

The Hit Heard Around the World

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The Hit Heard Around the World

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Summary

Ilya felt the hit before he processed what was happening. Immediately, all the air left his lungs as he flipped, slamming into the ice, head and shoulder first.

The sickening crack in his shoulder should have been concerning, but the way his stomach lurched and his head spun was all he could focus on.

Ilya Rozanov was down, and it didn't seem like he was getting back up.

Notes

So, Heated Rivalry has basically taken over my brain, and I actually dreamed about this 😂 so, instead of going back to sleep. I wrote a fic.

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

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It was supposed to be a clean, hard game. The Boston Bears vs. Montreal Voyageurs, a rivalry that burned hot every single season. Ilya had won the first faceoff against Shane Hollander, smirking when he did. A silent, secret kind of competitive affection.

But now? Now he was sprawled out, unable to breathe, unable to even blink the stars out of his vision.

The crowd erupted into a chaotic mixture of cheers, gasps, and then a chilling wave of silence as the reality settled in. Ilya remained motionless on the ice, the cold seeping through every layer of gear until it felt like it was inside his bones.

Pain licked up his spine, radiating through his ribs and into his shoulder as he tried to move, just a twitch of his hand, a shift of his knee. But the moment he tried to push himself upright, the world tilted violently. His stomach rolled so hard he thought he might throw up in his helmet. A high-pitched ringing flooded his ears.

He couldn't see straight. Everything blurred, colors smearing like wet paint. The overhead lights buzzed and split into six different halos that stabbed directly into his skull.

His breath came in shallow, useless drags. Something was very, very wrong.

A shadow hovered near the edge of his vision, skates cutting to a stop so sharply he heard the ice spray. Then—

“Rozanov!” someone barked, the sound distorted and underwater.

He couldn’t tell whose voice it was. Could’ve been a teammate. Could’ve been a ref. Could’ve been Hollander’s.

He tried to turn his head, but a bolt of pain shot through his skull so violently it felt like his brain was trying to escape his skull. The darkness swelled instantly at the edges of his vision, closing in like a tightening fist.

His gloved fingers twitched once against the ice. That was all he managed before the blackness rushed up and swallowed him whole.

His eyes slipped shut, and he didn’t feel it when his body finally went still. The arena noise faded into nothing.

And somehow, even unconscious, the only thought echoing faintly through his mind was—

Father is going to be angry for this humiliation.

Trainers rushed onto the ice, the Bears swarming immediately after. Some barreled straight toward the opposing player who threw the hit, shouting and shoving, while others dropped to their knees around their young captain who remained unmoving on the ice.

“Call it, ref!” one Bear roared, pointing wildly.

“What the *fuck* kind of hit was that?” another snapped, pushing the Montreal player back.

The man just smirked, cocky and careless. “The asshole deserved it.”

And Shane. Shane froze. His breath caught, stuck in his throat as he stared at Rozanov's crumpled form.

Ilya never stayed down. Never. Not even when he probably should. But now he looked small. How could the 6'3", burley Russian look so small?

Then, suddenly, a low groan left Ilya's chest, barely audible over the yelling, and Shane moved before he even realized his body had acted. He dropped to his knees, sliding across the ice in a spray of frost until he skidded to a stop right above Ilya's head.

"Hey, hey. Don't move, Rozanov." Shane's voice cracked. He braced both hands on Ilya's uninjured shoulder, keeping him flat.

Ilya's eyelids fluttered, unfocused, his pupils blown wide.

"Hollander." Ilya choked out.

A breath of relief punched out of Shane like he'd been stabbed in the ribs. He nodded quickly. "Yeah. It's me. I'm right here."

A jumbled slur of Russian spilled from Rozanov's mouth, thick and sloppy, his head rolling weakly against the ice as if he couldn't control it.

Shane whipped his head up. "He's speaking Russian."

Hayden was suddenly behind him. At least it felt sudden. Maybe he'd been standing there the whole time, but Shane's world had narrowed to the man lying in front of him.

“Probably in too much pain to process English,” Hayden said, voice quieter than usual. He didn’t like Ilya Rozanov, not even a little, but Shane looked one breath away from breaking open on the ice, and that was enough for Hayden to swallow every opinion he had. “He took a brutal hit.”

“They will see you...” Ilya mumbled, his accent thick as he forced his words into English. His eyes lolled sideways, meeting Shane’s for half a second before drifting again.

Shane let out a humorless snort. “I don’t care who’s watching, asshole. I’m not going anywhere. You’re hurt.”

Ilya blinked, slow and heavy, then breathed, “Knee...”

“Your knee hurts?” one of the trainers asked, instantly leaning over him.

“Da,” Ilya rasped, flinching as gentle hands palpated down his leg. He swallowed a groan, his throat bobbing tightly.

What he didn’t say, not because he didn’t want to, but because he couldn’t, was that his shoulder felt like someone had taken a blowtorch to the joint. That his head was throbbing with every heartbeat, a nauseating pulse that made his vision warp. That his chest burned with every shallow breath, ribs screaming from the hit.

He didn’t have enough strength to form the words, and the trainers already had enough to worry about.

But Shane saw it. He saw the pain lines etched around Ilya’s eyes. He saw the way his fingers kept twitching like he was fighting unconsciousness. He saw the sweat beading on his forehead despite the freezing rink.

Shane’s stomach twisted painfully, panic surging through him, tightening his throat and prickling hot behind his eyes.

“Stay with me,” he whispered, too soft for anyone but Ilya to hear. His gloved hand tightened on Ilya’s shoulder, not the injured one, never the injured one. “Rozanov, stay with me.”

Ilya’s lips parted like he wanted to respond, but only a harsh, shaky exhale escaped him.

And the second his eyes started to roll back, Shane’s heart stopped cold.

“We need to move him off the ice.”

The trainer’s voice barely registered. It was background noise. Just white static buzzing around Shane’s ears. He couldn’t tear his eyes away from Rozanov. Couldn’t make himself look anywhere else, not even for a second.

“Shane, come on.” Hayden’s hand landed firmly on his shoulder. A grounding pressure. A pull Shane ignored as the trainers carefully lifted Ilya’s limp body and guided him onto the spinal board.

The crowd was a living organism, shifting, murmuring, and holding its breath. But not a single cheer rang out. Not even from the Montreal fans. Even when Ilya Rozanov was the one lying on the ice like a broken doll.

When even the opposing crowd went silent for Ilya, that said everything.

“Shane,” Hayden tried again, softer this time.

Shane blinked, inhaling sharply as though surfacing from deep underwater. His gaze finally flicked up to Hayden’s worried face.

“I’m seeing him off the ice,” Shane said. His voice was steady. Shockingly steady. Much steadier than the way his chest felt like it was collapsing in on itself.

Hayden didn’t argue. Not when Shane looked like he’d shatter if anyone told him no.

Shane pushed up onto his skates and fell in beside the trainers, matching their pace as they guided the spinal board toward the exit doors.

He stayed inches from Ilya. Close enough to hear the shaky breaths rattling in his chest. Close enough to see how pale he looked under the harsh fluorescent lights. Close enough to realize, belatedly, painfully, that somewhere in the last six years, somewhere between all the teasing and the hookups and the stupid rivalry, Ilya Rozanov had become part of Shane’s heart.

He didn’t know when it happened. Maybe on a night when Ilya had laughed at one of his dumb jokes. Maybe during a particularly vicious game when Ilya met his glare with something softer. Maybe in the quiet moments after too-hot hotel rooms and too-loud confessions neither of them actually said aloud.

But it was real. It hurt. And right now, it terrified him.

As they skated toward the tunnel, Ilya’s arm shifted. His hand slipped off the edge of the spinal board, hanging lifelessly.

Shane’s stomach lurched. He reached out immediately, gently catching the hand and placing it back on Ilya’s chest, right over his heart, right where Shane could imagine the faint thud beneath layers of padding and pain.

“I’ll see you after the game,” Shane murmured, leaning in close so only Ilya could hear, even unconscious. His voice cracked on the words. “Don’t die on me, asshole.”

The second they stepped into the tunnel, the crowd erupted in applause. A roar that rolled across the rink like a wave.

Shane didn't look up to acknowledge it as he paused at the end of the rink, watching them carry Rozanov away.

Crowds always cheered when an injured player was taken off the ice. It was some weird mix of respect and condolences, a ritual he'd never cared enough to fully understand.

It always seemed pointless. Or maybe no one had ever mattered enough for him to understand why people needed that release, that collective show of concern.

No one until Ilya Rozanov.

And as the stretcher rolled toward the medical room, bright lights, rushing trainers, Shane realized with a cold spike of fear that this wasn't just a rival, or a fling, or a complicated friend-with-benefits.

Ilya Rozanov was someone he couldn't afford to lose.

"Quite a show of sportsmanship out on the ice tonight, during an NHL game between the Boston Bears and the Montreal Voyageurs."

The TV was on low in Ilya's hospital room, barely above a whisper, but it cut through the heavy silence like a blade. Shane sat hunched in the chair next to the bed, his shoulders curled in, hands clasped too tightly between his knees, one bouncing restlessly. He shouldn't be here. Every part of him knew that. And yet...he promised. He promised Ilya he'd come.

He doubted Ilya heard him. Doubted the words even scraped through the fog of unconsciousness. But Shane had still meant it. Every syllable.

He'd lied to his team to get here. Told them he wasn't going out to celebrate their victory because he had someone waiting to warm his bed.

A shitty excuse. He knew. And a desperate one.

And Hayden had seen right through it. Had leveled him with a look that said you're not as subtle as you think, buddy, but didn't push. Didn't comment.

Hayden was getting too close to the truth and Shane wasn't sure if he wanted to stop him anymore.

He shoved the thought down hard, swallowing around a tightness in his throat as he lifted his gaze to the TV. The screen showed the feed from tonight's game. The moment Ilya Rozanov went down.

Even through a pixelated replay, Shane could hear it, that wet, sickening crack of body meeting ice, loud enough that the sound guy probably jumped.

Shane winced, looking away for a moment. His stomach lurched.

When he forced his eyes back, the camera angle had shifted. To him.

There he was, sliding onto the ice, dropping to his knees behind Ilya, pinning him down to keep him from moving. His hands were shaking. His helmet sitting on the ice next to him. His face a twisted mix of terror and anger.

He looked frantic. He looked wrecked. He looked like a man watching someone he loved bleed out in front of him. Or maybe Shane was the only one who could see it.

The announcers kept talking, voices smug and cheerful, filling the room with a narrative Shane didn't want.

“Ilya Rozanov, captain of the Boston Bears, took a brutal hit tonight, bringing him to the ice. You can see Rozanov doesn’t get back up.”

“The sportsmanship comes in the form of Rozanov’s rival, Montreal’s Shane Hollander, dropping to his knees to assist his fallen rival.”

“You don’t see that in hockey, Tom. It’s refreshing to see a young player set aside rivalry to help his opponent. Shane Hollander is truly the NHL’s crowned prince.”

Shane let out a sharp, humorless snort. More of a scoff, really. Bitter and edged and exhausted. If only they knew.

The analysis kept going:

“And then to get back on the ice and win the game? What was going through Hollander’s head? I’ve never seen him play that hard befo—”

Shane grabbed the remote and turned the TV off with a harsh click.

He couldn’t listen to another second. His stomach was already turning, and hearing the commentators make a spectacle of what had been the worst moment of his entire damn season, made bile claw up his throat.

He set the remote aside and exhaled shakily, turning his head back toward the hospital bed.

The nausea didn’t fade. Because the sight that met him was worse than any replay.

Ilya lay completely still, pale under the fluorescent lights, lines of pain carved into his features even in sleep. His shoulder was immobilized, his knee wrapped tight. There was

bruising already forming along his ribs, dark and violent-looking.

A dislocated shoulder. A dislocated knee. Three broken ribs. A concussion.

“Fuck, Rozanov...” Shane whispered, voice thin.

He reached out and took Ilya’s uninjured hand carefully, threading their fingers together. His thumb brushed along the Russian’s knuckles, rough jersey friction now replaced with cool, fragile skin.

He held on tighter but not too tight, never enough to hurt, but enough that it grounded him. Enough that if Ilya woke up, the first thing he’d feel was him.

Shane leaned forward, elbows on the edge of the mattress, and lowered his forehead to the back of Ilya’s hand.

“Why do you always have to scare the shit out of me...” he breathed.

The beeping of the monitors filled the silence. Slow and steady as Shane’s eyes closed, the tension bleeding out of him in a silent, desperate exhale.

“Just wake up, Rozanov,” he whispered. “Please.”

Consciousness returned to Ilya slowly, sliding into his mind like fog creeping across a frozen pond. His brain clawed for purchase, grasping at anything that might anchor him to the waking world.

A faint beeping drilled mercilessly into the side of his skull. He winced. God, even thinking hurt.

His eyelids felt like they were coated in wet cement, but he forced them open, blinking until the room sharpened. It was dim, the only light coming from the thin slats of the blinds filtering in the pale glow of the hospital's hallway lights.

Hospital, his mind supplied sluggishly.

Right. I am in hospital.

His gaze drifted to the right and froze.

There was someone slumped over the side of his bed, head resting near his hip. Tufts of brown hair stuck up in chaotic directions, like the owner had raked their hands through it over and over and over.

Then he noticed his hand was being held.

Despite the throbbing agony radiating through his body, a small smile tugged at his lips as he took in the peaceful, exhausted face of Shane Hollander, asleep in an uncomfortable hospital chair.

He wanted, desperately, to reach out and run his fingers through Shane's hair. To smooth the chaotic strands back. To touch him.

But his left arm was immobilized and useless in its sling. So instead, he pushed out a single word.

"Hollander," he rasped, voice shredded and raw.

Shane shot upright as if electrocuted, eyes wild, rimmed red.

"Rozanov," he breathed, relief flooding through the name like a prayer.

The sound of Shane's voice soothed something deep inside Ilya's bruised, aching chest. He held Shane's gaze, those dark, onyx eyes that usually glared at him from across the ice, now wide and soft and terrified.

"You came," Ilya whispered. It was the simplest version of what he really wanted to say, but exhaustion stole everything else from him.

Shane blinked, startled for a moment. Then he smiled. Soft, real and beautiful.

"Of course I came, asshole. I told you I would."

Ilya snorted, though he couldn't remember that promise. Not that he could remember much of anything. Just the pain.

"I came right after we beat Boston's ass," Shane added with a smirk.

Ilya groaned and rolled his eyes. It was a mistake. Pain flared behind his eyes like lightning.

"If I had not been hurt," he muttered, "you stood no chance."

Shane chuckled, shaking his head. God, he loved that accent. The way English curled around Ilya's tongue like it was half-forbidden.

But then Shane's smile dimmed. Faded. He looked down, breaking their connection.

Ilya frowned, concern pulling at his eyebrows. "Is everything... okay?"

“I’m sorry you got hurt by one of my players.” Shane’s voice was thick with guilt, the kind that lodged in the chest and didn’t let go.

Ilya reached up with his uninjured hand, cupped Shane’s cheek, and gently tilted his head back up so he was forced to look at him.

“Is not your fault, Hollander. Is dangerous game, yes?”

“Of course it is, but I saw him line up the hit. I was too far across the ice to do anything.” Shame colored Shane’s voice, bitter and sharp.

Ilya shook his head. Another spark of pain. Another mistake. But he didn’t stop.

“Is not *your* fault.” He said it firmer this time. Unarguable.

Shane raised his own hand, covering Ilya’s. He leaned into the touch, closing his eyes for half a heartbeat.

“When I saw you go down,” he said quietly, “my heart stopped.” His breath trembled. “Rozanov, I was terrified.”

Ilya’s thumb brushed down Shane’s cheek, gentle and slow. The kind of touch he usually only allowed behind locked doors. His smile was soft, not smug, not mocking. Soft.

“I am okay, Hollander,” he murmured. “Be out a few games. Then I be back to kick your ass, yes?”

Shane laughed, tears brightening his lashes.

“Get some sleep, asshole.”

Ilya huffed a tired laugh, letting the sound of Shane’s laughter settle deep into his aching chest. It warmed him more than the heated blanket wrapped around his battered body.

“You will be gone, yes? When I wake?”

Shane’s smile faltered and his shoulders slumped. He nodded.

“Yeah. I’ll be gone.”

Ilya nodded as well, then tugged Shane closer by the front of his hoodie. The kiss he pressed to Shane’s lips was soft. Barely there. Nothing like the frantic, heated ones they shared in hotel rooms, in Shane’s commercial property, in Ilya’s penthouse, or anywhere else they could get away with it.

Shane froze for only the smallest second before kissing him back just as gently.

When they parted, Shane leaned in until their foreheads touched, breaths mingling.

"When you heal," Shane whispered, "maybe I'll let you fuck me as an apology for scaring the shit out of me."

“Oh, fuck off, Hollander.” Ilya shoved him lightly with his fingers.

Shane laughed, bright and, for the first time since he watched Ilya hit the ice and not get back up.

Ilya Rozanov had a long road ahead. Weeks of recovery. Maybe the rest of the season is gone. But he was going to be okay.

And months later, when they finally fell into bed again, tangled in heat and breathless laughter and everything neither of them wanted to name, Shane knew without a single doubt that Ilya was more than okay. He was his.

End Notes

Thanks for reading! Kudos and comments are very much appreciated ❤️

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