

you and my big dreams

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you and my big dreams

by [rilla](#)

Summary

It's January 2017 when Shane falls asleep in Ottawa and wakes up at the cottage.

"We are in love, you and me."

Notes

first fic in this fandom, first fic in a WHILE, but like everyone else in the world i have been absolutely captured by these two boys. what absolute joy! this is set after shane breaks up with rose but before all-stars.

It's his room, but also very much not his room at the same time. To the ceiling, Shane says: "Huh."

Slowly, he sits up. He's in the cottage, which makes a small amount of sense: he spends a decent amount of time there, but also he is supposed to be crashing at his parents' house in Ottawa. There is the scent of newly-sawn wood and fresh paint, which is always the case when he's at the cottage because it's still pretty recently built. But he isn't in his usual bedroom downstairs, and the furniture is covered with dust sheets, and also he doesn't have his pyjamas on. He has no clothes on at all, and he isn't the sort of person who sleeps naked unless - unless Ilya, afterwards - unless. Well.

He sits up, drawing his knees close to his chest, and tries to figure out what's going on. He was at his parents' house because his mom decided she wanted the three of them to have a board game night, and they ate grilled chicken and salad, and then they played Monopoly for probably too long, and then he went to bed, and in the early morning he's going to drive back to Montreal because then he has practice. There were awkward conversations about Rose and about how Shane was doing, no, how he was *really* doing, and he told his parents he was fine, because he is, and then he went to sleep, and now he's at the cottage.

He should be panicking, but somehow he isn't. The light is dim and golden, and the sheet-covered furniture makes it feel as though the room is full of friendly ghosts. He digs his toes into the mattress as he looks contemplatively around, and then he gets out of bed. This is a dream, obviously, but it feels more real than most of them. Usually when he dreams, he's on the ice without his skates, or he's supposed to be babysitting Hayden's kids but he's lost one of them, usually Ruby - it's always Ruby - and then he has to run all over the biggest mall in the world trying to find her again, except he never does. Sometimes he dreams about Ilya, about Rozanov, but those dreams are always more weird and blurry and when he wakes up there's a strange, sad pit in his stomach. Then he does fifty push-ups and he's good to go.

When he went to bed it was winter, but now it's fall. He never gets to come to the cottage in fall. He stands at the window and notices that night is starting to draw in, the sky is a hazy shade of pale purple, but he can still see the leaves, gold and red amidst the familiar green, the neatly raked piles on the grass. Subtly, it's different from when he's awake. The trees seem taller. The really big one near the driveway has gone, and there's a stump in its place. His dad always did say it was an accident waiting to happen, one big storm and it would fall right over, so that's probably a good thing. There's a car in the driveway, although Shane doesn't recognise it. It's bulky and practical, but he's also pretty sure that it has flames painted down the sides. Win some, lose some. There is no one in the world he knows who would have a car painted that, except for - except for--

That's when he hears the footsteps, which he knows by heart: the impatient tread, the slight bounce, and when Shane moves over to the doorway and into the hallway he sees exactly what he expects, which is Ilya Rozanov coming towards him. Maybe now this dream will have some semblance of normality, he thinks, they'll have sex and then he'll feel weird about it, except then Ilya does the exact opposite of what he usually does in Shane's dreams. Instead of commanding Shane to drop to his knees with a sensual mouth and heavy-lidded eyes, he jolts, almost drops his cell phone, and stares bug-eyed at him.

"Jesus fucking," Ilya says finally, leaving out the 'Christ'. He does that a lot. His eyes move quickly over Shane's body, and then he blows out a frustrated breath. "Hollander! Put some fucking clothes on!"

"I don't have any clothes," Shane points out. "I guess this is a dream, right? So--"

Ilya's already moving down the hallway. He seems to know his way around, enough to swoosh between curtains of plastic sheeting into the walk-in closet and to come back out again with a heap of fabric in his hands. He thrusts it into Shane's arms, and Shane does what he wants, pulls on the sweatpants and the t-shirt, which is old and soft from years of washing, yellow lettering peeling off the front. It almost looks like - Shane's pretty sure he doesn't own this shirt. He looks down at himself and smooths his hands down his chest. "Where did you get this?"

"From the closet," Ilya says, and apparently can't help adding, "Duh."

"Yeah, but..." This conversation is pointless. "How did you know where to find it?"

There's something softer about Ilya's face now, the corner of his mouth. "As you said. It is a dream. I know everything."

"Well, now you sound an awful lot like Rozanov in real life," Shane says.

"Hah," Ilya says. "Do I." He asks questions without actually asking questions all the time, in a way that Shane would probably find incredibly annoying if it wasn't Ilya. The list of things, he tells himself without much conviction, that annoy him about Ilya Rozanov is simply already so long that he can't add yet another to it. One of Ilya's hands is perched on his hip, which is cocked at a ridiculous angle, and his hair is pushed back from his face, and he's surveying Shane carefully with narrowed eyes. Something feels like it cracks wide open in Shane's chest. The truth is there, the truth is ever-present: there is nothing in the world he misses as much as Ilya Rozanov. There is nothing he misses more than the touch of his hands, certain and gentle, and the prickle of his eyelashes against Shane's cheek as he blinks, the warm huff of his breath against Shane's skin. Knowing what Ilya's mouth feels like when he smiles and kisses at the same time is something that Shane is going to have to force himself to forget over the rest of his life.

But this is a dream, right? He can control it. He can reach out, he can take, he can *have*, one last time. It was too much before, it got to be too much, all-encompassing. Shane was starting to feel as though he'd give up everything else in the world for Ilya, and that wasn't healthy or okay. He'd started to notice faultlines in Ilya, and he had loved it and found it unbearable at the same time. He couldn't be a person that Ilya would let in. He couldn't be someone who had the ability to hurt him, when he knew there was no way they could have a happy ending. He had always known that Ilya would break his heart one day and he had mostly accepted that, but the thought that he might have the power to hurt Ilya right back was more than he could take. But this isn't real Ilya. This is dream Ilya. This isn't real. One last time. One last time.

He reaches for Ilya, takes a couple of stumbling steps towards him and presses their mouths together. It's the sweetest relief he's ever known, as though he's found oxygen again after

being trapped underwater, except then Ilya breaks the kiss, takes a step back and says, "Shane." Then he says, more gently, the softest rejection, "Hollander."

Actually, this is a fucking terrible dream. Shane looks hard at a patch of wall just past Ilya's head. It feels as though tears are about to start welling up in his eyes from frustration. This might be a dream, but soon he's going to have to see Ilya in reality, and they can't do this again. He knows that if he reaches out, Ilya will be there, shrugging Shane off and on again, which is fine, Shane can deal with that, but then there might be those moments again, those fractional seconds that he can't deal with, where he thinks that maybe Ilya likes him back and they'll both end up so unbearably sad about the whole thing because it can never work out.

"All the time I think of another life," he says to Ilya. It feels as though the words are flying out of his mouth, like they've been waiting years for their chance to be said. "I think of what could have happened. I could have broken my ankle when I was a kid and maybe it didn't heal right, you know? So maybe hockey wouldn't have been an option for me. But then how would I meet you? That's the part that worries me. So I was thinking that maybe things could have been different for you too. You could have maybe come here on an exchange year." He feels himself frowning. Does Russia even do exchange years with Canada? Probably not. "To my high school. Or we could have both gone to the same college. I could have sat next to you in a sport science class. We could have talked, we could have got coffee, or beers, or dinner, or whatever. We could... I could hold your hand in public, right out in front of people. There are places, lots of places, where nobody would care. I think all the time about another life where no one would care."

"But you love hockey." Ilya's eyes are guarded.

"I know. I know I love hockey. I know you do too. But if something had been in my way. If you had done something different. I just think of that sometimes, and it makes me sad. That's all, Ilya." Shane presses the sides of his fists against his eyes, willing the tears to go away. "I'm only telling you this because it's a dream," he says blurrily.

"Shane." His own name as a caress. He feels the heat of Ilya next to him and chokes back a sob, but then Ilya's taking his hands one by one, unfurling his fists as though his fingers are petals. Finally Shane opens his eyes and Ilya is there in front of him, Shane's hands still in his. Quietly, Ilya says: "This is not a dream."

"Of course it's a dream. What the hell else--"

"This is not a dream," Ilya says steadily. "It's real life. Dreams are made up of things you already know, right? They come from your brain?"

Shane stares at him. "I guess so."

"Okay. So here are some things you don't know that you will find out tomorrow when you wake up, or whatever. First, your car will be blocked in by a black truck. Your mom will argue with the neighbour about it. It will be a whole... thing." He sounds annoyed by the concept of there being a 'thing'. "Second, Hayden will not be at practice tomorrow. His aunt will die. So sad, I know. He will skip the funeral for a game."

Shane stares at him some more. "What's happening?"

"Third." Ilya leans in so that his lips are almost brushing Shane's ear. He's wearing a different cologne than usual, more woodsy and less flashy. It suits him. Shane wants to turn his face sideways and press his nose against Ilya's jaw and breathe him in. Despite the different cologne he smells the same underneath it. "Third," Ilya says, and squeezes Shane's hands. "We are in love, you and me." He hums out a laugh, soft, vibrating against Shane's neck. "Okay, you might not find that out tomorrow."

Shane's breath stutters in the back of his throat. *We are in love, you and me.* Those words combined with that surprising warmth in Ilya's eyes. There are lines around those eyes that Shane never noticed before, as if he spends a lot of time smiling and looking into the sun. "Ilya," he says. "Could you tell me what's going on?"

Ilya nods slowly. "Yeah. Come on. We can sit down."

In dreams, Shane usually moves between places without having to think about it. There's no walking between places or going to the bathroom or Ilya tripping over the hem of a dust sheet and cursing in Russian. This is different. When he's done being mad at an inanimate object, Ilya kicks his shoes off and sits on the bed, one leg stretched out in front of him. He settles down and arranges his body with a degree of caution, as though there's some kind of injury there, something that aches. "What happened?" Shane asks.

"Huh?" Ilya's shrugging off his jacket.

Shane eyes the leg out in front of him. "It's your knee, right? What happened?"

"Shane. This is not about me."

"No, tell me. What did you do?"

Ilya rolls his eyes and stretches his leg out. "It's the meniscus. Not a new injury. It's fine. Shane! Take a breath. It's fine."

Shane sets his jaw. He's going to put Ilya in touch with his doctor. He's sure that Ilya has a great doctor, but maybe Shane's is better. He can ask around subtly. He knows that cortisone injections can help with damaged cartilage, but they don't help forever, which means that Ilya needs a more permanent solution. He knows that pretty much all hockey players end up with a battered body some day but he hates the thought of Ilya going through his life in pain, or hammering down mouthfuls of ibuprofen and destroying his stomach lining, or worse.

Ilya heaves a sigh and pulls up the leg of his sweatpants so it's up past his knee. "Shane. Look. Scars, see? I had surgery, keyhole surgery. Sometimes it gets stiff but it isn't so bad. If I get arthritis, maybe a knee replacement one day. No big deal."

"Sounds like a pretty big deal to me," Shane says through gritted teeth. "Why didn't you tell--"

"Sit." Ilya pats part of the bed next to him, next to the rumpled covers where Shane was sitting. "We need to talk some more."

Shane tries to look unwilling as he sits down beside him, but he still feels like a moth being drawn towards a flame. He looks down at Ilya's bare knee and traces his fingertips over the small scars. "I can't believe I never saw this before. When did it happen?"

"Four years ago. Maybe four and a half."

"That long? Jesus, Ilya!"

Ilya's eyes are on his face, Shane knows it, he can feel the weight of his gaze, the steadiness of him, like a cup of warm tea. "Well," Ilya says with what sounds like infinite tenderness, "I am forty-two, Shane. These things happen."

Forty-two. Forty-two. Shane feels like his heart is going to stutter itself to death inside his ribcage. Nothing makes any sense in a logical way, but at the same time...

He looks up, finally. Ilya tilts his head to one side, just a little, like a bird. His smile is so relaxed and sincere, maybe more than Shane has ever seen on his face before. But there are lines around his mouth and on his forehead and between his eyebrows, which makes sense because Ilya has one of the most mobile faces that Shane has ever seen. When he's not trying to control it, Shane has seen a million expressions flicker over his face in a matter of seconds. There's a scar beside his eyebrow that Shane has never seen before, and he knows he would have noticed it. There are shadows under his eyes in a shade of mauve-blue that's almost pretty, and at his temples there are flickers of silver, twined in his golden hair like stars on suns. Shane stretches out a hand, and although he feels like his fingers should be shaking, they're perfectly steady. He cups his hand around Ilya's jaw, which is the same almost exactly, and he strokes his thumb across the prickly stubble on his cheek. His eyes are the same, of course, and his long lashes, and the quirk of his mouth, always as if he's about to make fun of someone or break into laughter. "Forty-two," Shane mutters. "Forty-two, huh? How did this happen? What's happening?"

"I don't know." Ilya turns his head, kisses the inside of Shane's palm. "A miracle."

"Why aren't you freaking out?"

"I never freak out."

Shane gives him a look, and Ilya laughs. "Hollander! Some things don't change. You told me about this years ago, and you told me what to say, about your mom and the car, and about Hayden, to prove it's real. You didn't tell me about the knee, so please don't. I don't think I will want to know this." Shane hurts at that, a flicker of desperate worry rising up inside him, and Ilya says, "Shane, please. It's fine. But you and me, we talked about this. You looked on the internet, and you have decided that time is not linear. And so here we are."

Shane nods slowly. He can feel his mind adjusting to it, wrapping itself around whatever's happening. This Ilya is not his Ilya, but he still exists inside him, somewhere. "You're very handsome."

"Thank you." Ilya looks inordinately pleased with himself, and then he looks at Shane and sighs. "You are so young," he says regretfully.

"I mean, I'm legal," Shane says, a little rattled. "By a long way, actually."

Ilya snorts out another laugh. It's easier to make him laugh now, or maybe he doesn't hold back as much. "Yeah, you're legal. But I forgot how you looked."

"I look different now?"

"Yeah. You aged terribly. People say to me, how do you do it, Ilya, you are so handsome, how do you stay with that extremely ugly man? But I am known for my charity work--"

Shane thwacks him briskly across the head with a pillow, and apparently Ilya's knee isn't so bad that he can't catch him off guard and pin him down, half out of breath, entirely laughing. "Careful, old man," Shane says, kind of proud of himself for being a jerk right back, and Ilya says, "I will not stand for this," and Shane says, "Why, does it count as elder abuse?"

Ilya's eyebrows shoot up delightedly. One of his hands is on Shane's hip, his warm fingers just up inside the hem of Shane's shirt, resting on his skin. It has been so long since they touched, so long that every part of Shane's body is aching for him. He can feel himself smiling, slow and warm, like a sunrise. "You said that we fall in love," he said, and Ilya nods very slightly. "Promise?"

"I promise," Ilya says. Then he seems to make a quick decision, swooping down to catch Shane's lips quickly with his own. When he pulls back Shane finds himself chasing Ilya's mouth with his own, wanting more, more, more, just like he always does, but Ilya lets out a breath. "I don't know," he says. "It is - it feels kind of weird. You..." He takes a breath. It takes him so much less time now to rearrange complicated thoughts into English. Carefully he says, "I know you are Shane, but you're not my Shane yet, you know? I have my Shane at home."

"Where's home?" Shane dares to ask.

"No details," Ilya says. "He said I did not give you any details."

But there's a home. Shane's mind races. He thinks of Ilya's apartment and then his own apartment and then the cottage. "But you still come back here?"

Ilya relents. "Yeah. Every summer when we're not..." He flops off Shane onto his side and narrows his eyes. "No details. But we are here a lot. We're doing renovations. That's why all the..." He gestures at the dust sheets.

"Yeah? What are you doing?"

"Ah, architecture boy. We want more space, that's all."

Shane nods, looking at the ceiling. "And everything - hockey - what happened when..."

Ilya's more still now. Shane turns onto his side to look at his profile, the familiar tilt of his nose and his mouth. Then Ilya says, "I think the only thing you have to know is that it's okay in the end. I mean, it's not the end now. Maybe the middle. I don't know. But it's okay. And you are scared, I know you are now, and I know you will be in the future, and you will forget the truth of what I'm telling you: but it will be okay. I promise you this."

Shane believes him, or he wants to believe him, anyway, and that's always been the same thing when it comes to Ilya. It's hard, though. Even telling Rose he was gay, saying the words aloud, was terrifying. There are so many things in life that scare him - coming out, figuring out whether he can deal with a life that doesn't involve hockey, telling the truth about everything to people he's lied to for so long. But Ilya doesn't scare him, not at all, and this version of Ilya certainly doesn't, with his laughter lines and his gentle hands. If this is the reward for everything else, if this is what he'll get to come home to...

"I have to go soon," Ilya says, after a moment. "I guess in a couple of decades you'll be glad I didn't stay out too late. You wanted me to check the renovations." He's silent for a moment and then he says, with something like awe in his voice. "You knew you would be here, maybe, so you sent me along."

"Well, I am an evil genius," Shane says. He's starting to feel kind of weird, hazy around the edges, like a radio signal that isn't quite there. "It's okay. I don't think I'm going to be here for much longer. You go."

"Yeah?" Ilya's already getting to his feet, but Shane feels fine about it. He's going home soon anyway, back to 2017, back to frost and snow instead of fall-golden trees. This Ilya has a Shane, and maybe back home, some time he's going to have an Ilya too. He's going to Florida soon. Maybe he can do something there, maybe he can be honest, maybe the words will finally come. Maybe Ilya will take time to listen and to understand.

He follows Ilya downstairs in a dreamy haze. At the doorway they pause and Shane says, "Thank you."

"Thank you," Ilya says, and then, soft: "You had faith in me."

"You gave me faith in you," Shane tells him, completely honestly.

Ilya reaches out and takes his hands, and then he leans down to kiss him, slow and sweet. In that moment he is everything that Shane ever thought love could be. Shane is the one who breaks the kiss. "Go," he says, wanting to give his future self more time with Ilya, giving himself everything he can get. "Get home."

Ilya smiles and turns towards the door, and Shane steps away, and just as he does so, his bare foot catches on another dust sheet covering something bulky in the hallway. He almost trips and curses and Ilya reaches out to him. By the time he steadies himself, rolling his eyes in mild embarrassment, the dust sheet has been pulled down, and he sees... what is that?

"Shane," Ilya says, warning in his voice, but Shane doesn't listen; he grabs the dust sheet and yanks the rest of it off, and beneath it there's a double stroller. It's well-used, a scattering of crumbs in one of the seats and mud on both footrests, and a baseball cap hooked over one handle.

Shane's heart stops in his chest. He looks at Ilya, whose face is frozen as he stares at the stroller. Then he lets out a breath, shakes his head a little, grins at Shane, almost bashful. As he rakes a hand through his hair, Shane notices the ring on his left hand for the first time. "Twins," Ilya says, gesturing at the stroller, and although he's clearly trying to play it cool, there's a flash of such clear acute joy across his face that Shane's knees almost buckle. A ring. A stroller. Marriage. Kids. A life like this. The life he always wanted. Well, he can see why Ilya needed to get home. His eyesight is starting to fade at the edges, to scatter away in pieces, and he can tell that whatever this vision has been, it's starting to fade away, for tonight at least. But he could have this. He will have this. He will. They will.

The next day, Shane's car is blocked in, and his dad has to step in to stop his mom getting into fisticuffs - Shane's dad's word - with their neighbour about it. When he gets to practice, Hayden isn't there, and when he messages to tell Shane that his aunt died so he has to be with his family, Shane is sympathetic but not overly surprised. That just leaves number three. He carries that knowledge around for weeks like a lantern burning warm inside his chest. Things are going to be okay in the end. Things are going to work out. They're going to be in love.

He packs his best clothes for Florida, for All-Stars, but then Ilya immediately looks better than he ever could, in some bright shirt that would look tacky on absolutely anyone else. When he sees him, Shane feels a deeper wave of affection than he has ever felt in his whole life. *Ilya Rozanov*, he thinks as he crosses the room towards him, his heart so full it feels like it might burst. *Ilya Rozanov, I'm going to make you fall in love with me.*

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