

Little Talks

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Little Talks

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Summary

A lull in the conversation passes, though not an unpleasant one. The silence is easy, buzzing with a certain level of casualness, one they so rarely allow themselves. Shane swallows.

“I like...this.”

Ilya hesitates. “You like buying groceries?”

Notes

Hi. I have not posted in Months and am coming back with a fic for a whole new fandom (new to me, at least) as my darling partner introduced me to HR and I've unfortunately fallen desperately in love with these two morons SO !!! This is set after chapter 20 but *before Shane's injury ! As this is my first time writing hollanov you may have to forgive any slight mischaracterizations. Also shout out to my girlfriend AGAIN since wit practically wrote the scene(s) actually detailing. Yk. Hockey. because I am NOT well versed in the sport lmao. also, she beta'd. also I love her <3*

With all of that out of the way, I hope you enjoy Shane being a hopeless pining dumbass (affectionate)

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

March 2017—Montreal

Contrary to the tense grip he holds on the steering wheel, Shane actually doesn't mind buying groceries. What he *does* mind; is being bombarded by overenthusiastic fans that seem to think meeting him while out and about doing 'regular person' things and not 'NHL Superstar Shane Hollander' things is the chance meeting of a lifetime. Like it's a bucket list item, or something. Which is why he tends to order in. But every so often, Shane gets an itch under his skin that likes to remind him he's a person outside of hockey. It also reminds him that he's out of almost everything in his fridge.

In an effort to avoid said bombardment, Shane is wearing one of his shitty old ball caps with a frayed visor, alongside his glasses and a jacket one size or so bigger than he is. So far, he hasn't run into anyone, and he's trying to count his blessings. The store Shane's heading to is smaller than the average grocery store, which works out *great* for him. Not only was it sort of out of the way, but the customers tended to consist of little old ladies that only knew him for being able to grab things from the top shelves, and not for...everything else.

It's just as he's pulling into the parking lot that Shane's phone buzzes in his pocket. A text.

Lily: Are you at home?

Shane tries not to smile like a complete fucking dumbass. Shane also tries to ignore the swoop in his stomach at the question, because he is decidedly *not* at home.

Shane: No.

He types, before adding a tentative 'sorry.' He doesn't know why he feels like he needs to apologize. Shane watches the floating dots at the bottom of his screen appear and disappear while Rozanov types.

Lily: Can I call you anyway?

Shane: Yes.

No hesitation. He doesn't get out of the car—which he realizes belatedly is still running, something he hurries to rectify—gaze locked down at his phone, as if it might explain things if Shane stares at it hard enough. Rozanov has a home game tonight, one Shane doesn't even try to convince himself he won't be watching. If he wanted to unwind before the game, surely he wouldn't expect Shane to do that out in public. Even if it didn't sound *entirely* unappealing.

So why, then? Did Ilya just want his company? Shane supposes that isn't implausible either. The sound of his phone ringing catches him far more off guard than it should. "Hi," he says, like it's a question.

"Hollander." Ilya's voice fills his ears. He sounds...off, Shane can't place how-so. "What are you doing right now?"

Normally, hearing something like that drawled by Ilya would make Shane's face flush. But he's lacking any suggestiveness, or conviction, and the words sound like they're dipped in a soft kind of quiet. Lately, that's something Shane has become pretty familiar with. Vulnerability sounded a lot like rain and wind whistling on a window when it came to Ilya. Shane doesn't voice any of that, though. Not because he wants to keep it a secret, Ilya chose to share that side of him when he called him in Moscow. But because he would not know how to tell him that it makes him really fucking brave.

"Uh. Buying groceries?" Is what he replies, which is maybe the most mundane answer he could have given. Shane finally decides to get up and out of his car, since sitting on his own in a mostly empty parking lot doesn't seem like the best method of keeping a low profile. He bumps the door shut with his hip and locks it, bag tucked under his arm.

"Is everything okay?" Shane lets himself say this gently.

"Sure. Why wouldn't it be." Which he regrets, since clearly Ilya isn't in the mood.

It's not like Shane has no reason to ask. Sure, last they talked, Ilya seemed back to his regular self. And yeah, sure, last they talked, Shane was pretty damn certain he'd said too much, too *soon* and thrown himself headfirst over a line both of them had been teetering on for years.

This was Ilya's first game back since returning from Russia. Since his father's death. Since Ilya told Shane it might be his last time staying there. No more summers flying back to Moscow. Shane slots his phone between his cheek and his shoulder while he tucks one side of his bangs behind his ear and into his cap, crossing the lot. All in all, it'd be weird if he *wasn't* worried, which terrifies him. When did caring about Ilya Rozanov become so unconscious for him that it felt *weird* not to?

"Who are you buying groceries for?" Ilya asks, sounding bemused.

"*Me*, obviously." Shane feels like he can hear Ilya smile. "I still need to eat."

"You do not just order your food?"

“Ilya.” He rolls his eyes, sighing exasperatedly into the cool air of the store as he walks in. A sound that’s hardly there bubbles in his ear. A chuckle, however faint. “*Relax*, Hollander. Was a joke.” Shane can hear the grin in his voice.

Shane wonders what Ilya is doing on the other end. Probably lounging in his bed, legs open, one hand holding the phone to his ear and the other, sat lazily behind his head. Maybe there’s a can of Coke on his nightstand, maybe he isn’t wearing anything but his pants and gold chain. No underwear and a hand on—*God*. Nope. Too sexy. Shane did *not* need a charge of public indecency to top off his weekend.

He grabs a basket on his way in, pulling up a shopping checklist on his smartwatch while keeping his phone wedged against his shoulder.

“You finally admit it.” Whatever lingering nervousness Ilya had been feeling before drains from his tone, mirth replacing it. The uncomfortable, tight feeling that was slowly settling under Shane’s ribs eases. *This* Ilya, he was used to.

“Admit what?”

“That you cheated. For your record. Six point seven seconds, yes? You were not cheating last night.”

“Oh fuck *off*.”

Of *course* Ilya saw his game last night. Any fucking chance to hold something over him. “Can’t believe you missed that. Is like child’s play.”

He’s kind of right. Shane is mortified to even acknowledge that point. It was beyond embarrassing, and he felt like shriveling up if he thought about it too hard; a nasty pit forming in the center of his chest that made Shane feel a lot like a bad hockey player, stupid as that was.

But it had also been a *stupid* fumble, a stupid miss of an opportunity and a stupid lack of accuracy and stickhandling. Just thinking about it makes him so fucking disappointed in himself, and if it was up to him, Shane wouldn’t be showing his face in public at all. His fuck-up is going to be on highlight reels for at *least* a couple months. While Montreal still won, those tense eighteen minutes of overtime were all because of Shane.

After stealing the puck from Daniels—the Pittsburgh forward—Shane blew out of his zone down the ice; he’d snuck his way through the Pittsburgh defensemen on the blue line. He had their goalie *alone*. A buzzer beater breakaway goal would have been *perfect*. But instead, the Pittsburgh goalie surged forward for a pokecheck and Shane had been so caught off guard that he’d fumbled his stickhandling. The puck fell off his stick and out of reach, Shane flipping over the flat of the goalie stick with the grace of a newborn foal, which sent him careening into the boards, back hitting them soundly.

He snatches a carton of eggs from the shelf with way too much force, grumbling when he opens the lid to check for cracks. “Ilya, I *swear* if that’s the only reason you called.”

“No, was just making small talk.” There’s that smirk in his words again.

Shane is convinced Ilya only watches him play for the sake of finding ways to jab at him. “How are you feeling?” He asks, because he wants to change the subject.

“Fine. Game should be good tonight, I think.” Ilya pauses, Shane pictures him winking. “To make up for yours.”

“No I mean...in general. Outside of hockey.”

Words sound awkward and blunt on his tongue. Shane knows he’s maybe pushing his limits here. He hears a soft sound come from the mic; Russian words, he thinks, and shuffling fabric as if Ilya is sitting upright. Then, “you should buy bread.”

Shane doesn’t think it’s a translation. “What?”

“You are buying groceries, yes Hollander?” He explains, effectively explaining nothing. But because Ilya is on the phone with him and he wants to listen to his voice, low but effortlessly even, Shane finds himself smiling.

This should be weird. This whole thing *is* weird. Walking around a grocery store, phone cradled against his face while he honest to God *chats* with Ilya. If he wanted to, Shane could almost picture Ilya beside him, golden curls flattened under his own cap and falling over his eyes. Maybe he’d have an arm linked with Shane’s, or his hand holding his waist so that Shane could rest his head on his shoulder. He frowns, bending down closer to the bread rack.

“They don’t have the brand I like.”

“A crime,” Ilya deadpans, “how dare they not have Shane Hollander’s special bread.”

Shane tries to bite back the laugh that surges in his chest, but that only makes him snort. Loud enough that a woman next to him flashes him a narrow look, whom he mouths an apology to, hoping she doesn’t recognize him. He’s almost expecting to see Ilya beside him when he stands up, warm eyes bright and smiling just as much as Shane definitely is.

“You can’t make me laugh like that...”

“Is serious business, Hollander!” Shane crosses bread off his list with a huff, “that you can’t buy the bread with your face on it.”

“It doesn’t— why would there be bread with my *face* on it?”

“You are Montreal’s poster boy.” Ilya supplies, and this time Shane really struggles not to giggle. But then Ilya cracks up at himself, and Shane ends up hurrying away into an empty aisle to laugh with him.

It hits him that he wishes he didn’t have to hide. Shane realizes that he doesn’t *want* to pretend it’s someone other than Ilya making him laugh. Horrifyingly, he finds himself wanting everyone in this store to know exactly who he’s on the phone to. And, equally as horrifying, Shane wishes it wasn’t over the phone at *all*. He wishes he didn’t have to be alone

in the aisle, squinting at the fineprint on cereal boxes. He wonders if Ilya does the same. Shane almost asks him what brand he buys.

“Is there stuff you miss? Food, I mean.” Shane vagues, checking off another item on his list. “When you’re here.”

“Is not so different from Russia. But some foods, yes.” Ilya softens on that last part.

Shane’s chest tightens. *What’s your favorite? Do you get it imported? Do you want me to buy it for you?*

“Oh shit, these are on sale.” Is what he says instead. To himself, mostly. He tries not to think too much about how he doesn’t know Ilya’s favorite food, because that’s absolutely *not* something he should be getting upset over.

“What is?”

Coke, particularly. One of two things Shane knows Ilya likes. “Huh? Oh. Nothing.” He hauls a four-pack into his basket.

Shane floats around the store for a little while more, talking about everything and nothing with Ilya. It’s comfortable, working down the list on his watch and going back and forth with Ilya, smiling like an idiot. He doesn’t think anyone has recognized him despite that, which he’s grateful for. Shane doesn’t think he could smother the grin fixed on his face if he tried.

A lull in the conversation passes, though not an unpleasant one. The silence is easy, buzzing with a certain level of casualness, one they so rarely allow themselves. Shane swallows.

“I like...this.”

Ilya hesitates. “You like buying groceries?”

“No. I mean, sure.” He’s indifferent, really. “But I meant that I like talking to you. Like this.”

When Ilya doesn’t respond, Shane feels like he’s aware of every second crawling by. It’s only the truth. He wants to tell Ilya that he wishes he was here. That he’d spend every fucking day buying groceries with him, if he could. Bickering over what to have for dinner as if they weren’t two of the most famous players in the NHL. Shane *loves* the idea, because if Ilya was here, he thinks it would somehow make everything...make sense. It would be easy, they wouldn’t be hiding. His list would be longer and his free hand wouldn’t be limp and empty at his side.

“Is nice,” Ilya murmurs. Shane’s breath catches in his throat, “because it is with you, Shane.”

Then, his heart does something really strange. A feeling not unlike the flap of a bird’s wings right before it rams straight into a glass window. Shane wants to shout and cry and laugh all at the same time, all in varying degrees of intensity.

“Yeah?” He almost chokes the word.

“*Da*. You would be...not terrible to shop with.” Ilya admits, unabashedly gentle, and Shane almost wants to ask if it feels like vertigo for him too. If there’s a chance Ilya wants the same thing he does. But by the time his brain catches back up with reality, Shane has made it to the checkout, belatedly realizing that he *really* ought to have unpacked his things from the basket by now.

The cashier fixes Shane with a flat look. “Hi,” he says smoothly, fiddling with his phone. “H—Hold on, um, Lily.”

They raise their eyebrows, and for a second Shane is terrified they recognize him. But they scan and bag his items without another word, while he hurriedly puts the shopping basket back in the stack he first grabbed it from.

“Fuck, sorry. You there?” The other end of the line is quiet for a moment, before he hears Ilya laugh again.

“Yes. Jane.” The softness from before still hugs his voice.

On one hand, it *is* easy to pretend it isn’t Ilya on the other end of the line. That they are just everyday people, doing everyday things, living everyday lives. On the other hand, Shane can’t help but feel disgustingly happy about having him here—in any capacity—and at it being *him*, specifically. He pays with his watch at the same time Ilya makes him laugh again, and it all seems so simple. It wouldn’t be, Shane knows it would never be that easy if Ilya were actually next to him. Even if, by some miracle, their identities weren’t recognized; Shane would still find a way to say the one thing that would surely ruin everything.

He thanks the cashier with what’s definitely an overenthusiastic smile, and hurries out of the store like he’s chasing Ilya’s company. As if Shane can’t possibly bear a moment of dead air between them. Neither of them used to be all that conversational. Before, they spoke on the ice and in the cover of hotel rooms. His condo. Ilya’s house. But that was always faster and heated and breathless with a hell of a lot less giggling.

Slipping out into the lot, Shane realizes that he’s been on the phone for almost a full hour. Ilya will have to get ready for his game soon. That shouldn’t make Shane’s heart twist the way it does.

Only now does he figure that maybe Ilya had an actual reason for calling him, and that he neglected to ask Ilya what that reason *was*. *Why did you call?* Would be the easy thing to say. The honest thing.

“You should probably get going,” it’s the coward’s way out. “For your game.” As if that wasn’t obvious.

“Yes. Probably.”

Neither of them want to end the call. There’s a second so suffocating where Ilya doesn’t say anything and Shane fiddles with his car keys in his pocket, slumped back in the driver’s seat. He wants Ilya to stay, stupid and irrational as that is, but he’s far more afraid of missing him.

Ilya breaks the silence, “you are right. This...was good.” Shane thinks it was perfect.

“Good-bye, Shane.”

“Good-bye, Ilya. Good luck. I...” His throat works, jaw tense, “I’ll be watching. Score a couple goals for me.”

Ilya chuckles in his ear, low and infuriatingly genuine. “I will try.”

Shane holds his phone up another moment more after he hears the end-call sound. Again, stupidly, when he turns to find the passenger side empty save his bag of groceries, Shane’s eyes sting. The parking lot glistens with hazy afternoon sun, gold on asphalt. He sighs heavily, hands on the steering wheel as tight as they were on the way here, and tries not to let his thoughts hang onto the sound of Ilya’s laughter or the quiet rumble of his voice.

End Notes

I do plan on eventually uploading a short little part two of this fic where Shane watches Ilya's game at home while sipping on Ilya's favourite drink, so. Stay tuned for that maybe possibly perhaps. BUT other than that, as always, kudos and comments are highly appreciated <33

Edit: Forgot to post and link the small bit of [art](#) I did while writing this fic !!!

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