beating.

Although Shane didn't understand what Ilya had told him over the phone, he was able to hear the raw emotion in his voice, something Ilya was unable to hide. It had broken his heart, to hear Ilya like that when he had never known him to sound so broken, so lost.

After their call ended, Shane had looked up Svetlana on Instagram and sent her a message, asking her for Ilya's flight details. He didn't know what Ilya had told her about their relationship, if she knew of anything at all. He realised after he sent the message how odd she would find that Shane Hollander was asking for Ilya's flight details. They were supposed to hate each other! But Shane had shrugged, said fuck it and decided Ilya was too important.

Svetlana had replied instantly not once questioning Shane or his relationship with Ilya, to which Shane felt grateful for. She had given the flight details and then sent a short "take care of him" message. That had made Shane feel reassured in his decision.

Shane had then booked his own flight to Boston, making sure it was the day before Ilya arrived, so he would have time to get settled in his hotel and calm his nerves before seeing Ilya.

He checked the time again on his phone, making sure he had the flight time right before he looked up from his phone and saw him. Ilya was walking towards him, oblivious to Shane's presence. He was wearing a baseball hat and sunglasses, keeping his head low so he would not be recognised. But Shane would recognise him anywhere. Shane got up and walked toward him slowly so as to not startle him. He saw the exact moment Ilya noticed him, he froze and stopped in his tracks. Ilya's eyebrows shot up and his lips parted in shock. Shane couldn't help but smile, all throughout their relationship, Ilya was the one who always left Shane speechless, so it was nice to have that affect on Ilya.

"Hi." Shane greeted. All he wanted to do at that moment was hug him but he refrained from doing so as they were in public. Ilya, it seemed, was feeling the same as his hand reached toward Shane before dropping back.

“Hi. What are you…” Ilya swallowed, his voice thick with emotion. “What are you doing here?”

Shane smiled again. “I missed you.” He stated simply.

But judging from Ilya’s expression, he knew the weight Shane’s simple words held. How much more they meant to them. Shane took the bag that Ilya was carrying, and Ilya let him, and as he did, their hands briefly touched, sending an electric shock across them both. Their eyes met, and Ilya felt another rush of emotion that he took another gulp, feeling like he would burst. Shane’s eyes softened in the way they always did when he looked at Ilya, as if Ilya had hung the moon.

“Come on.” Shane nodded his head toward the exit, knowing they couldn’t stand here any longer. Not when they both wanted to *express* how much they had missed each other. Ilya followed Shane out of the airport to his car and got into the passenger seat.

As soon as Shane got into the car, Ilya couldn’t wait any longer, he took off his sunglasses and hat, and pulled Shane into a hug. It was slightly awkward since it was over the console but Ilya didn’t care, not when it felt like he could finally *breathe* again. He squeezed Shane hard and took a shuddering breath, burying his face in Shane’s neck and taking in his scent. Shane squeezed back, his hands in Ilya’s curls, lightly waving his fingers through them.

They stayed like that for a few minutes, basking in the silence and the comfort they gave each other. Ilya rubbed his nose against Shane’s neck before pulling away slightly, his eyes bouncing back and forth between Shane’s. Ilya leaned in and slowly kissed Shane, lightly pressing his lips to the other’s, waiting for Shane to take the lead.

Shane responded with such ferocity that it made Ilya think that he wasn’t the only one going crazy due to their distance over the past few weeks. Ilya matched Shane’s pace, placing his hand under his chin and guiding Shane’s face in the way he always did, taking control of Shane’s pleasure. Shane left out a small moan and kissed harder, seeming to forget where they were. He had parked in the airport parking garage as opposed to the open car park, so they would be somewhat hidden away from people walking by.

Ilya pulled back and watched Shane open his eyes slowly.

“Thank you.” Ilya whispered. “Thank you for coming. You didn’t have to, but…” he trailed off.

Shane swallowed. “Of course. I’m glad I’m here.”

Ilya smiled and lightly patted Shane on the cheek.

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Shane drove them to Ilya’s place, after picking up Shane’s stuff from his hotel. Ilya led Shane into his house, holding his hand, not wanting to part from him. He kept glancing back at him,

making sure Shane was actually there and not a figment of his imagination. He couldn't believe Shane was here, in Boston, in his house. After all Ilya had been through with his family, he thought he would be coming back to an empty and dark house, but no. Shane was here and he had brought the sunshine with him.

"Are you hungry? We can order food… or I can make you something." Shane asked, making his way to Ilya's kitchen as if it was his own and dragging Ilya along with him.

Ilya bit his lips from smiling too hard and risk looking like an idiot. The sight of Shane in his kitchen and making himself at home filled Ilya up with so much love.

"You know *I* am the host here right? I should be asking you this." He teased, his eyes soft as he looked at Shane, who blushed and let out a small laugh.

"Yeah but out of the two of us, you're the one whose had a long journey." He replied.

"So have you." Ilya replied, referring to Shane's own flight.

Shane shook his head and walked closer to Ilya. He searched Ilya's eyes and gently waved a hand through Ilya's hair. "I don't just mean today." He whispered softly.

And suddenly Ilya knew what he meant. Ilya swallowed back the rise of emotions and leaned forward, resting his forehead against Shane's. Ilya *had* had a long journey, with his family and with Russia in general. He had realised whilst arguing with his brother that if he remained in Russia, his situation would never change, so he had to take himself out of the equation. He had no plans of ever returning to Russia, now that his father was dead so he felt no loss giving his apartment to his brother. His brother could have it as it would be the last thing he ever gave to him.

"I just want you." Ilya whispered between them. He leaned back so he could look in Shane's eyes. "Is that… is that okay?"

Shane's eyes crinkled as he smiled. He nodded, their noses brushing softly against each other. "I want you too. Always."

Ilya felt his heart wobble at Shane's confession. He pulled him toward his bedroom, deciding food could wait. Shane let out a small giggle in return and followed Ilya, letting him take the lead.

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Later that night, after they had eaten and had sex multiple times, they lay on Ilya's sofa. Ilya's head rested on Shane's legs with Shane's hands in his hair, playing with his curls. They had some sports documentary on in the background, not that Ilya was watching, not really. After the week he had, this was exactly where Ilya needed to be.

"How long can you stay?" Ilya asked. They had a game against one another in a couple of days, so Ilya knew Shane's team would be coming down to Boston anyway. But maybe

Shane had to go back, and since they always had such little time together, Ilya wanted to soak up all he could.

“Until the game. Actually, until the day after the game.” Shane replied, his hand stopping in Ilya’s hair momentarily before continuing. Ilya loved it when someone played with his hair; his mother had done it when Ilya was younger but after she died, Ilya had forgotten how much he missed the feeling.

Ilya turned his head slightly to look up at Shane and grinned, teeth all on show, unable to hide his happiness. The day Shane would leave was four whole days away! They had so much time together and Ilya couldn’t wait. Shane matched Ilya’s smile, also feeling giddy.

“Perfect.” Ilya replied. The truth was, he never wanted to leave this place as long as Shane was here.

Shane looked down at Ilya, his eyes soft, and gently traced his index finger across Ilya’s forehead, then down his nose and cheeks before settling on his lips. Ilya smiled and kissed his finger, not breaking eye contact. Shane licked his lips, his expression turning serious for a second.

“Ilya, I want you to know that you can talk to me. About anything, your family, or… or whatever it is you’re thinking and feeling. I want to be…” he trailed off and closed his eyes before letting out a breath. Ilya braced himself for whatever Shane was going to say. “I want to be that person for you… your safe place. Like you are for me.” Shane whispered the last part.

Ilya just stared at Shane for a few seconds, not believing how lucky he was to have found Shane. He suddenly remembered their first meeting, when an 18 year old Shane came and introduced himself and captured Ilya’s attention with his flushed cheeks filled with freckles.

Ilya licked his lips and cleared his throat, which suddenly felt all too dry. “When I was in Moscow…” he began. “I felt like I was drowning in darkness. I felt exhausted all the time and yet I couldn’t sleep, and it felt like I was going to die.” He took a shuddering breath and Shane tightened his grip around Ilya, almost cuckooning him to himself.

“There was too much pressure, I felt like I was… *performing*. But really I was falling apart. But when you… Shane, whenever I talked to you… you filled up the empty spaces. So I want you to know… that you *are* my safe place. I think you have been for a long time now… I just haven’t let myself believe it.”

There was so much more Ilya wanted to tell Shane. He wanted to confess his love for him, tell him everything that had happened in Russia, but he realised they had time. They had time to figure each other out. Shane smiled, his eyes filling up with tears. He nodded and leaned down to kiss Ilya. The kiss started out soft, soon turning into more. Ilya broke away and sat up to sit in Shane’s lap.

“Can I take you to bed?” He asked.

Shane bit his lip, his eyes filled with lust and nodded.

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Shane laid next to Ilya, gently tracing patterns on his bare chest, and watched him sleep. They had finished having sex about thirty minutes ago, showered and then cuddled up in Ilya's bed. It wasn't long before Shane had heard Ilya's breathing get heavy and saw that he had fallen asleep. Shane was so glad that Ilya could finally sleep, he looked relaxed and at peace for the first time since he had landed in Boston, and Shane felt such a rush of emotions for the other man.

He loved this man, something Shane had realised a while ago. Shane smiled to himself, he would tell him soon, Shane thought, before he let sleep succumb him.

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