

The Bigger Challenge

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/75358506) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/75358506>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander
Additional Tags:	Parenthood , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , POV Ilya Rozanov , POV Shane Hollander , Anxious Shane Hollander , Bottom Shane Hollander , Top Ilya Rozanov
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-07 Completed: 2025-12-31 Words: 4,730 Chapters: 4/4

The Bigger Challenge

by [NickAndCharlie10](#)

Summary

Shane has always been a little high-strung, while Ilya tends to go with the flow. Now that they're parents, they have to figure out how to blend their wildly different styles and survive the chaos of raising kids together. Coming out as archrival hockey players was hard enough, but it turns out parenthood is the Bigger Challenge.

Chapter 1

“You’re late,” Shane frowned as he took the coffee Ilya offered him. He was sitting just outside the ice of their local skating rink, his skates already half tied up.

“And you are grumpy,” Ilya replied, swooping in for a kiss on the cheek. “Irina was helping me pick out my outfit.”

He hiked up his pant leg to reveal mismatched socks, then lifted his hand so Shane could admire the two plastic rings on it.

“Very nice, sweetie,” Shane said, giving their five-year-old daughter a half-hearted smile as he hurried to finish lacing himself up. She clung to Ilya’s pant leg, golden ringlets brushing her shoulders. She reminded Ilya of his mother, who he’d named her after.

“Sorry for making Dad late,” she whispered, peeking up at Shane with wide eyes.

Shane blinked, his eyes softening. “Sorry, I just meant—”

“Your papa just gets stressed before big games. Is not your fault,” Ilya interjected, scooping her up and bouncing her softly. Shane gave him an appreciative smile. “Let’s go find your grandparents.”

The rink was mostly empty except for parents, so spotting Shane’s wasn’t hard.

“Big day for your brother, yes? You will cheer so loudly that everyone in the arena will know you are his sister?” he asked as he walked over, continuing to bounce her gently.

Irina nodded enthusiastically, leaning forward to get a better look at the ice. Ilya followed her gaze and spotted his son, Liam, skating back and forth, his hands in his pockets.

“This is big day for your father too. You remember the surprise, yes?”

Irina nodded happily, her tongue poking out in concentration.

“Adorable,” he said, booping her nose.

After he handed her off to her grandparents, he hurried to pull on his own skates.

“Thanks for handling that,” Shane said when he got back. He was tying off the last of his skates.

“She looks up to you, you know. Which is saying something, because you are so short.”

Shane rolled his eyes.

“You don’t think you were cutting it a little bit close? This is Liam’s first finals match.”

“First *peewee* finals match,” Ilya corrected, which earned him a look from Shane. “And I’m sure our son will do great.”

Shane knelt down to help Ilya tie up his skates—whether out of helpfulness or impatience, Ilya couldn’t tell. Nonetheless, it still made his heart flutter just a little. He knew Shane felt the same by the way his ears turned pink when their eyes met.

“Enjoying the view down there, Hollander?”

“It’s Hollander-Rosanov now, actually,” Shane corrected, his ears growing even more pink.

Still, after all these years, it sent a thrill through Ilya to hear their names hyphenated. He wanted to take Shane’s face and crush their lips together. But beyond the basic expectation to keep things innocent around the kids, Shane and Ilya had talked about the extra scrutiny they faced as gay coaches in the hockey world.

“Alright, let’s get out there,” Shane said as he finished, slapping the side of the skate.

They both went onto the ice, the familiar sound of skates bringing a sense of peace to Ilya. Now that he and Shane had both retired, he didn’t get to spend nearly as much time on the ice as he used to.

“Alright everyone, it’s showtime. I know you’re all probably pretty nervous—” Shane started, corralling the kids together.

Ilya doubted that. Most of the boys were distractedly examining their hockey sticks or pestering each other. Everyone except Liam, whose face was set in stony determination.

“—but this is what we’ve been training for. Now let’s run our drills and get to it.”

“And remember to have fun. Hockey is all about fun,” Ilya added.

“And winning,” Shane followed.

“But mostly fun,” Ilya said again.

Shane shot him a look.

“What? Is true. They are just kids. They should be having fun.”

“When I was their age—”

“Yes, when you were their age, you were hockey God.”

This made the kids giggle.

“If they are going to be good at hockey, they have to keep playing. And if they are going to keep playing, they have to enjoy it,” Ilya said.

Shane only shook his head but let it go.

“Alright kids, run your drills. We’ll regroup in ten,” he said. Then, skating up to Ilya, “You shouldn’t undermine me in front of the kids.”

Ilya wanted to protest, but Shane was right. Whatever disagreements they had, he should have waited until they were alone to address it.

“You are right. I’m sorry.”

Shane huffed.

“You are right too, though, I think. I’m sorry. I just want what’s best for these kids, especially Liam.”

“I know,” Ilya said, giving him a small kiss on the head.

They split up to help the kids run their drills, and Ilya skated up to Liam. He was practicing his stickhandling, weaving back and forth with the puck.

“How are you feeling?” he asked quietly, low enough that only they could hear.

“I’m fine,” the boy replied tersely, not breaking concentration.

“You know your father and I, we are proud of you no matter what, da?”

Liam didn’t answer. This was exactly what Ilya was worried about. Irina was just reaching the age where she’d start deciding whether she wanted to try hockey, and he worried Shane’s intensity would ruin the game for her. He knew this was Shane’s way of loving them, but he wanted his kids to love hockey just as much as he did.

After a few more attempts at talking led nowhere, he gave up and skated around, correcting stances and encouraging the boys as much as possible before the game started. With about a minute left of drills, he glanced over to Shane. Ilya could tell he was nervous by the way he chewed his lip and kept his shoulders hiked up—but he was distracted by how red his cheeks had gotten beneath his freckles from the cold.

“It’s going to be okay, my *pomidórka*,” he said, skating up to him.

That was enough to crack Shane’s focus. A small smile crept onto his face.

“Your little tomato, huh?”

“Your cheeks. The freckles. They are adorable.”

Shane’s eyelashes fluttered, the smile tugging wider before he forcibly tamped it down.

“Don’t try to distract me, Mr. Hollander-Rosanov. We’ve got a game to win.”

“Yes, we must have a peewee trophy to put beside our ten Stanley Cups,” Ilya agreed.

Shane rolled his eyes.

“Maybe Liam will have his own trophy room someday. My parents still have my first peewee trophy.”

Ilya smiled, imagining some dinky peewee trophy nestled in their display case, dwarfed by their Stanley Cups. He started imagining other things about their trophy room as well.

“Do we need to go get it from your parents? Maybe you would like to look at this trophy while I—”

He was interrupted by the buzzer announcing the imminent start of the match.

“Alright, everybody circle in!” Shane called, his cheeks *really* red now.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Smut soon!

Clang!

The buzzer sounded, marking the end of the second period.

“I love you. I love you. I love you.” Ilya fist-bumped the kids as they skated back to the team’s area.

Liam kept his eyes glued to his skates as he glided past, too upset to look at his Papa. The score was 1–2, with the opposing team winning, and he was pretty sure it was his fault. He was the one with two hockey superstars for parents, and he was the middle forward. Even though he was the one who had scored their one and only goal, it would still be his fault if his team lost.

He wanted to sit and sulk, but if he was going to be the captain of the Ottawa Centaurs one day, he needed to practice setting a good example. Instead, he straightened his back and met Shane’s eyes as his dad broke down the team’s mistakes. He tried not to be annoyed that the other kids were goofing off instead of listening.

Papa passed out juice boxes during the speech, which Liam tried to stoically ignore until he realized that his mouth really was quite dry.

“I know we are down, but we have plenty of time to come back, yes? You will not be able to be in the lead every game, but what matters is that you don’t give up and that you work with your team,” Papa said as Dad furiously drew on his handheld whiteboard behind him.

Papa always said stuff like that, that all he had to do was try his best, practise hard, and not give up. But Liam didn’t want to just *try* his best, he wanted to *be* the best.

“Liam, I want you on the first faceoff,” his dad said when it was time to get back on the ice.

Liam’s heart thundered in his chest. It was his time.

He set up against Stephen Pierce. Stephen was bigger, with broad shoulders and a mean looking crew cut, but Liam was faster. Pierce looked down at him as he got into position, then back at his parents.

“Will you disappoint them, Liam?” the larger boy asked.

“The name’s Hollander-Rozanov,” he said through gritted teeth.

Then he won the faceoff.

Pierce struggled to catch up to him as he took off down the ice, but he was halfway to the goal before anyone came remotely close.

“Hey, pass it over!” his teammate, Jacob Henderson, called.

Jacob had dropped the last two passes earlier in the match, and Liam wasn’t about to give him another chance. Instead, he weaved to the side of the oncoming opponent, darting toward the goal and firing at the net.

The puck went in!

Cheers erupted on and off the ice, and Liam looked up to see his baby sister and grandparents cheering from the stands. He looked over at his team’s box to see his parents: Papa was smiling broadly with his hands raised in celebration, but Dad had his head bent over his whiteboard, already working on the next play.

Liam took a deep breath. Dad had the right idea, he hadn’t won yet. The next few minutes passed with no one scoring. No matter what Liam tried, Pierce and his blocky shoulders always seemed to be in between him and the goal. With a few minutes left, it was still 2-2.

He returned to the box for a final pep talk, but he couldn’t keep his eyes off of Pierce. He was all that stood between him and victory. He just needed a chance to prove-

“Liam?” it was his dad’s voice.

“Yeah?”

“Were you listening to the play? I want you to pass the puck to Jacob this time. They’ll be expecting you to keep it for yourself.”

Liam wanted to argue back, to say that he was the best person to score, but instead he dipped his head obediently.

When he got in position to face off against Pierce this time, both boys were silent. Liam tried to ignore the vein pulsing angrily in Pierce’s forehead, as well as his own blood pulsing thunderously in his ears.

The second the puck dropped, he sprang into action. The vibrations from his stick nearly took his arm off as Pierce tried to swipe the puck away from him, but in the end he got it. The pair went tearing down the ice.

This was it. This was the moment he earned his last name. He could already imagine his dads discussing how he had beaten a much bigger boy over the special dinner papa had planned tonight.

Jacob Henderson skated to his right, clearly expecting Liam to pass him the puck. He was defended by an opposing player, making the pass tricky. There was only one opponent in Liam's way, and he *knew* he could out skate him. Maybe if he just held onto the puck, he could make a hat trick...

"Liam!" Henderson called, as if Liam couldn't see him.

His stick wavered, caught between wanting to score and wanting to obey his dad. Pierce took advantage of the opening, shoving Liam's stick off the puck from behind and grabbing it for himself.

Liam skated after him, determined not to let this brute steal what was his. *He* was the one who had worked hard, *he* was the son of two of the greatest hockey players who had ever lived, and *he* wasn't going to lose like this.

Liam skated after Pierce, pumping his legs until they burned. He tried to steal the puck, but Pierce knew he was coming, and didn't let him get close. The goal was quickly approaching, and Liam started to panic as he realized he was running out of time. Without thinking, he body checked the much bigger boy. He knew it wasn't allowed, but he couldn't think of what else to do.

To his dismay, he simply bounced off, ending up on his butt in the middle of the ice. He watched helplessly as Pierce advanced on the net and scored, followed immediately by the ref calling a two minute penalty on him. He looked up at the clock to see a minute and forty three seconds remaining.

Damn.

His eyes slowly lowered to his parents. Dad was scowling, but Liam was used to that when a game was going badly. He could deal with that. Then he noticed the look in Papa's eyes, and his heart sunk.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas! Smutt next chapter!

“What was that?!” Shane’s husband was practically vibrating as he paced back and forth in front of their son. Shane tried not to think about the fact that the veins on his neck were visible, and he *definitely* tried not to think about how they’d taste. It didn’t help that something about Ilya being a good dad really did it for Shane.

“I—I don’t know, I just wanted to score,” Liam mumbled. He was sitting on a bench in one of the back rooms of the hockey rink. Ilya had dragged him back there practically by his ear as soon as he was off the ice.

“Oh, okay, Mr. Hockey Player. You just wanted to score,” Ilya said, as if that explained the issue.

Shane and Ilya had made it very clear that there was to be no body checking until Liam was older, not least because it was strictly forbidden in this league. Ilya still clenched his jaw whenever Shane’s close call from years ago came up, and Shane couldn’t understand why Liam would do something like this.

Liam looked at Shane, perhaps expecting him to come to the rescue.

“Mm-mm, don’t look at me. Listen to your papa,” Shane said.

Liam’s eyes fell to the floor.

“This is not who we are. Hollander-Rozanovs don’t cut corners!” Ilya said.

“I’m sorry,” Liam mumbled again.

Ilya bent down onto his knees, putting his face at the same height as their son’s.

“Look, your father and I aren’t mad at you. We just... want to understand.”

Ilya could speak for himself—Shane was pretty pissed. Liam was silent for a moment, then looked at Shane again.

“I just... I wanted to make you proud,” he said.

All of the tension and anxiety that Shane had been feeling melted away under his son’s gaze.

“Oh, Liam, you know I’m always proud of you,” Ilya said.

Shane met Liam’s eyes, and he knew he wasn’t talking to Ilya.

“Hey,” Shane said, placing his hand on Ilya’s shoulder, “why don’t you take Irena home. I need to have a talk with Liam.”

Ilya looked up with raised eyebrows, but after glancing back at Liam, he nodded.

“Alright. I’ll meet you at home then, yes?”

Shane nodded, giving Ilya a kiss on the cheek. Ilya leaned over, wrapping Liam in a hug before he left. In his absence, the room grew quiet, and Shane sat down beside Liam.

He let the silence stretch for a moment, considering what to say.

“You know, when I was young, maybe seventeen or eighteen, I used to think my mom cared more about hockey than I did. She certainly knew more about it than me.”

Liam sniffled softly beside him.

“At first, I got really annoyed with how much she got on me. I thought that maybe she wanted me to have a successful career, or maybe she just wanted her son to play on her favorite hockey team.” He looked over at Liam, who didn’t seem all that comforted. Maybe Shane had better get to the point. “But you know what I realized?”

“What?” Liam asked softly.

“I realized that that was her way of trying to connect with me. Loving hockey was something we both had in common, and it was her way of showing she cared. It was something we both loved.”

Liam nodded earnestly.

“I do love hockey, Dad. I promise.”

“And that’s great! I love that you love hockey, bud. I love hockey too. But I want you to know—I know I can be kind of intense sometimes, but that has nothing to do with you. I just get carried away from time to time. I’m sort of... uptight. Like, your dad used to make fun of me for years because I’d fold my clothes every time after I took them off,” he laughed, thinking about the time he almost wore a suit to his first hook up with Ilya.

“Like before you went to bed?”

Shane tried to keep his face impassive.

“Yeah, buddy. Like before we went to bed.”

Liam spoke in a small voice. “What if I’m not good at hockey like you and Papa?”

Shane thought about how hard it must be for a kid like Liam to grow up with two superstar parents. When Shane was young, everything he'd done had been record-setting. For Liam, even a spectacular performance was merely to be expected. Shane wasn't so sure he'd have pursued hockey in a pair of shadows like that.

“Do you think I'd love you any less if you weren't good at hockey? Or if you wanted to quit?”

His heart hurt to think of his kid not wanting to play, but it hurt more thinking about Liam being unhappy. The boy sniffled again, but shook his head.

“Good. Because I wouldn't. No matter what, you're my son, and I love you more than all of the trophies and hockey games in the world.” He pulled Liam into a hug.

The boy smiled against Shane's chest, and Shane kissed him on the head.

“Now, let's go apologize to Stephen Pierce. We've got to stop on the way home so we can get a surprise for your dad.”

Chapter 4: Call Me By Your Shane

Chapter Notes

I realized this chapter works as a one shot, so I'll be posting it also as a stand alone!

Ilya had just finished making dinner when Shane's car pulled up in the driveway. It was Chirashi-zushi, a sushi dish that Shane apparently loved on special occasions. Ilya had borrowed the recipe from Yuna. He carefully took the Mac 'n Cheese that Irena had helped make and added it to the plates.

"You think Daddy will like it?" she asked, peering over the counter to look at the food. She had an oversized chef's hat hanging lopsidedly off her head, and was covered in flour.

"Are you kidding? Who could not love your Mac 'n Cheese?" he asked. Irena giggled happily. It was one of the most beautiful sounds he had ever heard.

"Honey, I'm home!" Shane called just then as he opened the door. Hearing that every day was also pretty far up there as far as Ilya's favorite sounds went.

Shane had texted him about his conversation with Liam, and although Ilya knew they'd need to talk about it more as a family, he was happy to leave it alone for the evening. He quickly handed Irena the balloons he'd stashed nearby, and the pair ran out to meet Shane and Liam.

"Happy anniversary Daddy!" Irena yelled, running up to him with a celebratory balloon. Shane scooped her up with one hand, extending a bouquet of roses towards Ilya with the other.

"Happy anniversary baby," he said.

Ilya took the flowers and gave Shane a deep kiss.

"Eww!" Both the children squealed. Irena had her tongue out like she was going to puke.

That made Ilya smile, though he was still happy that their grandparents had offered to watch them for the evening. He was of course happy to have their kids there as part of their special day, but he'd also ordered a very expensive bottle of vodka and some chocolate covered strawberries. Strawberries which he fully intended on eating off of Shane's naked body later.

"I made Chirashi-zushi, I'm told it's your favorite," Ilya said.

"And I helped with the Mac 'n Cheese!" Irena supplied.

“Yeah?” Shane asked, his voice soft and high. He looked deep into Ilya’s eyes through long, dark lashes, his eyes big and round like a baby doe’s.

Ilya checked the time: 45 minutes until Yuna and David arrived.

“Goodnight!” Ilya and Shane called as they closed the front door. The kids had been picked up by their grandparents, and the house was finally quiet.

Ilya took a second to savor that fact. He almost didn’t want to look at Shane, because he knew the second he did that he’d be pressing him against the wall, and he didn’t want to rush this moment. He could feel the blood rushing its way to his dick just at the anticipation of it.

“So…” was all Shane said. The word hung in the air as neither of them moved. Ilya breathed in once. Then out.

Then he couldn’t take it any more, and he was grabbing Shane by both wrists and pushing him against the front door. He practically growled as he lunged for his husband’s throat, his tongue impatiently darting out to taste his skin. Shane let out a gasp, but Ilya could tell he was enjoying it by the way his hips bucked.

“Mr. Hollander-Rozanov!” A pant. “You are very impatient this evening aren’t you?”

“Mmm, so nice to hear our names together, but such a mouthful,” Ilya said, continuing up Shane’s neck to kiss him behind the ear.

“I could call you Rosanov tonight, like old times,” Shane offered, his breath fanning Ilya’s ear.

Ilya smiled wickedly at the idea, making Shane giggle as his lips brushed against his neck. He was intrigued, but would rather die than miss an opportunity to call Shane by his name.

“Mmm, good idea, but no. I like my name on you too much.”

Moving his hands down to hoist Shane off the ground, he began carrying him towards the kitchen.

“Why don’t I just call you Hollander then, and you call me Rosanov,” Shane suggested, digging his hands into Ilya’s hair. He pulled lightly at the nape of his neck, just enough to send a wave of pleasure down Ilya’s spine.

“What is this? Call me by your name?” Ilya laughed, though part of him secretly loved the idea. Maybe it was silly to long for the days when they couldn’t even acknowledge each other in public, but he enjoyed remembering what it had felt like to fall in love with Shane. When he had tried to force him out of his mind, and been completely helpless to do so.

“Mmm if only we had a peach,” Shane mumbled into his hair between kisses. Ilya enjoyed feeling the vibrations against his scalp. He set Shane on their kitchen island, keeping eye contact as he backed towards the freezer.

“Well, I don’t have a peach...” he said, removing the frozen tray of strawberries. “But I do have strawberries.”

Shane broke into a grin that made his eyes crinkle, and Ilya felt like his heart was going to rip out of his chest just so it could be closer to him.

“You gonna feed those to me?” he asked.

Ilya clucked his tongue.

“Why don’t you ask nicely... Rosanov.”

Shane’s eyes nearly fell closed as he took a deep breath in, clearly enjoying being called by his husband’s name. He didn’t say anything at first, his big brown eyes now intense in a totally different way than they’d been earlier.

“I’m asking you to please, please feed me,” he hesitated. “Hollander.”

Ilya felt for sure that he must be visibly sagging, because his insides felt like a puddle of goo. What had once been a poor attempt to pretend like they had meant nothing to each other was now reversed to show just how much they truly cared. Now that they were married, Shane was just as deeply a Rosanov as Ilya was, just as Ilya was truly and irrevocably a Hollander.

“Fuccccck,” was all Ilya could manage to get out. He removed a strawberry from the tray, licked it slowly, and fed it to his husband.

Shane lay on his bed, doing his best not to move. The cold caress of a frozen strawberry bloomed on his belly, joining the half a dozen or so others that Ilya had placed along different parts of his body.

“Fuck it’s cold,” he said, trying not to shiver.

“Almost there,” Ilya said, placing the final fruit on his collarbone.

Shane looked up to the headboard trying to distract himself from the cold.

“Now which one should I have first?” Ilya asked, slowly unbuttoning his shirt as he made a circuit around the bed.

Shane frankly didn’t care, he just wanted Ilya’s warm mouth on his skin.

“Fuck,” Shane repeated, knowing that trying to rush Ilya would just make him take longer, but unable to help himself. “Please.”

“Please... What?” Ilya asked, flicking the top of his pants open as he undid the button.

“Taste me,” Shane pleaded.

Ilya finished stripping off his pants, palming his cock hungrily before taking off his underwear. His dick throbbed as he looked at Shane, his teeth bared hungrily. Keeping eye contact, he leaned down slowly, placing his lips around a strawberry on Shane’s upper thigh. His tongue glided over the skin as he brought it into his mouth, replacing the cold with a delicious warmth. The heat made Shane gasp, his dick swelling even fuller than it already was.

“You enjoying yourself Rosanov?” Ilya asked, glancing meaningfully at Shane’s cock. A curl hung down over his forehead.

“Fuck,” is all Shane said, his hips rising as they chased Ilya’s retreating mouth. His upper thigh tingled where the strawberry had been.

Ilya smiled, letting Shane’s hips catch up and kissing around the base of his cock. He avoided touching his dick directly, instead kissing around it as he traveled to the next strawberry.

“Fuck I want you Hollander,” Shane said, barely able to stop himself from touching his cock. His own name felt weird in his mouth, but also so right. It was as if who was who had ceased to matter, and there were no barriers between them at all.

Ilya ate another strawberry, his eyes never leaving Shane’s. His hands quested over his thighs, slowly working their way up his body as his mouth did the same. It found its way along Shane’s ribs, up his stomach, across his chest. He finished by picking up the strawberry on Shane’s collarbone with his teeth, bringing their mouths together so that Shane could bite into it.

The sweetness of the fruit and the chocolate flooded his mouth just as Ilya fully pressed his weight into him. Shane let out an involuntary moan, finally giving in and wrapping his arms around Ilya. He felt along the moles on his back, down to his ass. Shane had always been both jealous and proud of his husband’s ass.

In a few minutes, Shane had gone from covered in cold strawberries to comfortably crushed by the warmth of Ilya’s body. He was right where he wanted to be. Ilya lifted head, gazing down at Shane. His eyes darted left and right, left and right.

“You’re so beautiful Rozanov,” he said, leaning in. “Shane Rosanov. My Shane.”

And then they were kissing again, Shane’s hands in Ilya’s hair and holding his ass, pulling him in tighter, tighter, until it felt like they would mould together. Until Shane forgot who was supposed to be Hollander and who Rosanov, until it ceased to matter, because there was no longer a place where he ended and his husband began.

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