

recrudescent

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by [17o2585](#)

Summary

The arena is beautiful like this, cleared of fanfare and chaos. There's a special kind of stillness that comes after a big game: a private warmth despite the cool of the ice.

To his surprise, Shane's already on the ice. Ilya blinks, once, then twice, mouth parting. Shane's wearing clean, black skates—*figure* skates, doing laps around the rink. His skating has shifted out into something more unhurried, elegant. He's not a professional by any means — the nature of his strides are still darting. Operating, by habit, towards an invisible puck.

“Holy shit,” says Ilya.

or: hollander, for all his quirks, is... hollander. rozanov, if were possible, falls a little bit more in love

(now with chapter 2: shane is once again filling in for his friend at an exhibition gala and is doing a poor job of secretly practicing for it. ilya finds out and attends the performance)

Notes

this idea came to me from this one tiktok video i saw of a hockey player trying out figure skating spins in hockey skates. it was impressive

hope you enjoy!

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

Chapter 1

“And that’s the final horn! The Raiders have done it! Rozanov came in clutch on the last play, and the Raiders fought tooth and nail for their win over the Metros. What a game! End-to-end action all night. Hollander and Rozanov, rivalry radiating, pushed the pace and made it a battle. You don’t see games like this every day, folks. This was an incredible night.”

It’s a great night. The Raiders have won, home game, against the Metros. For Rozanov, this was great on all fronts: it meant not only being able to play against Hollander, which was his second favorite thing to do, but it meant seeing him afterward, his first favorite thing.

A little girl, adorning a ‘ROZANOV’ jersey, screams from the bleachers, waving at him. Rozanov bends down and picks up a puck. He throws it up so that it crosses the plexiglass. She catches it and then waves the puck in the air, grinning so widely it must hurt, shouting *“thank you, thank you, thank you!”*

Rozanov waves at the little girl, finding himself smiling, too. When he looks up, Hollander’s watching him. His eyes are softened, fond. Rozanov winks at him.

When he and Hollander stand on opposite sides, fist-bumping their teammates, Hollander says, “That’s gonna be all over social media.”

Rozanov snorts.

After showering and talking to the press, Rozanov finds himself back in the locker room. He draws out his phone, clacking at the alphabet keys.

Ilya: Come to my place

Hollander’s reply is almost immediate. Rozanov, despite himself, snorts at the fact. And then he snorts again, because Hollander’s version of planning a hookup (*though, can they call it a hookup anymore?*) is just... regular conversation.

Jane: Okay. Maybe in a couple hours, is that okay? I have to do something first.

Ilya: That is fine

Ilya: Although I wonder what can be more important than my dick shoved in your mouth

Jane: Ilya!

Jane: You can’t just text that!

It takes everything for Rozanov not to smile outwardly.

Ilya: Why not? Is it not true

Marleau comes up next to him and claps him on the shoulder, gesturing towards a couple other teammates who are left. “We’re going to go celebrate at mine,” he says. “Do you want to join?”

It sounds appealing, but not as appealing as Hollander. “No,” he replies.

“Getting laid? You’re blushing at your phone again.”

Rozanov glares at him. “I told you. Russians do not blush. And sure, you could say.”

“If you say so,” Marleau chuckles.

By now, most of the stadium has emptied, save the cleaning crews. Rozanov eyes his skates, and then something in his mind prickles. When he was younger, back in Russia, he would skate after games. It was better than going back to his family. An excuse to draw out going home to his asshole brother and his father.

Rozanov takes his skates and leaves the locker room. He has time to kill anyway.

The hallways are dimly lit, a little ominous. Rozanov, though he is not scared of monsters and clowns and chainsaws, is half sure something might pop out and kill him. Without the echoes of the fans, sounds of the game, it’s a ghost town, almost. Ghost arena.

The rink itself is still lit, though most of the bleachers aren’t. It’s beautiful like this, cleared of fanfare and chaos. There’s a special kind of stillness that comes after a big game: a private warmth despite the cool of the ice.

Rozanov drops his skates down on the bench, and then, right before sitting down, blinks at the ice, mouth parting.

To his surprise, Hollander’s already on the ice. He’s wearing clean, black skates—*figure* skates. He’s doing laps around the rink, skating shifted out into something more unhurried, elegant. He’s not a professional by any means—his strides are still darting. Operating, by habit, towards an invisible puck.

“Holy shit,” says Rozanov.

Hollander shifts so he’s skating backwards. He pumps his arms, digging his icepick into the ice, and then lifts up. He spins once, arms crossed in an X across his chest, and just when Rozanov thinks he’s about to make it, he aborts the landing, falling flat on the ice.

Rozanov can’t help but laugh at the absurdity of it. It’s loud enough that Hollander catches it. He whips his head around, eyes widening.

“If you wanted your ass laid flat,” Rozanov tells him, a little gleefully, “You could have just asked me.”

“Shut up,” Hollander groans, bringing his arm to cover his eyes.

Rozanov sits down on the bench, tying on his skates. Hollander lays there, on the ice, a moment longer. Then he pulls himself upright, skating towards where Rozanov is.

“Figure skating?” asks Rozanov.

Hollander laughs, scratching the back of his head. “No, no. Not really. It’s a long story.”

Rozanov glides onto the rink, making his way towards the center. Hollander follows, but not as smoothly as him. He looks conscious of where he’s distributing his weight, unlike when he’s in hockey skates.

At Rozanov’s amused look, he taps his ice pick into the ice. “Don’t look at me like that. These toe picks always throw me off, I always trip on them if I’m not careful. I’m not used to them being there.”

“Hollander, I am confused,” Rozanov replies. “You are not used to it. But this means you… figure skate… often?”

Hollander shrugs. “Not really. Just sometimes.”

“Right.”

“Like I said, it’s a long story.”

Rozanov glances around, and when the stadium comes up empty, he reaches out and rubs his thumb over Hollander’s cheekbone. “We have time.”

Hollander’s cheeks go a little pink. He skates backwards, then gestures outward. “Skate laps with me?”

They do.

“Well, when I was 7 or so,” Hollander begins, “at the home rink I trained at— this was, uh, before I dropped out of school to focus on hockey— I had this group of friends. The rink used to have the same public skate schedule for younger kids, regardless of whether it was hockey or figure skating. So our group was a mix of both.

“Anyways, we all got pretty close, and pretty much grew up together. Our parents all became friends too. A few years later, we all kind of diverged in our paths, but it was always nice spending time with them when we had the time to. Two of my friends, Emi and Jonah, were pairs skaters. Jonah broke his ankle before one of their competitions, and Emi got the bright idea of getting her coach to speed-teach me their entire routine, so that I could fill in for Jonah. She asked around, but everyone thought she was crazy. My mom said—” Shane dips his pitch to match his mom’s, “—*why not, Shane, it could be fun.*”

Rozanov laughs. “Seriously, Hollander? That is… Did you win?”

“Oh, god, no,” Hollander snorts. He gestures at his feet. “Are you kidding? We placed last because of me. I fell so many times that our routine took double the time it should’ve, and I just stood there while Emi did her tricks.” His expression crosses into something reminiscing. “God. Our parents couldn’t stop laughing at us. Emi thought it was the best moment of her life.”

Rozanov, before he can help himself, tugs an arm around Hollander, wringing him in. He presses a sloppy kiss to his temple.

“That is so ridiculous,” he says. “Oh my god. Maybe you are not that boring after all.”

Hollander glares at him halfheartedly. “The rest is history, I guess. Every now and then, before I went pro, Emi would teach me a new trick. Not that I’ve got any down, but... I don’t know. I just decided it would be fun to learn a secret skill in tandem to a public one, too.”

“Learn a secret skill in tandem to a public one? What do you mean by this?”

“Sorry,” Hollander clarifies. “Um— basically, I thought it would be fun to practice figure skating every now and then. But not publicly, just for myself. For fun.”

“Like a hobby.”

“Yeah. Kinda, I guess.”

Rozanov shifts so he’s skating backwards in front of Hollander. He raises an eyebrow. “Spin.”

“What?”

“Do a spin.”

“Ilya,” Hollander groans. “C’mon.”

Ilya grins. “With— what is the word— jazz.”

“Pizzazz?”

“Yes, this.”

Hollander huffs. He skates past Ilya, gaining momentum. Ilya tracks him as he loops around the entire rink, shifting his weight to warm up. When he’s near the middle, he swings forward on one leg, tucking the other one around it. His legs twist as he spins.

It’s slow, and a tad wobbly, but it’s good. Hollander bows when he’s done, blinking the dizzy out of his eyes.

Rozanov claps. “That was good. Can you jump?”

“What is this, a test?”

“No. I want to see you skate.”

“You see me skate all the time.”

Ilya glides towards him. “I want to see you skate like *this*.”

“*Ilya*.”

“*Shane*.” Ilya mimics, lips upturned. “C’mon. Be a good boy and jump.”

Shane opens his mouth to retort, and then closes it, flustered. “Asshole,” he manages.

“Jump, *moy zaychik*.”

He does. Or at least, tries to. He lands on his ass again, wincing. “Fuck.”

“Don’t bruise yourself too bad,” says Ilya, wagging his eyebrows. Shane glares at him, pushing himself off the ground. “Say it.”

“What?”

“You look like you want to say something. Say it.”

Shane’s eyes track up and down his face, and linger, just briefly, on his lips. When Ilya quirks an eyebrow, he forces his gaze back up, shaking his head. “Skate laps with me.”

“We just did.”

“Yeah, I know. But I mean— I don’t know. We’re always playing against each other, but we never just... skate.”

Ilya thinks it’s a little ridiculous of a statement, because their job is to play, not skate laps with each other, but he gets it. The sentiment behind it, at least.

His heart skips.

It’s bordering romantic, whatever this is. A date. The two of them skating together, what, holding hands? Talking about their lives? Pretending to be a couple in the sanctuary of an empty stadium?

Shane notices the look on his face. He backtracks, a little frantic. “I mean. Sorry— not like that, I just meant... I thought that, well, it would be fun. I just love skating, beyond everything. So I thought...”

“Hollander,” he cuts in, and then stops. “Shane. It’s fine. We can skate together.”

“Oh.” Shane looks relieved. “Okay.”

“The more time we skate, the more chances you will trip on toe pick.”

“Asshole.”

They skate for a while, in silence, and Ilya has to admit that Shane's right. It's nice. Peaceful, even.

"I've never skated like this," says Ilya after a while, breaking the ice (pun intended). Shane startles, pulled out of his thoughts. "Without... purpose. What is the word?"

"Purposeless?"

"No."

Shane thinks a moment. "Oh. Aimlessly?"

"Yes, this. Hockey is my life, of course, but it is always with purpose. I skate for practice. If I am skating circles, it is to warm up. Or for drills." Something must read on his face, because Shane doesn't respond, either to give him space to continue or to give him silence to think. Ilya hesitates, shaking his head. "But when I was young, I did this. When I was kid. When I didn't want to go to my home. I would skate circles and circles. But even then. It was with purpose."

"Oh," replies Shane.

"Yes. The ice is my home."

"Mine too," Shane says. He hesitates, then laughs. It's a small, slight thing. "I get really worked up about my routines, sometimes. When there's a deviation or sudden change in plans. I don't like those, but they're kinda hard to avoid as a professional athlete. Whenever I get anxious, I try to carve out a minute to just come out here. It sounds counterintuitive, because I guess coming here would deviate my time *more*, but... it just reminds me that there's a purpose, you know? To all of this."

"*Da*."

"I love hockey. It's my favorite thing in the world. I'm really grateful that I get to dedicate my entire life to something I enjoy so much."

Ilya snorts, pointing at his feet. "You say this while wearing figure skates."

"That's besides the point."

"Whatever you say."

Shane laughs, head tilting back. And then he trips forward, on his toe pick, lurching forward. But instead of meeting the ice, he meets Ilya's chest.

"Thanks," he says, voice muffled in the fabric. It comes out more like: *fanks*.

“No problem,” Ilya replies, hauling him straight upright, hand gripped at the collar of Shane’s hoodie. His other arm stays wrapped around his back.

Shane’s eyes go a little soft around the edges. He presses forward, just slightly enough that the warm air of his breath tickles at the side of Ilya’s throat. “Maybe,” he murmurs, voice hoarse, “we’re done skating?”

Ilya grabs Shane’s chin and presses him in a kiss. “Maybe you are right, Hollander.”

Chapter 2: bonus pt 2

Chapter Summary

bonus second chapter! shane is once again filling in for his friend at an exhibition gala and is doing a poor job of secretly practicing for it. ilya finds out and (gleefully) attends the performance without telling him

Chapter Notes

this chapter is dedicated to my roommate who is a physics major and did my physics hw so that i could write fanfiction. i love u my dear roommate (i know you're reading this)

what can i say heated rivalry and winter olympics 2026 overlapping is the best thing to ever happen to me. olympic figure skating has me on a chokehold!! i used to skate so i hope the vocabulary in this is semi-accurate (its been a while)

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

A couple months later finds Shane's phone ringing from where it's perched atop the coffee table in front of them. Ilya catches the caller ID flash as *Emi*, before Shane shifts, sits up, and glances at it. He grabs it, lets it go to voicemail, then texts Emi, *I'll call you back later. Are you available tonight?*

"You can pick up the phone, Hollander," Ilya says, a little exasperatedly.

Shane settles back towards him, head tucking into the crook of his neck. "Later," he murmurs, shaking his head.

Ilya remembers the name Emi from the story Shane had told him. He shifts so he can run his hand down the open skin of Shane's free arm—the arm that's not smooshed between Ilya's chest and his side—and fast-forwards the ads playing on the TV with the other hand.

"Have you been figure skating lately?"

Shane shrugs. "I mean, sometimes."

"You always say *sometimes*. Sometimes is five times in day? Five times in year?"

Shane huffs. "Like, five times in a week."

"That's not *sometimes*. That is, like, full time *job*."

“It’s ice time, Ilya,” Shane says, like it’s obvious. “It’s a great exercise for control and power on the ice. And, it’s great for edgework.”

He says it pointedly, in his Shane way. “Okay, Mister Hockey,” Ilya says. He grins. “Are you saying my edges are bad?”

“No,” Shane defends, but his lips upturn, just barely, too. “I’m just saying that *some* players may find benefit from switching up their skates.”

“Right. *Some*.”

“Mhm.”

“I edge great.” Shane blinks, sending him an unimpressed look. Ilya trails his hand, keeping the touch feathery, across Shane’s stomach, then lets it slide lower. “You do not think so?”

Shane’s cheeks pink. He swallows, visibly, but forces his composure to remain as it is. Or, at the very least, casual. “You’re gross.”

Ilya grins as he peppers kisses at his neck. “Whatever you say, Hollander.”

When Ilya gets out of the shower, he hears Shane’s voice, a little muffled, trickling in from his bedroom. It had been a languid night for the most part: they’d fucked, twice. Once on the couch, where Ilya had practiced the kind of edgework he *very much* enjoyed, and then again, a little later, on Shane’s bed.

Ilya had let Shane shower first—the man had been a little doopey afterward when he had been tucked against him. Part of him wanted to follow Shane in, to let the man’s head rest on his shoulder, to let the hot steam decompress them both, but they... didn’t do all that. Sure, Ilya always made sure Shane was okay afterward, but it was never *emotional*. Not the way he would let himself let it be.

He had left the bathroom door cracked ajar. He catches a glimpse outside: Shane, upright and against the headboard, with his second comforter, the one he always kept on hand to replace a dirty one, tucked up to his waist, reading. He has one hand put at his ear, holding his phone.

“—*the most ridiculous thing ever*,” Shane says.

He cannot hear the person that he assumes is on the other end of the phone.

“*Fine. I’ll think about it... no, I will think. Don’t say thank you yet.*” Shane laughs. It’s a laugh, open and uninhibited, only given to people he’s comfortable with, Ilya has found. It’s a laugh that’s Ilya’s favorite to hear from the other man. “*No! Do not ask my mom... Seriously? No!... Okay. Yes, bye. Stop saying thank you... yeah, bye.*”

When Ilya comes out of the bathroom, donning sweats and nothing else, Shane's gaze flickers to his. "Hey."

"Hello," Ilya says. Despite thinking better of it, he slips back into the bed beside Shane instead of bidding his goodbye for the night. *Just a couple minutes.* "What are you reading?"

Shane shifts, just barely, closer to him. "Lord of the Rings," he says. "The second book."

Ilya nods. "I have seen the movie. The one where they go to the... mountain, da?"

Shane bookmarks the page he's at, and then places the book down on his nightstand. "Yeah. Mount Doom, in Mordor. I love the movies too. When I was younger, I had Lord of the Rings posters all over my room."

A lingering silence drifts between them. Ilya clears his throat. "Do you have early flight?" When Shane shakes his head, a little part inside him, selfishly, perks up. "Do you have laptop?"

At this, Shane nods. "Why?"

"We can watch. First one."

"You want to... watch the first Lord of the Rings movie? Right now?"

"*Da.* It is peaceful."

Shane considers this. He turns anxious for a moment, brain visibly cranking; Ilya watches how the lines above his eyebrows tense. Ilya reaches out and squeezes his hand, and then keeps holding it, drawing circles with his thumb.

"Okay," Shane whispers. "Okay, yeah."

It's not even thirty minutes into the movie that finds Shane asleep, burrowing further and further down into the bed. He's half on top of Ilya, still vaguely upright. If not for Ilya's arm wrapped around him, he would've been flopping onto the laptop. Ilya should've expected this — it's well past Shane's rigidly kept bedtime.

On the screen, Gandalf turns to Frodo. "*All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.*"

Ilya looks down at Shane and swallows. He gently folds the laptop and places it on the nightstand. He tucks Shane so that he's laying in his bed, and then, looking back just once, leaves.

A month later finds the next Metros vs Raiders game at Ilya's home rink. Ilya, freshly showered, and wanders towards the rink. Though he and Shane have inevitable plans to meet after the game, Ilya has an inkling about where the man is.

True to his prediction, Shane's in his black skates. A little amusedly, Ilya watches as he pumps backwards, skating back and forth between his outside and inside edge.

And then he pumps his arms, digs his toe pick into the ice, and jumps. Ilya counts two spins in the air. He almost makes it, almost— but his skate catches.

"Fuck," Shane mutters from where he's splayed on the ice. He winces. "Ow."

He breathes. Gathers himself.

Shane tries again. This time, he lands it.

Ilya finds himself smiling.

With a newfound momentum, Shane comes to the center of the rink, raises his legs and tilts his body, for a camel spin. It's neat. Fast. His form has improved since Ilya last seen him skate this way all those months ago.

Shane trickles out of his spin, slowing down. He stops, letting himself breath, and blinks the dizzy out of his eyes.

"Okay," he says, to himself. "Okay."

Without disrupting him, or announcing his presence from where he's carefully concealed by the bleachers, Ilya watches.

Later that night, when they're in Ilya's bed, enjoying their post-sex induced haze, Shane's phone rings.

He wrinkles his nose, mumbling out a *sorry* from where his face is half smooshed into a pillow.

The call goes to voicemail.

And then it rings again.

Ilya groans. "Pick it up, Hollander."

Shane huffs, shaking his head. "It's just my friend. I'll call her back later."

Ilya eyes him. "Your friend wants your attention."

“Yeah, and I’m with *you*.”

“So what? Is it secret?” A little pointedly, Ilya gestures towards the door. “I can leave.”

Shane’s throat bobs. “No,” he says. “I mean— I’m with you. It’s rude to answer the phone when I’m... spending time with you.”

“Oh,” Ilya says. “No, it is not rude. I do not mind.”

Shane replies, “Okay.”

“Okay, Hollander? You do not need to be so tense about this.” He softens his tone. “It’s okay. You are okay.”

“Okay,” Shane says, again. “Yeah.”

Due to a Multi Major League award show being hosted in the city, the Metros, and in extension, Shane Hollander, stay in Boston for a couple days after their game against the Raiders.

Since it’s in the middle of the season, they are graciously allowed to hold practice on Boston’s ice. Training facilities are blessedly multi-rinked— the Raiders use one, the Metros another, though their training times are staggered.

Home teams usually take the ice first, followed by the away team, but, in exception for the two available rinks, they are able to overlap. The Metros have notoriously early practices. By the time Ilya basks in rolling up at 10am, he knows that their team has probably nearly finished their morning skate.

Practice is decent and like usual.

Afterward, when Ilya’s showered and ready to hit the road, a little curiously, he makes his way towards the other side of the facility where the Metros had been practicing. Lo and behold, just as he had guessed, the Metros have filtered out. All except for one.

Shane, adorned in his black figure skates, is zeroed in on his phone, which is perched on top of the rink barrier. A tinny voice rings out through the speaker. *“I think this is going to go way better than last time.”*

“Emi,” Shane says into his phone, a little exasperated.

A man’s voice, equally as tinny as the woman’s, adds, *“Stop torturing him. Shane, go again.”*

Shane skates backwards. Music starts from their Video Chat— Shane follows it closely, movements breezy, loose.

And then, it occurs to Ilya that, for the first time he's seen, Shane is doing *choreography*.

"*That's it,*" the man says. "*And, 1... 2... 3...*"

Shane skips the actual moves, instead sifting through the entirety of a program. It's clear that there's supposed to be someone next to him from the way his arms hold air at some points.

There's clapping when he's done.

"*That was awesome,*" Emi says.

Shane huffs a laugh. "Yeah, thanks."

So Shane is performing. In place of Jonah, it seems, who has broken his ankle again.

It's a local Ottawa fundraiser exhibition performance, done yearly. It seems like a big deal, this performance. Big enough that Shane Hollander, who manages his routine and hockey career down to a T, has spared time enough to genuinely practice for.

Ilya makes a mental note to book a flight to Ottawa.

Another perk of the Metros staying for a couple nights is the fact that the two of them have unanimously, if not unspokenly, decided to spend every evening together. By the third night, it turns more... domestic. Instead of fucking right away, Ilya leads Shane to the kitchen, gesturing towards a barstool.

Ilya's cooking dinner for them— which should be weird, because *they don't do this*— when he asks, "Why did you fill in your friend?"

Shane startles, a little surprised at the question. "What do you mean?"

"Your friend. When you were little. Why did you fill in for him when he was injured?"

"Oh," Shane says. He eyes him, doing a bad job of concealing his search for whether Ilya knows about his upcoming performance or not, and then remembers himself and shrugs.

"Well, I don't know. I didn't think much of it. They were my friends. I'll always help them if I have a chance to."

“Even when you were tired after your own practice?”

Shane pauses. “I guess so. It didn’t seem like a chore. Plus, like I said, I’m— I was always looking for a way to be better at hockey. Any type of ice time helps.”

Silence drifts between them.

“I don’t know if I can call you boring anymore, Hollander.”

Shane’s cheeks color, just barely. “In a good way?”

“In the best way,” Ilya confirms, pressing a sloppy kiss to Shane’s temple.

They don’t see each other for a while after their bout of nights spent in Boston. Things, for the most part, go back to how they usually are.

The performance draws closer.

Shane’s replies are usually quick when he’s not at practice or otherwise occupied.

Recently, in the evenings, and in the couple hours around Shane’s hockey practice, they’re slow. Sometimes, his responses come in hours later.

Ilya imagines it: Shane, staying on the ice, after hours. Putting in a good amount of effort, trying, *really* trying. He’s Shane fucking Hollander, so he wouldn’t do anything half-assed.

And he’s Shane fucking Hollander, so he manages it.

His performance during games never once wavers— Ilya knows he must be exhausted, jumping and spinning on already sore, spent legs in his free time. He plays, and he plays damn well, like always.

God, Ilya loves him.

Ilya hopes that his baseball cap and oversized sweatshirt is enough to prevent anyone from figuring out that Ilya Rozanov, Star and Center of the Boston Raiders, is attending what seems to be the biggest local Ottawa Figure Skating Exhibition Gala.

The performances start out adorable. There are groups of young kids, feet barely big enough for the smallest skates, running around the ice, waving their hands in what seems to be

choreography. Each discipline— ladies, mens, pairs, and ice dance— goes at least once for each skill level.

The announcer, voice reverberating through the rink, says, *“This one is a special one! We have our very own NHL star Shane Hollander taking the ice in place of Emi Monata’s usual partner, Jonah Commadore. What a delight! Shane, we didn’t know you could figure skate, but we’re glad for it!”*

There’s some laughing and cheering in the crowds. As Shane and Emi skate onto the rink, Shane’s black pants and sparkling navy top matching with Emi’s black and navy dress, he’s smiling, waving at the crowd.

He looks a little nervous, but nonetheless relaxed.

He and Emi settle into place.

The music starts. Shane’s chest rises as he moves with the melody, following Emi’s lead. They’re not exactly in sync, but they’re good. Really good, for one of the partners to have been a professional *hockey* player.

They back crossover, positioning themselves for a jump. Emi does a triple, Shane a single. Both of them land it.

While Shane doing the simpler version of skills is visible, the crowd seems to be loving it. There’s applause at every jump, spin. Ilya finds himself clapping too, if not a little quieter, as to not draw attention to himself.

The routine goes smoothly. Shane is uninhibited, loose with his movements. Ilya never once takes his eyes off him— never once looks away from the loose smile painted across his lips, the quiet concentration etched across his expression.

When they finish, they get a standing ovation, just as all the previous skaters did. Shane grins as he and Emi hug, his mouth parted into a loose lipped laugh.

As he bows with Emi, Shane splits out into a grin.

Shane is a creature of habit. Once the performance is done, the first place Ilya goes is the empty ‘home team’ locker room meant for hockey teams.

Sure enough, Shane’s in there, tugging his skates off. He replaces the hard guard on them with a soft cover and tucks them methodically into his duffle bag.

He startles when Ilya turns up at the foot of the door.

“Great performance,” Ilya starts, a smile forming. And then he reaches into his pocket and procures a flower. “I would bring bouquet, but it would draw attention, I think.”

Shane blinks. And blinks again. He takes the flower, eyes going soft. “You came?”

“Yes.”

“How did you— how did you know about it?”

Ilya shrugs, coming to sit down next to him on the bench. “You are not so subtle. And Google.”

“Oh. Well...”

“You did good, Hollander,” Ilya says. “I am impressed.”

Shane smiles at that, openly and genuinely. “Yeah?”

“Yes. It was beautiful. You have been practicing. I can tell.”

Shane eyes him a second. Ilya leans back so his back touches the back of the lockers. “Is that why you asked about when I was younger?”

“I was curious, *da*.”

Shane leans back too, then lets his body tilt so that it can rest against Ilya’s. He fiddles with the flower, and says, a little soft and a little watery and always in his beautiful Shane way, “Thank you for coming.”

Ilya lets out a gentle laugh, letting a hand sift through Shane’s hair. “Anytime.”

Chapter End Notes

i very much hope you enjoyed this :)

End Notes

i might turn this into a series where ilya just keeps discovering the various random hobbies of shane hollander. let me know if that's something you'd want to see!

and as always, comments make me smile :) i always love hearing your thoughts

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