

Bitter Pine

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Bitter Pine

by [ladyshadowdrake](#)

Summary

A hit during a game knocks Shane's suppressant patch free, and Ilya escorts him off the ice, secret relationship be damned.

"...Shane Hollander appears to have just broken through his suppressant patch, or possibly that hit knocked it off. Folks, you won't believe it, but Hollander may have just gone into acute heat on the ice. Every player in the rink has frozen, but this could turn ugly quickly. He's gone down at center ice and he's not moving—"

"There are a lot of alphas and three other omegas on these two teams, and if the reaction of the crowd is anything to go by, half the stadium is getting a lungful of Hollander's pheromones right now."

Notes

Hello, new fandom!

This is a gift for my dear friend, Mouse, who also beta'ed it in the end <3.

For the world building here, I used my Temeraire ABO verse rules as the skeleton and added some sports-universe appropriate dressing. Hope you enjoy it!

Edit 01/12/2026: I have made some updates to this story (including about 1300 words of new content ^_^;;) There is some Russian in the text now; there should be hover-over boxes on the text, and the translations are in the end notes.

SO MANY THANK YOUS:

tododetka, for translations, thank you for letting me pester you

Boxy & Dienaziscum for additional beta'ing and also being here on the We're Completely Normal About This Island

And still Mouse, of course <3<3

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

"And that's a hard hit for Hollander from Boston's number seven. It looks like he's a little dazed from the knock as he drifts back toward center ice. He's lost his stick, and he's pulling at the back of his neck, possibly trying to remove his helmet—"

"Oh, it looks like that hit must have been even worse than it looked. He's clearly having trouble staying upright now, and his team is noticing something off with their captain."

"You hate to see a serious injury like this, especially someone—Jesus *Christ*—!"

"—the fuck...? Did he just—? Are we still rolling through this? Is that what I think it is...?"

"...Shane Hollander appears to have just broken through his suppressant patch, or possibly that hit knocked it off. Folks, you won't believe it, but Hollander may have just gone into acute heat on the ice. Every player in the rink has frozen, and we have two others down to their knees, but this could turn ugly quickly. He's gone down at center ice, and he's not moving—"

"There are a lot of alphas and three other omegas on these two teams, and if the reaction of the crowd is anything to go by, half the stadium is getting a lungful of Hollander's pheromones right now."

"Security is converging on the ice, but I'm not sure if that will improve matters or make them worse. The players are starting to move again, and paramedics are on their way—"

"—Cut to commercial at least—"

"Ilya Rozanov is now leaving the penalty box. I think this might be Hollander's worst nightmare coming true. Rozanov has dropped his gloves and his helmet...this does not look good for Hollan—*fuuuuck*—"

"...The entire stadium has just fallen dead silent, and everyone in the rink except for Rozanov is currently flat on the ice. It appears Rozanov has just released a nuclear bomb of oppression pheromones. We're about as far away from the ice as we can get while still being in the building—"

"—Not to mention there's a sheet of glass between us and the rest of the arena—"

"—and *I* can feel the effects from here. This is insane—"

"—This kind of reaction is to be expected with an alpha like Rozanov in play. There's no alpha in the league, except maybe Scott Hunter, who can go toe-to-toe with Rozanov in *this* arena—"

"Even Hunter might be hard-pressed today. He still pings at an eight on his O-levels, while Rozanov barely hits a *two* with A-levels at nearly ninety-seven."

"Meanwhile, Hollander is as close to a perfect omega as you could ask for, with A-levels at only four and O-levels at a staggering *ninety-nine-point-eight*... Come on, are we really

going to keep shooting—"

"Wait, what's this? Rozanov has gotten Hollander back to his feet and is currently escorting him off the ice—this is unbelievable, I really thought—"

"—These two have been on the ice together for a long time. They may be rivals, but they're both professionals, and you don't compete at this level without gaining some respect for your opponent. Rozanov might be known for being *difficult*, to put it nicely...but even *he* wouldn't want to see a fellow player in this situation."

"I've said it before and I'll say it again! With levels like we see in these two, you're only going to get one of two outcomes, and Rozanov and Hollander have been hitting the territorial rivalry hard for years at this point...but this is world-class behavior from Rozanov. You can't help but admire him in this moment as he gets Hollander through the nearest gate and off the ice."

"The crowd is starting to stir again. We're hearing cheering from the upper levels, though those closer to the rink and those still on the ice are barely moving."

"After this, both of these players are going to be down for the count, and every person in the arena today is going to have a story to tell their grandchildren. Wow, what a night! You know, this is the kind of display you only hear about in history books. A few hundred years ago, you can bet these two would have been battlefield generals, just look at the control Rozanov has exhibited today—"

"—And the stunning impact of Hollander's heat pheromones—"

"A lot of cups are going to be lifted to Ilya Rozanov tonight for averting this near disaster..."

~*~

"Stay with me," Ilya ordered, hauling Shane's arm further up over his shoulder. Ilya had blown past the few people in the tunnel with only a growl that had sent them stumbling into the wall or down to their knees.

Against his side, Shane was barely managing to move his own legs. He was breathing hard and mumbling something into Ilya's throat, but he was conscious and aware of his surroundings. Ilya's heart had nearly dropped straight out of his body when he'd seen Shane go down, and he'd been momentarily struck dumb by the tidal wave of snow-pine-whiskey of Shane's pheromones. By the time he'd gotten his scrambled thoughts back together, others had been starting to stir.

Secret relationship or not, he had not been prepared to let the rest of that nightmare play out in real time.

"Ilya..." Shane breathed. His next breath came out with a pained whine on the end of it, and the bruised pine needle scent of him sharpened. "Ilya, please..."

"I know, I know," Ilya soothed. He smashed the locker room door open and snarled at the beta in a white polo folding towels. The boy jumped, knocking the bag of clean towels over to spill on the locker room floor, and fled so quickly that he ran head-first into the door before he was able to get it open and escape.

"You are too gone for new patch," Ilya said as he maneuvered Shane to one of the benches. Marleau would have patches, but even if Ilya could find them, the room was already inundated with the cloying scent of Shane's heat. There was nothing short of an interrupter getting through the haze now, and no, fuck that. He wouldn't put Shane through that, even if they had been on hand.

Shane sprawled on the bench, blinking owlishly at the ceiling. He frowned while Ilya quickly ensured the room was empty and locked the doors.

"This isn't my locker room," he said, tone warming with accusation. He dragged himself half-upright and pointed a finger in Ilya's direction. "You dragged me to your lair!"

"Not my lair," Ilya told him sitting on the opposite bench and reaching for his skates. "Your guest lair."

"That's not—I don't think that's right," Shane said, but he thumped back down to the bench and moaned faintly. He was still in full uniform, sans helmet, and his gloved hands were clumsy as he pawed at his chest in increasing desperation. "Ilya, stop being an asshole. You're such a fucking—asshole, fuck me."

Ilya ripped impatiently at his laces, and ended up kicking the skates negligently off into opposite corners. He went down to his knees the moment he was freed from them, reaching for Shane's skates, but Shane rocketed upright as soon as Ilya hit the floor. He grabbed Ilya's head in a tight grip and yanked him up so hard and so fast that Ilya felt his neck pop.

Shane's mouth crashed into his, more teeth than anything, and he bit hungrily as he held Ilya into the position he wanted. Ilya barely caught his ankles before he could wrap his legs around Ilya's back. Which, he wouldn't exactly mind, except that Shane was still wearing knives on his feet.

"Hollander!" Ilya snapped, pulling away just enough to get a breath in. He was hanging onto his own control by a quickly fraying thread. He could feel the rut taking hold of him as his body responded to the saturation of Shane's pheromones, and neither of them were going to have the presence of mind soon to get Shane out of his skates.

Shane snarled at him in response to the implied order. His eyes were bright in his face, and he had his lips peeled back from his teeth to show his canines. Ilya bared his own teeth and let the growl he'd been holding back loose; it made his teeth rattle, and Shane hissed at him in response. The challenging sound shot a bolt of energy through Ilya's chest, and his hands clenched unconsciously around Shane's ankles.

Biting his lip hard enough to draw blood, Ilya breathed through the first instinctual impulse. It took effort for him to remember what he was doing and why, but he managed to break

Shane's grip on his head and rose to his feet to get the leverage to shove Shane flat on the bench.

"Stay," Ilya ordered in a voice he barely recognized, but Shane recognized it; his expression went calculating the way it only ever did during a game, and Ilya knew he would have mere seconds before Shane's drive overpowered his accustomed obedience to Ilya's orders in the bedroom.

Moving very quickly, Ilya divested Shane of his skates and his gloves, tossing them away to join his own abandoned gear, and then managed to gain Shane's cooperation just long enough to get the layers of his gear down to his mid thigh.

Shane's moan in response to being freed from his cup was loud and guttural. His cock, straining and soaked in precum, hit his lower belly. He immediately reached for it, and hissed again when Ilya batted his hands away. His eyes were wide and dark and wild in his face, and he looked imminently capable of violence when he snapped a glare to Ilya's face.

Ilya couldn't help the smile and didn't try to conceal his teeth. When Shane reached again, he caught Shane's wrist in one hand, and his cock in the other. The snow-pine-whiskey scent went bitter with musk as Ilya curled over Shane's hips and swallowed as much of it as he could fit down his throat.

Shane made a triumphant sound, but he wasn't content to let Ilya work. His fingers slid through Ilya's hair and then tightened into a fist close to his scalp, sending delicious sparks racing down his spine. Ilya made an encouraging noise around Shane's cock, and Shane responded by wrapping his legs around Ilya in a tight hold that nearly immobilized him.

Fuck, Ilya never could get enough of Shane, but they had never shared a heat before, and—*ni khuya sebe*, he was overwhelming as he took full control of Ilya's head and shoulders and thrust wildly upward.

Ilya would be impressed with himself later, but for the moment, he just kept his teeth out of the way and held on so Shane could fuck his mouth without falling off the bench. It was fucking amazing. Ilya didn't normally take to being held down, but something about *Shane fucking Hollander* losing his control to such an extent almost made him come just thinking about the picture they made.

The only warning Shane gave him was his legs tightening to bruising pressure and his lower back coming off the bench. Ilya managed to get one fast breath in and then found himself choking as Shane came down his throat with a roar. He swallowed hastily and tried to let himself relax around the pulsing cock in his mouth, but Shane held him there so long that he felt his lungs squeeze in a complaint for oxygen. He finally had to reach up to pinch Shane's side where he knew Shane was most sensitive.

Jerking away from Ilya's pinching fingers, Shane gave him just enough room that he could pull back and gasp in a breath. The rush of pressure to his head that followed was as heady as any party drug, and he sat and breathed with the sensation for a long time while Shane slowly relaxed his back to the bench, though his legs remained clamped tightly around Ilya's shoulders with the crotch of his pants pulled taut across the base of Ilya's neck.

"You know...I always thought it would be hot to fuck you in a locker room," Ilya told him. His voice came out as a rumble, and Shane shuddered and jerked at the sound of it, which did very nice things for Ilya's cock.

Shane's head rolled on the bench, and he gave Ilya a filthy, self-satisfied smile. "You haven't fucked me yet," he said.

"Want me to fix that?" Ilya asked, arching an eyebrow at him, but he was so hard that he thought he might actually die if Shane said no.

He needn't have worried; Shane's mouth dropped open and he moaned, long and low. The sound went straight to Ilya's cock, and he snapped a hand down to grip it hard through the thick fabric of his pants and his compression shorts, but the cup prevented his grip from doing anything useful. He couldn't say it was the first time he'd gotten an erection wearing a cup, but it was deeply uncomfortable, and that at least staved off the spontaneous orgasm.

"Yes, God...Fuck me, please, *Ilya*."

"*Fuck*, Shane..." He sank his teeth into Shane's still-clothed inner thigh and breathed heavily through his nose until the urgency faded enough that he could look up into Shane's face. He was glowing with sweat and arousal, and his lips were bitten-red and slick as he panted around a very soft whine that sounded like *Ilya, Ilya, Ilya*.

Ilya took hold of the edge of the bench and thrust himself to his feet. Shane still had his ankles locked behind Ilya's back, and he yelped as the motion lifted him until only his shoulders were still on the bench. His hands snapped down to grip the bench, but he didn't loosen his hold, even when Ilya started yanking at the tight fabric of his pants in a mostly futile effort to free Shane from them.

Stopping, Ilya closed his eyes and took several deep, deliberate breaths. He opened them again. "You want me to fuck you?"

"Yes! *Fucking* tease—!"

Ilya met his eyes. "You want me to knot you?"

Shane stilled. His legs clenched spasmodically, his eyes were wide and very dark, and the whiskey note in his scent turned potent enough to give Ilya alcohol poisoning. The flush on his skin deepened, spreading down the strong column of his throat and feathering across his chest. His nipples were hard, and his skin raised with goosebumps even as Ilya watched.

"Yes," Shane gasped out. He swallowed hard, moaned, and repeated, "*Yes*."

Ilya nodded. He had wanted...a bed. A warm bath waiting for Shane at the end of it, the comfort of their familiar scents surrounding them in their own den the first time they went through a heat together, but Shane was perfect, and wanting, and there would be time later for soft things.

"You are going to have let me go for a minute," Ilya warned him.

The immediate tightening of Shane's legs was answer enough even before he wildly shook his head. "No."

Omegas were possessive in heat, but Shane was still coherent enough to understand what Ilya meant. Ilya gave him a long look. "If you want me to fuck you, let go."

Shane made a heartbreaking noise of complaint. His hands gripped the narrow bench so hard that the wood squeaked under his skin. He gulped in a breath that came back out as a whine, and then another, but he slowly loosened his hold. Ilya reached up to take Shane's legs under his knees and gently guided his feet to the floor.

Watching him with the same level of attention as a bird of prey sighting a mouse, Shane let Ilya pull his pants and shorts off, and then followed the motion of Ilya's hands as he stripped himself out of his gear. It piled up around them; pads, guards, underlinings, socks, until Ilya was bare to the skin and tingling all over from the heat of Shane's eyes and the effects of their pheromones mingling in the air.

Freed from his underlinings, his own scent bloomed into the air around him, and Shane's eyes rolled back. How much easier it would have been to oppress the other players and the crowd if Ilya had been naked. He ran his hands over his skin, dragging his own scent-laden sweat down his body to flick it off and on to the floor. This room would smell like the pair of them for months if the mats weren't changed and the air wasn't scrubbed. Ilya knew he should be concerned about it, but he couldn't make himself care about the *secret* part of their *secret relationship* when Shane was looking at him *like that*.

Watching him, Shane thrust mindlessly into the air, already desperately hard again, and tore at the tangle of his own clothing. Ilya would have liked to just stand there and stroke himself while he watched Shane's increasingly frantic struggles to free himself from his gear, but he forced himself to take a step back to his own locker.

The plan had been to escape to Shane's condo after the game, but Ilya's bag was always prepped for things to change. He ripped his duffel open, heard Shane curse when he realized that Ilya had stepped away from him, and fumbled blindly for a condom. He had only one rut condom in the bottom of the bag, but it was bulky and easy to find, and he had it in hand by the time Shane emerged, snarling, from the confines of his jersey.

"Ilya—!"

"I am not going anywhere," Ilya reassured him, but he barely had the words out before Shane was off the bench and pinning him awkwardly into the cubby of his locker. "Shane, I am not going—"

"Damn right you're not," Shane said, and sank his teeth hard into the swell of Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya's knees went out from under him, and he cursed in his mother tongue as he collapsed to the bench. Shane followed him down, his teeth still locked on Ilya's gland and tongue flicking hard and fast across it. His hands were burning hot, and if his nails hadn't been trimmed down to nothing, he would have opened long rents in Ilya's back as he clawed at him.

"Oh-tvoyu *mat'*—Shane, *blyat'*, stop it or I will—" Ilya grabbed Shane by the back of the head and rolled them both over. Shane landed on the floor with a deep growl, but he released Ilya's neck long enough to spit a curse at him, and Ilya was able to pin him down with one hand on his collarbone and a knee on his thigh.

"You bite *me*, now?" Ilya asked incredulously, but Shane just bared his teeth and tried to lurch upward again. Ilya slammed him back down, the growl ripping out of his throat before he had even fully recognized that Shane was moving.

Shane stopped resisting him, but his expression was watchful and his hand gripped Ilya's ribs with a possessive determination. His scent concentrated, locking Ilya hard into his body as he breathed it in, and Ilya didn't try to tease him. He leaned down to take a kiss off his mouth and moaned when Shane bit his already split lip for his efforts. The sweet iron taste of blood exploded once more into his mouth.

Shane made a desperate, hungry noise. He sucked Ilya's lip into his mouth and between his teeth so that Ilya had to grab Shane's jaw in a hard grip to get himself free.

Ilya leaned back and dragged a hand across his lower lip and chin, sucking in a few desperately needed breaths while Shane watched him with that sharp, predatory attention. Ilya tore the condom wrapper open with his teeth and spit the foil out.

Shane barely let him get that far before reaching up to grab him by the back of the neck. He squeezed hard enough to make Ilya feel weak in the limbs and brought their mouths back together.

In his state, the condom was almost more than Ilya could handle, and the pressure of it sliding over his cock made him shout into Shane's mouth. Shane's legs parted without prompting, knees pulling up to his chest, and he made demanding, impatient noises as Ilya shakily secured it over the slight bulge of his knot already forming.

The condom was soaked liberally in lube, and Ilya's fingers slid messily over Shane's thigh as he braced himself and pushed into the gripping heat of Shane's body. Shane's breath caught in his chest, and he held it. His eyes found Ilya's, and they stayed locked together as Ilya made a home for himself and sank into it.

Only once Ilya had passed the barrier and felt Shane's body open for him did Shane let out his breath. His head dropped back and he panted for breath as he trembled around Ilya's cock. A moment only, and then he sucked in air around a long moan and once again wrapped his legs around Ilya's body, locking his ankles together and squeezing hard.

"Yes," Shane gasped. "Oh, please, yes. I want your knot, Ilya, I want it so badly—"

Ilya stole the rest of the pleas off his tongue. He shoved in until his hips met the curve of Shane's ass, pulled back, thrust in again. Each withdraw was torture, and each drive forward was punishing rapture.

Shane pulled and cursed and begged him on every breath, and Ilya tucked his head into Shane's neck and let his teeth hover there, but he held onto his sanity just far enough not to

bite down.

They were both too far gone to last more than a dozen frenzied thrusts, and that was already enough to make Ilya feel like his heart was going to explode.

Shane arched back, trying to scream but making almost no noise, and coated the space between them with his release. The ripples of his orgasm drew Ilya in tighter and tighter, and then the agonizing pressure of his knot built to a strangling squeeze at the base of his cock. Shane finally found his voice, but it was high and desperate as Ilya's knot filled him, and then Shane was coming again, weak and whimpering.

It was enough. Ilya almost sobbed at the abrupt release of his orgasm breaking through the pressure of his knot, and he drove himself as deeply into Shane's body as he could and held himself, straining, through his orgasm. His vision went dark at the edges, and he had the alarming sensation that he was falling, and then Shane's arms were around him, and he was panting against Shane's chest.

"Oh, fuck—That's. Fuck, Ilya. So good," Shane slurred.

Ilya raised his head enough to see the unfocused, blissful expression on Shane's face, and then dropped his head back to Shane's chest. English was too much for him in the mire of syrupy heat that wrapped around his head in the aftermath of his release.

"Ya tebya lyublyu," he said in the softest murmur. "Mne kazhetsya ya lyublyu tebya bol'she svoeyey zhizni. Dumayu ya umru zdes' s tobey yesli ty menya poprosish."

Shane kissed the top of his head. "Thank you," he said, and then his body went loose and relaxed as he drifted out of consciousness.

~*~

Shane slept soundly, still impaled on Ilya's cock. Ilya was not afforded the same luxury while they were tied together. The locker room had a state of the art air filtration system, and it quickly pulled the pheromone-laden air out and replaced it with filtered outside air that somehow still smelled like snow. The quick dispersal of their pheromones, combined with his recent release, purged any lingering warmth out of him at an uncomfortable pace, denying him the long unwinding of the afterglow.

It took twenty minutes for his knot to release. At least once every sixty seconds, he considered waking Shane up to wring another orgasm out of him. Remembering that second pulsing orgasm so soon after a full release, Ilya thought he could do it. He thought he could trap Shane on his knot and work him into a dozen more orgasms until he was sobbing, and begging, and soaked in his own cum.

But he didn't wake Shane. He kept himself very still and listened intently to the hall outside the locker room. Their frantic coupling had taken only a handful of minutes, and Shane had been happily passed out by the time the first hesitant knock came. Ilya had barked at the offender to leave, and they had left.

The rest of the time, he had stared down at Shane's sleeping face and thought, *How am I going to survive you, Shane Hollander?*

Once he was released from Shane's body, he *did* wake him. They were being left alone for the moment, but that wouldn't last for long, and Ilya did not intend to be naked and buried to the hilt in Shane's body when someone was finally brave enough to unlock the doors for a welfare check.

"Shane," he murmured against Shane's neck, kissing him gently.

Shane shivered and curled closer to him, but his eyes didn't open. As Ilya continued kissing and nibbling on his neck, he started making soft mewling noises and nuzzling against him. It was a struggle to remember that they were not going to be afforded privacy for much longer, and even more of a struggle to remember why that mattered.

"Shaaaaane, you are naked in my lair and someone will open this door soon."

Shane's eyes popped open, and he went tense as his gaze immediately flicked over the walls, the ceiling, the still locked door. "Fuck."

"Hmm, maybe later," Ilya said. He pushed himself up, ignored the faint throb of complaint from his knees after the twenty minutes trapped kneeling over Shane's body, and put a hand out.

Shane stared up at him for several long seconds, his expression blank and tight, and then he put his hand in Ilya's and let Ilya pull him up. He took in the state of the locker room, and his cheeks flamed scarlet, but his scent was *smugsatisfiedsmugcontentsmugsmug*.

"You brought me to the away locker room?" he hissed in contradiction to his own pleased scent prowling around the locker room floor. He tried to make himself sound annoyed, but Ilya could tell that he was not-so-secretly pleased to have claimed this territory.

Ilya grinned at him. "Where else should I go with you? Unless you keep rut condoms in *your* bag?" For emphasis, he pulled the condom off and held it up, shaking it just to see Shane's disgusted grimace.

The color in Shane's cheeks darkened as Ilya tied the condom off, and then he covered his face with both hands and curled over. "Oh, my god. Oh my god, this is—not happening. This didn't happen. I went into *heat* in the middle of a game, oh my fucking god—you—everyone *saw*—"

"Hey, hey." Ilya dropped the condom, wrapped his hands around Shane's wrists, and pulled until Shane dragged his hands away from his face and straightened. The panic fell off his face with almost alarming speed, but Ilya could still see where it was running rampant behind his eyes.

"All anyone saw was injured player, and dashing heroic rival helping him off the ice," Ilya said, gently squeezing his wrists in an alternating rhythm.

Shane's laughter in response was both startled and verging on hysterical. "Everyone *knows* what we were—"

"Stop, Shane. No one knows. Air filters are very good. I brought you here, you stayed in shower, I guarded door. I would do this for any omega, it's fine."

Freeing his left wrist, Shane made an exaggerated gesture around the mess of the locker room. He scoffed, but he put his wrist back into Ilya's open palm without seeming to notice. "Yeah, you guarded the door, Ilya."

Ilya shrugged. "Omega as strong as you? So I fucked myself while you were in the shower. Who will blame me?" He gave Shane a tug and Shane's elbows folded so he could put his forehead against Ilya's shoulder with his hands still trapped between them.

"Go turn on shower. I will clean up this mess." Ilya leaned in for a quick kiss, and then back again to capture Shane's mouth for a long, lingering moment. He let his lips be soft, and he pillowed kisses over the length of Shane's mouth until he sighed and relaxed into Ilya's body.

"Go," Ilya said, reluctantly releasing Shane's wrists.

Shane tossed another glance at the room, but then he took a deep breath and left.

Ilya waited just long enough to hear the water start, and then went through the task of gathering their gear into piles and separating out the pieces. If he stopped to bury his face in Shane's interlining, there was no one to see him to do it, and he might have just been trying to figure out if it was own.

Despite their thrashing around, the worst of the mess was the gear strewn over the floor and the disarray of Ilya's locker. He didn't bother to straighten it, but he picked the garment bag up from the floor of the locker to hang it on the hook and dug his gym clothes out of his duffel.

His gym clothes hadn't been washed since his earlier workout, but it would be better than squeezing Shane back into his gear, and that feral part of him that was still pacing under the barely dispelled rut rumbled in approval at the thought of Shane leaving this den wrapped in his clothing and smelling like him.

Sighing, Ilya set the t-shirt aside and swiped half-heartedly at the garment bag of his post-game clothing, still clean and smelling of nothing more personal than the detergent his cleaning service used. As much as he deeply, *deeply* wanted Shane advertising to anyone with working olfactory senses that he had been claimed, it would defeat the purpose of pretending that Ilya had been only guarding his heat.

He glanced at the clock on the wall, and then the door. There was time for a shower, and he could hardly walk out smelling like Shane any more than Shane could walk out smelling like him. He picked up the discarded condom and detoured long enough to flush it down the toilet, though he briefly considered leaving it, just to see Shane panic about it when they got out of the shower.

Grabbing two towels from the spilled bag, he followed the sound of running water to find Shane with his forearms braced on the wall and water cascading down his back. Ilya dropped the towels over the half-wall separating the stalls and fitted himself to Shane's back. Shane made a relieved, contented noise, and pushed back into him, but he didn't open his eyes, and he didn't turn around.

Ilya put his nose into Shane's hairline and mouthed at his neck. The gland at the back of his neck was slightly inflamed, and the skin tasted faintly of the bitter chemical of his failed patch, but Shane was so pliant and soft in his arms, that Ilya remained dutiful in his attentions.

"It feels like we're not going to be able to keep this a secret after this," Shane said after a long moment in a whisper that broke partway through.

Ilya should have felt the pang of terror more strongly. It was there: he was an alpha, he was an *Alpha*, and Shane was an omega. In most of the world, that mattered more than the fact that they both had dicks, but not everywhere. Not in Russia.

Somehow, the terror didn't feel as immediate when he had his arms around Shane, and he was a world away from Russian soil. He was self-aware enough to know that it had stopped mattering the moment Shane put his arms around Ilya's shoulders and Ilya had cried into his chest. He'd been reckless enough to tell Shane he loved him, in Russian, *in Russia*, with a cop car driving past him, and it didn't even matter that no one could have known he was talking to *Shane*.

The reality of Shane made him reckless. He wanted to stay coiled around him until someone came in, and he would just let them see the beautiful man he had claimed, and let them walk away jealous to tell the whole world. He would never see Russia again, but he never *wanted* to see Russia again.

If it was only his decision, maybe he would do that. Maybe he would dress Shane in the gym clothes that still smelled of his sweat and pheromones. He would take Shane by the wrist and walk out through the main lobby and turn Shane around to show everyone there that he was in a Raiders t-shirt with Ilya's name and number on the back. He would shout at the world that he loved this beautiful, infuriating, stunningly competent man, and Russia could go collectively fuck herself.

"Would you prefer I left you out there for paramedics?" Ilya asked. It came out quieter than he'd meant, and he felt himself tense at the uncertainty in his own voice.

Shane finally turned around. He draped his arms over Ilya's shoulders and let his head fall back against the wall. "Maybe. No...no. They would have hit me with an interrupter. And..." Shane dropped his head forward and looked at Ilya from under his lashes. "No," he repeated in such a soft voice that Ilya barely heard him over the fall of the water on the tile.

Dragging in a breath, Shane pulled a hand across the back of his own neck, and then returned it to Ilya's shoulder. He slid it around Ilya's neck and squeezed. "This is just..."

"Everyone knows you hate me," Ilya said into the lull. He smirked. "I am very hate-able, even when I am heroic and dashing. It will be alright."

Lips quirked in a crooked smile, Shane tipped forward to rest his forehead against Ilya's. "Sometimes, I think it's a problem how much I *do not* hate you."

The words shivered down Ilya's neck and burrowed under his skin to make him feel restless and full, like he had too much blood to circulate through his limbs. He said nothing else, just let the water pour over their faces as they shared a leisurely kiss, and then he made himself step back. If he stayed pressed up against Shane for much longer, they would still be tied together when someone unlocked the door.

Letting his fingers trail over Ilya's shoulders, Shane let him go only reluctantly, and then he froze and clamped his hand down on Ilya's arm to drag him back. Ilya stumbled a step, but rather than slamming him into the wall—as Ilya half-hoped—Shane grabbed his jaw and pulled his head to the side.

"I bit you," he said, letting Ilya go as though burned. Color flushed into his cheeks again as he gaped at what Ilya was sure was a very impressive mark. He pondered the wisdom of getting it tattooed while it was still visible.

"Yes," Ilya agreed, amused and patient. And a little bit smug.

"You *let me* bite you," Shane clarified.

"...Yes." *Let* was maybe a too strong of a word when Shane had jumped him like a starving wolf, but Ilya could have thrown him across the room if he'd really wanted to protest.

Shane clapped a hand onto his own neck, and then looked up at Ilya sharply. "You didn't bite me back."

"No, I did not."

Brows drawing together, Shane's expression went uncertain. Ilya loved that he could see Shane's thoughts practically spelling themselves out on his skin at times like these, but he was patient. He waited.

"Why not?" Shane asked carefully.

Ilya cupped his cheek and leaned back in to kiss him. "Because you didn't ask me to."

~*~

"You had a pretty wild game."

"Yeah... it was. Unexpected." Shane said, making himself look at her and direct his attention to her microphone when he just wanted to sink into his clothing and disappear. At least he was wearing *his* clothing.

He'd made it back to the home locker room without being caught by staff or press, and had managed to get out of Ilya's clothing and into his own just before the team had come crashing into the room. Everything had gone quiet and awkward for several very long moments, but then Hayden had jostled his way through the crowd and dropped onto the bench to take off his skates.

"Okay?" he'd asked.

"Yeah, okay," Shane had said, and then it was like a spell had been broken, like he'd just taken a hit and had needed to sit the rest of the game out. Not like he'd nearly sent three quarters of the players and half the audience into a frenzy.

Unfortunately, even though his checkup had kept him in the locker room until well after the rest of the players had left, he hadn't quite made it to the garage door before the press had found him.

"This may be too much to ask too soon," the reporter said with a bright look in her eye, "but... can you tell us what happened?"

Shane's stomach wrung out like a wet towel. "That's a little... private."

"No offense," she said in amusement, "but it was also a little public."

That was fair. Shane had been on camera for more than half of his life, and he could normally handle probing questions without blushing, but he felt himself go warm. He usually stridently refused to discuss anything related to how he managed his dynamic, but there had been a lot of people in that arena who had gotten an up-close and personal demonstration, and maybe he owed them something.

"Managing cycles during the season is a delicate dance. I must have broken through my suppressant, and then my backup patch was knocked off. I'm just grateful that things went they way they did and no one was hurt."

"I think everyone was just worried for you after you were taken off the ice by Rozanov." She laughed and gave him a once-over, even going so far as to gesture up and down his body with her microphone. "Looks like you made it out in one piece."

Shane snapped a glare at her. "It wasn't like that. Rozanov and I have had our differences on the ice, but he's not a monster. He got me out, and he guarded me until I could handle myself, like he would for any omega in similar circumstances. I am...inexpressibly grateful."

There was a moment of awkward silence, and then another reporter asked, "Does that mean you're going to take it easy on him in three weeks in Boston?"

"Not on your life," Shane said instantly, and honestly. He looked straight into the camera and pointed a finger into it. "Or yours, Rozy. Don't think I'm not coming for you."

He got the laughter that he always did when he played along with the press' narrative, and was able to escape before he could be peppered with more questions. Hayden was waiting at

the door; he held it open for Shane and used his body to block the press from following until security could take over the job. There was a car waiting just outside the door, and they both piled into it.

Shane let his head drop against the seat and closed his eyes. He ran his hands over his face and paused to pinch the bridge of his nose. "What a fucking night."

Heats were bad enough when he rode them out in his own den, surrounded by his own familiar scent, and sometimes—when the timing was lucky—blankets that still carried the faintest touch of Ilya's pheromones. He had control of the temperature, the texture of the clothing against his body, no unusual or unwelcome scents. Dropping out of his heat in a locker room with a doctor prodding at his swollen glands and shining lights in his eyes had been almost as unpleasant as falling into heat mid-game.

Hayden was quiet for a long time as the car pulled away into traffic. Shane hoped that he would feel too awkward to say anything for the whole ride, but it only took a few kilometers for Hayden to clear his throat.

"You okay?" he asked. "Really?"

Shane felt a headache creeping in, and his joints were starting to feel stiff and achy. He could already tell that he was going to get tired of hearing that question in the next week. "Yeah, I'm fine. No harm, no foul. Just... glad it didn't turn into a bloodbath out there."

Hayden glanced at the driver, who was studiously ignoring them. He looked back to Shane and lowered his voice. "And...Rozanov...?"

"Perfect gentleman," Shane said tiredly. He found the words thick and unpleasant on his tongue, but it wasn't the first time that he'd felt the urge to tell Hayden...something. Anything.

I like him. He's not so bad. He's so careful with me except in all the ways I don't want him to be careful with me.

I'm in love with him.

"You sure?"

Shane rolled his head against the seat to give Hayden a long look. "You really think I wouldn't have sent him out of that room with broken bones if he'd tried something I didn't approve of?"

Hayden laughed shortly, and then coughed into his fist.

There had been a few guys over the years who had looked at Shane's stats and thought the easiest way to beat Montreal on the ice was to force their captain into submission. It hadn't gone well for them, and people had learned quickly that Shane being an omega didn't mean he couldn't flatten them—physically or chemically. He hadn't yet met an alpha who *could* overpower him and actually tried it.

"Okay," Hayden said, putting his hands up. "I'm just relieved you're safe."

"Me, too," Shane said. "And hey, we still won." They'd squeaked out a meager and unsatisfactory victory at 2-1, and every player on the ice had been in at least one fight before the clock had ticked over. Shane hadn't looked for any of the highlights, and he wasn't looking forward to the post mortem.

Snorting, Hayden said, "No thanks to you."

Shane really just wanted to close his eyes, but he rallied himself for his friend. "Hey! I kept Rozy off the ice for the rest of the game. That's got to be worth something!"

"Sure. It's worth as much as him keeping *you* off the ice for the rest of the game," Hayden said with a laugh that felt more relaxed.

Shane summoned up a laugh, and then turned the conversation to Hayden's quickly growing family. That kept them occupied until the car pulled up outside his condo and he could joke about getting to go home to some *peace and quiet*. Hayden flipped him off, and he kept the smile pasted on his face until he made it to the front door.

Peace and quiet sounded a lot like *lonely* once he was in the chilly evening air with only the streetlight and the memory of Ilya's hands on him for company. He still felt shaky and fragile in the aftermath of his acute heat, and also embarrassed, and frustrated, and starved for touch. He wanted to curl up in his bed with his alpha wrapped around him and sleep, skin-to-skin, until the lingering effects of his heat faded.

Shane let his forehead thump to the front door. In a lot of ways, he regretted letting Ilya fuck him through his heat. He had never shared a heat before, not with anyone. He'd been thinking a lot lately that he wanted to share it with Ilya, but he'd never even brought it up. In all the years they'd been fucking, and even in the recent months when *fucking* had turned into... something else, they'd both danced around the topic of heats, had rarely even acknowledged that they weren't both betas.

After this, every heat he spent locked alone in his cottage, or his condo, or his hotel room was going to be torture.

He opened his front door and felt his shoulders unwind almost instantly, but it took him until he rounded the corner to see Ilya already sprawled on his couch to realize why.

"Hey," Ilya said, craning over his shoulder to look up at Shane as casually as if he was home to greet Shane after every game.

"I love you," Shane blurted out.

He froze in the aftermath of his own words, but Ilya's answering smile was like a sunrise in the dark room, and Shane collapsed down to the couch to take Ilya's face in his hands and kiss him until they were both breathless.

End Notes

This is my first foray into this fandom (or hockey); let me know what you think!

I like to chat!! Feel free to come say hi! I am lightshadowverisimilitude on tumblr or ladyshadowdrake on Discord!

Translations:

ni khuya sebe

Ни хуя себе

Holy shit!

tvoyu mat'

твою мать

This is literally "your mother" but the context being "(Fuck) your mother"/Fucking hell

blyat'

блять

Fuck

Ya tebya lyublyu

Я тебя люблю.

I love you

Mne kazhetsya ya lyublyu tebya bol'she svoey zhizni. Dumayu ya umru zdes' s toboy yesli ty menya poprosish

Мне кажется я люблю тебя больше своей жизни. Думаю я умру здесь с тобой если ты меня попросишь

I think I love you more than I love my own life. I think I would die here with you if you asked me.

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