

**my lover, a boy**

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# my lover, a boy

by [17o2585](#)

## Summary

In a lot of ways, Shane is just like anyone— he's joyous for the most part. Without doubt. Focused on his career, confined within routine. He talks to the press, laughs brightly, shit-talks Rozanov during pre and post game interviews.

That is, Shane is just like anyone, in a lot of ways except that there is something haunted that rests in his eyes. Tonight, he's sitting at the corner of a bar, eyes flat. The man sitting next to him tucks a joint between his teeth, bringing a lighter up towards it.

After taking a drag, the man offers the joint to Shane. To Ilya's surprise, he takes it.

It irks Ilya.

*or: someone from hollander's past reenters. rozanov misreads the situation*

## Notes

so i finally watched, and then read, the entirety of heated rivalry instead of studying for my finals. and then i wrote this instead of studying for finals too (help)

the only knowledge i have of hockey is that one time, back when i used to figure skate, when a hockey player rammed into me and then caught me before i fell. i never saw him again but i think about that moment a lot

enjoy!

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

## Chapter 1: one

The cherry on top of Shane's awful day is an awful game.

By the time he's made his way back to his hotel room, it's past midnight. It's a deviation from his normal routine— he'd normally be showered, have eaten, and be asleep by now. He'd washed the grime of the game off earlier in the locker room, but the second shower was for the better measure of giving him a warm, low lit sanctuary. That, and, it was good for wearing off the lingering adrenaline from the game, paving way for better sleep.

The Montreal Metros had lost, 2-5. He'd been off-kilter after the first goal scored against them, and, despite his best efforts, could barely shake it off from the rest of his performance. His skating had been shaky, thoughts away from the ice.

His mother, Yuna, had called him after the game. She'd been sympathetic, knowing. On a rare occasion, she'd forgone her usual *"you've gotta get your head out of your ass"* speech and opted to tell him to take it easy.

"I know it's a rough week for you," she'd said, then paused. "Take it easy. Maybe go for a walk tomorrow morning, it might help clear your head."

Maybe Shane had been more obvious than he'd thought. He didn't have the energy to be concerned about it, care, though. It would come to pass. In a couple days, if he kept his head down and forced his thoughts elsewhere.

His phone buzzed. There's a fifty-fifty chance it's either one of his parents, checking in again, or Rose, maybe, with some encouraging words. They'd broken things off a couple days after the whole club incident: Rose had been kind about it. She'd gently insinuated she strongly thought he was gay, to which he remembered Rozanov, blushed, and that itself was answer enough for her.

This was a couple months ago. Though he and Rose had become good friends, seeming to quickly grow closer when the label was platonic instead of romantic, he had heard radio silence from Rozanov.

**Lily:** That was bad, Hollander

Shane, despite himself, laughed lightly at the olive branch. A trickle of relief spread throughout his body. Another text came a moment later; if Shane tried hard enough, he could hear it in Rozanov's voice.

**Lily:** You looked distracted. I bet you were thinking about something else

**Shane:** You wish

**Lily:** Mm. I think you wish too

If their text thread went the way they usually did, Rozanov would've shown up to his room before the hour. While the thought is nice, doing casual with Rozanov, especially now, trickled dread up his spine.

He knew he was off his game, and he knew the people around him, his team *and* the media, were picking up on it, and he *also* knew that Rozanov is perceptive enough to see right through him. He was tired. Just the thought of having to mask the ball of anxiety that made its home in his stomach exhausted him enough.

It would pass. It would pass, and then life would return to normal, and everything would be fine.

He threw his phone on the bed, watching it flop facedown, and then wrung a hand through his hair. Shower. That's what he had to do. It would make him feel better.

Dragging himself into the bathroom, Shane leaned his hands on the edge of the vanity, tilting towards it. He sighed, low and deep, closing his eyes.

It was fine. It would be fine.

If only he believed it.

---

**Lily:** Is your ass ready?

Shane's face flares.

**Shane:** Ready for what?

**Lily:** To be beat tonight. What else?

**Lily:** You're too easy ;)

**Lily:** See you on the ice

---

*“And, folks, here we have the face-off between the Metros and the Raiders... Rozanov and Hollander are waiting for the puck to drop... you can practically smell the animosity... Oh, folks! Rozanov has claimed the puck! Hollander seems to be sloppy already... only a couple seconds in and—”*

The game wears on. His teammates, in the training room, had sent him sympathetic glances. On the ice, they're not the least bit happy—at one point, one of them hisses, “get your head out of your ass, Hollander,” as he skates past.

Rozanov, who had started off winking at him in their usual on-ice show of cocky rivalry, grew an increasing frown. Shane can feel his eyes on him, tracking his movements. Usually, Rozanov's gaze on him would make him feel... well, hot. Right now, all Shane wants to do is avoid it.

In the third quarter, an absurd inkling licks up his spine. He tenses, trying to scan the crowd between passes. Sure enough, though through the blinding haze of the stadium lights, Shane spots him.

The crowd roars. Another goal by the Raiders.

Rozanov skates towards him. “Hollander,” he says, and it's the first thing he's said to him in weeks. “What is wrong? You are making this game no fun.” He pauses, searching Hollander's expression. And then, seemingly finding something there, he softens. It's not enough to constitute as remotely gentle, but for Rozanov and Hollander on the ice, in front of the world, it's enough for Shane and only Shane to read the change in tone. “You are okay?”

“Fine,” Hollander replies, clipped.

Rozanov doesn't look surprised at the dismissal, but his eyes crease.

The rest of the game is terrible. The Metros lose again, though only by one point this time around, and he's pretty sure his team hates him by now.

Rozanov skates towards him again. This time, while he's shaking his hand in a show for the cameras, he leans in and murmurs, “Your room?”

“1240,” Shane replies, out of habit. Rozanov's hand burns where it grips him.

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Three hours later, the stadium is empty. Hollander finds himself sitting on top of the non-glass paned part of the barrier, staring at the ice.

The cleaning crew is since gone, and so has the fanfare. It's just him and the ice. And, of course—

“Hey.”

Hollander looks up with tired eyes.

“Tough game?”

“Cut the bullshit,” Hollander replies, surprising himself with the amount of vitriol in his voice. “Just... please.”

The man, who’s tan and has brunet hair that’s around an inch longer than his, extends his hand. Hollander huffs, jaw clenched, but takes the bouquet of flowers.

“Thank you.”

“Of course.” The man pauses, and the two fall silent for a moment. Hollander turns back towards the ice, tracing patterns on it with his eyes. “Look— I just came to say hello. And to —”

“Check on me?”

The man’s shoulders drop. He sighs, shaking his head. “It’s... I know it’s wearing on you, okay? I watch your games. You’re barely there.”

“So you flew here from California to tell me that?” Hollander laughs, but the sound is flat. “You could’ve just called.”

“Shane.”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” says Shane. “I don’t want to think about it.”

“Yeah,” the man says. “Okay. Yeah, okay.”

Shane rubs his thumb over one of the flowers, swallowing. “Do you have a hotel room?”

The man shrugs. “Not yet. I came straight from the airport, I didn’t pack anything. I was going to... figure all that out later.”

At this, Shane’s upset dissipates into quiet fatigue. His lips quirk up. “You can stay with me.” He fumbles into the pocket of his jacket, drawing out a key card. “Here. I think I’m going to stay here a little longer.”

The man smiles, but similar to Shane, it’s mournful. He looks exhausted too. “Thank you.”

“Thank you for coming here for me,” Shane murmurs, “It means a lot.”

With a squeeze to his shoulder in response, the man leaves.

Hollander’s shoulder pricks. He drags his gaze upward. Rozanov is standing there at the top of the bleachers, watching him. They stare at each other for a moment— Rozanov’s arm crossed and Hollander’s holding a bouquet of flowers— before Hollander’s shoulders drop. He ceases their eye contact, turns back towards the ice, and sits there longer.

---

Rozanov doesn't show up at his hotel room. Shane prickles at the fact, mood dampening further. And then, replaying their eye contact from earlier again and again, it hits him that Rozanov saw him hand over the key card to the man, and that, all things aside, there was no way Rozanov would've shown up when there was another person present.

If Rozanov's plan had been to fuck, it wouldn't have happened, anyway, without privacy. If Rozanov had shown up, what would they have done? Cuddled? Tucked themselves into his bed, held each other?

Shane's heart pricked. They weren't a couple. As much as he wished it, what was there?

It's a mess. A goddamn mess. His throat, for the better part of the week, has felt like there's a barbed wire in it: every time he swallows, he's half sure whatever emotion tucked there would have him break down fully, but he gathers himself enough to go about another hour, and then another.

He wants—he wants a lot of things. He wants to tell Ilya about his life, his unfiltered, media-less one. He wants Ilya to kiss him, hold him. He wants Ilya. Not just the 'leaves after' Ilya, but the one who stays, too.

The one that can't stay, because they're not... they're not like that.

It's never been this bad. He's okay. He's been okay. So why is it like this?

---

The next couple of days come and go. Shane distracts himself for the most part, going about his life. He tries to text Rozanov a couple times, but the drafts end up deleted: he doesn't know what to say. He doesn't know if he'd be able to make it through something casual without slipping up.

Part of him hopes Ilya will text first.

He finds himself one of the better known clubs in the city, tucked away at one of the booths. The music throbs into his pulse, body. It's loud enough that he can barely hear his own thoughts over it, making for a nice break.

He nurses a ginger ale, watching the open area. There's not an inch of space. People are grinding up onto each other, eyes lidded.

The man reaches for one of his joints, tucking one between his teeth. He drags a lighter to it, and then inhales, eyes fluttering shut.

When he opens them, he turns to Shane. "You want?"

Shane taps at his glass of ginger ale. "I stopped smoking, you know. When things got serious." And then, because fuck it, he takes the joint.

The man rolls his eyes. “You’re talking like you smoked. You used to pick up a joint, what? Once a damn month?”

Shane takes a drag. The warm smoke settles into his lungs. A pleasant dull spreads. “I was training,” Shane says, taking another inhale. He hands the joint back. “I had better things to do.”

When he turns back to the floor, his eyes catch a familiar bout of curls.

Rozanov’s face is low lit, but with the purple-blue of the club’s lights, he looks majestic, straight out of a movie. Shane met his gaze, blinking slowly, cheeks coloring.

Much like that disaster of a night, Rozanov is dancing with a woman, but his eyes are set straight on Shane. He drags his hand across the woman’s throat, and then chest, nipping at her ears. The woman’s eyes flutter closed.

Shane drags his gaze away. He takes the joint handed to him and takes another hit.

“I’m going to get another drink,” the man says, getting up, “I’ll get you another ginger ale.”

Shane nodded his affirmative.

“Hollander,” a voice says a moment after the man leaves. Rozanov is standing next to the booth, gazing down at him. Shane’s fingers twitch: he has half the mind to wrap his arms around the man’s waist, rest his forehead on his abdomen, but they are in public. “Are you going to introduce me to your boyfriend?” It’s teasing, but there’s an edge to the question.

Hollander’s lips twitch downwards. “Ew. He’s not my boyfriend.”

Rozanov, despite himself, relaxes.

Hollander laughs, noticing. It is brighter than usual, more carefree than it’s been in a long time. “Are you jealous?”

“And what if I am?” Rozanov makes a quick sweep around the room, then briefly touches his thumb to Hollander’s chin. “What would you do?”

Hollander stares up at him. “I—”

Rozanov waits, patient. His eyes sharpen as he asks, “What?”

“I couldn’t— I only—”

“You only what?”

“I only want you,” Hollander murmurs.

The air zeroes in around them. Painfully, Rozanov reminds himself that they are most definitely *still* in public. So instead, he plucks the joint still resting in Hollander’s fingers and

raises an eyebrow. "I did not take you as a smoker, pretty boy," he mutters. "You told me, that day, not to smoke, *da?*"

"Yes," Hollander echoes. He swallows, and Rozanov tracks the movement. "I'm not a smoker, Rozanov. Just sometimes."

"Just sometimes," Rozanov murmurs. He eyes Hollander, a little too closely, and then shakes his head. "Why now? What's gotten into your head?"

Hollander's expression goes carefully blank.

"Hollander."

"Drop it."

By the look on Rozanov's face, he's seeing right through him. "Fine," he replies, a moment later. "For now. But we will talk." He pauses. "Since your not-boyfriend is staying in your room, you come to mine. 880."

"Rozanov."

"We will talk," Rozanov repeats.

And then he's gone. Hollander leans back against the booth, closes his eyes, and tries to breathe.

## Chapter 2: two

### Chapter Notes

hello my friends i hope you are having a wonderful day. enjoy!

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

Something's wrong with Hollander.

He had seen the headlines a couple days after the night at the club. The paparazzi, relentless as they always are, had picked up on Hollander and Landry's breakup almost immediately. People had speculated, but for the most part, there was a supportive reaction.

One tweet he saw was, *ugh! I don't believe in love anymore. all my favs r broken up*

Another one read: *does this mean i have a chance with my husband (shane hollander)*

Despite everything, it had made Rozanov laugh. Boy, if they knew.

Their schedules don't align for a stretch of a couple months, so they don't see each other. Rozanov itches to text him a couple times, to text him something, *anything*, but he's not entirely sure where Hollander's at. He'd fled Rozanov's house and then gotten himself a girlfriend. If Hollander doesn't like him as much as Rozanov likes him, he has to deal with it.

He has to deal with it. God, it sucks.

The Metros are playing tonight. Rozanov flips the TV on.

He frowns at the screen. Something's wrong with Hollander. He's playing sloppy, eyes flat, focus somewhere else. Even through the TV, it's obvious that his teammates grow concerned enough to start sending him looks. The commentators pick up on it, discussing their theories. *Rough breakup?* One commenter mentions, chuckling. *Romance hurts!*

No, that's not it.

The camera pans to Hollander, who is taking a break on the bench. He's staring down, straight at the floor at his skates. His teammate, Hayden Pike, leans in and says something, eyebrows drawn downwards, but the cameras don't pick up the audio.

The Metros lose, and that too, badly. Rozanov winces as the timer runs out.

---

Rozanov misses him. He decides that even if Hollander doesn't want him like *that*, isn't falling in love with him back, he'd rather have a casual Hollander than none.

It hurts, but don't all things?

He picks up his phone, shoots him a text. They'll be playing against each other tonight, which Rozanov looks forward to. Hollander's reply comes a moment later, and, as always, his inability to sext is endearing. Rozanov huffs a laugh at his screen.

He carves a clear opportunity for meeting up post-game, but Hollander doesn't reply to it.

He forces himself not to think about it.

---

Hollander's performance is worse tonight.

When it ends, Rozanov skates towards him. He lowers his voice so that it is unintelligible to anyone around them, shifts concern into indifference for the cameras, and asks for Hollander's room number.

Hollander replies, but he doesn't look him in the eyes.

---

They don't end up leaving for a while. He catches Hollander sitting on one of the barriers facing the rink. He watches him for a moment, deciding whether or not to go join him.

Except, he's beat to it. A man that he's never seen, and who's holding flowers, before comes up behind Hollander. He's wearing a navy cable-knit sweater, with its sleeves tucked up to the corner of his elbows, and dark wash jeans. His hair a little longer than Shane's. Rozanov's heart pricks when his slender, tan arm extends the bouquet to Hollander.

He can't make out their quiet conversation from how far up he is, but the man shifts, says something.

Hollander looks upset. He fires something back, shaking his head.

So they know each other, Rozanov deduces.

They go back and forth. At some point, Hollander exhales, upset fizzling out momentarily, and smiles gently. He hands the man his hotel key.

At this, Rozanov's heart *really* pangs.

After the man leaves with the key card, Hollander seems to sense him. When he turns his gaze upward, his expression is blank. He turns back to the ice, a moment later, resuming his blank staring.

*Whatever*, Rozanov thinks. *Whatever*. They're just casual. Why is there a reason to get upset?

---

After a couple days of trying to ignore it, Rozanov resolves to go to the club to distract himself. Apparently, the universe, much like the first time, finds it funny to fuck with him.

Rozanov spots Hollander at the club before the man spots him. He's with the man from before, sitting in a secluded corner.

Hollander still looks tense.

Rozanov watches him. In a lot of ways, Hollander is just like anyone— he's joyous for the most part. Without doubt. Focused on his career, confined within routine. He talks to the press, laughs brightly, shit-talks Rozanov during pre and post game interviews.

Hollander is the media's "good boy" to Rozanov's "bad boy," which makes for a good story. He's genuine, too. He feels; Rozanov knows it, the way his eyes speak.

But... But. There's something else, too. Hollander is just like anyone, in a lot of ways except that there is something haunted that rests in his eyes. Something jaded, a tiny pinch at the back of his throat.

Tonight, he's sitting at the corner of a bar, eyes flat. The man sitting next to him tucks a joint between his teeth, bringing a lighter up towards it.

After taking a drag, the man offers the joint to Shane. The latter, to Ilya's surprise, takes it.

Hollander spots him when he turns to watch the floor. His eyes widen, imperceptibly enough that Rozanov only notices because he's learned Hollander's mannerisms, as they stare at each other.

Rozanov drags his hand across the woman's chest in a show for him.

Hollander swallows. And then he turns back towards the man he's sitting with, taking another hit.

It irks Rozanov.

Hollander is religious about his regime. He abstains from alcohol, for fuck's sake, in the name of his performance on the ice. Sure, whatever he was doing was one of the mildest

things he *could*’ve been doing, but still.

The man beside him gets up, presumably to grab more drinks or go use the restroom. When he’s gone, Rozanov excuses himself from the girl and makes his way to Hollander.

Hollander looks up at him from where he’s sitting, eyes hazy, cheeks pink. It’s a beautiful sight, and if they weren’t in the middle of a club, Rozanov would’ve been all over him already.

Rozanov raises his eyebrow, hoping to mask his distaste, and asks about the boyfriend.

He’s met with a laugh. And then he says, *I only want you*.

Rozanov’s shoulders relax. He plucks the joint out of Hollander’s fingers, eyeing it. When he asks about it, Hollander’s eyes go cold. He tenses, shoulders tightening. *Drop it*, Hollander tells him, biting.

“We will talk,” he promises Hollander.

---

Hollander doesn’t show up at his hotel room.

He’s not upset about it, more uneasy. So it’s worse than he thought. Hollander doesn’t want to talk, and if he did, not with him. His not-boyfriend is here to support him— all the way from California, right? Hollander doesn’t need Rozanov. It’s fine.

It’s fine.

---

Rozanov, Hollander, and Hunter are sitting, in that order, next to each other at a press conference. It’s a special one meant for captains, live on air. The rest of the league’s captains have already been interviewed, or will be afterwards: they’ve been split into groups of three for some reason.

Rozanov and Hollander, of course, have been put together for the drama. Hunter, too, because of that one fight between Hollander and the man.

Cameras flash at them, reporters waving their hands. “Yes?” Rozanov drawls at a reporter. The questions so far have been typical. Boring. About team dynamics, leadership, and game strategy.

The reporter stands up. The camera zeroes in on the three of them.

“This is a question for Mr Hollander,” the reporter says. “Have you been keeping up with the online fanbase?”

Hollander blinks, a little confused, but schools it. “Uh— no. I’m not online much, as it helps me focus my energy into training and playing, but as I always say, I appreciate the support from my fans.”

The reporter pauses. “Mr Hollander,” he starts. “I wanted to ask about something that’s been circulating online recently. Some older photos have resurfaced that suggest you spent part of your childhood in foster care. You’ve never publicly spoken about this, despite your parents’ very visible role in your career. Can you clarify whether your parents are your biological parents, and why this hasn’t been something you’ve chosen to speak about publicly?”

There’s pin drop silence. Hollander opens his mouth, then falters. His fist clenches on top of the table.

Rozanov wants to slide his hand across and take Hollander’s hand in his.

Hollander, pointedly, replies, after a moment, “I will not be speaking about that at this time, as I do not believe it is a relevant question to my career.”

The reporter, if taken aback by the answer, doesn’t show it. “Respectfully, Mr Hollander, your recent performances on the ice haven’t been at the level fans are used to, and your team, under your leadership, has struggled as a result. Some fans are wondering whether external factors might be affecting your focus. Given this context, perhaps you—”

Hollander’s face, despite him being on live air, falls completely and thoroughly. He blinks, a little devastated; Rozanov, without thinking, opens his mouth to fire back at the reporter.

Scott Hunter beats him to it. “That’s enough. Next question.”

Hollander’s been media trained. He seems to remember himself, melding his expression into something neutral, jaw clenching as he does.

But Rozanov has been Hollander trained. His lips twitch and his eyes are a little wet, and... god. Rozanov wants nothing more than to deck the reporter.

The rest of the interview goes back to being boring. Hollander answers general questions calmly, but his replies are clipped, tight. Hunter and Rozanov take the brunt of the rest of the questions, giving Hollander a moment. The air in the room is sympathetic to it, luckily.

---

Hollander disappears afterward. Rozanov finds him in a bathroom at the secluded, far edge of the building. Leaning against the wall next to the door, he waits for a couple moments, allowing Hollander some space.

He opens his phone. While Hollander's offline, he isn't— he's a big fan of memes, internet jokes, and Twitter. Keeping up with fans flatters him, too. The attention settles warm in his stomach, prompting him to work harder and harder for his career.

As a consequence to live TV, the clip from earlier has already blown up. Fans are storming their online hockey sphere, some calling out, some dissing the reporter.

Some of the tweets are:

*wtf was that reporter doing*

*that was ridiculous. i get asking questions, but not like that!*

*we <3 u shane holland*

*i love the way scott and ilya looked so upset too*

Rozanov tucks his phone back into his pocket and tries for the door, which Hollander has left unlocked. Rozanov is struck with the thought that Hollander was expecting him. When he comes in, Hollander shakes his head from where he's leaning against the vanity, eyes red, wet.

"I don't want to talk about it," he says, angry.

Rozanov leans down, checking that the stalls are empty. Then he wraps his arms around Hollander.

Hollander's shoulders shake. "I'm sorry," Rozanov whispers. "That was— *what is the word?* — not called for."

"It's not a secret. So what, I was in foster care. So what, my parents adopted me. They're my parents regardless. I'm not hiding it! One of the damn organizations I work for helps children in foster care! I've never denied anything!" Hollander huffs, shoulders tensing again. "This isn't even why I've been so upset in the first place! But why did they... fuck, now the goddamn *public* is *involved* in *my* life!"

Though this raises more questions than it answers, Rozanov keeps his grip on Hollander, running a hand through his hair. "*Malysh*, if you want to keep private, then you keep private. It's no one's business." He draws his phone out, and Hollander shifts enough to be able to see the screen. "See? Your fans agree. They support you. If you ask for privacy, they will give it to you." He winces. "For the most part, of course. It is... different now. But you just have to adjust. And they will understand, Hollander."

Hollander doesn't reply for a while, just stands there, tucked against him. Rozanov draws his hand back and forth his back, making patterns.

A couple minutes later, breaking the stillness, Hollander's phone rings. He reaches for it, and Rozanov catches the *Mom* flashing on the caller ID. He straightens up, taking a step back.

The upset has faded from the lines on Hollander's face, leaving way for a fatigued gentle. He wipes his eyes with his hand. Before taking the call, he licks his lips, offering Rozanov a genuine, quiet smile.

"Would you like to come over, tonight? I'm sure you know, but my friend is staying with me. He's like my brother. I would love for you to meet him."

Rozanov reaches up, rubbing his thumb across Hollander's cheekbones. "Meet him as your..."

"As my—" Hollander clears his throat. "As someone who means a lot to me. He's trustworthy. I promise. But I understand if you don't feel comfortable with it. I would never tell him anything that you don't want me to."

Rozanov softens. He presses a kiss at the corner of Hollander's mouth, and then lets him go. "Okay. I will come."

Hollander's laugh is a breathless thing. He swipes his thumb across the screen, and then says, "*Hey, mom. Yeah, I'm okay. I just needed a minute—*"

Hollander's eyes say, *thank you*. As Rozanov takes his leave, his say, *always*.

## Chapter End Notes

shane is me fr. he'll say he doesn't want to talk about it and then will indeed end up talking about it.

extended the chapter count! i think this is going to be longer than i originally anticipated :)

## Chapter 3: three

### Chapter Notes

I AM A SLUT FOR SHIFT IN LAST NAME TO FIRST NAME USAGE IN FANFICS  
i scream as they drag me away to the asylum

enjoy!

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

**Ilya:** I am here

This is how Rozanov finds himself waiting in front of Hollander's hotel room: sporting a bottle of vodka, a can of ginger ale, and, what he hopes, is an easy smile.

Hollander opens the door. "Hi," he greets, cracking the door open further. "Come in."

"I brought this," Rozanov says, handing him the ginger ale. "Because you don't drink. You prefer to smoke instead..."

Hollander shoves his shoulder, rolling his eyes. "Like I said. Just sometimes." He pauses, glancing down at his hand. His eyes soften. "And thank you. I appreciate it."

*"Pozhaluysta."*

"I'm guessing that's... You're welcome?"

*"Da."*

Rozanov realizes, a little belatedly, that this is the first time he has come to Hollander's place without the intention of fucking. It's the first time, too, where there'll be someone else present.

Hollander must have come to the same conclusion, because they stand there, staring at each other, for a long moment. Hollander fidgets his hands like he's refraining from reaching out towards him.

So Rozanov does instead. He steps forward into Hollander's space, watching as his throat bobs as he swallows. With a quick glance sideways, Rozanov notes the door is obstructed from the general area, instead leading down a short hallway.

He grabs the collar of Hollander's shirt and tugs. "Hollander," he breathes against his ear. "Do not leave like that again. I know we do not talk, but we can. Better than you leaving." He lingers his tone on the edge of teasing, because, well— Hollander had looked freaked out that

day. Whatever it was, Rozanov knows it was not a decision taken for— *what did they call it?* — shits and giggles.

Hollander makes an apologetic sound. Rozanov draws him closer by his collar, pressing his mouth against his.

*“Shay! Where are the plates? Does this place come with them?”*

“Shit!” Hollander startles, whipping his head around. “Fuck. *Yes, I’m coming! Give me just a second!*”

“Shay?”

“Shut up. It’s an old nickname.”

Rozanov laughs. “We can continue this later.” He wags his eyebrow. “When we are alone.”

Hollander’s lips quirk upwards. He pauses. “By the way, I didn’t tell him about... uh, anything. I wasn’t sure if you would be comfortable with it. I just said that we’re good friends, and that we’ve been keeping the rivalry up publicly for attention.” He’s smiling his soft Shane smile, and Rozanov barely restrains himself from kissing him all over again. “Or rather, that you wanted the attention from it, and that I’m entertaining it.”

“Ah,” Rozanov replies. He smirks. “You are entertained by me?”

“Close,” Hollander corrects. “Entertaining you means I’m... allowing it. Considering it.”

*“You’re allowing it?”*

Hollander’s cheeks twinge pink. “Yes.”

“We will see about that, Hollander.”

---

It smells amazing. The air lingers of sauteed garlic, tomatoes. Hollander’s friend... brother?... is standing at the kitchen, wearing an apron that reads *Kiss the Chef*.

“Hello,” he says, voice low pitched but even. “You must be Ilya?”

*“Da,”* Rozanov says, and then remembers himself. “Yes.”

The man smiles. “I’m Harley.”

“Harley,” he says, testing the name. “Nice to meet you.”

“I hope you like pasta?” At Rozanov’s affirming nod, he gestures, a little amusedly, towards Hollander. “I made a different version for this one. With lots of vegetables and exact proportions.” He snorts. “The way he likes it.”

“Thank you,” Hollander replies, smiling sheepishly. To Ilya: “He’s a chef.”

“Oh. Do you work at a restaurant?”

Harley laughs, shaking his head. “I used to. I’m a private chef now, for an actor. I live in California, I’m just here for a couple weeks.”

“Ah,” Rozanov says.

“Makes cooking for Shane a little easier. Hollywood’s just as anal about their macros.”

Rozanov snorts at this, settling down on one of the barstools. Hollander’s phone rings, and he pauses reading the Caller ID.

“I’ll be right back,” he says.

They watch as he steps out, saying *hey* into the phone. Harley, pouring two glasses of the vodka he brought, tips his head towards Rozanov. “The Raiders, huh? How are you liking it?”

“It is good,” Rozanov says. “Playing in America was new, but not hard to adjust. It is good.”

“Mm, I can imagine.”

“So, you and Hollander are— what is called— foster brothers?”

Harley nods. “Yes.” He opens his mouth, and then catches himself. “How much has Shane told you? About it all?”

Rozanov shakes his head. “Nothing. I only found out during the press conference.”

The concept of older brothers leaves Rozanov with a bitter taste on his tongue, but it’s clear Harley is a good one. Hollander is at ease around him: they tease each other, but it is not insulting. It is not like Alexei, who hates him.

Harley’s expression softens. “He doesn’t talk about it. I mean— not in that way. Uh— I don’t want to talk on his behalf, but... there were things, you know? Hockey’s his way of tunneling his thoughts.”

“A distraction.”

“Yeah,” Harley says. “I guess so.” He pauses for a moment, leaning in. “You know, I can see it in his eyes. He really trusts you. Not many people in his life have met me, not on purpose, but because sometimes, it’s easier to let things be than explain.”

“Oh.”

Harley grabs a couple plates from a cabinet. “I would ask him, you know. Prompt it. I have no doubt Shane’ll talk to you about it, but sometimes... it’s easier for him to bring something up when someone else does first.”

That’s news to Rozanov, but it makes sense. Out of the two of them, Hollander’s the one who talks the most. Asks questions about Russia, about his parents. About him.

He doesn’t usually want to think about those things, so he gives Hollander vague answers, turning the questions back towards him. And Hollander talks. Tells him about his parents, his need for routine. How, sometimes, he gets in his head too much. How order helps ease it.

Rozanov doesn’t want to talk about those things, about himself, so he’s always been one to listen. Regardless, it’s endearing that Hollander asks. And sometimes, *sometimes*, he shares when Hollander gets that soft inquisitive look in his eyes, because with him, he’s... he’s warm. Comfortable. At ease.

In a way he’s never been.

In a way that never occurs without Hollander there.

When he looks up, Harley’s watching him with a twinkle in his eyes. He softens when Rozanov meets his eyes. “You went somewhere, for a second.”

“Just thinking.”

Harley concedes to that, offering a kind smile. “I know you care a lot about him too. I’m glad.”

Footsteps pad into the kitchen. Hollander places his phone on the table, coming to sit down on the barstool next to Rozanov. “So,” he interrupts, looking back and forth between them. “What were you guys talking about?”

Rozanov doesn’t want to force Hollander to talk, so he sends him a wiggled eyebrow, prompting the man to upturn his lips.

“I gave him shovel talk,” Harley replies.

Hollander’s jaw drops, and his face goes pink. “We’re not— *Harley*, I told you— Ilya, I’m —”

“Relax,” Harley says, before Ilya can. “I gave him shovel talk as your *friend*. You don’t have many, so I gotta make sure the select few you do are fine.”

“I hate you,” Hollander mutters.

Ilya stops. He opens his mouth, and then closes it. he tries again. “Actually, you’re right,” he says.

Hollander blinks, a little confused.

“You’re right. Shane and I. We are seeing each other. Romantically.” The weight in his chest, the one harboring secret after secret, lifts, just enough for him to smile genuinely, openly. With love for Shane. He laughs, sending Shane a wiggle of the eyebrow. “And physically.”

Harley’s eyebrows raise as he smiles, delighted. “Well, that’s great to hear. I’ll pretend I didn’t already guess.”

“Ilya,” Shane says, eyes blown a little wide. The tone reads: *You didn’t have to.*

The edges of Ilya’s eyes crinkle. *But I wanted to.*

---

They eat dinner on the couch. *Rush Hour 2*’s playing, live, and so they watch. It’s a good movie, a funny one. Though Ilya doesn’t fully understand all of the references, he enjoys it thoroughly. Especially the stupid action scenes where buildings are blown up for no reason.

At some point, Harley excuses himself. “I’m meeting a friend,” he says, grabbing their empty plates. “I’ll be back in a few hours.” He sends them a pointed, knowing look. “Maybe longer, if you guys want it.”

“*Harley*,” Shane groans.

“It was nice meeting you, Ilya,” Harley continues, choosing to ignore him. “I’m sure we’ll be seeing each other again. In the meantime, beat the Metros a couple times, would you? Shane may not show it, but his ego needs to get knocked down a peg.”

“*Harley!*”

Ilya snorts. “It was nice to meet you too.”

After they hear the door shut, Shane shifts towards him, bringing his knees up so that he’s facing Ilya’s side. “Can I ask you something?”

“Of course,” Ilya replies, mirroring his position. Unable to help himself, he reaches out to rub his thumb across the man’s knee. God, the months where he thought Shane was Rose’s were hell on Earth. Absolutely gut wrenching, even if he hadn’t admitted it at the time.

“Why’d you tell Harley?”

Ilya stops. “Is it okay that I told him? I am sorry. I did not ask you first.”

“No, no,” Shane huffs. “It’s totally fine. Like I said, he’s a trustworthy person. But... I don’t know. I’m just wondering, because he’s the first person we’ve come out to, so to speak. And, well. We haven’t really even—” He pauses, closing his mouth. Then he opens it again. “We haven’t really... defined anything. What we are.”

Silence drags for a couple moments. Shane looks a little upset, not at Ilya, but because of the little something drudging back up his spine. The stress from earlier, never fully dissipated.

“I don’t know,” is what Ilya settles on, a couple moments later. He continues tracing patterns on Shane’s knee. “But to me— that’s okay. Not to know.”

“Yeah,” Shane agrees. “That’s okay with me too.”

On the TV, Jackie Chan jump-kicks the villains in the middle of Las Vegas. Shane worms a little closer to Ilya, letting his head drop onto his shoulder. Ilya wraps his arm around his shoulders.

Last time, when they were like this, Shane had left. He tenses, memories crawling up. Ilya’s here, and it’s fine. So why doesn’t it feel like it? Why does everything feel out of place?

“Do you want to talk about it?” It’s like Ilya’s reading his mind. His chest rumbles as he speaks. “Sometimes, it helps.”

Somehow, that’s all Shane needs. The words, grief stuck raw in them, come spilling out. “A couple days ago,” he starts, voice shaky, “was the anniversary of my parents death. My other parents, I mean. My birth parents, the ones who died when I was six.”

As he says it, grief is replaced with something flat, emotionless. Avoidant, maybe. Ilya presses a kiss to his temple, letting it linger.

“My mom, Yuna, was my birth mother’s sister. They died in a car accident out of all things, and since my parents lived in London at the time, there was a gap between when they died and when my parents could get legal custody of me. I was only placed in this other home for that time. They were nice people, but I don’t remember much. Harley was there, too, that’s where I met him.”

His eyes wet. Ilya wipes it with this thumb, silent.

“It doesn’t bother me, you know. I know it’s a horrible thing to say, but I was too young to remember. But around this time... I think my body does. I don’t remember them, but I miss them. My other parents.”

“It is not horrible,” Ilya murmurs.

“You know, that’s how I got into hockey. My mom says I was straight up nonverbal after everything happened, so she hoped a sport would give me some structure.”

Ilya smiles. “And look at where you are, now.”

“Yeah,” Shane replies, laughing wetly. “I got to win the Stanley Cup. And I got to meet you.”

Ilya presses a kiss on the corner of his eyes. He zeroes in on Shane, shaking his head. “You can talk about it to me. My mom is dead, too. I understand. How it feels.”

“I’m so sorry,” Shane whispers, eyebrows creasing.

“I will always listen.”

“Ditto, Ilya. Thank you.”

“What does this mean?”

“Likewise. Same.”

“Ah,” Ilya replies. “Yes. Ditto. Always.”

## Chapter End Notes

i find it hard to add OCs to works of mine bc they're not familiar to the audience and therefore sometimes seem randomly placed or even out of place. i hope harley seemed genuine, and like he could be a person in shane's life. my face claim for him is thomas weatherall

## Chapter 4: four

### Chapter Notes

final chapter! :)

also apparently marleau is one year younger than shane and ilya but i didn't realize that while writing this so lets pretend he's older, like scott hunter age

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

They sit for a little bit, like that, Shane tucked into Ilya. At some point, Shane had dozed off. His breathing had evened out, body going lax and slumping further onto Ilya. The latter had the inkling to leave, to let Shane sleep, but he didn't... want to. It was warm, quiet. Shane's body pressed against his was a welcome pressure.

Shane's phone buzzes from where it's laying under him. It buzzes again, and then a third time.

The man stirs, rubbing his eyes. "Fuck," he mutters, fishing for his phone.

"You are popular," Ilya sing-songs.

Shane glares at him a split second. Then he squints at his phone. "It's just Harley. He's spending the night at some girl's place."

He types a confirmation back, flinging his phone back onto the couch cushion. He pauses, alertness dragging into his eyes, and adjusts so he's upright and turned towards Ilya. "I fell asleep? Fuck, how long was I out for? What time is it?"

"Barely," Ilya replies. "Not more than fifteen minutes."

"Oh. Okay." He glances at his phone, then hesitates a moment. "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course."

Shane winces. "Can I borrow your phone for a second? I don't keep any of my social media accounts on mine. I just want to, uh, scroll Twitter, if that's okay."

"Of course." He hands Shane his phone. And though he can guess the answer, Ilya asks, "What for?"

Shane leans back against his shoulder. Ilya throws his arm around him, pulling him closer. Shane hums, a little faintly, shrugging. "I just want to see what people are saying about me."

Ilya pauses. “What do you *think* they are saying about you?”

“I don’t know. I mean, I bet people have already dug everything up. About me, I mean. I swear people can find anything if they want to.”

“Hm. Yes, that is true. I have not heard anything. I think, if something big leaked, it would be on the news.”

“Keeping tabs on me, Rozanov?”

Ilya laughs. “Don’t flatter yourself.” And then: “Yes. You are my rival. So I keep tabs on your career.”

“Sure.”

“I am serious.”

Shane stops on a post. “A lot of people are hating on the reporter.”

“Well, it is deserved.”

“Yeah. I mean, I guess. But I also guess he was just doing his job, right? I’m sure the company he works for had him ask it. And, I don’t know. It’s a valid question. I’ve been off my game.”

“Yes,” Ilya agrees. “But that does not mean it was not called for— uncalled for.”

Shane laughs, a little faintly. He hands Ilya his phone back. “A lot of people are curious.”

“They are. They always will be.”

The two of them sit like that for a moment, silent. Shane plays with his hands, drifting into his thoughts.

“What are you thinking about?” Ilya asks, soothing a hand up and down Shane’s arm.

Shane blinks, refocusing on the conversation. “I think— I don’t know. I think I want to go public, maybe. Not that there’s anything to go public with, but... acknowledge it.”

He says *it* like it explains everything without him having to say it explicitly. Ilya gets it: Russia, and his father, and his brother, are an *it*.

*It* is fine.

*It* doesn’t matter.

“Mm.”

“I just don’t want it to be dramatic. Like, not a press conference. Just a quiet thing. But...” He trails off, biting his lower lip. “I don’t know. I— I don’t know.”

“It is okay not to know, Shane. It is up to you.”

Shane looks up at him, eyes softening into careful curiosity. “You don’t talk about your mother. Publicly, I mean.”

“Yes,” Ilya agrees. His voice wavers. “You are right. I do not talk about my mother. I think of her. I dedicate my entire career to her. But I do not say so. When reporters ask, I always give, what is called, president’s answer?”

“Politician’s answer?”

“Yes, this. I am honest. I dedicate to my fans. To my team. To my coach. That is not a lie. But privately, most important to me is my mother.”

Shane adjusts upright so that he can bring his hand to Ilya’s face. He runs his thumb across Ilya’s cheekbone. “I don’t know her, but I think she would be proud of you.”

Ilya nods. He blinks, a little wet. “She would be. I think so too.” He places a chastise kiss on Shane’s lips, then leans back a little to regard his entire face. “We are in the public, Shane. The public eye, I mean. But that does not mean everything about us needs to be. You are allowed privacy, whether you are ranked number 2 or 1 million.”

Shane snorts. The stress pulling him taut unwinds, just enough to let him breathe. “2nd? What, you think 1st is reserved for you?”

“Yes,” Ilya laughs, tapping his forehead. “Smart boy.”

---

Things drift back to normal after that. Though they’re separated between games where they play against each other, Jane and Lily’s text thread revives itself, and they fuck it out every now and then when they’re in the same city.

It’s the same, but it’s warmer. Gentler. First name basis.

Their physical proximity now includes hugging, tucking themselves against each other. Kisses, just because. With early flights, one of them always has to leave. But on nights *without* early flights, the best ones, they stay like that, slotted against each other, and wake up together the next morning.

It’s the same, but it’s different.

Ilya’s phone buzzes.

**Jane:** *By the way, this is Harley’s contact.*

**Jane:** *[1 Contact Shared]*

**Jane:** *He said 'don't be a stranger'. I always stay with him on the rare occasion we play the LA Ducks, and he said that you're always welcome to reach out when you're in LA area, too.*

**Ilya:** *That is very kind of him*

**Jane:** *You can stay with him as long as you two don't plot against me.*

**Ilya:** *No promises*

**Jane:** *I'm regretting this.*

**Ilya:** :)

---

Shane doesn't bring up anything about his parents except for the usual occasional mention of Yuna and David Hollander. He seems to be feeling better: he scores two hat-tricks in two back to back games. Focus trickles back into his eyes. He skates sharp, fast.

He plays, and he plays damn well.

Shane doesn't talk about it, and Ilya doesn't push him to.

---

A couple weeks later, Ilya's in the locker room, post shower, when Marleau leans towards him with his phone. "Have you seen Shane Hollander's newest post?"

Ilya grabs the phone as casually as he can and answers, "No."

"Oh. I mean it's not too serious. I just thought it was a sweet post."

It is. Shane's posted an old photo of himself, a woman, a man, and Yuna and David Hollander.

He's a baby in it, no older than two. The first woman, who's holding Shane, is no doubt Yuna's sister. The resemblance is striking. The man standing beside David has the same shy, upturned smile that Shane often does.

These are his parents. His birth parents.

There's no caption, but the photo is enough. Shane had posted it a couple hours ago, but it had already garnered over a hundred thousand likes. The comments, as Ilya skims through

them, are generally supportive.

“As much as we hate him, he’s a good kid,” Marleau says. “A good player.”

“Mmhm,” Ilya agrees absentmindedly, still focused on the photo.

Marleau eyes him, and then his eyes soften. He claps Ilya on the back. “You’re a good kid too, Rozanov.”

“I’m not a kid.”

“Maybe not now,” Marleau agrees, “But you were when you first signed on with us. A damn good one at that.” He pauses, searching for the words. “I know that you don’t talk about it. But with your dad and all, you know that I’m here for you, right? If you ever want to... talk about it.”

It’s a little awkward, this moment. He’s rarely vulnerable with his team, and they’re rarely vulnerable back. He says *I love you* while fist-bumping his teammates after a game, but— it’s casual. They do not know jackshit about him. He has never once opened up to them beyond the usual, surface-level talk.

Or, he *thinks* he hasn’t, apparently.

“When did I tell you about that? I do not remember. I would remember.”

Marleau offers him a faint smile. “It was your rookie season. You got extremely drunk that one night we went out in Chicago. You were hungover as fuck and kept insisting you were’t, because ‘Russians don’t get hungover’? I was walking you to your room, and you just— spilled. It was a joke though, more like a self-deprecation.”

“Self-deprecation? And yes. I remember that, for the record, I was not hungover.”

“Sure,” Marleau snorts. He pauses, words sobering. “You were upset about it. But not *upset* upset, just drunk upset.”

“Oh,” Ilya replies.

“My point is, man, we’re here for you. Just so you know.”

“Thank you,” Ilya says. And he means it.

Marleau leaves after that, waving a goodbye at the locker room door. Ilya fishes his phone out of his locker, sitting down on the bench.

**Ilya:** *It is very cute photo*

Three bubbles pop up, then disappear. They pop up again.

Ilya’s upturn. Of course Shane’s *typing-deleting-typing-deleting-typing*.

It's almost a minute before his next text comes in.

**Jane:** *I feel better.*

Another pause. Another three dot bubble.

**Jane:** *And I really appreciate you. For listening.*

**Jane:** *And being there.*

Oh, Shane.

**Ilya:** *Always*

## Chapter End Notes

aaaand, that's a wrap! i hope you enjoyed it as much as i enjoyed writing it :)

your thoughts/opinions always appreciated. let me know what you thought!

## End Notes

also i love writing shane sexting, because i, too, do not know how to sext

leave your thoughts! i love reading them :)

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