

hidden depths

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Summary

The sky is blue, the sun is bright and Ilya Rozanov is a womanizer. But is he really? What seemed like a simple fact of life gets questioned at practice and the Ottawa Centaurs are nothing if not nosy...

Cue idiots being idiots and making big discoveries!

Notes

be warned : the timeline is nebulous at best (but it isn't relevant to the fic, so no worries ;))
also, this is set during the long game and as such might contain spoilers, so read at your own risk

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

Zane Boodram is getting ready for morning skate when his captain's back catches his eye and he can't help but visibly recoil, because *damn*. Rozanov's back is crowded with what must be dozens of scratches, red and angry. Zane shivers in sympathy, he can just imagine how bad that must sting. He clears his throat to get the man's attention.

"Yes?" Rozanov raises an eyebrow, glancing over his shoulder.

Trying to contain a grin, Zane crosses his arms in an effort to look at least a bit serious. He's under no impression it'll work on Roz, but he can't be blamed for trying to make him squirm. "So, *Captain*, did Coach's 'no going out under any circumstances' rule yesterday not apply to you?"

Coach Wiebe is usually quite laid-back about curfew, club-hopping and all that goes with it, but he ordered all of them to stay confined to their homes yesterday evening. A smart decision, considering they have back-to-backs against LA and Dallas, both of them teams that are nothing to scoff at. Zane is almost certain that the rule was mostly meant for the rookies and call-ups, who are all starting to flag because it's the end of a long season, but this team makes an effort to respect the trainers' decisions and not ask for favors. It's one of the things Zane loves about being here. The point is, he's a bit surprised that Rozanov would break the rule, even if he could probably get away with it. So far, he hasn't really done anything that lives up to his reputation as a hardcore party-goer.

"Sure, it applied to me. Very sad. Was boring," Rozanov says, face scrunched up. Again, Zane doesn't think the guy goes out as much as he pretends to, but who knows? Yesterday at least, he certainly did.

Dykstra, leaning against Zane's shoulder, seems to agree. He snorts. "No offence, dude, but next time you want to lie like that, at least make it believable."

That gets him a chorus of agreement from the rest of his teammates and Roz frowns in the way he does when he's worried about his English skills. Zane is starting to notice his tells.

"What are you all talking about? Is the lack of sex finally getting to your heads?" Ilya asks, winking at his poor victims—Zane doesn't count himself amongst them, he has a wonderful

wife and is certainly not suffering from that particular affliction.

“We’re talking about your *abundance* of sex,” Hazy says, clapping their captain’s shoulder and putting him out of his misery. He’s too good of a guy. “Look at your back, man.”

Rozanov twists his neck in a move that should frankly not be possible. “I cannot see anything except beautiful muscle. Take a picture. And hurry! Coach is waiting and I do not want to do bag skates,” he reminds the team, eliciting groans and complaints. Grimacing, Zane briefly wonders if his teasing was a good idea.

Still, he obeys and thrusts his phone into Roz’s hands before going back to his stall to put on his socks. He really hopes Coach will be lenient. He’s getting too old for punishments on top of back-to-backs.

His captain squints at his back on the screen and still seems confused. He throws the phone back at Zane, who scrambles to catch it and almost has a heart attack. It’s barely a few months old and Cassie would tear him a new one if he broke it.

“I do not see the problem,” Rozanov says, confirming Zane’s suspicions.

“Dude, you look like you got mauled by that bear you’ve got tattooed on your chest!” Dillon exclaims, shaking his head in disbelief.

Their captain suddenly looks very smug, more than usual, and that’s saying something. “Yes? You all know I have lots of sex, I don’t understand why you are all making a— what is the word again for too much agitation?”

“A fuss?” Troy suggests.

“Yes, that, thank you, Barrett. Why are you all making a fuss about Coach’s rule just because I got laid?” Roz says, lacing up his skates.

“Because you can’t have gotten laid without going out!” Dykstra hollers. “Busted, Cap!”

“I totally did,” Roz *splutters*, which is likely the most suspicious thing he’s done all day. Ilya Rozanov doesn’t splutter.

Hazy raises a hand to stop the commotion of voices and thrown tape balls, and because he’s the goalie and they all want to win tonight, the locker room immediately quietens. In his years in the league, Zane has learned all about the magic of goalie eyes, and he’s on the edge of his seat waiting for the man’s input.

“If you got laid but you didn’t go out, that means you didn’t need to pick up someone because you already had a sure thing,” Hazy starts. Rozanov looks vaguely like a spooked cat. “Which means that our captain is hiding a special someone from us! He’s still a stickler for the rules, don’t you worry about it.”

At that, even more noise erupts, a unique mix of gasps, cackles, dog-whistling, crass comments and questions. The greatness of hockey lies somewhere in this chaos.

“Never mind!” Roz cuts off the team. “I admit it, I lied earlier, I broke Coach’s rule, I will do extra laps later, now let’s go and practice.” Zane doesn’t think he’s ever seen a worse liar.

“Not so fast! C’mon, tell us who’s the saint who can deal with the great womanizer Ilya Rozanov,” Chouinard says, blocking the door with his body. Wiebe is going to kill them all but apparently Zane isn’t the only Centaur who would rather die than miss a shred of gossip.

“I said there is no one.” Roz eyes the window, probably devising a getaway plan. Considering the height he’d have to fall from, it’s probably not a very good plan.

Holmberg and LaPointe grab one of his arms each, as if sensing his desire to escape. “You’re a better hockey player than you are a liar, Roz,” Boyle chimes in. “Tell us one thing and we’ll leave you alone. We just want to know who deserves your time more than we do.”

Their captain's repeated absences and conspicuous silence during their time off suddenly make a lot more sense if Boyle is right, and he probably is.

"It has only been this person for a very long time." Rozanov tells them, slowly, like he's not sure what he can or can't say. Despite the caution, there's also a fondness on his face that Zane has never seen there before. "We both have very demanding careers in different cities, so we try to make the most of the little time we have."

And if Zane was ever upset about Roz missing team events—which he wasn't, just confused—he certainly wouldn't blame him anymore. The guy looks absolutely besotted and if thinking about his girlfriend makes him look like that, Zane can't imagine how happy he must be to spend time with her.

It's sweet, really sweet, and Zane really wants to kiss Cassie right now. He's about to thank Roz for telling them when Coach Wiebe appears in the doorway, behind Chouinard.

"What's taking you so long, boys? We have a practice to get to if we want to beat the Comets tonight!"

Cheers rise in the room. "Hell yeah, Coach!" "They don't stand a chance!" With that, the guys clap each other on the backs and start to clear out.

Zane slides on his visor and tucks the subject in a corner of his mind. He's got a job to do.

"You're fucking cheating on your girlfriend with *Shane Hollander*!"

How did it come to this? Ilya has no fucking clue.

Rewind.

Luca Haas wants to preface this by saying it was not his idea and he actively tried to discourage his teammates from going through with it. They are exceptionally nosy, though, so there wasn't much to be done.

Morning skate wasn't too exhausting but Luca still feels kind of weary, the way he always does after a game lately. He's grateful for the chance to play in the NHL, *obviously*, but playing at such a high level takes its toll on him. Twenty-one is still young—but he certainly isn't going to tell his team that. They already have way too much fun teasing him about it.

So, he's eager to get home and into his bed for a nice, long nap. Of course, because Luca can never have nice things, his plans get ruined before they even start. As he's walking through the rink's hallway, enjoying the rare silence, his arm gets grabbed by someone's hand and he's pulled into a dark room. He yelps, but by the time his brain catches up and he realises he should scream, a hand is slapped over his

mouth.

Thankful for the experience he acquired from having more siblings than he can count, Luca licks his assailant's palm and is immediately freed.

“Aw, damn, Rook, that's disgusting!”

Probably not a kidnapper, then. A teammate, and that's arguably worse.

Finally, the light is turned on. It flickers just long enough that Luca's eyes don't need to adjust when it settles. He's met with three other Centaurs and a social media manager in a very cramped janitorial closet and feels his calm afternoon slipping away from him.

Still, Luca is nothing if not a polite Swiss boy. "Hi? Can I ask what I'm doing here?"

Harris steps forward, beaming. "Welcome to the super secret reunion of the exclusive Detec-Centaurs Club!"

"Was that really the best name we could come up with?" Hazy asks, a corner of his mouth tipping up in amusement.

"We voted!"

"Well yeah, but obviously Barrett was going to agree with you, so it's not—"

Barrett, cheeks suspiciously red even with the shitty lighting and eyes a bit too wide, jumps in before Hazy can finish his sentence. Huh. "I think we're getting off-track!"

"Right, thank you, Troy," Harris says as he places a hand on Barrett's shoulder, his thumb rubbing it absent-mindedly. *Huh*. Rozanov isn't the only guy keeping secrets, is he? "As I was saying, you were chosen to be part of our secret club, congrats Luca!"

"Okay... Why?" Luca isn't underconfident or insecure about his place on the team but he's just a rookie, there's no reason why would he be picked for whatever this was over any of the other guys.

Bood's expression turns sheepish and his hand comes up to the back of his neck, flexing his bicep in the process—and if the man wasn't happily married and way too old for him, it would probably make Luca salivate. "Well, most of the other guys have kids they should spend time with before we go on that long road trip in a few days and Young, Lapointe and Holmberg are blabbermouths."

If the word itself isn't familiar to Luca, the idea is, and he can't say he disagrees.

“Either way, you should be happy, it means you get to spend time with the best of the Centaurs.” Hazy winks. “And Harris.”

“And Chiron!” the man adds.

The necessity of a dog's presence for this is questionable at best and as Luca muses over it, he realises he has no idea what 'this' even is. His disappointment for the wasted afternoon doesn't wane but his curiosity is piqued. “What's the plan?”

“We're following Roz home to ask him about his girlfriend! Maybe he didn't feel comfortable talking about it in the locker room because there were so many people, and we just want him to know he can be open with us,” Harris replies, his tone light.

“I'm not— I don't think that's a good idea. Roz has a right to his privacy, yes?” Luca says, trying not to sound chiding. It's not really his place, the alternate captain is right there, but he'd feel bad if he didn't say it.

Troy nods. “I said the same thing. They all promised they wouldn't push, though. We'll go away if he tells us to.”

“Alright, I'll come.” If only to be able understand whatever might go down later. “But we might want to hurry before Roz's gone. Unless you know his address?”

“Shit!”

They manage to catch the direction Roz takes before he's gone and follow his trail from a distance in Wyatt's Mercedes, which is somehow the most inconspicuous of all their cars. As he drives, comfortable silence falls, only interrupted by Barrett and Harris' occasional whispers. It gives him time to think.

He's not as nosy as Bood and Harris, he mostly came with to be the voice of reason. Of course, he hopes they don't discover anything bad. Nonetheless, if they do, well, he'll be prepared to deal with it. And, he won't say anything because it's no one's business, but he's been worried about Roz. As exuberant as he makes a show of being, he's intensely private, almost withdrawn, and that can't be good for anyone. Sometimes, when he thinks nobody's watching, Roz's face turns somber, almost longing, and it breaks Wyatt's heart. He considers Roz a friend, so he can't help but wanting to help.

Something rises in his throat when he wonders if Roz's lover could be the reason why he isn't okay. Please, let it be something else. Wyatt has seen in his father how much domestic abuse can break a person. He doesn't know how he could stand seeing Roz, his strong, kind captain, go through that.

With a deep, steadying breath, he forces himself to step back into reality. "We're there." They all step out of the car, stretching their limbs to shake off the lethargy that seeped in during the drive.

"Ready?" Bood asks, with a grin and all of the leadership that makes him such a great alternate.

Haas stumbles a bit, mouth twisting in hesitation. "Are we sure this is a good idea?"

"It'll be fine, kid," Harris says, ruffling his hair. It looks a bit awkward considering Haas is much taller, but it seems to have the desired effect.

"I'm not a kid!" Disproving his own point, the rookie stomps up Roz's alley, all traces of his earlier uncertainty erased.

A smile tugs at Wyatt's lips.

When they reach the front door, they all steel themselves, no matter how confident they pretended to be. Bood breathes out and presses the doorbell. Muffled ringing comes through the door, then hurried steps, and finally, a key turning in the lock.

“Mom, I thought I told you that—” A masculine voice that is definitely nothing like Rozanov's accented English comes through before the door opens to reveal a face that is also definitely nothing like Rozanov's sharp cheekbones and golden curls.

Shane Hollander blinks at them, open-mouthed. “Oh. You're not my mom.” The door slams shut.

Well, Wyatt'll be damned.

There is no sound except the one Troy's brain makes as it starts to piece the whole story together. He fucking knew it!

He's so overwhelmed by the relief of not being the only queer player on the team, of it being *Ilya Rozanov*, one of the greatest players of the generation, that he barely even thinks of how the man himself must feel.

Then, the door flies open again and Ilya appears, eyes wide and jaw clenched so hard they hear his teeth grinding. Troy's stomach drops. Oh no. Shame curls hot and red in his chest. This isn't the time to be happy, Ilya and Hollander just got— outed, they got outed, there is no other word for it. It's Troy's worst nightmare and they just made someone else go through it.

Just when he thinks it couldn't possibly get any worse, Bood walks into the house and grabs Ilya by the collar. Reliable, fair Bood is homophobic. Troy stops breathing.

“You asshole, you’re fucking cheating on your girlfriend with *Shane Hollander!*” Bood explodes, louder than conversational, but not loud enough to be overheard by any neighbours. Small mercies.

It takes a second for Troy to register the words and when he does, he whips his head around to face Harris, who seems to have gone through the same rollercoaster as he had. He leans into the other man's body.

Ilya just stares at Bood for what seems like an eternity until he bursts out laughing. It's not a pretty laugh, it's nervous, it's raw, almost cruel, but at least it's genuine. They haven't lost their captain yet.

Bood keeps glaring. “You think it's funny?”

With an obvious effort, Ilya catches his breath, hiccuping and wiping a tear from his eye. It might be a tear of laughter or a tear of sadness. Troy suspects they'll never be privy to that knowledge.

“No, no, Bood, you have it wrong,” Ilya says, finally breaking the limbo he accidentally created. “Shane Hollander *is* my girlfriend.”

The grip Bood had on Ilya's shirt loosens and he takes a step backward. “Really?”

A nod.

“Fuck, man, I'm so sorry, I didn't—”

“Is okay. I am glad to see you have ethics. Good quality in a captain.” Roz winks and Troy is struck again by how *good* he is. There is no hint of resentment or anger in his eyes, only a glimpse of fear. “Please, keep this secret, yes? We—”

Whatever Ilya was about to say is interrupted by the man getting an armful of rookie. Haas, usually so shy, throws himself at his captain and squeezes. "I'm sorry. We didn't mean to—to find out something you weren't ready to tell us."

"I know. Is okay," Ilya repeats.

"I'm sorry too," Troy says. There are so many things he can't articulate, and that's okay : his captain can see it all on his face. The Centaurs seem to be open books to him. He made them that way, with cocky smiles and back pats and *I love yous* after a tough game.

"Same here," Hazy says.

"Me too. It was my idea, I would never have suggested it if I'd had any clue." Harris looks chastised and beautiful and Troy yearns to kiss him better.

"Is okay," Ilya repeats, one last time, still holding Haas, and his voice breaks. He composes himself quickly, clearing his throat and letting the rookie go. "Can you come in? For Shane."

"Of course. Anything you want," Bood rushes out, his guilt painted on his face.

"Anything?" Ilya asks, grinning as he opens the door fully to let them in. "Okay. Next game, I get six goals and you all get hat trick, yes? Hazy, too." Bood really should have seen that coming.

"Anything but that."

Ilya rolls his eyes, leading them to what must be his living room. "Bleh. You are very boring." He points at the sofa. "Speaking of boring, I need to find Shane. Sit, I will be back." Without further ado, he strides out of the room and they hear him climbing up the stairs.

They sit in silence for a bit until Haas breaks it. “He just called *the* Shane Hollander boring. I need to switch teams, you are all insane people.”

“Shane,” Ilya calls. “Moya lyubov.” He's a little thrown off-balance by his team showing up while Shane was there because he wasn't expecting it, although maybe he should have, after the locker room discussion. He'd been certain it was forgotten. It doesn't matter, really, he mostly feels relieved at not having to hide anymore, not with them, at least.

It's not the same for Shane. His lover doesn't know his teammates, which sends a pang of longing through his heart, doesn't know how they reacted, even, considering he fled before they could. He told Ilya what happened and that he could decide what to tell them. He said 'I love you' and ran upstairs. For the first time in what feels like forever, Ilya couldn't quite read his face.

In their bed, Shane is leaning against the headboard, head thrown back, revealing the pale, unmarked length of his throat, and knees hugged close to his chest. He tips his chin down to look directly at Ilya, eyes searching. “Okay?” he asks.

Ilya nods, sitting down on the edge of the mattress. “They are good people,” he says, nothing more and nothing less than the truth.

A smile blooms on Shane's face. It holds a tang of something sad and Ilya doesn't like it. “I'm glad, Ilya.”

“You are not mad?”

“Of course not.” Shane crawls to Ilya and lays a kiss to his neck, wrapping his arms around Ilya's waist. “I just wish you could have told them the way you wanted. Told them sooner, maybe. You deserve support and they will give it to you. You love them and you felt like they couldn't love you back because you had to hide such an important part of you. I'm sorry.”

Ilya's breath catches. After all those years, he still can't fully comprehend how and why he gets to hold this man for the rest of their days, gets to kiss him through all that life brings him. He cranes his neck around and brings his hand to Shane's chin, lifting it with the gentleness the man gives him every day. "Do not be sorry for our love. I never regretted it and never will." He brings their lips together for a kiss, chaste and soft as a feather. He wants to chase its taste but there is time for that later.

Shane stares at him, mouth parted and eyes shiny and as gorgeous as the day they met. "I love you more than anything in the world."

An eyebrow raises. "Not true. Hockey."

Before they can rehash the age-old debate, Shane blinks repeatedly and jumps up from the bed. "Your teammates! They're waiting."

"Let them. Their punishment for interrupting a rare afternoon of good sex."

"I'm not falling for that trap, Ilya," Shane scowls. "Up, come on."

"But you are so hot, moya dver'," Ilya pleads.

But Shane is already half out of the—well, the door. "Not falling for that either."

When they walk into the living room, hand in hand, Luca Haas is bright red and half hiding in his hands as the others laugh at him. Anya rushes into the room after another massive beast, and Shane is very confused. The social media manager, he understands, but why is a *dog* here? The Centaurs are a weird bunch, even for hockey players.

"Hm, hi?" Shane says, a bit flustered. Is this what meeting his family was like for Ilya? Fuck, that's terrible. He wipes his moist hands on his jeans, letting go of Ilya, and that's even worse.

“I'm Shane Hollander. It's nice to meet you?” He means it like an affirmation except his pitch makes it sound like a question. And why is he introducing himself? They know who he is, for fuck's sake.

Hayes looks amused but the rest of them don't seem to notice. “Nice to meet you too,” they chorus obediently. Why are they in synch? This isn't a musical, as far as Shane's aware!

Then, they all look at Shane and Ilya expectantly. Shane glances at his boyfriend, who shrugs. “Did you guys need something? Why are you here?” Oh no, that's so rude, oh gosh. “Not that we don't want you here! We just—” Shane sputters, his hands brassing air in front of him.

“We wanted to tell Ilya he could open up to us about his relationship! We thought he might be more comfortable around a small group, though we didn't suspect why,” Harris explains, smiling softly at Shane. The rainbow pin on his jacket catches Shane's eye and something warms up in his chest. These people love Ilya so much, so openly, and that's all Shane's ever wanted for him.

“Well, if you want to ask something, there's no time better than the present.” Shane glimpses at Ilya, who's already openly staring. He can't help but press a kiss against his cheek, watching intently as it colors a pretty pink. He pulls away, satisfied.

Somehow, that seems to break the dam.

“When did you guys get together?”

“Do you live together?”

“You know, I'd disappear fast as fuck too if Shane Hollander was waiting for me at home.”

“Is the rivalry just foreplay? Actually, don't answer that.”

“Please come to the Centaurs.”

“Wait, wait, wait, is your ring an engagement ring, Roz?”

Then, all hell breaks loose, and neither Shane nor Ilya can keep track of what's being said over the dogs barking and their guests losing their minds.

Shane leans against the warm lines of Ilya's body and laughs. Everything is okay, better than okay, everything is good. If they never have anything else, they have this moment.

End Notes

i wanted to have harris' pov somewhere in there too but i couldn't quite figure out where to add it so i gave up,... maybe another time!

relationship reveal is one of my favourite tropes so i hope i did it justice. and hollanov just goes with it so perfectly i couldn't pass up that opportunity.

this fic kinda ran away from me, but i hope you enjoyed it! comments are always appreciated, i love chatting with all of you <3

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