

we all need a friend sometimes

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we all need a friend sometimes

by [cityofdownwardspirals](#)

Summary

Svetlana has seen enough hockey injuries happening in real time to recognize a bad one. After the way Cliff Marlow collided with Shane Hollander, she is not surprised to see that the former needs to be taken off the ice by paramedics.

What she is surprised by, however, is the look on Ilya's face when it happens.

Suddenly, a lot of different things start to make sense.

OR:

How Svetlana figures it out and doesn't let Ilya be alone while he worries about Shane.

Notes

hellooo so i have a new hyperfixation: heated rivalry!!

after watching episode 5 i just really wanted someone to be there for ilya while shane was in the hospital and also wanted to write a little fic about svetlana finding out about the two of them so this happened.

this is very self-indulgent. i am mixing show and book canon and also treating this as sort of a deleted scene in an alternate universe.

i also just really adore my queen svetlana and wanted to write from her pov

hope you all enjoy it!!! comments make my day <3

this will also definitely not be my last heated rivalry fic so keep an eye out

There was absolutely no way Svetlana was going to miss tonight's game. Yes, Boston and Montreal games were generally very thrilling to watch and she loved the dynamic between the two teams so those nights were always some of her favorites. But for once, it wasn't the performance she was most interested in. Tonight, her only concern was Ilya's wellbeing.

She had been there for Ilya's father's funeral and knew very well how much Ilya's family affected him, which is why she was surprised by the fact that her friend seemed better than she had expected by the time they were back in America. Like he had come to terms with something.

That being said, "better than she had expected" was still not "fine", and yet, here he was, back on the ice. Svetlana knew why he chose to go right back into it and fully supported his choice, but at the same time she couldn't deny that she was concerned about him going back to acting as if nothing had happened after everything. The announcer was saying something about how Ilya is good at overcoming obstacles, and Svetlana almost let out a bitter laugh at how easily people seem to talk about stuff they know nothing about. They will never understand how easy or hard things are for Ilya, but they sure love to talk about it as if they do.

The Boston Raiders hoodie she was wearing smelt faintly of Ilya and that gave her some comfort, at least. She knew that most people would not understand the bond she has with Ilya. It had been a long time since they last had sex, but ever since figuring out how much Jane means to Ilya, Svetlana understood that they were past that. She still liked borrowing Ilya's clothes and being physically close to him, and it was like the lack of sex actually made their bond stronger in a way. Which is why she needed the extra comfort tonight when she was worried about him.

She sat down on the sofa with a glass of wine, wishing she could have been in the audience at the game to look after him, yet she couldn't just fly to Montreal that night. She had some work to catch up on herself considering the unexpected flight to Russia for the funeral. Thankfully, the cameras always seemed to be laser-focused on either Ilya or Hollander, or both, so she would not have to leave him out of her sight for too long.

That, as it turns out, would be the least of her concerns.

One moment, everything looked like a normal game, with Ilya and Hollander fighting for the puck and Hollander taking control of it and skating away. He seemed to turn around and look at Ilya with a pleased smile on his face and that is when Cliff Marlow came out of nowhere and... Now, Shane Hollander was laying on the ice, his body motionless.

While everyone else was watching the injured Montreal player, or Hayden Pike and Cliff Marlow fighting it out, Svetlana could not tear her eyes away from Ilya. Ilya, who looked down at Hollander with more terror than Svetlana had ever seen in his eyes. Ilya, who had to be sent away by the referee because he was standing too close to Hollander and wouldn't leave. Ilya, who, at that moment, did not seem to hate Shane Hollander at all. The wording the announcer used was that he was looking "concerned" and while that may have been right, it didn't encompass all the emotions Svetlana could see playing out on her friend's face.

Her fingers tightened on the glass of wine she was holding.

Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander.

Shane. Her mind kept repeating that name, as if looking for hidden clues. Shane...Shane...
Shane...

Jane.

“Holy shit,” she muttered into the empty room.

Maybe she hasn’t been paying as much attention to Ilya as she thought she was.

Once the game officially ended, Svetlana waited for about 30 minutes, giving Ilya the time to change out of his gear and leave (and, hopefully, not murder Cliff Marlow), before calling him. Her first call went straight to voicemail because Ilya was who he was. And because Svetlana was who she was, she called two more times until he finally picked up.

“Svetlana-” It sounded like Ilya was in an alley somewhere, since she could hear the faint sound of cars driving by and the whooshing wind.

“Are you okay?” she asked, before Ilya could cut her off by saying something like ‘this is not the time’.

Ilya’s voice sounded exhausted but also a little surprised when he said, “What?”

“I watched the game, Ilya. Are you okay?”

A humorless laugh. “You know that I was not the one who got injured, right?”

Svetlana bit her lip, feeling unsure before saying the next words. “You may not have gotten injured, but it still looked like you were hurting.” She laid out the words carefully one by one, afraid that speaking her thoughts out loud might spook Ilya.

There was silence on the other end of the line for so long that Svetlana thought he might have hung up. She heard a clicking sound and could literally picture Ilya lighting a cigarette. She had not seen him smoke in a while, now that she thought about it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Ilya muttered. It was the most unconvincing lie Svetlana had ever heard.

“Ilya, who is Jane?” Svetlana had already understood that Jane was a man and when she had said as much to Ilya, he didn’t deny it. But this question was a lot more specific and the answer much more dangerous to give.

“Svetlana.” Ilya’s voice was shakier now, and Svetlana was sure it was not because of the cold. “Not tonight. Please. I cannot talk about... that. Not now.” This was probably as much of a confirmation as she was going to get. Because Ilya did not question the seemingly sudden change of subject. He was not even the least bit surprised by it. He sounded resigned, like he knew that Svetlana knew now and just wanted to avoid any further questions.

That is when Svetlana realized she may have been coming at this from the wrong angle and Ilya was taking her words the wrong way. He thought she was interrogating him or going to tease him about “Jane”. And well, she will definitely do that sooner rather than later. But right now, that was not what Ilya needed. Ilya needed a friend and she needed to make sure he understood that she was there.

“I don’t need you to talk about *that*. I just... I’m here. If you need to talk about... about what happened tonight. If you need to talk about him. I am not going to ask you questions. I’ll just listen.”

More silence. There was definitely something happening in these silences and Svetlana again wished she was in Montreal, wished she was able to look at Ilya’s face and see all the unsaid things that would be displayed there. After years and years spent with Ilya Rozanov, she had gotten quite good at reading him, but doing it on the phone was a different challenge.

Finally, Ilya let out another laugh, but this one sounded like he was halfway between laughing and crying. “This is so fucking ironic. The last time I had a phone call in a dark alley was last week and it was... with *him*. I told him all the shit about my family and now... here I am, in yet another dark alley talking *about* him.”

“Sounds like it may be a ‘you’ problem if you like conducting all your phone calls in dark alleys,” Svetlana pointed out, hoping to lift some of the heaviness of the moment. She couldn’t make anything better, but she could try to be there as much as she could in a way Ilya would appreciate. And Ilya appreciated banter, which actually made Jane’s identity make much more sense.

It seemed to work, getting another wet laugh out of him. “Fuck you. I was on my way to my hotel but someone wouldn’t stop calling me so I had to pick up.”

“Were you actually?” Svetlana asked, raising an eyebrow even though he couldn’t see her.

“No,” Ilya quickly admitted. “I started walking to the hospital. It’s not unusual for the captain of the other team to visit an injured player, right? But then I realized it was probably too late for visiting hours and his parents will probably be there and that is a conversation I don’t want to have.” He let out a long, shuddering breath. “I’ve been checking the news for any updates on his condition but so far there’s nothing.”

Svetlana knew that already, because she too had been refreshing the news every few minutes or so to check for any news on Hollander’s condition. Of course, if he needed any sort of surgery, that would take a while and also, now that it was nighttime she didn’t expect there to be any proper updates until the morning.

Ilya seemed to wait a moment in case she wanted to say anything, but she didn’t, so then he spoke again. “Svetlana, I’m scared.”

She hadn’t ever heard those words come out of Ilya’s mouth before. Of course, sometimes things got bad and he couldn’t hide his fear no matter how much he tried. But he never admitted it out loud, usually kept it in or suppressed it as much as possible. Hearing him speak so bluntly left Svetlana unsure what to do for a moment.

“He will be fine, Ilya.” And that, she could say quite convincingly. She had watched enough hockey games to have a pretty good idea about the different kinds of injuries there are. Hollander’s injury looked bad and the angle Marlow hit him at was weird, but it could have been worse. Reports say he was awake when the paramedics tried to talk to him, so that was another good thing. “He seems tough. You have been doing this for years, Ilya. You know that injuries are sometimes part of the game. How many people have you seen get hit like that and be out for a season then come back?”

“I know,” Ilya said, not sounding at all relieved. “But none of those people... None of them were him.”

Those words were like the final puzzle piece falling into place. The softness in Ilya’s voice made it almost unrecognizable and it made Svetlana’s own heart ache a little. “Holy shit. You love him,” she whispered. She was almost afraid that if she spoke the words too loudly, she would break this fragile thing Ilya is choosing to share with her.

Ilya didn’t answer. He neither confirmed nor denied it. Instead, the crying that was underlying his voice now was turning into full sobs. Ilya was crying, being more vulnerable about someone than Svetlana had ever seen him be. He was crying as if the love he felt for Shane Hollander was physically hurting him. But Svetlana had seen the effect that one phone call with Shane had on Ilya. She understood now how Ilya had managed to be this okay after his father’s funeral. She wondered what it feel like to love someone so much that it is both a kind of torture and the thing keeping you together.

Once Ilya’s sobbing slowed down and then stopped, he stayed on the phone with Svetlana as he walked to his hotel. They kept talking until 4am, with him telling her little bits and pieces about himself and Shane. There were certain things that were not his to share, though, so he focused on talking about how Shane made him feel and how it was different from anyone else he had been with before. Svetlana did as she promised and didn’t ask him any questions, just listening and trying her best to understand the shape of Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander’s relationship in her head.

Seemingly out of nowhere, Ilya asked *her* a question. “I should end it, shouldn’t I?”

Now, it was Svetlana’s turn to be surprised. “What?”

“This... Everything. I... I was thinking last night, before the game. This is not safe anymore. I should end it.” Ilya sounded tired, and not just physically.

Svetlana’s knowledge about Ilya filled in the gaps. Of course none of this was safe for their careers, but she knew that that was not all it was about. Ilya Rozanov, as much as he claimed to like trouble, had always preferred to keep his heart safe and Shane had done what no one ever could before and broke down those walls.

This was not Svetlana’s call to make, of course, so she said, “Is that what you want?”

“I-” Ilya started, then stopped himself. “I should let you sleep. It’s late.”

Svetlana didn't push for an answer to her question. That was something Ilya needed to answer for himself. "Are *you* going to sleep?" she asked instead.

"No."

"At least you're honest."

"After tonight, I don't see the point in lying to you about anything anymore. You will find out all my secrets anyway." He emphasized his words with an exaggerated sigh.

"That's what best friends are for," she smirked, then sobered. "Genuinely, though... Are you going to be okay?"

"Yes. As long as he's fine, I will be too."

And just like that, the picture of Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander together made sense in Svetlana's mind. Be it as rivals or lovers or both, their careers have been growing together. They have been growing together. It was easy to see now.

"He will be fine. You both will."

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