

and when it rains on this side of town, it touches everything

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/78179671) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/78179671>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Irina Rozanova
Additional Tags:	Implied/Referenced Suicide , Angst , Depression , References to Depression , Post-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , Canon Compliant , Post-Canon , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Depressed Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander Needs a Hug , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , POV Ilya Rozanov , POV Shane Hollander
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of i pray that something picks me up and sets me down in your warm arms
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-27 Words: 3,867 Chapters: 1/1

and when it rains on this side of town, it touches everything

by [canadianwolfbird](#)

Summary

Suddenly, there's the sensation of a hand in his and Ilya smiles, turning to see his mother, Irina. She's just as beautiful as he remembers. "*Hi, mom.*"

A sad smile crosses Irina's face in return - a smile Ilya was all too familiar with as a child. It's the smile she used when she was trying to cover her pain.

Ilya is confused - he thought his mother might be happy to see him, the way he is happy to see her. "*What's wrong?*"

Irina shakes her head a little, staying silent.

"*Tell me, please,*" Ilya says, a little desperate.

"*You need to go home, Ilyushka.*" His mother shakes her head again, squeezing his hand. "*This is not your home.*"

Notes

Formatting note: italics in the conversations between Ilya and his mom are meant to be interpreted as them speaking in Russian to each other - I did not trust google translate for all that.

Big, huge thanks to [dntat](#) for your multiple beta reads and suggestions that made this fic what it is! I couldn't have done it without you! As always, any errors leftover are my own.

Ask and ye shall receive - part two is here. A little less heavy but still not exactly light. Take caution when reading - I tried to get all the TWs in the tags, but if I have missed something, please comment to let me know. I appreciate you reading! 💜

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

*and oh, oh, how could you do it?
oh i, i never saw it coming
oh, oh, i need an ending
so why can't you stay just long enough to explain?*
-Paramore, "When It Rains"

It's bright, wherever Ilya is.

It's also warm, which he appreciates. That water was so fucking cold.

But it isn't the brightness or warmth that overwhelms Ilya. It's the fact that for the first time in months - *years* - his mind is *quiet*.

He finally feels free from not only the darkness of the night he dove into that water but also from the darkness of his thoughts. The intrusive thoughts that plagued him day in and day out are just...gone. He let go completely and the darkness let go of him - an eye for an eye.

Suddenly, there's the sensation of a hand in his and Ilya smiles, turning to see his mother, Irina. She's just as beautiful as he remembers. "*Hi, mom.*"

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—

Shane Hollander sits vigil by his husband's hospital bed, listening to the steady beeps and whirs of the machines.

He's exhausted from the last five days of sitting here, watching Ilya lay in a coma. Shane has barely slept, hardly eaten, and with the exception of speaking to the doctors and nurses that come in to check on Ilya, scarcely said a word.

More than exhausted, Shane is angry. Angry at Ilya for thinking the best course of action was to leave him...forever. Angry that he didn't catch the signs that Ilya was thinking of doing what he did. Angry that Ilya still might leave him forever. Angry at himself for *being* angry at Ilya.

Shane *knows* he shouldn't be angry at Ilya. Ilya has fought his depression for years, and Shane has been there with him through it all. It's always been a battle - there are good days and bad days, and while most times Ilya's good days outweigh his bad ones, the bad days are often *really* bad. Some bad days mean Ilya forcing himself to function while putting on a mask for the outside world, but all the while, Shane knows the cracks are there just under the surface, threatening to become deeper and make themselves known. Some bad days mean Ilya can't get out of bed at all, and all Shane can do is lie there with him, hoping it will pass.

On all bad days, Shane wishes he could just take the pain away from Ilya.

He had once promised he'd be there for Ilya, no matter what, and Shane has always done his best to keep to that promise. And yet...in Ilya's darkest moment, he had chosen to leave. He gave into the intrusive thoughts that had plagued his mind and decided to forfeit the life Shane and he had built together. As selfish and shameful as it may be, Shane can't help but feel abandoned by the man he loves.

Shane can't focus on that anger right now, however. He needs to focus on Ilya.

The doctors had run their tests and done their scans, and assured Shane that there *was* brain activity. Ilya was still medically alive, but they wouldn't know what his functioning would be like and if there was any unseen damage until he woke up - *if* he woke up.

Shane shivers at the thought, wrapping his arms around himself. He had been the one to find Ilya, body limp and cold in the freezing water. He had been the one to get there just in time to see what turned out to be Ilya sliding below the surface. He had been the one to jump into the lake after Ilya to pull him out.

Every time Shane closes his eyes, that night comes to him in flashes.

Getting up to get a glass of water to find Ilya gone, a note left in his place. Calling Ilya's phone, only to hear it buzzing on the night stand. Tracking one of their shared cars on his own phone to see it heading towards the cottage with about a forty minute head start. Driving as fast as he possibly could, following the path Ilya was taking, hoping he could make up time. Screaming Ilya's name as loud as he could in the cold night air. Running down to the dock when he got no answer. Seeing a figure disappear into the dark water...

Shane's head snaps up, his eyes shooting back open. Sighing, he leans forward in the chair he's become so familiar with, taking Ilya's hand. It's cool and clammy to the touch - an effect of the hypothermia, the doctors had told Shane. Shane hates the sensation of his husband's cold skin - if nothing else because it reminds him that this is not his Ilya - not really, anyway.

His Ilya is warm, comforting, and full of life. This Ilya is still, quiet, and clinging on to whatever purgatory he's in.

Please know that if love were enough, you would have kept me here for all eternity.

The words from Ilya's goodbye note haunt Shane. What if Ilya was right - because if Shane's love *were* enough, Ilya would have come back by now, wouldn't he?

—

"What are you talking about? My home is here with you now." Ilya furrows his eyebrows. *"Do you not want me here?"* When Ilya dove into the water that night, he did so knowing that there was no guarantee his mother would be waiting on the other side. But here she was, standing in front of him, and she didn't want him?

"That's not it. Of course I want you here." Irina's hand moves to Ilya's face, cupping his cheek. *"But I think you know there's someone else who wants you more."*

Ilya's head drops ever so slightly, his eyes still on his mother's. He knows who she's talking about. But he can't go back to Shane from here - Ilya's already dead...isn't he?

His mother continues, her eyes earnest and her touch light. *"It isn't even that he wants you more. He needs you more than I do, Ilyushka."*

She's right, and Ilya knows it. His mother has been dead for over twenty years now, and while that thought pains Ilya, the idea of leaving Shane to go through what Ilya went through when Irina died hurts more. But even so... *"I don't know if he will forgive me for this. For leaving him at all."* A tear slides down Ilya's cheek as he closes his eyes.

Irina brushes the tear away, speaking softly. *"He will forgive you, love. I think you know that too."*

"And what if..." Ilya trails off. *"What if the thoughts become too much again?"* Ilya asks. He's almost ashamed to - his mother had lost her battle against the depression that plagued her for years, and now Ilya is on his own precipice of permanently giving in for the peace of never having to feel that way again.

"Then you fight it with all you can," Irina says, cradling Ilya's face with her hands. *"I won't pretend that it's easy to be alive when the world is so cruel at times. But just remember, Ilya, you...you have someone that loves you with all their heart, and that is one of the rarest things to find. He is so good to you, and you to him."*

Ilya swallows, opening his eyes to look at his mother once more. *"Will you be here when I return again?"* He has to know - does going back to Shane mean that he'll lose his chance to be with her?

Irina smiles, nodding. *"I hope that isn't for many years, but no matter what, I'll always be here for you."*

"I love you, mamochka," Ilya whispers as his mother embraces him and he clings to her, as if doing so would bring her back with him, however he's going back.

"I love you too, Ilyushka."

It's the last thing Irina says before she disappears from his arms and Ilya is alone, again.

—

Shane isn't sure what he's hoping for. Does he want Ilya to let go? Does he want him to come back?

The thought of letting Ilya go is absolutely unbearable to Shane. He doesn't know how he's going to live his life if Ilya is gone. Letting Ilya go means letting go of so many things - the kisses Shane wakes up to every morning, the feeling of Ilya's embrace after Shane scores a goal, the sound of Ilya's laugh when he finds something funny - all that and more will just be...gone. But, if letting go means Ilya gets what he truly wanted, it doesn't matter how angry or hurt Shane is, Shane supposes he should let that happen.

He lifts Ilya's hand to his mouth, pressing a kiss to the tattooed band on Ilya's left ring finger that he had gotten earlier this year to celebrate their five year wedding anniversary. Shane has a matching one on his own hand - his first and only tattoo.

It had started as a joke about a year after they got married - Ilya said something about how he was always afraid something would happen to the wedding ring on his chain during games and he wanted something permanent that would let everyone know he was married, whether he wore his actual ring or not.

Shane told Ilya that he was perfectly within his rights to do that - but Ilya would back off when Shane told him to go get the tattoo alone. Shane had no real interest in a tattoo himself, but far be it from him to have stopped Ilya from getting more (the only tattoo idea that Ilya had come up with that Shane had ever vehemently vetoed was the proposal of *property of Shane Hollander* on Ilya's ass, and even that one, he knew Ilya was kidding - mostly).

It took Shane longer than he cared to admit to figure out that what Ilya really wanted when he mentioned getting the ring tattoo was actually for them to have matching ring tattoos done. When the five year anniversary of their living room ceremony with the Pike children came around, Shane arranged a private appointment with a tattoo artist friend of Rose's as his present to Ilya. They had just had the tattoos touched up on the fifth anniversary of their backyard wedding only a few months ago. Ilya had been positively giddy both times, and Shane wipes at his eyes as he remembers the smile on Ilya's face.

The tattoos had meant forever, or so Shane thought at the time. Will they still mean that when all this is over?

Shane presses another kiss to Ilya's finger over the tattoo, closing his eyes as he begins to speak.

"Listen, Ilya. I...I don't know if you can hear me." It hurts to speak, but he needs to say it, even if Ilya *can't* hear him. "But...if you don't want to stay any more, you can let go. You can go. Maybe you'll be with your mother, and she can take care of you...like I couldn't."

Shane swallows hard. "I just want you to be happy and out of pain, Ilya, and if that's not with me, if that's not here, then..." Shane trails off, gripping to Ilya's crucifix with the hand not holding Ilya's. After the paramedics had arrived and begun to work on Ilya, Shane had found the necklace on the dock, neatly laid on top of the clothes Ilya had left behind. Shane had been wearing it ever since, hoping that whatever god or gods out there would give him Ilya back. But now...he's going to release Ilya, if that's what Ilya is waiting for. "You don't need to come back to me. You have my permission to go, if you need it."

He's not sure why he thought Ilya might go immediately, but Shane is relieved that it isn't instantaneous.

Instead, Ilya just remains still, save for the rise and fall of his chest as he breathes in and out, in and out, and all Shane can do is watch and wait, watch and wait.

—

When Ilya opens his eyes again after Irina disappears, he's back on the dock at the cottage.

The sun warms his face and a light breeze blows through his hair as he looks out across the water.

Sighing, Ilya sits on the edge and dips his bare feet into the lake.

Will this ever be a place that he can come back to? That *they* can come back to?

He hopes so. He hopes he hasn't forever ruined a place that had always provided a place of solace for both Shane and him.

And this...this is why a part of Ilya *doesn't* want to go back. There's too much he's ruined by leaving like this. He doesn't know if he can bear to face Shane. Face David and Yuna. Face Galina. Face his teammates. Face...anyone. He feels like a coward, but maybe the more cowardly thing is to stay here, when his own mother told him that there is at least one person that needs him.

Ilya lifts his feet from the water and hugs his knees to his chest.

A soft voice in his ear startles him. *...if you don't want to stay any more, you can let go. You can go. Maybe you'll be with your mother and she can take care of you...like I couldn't. I just*

want you to be happy and out of pain, Ilya, and if that's not with me, if that's not here, then... you don't need to come back to me. You have my permission to go, if you need it.

Shane.

Ilya whips around to look behind him but no one is there.

Was his mind playing tricks on him so he can absolve himself of staying, or was that really Shane speaking to him somehow? And he was telling him it was okay to go?

Fuck.

Whatever it is, Ilya just needs a little more time here on the dock. He just needs until sunset, in case he really has ruined this place and he never gets to see the cottage or another sunset here again.

Then...he'll go home because if that was really Shane speaking to him - then that means Shane is selfless enough to give Ilya permission to go. And if Shane is selfless enough to let him go, then Ilya knows he needs to be brave enough to go back.

—

As he wakes up, Shane doesn't know how long he's been asleep on the cot. But telling Ilya he could go was a release of sorts, and Shane's body had finally relaxed enough for him to sleep longer than the fifteen minutes he's been allowing himself here or there. For the last five days, Shane has been terrified to sleep longer, fearing that Ilya would die and he wouldn't have been there for him.

Even when he laid down after giving Ilya permission to go, Shane told himself it would only be for a few minutes - and if that was when Ilya did choose to go, Shane could be at peace with that. Now, however, it's dark outside the window of the hospital room, so it must have been at least several hours - the last thing Shane remembers looking at was the sunbeams that illuminated Ilya's face.

The beeps and whirs of the machines around Ilya's bed continue and Shane finds himself grateful for them, even as repetitive and droning as they are. The noises from the machines mean that even if Ilya isn't awake, he's still alive. He *hasn't* let go, not yet.

Shane breathes a muted sigh of relief, unmoving from the cot but still keeping his eyes on Ilya.

Ilya, who lets out a quiet whimper - the first noise he's made since he's been in the hospital. Shane bolts off the cot as fast as he can, scrambling to get up and take Ilya's hand in his.

"Ilya? Ilya - can you hear me?" Shane can hear the panic in his own voice - he's hoping he wasn't imagining the noise he heard. *Fuck, please don't let me be imagining the noise I just*

heard.

Another faint noise emanates from Ilya as his hand twitches in Shane's. He's not imagining this. Ilya *is* waking up.

"Ilya...I'm here, I'm here, I'm here."

On the last *here*, Ilya's eyes crack open ever so slightly and Shane's heart feels like it could burst. All the anger, all the hurt, all the fear rushes away in an instant the second Shane sees the hazel-green of the irises he's so familiar with.

"Shane..." Ilya's voice is barely above a whisper as his eyes close again, heavy with exhaustion.

"I'm here, okay? I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere." Shane murmurs, reaching up to stroke Ilya's forehead. Tears threaten to fall as Shane watches Ilya lay there, silent and still again. The internal panic that Shane has mostly managed to temper over the last five days is slowly creeping into his veins again. Was that it? Has Ilya gone back to whatever world he had been floating through?

Several moments pass, and Shane is doing his best to quell his racing thoughts - surely he must be more patient with Ilya and the trauma his body and mind have been through - but then Ilya speaks again.

"I'm so...s-so fucking sorry." Ilya's voice catches and scratches - hoarse from days of not being used, and Shane hates himself a little for wanting more from Ilya than just him having said his name.

"Hey, no. Shhhh, it's okay," Shane says softly, shaking his head and moving to stroke his fingers through Ilya's hair. "You don't have to say anything else just yet...you've been through a lot."

Ilya nods, his eyes still shut. It still doesn't feel like enough to Shane - but he realizes what he needs isn't from Ilya himself, not really. God, Shane just needs to be closer to Ilya - needs Ilya to feel how relieved he is that the man Shane loves is *alive*.

Shane knows he probably shouldn't do what he's about to do. He should go find a nurse or a doctor to tell them Ilya is awake so they can check on him first, but instead he does the only thing he's wanted to do for days. He crawls into the hospital bed with Ilya, carefully draping his arm over Ilya's chest and pressing himself into his side. Shane does his best not to put any unnecessary weight on Ilya, only resting his forehead against Ilya's temple. He also lays his hand lightly on Ilya's heart, and as Shane does, Ilya lets out a hushed exhale.

Ilya's alive. Ilya's *awake*.

But any words that cross Shane's mind lodge in his throat as he lays there with Ilya. He could say a million things and none of them would be the *right* thing, because what do you say to your husband who almost died? What do you say to your husband who you pulled out of the water and performed CPR on while the 9-1-1 operator talked you through it until the

paramedics showed up? What do you say to your husband who scared you so badly that you thought *you* might die?

Shane closes his eyes, and presses kisses to Ilya's nose and forehead and cheeks, anywhere his lips can reach, in hopes that it says what he can't.

I love you. Thank you for coming back to me.

Ilya groans as he wakes again. It takes a few blinks before his eyes adjust to the artificial hospital lighting and he can get his bearings.

The first time he had been awake, opening his eyes had felt nearly impossible, but Ilya needed Shane to know that he was alive - that he came back. The second time is a little easier, but everything still feels like Ilya is moving through quicksand. He can't move his left arm at all, but soon realizes that it's for a good reason.

Shane's body is pressed tightly up against Ilya's left side, and he's fast asleep. The quiet sound of Shane's snores somehow permeates through the steady beeping and whirring of the monitors and machines around them, and it's the most lovely sound Ilya thinks he's ever heard.

Ilya can also feel the gentle pressure of Shane's hand where it rests lightly over his heart, fingers curled ever so slightly in Ilya's hospital gown. A lump forms in Ilya's throat as he lifts his own hand to cover the back of Shane's, feeling the warmth immediately seep into his cold palm and fingers. Shane doesn't stir, save for the slightest little shift of his body as he cuddles closer into Ilya's side.

It's a small miracle to Ilya that Shane is getting rest. There's no telling to Ilya how long he was caught in the world between living and dying, but however long it was, he does know that Shane wouldn't have left his side through any of it. He never has.

...just remember, Ilya, you...you have someone who loves you with all of their heart, and that is one of the rarest things to find...

Irina's voice echoes in his mind, and Ilya feels a pang in his chest. It would have been so easy to stay with his mother, but even just lying here with Shane close by, Ilya can feel what he would have lost. He wouldn't have been able to touch Shane's warm skin, or hear the gentle snoring sounds Shane makes in a deep slumber, or watch Shane as he sleeps, among a million other things that Ilya would have never been able to experience again had he stayed on the other side.

There's going to be a long road to recovery between the damage to his body and mind - Ilya is certain of that. But he wouldn't have come back if he didn't think it was worth it. If *Shane*

wasn't worth it - and he always will be to Ilya.

Ilya looks down at where their hands rest together, the stark black ink of the tattoo on Shane's left ring finger illuminated by a ray of sunlight. He can feel his heart pull as he remembers the words in the note he left as a goodbye for Shane.

Please know that if love were enough, you would have kept me here for all eternity.

Turning his head, Ilya presses a kiss to Shane's forehead.

Love was enough to keep him here in the end. Now, Ilya just has to prove it.

End Notes

Thanks to all the folks who requested a part two. This one's for you.

Title credit to "When It Rains" by Paramore.

Comments and kudos always appreciated. Thanks for reading. 💜💜💜

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