

A Fucking Babe

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A Fucking Babe

by [wilmonstan12345](#)

Summary

"Maybe he should ask Ilya for Shane Hollander's number. Shane was a fucking babe.

The thought made Troy smile, and that was at least something."

What if in Role Model, Troy actually asked Ilya for Shane's number?

Notes

"He'd also heard the rumors that Shane Hollander was gay. He wasn't sure if they were true, but he secretly thought it would be cool if they were. He certainly didn't blame Hollander for not announcing it.

He wondered if Ilya knew. Somehow those two rivals had become tight over the past few years, and Troy would be impressed if Ilya was best friends with a gay man. Maybe when you'd hooked up with as many women as Ilya had, you didn't have to worry about having your own sexuality questioned.

Ilya would probably support Troy if he knew Troy was gay. If Troy wanted to come out and just...be himself. Finally.

Maybe he should ask Ilya for Shane Hollander's number. Shane was a fucking babe.

The thought made Troy smile, and that was at least something."

This takes place before Harris takes Troy to Bood's BBQ.

Chapter 1: Don't Send Him A Dick Pic

November

“Hey,” Troy tried to sound casual as he approached a still-shirtless Ilya Rozanov in the dressing room after yet another loss. “Got a sec?”

“Do I look busy?” Ilya raised an unimpressed eyebrow as he continued putting on his clothes.

“Right.” Troy’s cheeks flushed. “I just wanted to ask... I mean, do you—?”

“Spit it out, Barrett.”

“You’re friends with Shane Hollander, right?” The words came out rushed, and Troy could feel his face burning. He hoped it didn’t show.

Amusement danced in Ilya’s eyes, as his mood immediately jumped from post-defeat despondency to something much more devilish.

“Yes.” The smirk on Ilya’s face was lethal. “We have a charity together. You may have heard of it. Why?”

“I was wondering if...” Shit, how was he supposed to say this? “If I could have his number? There’s something I wanted to ask him about.”

“Something.” Ilya raised an eyebrow, obviously enjoying this too much already.

Fuck, was Troy already giving himself away? If he’d learned anything in the last few weeks, it was that Rozanov was annoyingly perceptive. His gut instinct told him that Ilya wouldn’t judge him or tell anyone even if he did see through him and figure it out, but he still felt on edge as he tried to think of any platonic reason he might need Shane’s number. He probably should’ve thought of an excuse before asking, but no one had ever accused Troy of being too smart for his own good.

Maybe he could take the mysterious route? Ilya himself had proved to be a bit of an enigma in the short time Troy had known him, so he might respect that.

“I can’t really get into it. It’s just like, an advice thing. I thought he might be a good person to talk to about it.” Troy practically held his breath.

“Advice.” Ilya’s lips quirked up, staring at Troy like he knew every secret he’d ever had. Well, no option now but to double down.

“Yeah. So... Can I have it?”

“Sure.” Ilya shrugged. “You are not going to post it online, are you?”

“What? No!” Troy blustered. “I would never. That’s not—”

“Relax, Barrett. I am fucking with you.” Ilya grinned, reaching for his phone.

“Oh, fuck off.”

“There. Sent. Don’t send him a dick pic.”

“What?! I’m not— that’s not why I’m—” Troy blushed furiously. Yeah, Ilya totally knew.

“Barrett. Is fine. You are fine.” Ilya chuckled, clapping him on the back in a somewhat fatherly manner. Well, fatherly if Troy’s actual father wasn’t a shithead.

Troy exhaled through the stress of the conversation, and Ilya met his eyes, a kinder, more serious look crossing his face. “Is okay. Whatever you need... advice about. From Hollander. He is a good guy. He will give it to you. Okay?”

“Yeah. Thanks.”

Later that night, Troy stared at the blank text he had open on Shane’s contact. He still kind of couldn’t believe he had Shane Hollander’s phone number. The advice thing had sort of been an excuse, but he probably could use some words of wisdom from another gay man in the league. He could start there. God knows he had no idea how he was supposed to hit on a guy he’d barely met.

He logged into his burner account and opened Shane’s Instagram. All things considered, it was pretty sparse, mostly featuring professional photos from games and a couple promotional posts for the Irina Foundation. But damn. The man really was a fucking cutie.

Chat with Shane Hollander

8:12pm

Troy: Hi, this is Troy Barrett. Roz gave me your number. I was wondering if I could talk to you about something

There. That was simple. Direct. Not flirty.

It only occurred to him afterwards that he didn’t actually have anything to talk to Shane about. Nothing beyond, “So I’m gay. I heard you are too. I think you’re hot. Want to tell me how to come out and also maybe fuck me?”

Shane: Hey, sure. What’s up?

The response came twenty minutes later, which was enough time for Troy to sufficiently freak himself out. His stress only worsened as he workshopped different versions of what to say.

Troy: There’s not really a good way to ask this but I heard you’re gay? Is that true?

He watched as Shane's typing bubble appeared and disappeared, until it seemed like he might not get a response. Fuck, this was coming off all wrong.

Troy: I mean it's cool if you are

Troy: I was just wondering

And now he had triple texted. And said the word "wondering" twice, which looked increasingly suspicious the longer he looked at it.

Shane: Uh, yeah, I am. Is that what you wanted to talk to me about?

Alone in his barely furnished hotel room, Troy turned beet red. He should've thought this through. His only option was to come out to Hollander, and pray that he wouldn't tell anyone — which, okay, he probably wouldn't — or... Was there an or? He'd probably already outed himself just by asking.

Troy: I guess I just wanted to know how that's going

Shane: How it's going? What do you mean?

God, Hollander probably thought he was asking about his sex life. Well, he was planning to, but not like this.

Troy: Like how Montreal is treating you

Shane: Uh, fine mostly. Why?

He should've anticipated answering that question. Of all of the dumb shit Troy had done recently, this was turning out to rank pretty high.

He could pivot. Say his curiosity came from asking about how progressive the league was, given his most recent situation with Kent and Toronto.

Or he could be bold. Say he'd rather get into it face-to-face and see if Hollander would meet up with him the next time he was in town, then take it from there. Hollander was from here, right?

Yeah. That was the right call. Feel it out in person. Troy had been informed enough times by Adrian to know that his text game was subpar anyways.

Troy: This might be more of an in-person conversation now that I'm thinking about it. Maybe we could meet up next time you're in Ottawa or after a game or something

His heart beat rapidly in his chest. He couldn't believe he'd sent that. Fuck, this was so stupid.

The reply didn't come for another ten minutes, during which Troy sincerely debated throwing himself off of his patio.

Shane: Sure. I'm not in town much during the season but I'll be home at Christmas. Happy to get coffee or something and give some advice

Christmas. Two months from now. During which they definitely had two games against Montreal planned that Shane was clearly not down to meet up at.

Well, that was a shut down. The patio was looking pretty good right now.

Troy: Sounds good 👍

Shane gave the message a thumbs up, and Troy resigned himself to go miserably jack off in the shower and attempt to forget this had ever happened.

“You *gave him my number?! What is wrong with you?!*”

Ilya cackled at the bewildered look on Shane's face over FaceTime. He'd been hoping Troy would text Shane immediately, and now he was giddy to hear how it went.

“He asked! What, am I supposed to say no?” He couldn't wipe the shit-eating grin off of his face if he tried. Shane's shocked, distressed little face right now was so adorable he wanted to bite him through the screen.

“I mean, yes!”

“What did he say?” Ilya smiled. “Hi Shane, this is Troy Barrett, do you like dick?”

“Stop it.”

“Would you like to try mine?”

Shane groaned, smashing his face into a nearby pillow.

“He is growing on me. He has bad vibes, but, good taste.”

“Come on,” Shane looked up, cheeks going a little pink. “You don't even know that he's gay.”

“No?” Ilya smiled, patronizing as ever. “He asked you about something else?”

“Fine, he's probably gay.” Shane's consternation did nothing to dampen Ilya's spirit. The next part came out awkwardly. “He... He asked me to meet up.”

“Ha!”

“I don't know if he meant like, for advice or to hook up!” Shane's face went even redder.

“Of course he meant to hook up! Look at you!”

“Stop.”

“What? You are very beautiful! I do not blame him.” Ilya waggled his eyebrows.

“You are aware that I have a boyfriend, right?” Shane looked into the camera flatly. “And that it’s you?”

“Yes,” Ilya practically giggled. “A boyfriend who loves you very much and thinks you are very cute when you are embarrassed.”

Shane couldn’t keep the shy, annoyed smile from surfacing.

“What did you tell him?” Ilya loved this situation far too much. He loved *Shane* far too much. He looked so uncomfortable, blushing so brightly that Ilya wanted to kiss every pink freckle on that face.

“I said maybe we could meet up for coffee—”

Ilya raised an eyebrow.

“—and *advice* when I’m home for Christmas. I tried to, like, friend zone him or whatever. I’m just hoping he’ll forget about it by the time it actually happens.”

“Oh my God.” Ilya laughed so hard his eyes watered.

“It’s not funny!”

“Is absolutely funny! My homophobic teammate is gay and tried to hit on you!” Ilya’s whole body shook. “And he asked *me!* *Your boyfriend!* For your number! Come on, Hollander, is fucking funny!”

Shane chuckled, finally giving in, until they were both wiping tears from their eyes.

“God,” Shane smiled wistfully as the moment settled. “I wish you were here right now.”

“Me too. Two weeks is too long. I want to be touching you right now.”

A sentimental look passed over Shane’s face, and Ilya stared back fondly before his smile widened.

“Just like Barrett.”

“Oh, fuck off.”

Chapter 2: Coffee

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

December

“Heard you are meeting up with Hollander over the break.” Ilya smirked as they left their last practice before Christmas.

“Shut up.” Troy sent him a flat look. “It’s not like that.”

“Of course not. What would Harris think?”

“Keep your voice down!” Troy hissed, looking around the parking lot at the team’s remaining stragglers. “I just thought it’d be good to get some advice, in case I... You know.”

“Yes. I do know.” Ilya looked too amused for Troy’s liking.

He’d come out to him only a few weeks prior, and it felt good to finally have someone to talk to about his sexuality, but he still thought Shane Hollander might be able to offer some perspective on what it was like to be *out* out.

He wasn’t about to tell anyone about Ilya, and he knew Ilya wouldn’t say anything about him either, but part of Troy was almost hoping he would — not because that would be the ideal way to tell the world he was gay, but because he was getting pretty fucking tired of hiding, and he wanted to rip the bandaid.

Still, he didn’t think he was ready yet. Not without knowing what waited on the other side. Hopefully Hollander could give some insight on that part.

Two days after Christmas, Troy sat in a Tim Hortons shaking his leg, waiting for Shane Hollander to show up. He felt weird, like this whole coffee meetup had been a bad idea, and maybe he should’ve just been grateful to have found a confidante in Ilya already. But, Ilya wasn’t out, and he was practically the bachelor of the century, so he couldn’t exactly give advice on the things Troy really wanted to ask about, which all boiled down to one thing... Harris.

What was jarring his nerves even more was that Hollander was late, which felt extremely out of character for everything Troy had heard about the man.

Troy decided to shoot him a text to let him know he was here, and immediately got a reply.

Shane: Shit, I’m so sorry. I completely forgot about this. Can we FaceTime instead?

That, too, seemed out of character, but it definitely worked for Troy. He was more than happy to get the fuck out of this coffee shop.

Troy: Yeah, give me a minute. I'm gonna drive home. Call you in 15.

Hollander gave him a thumbs up.

When Shane Hollander answered his FaceTime request fifteen minutes later, Troy was surprised to find that he looked like, well, kind of a mess.

“Hey. How's it going? I'm so sorry I forgot about this morning. I came back to Montreal early.”

Hollander looked tired, the bright glow of his laptop screen illuminating purple shadows under his eyes and bloodshot veins. Still hot as fuck, but clearly... not doing okay. Some words Harris had recently taught him came to mind — ‘Diva down.’

“It's fine, man. Hey, are you sick? Because we can...”

“No, no, I'm good. We should talk. How's, um, how's your team? How was Boxing Day?”

“What?”

“Oh, um, nothing. How were your holidays?”

“Um... They were fine. Pretty good. Just, uh, you know. Mostly stayed at my place. We had a party with the Centaurs yesterday, so that was fun.”

“Right, yeah.” Hollander flinched. “How was that? Did you have fun?”

“Yeah. It was good.”

“That's good. Everyone had a good time?”

“I think so, yeah.”

There was something nervous about the way Hollander was asking, like he really cared to know, which was kind of touching. Truthfully, Troy didn't know if everyone had a good time, because he hadn't really focused on anyone but Harris.

Hollander gave a tight smile, and Troy was glad for it. He'd reached his limit with the niceties, too.

“So... I wanted to ask for your advice, I guess.”

“Yeah, let's get into it.”

“I just, um... Well... I'm gay.”

There. Now Troy had said it. Elephant in the room addressed.

“Okay. That's cool.” Hollander didn't look surprised. “That's okay. Well, you probably know that's okay. Unless you don't, I guess, so... If no one's told you that's okay, uh, that's okay.”

It dawned on Troy then that he had chosen a near stranger as his emotional confidante, and he made a note to vet the next person a little more.

“It's just, you seem like you've got this whole... Like, you've got it all together, you know?”

Hollander's lips pulled into a flat line as he listened to that. “Right. Uh, sure. Have you told anyone?”

“Um.” *Ilya*. Troy wasn't sure what Ilya had shared with Shane, so he decided not to name names. “One person. But my team doesn't know. I think they'd be cool about it, but I just... Well, you know.”

“Yeah. I do know.” A somber look passed over Hollander's face before it morphed into something more resolute. “But I think they'd be cool about it, too.”

“What makes you say that?”

“I get the sense that you guys are more...” Shane searched for the words. “They're good guys. Or at least that's what Ilya says. I don't really know many of them, other than like, Rozanov, obviously.”

“Has it been shitty for you? In Montreal?”

“No...” Shane stalled. “It's not perfect, but it's not bad. There are some guys who, I think, would rather not know, but I have my best friends. They know, and that's a lot more support than a lot of people get, so I feel lucky in that sense.”

“Right.”

“But honestly, you're on a totally different team. I think your team would be great.”

“Yeah. You're probably right. It's just a lot.”

“Yeah.” Shane nodded. “It's a lot.”

“I guess there is something else I wanted to talk to you about.”

“Oh?” Shane looked nervous.

“And look, you're already being really nice to even, like, talk to me, so I appreciate that.”

“Sure.”

“It's just... dating is hard. Right?”

“Yeah.” Hollander blew out of breath.

“Just like, in the position we're in, you know?”

“Definitely.”

“It’s fucking awkward trying to meet people or whatever and explain how fucked up the game can be. I don’t want to ask anyone to stay in the closet or anything, but...”

“Right.”

“So, I guess I was wondering if maybe.... I don’t know, maybe this is weird, but if you might want to—”

“I think my boyfriend is mad at me.” Shane blurted the words out like a gun was being pointed at his head.

“—give me some advice on this guy.”

“—Well, I know he’s mad at me.”

“Oh.”

“Oh my God.”

Troy couldn’t conceal his shock. Shane Hollander had a secret boyfriend.

“Oh fuck, I’m sorry.” Hollander turned bright red. “I didn’t know where you were going with that and I—”

“No! I mean, uh.” The words took a second to click. “Oh! You thought—? No! Oh, no! You’re really hot but—”

Shane looked simultaneously horrified and mortified, and Troy refused to look at his own face in the corner of the screen, knowing with absolute certainty that he’d find the exact same expression.

“Jesus Christ.” Shane closed his eyes miserably.

“Can we forget I said that?” Troy cringed.

“Yes. Definitely. Can we forget *I* said that?”

“Yep. Absolutely.”

An awkward moment lingered as both men spiraled into embarrassment. Hollander broke it first.

“So you’re... seeing someone?”

“No.” Troy exhaled through the god-awful tension of this entire exchange. “Sort of. I don’t know. I like him. And I think he likes me. But he’s super different from me, and I just...”

Hollander let out a humorless laugh. “Sorry. Go on.”

“Anyways, he’s out. I’m not. And we’re not even together, we’re not even *anything*, but I just wish...” Troy trailed off. “I don’t know. Can you tell me about your thing so I don’t feel like such a fucking loser?”

Hollander gave a slight smile, but it turned into a more pained expression quickly. “You’re not a loser. The situation just sucks.”

“Yeah. It does.” Troy replied sadly. They both sat with that for a minute before he went on. “Why’s your boyfriend mad at you? Bad Christmas gift or something?”

“No, I think he liked that.” Hollander rubbed a hand over his face. “Sorry. I’m probably not the best person to get dating advice from right now. Fuck, I really wish I hadn’t brought this up.”

“I’m not gonna tell anyone anything. I really hope you’re not gonna tell anyone anything I just told you—”

“No, God, of course not.”

“So if you, like, need someone to talk to, I’m not very good at advice, but... You can say whatever. I don’t exactly have a lot of friends to tell right now anyways.”

“Right.” Hollander frowned. “Sorry about that. For what it’s worth, I think you did the right thing. Kent’s an asshole, and he had it coming.”

“Yeah. He did.” Troy clenched his jaw, not wanting to think about the situation any more than he had to. “But I’m on a new team now, so. Why do you think your boyfriend is pissed at you?”

“I don’t think, I know.” Hollander grimaced. “He... He wanted me to go to something with him. And it’s like you said. It’s not something I can just do. It’s not that I don’t want to. But I said some really fucked up things, and now he’s not answering my texts, and I think he’s going to break up with me, and God, this is so fucked.”

“Oh. Wow.” Okay, maybe Troy was in over his head.

“Jesus, I already wish I hadn’t said that.”

“No! It’s— I’m thinking.” Troy bit his lip, searching for any answer he could come up with. “My ex and I weren’t out either, and it kind of worked because of that until it didn’t. Is your boyfriend out?”

Hollander shook his head.

“Does he want to be?”

“I didn’t think so. Or I thought we had a plan. But now I’m just thinking over everything he’s ever said to me and trying to figure out what I missed.”

“So you do think he wants to come out?”

“I mean, who doesn’t?” Hollander said, with some irritation. “Sorry. It’s just, I don’t know if I can even give him that. I don’t even know if he actually wants that, or if he’s just unhappy with me, or just unhappy in general... Fuck, I really shouldn’t be talking about this.”

“Well, if it helps, it’s not like I know the guy. I don’t know anyone in Montreal.”

Hollander forced a smile, but it didn't meet his eyes.

“What’s he like?”

The strain on his face turned into something gentler, albeit more miserable.

“He’s the best. I think you’d like him if you got to know him.” Hollander's eyes went soft.

“You kind of do have to get to know him. But he’s... Fuck, I feel like I should be in my car right now.”

“I mean, you can if you want. I don’t want to stop you from like, true love or whatever.”

“You’re not. He doesn’t want to see me. I’m just going crazy over here because our schedules are so fucked. I don’t know when I’m going to see him again. I guess you know how it is.”

“Yeah, I do.” Troy nodded. “Although, I’m actually feeling pretty lucky about that right now though.”

“What does that mean?” Hollander’s curiosity took over.

“Sorry, I’m not trying to interrupt.”

“No, I need the distraction. Go on.”

Troy felt a little taken aback by how easily Hollander transitioned into captain mode, all quiet authority, but he went with it, feeling compelled to answer.

“Well, I guess there’s no point hiding it now since you’re, you know...”

Hollander winced as Troy trailed off, the words “probably getting dumped,” written all over his face.

“Anyways. He’s, uh, he’s our social media guy? So the schedule thing isn’t so bad this time. Or at least I hope it wouldn’t be.”

Hollander nodded, once again looking unsurprised. Troy briefly wondered if he just didn’t have a very expressive face, but his next words hit like an ice bath.

“Harris, right?”

“Uh. What?”

“Isn’t that your social media guy?”

“You know him?” The blood drained from Troy’s face.

“Oh, no, I just— Ilya, I mean, Rozanov has mentioned him before. Like at our camps or whatever.” The words came out too rushed.

“Rozanov talked about Harris at your camps?”

“Well, not a lot. He just talks about the team sometimes. I don’t actually know the guy. Sorry. I didn’t mean to...” Hollander trailed off, an awkward grimace on his face.

“Okay.”

“Do you want to tell me about him?”

“Not really,” Troy sighed. “Maybe another time. I think he deserves a lot better than me anyways, so.”

“I know the feeling.”

Troy looked back at the anguish shading Hollander’s face and thought this might be one of the weirdest days of his life. How did he even get here? What the fuck was he doing talking to the best player in the NHL about *boys*?

Still, he got the sense that Hollander was tormenting himself over nothing. He didn’t seem like he’d be a bad boyfriend. His whole thing was that he was a responsible, good guy. Troy had never heard a bad word about him in the league, at least nothing outside of Dallas’ homophobic jokes, which had a lot more to do with Dallas than they had to do with Hollander.

Hollander misinterpreted the careful expression on Troy’s face as being insulted. “Oh fuck, I’m sorry. I wasn’t trying to say that you’re— like, that you don’t deserve— or something. Jesus I’m so bad at this. You really should talk to Il— I mean, oh God.”

Troy’s lip quirked up. “Were you going to say Ilya?”

“Um.” Hollander reddened. “Yeah. He’s just, he’s a good listener even though he’s not, uh... Gay.”

The stammering was starting to actually amuse Troy. So Hollander didn’t know. Or, he didn’t know if Troy knew and was trying to be respectful. The way Hollander was blushing now made Troy wonder how the hell these two were friends, let alone confidante level friends. If he got embarrassed this easily, Ilya must have a fucking field day.

He cleared his throat. “Anyways. Rozanov. Good listener. You’d probably be surprised.”

“Probably not.” Troy smiled, trying to be reassuring, but his smile sort of sucked and Hollander looked a little annoyed by the reaction.

“Oh.” Hollander’s eyes darkened, though Troy didn’t know why. He had literally just told him he should confide in Ilya.

“Well,” he continued, “I hope this was helpful. It probably wasn’t, but, yeah. I think I’m going to go freak out and maybe text my boyfriend again, if that’s cool.”

“Yeah. Totally cool. I mean, good luck with everything. I’m sure it’ll be fine.”

“Fuck, I hope so.” Hollander exhaled. “Good luck with Harris.”

It was still a little eerie that Hollander actually knew Harris’ name, but Troy nodded and they said their goodbyes.

In all honesty, the conversation hadn’t been super helpful. But, in a weird way, it made him feel a little more at home in the LGBTQ community. People could make all of the assumptions they wanted to about the top tier of NHL players, but there was something reassuring about knowing that the best player in the league was just another awkward gay guy dealing with love life drama, and wasn’t that neat?

“Good break?” Troy tried his hand at small talk with Ilya at their first practice back from the holidays.

“Good trip to Starbucks?” Ilya looked him up and down, in no mood for it.

“Shut up.”

“Is your plan to keep buying him balls until he realizes you want to suck his?”

“Oh my God!” Troy nearly choked on his mouth guard. “They’re called cake pops, and Jesus fucking Christ. What is with you today?!”

“Nothing. Tired.” Ilya snapped, though not unkindly. “Go line up.”

His mood lightened slightly over the course of the day, but not by much. At the end of practice, Troy decided to throw him some easy bait, thinking that maybe a little good, old fashioned mocking would cheer him up.

“Not going to ask me how the coffee with Hollander went?”

Ilya’s eyes flashed and he focused on unlacing his skates.

“Why? Did you hit it off? Am I going to have to deal with two boring guys at our camps this summer?”

“Fuck off. He’s a nice guy.”

“I know.” Ilya looked irate. “I am the one who told you this.”

“Yeah, well. He was nice.”

“Glad you had a fun time. I hope you could bond over eating most bland food in the world.”

“That’s not what we—!” Troy shot him a side eye, then lowered his voice, not wanting to give away any secrets that weren’t his to share. “Look. Do you know if he’s... seeing someone?”

“Oh, you want two boyfriends now? I don’t think Harris will be very into this idea, but you are welcome to try.”

Ilya’s annoyance was palpable, but Troy didn’t understand it. He usually took great pleasure in making fun of others.

“Look, I’m just asking. Is he...?”

“Hollander is not on the menu for you, Barrett.” Ilya stood up, his full height suddenly imposing.

“I’m not—you know that’s not why I’m asking.” Troy’s eyes darted around the room, checking for any listeners or stray social media managers. “But they... They made up?”

Surprise flashed across Ilya’s face.

“He told you?”

“Well, when I called, he was really freaked out that,” Troy lowered his voice to its quietest setting, “his boyfriend was going to break up with him. I think he thought I was coming onto him and he just blurted it out.”

Ilya’s brow furrowed, and he stared at the ground momentarily.

“He wouldn’t. His boyfriend.” He shook his head, sighing. “Hollander is an idiot.”

“Wait, you’ve met him?”

“I need to go home, Barrett.” Ilya slung his bag over his shoulder. “And you are an idiot too. Go get Harris more balls or something.”

“Alright, fuck you too?”

“Goodnight.”

One condescending pat to the shoulder later, Ilya was gone, and Troy was on his way to the social media office.

It's very possible I am ruining a good thing by adding to this, but if you do the math, their coffee meet-up would've happened right after Shane and Ilya's Bad Christmas. That said, I do have a cute final chapter mostly written and will soothe the burn very shortly lol I just like the idea of Troy thinking he's going to talk to the calm and collected best player in the NHL and instead getting panicked omg he's gonna dump meeeee Shane

Chapter 3: FanMail

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

March

“It’s bad that I think it’s hot, isn’t it?” Sitting in bed, Harris stared down at the tweet, easily on its twentieth loop of the cropped gif someone had made of Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander making out in Hayden Pike’s backyard.

“Like, obviously it’s awful they got outed. But it’s *Ilya* and *Shane Hollander*. It’s like, every sweaty jock fantasy I’ve ever had coming true.”

It took a beat for Harris to notice that Troy hadn’t said anything. His eyes were glued to the clip, and he looked catatonic.

“Buddy, you okay?”

“Oh man, this is bad news.”

“What?” Harris’ voice was high and surprised. “What’s bad news?”

“No, not Ilya and Shane. I mean like, I have really bad news for you.”

“Bad news for *me*? Can’t be worse than getting called into work on a weekend to handle something that’s actually like, really hot and cool. Or, you know, worse than getting outed on Twitter.”

Troy groaned.

“Babe? What bad news?”

“I think you’re dating someone really fucking dumb.”

“What?” Harris laughed. “Of course I’m not. What are you talking about?”

Troy pinched the bridge of his nose. “Like there are people who are stupid, and then there are people who are *fucking stupid*. I think I might be the second one.”

Harris locked his phone and rolled over in bed. “Troy. You’re not dumb. What are you talking about?”

Troy opened his mouth and shut it, then did it again.

“Oh my God, just say it! You’re freaking me out!”

“Okay first of all, this was in the fall, when I first showed up here, and I thought I had no chance with you because I was a closeted asshole and you were this, like, walking sunshine who thought I was homophobic.”

“Okay...?”

Troy blew out a breath. “I think I asked Ilya for his own boyfriend’s phone number.”

“WHAT?!”

“I know.” Troy cringed.

“You asked Ilya for *Shane Hollander’s* number?!”

“Yep.”

“I’m sorry, you thought you didn’t have a chance with *me*, so you instead tried to shoot your shot with Shane Hollander?!”

“Yes.” Troy squeezed his eyes shut, as though he could erase the memory if he closed them hard enough.

“The captain of the Voyageurs. Who has like a million cups. And does those Rolex ads. That Shane Hollander. That’s the one you thought would be easier to hook up with than *me*?!”

Troy opened his eyes and shot over a pouty look. “I don’t like the way you’re framing this. I love you way more than Shane Hollander.”

“Oh, hush. You know what I mean.”

Harris kissed Troy’s forehead, then sank back into his pillow and let out a bewildered squeal-laugh.

“I can’t believe this.” He grabbed for his phone again, re-opening the tweet.

“I wish you didn’t have to.”

“And you asked *Ilya* for his number?!” Harris held the screen up to Troy’s eyes, as if forcing him to reckon with the reality of their love. It really was a hot kiss.

“Obviously I didn’t know they were together! Looking back, I have no idea why he would give it to me!”

Harris stifled another laugh as realization dawned.

“Oh my God,” Troy groaned louder. “I’m gonna kill him. Or kill myself. One or the other.”

“Hey, at least you’ve already talked to Shane. Now you know another one of the WAGs!”

Troy picked up his pillow and smacked it over Harris’ head.

“Hey! Rude!” Harris laughed as Troy wrestled with his wrists.

“I’ll show you rude.”

“Promises.” Harris smiled into a quick kiss. “I’m still stuck on Ilya being gay. Like, wow, that’s a plot twist.”

“He’s not gay, he’s bi.”

Harris’ eyes narrowed. “Troy Benjamin Barrett. Did Ilya Rozanov come out to you and you didn’t tell me?”

“Benjamin? Where did you get Benjamin?”

“I don’t know. I needed a middle name.”

“That’s not my middle name.”

“Stop changing the subject. Did he?”

“I mean, yeah?”

“WHAT?!”

“It was back in December! We weren’t together yet, so I couldn’t exactly turn around and say, ‘Hey Harris, guess what I found out today?’”

“Fine, good point,” Harris grumbled. “Wow. Your first few months here were so much more eventful than I thought they were.”

“I mean, not really. The highlight of my Christmas was texting you, so— oh, God.”

Troy sunk under the covers.

“What? What now?” Harris laughed. “Are you going to tell me you hit on Santa too or something?”

“Harris. That was such a dad joke.”

“Hey, I’m riffing! What did you do?”

“I FaceTimed Shane.”

“You *FaceTimed* Shane Hollander?!”

“That’s not the bad part. Jesus, I need to start asking people more questions.”

“I mean, not no.” Harris grimaced. “Love you, but not no. What happened?”

Troy let out a dramatic sigh. “I wanted his advice about like, coming out, and you, and stuff
—”

“Shane Hollander gave you advice about *me?!?*” Harris gasped.

“Sort of. I mean, no, not really. He was pretty useless because he was stressed about a fight he had with ‘his boyfriend.’ And now I’m just remembering all of the things he said about Ilya, and oh my God, never let me believe I’d make a good FBI agent again.”

He looked up to find Harris watching the gif again.

“Should you really be watching that?”

“I know. I’m sorry. It’s just so hot. I don’t want to believe they fight.”

“That’s like, their whole thing.”

“No, it’s not. Their whole thing is making out in Hayden Pike’s yard, and they both basically told you that.”

“I had a lot going on, okay?!”

Harris took pity and smiled, opening his arm wide for Troy to lean in. “I know, buddy. I know.”

Chapter End Notes

ok not where i want to end this lol so i think i will keep writing more

Chapter 4: Centaurs, Meet Shane

May

The only warning the Centaurs got on meeting Shane Hollander was a text twenty minutes before Bood's end of season barbecue.

Ilya Rozanov: I am bringing Shane

Ilya Rozanov: Be normal

"He's not going to remember." Harris patted Troy's arm reassuringly.

"He's definitely going to remember."

"Okay, well, he's not going say anything about it."

"*Ilya's* definitely gonna say something about it."

Harris didn't hide his wince fast enough, and Troy groaned.

No one on the team could say that this was their first impression of Shane Hollander. Pretty much everyone was bringing some sort of baggage into the interaction.

The rookies had idolized him. A couple guys knew him from juniors. They all knew him from playing him, a famously miserable experience. And no matter what their experiences were with him personally, everyone on the team held a great deal of reverence for him professionally.

"I'm gonna be weird. I know I'm gonna be weird." Young shook his head.

"You weren't weird to Roz, were you?" Dykstra asked as he popped a chip in his mouth.

"Dude. Yes, I was!" Young exclaimed. "It took me like a month to talk to him like a normal person!"

"Bad example." Luca tucked his head between his legs.

"You guys are freaking out over nothing," Selena chimed in as she sat down next to Chouinard. "You were all super nice when Nick brought me to my first one of these. Just think of him as another WAG. WAB. BAG. Whatever."

Immediately, shouts of offense erupted.

"Oh, absolutely not."

"No, there's no world where that's—"

“Oh my God, no.”

“Babe.” Nick made a face at his wife. “Shane Hollander is not a WAG.”

“What? I’m trying to help!” She shrugged.

“For what it’s worth, I agree.” Harris added. “It’s like all of you lost your social skills overnight.”

“I don’t know if I ever had them.” Troy muttered.

“Imagine we’re just meeting Ilya’s boyfriend!”

“Not helping.”

“Think about it this way: He’s just a guy. He’s just another friend of the Centaurs. And he probably wants to make a good impression, too!” Harris waved a hand, like *duh*, only to be met with blank stares from half the team.

“Or,” Wyatt mused, “Think of him as just another player. He’ll probably just want to talk shop. That’s pretty much all he wanted to do when I met him at All-Stars. He’s a nice guy!”

“Just another player?” Holmberg balked. “He’s *Shane fucking Hollander*.”

“I’m with Wyatt.” Lapointe spoke up through a muffled hot dog as he swallowed. “We were on the World Juniors team together. He’s... I don’t know, shy? Or he was then. I guess it’s been, like, ten years since I talked to him, so he might be different now. But he’s definitely not, like, scary or mean or anything.”

“Of course he’s scary.” Boyle laughed in disbelief. “He’s Shane Hollander.”

“Troy, you’re being quiet. Back me up.” Wyatt nodded in his direction.

“Oh, uh...”

“You met him at All-Stars, too. What’s going on in that big, beautiful head of yours?”

“Yeah, I mean, you’re right. He’s a nice guy.” Troy shrugged. “But Boyle’s right too. Not because he’s scary, just because... Well. It’s Shane Hollander.”

“Okay, we have to stop saying his first and last name.” Harris held up a hand.

“Yeah, I’m not going to lie, you guys sound like teenagers talking about a pop star.” Lisa shifted in Wyatt’s lap. “Say it with me now: Shane. Just Shane.”

She lifted a hand as they repeated after her: *Shane. Just Shane.*

“This is what Roz meant when he said ‘Be normal,’” Luca sighed.

They ran out of time to keep analyzing it when the sound of the sliding glass door announced their arrival.

“Okay! We are here. You can stop talking about us now.” Ilya entered the patio with a beaming smile and standard twinkle of mischief in his eye. Every head snapped in his direction.

They heard Shane’s voice before they saw him, an admonishing, “*Ilya*,” coming from the house.

“Making an entrance, are you, Roz?” Bood grinned.

“Always.” Ilya smirked, his presence immediately demanding attention.

Tucked behind his shoulder stood Shane Hollander, wearing a soft, blue sweater and an exasperated grimace.

Ilya simply smiled back at him — a completely genuine and earnest smile that Troy couldn't say he'd seen often — and ushered him onto the patio as Shane raised his hand in an awkward wave.

“Guys,” Ilya instantly commanded the space. “This is my very sexy and impressive boyfriend, Shane. You are going to be nice and normal to him, because I am trying to convince him to move here and be a Centaur. If you do a good job, you will get an invite to the wedding, yes?”

There was a brief moment of silence after that, in which Hollander’s mouth seems stuck open in disapproval. Wyatt broke it.

“Roz, what the fuck kind of entrance is that? You just walked in announcing, like, three things at once.”

Bood cracked up. “I can't tell if we're supposed to say nice to meet you, congratulations, or what the fuck?”

“Dude, there's no way we could afford Shane fucking Hollander.” Lapointe spoke before thinking, stuck on the last thing, and Lisa kicked his foot. “Sorry, Shane. Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you, too,” Shane nodded.

“Welcome.” Bood jumped to his feet, offering his hand. “Come on in. There’s food by the grill, drinks in the cooler, snacks on the table.”

“Awesome, thanks.” Shane’s face hadn’t lost its red shade yet.

“You are not being normal.” Ilya barked at the team. “You will do better now, okay?”

Mumbles of acknowledgment, congratulations, and nice-to-meet-yous came from the fire pit as the team acquiesced.

Troy stayed on the perimeter of the party, anticipation in his gut as he watched Ilya corral Shane into meeting everyone. He knew he *should* go say hi, or at least more of a greeting than his initial nod-and-wave. Ilya was his best friend on the team. It had been at least six months since he'd been nervous to approach him.

He'd even had two completely casual conversations with Shane himself in the last few months — the FaceTime, yes, but also in the final handshake line of the playoffs, when he'd gone out on a limb to give Shane a hug, and told him that he wanted to be friends. Still, that interaction had lasted all of one minute, and hadn't included Ilya's supervision.

This should be fine. This would be fine.

But then, Ilya pulled Shane tight into his side and winked across the patio, and Troy knew he was done for. He chuckled, shaking his head back, and decided to get it over with.

"Troy!" Ilya smiled. "Was wondering when you would stop... What is the word, lurking? Being a lurker?"

"No, you got it the first time. Lurking." Troy sighed.

"Lurking! You are done lurking now?"

"God, you're a dick." Troy smiled, already relieved.

"Shh! Do not insult me in front of my fiancé, Barrett!" Ilya tsked. "Is very bad manners, you know."

"No, I agree." Shane gave Ilya a long-suffering look, fondness written all over his face. "You're being a dick."

"I have said nothing!" Ilya feigned innocence. "Have not even brought up Barrett hitting on you yet!"

"Oh my God," Shane and Troy groaned in sync.

"Ha! You have jinxed!" Ilya's face lit up, eyes glued to Shane. "I told you, you have much in common. You are both gay, short, very easy to embarrass..."

"You know, I was going to congratulate you, but now the only words coming to my head are, 'Fuck off.'"

"Barrett, that is enough bringing up your head. You know he is mine now, so, is no longer okay."

"Jesus Christ." Troy pinched the bridge of his nose at the same time as Shane gaped, hissing, "Ilya! Shut the *fuck* up!"

"And you told *us* to be normal?"

“Could not resist.” Ilya shrugged, a wide smile plastered on his face as he hauled Shane in closer to kiss the top of his head, only to receive a shove and a glare in return. Troy snickered at the sight of his captain’s puppy dog pout.

“So, engaged, huh? Didn’t feel like mentioning that earlier?”

“Mm, was not true earlier, so.”

“Right. Just your boyfriend then.” Troy shot a look at Shane, too, who blushed accordingly.

“Eh.” Ilya seemed completely unbothered. “Was fun. You could not have known that it takes many years for Shane to realize he is being hit on.”

“Come to the party, he said. It will be chill, he said.” Shane grumbled.

“What’s going on over here?” Harris cluelessly joined the circle, reaching out to shake Shane’s hand. “Hey, Shane. I’m Harris. It’s good to meet you.”

“Hey, Harris,” Shane seemed to exhale at the distraction. “You too. I’ve heard great things.”

Shane sent a slight smirk in Troy’s direction, and Troy narrowed his eyes as he realized that, unfortunately, they were perfect for each other.

“Likewise!” Harris smiled, unaware as he easily slotted into place in Troy’s arm. “So what are we talking about? I hear congratulations are in order!”

“Yeah, we’ll see about that.” Shane huffed.

“Yes.” Ilya ignored the dig, squeezing his fiancé from behind so hard that Shane’s ginger ale wobbled in his hand. “Hopefully you are free in July. We will send a text or something.”

“A text?!” Harris laughed. “Oh my God, you really are just hockey players, aren’t you?”

“An email, maybe. Whatever. You will come, yes?”

“Wouldn’t miss it.” Harris smiled, and Troy was grateful that at least his boyfriend was socially competent, even if he wasn’t. “So I read your post. It was really powerful, you know. Years, huh? That must’ve been awful, having to keep it a secret that long. I couldn’t last a month with this one.”

Troy’s eyes softened as he looked down at his boyfriend.

“Yeah, it wasn’t easy.” Shane sounded resigned. “And, thanks.”

“Yes. Has been a long time. But I am very excited to... What does Beyoncé say? Put a ring on it?”

“Ha! Yes!” Harris’ eyes lit up at the mention. Troy already knew he was a card-carrying member of the hive.

“Is very nice to get to tell people about him. Was not easy to have such a talented and handsome boyfriend and let people think he was single.”

Shane’s smile was soft, but Troy rolled his eyes. “Are you going to drop it or not?”

“Oh! We’re doing *this*?” Harris’ eyes sparkled, delighted.

“Not you too.” Troy cringed.

“Ha! Harris gets it! Is very funny, no?”

“Nope.” Shane peeled Ilya’s arms off of him. “You’re done. Last one.”

“But *moy kotenok*...” Ilya nuzzled into his neck.

“I said *done*. ”

Shane sent a firm look Ilya’s way, and Harris and Troy exchanged a teasing, knowing look.

“Alright.” Troy shook his head, laughing at the ridiculous couple. “If I have to survive more of this, I’m going to get another drink. I’m happy for you guys. And hey, Shane, I really do hope you end up here. You’re the first person I’ve seen actually shut him up.”

Harris elbowed him as they walked away. “I told you it would be fine.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Troy groused, deciding not to bring up the part where Ilya made a joke about him propositioning Shane.

“I can’t believe he’s thinking about coming here. I mean, he’s definitely not in our budget, right?”

Troy ignored Ilya’s voice in his head, reveling in the words *coming here*.

“Probably not, no. Would be cool though. I meant what I said; that’s the first time I’ve ever seen someone put Ilya in his place, and I’m including Wiebe in that.”

“No kidding.” Harris laughed.

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