

About time.

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About time.

by [Spotsandsocks](#)

Summary

"So you've been in love since..."

They'd both been quick to deny Yuna Hollander's stunned question and if the 'just' of their answer hadn't been entirely true, at least not for Ilya, then no one needed to know that right?

Once they're back at the cottage Ilya forgets all about that question but unfortunately Shane Hollander, his newly coined "boyfriend" has a mind that thinks too much and a mouth that while good for many things is unfortunately also good at asking questions - questions like "when?"

It's a question he's rather not answer, not that he doesn't know the answer he does, he just doesn't particularly want to admit it out loud but for Shane, for them and their future together perhaps he can.

Suddenly all Ilya can see are Shane's eyes; so full of feelings, his lashes dusted with the tears he won't ever let fall and Ilya's heart flutters in a way that he's become very familiar with, he understands the question now and he knows the answer.

He's known that answer for a very long time.

And now Shane wants to know too.

Notes

Hello there, we are again, a little unexpectedly as I had no plans for this one but there you go, that's how things work sometimes.

This fic started in a slightly different form, still at the cottage but not around this particular question. I'm pleased I had the idea to flip things around a bit because this works much better and it meant I could still use words from a slumbering wip.

So basically for me there's a moment in Heated Rivalry when I think Ilya knew the trouble he was in and that his heart had already gotten far too attached to a certain Canadian Hockey player with beautiful freckles - that is what this fic is all about.

It got a little more emotional than I expected and maybe there's a sprinkle of light angst and mild retrograde suffering too but not too much, just lots and lots of delicious feelings because

both these guys made questionable choices at times and couldn't quite work out that using your words usually gives better outcomes .

But at least you're never too old to learn.

So onwards we go... hope you enjoy 😊

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

"When?"

The single word, barely louder than a whisper, has Ilya's attention in a heartbeat. He looks up and finds that Shane is looking at him with the big, sad brown eyes that have haunted his dreams for years.

They may only have been 'boyfriends' since this afternoon but Ilya knows the man at the other end of the couch and that single word is the end result of a chain of thoughts Shane has been mulling over since they returned to the cottage.

Unfortunately despite his many talents both on and off the ice Ilya isn't a mind reader, which means he has to say -

"When what Hollander?"

Of course that's met with a "look" because Shane thinks he's being perfectly obvious. Ilya doesn't, so he waits for more and while he does he takes the time to appreciate his boyfriend's cute little frown - the crinkle on his forehead really has no right being as endearing as it but when seconds tick past and there's no more information Ilya asks again, this time with his own "look" of lifted eyebrows and wide eyes.

It takes a few more seconds before Hollander expands on his crypticness.

"When did you *know*?"

Although technically it counts as the more information he requested unfortunately it provides very little in the way of clarity so with a sigh Ilya sits himself up, shifting across the couch to get closer to his love.

"Hollander, when did I know what? That I am genius on ice? Stallion in bedroom? Smartest guy in room? Or maybe that I am strongest, fastest league player."

Shane snorts, the frown instantly wiped away by his scornful amusement just as Ilya had intended.

"You wish!"

Shane chirps back with a grin and Ilya replies with the self assurance he knows drives Shane mad in more than one way.

"Do not need to wish, is all truth."

Before Shane has the chance to argue he adds, "but I admit, am not mind reader, so explain with more words please."

He'd expected that to get him a quick exasperated explanation but instead Shane goes silent and looks away, his cheeks and ears glowing pink as he mutters something that sounds very much like,

"Doesn't matter."

Ilya blinks in surprise, surely Shane doesn't expect him to believe such nonsense. Whatever this is matters to him so it matters to Ilya too.

Shuffling even closer until the gap between them is gone he reaches out and gently turns Shane's face back towards him.

"You are still terrible liar."

Shane looks at him, but only briefly, his eyes refuse to settle and Ilya experiences an anxious wave of nerves. He's starting to think something bad might be happening.

Keeping his feelings hidden and his voice calm he chases Shane's eyes and eventually captures them with a quiet reassurance.

"Is ok to ask... whatever it is."

The sweep of his thumb across Shane's freckles makes them both feel better. Shane's eyelids flutter and he sways a little closer and as usual Ilya is utterly helpless against the magnetic pull of Shane Hollander and it's suddenly obvious that the next thing he needs to do is kiss him.

It's as much to reassure Ilya as Shane. It's soft and slow and every bit as good as the first time they kissed, a moment when Ilya's world shifted in a new and unexpected direction.

Shane moans softly under his ministrations and opens for him. Ilya takes his time, enjoying the gentle press of lips and tongue, savouring the taste of him and knows he'll never get tired of kissing this man.

When they finally part and the tension is gone from Shane's face he reminds him of a promise they made to each other only days ago.

Fingers brushing against the nape of Shane's neck Ilya whispers into the shell of his ear, finishing with another soft kiss that makes his boyfriend shiver.

"We said to tell feelings to each while we are here, yes?"

Ilya feels the nod against his skin and leans back to study his face.

"So it matters, yes?"

Shane doesn't say no but he still tries to dismiss the conversation he started.

"It's just something silly that's all...nothing important..."

"Let me be judge ok?"

That's met with more silence but Ilya waits patiently and watches the emotions flicker across Shane's face, he's hard to read and the clues are small but they're also bright enough if you

know what to look for and he does.

Shane is clearly torn; he wants to say what's on his mind but years of secrets and repression are fighting hard to keep him silent. Ilya could laugh, and they say Russians are bad at taking about feelings! He can silently admit that that's true, at least if he's anything to go by, but is ok though because it means that once again Shane is his perfect match.

Shane's silent battle continues and another prompt seems to be required.

"Hollander, when what?"

Looking away again Shane's cheeks get a little pinker but at least he nods. When he closes his eyes Ilya tries to imagine what Shane has to say that can be so very awful. He keeps his breathing slow and steady as the words finally start to flow.

"God this is embarrassing, it's so not important and it's not like it matters at all but ... I was thinking about it and well we told my parents... we said.. well we said not since our rookie season and yeah, obviously that's right cos that would be crazy but I was wondering ... when, when you did *know*... about me, us... about you know being in ..."

Oh!

Suddenly all Iyla can see are Shane's eyes; so full of feelings, his lashes dusted with the tears he won't ever let fall and Ilya's heart flutters in a way that he's become very familiar with, he understands the question now and he knows the answer.

He's known that answer for a very long time.

And now Shane wants to know too, he's asking to know the secret Ilya's been holding onto for years; he wants to know just when Ilya Rozanov fell in love with Shane Hollander.

"See I told you it was stupid, don't worry about it."

Shane starts to stand, trying to move away from him and that's utterly unacceptable, terrifying even. Without thinking about it Ilya grabs hold of Shane's wrist and pulls him back down to the couch, his mind racing with how to answer him because he knows he has to answer.

What should he tell him?

It's honestly hard to remember a time when he wasn't in love with Shane Hollander but he can't say that. Never in a million years can he say that.

"Ilya?"

Shane's voice pulls him out of his own thoughts.

"It's ok you don't need to tell me. I'm sorry I asked."

The small apology makes him feel terrible and he falls over his words to make Shane understand that he doesn't have to apologise.

"No... do not be sorry.. I..."

Why is his heart pounding so hard, it's not like they haven't said I love you, it's not like they haven't promised to try for a future together. Why is he so scared?

Then he hears his own voice speaking a mortifying truth.

"Can not tell you. Is too embarrassing."

Then, in a heartbeat, just like the sun appearing from behind the clouds, Shane's face clears and he's beaming at him.

It really doesn't the situation at all; God he's far too gorgeous, it's so unfair, what chance did he ever have of resisting that face, that smile.

"Tell me."

The words are stretched by Shane's smile.

The fluttery fear inside Ilya starts to fade but he's can't just blurt it out. If Shane is going to learn the truth he has to earn it.

He shakes his head and says as nonchalantly as he can;

"No. Head will swell then explode, I would miss freckles."

Shane's grin gets even wider as he climbs onto Ilya's lap.

"Just my freckles?"

The question ends with a small kiss and Ilya's hands on Shane's hips. He shrugs and looks over Shane's shoulder, playing hard to get.

"Maybe a little more than freckles but not much more."

That earns him a snort and Shane rolls his hips, probably to remind Ilya of his other interesting attributes. Ilya lets himself enjoy being reminded for a moment or two as he gapes open mouthed at the man in his lap and enjoys his considerable talents.

"Uh huh?"

Shane smirks down at him, he knows exactly what he's doing and then he ups his game with kisses to Ilya's nose and cheeks as he moves his hips up and down lightly, teasing more than anything else.

"Not much more than my freckles, gottchya"

Hollander looks far too smug sitting in his lap but Ilya never really had the upper hand in this relationship so what does it matter now.

Happily accepting his fate Ilya adjusts himself on the couch, getting more comfortable and when he speaks again his voice is lower than it was.

"Do really love your freckles. From first day —freckles ... so many ... wanted to..."

A soft gasp leaves both of them as Ilya pushes his hips up and strokes across Shane's dappled cheeks at the same time.

"Wanted to touch, kiss, count them all, see if there were more in other places."

Shane sinks down to kiss him hungrily and Ilya opens; legs, lips, heart, all opening wider and wider as he lets Shane have whatever he wants. He matches Shane's need perfectly with soft groans and wet strokes of his tongue. Fuck he loves him. So so much.

The kiss lingers, changes, becoming kitten kisses spread across his skin as Shane's fingers end up tangled in his hair but eventually he stills and pulls back to look down at him again.

Ilya's heart aches when he looks into Shane's eyes and they reveal that he's feeling everything that Ilya is too.

Shane's eyes, his voice, his touch all of him is soft and Ilya knows that Shane sees him, all of him, but it's more than that, it's like when he looks at him he sees something valuable, something precious. It's almost too hard for Ilya to believe in a look like that, no one has looked at him like that since his mother left.

It's an amazing thing but Shane really does love him and once more he's reminded that he'd do anything for this man.

Anything.

Mesmerised by the beauty in front of him Ilya watches the nervous flick of pink as Shane wets his lips some more and asks for what he wants;

"Tell me, tell me when you knew you loved me.."

Fuck... it's so very long ago and if he tells him then Shane will know that, he'll know how hard Ilya fell, but then maybe he wants him to know now and maybe Shane should know. Ilya stares deep into dark hopeful eyes and knows there's no point fighting because if Shane Hollander asks for something that he can give him then he will.

He takes a breath.

"Is maybe little more complicated than that."

Soft fingers never stop smoothing through his hair but the corner of Shane's lips twitch sadly and the tiny nod that goes with it says he understands perfectly. Ilya should have known he would, they've been on the same path, side by side since they were seventeen and because of that the next word falls easily from his lips,

"But.."

It's just three letters, one word but it makes Shane's breath catch and Ilya's heartbeat stutter painfully.

"... do you remember, our first time, in fancy apartment with too many cushions."

Ilya delights in the blush and the tiny giggle that sneaks out without Shane's permission but he's even happier with Shane's gentle answer.

"Ilya, I remember every time we got to be together but that night, that one was special. You made it perfect. I'll never forget a single moment of it."

Then Shane kisses him, without lust or urgency just his love, soft and gentle and Ilya could cry and maybe he does, because Shane's finger is brushing against his cheek, and his skin feels damp.

He needs a moment to find his voice again but when he does he uses it to tell Shane something he could barely admit to himself for years.

"That night, after we were together, I asked you something."

Shane nods his own eyes shiny, " You said; worth the wait?"

Ilya's chest feels too tight, Shane remembers too, there are too many feelings, too much love to be kept inside of him, it wants to break free. Maybe now, he can finally stop fighting it and let it out.

"You didn't answer, but you kissed me- here"

His fingers brush the skin where Shane's mouth had rested on his lips that night.

"and here"

He moves to touch the other spot, the one that had truly made him see what was happening to them or maybe just to him. The gentle kiss Shane had laid on his brow had sent him running for years. That kiss had made him lash out in Sochi and ignore messages for months because he thought it would be easier that way.

Until Vegas proved it could never be easy for him again.

"That is when I knew that I was falling in love with you but I also knew that I could not let it happen so I left."

He waits and watches as Shane breaths in deep and slow, thinking before he speaks.

"And that's why you ignored me for months."

The simple statement casts a long shadow; Ilya knows now what that decision did to Shane and the shame and hurt of that choice still lurks in the pit of his stomach.

He'd been so sure it was the right thing to do. It hadn't been easy either, he'd had to work hard to push Shane away, reject what he was offering when he'd seen him at the Olympics, to ignore every text that arrived from "Jane".

He'd had to fight even harder when the messages started to arrive less and less frequently. He'd been proud of himself for being so strong, for getting over the small blip in his no feelings just sex set up with Hollander. Except finally, there were no more messages to ignore and he found himself fighting a new battle - the desperate urge to send his own message saying he was sorry, that he'd lost his phone, that he'd been in hospital anything so that they could talk again.

He won that battle too and paid the price.

"Yes, and you know I am sorry for it but I thought... I thought I could stop it all, make it easier but then we were in Vegas together and all I wanted to do was touch you."

Shane's voice is hushed.

"You did touch me."

Ilya studies the beautiful face hovering above him, Shane's eyes are closed now and his lips remain parted as he breaths slowly. Ilya knows what he's remembering; the way they stood too close to each other, how he'd run his hand down Shane's spine, the closest he could get to him, the most he could steal in public. He stole the moment on his phone too. Hoarded it away, protected it carefully for so long.

Shane's speaking again;

"It burnt. Where your hand was, I felt it, all the way down my spine, even through my jacket, I thought I'd implode."

Dark eyes open, darkened further by memory and feelings.

"I had to get away but you followed me."

Ilya nods, feeling too much too fast.

"Yes, I was weak, I followed you, I wanted too much."

"And you were such a fucking asshole to me."

The flicker of annoyance in Shane's tone reminds Ilya of that night. He remembers how he behaved. He'd played it arrogant and rude. He hadn't thought Shane would be that upset with him. He'd thought that if there were any feelings they must only be on his side.

He'd hidden his own heart and desires behind bravado and crudeness, thinking if he pissed Shane off he'd leave and Ilya wouldn't have to deal with what he wanted so badly.

He'd played it wrong though and in the face of Shane's very real hurt and confusion Ilya's already weak resolve had snapped.

"I know. I thought if I could make you leave. You could save us both."

There's such a sad look in Shane's eyes Ilya can barely look at him.

"I didn't want to leave. I didn't want you to leave... I wanted..."

Ilya interrupts him, "I remember what you wanted..."

The joke is a weak attempt to lighten the mood, but Shane smiles anyway because he understands but he won't let Ilya play off what they did to each other that night and over the years that followed. He knows they need to look at it now so they can move past it.

Shane's fingers stroke lightly down his cheek as he makes his own confession.

"I didn't just want that... I wanted you. I wanted to talk to you, laugh with you, just to be together for a while and when I left your room I was... "

He sighs then laughs sadly and Ilya would prefer to be checked hard into the boards a thousand times than to hear that sound again.

"We didn't even kiss and I... I think I wanted that more than anything else. Already, even then, even after how you were with me, I wanted that, I wanted you to be feeling it with me."

Shane breathes deeply, resets himself and returns from the past.

"So that's when *I* knew. "

Ilya feels the tremor run through Shane's body as he shrugs off the past and laughs again, less sad, more dismissive, just as bad.

"Stupid huh, I was in an elevator all alone wishing I could kiss you and I knew what that meant. I just couldn't face it so I pushed it down, tried not to see it, told myself it was the sex I wanted, the danger too maybe.

I thought you were the smart one, keeping your distance, keeping it cool. I wished so hard I could be like you and not care, not be the one falling in love but I was and I hated it."

It cuts sharply, knowing Shane has spent years with this inside him, never seeing that Ilya was wanting too, hurting too.

They're so very stupid.

He can't change the past but he can share a different version of it, fingers clenching into the muscle of Shane's hips he can't stay silent a second longer.

"Hollander, no... you are wrong. I was always hiding, lying to you, to me, to everyone. I cared... I always cared about you, very much, too much from the time you said first stupid hello to me, then in gym and at that dumb commercial I agreed to do just so I could see you."

The face he's looking at softens and there's more unshed tears to catch the light.

"You wanted to see me?"

"Yes, all I could think of for months, and then I was so nervous but you wanted me back and you were perfect. You were perfect and it was terrible because you didn't want me the way I wanted you."

Suddenly his face is being cupped and held between Shane's large, safe hands.

He tells Shane everything else.

"You were always so perfect I hated it as much as I loved it. Kissing you, touching you... always different, with you always different than anyone else, always ... better.

Was ... I just ... it was too hard to be together but I wanted that, wanted more. Always more, until I could not pretend and I had to try or go mad."

His eyes have somehow closed by the end of all that honesty, squeezed tight and holding back onto what little dignity he has left alongside the tears that want to fall.

"So I tried.."

He can hear the echo of pain in his voice -and wonders if Shane can too.

"I said stay and you said yes and I thought... maybe, maybe not just me then, maybe him too, but..."

It's mortifying but his voice fails him, trapped behind lips that are twisted and pressed together tightly. A sharp, almost vicious shake of his head helps too, keeps the tears away but Shane always looking, sees his distress and continues the story.

"It was me too, it was.

I'm sorry I left, but you said my name... and fuuucck, Ilya, I wanted everything right there and then and it scared the fuck out of me but not as much..."

Shane swallows hard and must push himself into the next sentence by will power alone.

"...not as much as what it felt like to have your name on my lips for the first time."

The admission makes the room bright again, his eyes opening in surprise, he'd always thought it was him that had sent Shane running, his stupidity in saying his name, showing his heart. He was wrong.

Shane's head is shaking back and forth, eyes cast skyward blinking furiously.

"Jesus Ilya, it was like ... "

Ilya can feel the way he's trembling or maybe it's Shane trembling he can't really tell anymore he just holds onto him tighter.

"It was like..."

Dark strands of hair shake with the vigorous movement of Shane's head as he flounders, trying to find the right words.

"No, is ok, I understand."

Shane smiles down at him lashes wet, eyes bright.

"No you don't.. saying your name it was like ... it was like the first time I put my skates on the ice, the first time I scored a goal, the first time I won a game, God it was the Stanley Cup in my hand. It was what I was always meant to be doing, saying your name and I wanted to say it again and again, never stop saying it until everyone understood you were mine and I was so fucking terrified by that I freaked out."

Ilya can hardly believe what he's hearing but he is hearing it and Shane would not lie to him, not now, not about this.

"I'm so sorry I wish I hadn't.. I wish I'd stayed, I already loved you but right then is when I knew it couldn't be stopped and I should have told you."

Ilya knows he should respond but he can't, he feels raw and exposed, flayed open by the brightness of the honesty all around them, all he can push past his lips is Shane's name and he silently thanks god that he's not crying again.

Except Shane says his name and then he says it again and by the third time he's undone; collapsing under the weight of love and gentle touches; Ilya breaths past a gentle finger tracing over his lip, then gasps for air as Shane's mouth touches his, kissing him so lightly it could be his imagination but it's not, he knows it's real, that Shane is real and as a reward for his faith in love and Shane Hollander the kiss grows firmer and unlocks the desperate sob he's been holding back.

Ilya's breath catches as Shane swallows the sound of his joy and pain combined and kisses him, slowly under his gentle care everything sharp and painful that lives inside of him is softened and Ilya finds himself laying down, pressed gently into the cushions of the couch with Shane's body covering him completely, grounding him, keeping him sheltered from the storm of emotion he's lost in.

"We wasted so many years."

Shane's words are whispered against his skin with more kisses and hands in his hair and on his face.

"No."

The word just slips out.

"No?"

Shane pulls away, a cutely confused expression on his face, and while Ilya mourns the loss of kisses it's a necessary pause because he has something important to say and as the storm inside him has calmed now he can say it.

"No, I think we were too young and stupid at the start, together we would have made even more mistakes than we did, maybe too many to fix. Is better it took time to get here, time for us to learn truth and honesty. We are ready now. Ready for this, for us, for future. Yes?"

The answering nod is silent but the passion and commitment glowing in Shane's eyes leaves no room for doubt.

"Yes. God yes, so ready."

Above him Shane's smile is bright and beautiful and utterly perfect and Ilya thinks he has and will love him forever.

And that feels like something he should say in this new world they're building together so he does; Ilya tugs on Shane's hair to pull his head back just as it descends towards him for another kiss. It makes him smile, how that simple act makes his man gasp, his eyes wide and alive with a sudden heat.

God he's always going to be perfect isn't he.

Ilya pulls again and smiles at the man he loves.

"And Shane, moy lyubimyy, in case you ever wonder this is *when* too, this when I knew that you are my forever. That this will work"

The words sinks in slowly and Ilya has time to kiss him thoroughly before it's fully processed.

He kisses him harder than any of their other kisses and moves to his neck, kisses, bites in ways he knows are wanted and Shane responds beautifully; purring, arching up pressing down, gasping out one word.

"Forever..."

Ilya repeats the promise one last time before he takes control of Shane's mouth and neither of them are capable of any more words at all.

Not that it matters they know each other well enough that for this and for now words aren't needed.

They'll talk again later, tomorrow and the next day too, they'll make plans, laugh, dream, cry, fight and hope and when they look back on their lives they'll both remember that this moment, in Shane's cottage is when forever started.

End Notes

Thanks for reading if you got all the way down here then please consider leaving kudos, or a comment short, long an emoji it's all appreciated and it's the only way we find out that people are reading our words and if I know people are reading I might make more words.

Have a wonderful day night or relevant time zone 💜

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