take it easy, let it flow

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by princebutt

Summary

Shane Hollander allows his movie star friend Rose Landry to set him up on a blind date with one of her co-stars. That date just so happens to be Ilya Rozanov.

Flufftober day ten -- set up by friends.

Notes

This was a hard one! I initially wanted to do it where they were still both hockey players but I couldn't work out the logistics, so I made Ilya an actor instead! Thank you forever and always to Anna and Dntat for betaing!

“So. I found someone for you.” Rose Landry, famous movie star and two time Oscar nominee, grins over her salad at Shane Hollander, Montreal Voyageur team captain and three time Stanley cup winner. They’ve been friends for a while now, and while they’d tried dating at the start, Rose had been the end of Shane’s rocky relationship with women. He’d come out to his team soon after they broke up, and came out publicly a year or so later, wanting to be more genuine for his fans and more honest with himself.

It’s been great, if he’s being honest. Sure, there was backlash; a lot of the NHL fanbase can be incredibly insensitive and homophobic, but Shane has always been good at tuning out that kind of noise. As long as his teammates accept him, he’s happy. And so far, by and large, they have. There were some weird glances, some obvious distance in the showers, at first. But things are mostly normal now.

“I don’t want to be set up, Rose,” Shane grumbles around a mouthful of salmon. He takes a sip of water to wash the bite down and glares at her across the table as he folds his arms across his chest. “I told you – I’m happy to be single and just, ya know, live life or whatever. For now. This is all really new, anyways, and –”

“Oh my god, *please* Shane. Just because you’ve been alone for so long doesn’t mean you have to keep doing it,” Rose points out as she stabs her fork into her salad and takes a bite. Her eyebrows waggle as she chews, and Shane’s brows arch as he waits for what she’s going to say next, because it’s obvious she isn’t done, just hungry.

“He’s nice, and he’s hot, and he’s not like, mega-famous so it’s not like it would be weird or whatever.”

Most of Rose’s friends were decently famous. He’d learned to say no to her propositions early on, because usually they meant hot shot directors or swarthy actors who would talk at him and grin condescendingly when he wanted to talk about hockey. He’d been on a few of those dates, and they’re miserable. He refuses to put himself through it again.

“After that last guy, I don’t trust you,” Shane says pointedly. He sits back in his seat and looks at Rose with narrowed eyes.

“Liam was *hot*,” Rose argues.

“And *boring*,” Shane deflects. “All he wanted to talk about was Cannes and his stupid indie film. I watched it, Rose, it wasn’t even that good!”

Rose’s own eyes narrow back at Shane and she heaves a sigh. “You can’t have it all, Shane. Although, I think this guy *does* have it all.” Sly, but she wasn’t going to get him with that.

“No.”

“Please! He’s so nice, he was my co-star in the last film I shot and he’s *really good*. Just give him a shot.” Rose is pouting now, her lower lip jutting out, and Shane feels his willpower receding, because for some damn reason he can’t say no to Rose.

“Ugh, fine.” He scrubs a hand down his face and sighs. He’s only in town a few more nights, anyway, then he goes back to Montreal. What’s one shitty date?

Rose claps her hands and shimmies in her chair. “You’re gonna be so happy you said yes, Shane Hollander. I promise.”

When Shane first sees his date the next evening, he quite frankly is very happy he said yes. The man is tall and statuesque, with an obviously good physique hiding beneath a silky cream button down and brown high waisted trousers. He’s well accessorized, from his belt matching his shoes to the expensive timepiece on his wrist, but the most noticeable feature is his smile. It’s bright and wide and *genuine*, like he really is happy to see Shane.

Shane is mesmerized by the perfect coif of curls that look purposefully tousled and spill onto his forehead, and they way they shine almost golden in the late evening LA sun. Ok, so Rose had been correct on that front – this guy, this *Ilya*, is the hottest she’s set him up with yet. But the night is young, and plenty of stupid things could still be said.

“Hey,” Shane offers as he approaches, and Ilya’s grin widens into something like a smirk as he offers Shane a hand.

“Hello,” Ilya returns easily, the words rolling off his tongue with a thick Russian accent. Shane shakes his hand, feeling a little formal and a little self conscious in his black button down and grey slacks. The way Ilya’s eyes scan him appraisingly, though, then meet his with warmth like he’s seen something he liked, is definitely reassuring.

Rose picked the restaurant. It’s bougier than Shane would usually choose, but he’s heard the food is good so he’s excited to at least get a good meal out of this. “Should we, uhh…?” Shane gestures towards the door and Ilya nods, taking a few long strides and opening the door for Shane. Shane steps inside and gives the maitre d the name on the reservation, which earns him a strange look as he’s dropping Rose Landry’s name without her being there herself.

“She’s a friend of mine?” He says weakly, and the man huffs and grabs menus, then ushers Shane and Ilya into the dimly lit room. They’re seated away from windows and in a cozy booth, which also keeps them away from prying eyes. Ilya is attracting attention, and being cocooned in their own private space is nice.

They both settle in, and Shane picks up his menu, looking over his options thoughtfully. Ilya is looking over the top of his menu at Shane, and Shane’s cheeks pink at the attention. He ducks his head and ruffles his hair, chewing on his lower lip as he tries to read the sushi options and fails horribly. Instead his gaze is drawn to Ilya – to the way his hazel eyes smoulder in the low lighting, how he seems to see right into Shane.

Shane huffs out a soft sigh and drops his menu. A look of mild annoyance flickers across his features, his brow furrowing and his lips curving down into a slight frown as he meets Ilya’s gaze head on.

“What?” He asks as his arms cross over his chest.

As he sets his menu down, Ilya arches one brow. “I am just looking at you. You do know you are handsome, yes?” The question isn’t mocking or rude, and Ilya says it like he’s stating an undeniable truth.

Shane feels like he’s being punked. The most gorgeous man he’s ever seen is telling *him* he’s handsome. It feels insane. He feels wild with the compliment, like he could eat the sun whole and it wouldn’t warm him as thoroughly as that simple statement did. He doesn’t want to love this attention from Ilya; he doesn’t want to *like* Ilya. It’s a disaster waiting to happen. They live on opposite sides of the continent, and they’re both insanely busy with work. It wouldn’t be easy or simple – so why is he even thinking about it? Why is he already thinking logistics in his head?

“I’m not going to fall for that line,” Shane says instead, and he keeps his features schooled into an expression of neutrality. “I don’t like you.”

“You do not know me.”

“No,” Shane agrees, and he takes a deep breath, steels himself. “But Rose has set me up with enough of her actor friends. I know how this goes – you butter me up with compliments then spend all night talking about your shitty filmography and all the minor roles you’ve taken in TV shows. I’ll lie and say I’ll watch some of them, when I probably won’t. You’ll try and kiss me before we go our separate ways, I’ll say no thanks, and that will be that. Look, you’re hot but there’s just no way this is going to work out.” Shane plays with his fork as he talks, avoiding meeting Ilya’s gaze. He can’t help it if it’s true.

The waiter comes by then, and Ilya orders them each warm sake. Shane sips on the water that was dropped off, and looks at Ilya pointedly, begging him to contradict those words.

With a sly grin, Ilya steeples his fingers in front of him. “I do not want to talk about the films I’ve been in. Is boring,” he shrugs his broad shoulders. “Would rather talk about the Bears’ lead on Montreal by two wins this season. How are you feeling about it? I think they are giving you a run for your money.”

The words stop Shane in his tracks. Hockey he can do. Hockey is easy for him, and he’s comfortable talking about hockey. So this man is hot *and* knows the NHL. No big deal.

Be cool, Hollander, he thinks as he thanks the waiter when he drops off the sake and takes their order.

They spend the rest of the night talking about playoff goals and hockey stats. Ilya knows his stuff, and admits he played in Russia before moving to the States to follow his dream of becoming an actor, something his father hated but his mother encouraged. Shane hates that as the night wears on he falls deeper and deeper into a hole of attraction for this man, and he loathes that he wants to make this work. He wants to figure out the schematics and draw blueprints for their lives together. He wants to worry about the passage of time with Ilya, to mark the weeks with facetime dates and look forward to the months he’ll play in LA, or the times Ilya could come visit him in Montreal.

He *wants*, and that feels huge.

When Ilya reaches across the table to brush his fingers against Shane's, Shane doesn't pull away. When Ilya's foot taps against his beneath the table, he doesn't withdraw. He hunkers down into the way it makes his stomach swoop, savors the rushing of blood through his veins, and rejoices in this feeling, that someone can make him feel this alive.

When dessert is offered, they both decline, and share a secret smile. Shane is feeling warm from the sake and the looks they're sharing. When the check is dropped they argue for a moment over who should pay, but ultimately Ilya wins out.

"I just finished a major motion picture, you know. I have plenty of money to spend on you," he teases as he sets down his card.

With a roll of his eyes, Shane sighs. "Here I was thinking we could make it through the night without mention of movies you're in," he teases, and Ilya winks at him, his eyes glistening in the low light, and his smile one of fondness that Shane feels honored to have directed at him.

The waiter returns Ilya's card, and Shane finds himself with a pit in his stomach at the idea of losing this connection they've forged tonight. He wants this night to last forever, wants it to stretch languidly into oblivion, to outlive time and space and let him have something he wants for once. But he can't freeze time, so he calls himself a car. He wants to curl his fingers into Ilya's and tell him to stay, even though this city isn't his. He wants to take Ilya back to his apartment and mark him, make him his, but that feels fast. So instead he lets Ilya walk him out to the car, and doesn't move away when Ilya's hand finds a home at the small of his back.

They stop in front of Shane's car and turn to face each other. The moment is thick with longing, a desire for this night to last longer than they know it can, and Shane finds Ilya's eyes, meets his gaze, and tilts his chin up, a challenge. Ilya steps in and closes the distance between them, and then his hand is at the dip of Shane's waist, his fingers are tugging Shane in by the collar of his shirt, and their lips meet.

It steals his breath away, and Shane loathes that he's become a rom-com trope at this moment. His eyes close, and he savors the feel of Ilya pressed against him, holding him there, savoring him. The kiss is chaste and doesn't last long, and Shane wants to whine when the contact ends and Ilya pulls away. His grin is crooked as he smiles down at Shane, and Ilya's hand cups his cheek, thumb stroking over the flushed skin there.

"You let me kiss you." It's a statement, not a question, and Ilya seems delighted to be saying it.

"I had a really good night," Shane admits, much to his own dismay. He hates when Rose is right.

Ilya looks at Shane's car then back at Shane and sighs. "I had an amazing night," Ilya agrees. He tugs open the door of the car and helps Shane in with a hand. Shane feels dismayed to be calling an end to the night, but he knows it's the best option; he has an early flight in the morning.

“Listen, I am filming in Montreal in a month or two…” Ilya rubs at the back of his neck, and braces his other hand against the doorframe. “Can I see you then?”

The simplicity of the question lights Shane up like a damn Christmas tree. He leans in and presses a tender kiss to Ilya’s cheek and nods emphatically. “I’d love that. Seriously.”

This causes Ilya to grin brightly in return, and he nods with determination. “Okay. I will get your number from Rose and text you.”

“Promise?”

“I promise.” Ilya leans in and presses another soft kiss to Shane’s lips. “I will see you in Montreal.”

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