

A lighthouse in the tempest, my sunshine in winter

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/78455401) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/78455401>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Categories:	Gen , M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Ilya Rozanov & Irina Rozanova , Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Irina Rozanova , Ilya Rozanov , Grigori Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , Shane Hollander
Additional Tags:	Implied/Referenced Domestic Violence , Implied/Referenced Child Abuse , Implied/Reference Suicide Ideation , References to Depression , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Irina Rozanova Lives , Angst with a Happy Ending , Light Angst , no beta we die like men , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Irina Rozanova Needs a Hug , Protective Irina Rozanova , Ilya Rozanov is a Mama's Boy , i said what i said , Fluff and Angst
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-28 Words: 5,219 Chapters: 1/1

A lighthouse in the tempest, my sunshine in winter

by [obtainjh](#)

Summary

The drive to the airport terminal feels eternal, longer than it should be. Every stop the driver makes, gets Irina's blood pumping faster in fear at possible discovery. She has planned this, but it's all dependent on not being found out. Irina has done everything to make sure she's not discovered running away from the country with Ilyusha, but that doesn't mean her anxiety isn't screaming at her that soon enough it will all fall apart.

OR: Irina doesn't commit suicide and runs away with Ilya at the first opportunity.

Notes

Hello! This is my first time writing for this fandom. I saw a tweet about this (I'll link it in the end notes) and decided to try my hand at it. I haven't had the chance to read the books yet, so I'm not sure how loyal I've managed to stay to the characters yet, but this is fan fiction so...

A few disclaimers before reading:

- 1) I'm not a native english speaker, I've studied the language for years now but there are still moments when I have issues writing a few things.
- 2) I'm also not a russian speaker, so if there are any russian native speakers reading this and have a recommendation to make. Please, do tell. I didn't want to use google translate since I know how awful it can be. I tried to do some research about diminutives but I'm going to be honest, I'm running on fumes and I still don't understand it very well.
- 3) I have never been in a situation of domestic abuse, and therefore I can only imagine the strength needed to take your son and leave. I hope I have given justice to Irina's character here.
- 4) I don't feel like I have to say it but any dialogue in italics is supposed to be in Russian. I'd rather not embarrass myself by attempting something in a language in which I only know like four words.

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

Moscow. June 2nd, 2003.

It's an early Monday, early enough that there are no cars on the streets. Irina left everything ready the night before, the only things needing to be done is to wake up her sweet baby boy, have him change clothes and grab the bags. Her husband knows that she's taking Ilya to the summer camp, it'd been agreed she'll be the one to take care of Ilya ~~she doesn't think of all the careful scheming she had to do to ensure it was her that would accompany Ilyusha.~~

It's the easier thing, the *proper* thing.

Her husband doesn't know about the asylum forms and the legal documents she's carrying in one of the bags. Irina has done everything to ensure that he doesn't suspect a thing.

He can't. She'll be dead if he does, that she knows for sure. It's why she's complying with every little thing he demands of her, it's why she's not said a thing to anyone.

Despite his best efforts, sleep still clings to her baby, his eyes bleary and dropping even when he's washed his face with cold water. She sees him tumbling minutely while he brushes his teeth, his blond curls still wild even if a few of them are sticking to his forehead. This is the image that reinforces Irina's resolve. She is no fool, she will not survive one more year under *his* roof, whether it be by his hand or hers, Irina's days are numbered if she stays in this house, in this city, in this country. Anywhere *he* has any influence he may use against her and her children, ~~on how it pains her to leave her oldest,~~ is not a place where they'll be safe.

Not for the first time, Irina thinks about taking her oldest with her, but it's futile. She knows nothing in this world is for free, and if Irina wishes to leave, to save her sweet boy from the cruel, cold hands of his father, she cannot take her oldest with her.

Irina is waiting in her baby's bedroom, sitting in his bed, memorizing the room, when he comes out of the bathroom.

"*Mama,*" her sweet boy approaches her for a hug, one she gives easily. "*I'm ready, mama.*"

She allows herself one small moment of weakness, she holds her sweet boy just a little bit longer, her nose in his only-slightly-better-tamed curls. Time is neither kind nor cruel, it simply is, but for a moment, Irina feels as if the sands of time fall just a tad bit slower than they are supposed to do.

A small mercy for all her pain and suffering, for the pain and suffering of her Ilyusha.

Taking a breath, she steps away from the hug. Smiling at her baby, "*do you have everything? You're not forgetting anything, are you? We're not turning back home half-way to the airport, Ilyusha.*"

"*Yes, mama. I have everything I need for camp in the bags,*" his voice is barely above a whisper. It has to be, it's part of the rules of this house.

“Good,” she grabs her purse sitting next to his desk. “Let’s go, then. We don’t want to be late.”

Her heart thumps too loudly inside her, Irina fears it will be this that will give away her plan, but she keeps going. Irina cannot stop, she can’t afford to hesitate, not now. They board the cab, their suitcases and bags in the trunk. She holds her sweet boy’s small hand in hers, it’s only when they’re a block away from the house that she presses Ilyusha’s hand in hers three times.

Their secret way of saying *It’s okay, I love you*; their way of saying *I’m sorry, I forgive you, I love you*. Irina thinks of it now as a promise. *I love you; I won’t let him put a hand on you anymore. He won’t hurt you like he did me. I love you, forgive me. I love you.*

Her baby rests his head on her shoulder, trying to fall asleep once more. Irina keeps her head tall, her shoulders and back straight, and Ilyusha’s hand in hers. Her purse sits beside her, she doesn’t check it, she’s already done it before leaving. She scans her surroundings outside the window, careful to make sure she looks as a tired mother watching the city pass through the window and not a mother whose heart is gripped by terror at being discovered fleeing with her baby.

The drive to the airport terminal feels eternal, longer than it should be. Every stop the driver makes, gets Irina’s blood pumping faster in fear at possible discovery. She has planned this, but it’s all dependent on not being found out. Determined enough to see this carried out, Irina only has so many options for what to do in the off chance her plans fail. Each option is more desperate than the last one. *No, this **has to** work, there is no other way*, Irina thinks.

Still, every time Irina sees the blue-red lights of a siren, the hand holding onto the strap of her purse tightens just a little bit more. Until finally, after what has felt like an eternity, they arrive at the airport. The driver unloads their luggage, and Irina pays him exactly the right amount. Her sweet boy, who’s far more awake and certainly looks more excited about the idea of travelling now that they’re at the airport, drags one of the empty luggage carts to where she stands.

Once all their luggage is in the cart —three big suitcases, two medium-sized bags, and a small carry-on—, Irina walks with Ilya to document it. She has to remind herself to be calm, to pretend nothing is any different than what it should be. They walk, or Irina does, while Ilya stands perched upon one of the bars of the luggage cart, holding tightly to the hand-holds, Irina can only smile fondly while pushing the cart. It’s a bit of an effort, with how heavy it is, but she makes do.

Thankfully, everything goes right as it is supposed to do with their luggage. This wasn’t a part of the process that had Irina too worried. No, that was going through security and handing their airplane tickets. She has Ilyusha’s permit with her, the one signed by her husband. The one that says she can take her baby with her out of the country with the full knowledge and legal permission from the other parent. The one for which Irina had to do such precise scheming it might as well have been on par with a neurosurgeon’s strokes with the scalpel on the Operating Room.

Backpack moving up and down with every step he takes, her sweet boy keeps walking beside her, his hand in hers. Irina knows that Ilyusha enjoys having the chance to hold her hand and hug her without the overbearing eyes of his father following his every move, silently reproaching him for not acting “like a man” simply for holding her hand in public. This is her Ilyusha’s form of rebellion, a preview of what rebellion awaits in Ilyusha’s teenage years.

A rebellion she encourages now openly. Once they’ve passed security, Irina takes her sweet boy to eat the sandwiches she bought at the bakery yesterday before closing. They’re still packaged, and they’re her sweet boy’s favorites. She should’ve bought them something fresh from one of the airport stores, she was given money for it too, but she needs to save as much money as she can until she has secured a job.

Time passes slowly, and too fast at the same time; before Irina knows it, their flight is being announced. She hasn’t stopped looking behind her right shoulder, a part of her still waiting for the other shoe to drop. It’s only until they’re sitting in the plane, the doors closed and Ilyusha’s hand still in hers, that Irina allows herself a small breath of relief.

“It’s okay, mama,” her sweet boy looks at her, head tilted in open reassurance, his big blue eyes observing her every move. *“Planes are super safe, remember? Grandpa said so last time we saw him.”*

“You’re right, of course,” she holds Ilyusha’s hand and presses it one more time. *“Mama is just a bit nervous, it’s a long flight, that’s all.”*

And it is a long flight, 24 hours of travelling, almost 25, depending on if they’re not delayed. Just to reach Ottawa, to reach the hockey summer camp where Ilyusha was invited to attend. To reach freedom from her husband.

The first stop is Istanbul, nothing too long compared to the flight they’ll take to Montréal. They change planes, but they thankfully don’t have to spend more than about an hour waiting. Ilyusha spends most of the flight asleep out of boredom. Irina spends it reading an English-Russian dictionary and writing down the words she *knows* she will need to understand. Their second flight is longer, as is their wait for their final flight.

Once they land in Montréal, tired and groggy, Irina walks her sweet boy through Canada Customs, handing their documents when asked. It all goes smoothly, there is not a hitch in sight. They spend almost 4 hours waiting at the Montréal-Dorval International Airport for their final flight to Ottawa, the waiting feels eternal. Ilyusha grows bored and hungry and Irina ends up buying him something from a fast-food chain. She’s only a little bit hungry, but she makes do with the snacks Ilyusha didn’t eat in the plane and she kept in her purse.

Finally, after more than a day of flying and travelling, they reach Ottawa. This is, relatively, the easy part. They claim their luggage and, soon enough, they’re on their way to their hotel.

Irina is dead on her feet, and Ilyusha is only awake by sheer force of will and candy, their bodies still working in the Moscow time zone. After they’ve registered at the hotel, once Irina has showered and Ilyusha is sleeping on his bed, curls wet and furred in the bed sheets and blankets, Irina takes a moment to breathe once more.

One step closer to freedom, Irina thinks. A thousand more to follow.

Irina wants to rest, to sleep soundly until the next day, but she can't. She has to make calls and contact immigration lawyers, and see about renting an apartment, and look into getting a bank account, and learning how to move using public transportation in a language she's only starting to get the hang on, and how she is going to do that without having access to any kind of information is beyond her.

She feels the tears falling down on her hands, her body shaking in contained sobs, willing herself not to cry loud enough to wake her sweet baby boy. Things are not over, not even close, but the thread by which Irina had been holding herself to sanity —no, not sanity, strength, resolve, determination, maybe—, finally snaps and the tears fall with the strength of an announced tempest against the windows on a little cottage holding what warm can still be preserved by sheer force of will. Irina had not cried when she had taken the shower and washed away the remnants of airplane air-conditioning smell off her skin, she had not cried when she had to re-read the stupid English-Russian dictionary for the fifth time to understand which way to go to reach the taxi terminals —even if the frustration had reigned deep in her heart and threaten to take everything. She had not allowed herself to cry, she couldn't, not with Ilyusha there, not when Ilyusha *needed* her.

But now, standing in a hotel room, her sweet boy asleep, his whole body cocooned in blankets and holding onto his old teddy bear, face smushed into the pillow, wild curls still slightly wet... the tears overtake her, her shoulders shake, and Irina feels many things inside break into a million tiny pieces, as she bites into her hand to keep her sobs down from waking Ilyusha.

Sight blurred by tears and her hands shaking, Irina forces herself to sit down on the bed in front of her sweet baby. Her sweet boy, her baby, her ray of sunshine in the darkness, her lighthouse in the tempest, her strength and her determination. He, who is every good thing Irina has had to offer to the world, and for whom she has willed herself to keep going despite the tiredness that fights her every move, the numbness that has her in bed without the strength to lift one finger. She needs help, Irina knows. The pills she was given by the new doctor she had started seeing will only last her so long, and will only carry her so far.

She needs to do so many, many things, Irina knows this, but she is so, so tired. And the tears just keep falling down, water bursting from a dam broken and unable to be repaired. She wants so many things too. She wants to be done with everything, for everything to be over already, and for her baby boy and her to be able to go to their own warm home and be happy, and safe, and carefree, and healthy. Irina *wants* that with the same kind of want a person wants a glass of water after hours of walking through the desert, she wants it with *need*, and not desire.

Irina cries, and cries, and cries. She doesn't know how long she spends crying, it was already too late in the evening when they arrived at the hotel. Ilyusha had asked a thousand questions about how time zones worked and how it was possible that despite having spent more than a day travelling they were still living the same day. She had done her best to explain it, a smile and messy blond curls after having spent hours in their flight to Istanbul.

Enough is enough, he needs you, Irina. Get your shit together, she reproaches herself, standing up from the bed to go to the bathroom once more.

She washes away the tears with water from the faucet, braids her hair in one big braid to keep her hair somewhat manageable tomorrow morning. A thin woman looks at her from the mirror, her skin sickly pale, her blond hair no longer a beautiful gold but an ashy one, lifeless. The woman that looks at Irina is too thin, and her eyes are lifeless, devoid of the spark and shine they once had. Irina hates it, she wants to throw things at the mirror and break it, perhaps that way the woman won't keep staring at her.

Ilyusha is the only thing keeping her from doing it, the reminder that she can save him from the cruel hands of Grigori Rozanov, keeps her from it. Her chest feels so tight, and she breathes, open-mouthed and still shaking. The sting from her nails pressing too tightly into her own hands grounds her, and she knows she cannot stay inside the bathroom. It's safer for her and her mind to keep Ilyusha in sight.

Irina ends up sitting next to Ilyusha's head, on the other side of the bed. Her hand, playing softly with his curls. Sleep finds her somewhere along brushing her sweet boy's hair, her body exhausted from the travel and the emotional labour. When she wakes, Ilyusha is nestled in her arms, her sweet little boy. She has a mouthful of golden, luscious locks, but she doesn't mind it. Not when Ilyusha looks so peaceful.

She wishes she could stay here, with her baby all bundled up and cozy in blankets next to her, but soon enough, her baby will wake up, they'll need to get breakfast, go out to buy a few things, and find the way to get to the rink for when the summer camp starts tomorrow morning. Irina thinks about how to go about obtaining the information she needs about lawyers today, but it'll be almost impossible with Ilyusha asking too many questions. She'll have to do it tomorrow, while her baby is at the rink, under the supervision and care of the coaches and staff.

Careful not to wake him, Irina slowly dislodges Ilyusha's arms from her. He turns, and nuzzles the pillow instead. Irina changes her clothes, she does her make up, careful to keep the facade of nothing different than usual from falling apart. Once she's ready, she wakes him. It takes Ilyusha a while to properly wake up, and Irina can't help the smile at seeing him all groggy and bleary-eyed brushing his teeth. Even when he's come outside the bathroom from changing into the clothes Irina hands him, sleep continues to stick to him.

Having made the bed while he was in the bathroom, Irina makes him sit in it and begins brushing his curls. First, with her hands, unknotted a few of the curls, and then using a brush and some water to properly do his hair. He would've had to cut it before going back to Russia, Grigori Rozanov hated seeing any of his sons with long hair. Irina prefers it when her baby's curls are long enough they are actual curls and not whatever abomination her husband wants.

Ilyusha loves it when her mama does his hair, Irina knows this from the way he melts whenever she works his curls into proper shape. Where perhaps other boys would be embarrassed at their mothers using their own hair products in their hair, Ilyusha gleefully hands her every product before she has the chance to ask for it.

They have breakfast at the hotel, it's part of Irina's plans to save money, using the already-paid hotel room and the food it offers them freely. She makes sure to grab two apples and two water bottles, inconspicuously putting them into Ilyusha's backpack. She eats as much as she can, ravenous from yesterday. She takes her meds with coffee, while Ilyusha finishes his second plate of breakfast.

Their morning is spent figuring out the public transport system of Ottawa with the help of a map of the city Irina had gotten from the hotel. Ilyusha spends a lot of time glued to the windows of the bus, looking around the city, trying to match what stores and landmarks he recognizes to the map. A game Irina encourages, this will be their new home, and it is better if Ilyusha is familiar with it.

Nothing much gets done that day, aside from figuring out how to get from the hotel to the rink and back, buying a few things in a grocery store so that Irina can save some money on food in the next few days. Guilt eats up at her, at not doing anything to start the process of looking for an immigration lawyer, but she wants Ilyusha to have happiness and herself for the day. Camp will have him too tired and too busy to be able to spend alone time with her, and Irina allows herself this small act of selfishness.

"Mama?" Ilyusha asks, turning to look at her from where he had been previously admiring the rink building. His blue eyes look at her with so much trust, and Irina knows she will do anything for them to retain their spark.

"*Hmm, what is it, Ilyusha?*"

"*I'm glad you came with me, Mama. I knew you were sick and sad, and that you are still tired but I'm glad it's you here with me.*" Ilyusha's warm hug keeps her grounded, rooted and anchored to reality.

"*I couldn't miss my sweet boy's first international camp,*" she says, her left hand on his curls, her right hand drawing circles in his back. "*One day, a few years from now, you're going to be playing in arenas, being the best of the best. You will break records and set new ones too, and I'll be there too. Beside you all the way, Ilyusha. Always.*"

"*Promise?*"

"*I promise it, Ilyusha. I'm sorry Mama hasn't been the best the last couple of months, that I haven't been with you like you needed me. I really am sorry, baby. It's in the past now, I'll be with you every step of the way. I promise.*" She shouldn't be making promises like these, not when she knows there's a chance her meds will fail her and she will go back to being unable to move out of bed, but she still does.

If not for herself, then Irina will keep going for Ilyusha.

Ottawa. June 4th, 2003. First day of summer camp.

Her heels sound loud against the pavement with every step she takes. These are her most comfortable pair. She has to look presentable for when she meets with the lawyer she has yet

to hire. Ilyusha is carrying his training bag and stick, Irina has the other bag with his equipment. It's heavy, and her body is not used to carrying this sort of weight, but she makes do.

The jetlag hasn't exactly left their bodies, but they don't have more time to rest. Irina wants to make sure Ilyusha is settled enough for her to leave without worries and get to work on finding a lawyer, and to do that, Irina makes sure they arrive earlier than anyone else.

The rink opened its doors not even 20 minutes ago. They're the first ones to arrive, and they have to wait in the lobby until there's someone available to register Ilyusha.

Their wait isn't long, thankfully, and Irina is filling in the form, her notebook of Russian-English words next to the form on the clipboard she was handed by a tired teenager with red hair. It takes her a while to understand a few of the words on the form, thankfully the receptionist is far more busy with other paperwork to notice Irina's struggle. She's on the second page of the form, —why a form to register a kid for a hockey summer camp has more than one page when parents were given papers to sign a long time ago is beyond Irina's understanding— when she hears the doors opening, a quick look away from the form reveals an asian woman and her son entering the lobby. Seems like Irina wasn't the only one with the idea of arriving early.

The kid is sent to the chairs with his training bags and stick in hand. Ilyusha will likely try to draw the kid into conversation, despite the language barrier, Irina knows her baby will try to speak with the boy. She feels more than hears the other woman approach the desk, the receptionist hands her the same form.

It's obvious to Irina that the woman speaks far better English than she does, especially when she fills the form in a far shorter time than it takes Irina. Especially when Irina feels the frustration of not understanding what the form is asking, the exact word used in the form eludes her and toys with her patience. She checked her notebook to see if she wrote down the word, but it is to no avail.

Irina ponders the idea of asking Ilyusha to lend her the dictionary, but the mere idea of having to show any weakness on her grasp with the language feels too embarrassing.

"I'm glad to know I'm not the only one who has such a hard time reading these forms," the woman says to Irina. She has kind brown eyes, and an even kinder smile, she also speaks slowly enough for Irina to understand, enunciating every word carefully. "The size of the letters is so small for my sight, I feel like I need to read everything twice to understand what it is they're asking us to write. I mean, really, 'allergies to medication'? I thought we had already given this information when we filled in those first forms."

There it is again, that word, "medication". Irina is seconds away from pulling her hair out of frustration.

"Yes. I agree," Irina answers curtly. She wants to say more, she wants to speak about how redundant this task seems to her, a very awful consequence of not keeping track of proper procedures and paperwork. But Irina understands more English than she can speak, she can listen to it and understand it, read it and write with only a few hiccups here and there.

Speaking, on the other hand, is where her issue has made its home. “I do not understand... this... need to do things more than one time.”

“Exactly. Seems a bit silly to me, but I guess some people might forget to write their kids are allergic to medications like...,” the woman pauses, as if trying to remember the right word for her example. “Ibuprofen? I’m afraid I can’t remember many medications right now.”

Ibuprofen. Of course, that’s why the word sounded familiar, Irina thinks, while turning to her notebook, searching for the small section she wrote about doctors and medicine. She finds the word easily. It’s embarrassing, knowing that she had indeed written the word under a different section and hadn’t been able to find it in her stress-filled search.

Some of her embarrassment must show on her face, for soon enough, the woman is whispering to her, trying not to bring attention to them from the receptionist. “I still have trouble understanding a few words in my second language. It happens.”

Irina only allows herself to smile at the woman. A part of her hopes the woman’s child is as kind as she is, and that her Ilyusha has that same kindness in his life.

“I’m Yuna, Yuna Hollander,” says the woman—Yuna, offering Irina her hand in a greeting the moment Irina finishes with the form and puts it down on the desk.

Irina takes her hand, a little weary, but hopeful. “Irina Rozanova.”

Later, much later, years and years away from now, when both of their sons will be wearing black suits and standing under the same wedding arch, both women dressed in expensive dresses, and Yuna’s husband—who will be Irina’s friend by then—wearing a suit sitting next to the both of them, surrounded by all of the friends her Ilyusha and his love have made throughout their careers, Irina will think back to this moment. She will think back to how such a small gesture of kindness will help birth a close friendship between both women. How their friendship will be mirrored in their sons.

It will not be an easy path, it will be filled with so much stress and pain, with so much regret and guilt. Her depression won’t go away simply because Irina managed to escape Grigori Rozanov’s mausoleum of a house, it will take years upon years of hard work for Irina to get better. Ilyusha will be her rock, her lighthouse, her sunshine, her hearth, and her home. And Irina will be all those things for him too. Even if her Ilyusha lashes out at her in his anger at not being able to go back to the country that saw him grow up.

But not all will be filled with darkness, there will be happiness, and hope, and laughter, and warmth in their path too. Ilyusha will come to her, his cheeks red and his eyes wide, after having spent the afternoon at the Hollander’s house working on homework, and confess about having kissed Shane for the first time. Irina and Yuna will work together to ensure that their sweet sons have everything to succeed, that their secret and their love for each other is not revealed to the public until both of them are ready for it.

There will be times when Irina’s heart will ache for her firstborn son—for the could’ve, should’ve, would’ve and the what if’s—but she will need only to look at her Ilyusha to know that this was the best outcome. The only one where Ilyusha gets to walk to the wedding altar

with Irina's hand in his, with Irina pressing Ilyusha's hand three times to tell him she loves him.

She will struggle with English for a couple of months, but necessity will drive her to proficiency. She will end up picking up French, too, a couple of years later. Shane Hollander will ask her to teach him Russian, his cheeks all rosy and fidgeting in embarrassment while she finishes cooking dinner for the three of them. Irina will say yes, a knowing look in her blue eyes.

Her Ilyusha, her sweet boy, will grow up healthy, happy and loved, with the only memories of Grigori Rozanov's cruel, cold hands a distant afterthought. His golden locks will never become the ashy blonde Irina's curls were when they first arrived in Canada. He will miss his brother, or the brother he once knew and loved. But growing up will teach Ilya Rozanov that his mother did everything to make sure he was always happy, healthy and loved.

Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov will still open charity about mental health and suicide prevention, but not because Irina Rozanova died when her son was 12 years old. The charity will also offer resources for women and single mothers in domestic abuse situations, or those who have left them. Irina and Yuna will help manage the charity.

And Irina's crucifix necklace, the one in another universe Ilya Rozanov started wearing after his mother's death, will be gifted to her Ilyusha when both of them are granted Canadian citizenship.

Irina Rozanova will be present when her sweet boy is drafted to the NHL, she will be there for when both of her sons break records and play in arenas. She will be there, alongside Yuna and David Hollander, celebrating their triumphs and comforting them for their losses. Irina Rozanova will live a long life, next to her sweet son.

For now though, Irina takes Yuna Hollander's hand. They go sit next to their sons while they wait for the coaches and kids to show up. For now, all that Irina can think about Shane Hollander is that he seems like a good kid, a kid hoping to befriend Ilyusha and making sure to speak as slowly as he can in his own excitement at meeting someone who loves hockey as much as he does.

Shane Hollander asks Ilyusha a thousand questions in the short time Irina and Yuna join them, and Ilyusha makes sure to answer every single one of them in his limited vocabulary. The ones he doesn't quite understand or doesn't know how to answer in English, Shane is there to help him search for the right word in the English-Russian dictionary.

Irina can only watch the way the kid, Shane, tries mouthing every word they end up searching in the dictionary to varying degrees of success. She will watch the way Ilyusha's ears go a little pink every time she catches him watching Shane's freckles with the pretext of teaching him the proper way to pronounce a word.

And all the pain and suffering, all the sleepless nights spent wondering what could've, should've, would've been's, will have been worth it for Ilyusha's happiness.

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

This fic was inspired by a tweet by user ItsMayBiTheWay and the fanart made by user todoga_k

Please, I urge you guys to give them some love because their writing and art are just amazing.

To any Canadian reader, I'm sorry, I know next to nothing about your country's public transport or the process to become a refugee recognized by the state. To any reader who has travelled more than 10h by plane, my apologies but the last time I travelled by plane I was 12/13 and it was a national flight of 45 mins. I did as much research as I could by estimating flights and timezones, but I'll be honest, I doubt they're accurate to 2003.

I know nothing of hockey and hockey summer camps, as you can probably tell by the lack of description on the rink. I did what I could with what I had, which is very little and mostly based on google research because I have only set foot on ice once and it was an outside rink when I was 15 and there are like three rinks in my entire country.

I loved writing Irina and thinking about what could happen. I'm considering writing a short Ilya POV of this, but I won't be making any promises since I have my own plate quite full.

If you guys want to come to my twt profile and talk about fics, you can find as @obtainjh (I will not be calling it X, I hate that fucker and I have no respect for him).

Once again, thank you guys for reading!

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