

what if? - WHAT DOES MAYBE MEAN

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76035106) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76035106>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Rose Landry
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Rose Landry
Additional Tags:	Talking , Gay Panic , Panic , Phone Calls & Telephones , I think im in love with him , Help , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Medication
Language:	English
Series:	Part 7 of What ifs? - game changers
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-19 Completed: 2026-01-07 Words: 2,158 Chapters: 2/2

what if? - WHAT DOES MAYBE MEAN

by [h0pei5Abutterfly_08](#)

Summary

so after ilya comes to the hospital, Shane freaks out (like always) but not to ilya. he decides in his medicated state to call rose. and he panics to her.

Chapter 1

The nurse adjusted the monitor and shook her head softly to herself.

“I still can’t believe Rozanov was just here,” she muttered, mostly to the clipboard, as she moved around Shane’s bed checking vitals.

Shane blinked at the ceiling lights. Everything felt slightly out of focus, like the world had been wrapped in cotton wool. His shoulder throbbed dully under the medication, but his head felt... floaty. Not good. Not bad. Just wrong.

When the nurse finished, she looked down at him, her expression gentle.

“Alright, dear. How are we feeling?”

Shane considered this very seriously.

“My brain feels... fizzy,” he said finally. “And my arm hurts but not in a way that makes sense.”

“That sounds about right,” she said with a small smile. “Anything you need?”

Shane hesitated. His mouth felt dry. His chest felt tight in a way that had nothing to do with the injury.

“Can I call someone?” he asked. His voice came out smaller than he meant it to.

The nurse tilted her head, assessing him. “As long as you don’t look at the screen and you promise me you won’t get yourself worked up.”

“I promise,” Shane said immediately. Too quickly. “I just need to talk.”

She nodded. “Okay. Who would you like me to call?”

“Rose Landry,” Shane said. Relief rushed through him the second the name left his mouth.

The nurse smiled in recognition and dialled. Rose picked up on the first ring.

“Oh my god—Shane? Are you okay?”

Her voice hit him like a lifeline.

“I’m all good, girllll,” Shane said, laughing too loudly, too suddenly.

There was a beat.

“Oh,” Rose said, her tone shifting instantly. “They gave you the good stuff.”

Shane frowned. “Does maybe mean yes or no?”

Rose laughed, softer this time. “It means maybe. Which is neither yes nor no.”

Shane accepted this with a slow nod. That tracked.

There was a pause, and then his face crumpled without warning.

“Rose,” he said, voice wobbling. “He looked so pretty.”

Rose went very still. “Who did, Shane?”

“And so worried,” he continued, eyes burning. “Like—really worried. And then I think I fucked it up.”

“Okay,” Rose said carefully. “You’re gonna need to rewind.”

“I invited him to the cottage,” Shane rushed on. “And he said maybe. And I don’t know what that means and I thought we were on the same page.”

“Shane,” Rose said firmly. “Who are we talking about?”

“He came to visit,” Shane said, tears spilling over now, completely unbothered by them.

“And I kept telling the nurses to call him after the hit because I didn’t want him to think I was dead but no one listened to me.”

“Shane,” Rose repeated, softer now. “Who came to visit you?”

“Ilya,” he breathed.

He smiled when he said it. Like the name itself soothed him.

There was a long silence on the other end of the line.

“...Rozanov?” Rose finally said.

Shane sniffed. “What other Ilya have I been sleeping with my entire NHL career?”

“Oh my god,” Rose said faintly. “Shane.”

“Oh shit I wasn’t supposed to tell you,” Shane panicked immediately. “He can’t go back to Russia if people know. We’re not even together—”

“Hey,” Rose cut in, grounding, steady. “Slow down. You’re okay. His secret is safe with me.”

Shane exhaled, the tension draining out of him instantly. “Okay. Good.”

His smile went a little crooked, but the panic eased.

“So,” Rose said gently. “Let me understand this. Ilya Rozanov came to the hospital because...?”

“We’re sleeping together,” Shane said, lowering his voice conspiratorially. “But shhhh.”

“I know,” Rose said, smiling despite herself. “I’m shhushing.”

“And we’re getting closer,” Shane continued. “And I think—” His throat tightened. “I think I’m in love with him.”

Rose didn’t speak for a moment.

“Holy fuck,” she said finally. “Okay.”

“And I think he loves me too,” Shane rushed on. “But he’s scared. Because—because who wouldn’t be scared? I’m scared.”

“I know, babe,” Rose said softly. “I know.”

“And I asked him to come to the cottage,” Shane said again, looping back like his brain needed to. “You know. The one by the lake.”

“Yes,” Rose said. “I know.”

“And he said maybe,” Shane said, voice cracking. “What does that mean?”

Rose took a breath.

“I think,” she said carefully, “it means he’s thinking. It means he cares enough not to say no, but he’s scared enough not to say yes yet.”

Shane swallowed.

“So it’s not bad?”

“No,” Rose said firmly. “It’s not bad. It’s just... complicated. And you two live in a world where complicated is kind of the default.”

Shane stared at the ceiling, blinking slowly.

“I don’t like uncertainty,” he admitted quietly.

“I know,” Rose said. “But you’re not alone in it. Not this time.”

Shane nodded, even though she couldn’t see it.

“Okay,” he said. “I trust you.”

And he meant it.

There was a pause on the line. Then Rose exhaled, slow and deliberate.

“Okay,” she said. “Okay, girl. I see you.”

Shane blinked. “See me how?”

“Ilya Rozanov,” Rose said. “Really? You went there?”

Shane huffed a small, dazed laugh. “He’s... very hot.”

Rose snorted. “Lowkey? Shane, he’s aggressively hot. Like, offensively attractive. I do not blame you in the slightest.”

Shane smiled, cheeks warming. “Thank you.”

“And wait,” Rose continued, her tone sharpening with curiosity. “When I asked you a while back if you’d ever been with a guy before—was that who you meant?”

Shane’s eyes widened slightly. “Yes. But—remember—shush.”

“I am shushing,” Rose promised.

There was another pause, and then her voice softened.

“Hey. One thing I need to ask,” she said gently. “You didn’t... overlap, right? With us.”

Shane’s head snapped to the side, horrified. “What? No. No, never. Rose, I would never cheat. Ever. I don’t even—no.”

“Okay,” Rose said quickly. “Okay. I just needed to hear it.”

“We weren’t speaking then,” Shane added, words tumbling over each other. “I got scared. I ran. That’s my thing. I panic and I flee. But I did really like you, Rose. I promise I did.”

Rose smiled to herself. “I know. I always knew.”

Shane frowned slightly. “You’re not mad?”

“No,” Rose said easily. “Honestly? I prefer us like this. You’re my person, just... not in the romantic relationship way.”

Shane relaxed, the tension leaving his shoulders. “Good. Because kissing you always felt... wrong.”

“Rude,” Rose said, laughing. “But I know, don’t worry.”

There was a beat, and then Shane sighed, staring at the ceiling again.

“He has this stupidly hot face,” he said suddenly. “And his hair never does what he wants it to, but he pretends it does. And when he’s tired, he gets more cuddlier, but only with me.”

Rose hummed. “Uh-huh.”

“And he acts like he doesn’t care what people think,” Shane went on, voice soft and reverent, “but he does. Just... selectively. And he brings me ginger ale without asking. He made me a

fucking tuna melt. And he remembers things I say even when I don't."

Rose smiled wider.

"And when he smiles," Shane added, eyes glassy now, "it's like he forgets to be sharp for a second. Like he's just... Ilya. Not Rozanov."

There was silence on the line. The good kind.

"Yeah," Rose said finally. "You're in love with him."

Shane sniffed. "I was afraid you'd say that."

Rose laughed gently. "You're going to be okay, Shane."

"I hope so," he murmured.

"You will be," she said. "And when you inevitably freak out again, I'll still be here."

Shane smiled, small but sure.

"Okay," he said. "That helps."

And for the first time since the hit, the world felt a little steadier.

Chapter 2: the nurse reaction!!!

Chapter Notes

nurse time!!!

The nurse stayed by the bed, clipboard tucked under her arm, half-listening in the way medical professionals did when patients were rambling under painkillers. You learned quickly what to tune out and what to flag.

At first, she assumed this was nothing.

Concussion talk. Post-hit emotional leakage. It happened all the time.

She adjusted the IV drip slightly, eyes flicking between the monitor and Shane's face as he spoke—too loose, too honest, words sliding out without brakes. When he asked to call Rose Landry, the nurse relaxed. Good, she thought.

Girlfriend. Familiar. Safe.

She even smiled a little when Rose answered immediately.

That smile didn't last.

At first, the conversation tracked normally enough, Rose's fond concern, Shane's over-loud reassurance. The nurse noted the slurring, the laughter that came too fast. Textbook.

Then Shane's expression changed.

Softened.

Not pain-soft. Not dizzy-soft.

Fond.

"Rose," he said, voice wobbling. "He looked so pretty."

The nurse froze.

Her pen paused halfway through a note.

He? she thought. Probably a teammate. She'd seen that too, players getting emotional about linemates, about guys who scared them during injuries.

Then Shane kept going.

“And so worried.”

The nurse glanced up properly now, attention sharpening.

Still, could be anyone. Concerned rival. Hockey was dramatic like that.

Then—

“He came to visit.”

Her brows knit.

Then—

“Ilya.”

The name landed in the room like a dropped tray.

The nurse’s head snapped up fully this time.

Rozanov?

Ilya Rozanov?

Her mind scrambled to reconcile it. Rival. Star player. Media enemy. The guy every broadcast framed as Shane Hollander’s on-ice opposite. The guy she had just been muttering about minutes earlier.

She watched Shane smile at the name, slow and unguarded, like it was a reflex.

Not rivalry.

Relief.

Her grip tightened on the clipboard.

She told herself, meds. This was meds.

Then Shane said, clear as day:

“What other Ilya have I been sleeping with my entire NHL career?”

The nurse very nearly dropped the clipboard.

She didn’t, because she was a professional. But something inside her very definitely short-circuited.

Sleeping with.

She stared at Shane like he might suddenly explain himself. He didn’t. He just sniffed, wiped his nose on the back of his hand, and kept talking.

And then,

“We’re not even together—”

Together.

Her brain latched onto the word like a life raft.

Okay. Not together. Maybe a joke. Maybe a half-truth warped by concussion logic.

Then Shane panicked.

“He can’t go back to Russia if people know.”

The nurse’s stomach flipped.

That... that wasn’t a joke.

That was fear. Real, informed fear. The kind you didn’t hallucinate.

She glanced instinctively toward the curtain, the door, as if someone might be listening. No one was. The room was quiet except for Shane’s voice and the steady beep of the monitor. Rose’s voice came through faintly from the phone, grounding, calm. Shane relaxed immediately when she promised secrecy.

Secrecy, the nurse thought faintly.

Her mental image of the situation, Rose and Shane, on-again off-again couple, Rozanov as rival, started to crack. Not shatter. Crack. Like ice under pressure.

Then Shane said it.

“I think I’m in love with him.”

The nurse felt her chest tighten, not with judgment, but with the sudden, unsettling realization that she had been very wrong about something very important.

She’d seen players confess love before. Usually for wives, fiancées, kids. Sometimes for the game itself.

This was different.

This was quiet. Earnest. Unfiltered.

She watched his face as he talked, how it softened when he described small things. Ginger ale. A tuna melt. Remembering details. The way he said Ilya like it was a safe place.

Not rivals.

Not enemies.

Not whatever narrative she’d absorbed from headlines and locker room gossip.

Something else entirely.

By the time Shane was rambling about hair that wouldn’t behave and smiles that made someone forget how to be sharp, the nurse had stopped pretending not to listen.

Her assumptions about Rose flickered too, about what she thought that relationship had been, what she thought she’d witnessed earlier in the season. She’d filed it all away neatly. Too neatly.

When Shane said, softly, “I don’t like uncertainty,” something in her chest ached.

When Rose told him he wasn’t alone in it, the nurse felt an unexpected swell of warmth toward a woman she’d never met.

By the end of the call, Shane looked calmer. Still dazed. Still injured. But steadier. The nurse cleared her throat gently, stepping forward again so he knew she was there. “Alright,” she said, carefully neutral, professionally kind. “Phone call’s done. You did really well.”

Shane smiled at her, sleepy and trusting. “Thank you.”

She nodded, adjusting the blanket, her mind still racing.

As she moved to update his chart, she added nothing about what she’d heard. Not a word. But as she wrote patient calmer, oriented, emotional due to concussion, she couldn’t help thinking:

Rivals, huh.

She glanced once more at Shane, at the way his fingers curled loosely around the phone, like he was still holding onto something important.

And for the first time since Rozanov had walked out of the room earlier, the nurse shook her head again—but this time, with a quiet, stunned smile.

“Well,” she murmured under her breath.

“That explains a lot.”

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