

When lights close their tired eyes

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/78388741) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/78388741>.

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:	Overworking , Exhaustion , Shane Hollander Needs a Hug , Worried Ilya Rozanov , Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified , author know nothing about hockey , Hurt/Comfort
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-27 Words: 3,366 Chapters: 1/1

When lights close their tired eyes

by [chest_infection](#)

Summary

Shane has a really, really rough week. Ilya is there to catch him at the end of it.

Notes

This is a little treat to myself cause im very sick, so it's definitely inaccurate esp about the hockey stuff. This is also the first fanfiction i've ever written, i think the gay hockey boys possessed me.

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

They had a big game against Boston next week, the last one before the break. Shane could feel his chest tighten, both because he was excited to see Ilya and because there was extra pressure on him and his team, as they had lost their last couple of games. Shane wasn't sure what he'd been doing wrong, but he needed to step up, and fast.

So he woke up at 4:00 no matter the city and did cardio until he felt too nauseous, snagged two boiled eggs and then skated as hard as he could for as long as he could at training. Yuna had organised a couple of big deals, so on top of the usual hockey games and subsequent interviews, he had several photoshoots in each place he was playing. Texting Ilya between rounds was his only relief.

After scurrying around like a mouse all day, he would go for a run, lift weights, eat the usual chicken and rice for dinner and collapse into bed at around 11:30 on non-travel days. That had been his routine for the past several days—over and over, cyclical, like a treadmill belt.

But today was different. He was a little slower, groggier, and his coach had noticed. He'd pulled Shane aside, with a hint of concern in his eyes, and said they needed him in top shape for the game. Shane agreed. So he'd skated harder, run harder, lifted harder, because his team needed him goddammit, and he couldn't let them down.

But when he fell into bed that day, sleep didn't come. His heart was beating loudly into the silence, and he could feel fear gripping his chest. It didn't make any sense; he'd been tired all day, he'd worked hard, and now he was being kept awake?

He didn't know what he was nervous about, either. The big game, maybe? He was always nervous for those, but they had never sent fear lurching through him like this. After tossing and turning for a frustrating three hours, he finally fell asleep.

...

He felt like a giant piece of concrete was lying on top of him. Shane opened his eyes, groaning, and fumbled with his alarm.

Of course, he'd been tired all season. It was just the nature of the sport; there was a lot to do, and not a lot of time. But this felt different. He heaved himself up and braced against gravity, head spinning. Exhaustion pulled at his features like desert heat melting a wax figure. Rain pattered against the windows insistently, and Shane could already feel the humidity stiffening the ankle he'd broken a while back.

Get up, Hollander. Push through. He stumbled through his routine, heading out into the dismal morning to find the closest gym. He'd hoped the cardio would wake him up, but he just couldn't shake the weight in his body.

Irritatingly, as much as he pushed himself, he couldn't do as much as he usually did.

That day's game was almost humiliating; although nobody seemed to notice, Shane knew he was even slower today. His reflexes were worse, he couldn't think properly, and he kept

getting distracted. He had messed up an easy pass, and he just knew he'd cost his team the game. The general consensus seemed to be that his whole team was off today, probably because of the dreary weather, but Shane could feel the silent judgement. He checked his phone after getting into a cab.

Lily: Thighs looked juicy at game 2day

Lily: Nice backhand 1st half

Shane huffed out a laugh. He never thought the day would come when he'd hear that from Ilya Rozanov.

Jane: Greatest sext you've ever sent

Jane: Compliment my backhand more often

Lily: No. Probably very rare to see good backhand out of shane hollander

Lily: I mean. Jane.

Jane: Nice save. Ok, gtg to a radio interview now

Some of the tension left his shoulders. Ilya hadn't mentioned how he'd played worse than usual, and Shane let out a little breath. But, God, now he missed the man. Alone in the backseat of a cab, Shane tipped his head back and allowed himself to imagine Ilya holding him tight on the couch, stroking his back as Shane buried his head into the man's neck.

A pang of longing tore through him. He wished he could see Ilya, felt like he needed him to breathe, but Ilya was on the other side of the country. They would see each other in just a matter of days. Shane took a breath, packing this neediness away along with his fatigue and hunger. He straightened his spine, thanked the cab driver, and went to the interview.

...

He couldn't sleep. The game was playing itself over in his head, and that cold fear was digging under his ribs. He'd managed a good workout and a longer run than usual, had even had a big dinner, so he should be fast asleep by now. But he couldn't get his breathing to slow down, or his heart to stop pounding. He felt more alert than he had for the entire day.

He needed to get to sleep. To perform, he needed to get to sleep.

...

Shane woke to his alarm, sitting up abruptly, chest heaving and cheeks wet.

He'd dreamt he was rushing through an airport he didn't recognise, down a hallway that stretched into the dark. It had started warping, twisting, funneling until he was being crushed by white tiles and fluorescent lights. He'd fought, desperately squeezing through, pulling himself out and into a tiny doorway where he'd tumbled onto linoleum. He'd looked up, the

scent of antiseptic stinging his nose, to find a hospital bed. Stumbling to his feet, his chest had seized as he'd seen who was lying there.

Ilya.

Ilya, looking pale and drawn, unconscious in the hospital, nose bleeding.

Shane hadn't had any dreams for months, and not an intense stress dream like that since his rookie year. It was frustrating, because he had no idea what was going on with him this week; why on earth was he so stressed out? It made no sense.

The worst part was how much he missed Ilya. The longing felt like a physical weight, and he couldn't even call him, because Ilya was probably just as busy and just as stressed as he was, and they didn't do that. Didn't talk just to talk. Shane just wanted to see him.

But he had things to do, so he picked himself up, neatly packaged his feelings away, and went through his day.

...

Shane woke up feeling like he'd been hit by a semi truck speeding down the freeway, limbs sore for absolutely no reason and a headache already building. He hadn't gotten more than a few hours of sleep a night since his nightmare, and his schedule had only become more intense leading up to the Boston game. The Boston game which was today.

Despite feeling like roadkill, he rolled over and turned off his alarm. But that wasn't right; it was his alarm for pre-game practice...it was nearly 8:00. He'd overslept.

He rocketed out of bed and sped through his morning routine, stopping once to take a breath and compartmentalise before rushing out the door. Arriving at practice late (even if it was by five minutes, but he was usually early) was a terrible look, and he could feel that his team was off centre. But still, they ran light drills and talked strategy like nothing was wrong.

And suddenly he was sitting on the bench, about to play Boston. He could barely recall what he'd said to the press. The rink lights reminded him of every time he'd woken up, disoriented and hurting on the ice. The crowd's cheers crashed over him, sending cold fear sliding down his spine. He shivered.

The call to start came, so he did.

...

He'd played like shit. They lost 2-1, probably entirely due to Shane's slow skating and poor passes. Ilya had a smart chirp ready for their face-off, and Shane hadn't said anything back, because the relief of seeing the man's face had nearly knocked him off his feet. He'd lost the puck, too.

It had all blurred past him, and although he'd skated as hard and as fast as possible, he knew that he'd let his team down. Shane suffered through the subdued shoulder pats and thin platitudes, changing out of his sweaty gear. He felt so heavy, so clumsy, smeary like a giant

bug on a windshield. He stumbled through post-game interviews and into a cab, which took him a block away from Ilya's house.

He was really looking forward to forgetting the shame he'd been carrying around, letting Ilya take him apart. And he was really, really looking forward to the cuddles he'd get afterwards.

The mask, sunglasses and hoodie he'd put on were sticking to his skin and pulling uncomfortably. He was weirdly cold, and the sudden dizziness that had been plaguing him all week hit with full force. Exhaling heavily, he leaned against a wall.

It was slow going, but he made it to Ilya's, removing his mask and glasses, and finally, finally the door opened to reveal a tall, blonde, muscular, shirtless man. His Ilya. The man squinted at him.

"You look like shit, Hollander," he said, sounding a little confused.

"Gee, thanks, Rozanov. Just what I need after that game," Shane shot back with more bite than was warranted.

"No, no, you look... pale," Ilya said. He sounded almost concerned.

Shane rolled his eyes, pushing off of the wall and walking into the house. It was always nice, with its paintings and its warm lights. It smelled a little like Ilya too, faintly of cigarettes. He felt himself relax a little, instinctively knowing that he was safe.

The exhaustion he'd been keeping in a little box burst out, smothering him. He stumbled, placing his hand on a wall and pausing for a moment.

"Hollander?" Ilya asked from behind, but Shane couldn't really hear over the roaring in his ears. His vision darkened at the edges, and he took a breath before pushing off the wall again. He turned to face Ilya, suddenly recalling that he had not eaten since yesterday. His knees gave out, and his vision dissolved into nothing.

Shane had been acting strange, Ilya decided. He'd been texting less, which Ilya knew was because of the busy schedule, but the texts he'd been sending Ilya lately weren't his usual witty style. They were almost stilted.

Ilya had, of course, felt a rush of relief and excitement upon seeing Shane on the ice, but it was dampened when he looked closer. Shane's skin was pale and clammy. His eyes were less focused than usual. When Ilya really noticed something was wrong, was when he said his stupid chirp and the freckled idiot didn't respond.

...

After the game, Ilya rushed through congratulating his team, changing, and interviews before speeding off to his house. Shane had been off his game tonight. Not by much; he was still better than his teammates, who definitely needed work, but enough that it wasn't fun to beat him. Ilya still sent him a flirty text, refusing to admit that he just wanted to make sure the man was alright.

Ilya had been waiting for a while when the knock came. He leapt up, jogging to the door and pulling it open. Shane looked awful, the bags under his eyes clear even with the low lighting, shoulders slumped.

"You look like shit," he said, which was not what he meant at all. But English wasn't coming easy when he was desperately trying to understand why Shane looked so tired. Shane had evidently gotten sick of his probing, walking past him and into the house.

The back of Shane's neck glistened with sweat, and it caught the light as he stumbled, leaning heavily on the wall. Alarm tore through Ilya and he took a step forward, hands hovering, unsure.

"Hollander?"

At this, Shane turned, just in time for Ilya to see his eyes roll back into his head. Shane collapsed onto the floor, unmoving, and Ilya's lungs froze with panic. He dropped to his knees beside Shane, shaking his shoulder.

"Hollander! Shane, Shane, you have to wake up. Please, моя любовь, you have to wake up," he gasped, cupping Shane's cheek. He fumbled, feeling for a pulse, relieved to find one, even if it was weaker than Shane's usually was. He refused to admit that he kept a finger on Shane's pulse to fall asleep.

Ilya felt terror grip him, seeing double, seeing long hair and a bottle of pills. He felt twelve years old again, helpless. Ilya pleaded and begged for Shane to just open his eyes, solnyshka, just look at me, please, running his hands through Shane's hair and rubbing his shoulder.

Shane's eyes fluttered open. Ilya sagged with relief, chin dropping to his chest.

"...Ilya?" Shane reached up, thumb brushing across Ilya's cheek, "Why're you crying?" He abruptly realised that tears were streaming freely down his cheeks, soaking Shane's shirt. Ilya couldn't reply for a moment, revelling in Shane's eyes.

"You scared me. Do not do again," he said, aiming for stern but coming closer to desperate. "Let's get up." He hooked an arm under Shane's knees and another across his back, hoisting him up and relishing the warm, solid contact. Even if Shane felt a little too light. Shane melted into him, gripping the front of Ilya's shirt.

"I can walk," Shane grouched as Ilya set him onto the couch.

"No. Now tell me what is wrong," Ilya replied, sitting next to him.

“...I don’t know,” he began, “I guess...I haven’t been sleeping that well?” but the explanation didn’t seem to make sense to Shane, and it didn’t make sense to Ilya either.

“What about fainting earlier? Not caused by lack of sleep, yes? When did you eat?” probed Ilya, concern leaking into his tone without his knowledge. Shane frowned.

“I’ve just had a bad week okay? Nothing’s wrong, and I can— I can just go. I can’t give you what you want, and I’m sorry for fainting on you,” he snapped, but the anger in his tone was betrayed by the slight shake of his voice. Shane moved to stand, but sat back heavily back onto the couch instead.

“Hollander. Shane. I am worried. I want to make you stop fainting,” Ilya replied, settling for honesty. Shane deflated.

“Sorry. I just, I can’t...” he trailed off, looking lost. Vulnerable.

“Wait here,” Ilya said, hurrying over to the kitchen. He grabbed a ginger ale and a sugary muesli bar and headed back. Shane’s face twisted when he saw them.

“Macrobiotic diet, you know,” he reminded Ilya.

“You need sugar, Shane,” Ilya replied, unwrapping it for him and opening the ginger ale, setting them both down. Shane acquiesced, nibbling the bar and drinking a healthy amount.

“...You keep ginger ale in your house. Do you like it?” asked Shane.

“No. Disgusting medicine drink,” Ilya replied as he sat back down. Shane glanced at him with his lips parted for a moment, surprise flickering across his face. Ilya caught his eye.

“Shane. Please tell me what is wrong.”

“I don’t know! I swear it’s been just another week, but I’ve been off my game. I mean, you saw how I played. I let my team down hard, and I’ve been playing badly for a while,” Shane said, fisting a hand in his hair as he explained. Ilya shifted closer, pressing their knees together.

“Not you. Metros have been playing badly, you have been playing well. Little worse than usual, yes, but well,” he said, because it was the objective truth.

“I should have compensated for them, then. They shouldn’t have had to cover me,” Shane said, and Ilya could see that Shane was putting this all on himself.

“No. It is team’s job to cover each other,” Ilya rebuffed, “Now, tell me about Shane Hollander’s days this week. What was different?”

“Okay, um, I wake up, and—”

“When?”

“I wake up at four, do some cardio, go to practise—”

“Four is too early. Cardio on game days too? What do you eat for breakfast?”

“I have to keep myself in good shape. I have a couple of boiled eggs.”

Ilya’s eyes widened. No wonder Shane had looked pale and shaky.

“It works for me. Then I go to interviews and any photoshoots, go for a run, work out, eat dinner and go to bed at 11:30.”

“...No lunch?”

Shane chewed on his lip for a moment. “Maybe a smoothie. Sometimes.”

“Shane. Shane, this is not healthy,” Ilya said, twisting his body to look at Shane fully.

“Fuck, I’m sorry. I know you didn’t sign up for all of this. I’ll go,” Shane said, but Ilya put a firm hand on his shoulder.

“No. You scared me. Stay here, I will make dinner. When did you eat?” Ilya asked, suddenly not wanting to hear the answer.

“...Yesterday morning,” came the subdued reply.

“Shane. This is why you are fainting,” Ilya said, getting up and bustling around the kitchen. Shane was quiet as Ilya plated the quinoa, green beans and smoked salmon (that he definitely hadn’t bought just because he’d known Shane would be coming by).

“Thank you,” Shane said as Ilya placed both plates on the coffee table. They ate in silence, Shane with barely restrained ravenous hunger and Ilya with regular hockey player hunger.

“You need to eat more. Bigger breakfast, good lunch. You are doing, ah, big calorie deficit. Bad during season, and you don’t need anyway,” Ilya started. He saw the moment Shane opened his mouth to argue, so he ploughed on. “Exercise less. Not as tired for games, and you play better.”

“Ilya. I need to work hard to maintain my fitness. Exercising is how I make sure I can play well,” Shane said, sounding frustrated, “and I don’t need that much food. Diet, remember?”

“Then why are you fainting?”

Shane didn’t look like he had an answer, turning away from Ilya.

“You need to take care of yourself. You are Shane, not robot. And even robot needs fuel.”

Shane turned further away from Ilya, curling in on himself. His shoulders started to shake. Ilya realised the man was silently crying. He shifted closer, draping an arm over Shane’s shoulders. Shane leaned into his chest, tucked his head under Ilya’s chin, and began to let out soft, hiccuping sobs. Ilya wrapped him in a firm hug.

“I’m just— I’m just so tired, Ilya. I can’t sleep at all, and I have so many brand deals to do, and I need to get better for my team, and I dreamt that you were in the hospital and I couldn’t even reach you. I think I’m stressed out. I just want to go to bed,” Shane said into Ilya’s hoodie, the pain in his voice spearing through Ilya’s heart.

“Shane. I am here. Season has ended. You have nowhere to be now,”

“But I do, I have to— to do one last shoot with Rolex tomorrow, and then the team will expect me to fly back with them—”

“Tell Rolex you are sick. Tell team you are with Boston Lily,” he said, logically. He expected Shane to fight, but Shane just sniffled and relaxed against him.

“Will you hold me while we sleep?” Shane mumbled, sounding shattered.

“Of course, solnyshka,” replied Ilya, scooping Shane up carrying him to bed, turning off the lights along the way. He gently took off Shane’s shoes, jeans and hoodie before climbing into bed in his sweatpants and shirt. Carefully, Ilya lay down, pressing himself against Shane’s back and kissing the crown of his head. Shane sighed with content, falling asleep almost immediately.

It caught Ilya off guard, how much he cared. How it made his heart ache when Shane was hurting, how he wanted desperately to protect him. He was in love, he realised, settling his fingertips on the inside of Shane’s wrist, watching as his chest rose and fell. He was in love with Shane Hollander.

End Notes

you know. they didnt even kiss.

I TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM THANK YOU FOR READING

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