soldier on, achilles

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/80481651.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, Yuna Hollander, David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Soulmates, Pain Sharing, Relationship Reveal, Aftermath, Yuna Hollander Walks GMs Like Dogs, Hopeful Ending, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, POV Shane Hollander, Homophobia, Author Pretends The Metros Are Just The Habs, For His Own Personal Enjoyment
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of the most dangerous thing
Stats:	Published: 2026-03-02 Words: 2,428 Chapters: 1/1

soldier on, achilles

by voidvapor

Summary

Shane's mom walks back in, then. Her angers melts when she sees them, a fond smile washing away the last of it from her face. "I'm not sure anyone would believe me if I told them you were this sweet together."

"Not always sweet," Ilya says with laughter curling around the accented syllables. "You raise a menace, Mrs. Hollander."

Yuna nods, a quick little thing that screams satisfaction and pride. "Apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

---

or: in a world where soulmates share each other's pain, Shane's in the hospital after the hit from Marleau revealed his soul tether with Ilya to the world. Yuna Hollander is there to make sure her boys get whatever the fuck they want from the NHL.

A direct sequel to achilles, come down

Notes

hi there, i'm baaaaack! a few notes to start us off:

- title is from, once again, Gang Of Youths' Achilles Come Down
- i love hockey. i don't know SHIT about nhl contracts. i wrote this armed with enthusiasm and google.
- i go into it a little in the fic, but even in this soulmate 'verse, homophobia still exists, especially in an organization as conservative as the NHL. but i tried to give our boys a hopeful ending!
- i could not for the life of me find if the GMs had any actual canon names, so you're getting the ones i made up.

enjoy :)

See the end of the work for more notes

2017

The next time Shane wakes up, he feels like he's missed an entire chapter of his own life. Last he remembers, he was sniffling into the collar of Hayden's shirt like a very loopy little kid.

Ilya's still in the bed next to his, sitting cross-legged on top of it, paying no mind to the fact that he doesn't quite fit that way. He's wearing sweats Shane is pretty sure belong to him, and that makes his stomach do a funny little flip.

That part's normal, though. Nothing new about how fuzzy Ilya makes Shane's insides.

What isn't normal is the fact that he can *hear* his mom out in the hallway, whisper-yelling at fuck knows who. Ilya's lips are curled into a boyish smile, something bright and pleased and so *sweet* it kind of makes Shane's teeth hurt.

Shane tries to sit up, nearly falls over because he's only got one hand to do it with and he's not exactly small either. "What the fuck is going on out there?"

Ilya looks over at him, eyes still a little glassy from the painkiller-muted pain that lingers in their bond. His smile doesn't fade. "Do we stop fucking if I ask your mother to adopt me? I *am* orphan, now."

"Jesus Christ, Ilya." Shane's good at making himself sound annoyed when really, he just sort of wants to tackle Ilya into a hug. Getting his bell rung hasn't stolen that from him, which is comforting.

Shane's been too in and out to really have a good grasp on Ilya's sudden relationship with his parents, but the vague knowledge that it's a positive one is enough to make him feel like a balloon about to pop. In a good way. "Can you please explain who my mom's trying to kill right now?"

The smile falters a little, then. "Coach." He says, clipped. "Wanted to bench me. Said I was 'liability', your mother disagree."

Shane swallows thickly. Yeah, they'd both been expecting that, dreading it. Nightmare scenario number one is officially here; the whole fucking NHL knows about them, and it's going to put a bright red target on both their backs. Shane's sort of glad he's banned from looking at any screens until his head stops feeling like it's full of broken glass. He's not sure he could handle his twitter feed without having a panic attack, and he's sending Ilya enough residual pain right now.

Shane catches words like '*lawsuit*' and '*discrimination*', louder than the rest, and they make him itch. He doesn't want to be the face of that, has always only wanted to play good hockey. But that's still what this is, in the end, no matter how much he doesn't want to hear the words.

There's nothing in the rule-book about which *profession* a player's bondmate can have. Drapeau's wife plays for the women's league, for fuck's sake, and no one's stopped *them*. But unfortunately, the conservative delusion that same sex soulmates are a divine challenge one is 'meant to resist' is as deeply entrenched in the world of hockey as anything can be. It makes Shane *seethe*, every time someone casually drops a slur in the locker room, and not just for himself. Makes him want to hit and break things the way *nothing else* does.

He's not sure if the pain meds are making him sick again, but he definitely feels kind of nauseous, waves rolling in his stomach uneasily.

Ilya hops off his too-small bed with more grace than a man his size has any right possessing. He pads across the room with socked feet, until he's close enough to press a wet, sloppy kiss to Shane's forehead.

"Я тебя люблю," he murmurs, and Shane recognizes the sound of the words, if not their meaning. They help the nausea abate, flood him with a gentle fuzzy warmth instead. He wishes his brain wasn't so scrambled, because he's started trying to learn Russian for Ilya. Whatever he'd absorbed from the phrasebook is too far out of his reach right now, though.

Shane's mom walks back in, then. Her angers melts when she sees them, a fond smile washing away the last of it from her face. "I'm not sure anyone would believe me if I told them you were this sweet together."

"Not always sweet," Ilya says with laughter curling around the accented syllables. "You raise a menace, Mrs. Hollander."

Yuna nods, a quick little thing that screams satisfaction and pride. "Apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

Her support means the fucking world to Shane. She joins them, stands on the opposite side of Shane's bed and pushes back the sweat-damp hair from his forehead. "What do you want, baby?"

Shane's heart shatters a little. His mom hasn't called him that in *years*. It's a broad question, but Shane knows instinctively what she's getting at.

He swallows thickly. "I want to retire a Metro."

The playoffs are fucked, since he's been put on LTIR. Montréal won't make it far without him. But he wants to come back at the end of summer, wants it so badly it makes his head spin. Wants to look down and see the C on his *bleu blanc rouge*, like nothing's changed.

Something his head is too messed up to identify flashes across Yuna's face, and she leans in to press a kiss against his brow.

"And you?" She directs at Ilya, delicate and cautious.

Ilya takes a deep breath through his nose, and Yuna reaches for his hand, runs a thumb across the back of it. They all stay there like that for a long, quiet moment. It feels tender, like Ilya's

being folded in to something that had only ever been waiting for him.

“Want to retire a Raider. Family,” Ilya says carefully, and Shane thinks of Marleau with an arm hooked under Ilya’s, holding him steady. Thinks of the other Raiders crushing in around Ilya while he holds the cup, and gets it. Soulmates are *normal*; that Shane’s is a man *and* an NHL player doesn't somehow make him an aberration. He shouldn’t have to give anything up because of it, and neither should Ilya. He tries to catch his mother’s eye, hopes their little non-verbal language still translates; Ilya’s already lost enough. He deserves the same amount of fight to keep what he’s got left that Shane’s going to get, and no one’s better suited than his mom. His message gets across, and Yuna’s smile is sharp enough to slice, now.

Yuna looks at them both in turn, determination in the set of her jaw. “Then that’s what you’ll get.”

His mother gets her chance to show off just *how much* of a menace she can be very quickly.

The day before Shane’s supposed to be released, a bunch of people show up in very quick succession. His father lets them in with something like excitement sparkling in his eyes, because David is still absolutely nuts over Yuna all these years later. Shane thinks his parents’ own ridiculously strong bond might’ve been what made it easy for them to swallow his.

Having both Boston and Montréal’s management crammed into what is nominally Shane’s hospital room is so bizarre, Shane has to double check to make sure that he’s been taken off the morphine drip. They’re clearly here in the hopes of catching them without their agents, getting them to agree to something that almost assuredly violates their contract clauses. They think they’re *stupid*.

It’s so ridiculous Shane almost laughs, but he’s too furious to indulge it.

“Soulmates, huh,” Boston’s GM, Cabot, says, uncomfortable with it like it’s a dirty word. Shane bites down on the anger that tries to claw its’ way out of his mouth.

Fortin, Montréal’s GM, looks up in a panic like he’s learning this information for the first time. He’s not; it’s been the only thing anyone in hockey media has talked about for days, now. “You’re not getting him for any less than Marleau and St-Simon.”

Cabot scoffs. “Not happening. Now, if *you* put Pike and Dagenais on the table, maybe a pick, too, *then* we’ll talk.”

Shane doesn’t even have time to shape the word ‘no’ with his lips. His mom is faster.

“Absolutely not. You’re not *trading* them.” Yuna Hollander’s tone is so acidic, it could eat a hole through the floor.

Apparently, Fortin is an idiot. “I understand this might be hard for a mother’s heart, but—”

“I am his *manager*, and *both* their agents in absentia. No deal.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Shane spies the twitch in Ilya's lips that tell him his soulmate is trying to contain a grin. He feels pretty much the same about his mom, when he watches her make a squeaky hospital chair look like a throne fit for a queen. She's utterly unforgiving.

Cabot is less of an idiot, more careful with his words. That doesn't make them sting less. "The league wants them both out. This way, they can still play, ma'am."

Fortin hasn't gotten any brighter in the last few minutes, though. "Waivers." Just the one word, thrown like it's not a pipe bomb of a concept. Like he's not making an equivalence between Shane having a soulmate and other guys' arrests and controversies and bad seasons. The palm of Shane's immobilized hand prickles, and he knows it's from Ilya digging his nails into the skin of his own.

Yuna's face reminds him of a thunderstorm. "You'd sink the franchise. The city would never forgive you."

As long as Shane plays for Montréal, the city fucking *loves* him. He's brought them two cups, and for that alone its people would spill blood for him. It's a possessive city, at its heart; the fans will shit talk the team all day long, but if they catch anyone else doing it, it's war. Taking Shane from them would be tantamount to national treason, just as bad as the loss of the Arctiques in '95.

Fortin looks like he knows it, too, like a bug caught in a trap. There's no leverage here.

"What you're *going* to do is get Crowell on the phone and beg for your lives. You need those boys and we all know it, make sure he knows it too," Yuna says, absolutely steamrolling the two men in front of her, who look more like flattened rabbits by now. "You'll say whatever you have to, present a united front. They don't want to play anywhere else, so you make that happen for them."

When she pauses, it leaves them all sitting in a silence so thick with tension, it's suffocating.

"Or you'll have the fans *and* the Human Rights Commission fighting each other to decide who tears your doors down first."

And that's the end of that. Shane stays on LTIR, Ilya's expected back in Boston after his personal leave runs out. Shane takes his first easy breath since the collision with Marleau.

Ilya has two days of leave left before he has to catch a flight back to Boston. He looks at Shane like he's stupid when he asks hesitantly if he wants to spend them in Ottawa at his parents' house, which makes Shane flush hot with embarrassment.

"Of course I go home with you, Shane," Ilya says slowly, eyes narrowed in annoyance. "What kind of boyfriend you think I am?"

Shane worries he might have to be carted back up to the ER from the way his heart stutters and stops. The thing is that they've used the word '*soulmate*' around each other, mostly, because that's what they are. But soul tethers don't always mean '*we are in a monogamous*

relationship with each other'. Sometimes it means something platonic, sometimes it means something mostly physical. Shane thought for a long time the latter was what they were; two people who got on well in bed and outside of it, but weren't going to label whatever this was.

Ilya crashes through that idea head first, like he always does. Shane can't find it in himself to mind.

The drive home is quiet. Shane naps for most of it, two hours of fading in and out of consciousness. Every time he comes to, Ilya is chatting easily with his parents, his fingers laced through Shane's. Ilya gives Shane's hand an absentminded squeeze every time Shane stirs, and okay, yeah. Maybe they've been *boyfriends* for a while, actually.

Later that night, he watches, rapt, as Ilya dances around his parents' kitchen. He helps David with dinner, makes Yuna laugh bright and bubbly with his breakdown of incoming playoff match-ups. Shane's head hurts a lot less, looking at him like this, seeing him open and relieved and *happy*. Maybe he can finally be that way, too; the most important people in his life (except Rose, and Jesus fucking Christ he really needs to ask Ilya to help him text her, and that's going to be a whole thing) know about his soul tether, know about Ilya Rozanov the actual person and not the NHL superstar.

Since Shane's allowed limited screen time, they all settle in with overflowing bowls of parmesan-dusted pasta (and Shane doesn't even feel *bad* about that, miracle upon miracles) to watch Buffalo pull off the single most disturbing thing any of them have ever seen; a four-nothing lead on *Tampa Bay* at the end of the first.

"Am I still on planet earth?" Yuna asks, sounding dazed.

Ilya cocks his head to the side, absolutely baffled. "I am not sure, Mrs. Hollander. Abduction, maybe? Aliens took us."

"Alternate universe," David suggests genially.

Ilya purses his lips. "Makes sense, yes."

Shane gets that feeling again, like his chest's about to burst. He curls further into Ilya's side, is daring enough to press a kiss to the other man's jaw where his *parents* can *see* him.

It's been a wild week. Things are probably going to be really weird with the team when he comes back, but Ilya's been reading Hayden and J.J.'s texts out loud to him and they're nice enough that even *Ilya*'s starting to look kind of fond when another one comes through. Not that he'll ever *admit* that.

Anyway, the point is that there's a *chance*; a shot for them to keep doing what they've been doing for years, entwined together at the top.

Maybe their tether's evolving, growing stronger somehow, because the fragile sense of contentment in Shane's heart doesn't feel like just his own; it has a distinct *Ilya* twist to it.

End Notes

thank you for following along :)

- the "buffalo blowing out tampa" did in fact happen LAST NIGHT while i was writing this so yes you bet your ass i jammed it in here.
- yes i'm a montréal fan irl why do u ask

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!