

Strong Enough to Bring Sun to the Darkest Days

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/75781381) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/75781381>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry_(TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Original Characters , Hayden Pike , Jackie Pike , Amber Pike
Additional Tags:	girl dads hollanov , black and white photos , wedding anniversary , Ilya's depression , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Mpreg. , Male Pregnancy , Past Mpreg. , Male Pregnancy
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of Hollanov Family
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-15 Words: 3,776 Chapters: 1/1

Strong Enough to Bring Sun to the Darkest Days

by [lucianowriter](#)

Summary

It is their wedding anniversary and Ilya has plans that involve a black and white photograph that Jackie took. Too bad his depression decided to rear its ugly head. Shane is there to pull him out with love and support.

Notes

Hello my lovelies,

This fic came to me thanks to that black and white BTS photo of Connor and Hudson from Episode 4. Then it developed into something a bit more. Hope you all enjoy.

Russian phrases in the fic:

Ty pozor. Razocharovaniye dlya imeni Rozanova. Ty slabak. Dazhe s emotsiyami spravit'sya ne mozhes'! Tebe dolzhno byt' stydno. - You're a disgrace. A disappointment to the Rozanov name. You're weak. You can't even control your emotions! You should be ashamed.

moye solnyshko - my sunshine

luna - moon

zvezdy - stars

Lyublyu tebya bol'she. - I love you more.

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

Ilya was gathering up equipment after their final Montreal camp. He glanced over at the ice and found Hayden skating around with Jade, Ruby, Arthur, and Amber. The kids were wearing the signature camp shirt, even if Amber wasn't actually attending the camp yet. Then, he spotted Shane skating over holding Mila (who was barely 2 years old) in his arms with Masha skating around him as they headed towards Hayden and his kids. Ilya shook his head and smiled at his family.

A tap on his shoulder brought Ilya out of his thoughts. He turned and came face to face with Jackie Pike. He smiled at her and she handed him an envelope. Ilya raised an eyebrow and held it up questioningly.

She shrugged, "It's a picture I took about a year after Masha was born. When you and Shane came over to our place for a game night. I've been meaning to give it to you for ages now, but I kept forgetting."

Ilya pulled a black and white photo out of the envelope. He held it, his breath catching. In the photo, Shane was standing directly behind Ilya, his body pressed against Ilya's back, but his hands were around front, each one holding onto Ilya's chest. Ilya's arms draped down over Shane's and he was smiling. They both were. Ilya couldn't remember that night or even why they were standing like this or smiling, but he loved it just the same. They were in long sleeved casual clothing: a hoodie for Shane, probably one of his Montreal ones and an Adidas branded one for Ilya.

They looked so young, and calculating back from Masha's current age of 5, Ilya surmised they were about 26-27 in the photo so they were young. But, this was probably the first time they held a joy in their appearance that they'd never been allowed to have before Masha had been born. Her arrival had allowed them to come out, live their truth, and be the couple they'd wanted to be for so long. Shane had lost his spot on the Montreal team as a result, but shockingly, Shane hadn't cared. He just joined the Ottawa team while Ilya left Boston at the end of his contract and never went back to the sport. Instead, he chose to be a stay-at-home dad to their daughters.

Ilya slipped the photo back into the envelope and turned to Jackie with a smile. "Thank you, Jackie. This is beautiful."

“I figured you would like it. It shows the real *you*.” Jackie then moved closer to the ice and yelled at her husband, “Hayd! Let’s go! The kids need food.”

“Mommy!” Amber and Masha came skating up to the edge of the rink closest to Jackie and Ilya, “Can Masha stay over tonight since it’s Friday?”

“Well, I think you need to ask Masha’s daddy and papa first.” Jackie gave her youngest a serious look.

“Mr. Ilya,” Amber and the rest of the kids all called him that because none of them could handle Rozanov.

Ilya looked down at Amber, and positioned his body into more of a squat so that he was at eye level for both his daughter and her best friend, “Or maybe you could spend the night at our place, get away from your big sisters and brother. What do you think about that?”

Amber’s face lit up like a million stars. “YES! Mommy, can I? Please please please? Masha’s my bestest friend in the whole world! I will just die if I can’t stay the night with her.”

Jackie laughed just as Hayden and Shane came skating up with the rest of the kids. Shane immediately handed Mila to Ilya and gave a look.

“What’s going on here?” Shane looked between his husband and Jackie and the two soon to be kindergarteners.

“I said Amber could spend the night with Masha tonight.” Ilya shrugged and gingerly pulled himself back up to full height while holding Mila.

“Fuck you, Rozanov.” Hayden exclaimed, “How dare you make kid handling look effortless.” He swept his hand toward Ilya holding Mila.

Ilya smirked, “Well, that’s because it is. Sorry you struggle, Hayden. Maybe like with your backhand you should practice.”

“Ilya, please don’t antagonize him.” Shane sighed, but there was a spark in his eyes that gave away how much he didn’t actually mind the teasing.

“Amber, baby, go get out of your skates and put them in your bag. Daddy and I will take them home with us.” Jackie instructed her daughter, then she turned to Ilya. “We will bring a change of clothes for her later.”

Ilya shifted Mila so that she was supported by only his left arm and then used his right to brush her off, “Don’t worry. Masha have clothes Amber can borrow.”

Jackie sighed, “Thank you. You’re a lifesaver.”

Shane helped Hayden wrangle the rest of the kids off the ice and instructed their daughter, “M, baby, please go get changed with Amber so we can go.”

Once Hayden had left to go supervise the kids getting changed, Shane came up to Ilya and snuggled against him. He rested a hand on Mila’s back and the three of them just stood there in each other’s presence, enjoying the brief stillness.

“I can’t believe you volunteered us to watch Amber tonight.” Shane murmured, but there was no heat behind it.

“You think we can’t handle one more?” Ilya’s question was loaded and he knew it, but he also didn’t want to pressure Shane.

“Ilya,” Shane sighed, and pulled away from where he’d been resting on Ilya’s shoulder, “I think we can, usually. I’m just really tired and run down. Mila going through this growth spurt means I haven’t had a full night’s sleep in weeks.”

Ilya's heart ached for his husband. He was looking a bit rundown now that Ilya really looked at him. He wrapped his free arm around Shane's shoulder, and gave him a kiss to his temple.

"I'll handle everything with the kids tonight. You can go to bed early, try to catch up. You have the season starting soon, you need to be in top form."

"We still have a month or so til our season opener." Shane replied, but he nuzzled against Ilya's arm, "Have I told you lately that I love you?"

"Mm. Yes." Ilya whispered, "But you can keep telling me."

"Daddy! Papa!" Masha came running out of the locker room wearing her light up pink and purple sparkly princess sneakers that she had insisted on having. And Ilya being the soft touch that he is, bought them for her on the spot despite Shane telling her 'maybe for her birthday.'

"There's my little bean!" Ilya smiled down at his daughter, his face completely lighting up.

"Let's go home." Shane gave Ilya a kiss on the lips, grabbed Mila from him, and headed toward the doors.

—

One Week Later

"Papa, is this you and Daddy?" Masha was hanging out in Ilya's office with him while Mila slept and Shane was at practice.

"Hmm, baby?" Ilya was distracted by emails he needed to send for the Irina Foundation. He tore his eyes away and turned to see what his daughter was referring to.

She was holding the framed black and white photo Ilya had taken out this morning so he could wrap it for his anniversary dinner with Shane tonight. He smiled and leaned forward in his chair, scooting closer to her.

“Yes. Moyo solnyshko.” He ruffled the top of her head, and she looked up with a look that she definitely got from Shane. Ilya called it their angry kitten face.

“Papa! Don’t! You mess up my braids!”

Ilya shook his head and grabbed his beautiful daughter, plopping her down in his lap so that she faced outward. He got to work fixing her hair and while he did he told her about the picture.

“That was taken by your Aunt Jackie. We were at a party not long after you were born.”

“Where am I?” Masha briefly turned her head to look back toward Ilya, but he gently moved her head back to its original position so he could continue brushing her hair and creating two braids.

“You were with Grandma and Grandpa.” Ilya explained, “Daddy and I needed a break. So, your Aunt Jackie and Uncle Hayden invited us over to play board games.”

“That sounds boring.” Masha said, matter-of-factly, another mannerism she’d inherited from Shane.

Ilya smirked at the reminder that he used to tease Shane about how boring he was. “Yes. But, sometimes boring is really fun.”

“Papa,” Masha’s voice turned inquisitive again, and Ilya wondered where his daughter’s mind was this time.

One of the things he loved most about his beautiful solnyshko was how much she questioned everything. She had a thirst for knowledge that kept both Ilya and Shane on their toes. She would hit them with the craziest questions and then run off to play with dolls. It was amusing to say the least.

“Yes,” Ilya finished up one braid and deftly started creating the second one. He thought back to hours of YouTube videos when Masha was still a baby so he could learn how to do a variety of girl hairstyles. He was grateful that Masha preferred braids because those were the easiest for him. But, he prided himself on being good at just about any style you could think of.

“When did you know you love Daddy?”

Ilya paused, his fingers holding strands of her hair, and considered the answer he wanted to give.

“So, not long before you were born your daddy and I went through some really tough stuff. Daddy got hurt on the ice and my Papa died back in Russia. I had already started to think I was in love with your daddy right before I found out about my Papa. But then, he called me while I was there and he let me vent for ages in Russian, not understanding a single word. It was then I realized that I loved him. Your daddy was there for me when he didn’t have to. That’s what love is all about, being there for others when they need it most, especially if they aren’t able to ask for it.”

“You didn’t ask for Daddy to call you? Why not? Didn’t you miss him?” Masha’s innocent question caused Ilya to tear up.

“Well, moyo solnyshko, back then I wasn’t willing to talk about the important stuff. So, your daddy found out my Papa had died from the news. I was too scared to ask him because in Russia loving your daddy would get me into big trouble.” Ilya’s voice was sad, he knew that, but he couldn’t fake being okay when talking about a dark time for him.

Masha turned around, despite Ilya not being done tying off her second braid yet, and wrapped her arms around him.

“I’m glad you let him call you, Papa. I’m glad you're my Papa.”

Ilya smiled and kissed the top of her head, his hands reaching around and tying off her braid finally.

“I’m so glad you are my Masha.” He whispered lovingly, before clearing his throat. “Now, run along and play. I have some work to finish up before Mila wakes up.”

Masha didn’t have to be told twice. She handed Ilya the framed photo and skipped out of the room singing under her breath. Ilya leaned his elbows on the desk and sighed. Thinking about his own father always put him into a funk. Usually he just let his brain process his grief and negative thoughts in its own time. But, today he needed to snap out of it. They had a beautiful date planned for tonight, Ilya needed to be on top.

He slowly pulled down the neatly folded tissue paper he’d placed on top of his desk that morning, after Shane had left for practice. With light fingerwork, and his brain spiralling with thoughts of his inadequacies spoken in the gruff Russian voice of his father, Ilya managed to wrap the image up without tearing the paper. As he finished the gift off with a light blue ribbon, Ilya sniffed trying to prevent the tears he knew were moments from falling.

He’s pulled from his thoughts by the sound of Mila giggling. He looked over at the small camera on his desk and smiled a small tentative smile as he watched Shane bond with their daughter.

It didn’t take long for the negative thoughts to come back with a vengeance. He rubbed his eyes and stood up from his chair. As if on autopilot, Ilya’s body moved toward the door and headed in the direction of his and Shane’s room. He didn’t register anything as he walked, though Masha and Shane both spoke to him. If he’d been more aware, Ilya would’ve heard Shane tell Masha to take Mila to the play room and keep an eye on her. But, he didn’t. Instead he heard his father’s voice confirming all his worst fears.

“Ty pozor. Razocharovaniye dlya imeni Rozanova. Ty slabak. Dazhe s emotsiyami spravit'sya ne mozhes'! Tebe dolzhno byt' stydno.”

Ilya curled up into the bed he shared with Shane and buried himself under the covers. This time when he felt the tears well up again, he let them fall. Under the blankets no one could see him cry. No one could call him weak or a disgrace. He shoved a pillow over his head and pressed it against his ears in the hope it would drown out his father's voice.

Instead the voice turned to Shane's, "You can't even tell our daughter about her Russian family without falling apart. You aren't the man I married. What happened to him? You quit hockey and you got weak."

Ilya felt his chest get tight, making each breath he tried to take harder than the last. He didn't know how long he laid there with the voices in his brain alternating between his father and his husband. But, eventually the blanket was lifted and Shane slid into the bed next to him. He gathered Ilya up in his arms and just laid there, letting Ilya cry. Shane didn't say anything, he let his loving, gentle back rubs do all the speaking.

"I'm sorry." Ilya finally managed to say, his voice still wet with tears.

"You don't have to apologize. Well, not to me anyway. But, Masha? She's a little worried. You'll probably have to smooth things over with her."

"No, I shouldn't be like this. I shouldn't fall apart every time I think about my dad." Ilya insisted, his tears all dried up. He'd pulled out of Shane's arms and was now sitting up, his arms draped over his bent knees.

Shane sat up too, "Like what? Depressed? Ilya I know you know there is no controlling when it'll hit you. Despite what your father taught you, showing your feelings is never a bad thing."

His husband leaned forward and connected their foreheads. Shane's fingers gently caressed Ilya's cheeks and he kissed each of Ilya's tear tracks. "I'm always here to pull you out whenever you get in too deep. You're never alone."

Ilya's heart ached with how much he loved Shane. "I love you. So much."

Shane smiled, "I love you too, asshole." Then, after a brief pause he said, "I can cancel our reservation tonight. We can stay in and spend time together, just the two of us."

"You wouldn't be upset?" Ilya bit his lip, looking Shane over, hoping his husband was being 100% serious about cancelling their anniversary plans.

"Not at all. You know me, restaurants give me anxiety, especially if I'm not familiar with their menu. Easier just to make myself a salad here at home."

Ilya laughed, "You are so boring."

"You love it."

"Yes, I do." Ilya connected their lips together in a kiss. "We should go check on the girls. Masha has probably taught Mila all the wrong things by now."

"Our daughters are complete angels, I don't know what you're talking about," Shane interjected in mock affront.

Ilya smiled, "Of course you think that. I think you are blind to Masha's evil genius because she is a mini-you. You don't recognize the problem."

They both got up from the bed and Shane wrapped his arms around Ilya's waist.

"Oh and what problem is that?" Shane tucked his lips behind his teeth as he smiled.

"Masha is very persuasive without realizing it. She doesn't understand how easily she charm people to do things." Ilya shrugged, looking down at Shane lovingly. "You are same. It's quite boring."

Shane laughed. "I'm sure. You just think our daughter is manipulative because you have a soft spot for her."

"No, that's lie." Ilya smirked, loving that Shane's charm had quieted the voices inside his brain.

"Face it, Rozanov, you're a soft touch." Shane extracted himself from Ilya's waist and walked down the hall toward the playroom.

Ilya followed him and followed the sounds of joy. He would never say it out loud, but he loved being a soft touch when it came to their little girls. Masha and Mila had shown Ilya that he could never be as cold and cruel as his father had always been. He would burn the world down if it meant he got to protect his solnyshko and his luna.

Upon reaching the playroom, Ilya immediately went to where Masha was curled up reading a book while Mila rolled a ball on the floor with Shane. He scooped up his daughter into his lap.

"Moye solnyshko, I'm sorry you had to see me like that. Sometimes your papa gets sad." He kissed Masha's temple and put his nose to her hair and breathed her in.

"That's okay, papa. Are you better now? Did daddy make you happy?" Masha turned so that the two of them could make eye contact.

"Yes, daddy always knows how to make me happy."

"That's why you love him!" Masha exclaimed, bouncing a bit on Ilya's lap, which had slightly uncomfortable results. Ilya softly groaned.

"Masha, you remember that thing we were looking at earlier?" Ilya looked at Shane playing with Mila and didn't want to wait to gift him the photograph.

Masha nodded, “Yep!”

“It’s on Papa’s desk wrapped in tissue paper. Could you go grab it?” Ilya played with his daughter’s braid as he waited for her reply.

Masha jumped up and started to run, Shane saw her out of the corner of his eye and admonished her.

“M! No running!”

“Gotta get something for Papa!” Masha hollered over her shoulder.

Ilya’s eyes focused on Shane. He looked exhausted and a bit pale. Ilya’s brows knitted in concern. Was there something wrong with his husband? Was that the real reason he suggested they cancel their plans? Shane had been exhausted quite a bit lately, which now made Ilya pause.

“Shane, are you okay?” Ilya broke the silence that had fallen over the room with Masha’s departure.

Shane looked up at him, distracted, “Huh? Oh yeah. I’m great. Just had a brutal practice.”

Before Ilya could call him out on his blatant lie, Masha came rushing back in and looked at Ilya.

“Give that to your daddy.” Ilya instructed. Masha, knowing what it is, got an excited look on her face and she started to bounce on her toes from the anticipation. It was one of the few mannerisms she had that reminded Ilya of himself when he was her age.

“Happy Anniversary, moy lyubimyy.” Ilya muttered as Shane started to unwrap the gift.

Ilya knew the moment Shane had seen the image because he looked up, a fond look in his eyes. “Where’d you get this?”

“Jackie gave it to me the last day of camp. She took it at one of their game nights about a year after Masha was born.”

Shane crawled across the carpet until he was right in front of Ilya. “Thank you,” he smiled and leaned in for a kiss.

Ilya returned it without any protest. “Always.”

“We have so few pictures together. I’m glad Jackie took this one.” Shane muttered, his eyes still raking over the photograph as if he was trying to commit every detail to memory, and honestly, he probably was.

“Yes. It nice photograph.”

Shane glanced back toward their daughters who were now engaged in some sorting game together. Then, he moved even closer so that he was practically in Ilya’s lap.

“I have a photograph for you too.” Shane whispered, “But you’ll have to wait until after my parents take the kids.”

Ilya smiled, “Can’t wait.”

—

Hours later, Shane was closing the door behind his parents' retreating figures as they carried the girls to their car. Ilya watched him from the other side of the living room. Shane truly looked dead on his feet. The more Ilya thought about how he looked, the more worried he got. But, then, Shane crossed the room and retrieved an envelope from the mantel.

Ilya met him there and Shane handed it over. Ilya watched Shane go through a series of nervous ticks before he flipped it over to open it.

He pulled out a sonogram. Shane's name was listed as the patient. All of a sudden, all of Shane's symptoms these last few weeks started to click into place.

"You're pregnant?" Ilya whispered, love and fondness wrapping each syllable.

Shane nodded, tears springing up in his eyes. "Today I officially told Coach Wiebe that I would need a leave of absence."

"How far along?" Ilya couldn't stop moving his eyes from the sonogram image and Shane's smiling face.

"Only 8 weeks. So..." Shane shrugged his shoulders, "I kind of hope this one is a boy. Not that I don't love our daughters, but it'd be nice to have at least one boy."

Ilya wrapped his husband up in a warm hug. "I can't wait to have another baby with you. I am the luckiest man on Earth. You gave me the sun, the moon, and now the stars. Solnyshko, luna, i zvezdy." As he said the Russian word for stars he placed his hand on Shane's stomach.

Shane smiled through his tears, then he pulled up onto his toes so he could kiss Ilya soundly on the lips. "I love you, Ilya."

"Lyublyu tebya bol'she." Ilya returned the kiss. He truly was blessed with the family he'd built. Meeting Shane Hollander all those years ago had made his life everything he'd hoped it could be. Shane and his daughters made him a better man.

End Notes

Comments and Kudos mean the world to me. If you feel so inclined, please leave some!

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