

Between the Notes

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76741541) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76741541>.

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:	Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Fluff , Soft Ilya Rozanov , Pining Shane Hollander , Implied Sexual Content , Tooth-Rotting Fluff
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-30 Words: 1,335 Chapters: 1/1

Between the Notes

by [rocketttt](#)

Summary

Ilya has a hidden talent and it's actually super sweet and not dirty at all. Until maybe it is.

Notes

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

All-Star Weekend in Tampa feels unreal in a way Shane doesn't quite trust.

They're wearing the same jersey.

It's a stupid thing to fixate on, he knows that, but it keeps catching his eye. Ilya Rozanov's name stitched across the back of the same uniform Shane pulled over his own head. Same logo. Same crest. Same bench. Same team.

There's something different about being here. About Tampa, with the sun too bright and the air too warm. About sharing a locker room with players he usually only sees across the ice. About Ilya—loud, reckless, impossible Ilya—grinning at him on the ice like they've been on the same side forever.

They've been orbiting each other all weekend.

Not intentionally. But constantly. Assigned seats at team meals. Adjacent stalls in the locker room. Standing too close during drills because neither of them wants to move. Even judging a diving competition Vaughn organized at the pool.

And then last night. A rare moment of shared emotional intimacy that changed everything for Shane.

The hotel the league booked for them is sprawling and sleek, all glass and pale stone overlooking the ocean. The team takes over almost an entire floor, rooms lined up like dorms, doors opening and closing at all hours. Everyone coming and going as they please.

They're supposed to meet downstairs in ten minutes for a final team breakfast before everyone heads back to where they came from. Nothing formal—just a group meal the coaches insist will help “*cement the sportsmanship built over the weekend.*” Or something like that.

For Shane, something *has* been built this weekend. Something big. But it isn't sportsmanship.

He checks his phone. No new messages.

Shane takes the elevator up to their floor and heads down the quieter end of the hall, where the rooms face the water and the noise drops away. Most of the guys are already out, laughter echoing faintly from somewhere toward the lobby.

Halfway down the corridor, Shane hears it.

At first, he thinks it's a radio—music bleeding softly through a cracked door. But he slows almost immediately. The sound isn't tinny or distant. It has weight. Shape.

It breathes.

The melody moves carefully, deliberately, like it knows exactly where it's going and isn't in any hurry to get there. Shane doesn't recognize the piece, but it makes something in his chest

tighten anyway.

The room it's coming from is marked **PRIVATE LOUNGE**, but the door has been left open.

Shane hesitates. He shouldn't push it open further. He knows that. He should head back downstairs and join the rest of the team for breakfast.

But he doesn't.

Instead, he nudges the door open a few inches more.

Ilya is seated at the upright piano near the window, shoulders loose, posture uncharacteristically still. He isn't wearing a shirt, just soft black joggers slung low on his hips, his back a familiar map of moles Shane knows by heart. His head is slightly bowed, golden-brown curls falling into his eyes.

His hands move delicately across the keys.

That's what gets Shane. Not the music itself—though it's undeniably beautiful—but the way Ilya plays. His fingers are precise, confident without being harsh. They glide, press, linger. His wrists stay loose, absorbing the motion like he's done this a thousand times before.

Because he has. That much is obvious.

Shane leans against the doorframe and allows himself to watch.

This isn't Ilya showing off. There's no grin, no theatrical flourish. He looks almost... serious. Focused. Like the world has narrowed to piano keys and sound and nothing else. Like this is something he does only for himself.

The thought lands harder than Shane expects.

By the time the piece ends, Shane's breath has gone shallow. Ilya lets the last note fade completely before lifting his hands, flexing his fingers once, as if grounding himself back in his body.

"Enjoy the show?"

Shane startles. Ilya hasn't turned around, but he's smiling—Shane can hear it in his voice.

"You knew I was watching," Shane says.

"Please." Ilya finally looks over his shoulder, one eyebrow raised. "You breathe so loud."

Shane huffs a laugh despite himself. "No, I don't." He looks at Ilya, more seriously now. "I didn't know you played."

Ilya shrugs, casual as ever. "There is much you still don't know about me."

Still.

Shane's pulse quickens at the implication of the word—the unspoken promise of more discoveries. Ilya means to be flippant. Shane can hear the practiced deflection in it. But something about the room has shifted, the air still humming with the echo of music, and the line doesn't quite land.

“That wasn't...” Shane stops, frowns, tries again. “You're really good.”

For just a second, Ilya stills. Then he clears his throat and stands, rolling his shoulders like he's shaking the moment off.

“Don't sound so surprised, Hollander.”

“I'm not,” Shane lies. “Just... I didn't peg you for a piano guy.”

Ilya steps closer, eyes flicking over Shane in a way that feels like hands. “What, you think I only know how to break things?”

Shane swallows. “I think you like pretending you do.”

Ilya's smile softens—just a fraction. “Yeah. Well. Don't tell anyone.”

“Wouldn't dream of it.”

They leave together a moment later, the door clicking shut behind them. The piano sits silent again, like it hasn't just upended something fundamental in Shane's understanding of the man walking beside him.

After that, Shane starts noticing things.

The way Ilya's fingers tap out rhythms on tables, on his thigh, with his hockey stick on the ice. The way he becomes deliberate when he chooses to be—adjusting pressure, angle, pace.

It reframes things. Small moments Shane hadn't known how to categorize before. Touches that felt thoughtless but never were. A kind of attentiveness Ilya pretends not to possess.

Shane doesn't bring up the piano again. He doesn't know how—and more importantly, he doesn't want to break whatever fragile permission he's been granted by witnessing it in the first place.

But the knowledge stays with him.

Weeks later, they're in Ilya's bed, the city of Boston humming quietly outside his bedroom windows. The lights are low.

Shane is acutely aware of Ilya's hands. He always has been, but tonight is different. Tonight he sees them the way he saw them at the keys—capable, patient, listening.

The realization isn't sudden. It unfolds slowly, like a melody repeating until it clicks.

Those hands know how to wait.

They know how to adjust when something shifts. How to read response, not just impose intention. Shane thinks about muscle memory, about practice, about the kind of dedication it takes to master something without applause.

“You’re thinking too loud,” Ilya murmurs into Shane’s shoulder.

Shane blinks, dragged back into the moment. “Sorry.”

Ilya tilts his head up to look at him. “What about?”

Shane briefly considers lying. Then decides not to. “The way you play piano.”

Ilya freezes. Not completely—but enough that Shane feels it.

“...Yeah?”

“You never told me.”

Ilya studies him, expression unreadable.

“You didn’t have to,” Shane says quickly. Then, softer, “I’m just... I’m glad you let me hear it.”

For a long moment, Ilya doesn’t joke. Doesn’t deflect. He just reaches out, fingers settling around Shane’s wrist, thumb resting where Shane’s pulse jumps.

“My mom played,” Ilya says quietly, barely above a whisper.

Shane leans down and kisses the top of Ilya’s head, brushing his untamed curls out of the way.

Ilya sets his hand on Shane’s chest and begins to tap his fingers, quickly finding a gentle rhythm—playing a melody Shane’s heart already knows. He walks his fingers slowly down Shane’s torso, stopping at the waistband of his sweatpants, and looks up through soft lashes.

Shane relaxes back against the bed, resting his hands behind his head.

Outside, the city hums on. Inside, Shane lets himself lean into the silence between the notes, trusting the hands that know exactly what they’re doing—and exactly when to play.

End Notes

Thanks for reading! :)

(Please remember to tip your fic writers by leaving comments/kudos!)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!