Eyes On Me

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Category:	M/M
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Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander & Rose Landry
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, Rose Landry, Zane Boodram, Luca Haas, Wyatt Hayes, Brandon Wiebe, David Hollander, Yuna Hollander, Hayden Pike, Svetlana Vetrova, Original Male Character(s)
Additional Tags:	Anxious Shane Hollander, Mild Smut, Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Protective Ilya Rozanov, Hurt/Comfort, Boys Kissing, Kissing, Autistic Shane Hollander, Angst with a Happy Ending, Angst, Minor Injuries, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, Stalking, Non-Consensual Drug Use, Rape/Non-con Elements, nothing too serious though, Kidnapping, Implied Sexual Content, Home Invasion, Whump, Hurt Shane Hollander, Shane Hollander Needs a Hug, Shane Hollander's Cottage, Post-Episode: s01e06 The Cottage (Heated Rivalry), Post-Canon, Anal Sex, Anal Fingering, Aftercare, Bottom Shane Hollander, Top Ilya Rozanov, submissive shane hollander, Submissive Character, Non-Sexual Submission, Ilya Rozanov Whump, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, read the tags, Some slightly graphic scenes, Don't Like Don't Read, Major Character Injury, Physical hurt, Courtroom Drama
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Eyes On Me

by 1100200

Summary

Shane Hollander knows he’s not a small guy. Years of hockey and workouts have built up his muscles, and lucky genetics from his father’s side places him just shy of six feet. He’s checked hockey players half a foot and several pounds more than him, knocked Scott Hunter into the ice in the one fight he’s ever actually thrown hands in. But as much as Shane loves the game, the fast movements, passes, and team camaraderie, there were times where he could only feel regret at following the path of athletic fame. He puts on the media smile he practices in the mirror as he brushes his hair each day, uses the bright lights of press conferences to erase his view of the audience, and keeps his answers simple and focused on hockey.

The number of people outside the arena still makes him feel crushed in on all sides, small. Eyes trained on his face, cameras flashing, pens and cell phones being passed into his hands. The itch of it all settles under his skin.

@OttawaPoliceDispatch: Police have been dispatched to a house alarm in Galetta, On. Possible break in, destruction of property.

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Recent Missing Persons Report filed for Shane William Hollander at 9:25 pm

Epilogue: 3/1

Notes

Hello hello, like many of you I am also absolutely obsessed with this couple, fandom, show, everything... so I'm joining in filling the void till season 2.

I needed to put Shane Hollander between my teeth and shake him... so that's what we're doing

Please read the tags, nothing graphic will happen, but it's good to know what you're getting into! I only saw a few other fics with this premise, which I am also reading, and I'm excited to add to the Hollander whump. That being said this story is already fully planned out so if it is similar to any others, great minds just think alike.

Next to Ilya's dialogue there is the translation of the Russian words in italics, so you don't have to pull out google translate. I have also never written smut before so this is a bit fade to black, but there might be more in the next chapter. I'm demisexual af with only fanfic as

experience so I'm trying my best. Would love to hear what y'all think about how I wrote the characters and how the romance came out

Sadly I have not read the books yet, but if the shipping could hurry up I will soon! Honestly I know more about actual NHL hockey then the NHL in this universe

For more information about this fic like how I plan to pace it and such please see the bottom notes

Chapter 1: Stage Fright

If there was anything anyone knew about him, first thing anyone would probably say, was that the world knew Shane Hollander loved playing hockey. He lived and breathed it. No one has dedicated their lives like him, cementing their own feet into ice skates and brain rewired for power plays the way he has, holding records since his rookie years that others worked for years for.

Now as much as Shane loves the game, the fast movements, passes, and team camaraderie, there were times where he could only feel regret at following the path of athletic fame. It had gotten easier since his rookie year, years of social practice and now the reassurance of his team captain and fiancé watching from the sidelines. Shane puts on the media smile he practices in the mirror as he brushes his hair each day, uses the bright lights of press conferences to erase his view of the audience, and keeps his answers simple and focused on hockey.

Tonight's panel is not unique in that sense. Shane still dreads every part.

He can still feel the tenseness in his shoulders minutes after, body fighting against the thumb Ilya is pressing into the stiffness of the muscle. Despite the shakiness he feels, he lets the man crowd him into a dark corner off the stage as others move to join the main banquet area with all the donors and big leagues. Shane works to soothe himself, running the palms of his hands up and down, up and down, across the slightly scratchy fabric on Ilya's chest, eyes closed and chin tilted down to his chest.

The deep chuckle he receives lowers his shoulders an inch, the sound fond and sweet. Shane can feel his own face break into a small smile. He lets himself fall into the soft press of lips on his for several moments, before reluctantly peeling himself away from the warm body in front of him. Ilya only lets him pull away a couple of inches before moving his hands from his forearms to around his waist, refusing to let the moment end, anchoring him in place.

"Ангел, eyes on me for a second". *Angel*

Shane pries his own eyes open again, the loss of past anxiety leaving him tired and fragile at the edges. Shaky with lost adrenaline. Just the thought of going out to that floor and mingling among live music and buffet foods is already torture.

Despite it all, he meets hazel eyes nearly glowing with fondness. The sight almost makes him close his eyes again at the brightness.

"Ангел, Ма́ленький, only an hour, food and small talk with rich men, then we disappear from party and go home to fuck". *Angel, little one*

At that Shane can't help but let out an unattractive snort, leaning back in the man's hold as a hand passes below his waist, sneaking a quick squeeze. Tapping his palm against the opposite shoulder, he twists out of the hands holding him, dodging a soft second attempt at a grab and turning towards the stage exit doors.

“Honestly, if anyone expects me to actually have some sort of conversation tonight, I better have a reward lined up in the end”.

He doesn’t bother to turn around to see the smirk on his fiancé’s face as he follows behind him.

-~-

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: THE WAIT IS OVER. 🏒🔥

The Playoffs continue in Ottawa as we take on the Detroit Angels at Canadian Tire Centre.

Puck drops at 7:00 PM — bring the noise, bring the energy, get hype!

@CentaurPowerPlay: The cup is ours this year!!!!

@OttawaCentaurs#24: Detroit has no chance tonight, can’t wait to see it live

@AngelOnIce_32: Thomas Reck’s power play is going to throw the centaurs clear out the ranks!

@CentaurPowerPlay: No chance, that man hasn’t score since 08’

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Tonight at 7pm in Ottawa’s Canadian Tire Centre Shane Hollander will be taking the ice against the Detroit Angels with good chances to lead his team to victory in this phase of the playoffs. Two nights ago, in Montreal, Hollander showed his old team what they were missing by scoring twice in the second period and assisting Haas in the third

@HollanderHockeyFan: my man, my man, my man

@OttawaTitan: Montreal all went home crying, showed them right he gave you all those cups, better with us

@LA_BeastOnIce: the consequences of homophobia

@RozanovBackhand: Hollander isn’t even alt captain

@TheGist: Captain Ilya Rozanov talks team strategy and the importance of nonverbal communication on the ice; “Team is just large family, rookies need big brothers”. Https:/huahuhshw_@TheGist/x.com

@NHL_Centaurs81: what a great fucking guy, ya’ll hate on him too much

@PuckChickLA: The only people who liked him until recently were Boston, don’t lie, all he does is fight like an asshole

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Douchebag ends up in the box every game, biggest trouble magnet, gets his teammates hurt

@**NHL_Centaurs81:** he defends his team well on ice and wins

@Ottawa_puckmasters: I didn't know I could love him more

@OttawaRider81: Hope his man can fight

@Ottawa_puckmasters: @OttawaRider81 Idk if I could I love Shane Hollander too much he's my baby

-~-

The sound of the crowd in the stands blends into the rush of blood in his ears, forming the white noise needed for his thoughts to flow with the movements he has practiced over and over again.

Ilya is circling the ice in the Centre, stretching his legs this way and that as he balances on individual skates, sharp eyes focused on his team as they stretch across the ice. Shane keeps his eyes down, focuses on stretching out his legs as he dips his chest down towards the ice, hips pressed flat. Every other moment he feels hazel eyes focus on him and his form against the ground, but he knew one of them had to be determined to keep the PDA to a minimum.

Ice skates stop feet in front of him. Before he can think he's already glancing up, making eye contact with the large Russian man in front of him, wicked smile stuck on his face and hazel eyes bright, and Shane has to drop his head back to his chest to hide the redness that splashes across his face at the lecherous look. A chuckle rumbles through Ilya's chest before he skates off again to round his teammates again.

Couch Wiebe calls them back to the bench before the game starts, sending out the starting line for both the National Anthems. He keeps his eyes on the lights shining on them from above, squinting against the glare that erases the thousands of people all around him, only Barrett and Dykstra visible in his peripherals and the line of Detroit across the ice.

He tries to put himself back into those practices, those years of grade school hockey, where the only people sitting out in the crowd watching his every movement were friends and loved ones.

It's one of those nights the blaring music sits heavy and itchy in his bones. Shane can feel the coldness of the rink seep under his chest guards. He holds his breath for 7 seconds then lets it out in ten, letting the noise fade into the fuzz of his thoughts as he glides up to the center of the ice, stick ready for the face-off.

He wins it and sends it quickly back to Haas to take off towards Detroit's goal.

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The smile across his face in the locker room is almost painful. Across the room, his team captain and fiancés' smile matches his as he jostles the players within reach. The room is chaotic, filled with the loud yells of the Ottawa Centaurs as they come off a 5-3 against

Detroit, the win moving them closer to the Stanely Cup Playoffs. Boyle and Young are shaking his shoulder from either side as some of the others end up in a jumping pile of to the side to work out their excitement. Even as his head whips side to side it can't wipe the grin off his face.

"We gotta go out and celebrate, there's no game tomorrow!" Someone yells out, met with more cheers of enthusiasm from various Centaurs.

"Lucy's!" a secondary roar sounds out

Young has moved off to grab some of the other rookies, moving for the showers. Boyle's hand stays clasped on his shoulder, large hand tight. At another small jostle, Shane turns to face the taller man, the man's blue eyes alight with mischief and a small smile on his usually passive face.

"You coming Hollander? We missed you last time."

The man's eyebrows raise further up his forehead at Shane's hesitation.

"C'mon Hollander, lets have some fun tonight", This time it's Ilya goading him as he comes to stand in front of them both. Boyle just laughs again before giving him another small shake, moving off towards the showers as well and giving the couple some privacy in the crowded room to argue over after-celebrations.

Instead of meeting the man's eyes, Shane turns around to continue pulling off his gear, placing pieces gently atop the bench in front of his locker. He feels a hand tug at the back of his shirt collar, then tangle in the hair at the back of his head as his fiancé steps up closer to his back. At the warmth and the feeling of fingers in his hair, Shane rolls his eyes, tilting his head to the side to finally make eye contact over his shoulder.

"Is that supposed to mean you want to go out with everyone?"

He's met with a fond chuckle, "Party with team, party at home, does not matter to me. Will end up in some place no matter".

Like often when he deals with his asshole of a fiancé, Shane merely rolls his eyes and continues to strip down to his under clothes. Grabbing a towel, he spins around and places a hand against the Russian's chest, keeping the man at a distance but secretly enjoying the muscle he can feel beneath his hand. Ilya's smile grows as he leans into Shane's palm, chin forward, letting Shane hold him up and away.

At this point his eyes will get lodged in his head if he keeps rolling them at his man, Shane can't help but think, snorting to himself and removing his hand fast, letting Ilya fall forward into the space he was just occupying.

"I need to shower, then I think we should go see how fast Hayes gets the rookies to do tequila shots with him".

"Who are you, and what have you done to мой ангел, Hollander?". *My angel*

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Shane knows he's not a small guy. Years of hockey and workouts have built up his muscles, and lucky genetics from his father's side places him just shy of six feet. He's checked hockey players half a foot and several pounds more than him, knocked Scott Hunter into the ice in the one fight he's ever actually thrown hands in.

The number of people outside the arena still makes him feel crushed in on all sides, small. Not the good kind of small Ilya makes him feel.

Despite the ever-growing nerves and itch underneath his skin at the amount of people looking at them standing close together, the cameras flashing, he plasters on his media smile and starts following the others past the crowd of fans.

Ilya is only a step behind him, shoulders squared like he's still on the ice, and Shane can't help but give an amused huff at the attack dog that has taken up his side.

He ignores him most of the way, instead focusing on the steady movement between people, taking a pen and autographing, clapping hands with an obviously tipsy middle-aged man. A teenage girl with dark hair pulled back in a ribbon has him sign her jersey. He takes a selfie with two young college students, passing their phone back and being handed another for another group. He crouches down to sign a young boys team jersey, blonde hair curly in his face like his fiancé's, he straightens up to sign another man's hockey card with his own face on it.

Shane tries to forget the feeling of palm on palm, fingers brushing his as fans reach to pass him phones, pens, and notebooks. The itch of before crawls up his arms to the back of his neck.

He leads the both of them through the crowd, Ilya's hand coming up to grasp his opposite shoulder as Shane is jostled closer to the guardrails. By the time they are sitting in Ilya's stupidly high-powered car, Shane can feel his shoulder back at his ears.

A large hand squeezes tight over the back of his neck, then slowly moves to settle on his left knee. Air comes rushing back into his lungs.

"Дорогой, they hold us to nothing, we can go home". *Dear one*

Shane lets the next breath out hard, "no no, I'm good, I want to go. It'll be fun to see everyone have a good time, the rookies have been stressing themselves out".

Ilya glances at him from the corner of his eyes quickly before focusing back on the road before them.

"hm, much stress in team". Another look, "vodka will be good for heads".

Like always Ilya Rozanov has a way of breaking his tension. With a snort, Shane lets his head fall against the car door, tiredly watching the lights of the bars and restaurants pass, then

amusedly watching through the side mirror as Haas' SUV clumsily changes lanes two cars behind them.

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The pounding bass of the club did little to remove the itch still present under his skin from earlier. He had thought the win of the night would smooth him over, but as he and his team gather in public again, this time drinks in hand, he can't help the static nerves that settle along his spine.

So much so that as he feels a heavy hand at his waist, he jumps a bit in place, sloshing his barely touched beer over the sides of the glass. Behind him, Ilya peers over his shoulder, studying his face closely, eyes flitting across his brow and down to his mouth. In any other circumstance Shane would be a blushy mess, pressed back into the chest behind him. Right now, he can only grip his glass tighter.

"What is wrong, Ангел". *Angel*

If anything, the man's worry made him feel worse. Here he was, NHL star Shane Hollander, barely able to go out with his teammates for a drink without acting like a nervous wreck. Just minutes prior Ilya had been grinning by the bar waiting for refills with Boodram, now he was fussing over him instead of enjoying himself.

Shane tries to plaster on a smile, one he knows doesn't quite reach his eyes, and knows his attentive fiancé isn't swayed in the slightest. He drops it and huffs out a breath, bringing his cup up to his mouth and chugging half of the gross beer that Boyle had bought him.

Feet away a few of the guys cheer as they watch him.

The taste on his tongue disgusts him, and Shane tries to focus on the tinkling of ice in Ilya's vodka class just by his ear as he sips instead of the urge to go and wipe his mouth out with a napkin. The sound of Ilya swallowing behind him makes his leg twitch and he holds his breath slightly as he downs the rest of what's in his glass.

He places it down on the empty table in front of his, the arm around his waist squeezing him back in.

He's pressed tighter now to the strong Russian man standing behind him, hips pressed into the plush of his ass and keeping him still. Ilya's now empty glass is being set aside his, the man's free hand moving to his opposite hip, pulling him closer like it's possible to fuse them together.

Shane has never been one for PDA, too anxious about keeping a secret that's not a secret anymore, but with enough alcohol in him he finds himself losing his footing increasingly and wanting to fully lean into the warmth of his fiancé at his back. He's desperate for the anchor the man provides despite feeling the itch of watchful eyes on his back.

Tucked into a corner on the opposite side of the room is a group of young girls, dresses tight and sparkling in the neon lights, whispering to each other with big smiles on their faces, not hiding the fact that they are looking over at the team. By the bar a young man sits with a beer in his hand, not bothering to look away when Shane makes eye contact.

Ilya's arm around him keeps him upwards, turning them both to their teammates who are in various states of drunkenness, the most obvious being Young who is chugging a vodka redbull and lost his shirt an hour ago.

"Get home safely my loves, Playoffs too soon to replace lost hockey players!", he lowers his voice a bit to those closer, "Time for home, boring couple activities".

The laughter that follows them as they turn to head to the front door tells him no one believes them; the flush of his face streaks down his neck. The eyes of the Russian man besides him follow it down below his shirt collar.

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Shane can barely remove his shoes from his feet before strong arms are wrapped around his waist, and he's being twirled and pinned against the wall across the front door. The buttons of his fiancé's shirt are completely undone now; several being popped open between the car and the house.

"You're a man of little patience, Rozanov". The words come out fonder than he means, his chin already tipping up towards the taller man.

Lips are pressed to his own, and his eyelids flutter shut to enjoy the warmth of the man in front of him. He's rewarded for melting into the arms snug around his waist with heavy presses of lips, tongue coming out to trace his bottom lip before swiping over his front teeth.

Shane's hums are turning into small moans, latching his arm around Ilya's broad shoulders and pulling him down into his body, letting him press him against this wall. They turn breathier as cold fingers trace along the waist band of his jeans, skimming across the tight skin of his stomach, then under his shirt to ghost up his sides.

The feeling of rough thumbs on his chest makes him tip his head back to let out a soft groan. Hazel eyes watched his mouth move with pupil blown wide. The sight makes him groan again and tighten the arm he had latched around his fiancé's neck, bringing the man down an inch so Shane could start laying open mouth kisses up and down the tendon of his neck.

Ilya's thumbs press harder to his nipples, circling both and pressing his shoulders back to the wall. He slides his leg between Shane's to line up their hips, pressing his own hardness forward into the bulge growing in his briefs, the sharp zipper of his jeans ignored. Shane's head drops back to thump hard against the wall behind him, his fiancé taking advantage of his submission and deciding to get some payback for the little red mark Shane had tried to make behind his ear.

At a particularly hard suck of his neck, Shane pulls himself from the haze of kisses his fiancé has put him in. One hand leaves the other man's shoulders to press fingers against his mouth, "No marks, c'mon Ilya!".

The teethy grin and deep chuckle he gets in response does not help the straining in his pants, and the scape of teeth over his jaw only makes his breath stutter more.

"I'm just so hungry, Котенок, I've been starving all night". *Kitten*

Shane tightens his hands on Ilya's shoulders, the man's hands drag and cress down his chest then to his back, large hands spanning over his waist.

He holds himself back from offering to make the man dinner before they continue, having not eaten since before the game, but he's fallen for it before only to be laughed at fondly before being bent over the sofa.

Lips ghost over his and Ilya's hands squeeze over his hips, then move down to grip his ass in both hands, squishing the muscle and fat in his hands, "You'll let me taste you, Ма́ленький, da? Just a taste". *Little one*

Shane breath comes out in a slow moan, his eyelids shuttering and hands tight on the strong shoulders in front of him. Another squeeze of his ass is all he gets in warning as the Russian sets his hands under the fat of thighs, lifts all 200 pounds of him, and wraps his legs around his waist.

Like this he has a much better angle, able to sink both hands into the curly blonde hair in front of him, tilting Ilya's head back to connect their lips again and put his own tongue in the other's mouth as the larger man slowly maneuvers himself through the cottage hallways, not bothering to turn on the lights.

They get lost in each other's lips and tongue as Ilya settles him atop the kitchen countertop, freshly wiped down only this morning by Shane's own hand. When Ilya leans back to pop open the button of Shane's jeans, impatiently shucking the denim from his legs, Shane can't help but think about how he's going to need to get more Clorox wipes soon if this keeps happening.

A hiss leaves his teeth as his now bare ass hits the cold marble. The Russian man in front of him ignores this, too focused on pressing open mouthed kisses and teeth up the inner skin of both his calves up to his knees. Eyes with pupils blown wide are trained on his face, the want there enough to make Shane tip his head back and moan at the sight.

Ilya's mouth spreads in a toothy grin, rough hands dragging down his bare legs before latching onto both his calves, lifting his legs up and tipping him back to lay on the countertop, legs propped on tan broad shoulders.

Shane's breathing rasps in the quietness of the house as lips trail over sensitive skin, stopping to suck small red marks behind his left knee then up the inside of his thigh. The warm breath ghost across his skin makes him shudder, large hands sliding up to settle behind his knees, pushing them slowly up towards his chest.

The tongue running over the stretch marks across his thighs would usually be a turn on, Ilya always set to worship the parts of his body he was most insecure about, but instead of melting against the cold marble countertop beneath him, Shane can only feel the prickling itchiness across the small of his back return as his body decides ‘something is wrong’.

Ilya notices the change in his body almost before Shane notices himself, smoothly moving to glide his mouth back down the skin of his thigh towards his knee, gentling the hands behind his knees and slowly letting him unfold in front of him. Those hazel eyes are still blown wide but now shine again with worry, more prominent than earlier tonight.

Despite the love that glows behind Shane’s ribs, the liquid warmth he can feel in his stomach, he can’t help but twitch at the feeling settling in his lower spine.

“Дорогой, Сердце моё, you are tense all day. Before game, after game. What is wrong, tell truth, let me fix it”. *Dear one, my heart*

As Shane’s hand reaches out, going for a grasp on his hair to bring Ilya back to where he wanted him, the man moves back further, his hands moving to wrap loosely over his calves, Shane’s feet still propped by his ears. Sharp eyes trail over his body, looking for something or other, only pausing for a moment at the evidence of Shane’s arousal standing before them.

Shane can feel his ears go red.

“It’s fine! I’m fine, I’m all good, I want this… please? I just had a funny feeling or something, it’s just the nerves of the game still around”.

Ilya’s face is stoney, but his eyes show that he is still wary of his answer. The light of the moon shining through the big open windows of the cottage makes him look ethereal, almost made of marble.

“You are star NHL player, no need for worry outside ice. Most shots, most scores, beautiful assists”. Dark eyes meet his, “Yet you, Shane Hollander, know this. Game is worrying but not so. What is true issue?”.

Shane can’t quite find the words, the intense look, the warmth in his stomach, and the itch in his back are making it impossible to think. For a second he avoids the man in front of him’s eyes, looking over the corner of the fridge shinning in the moonlight, the tree tapping softly against the far window, the dark water of the river past the backyard.

Finally, he meets the love of his life’s eyes, and not quite knowing the real reason himself, but also not wanting to lie, Shane musters up a small smile and simplifies it as, “I think I just rather do this in the bedroom instead of in front of all the kitchen windows”.

“hmm”. Ilya obviously is hesitating to take his words as truth, but as Shane fights with himself to maintain the eye contact, the Russian drops his eyes first, first to his lips, then down the line of his still clothed shoulders, down to the hardness of his cock between his legs that has only flagged slightly at the questioning.

Shane tries to give his flirtiest smile, fluttering his lashes for good measure and tipping his knees farther apart. It does the job of distracting the man, attracting dark eyes back down to where Ilya was heading earlier.

“Bed first, c’mon”.

“Okay, Душа моя, dinner in bed”.

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@Nhl: Tonight, the Ottawa Centaurs knocked the Detroit Angels out of the Playoff brackets, moving one step closer to raising the Stanely cup for the first time in 12 years. Ilya Rozanov seeks to win his third ever cup as the captain of his new team, alongside fiancé three-time cup winner former Montreal Captain Shane Hollander

@HollanderHockeyFan: Power couple!

@HollanovHockeyHQ: I need to see them win the cup together, it would cure me

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Fourth cup needed

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: HUGE playoff win at home 💪

Knocked out Angels and kept the momentum rolling. 5-3

@FrozenPond_12: Here we go boys!

@Ottawa_puckmasters: Screaming, crying, throwing up

@Sports_Illustrated: The Changing Dynamics; Interpersonal Relationships Within the Sports Community https:/ohohasff.Sports_Illustraded/x.com/akfohfjaaojsja

@NHL_Fanatic2013: Didn’t Hollander win three cups while dating his supposed archrival?

@PuckChaser_Wild: We’ve seen it in the woman’s leagues God forbid a boy kiss another boy

@HollanovInAction: They just need the clicks

@ZoneCoverageCrew: I want to talk about sports not gay people

@HollanderHockey_Updates: The Ottawa Centaurs were seen partying it up in downtown Ottawa, attending various music bars and clubs to celebrate their win against the Detroit Angels tonight. The real question is what is the effect of the Centaurs of their newcomers? Rookie Kyle Young was seen propped up by long-term Centaurs members and Shane Hollander was last seen with a beer in his head, a big difference than his previous years of sobriety at public events

@HollanderHockeyFan: Yo let the guy live he’s like 30

@RozanovIceLegends: I love the mix of straight vodka and shitty beer in this photo, shows who's European and who's from North American

@RinkRebel: Rozanov definitely drinks vodka like it's water

@FrozenPond_12: the photos were circulated like a minute ago how chronically online are you?

@HollanovHockeyHQ: I saw them in seconds my brain just knew they were somewhere hah!

@HockeyHeartbeats: @HollanovHockeyHQ Why are they actually the cutest??? They're both like six foot and I just want to put them both in my pocket

@OttawaTitan: Young is such a light weight, poor bby

Chapter 2: In Quiet Moments

Chapter Summary

Even his previous cups with Montreal as their captain didn’t compare to this; the joy of how far this team has come, the love and care he feels for each man wearing a Centaurs jersey besides him, and the sight of fire blazing in his fiancé’s eyes as he shakes his alternate captain, toothy grin on display. Nothing compares to being able to play a whole season with the man he loves and end it with a Stanley cup, their names side by side.

Chapter Notes

I am back my lovelies! This is the length you should expect between chapters, I hope the longest the longest chapters will take is at most a week... Read the tags people, this gets smutty

If you do not want to read the smut skip from "The whole night is still humming under his skin in the car" to the twitter section.
Btw it is important to read the tweets, I add them for extra context and foreshadowing, plus I have fun writing those parts

NOT ALL RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS ARE PROVIDED NEXT TO DIALOGUE *If Shane knows what the words mean then they are next to the dialogue, otherwise both you and Shane will have just let the words flow (translation in end notes)

If you didn't read in the last note, I have not read the books although they are in the processed of being shipped to me, so this is based on the show, common things in other heated rivalry fanfics, and my own take, so if it's not perfectly cannon accurate it's mine now you can't stop me... in other words I have moved the cottage to Ottawa for plot purposes, Shane lived in an apartment in Montreal, this has always been his Ottawa get away cottage that they now live in

The first part of this chapter I had a lot of fun writing. First, I wanted to write a more accurate Stanley Cup Winning celebration than what we see in the show, no hate but I've watched hockey for years so I neeeeed to write it. I think I have attended almost 20 games between my two university over like three years. I was obsessed and now they do their little stretches and i drool. Second, I love building up Shane's character because I feel so connected to him as an autistic character, so I am writing him with similar experiences I have. One thing in particular is the hardship of having to become famous to do what you love, I would hate being famous. I also have a special interest in ice hockey, I watched during a night class once and ended up teach 4 different international students the rules of the game and pointing out my favorite players/

I almost gave Shane a ring camera doorbell, but they were not really a thing in like 2017-18 I don't think, but in modern day Shane Hollander is a Ring doorbell camera ambassador, in the commercials and everything. If anyone has a ring camera it would be that man

Last things last, I also wrote the Stanley cup scene as my actual NHL team sucks ass these years. We got rid of our team captain last year, our general manager sucks, and now they are talking about trading one of our only goal scorers because they can get good money for him - blasphemy. Can we win a game for once so I can stop crying

Stay tuned for the next chapter, it will be longer most likely

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thousands of pairs of eyes staring down from high up bleachers. More cameras than Shane could count, each one rigged up high or held aloft by camera men. The lights above so bright that he was surprised his skates hadn't been hitting the rink's underboard as he chased the puck up and down Canadian Tire Centre for three periods.

And yet the only thing Shane Hollander could see was the blur of yellow, orange, and brown plush toys raining down over the glass onto the ice. The only thing he could hear was the rushing of blood in his ears.

The noise comes back in layers, like someone pressed play on individual scenes around him, his head still humming as cheers and screams of an absolute feral fanbase rain down from all sides.

Shane doesn't think he's filled his lungs fully since Ilya's game opening face-off.

The Ottawa Centaurs are buzzing, electric off turning the score in their favor as the last minutes of the third ticked down. His assist to Young set them even, their captain raining down hell and slamming the puck into the back of Chicago Titans net with barely a minute till overtime.

As the end of 5th Stanley Cup Finals game sounds with a blaring horn, he and the rest of the Centaurs on the bench vault over the walls, helmets already off, arms in the air to pile on each other in a moment of sheet adrenaline and blinding excitement. The weight of the men he has started to see as family all around him in a chaotic cluster of hugs and heavy shoulder patting helps Shane to find the ground beneath his skates again.

Even his previous cups with Montreal as their captain didn't compare to this; the joy of how far this team has come, the love and care he feels for each man wearing a Centaurs jersey besides him, and the sight of fire blazing in his fiancé's eyes as he shakes his alternate captain, toothy grin on display. Nothing compares to being able to play a whole season with the man he loves and end it with a Stanley cup, their names side by side.

Their men start to break off to find family to share joy or familiar journalists for post-game interviews, Shane himself following Dykstra to clap hands with the few veteran Titans still on the ice. Towards the center of the ice multiple cameras and media handles surround the captain of the Ottawa Centaurs, interested to know what the great Ilya Rozanov thinks about winning the Stanley Cup after two years with a new team.

The beaming cocky smile on the man's face tells Shane from here that his fiancé is bragging, probably claiming he knew in his bones that this year the cup would be Ottawa's. Most likely boasting about Boodram and his power play earlier in the game, probably slipping in how important he finds Shane's presence on the team like he always tries to do in press conferences, no matter how many times Shane tells him to keep the PDA to a minimum.

Ilya catches his eye for a second before focusing back on the question being asked to him. He responds with a smirk and something cocky but directs the wink he flashes back in Shane's direction.

He's still admiring the Russian man from afar when his parents find him, his dad beaming with arms open wide to embrace him, his mom already crying and taking pictures of the crowd from the ice. David Hollander gives the best of hugs, Shane has always said, the continued roar of the crowd around them fading a bit under the pressure of familiar arms. His mom cups his face as he puts it over his dad's shoulder, and the sight of happy tears in her eyes and the large pride flag pin proudly displayed on her chest makes his own eyes misty.

He wraps Yuna in his arms after his dad lets him go, chuckling at the sight of his fiancé now circling the ice, pumping the Stanley Cup high above his head, rousing up the screams of the filled Ottawa stadium as the lights went wild.

Because Ilya Rozanov had promised them all, after their forced coming out and Shane's switch from a rival team to his, a Stanley Cup was inevitable with the future Hollander-Rozanovs on the same team.

The Cup is passed off to Zane Boodram, alternate captain of the Ottawa Centaurs, a man who typically is hard to get a reaction out of now smiling broadly as he hosts the cup over his head. After a couple large raises of the cup towards the crowds, more cheers ring out, he turns to his wife beside him, kissing her passionately, their one-year-old son in her arms, and the crowd erupts further.

Ilya skates fast, dodging additional journalists and their microphones, towards where all three of the Hollanders now stood, still admiring him and the elation on his face. It's him that he hugs first, the larger man's arms going around Shane's shoulder, squeezing him tight and rocking them side to side with joy. His own arms go around the man's waist, pressing into him.

As they separate Ilya's hands drag across his shoulder padding, pat him hard, then let him go. Hazel eyes drag across his body just as physically. Shane watches as the Russian man takes a step to the side, smile soft, drifting back from him, before his hazel eyes widen for a split-second at spotting the open arms of David Hollander approaching him. Shane's face

splits wider as Ilya is wrapped up in the arms of his father, congratulating him for a game and season well played as Yuna rubs her hand over the large man's back.

Zane Boodram approaching him with the Stanley Cup in hand is the only thing that can tear his eyes away from the sight of his family in front of him.

Around the ice Chouinard and Hayes are still kissing their wives, ignoring the whining of the small children around each of them. Boyle is holding his young twins in each arm, happily chatting with one of the rink attendants who is offering them each a plush lion or horse that had been thrown to the ice by Ottawa fans in celebration. Men and women with large cameras on their shoulders turn in his direction.

The roar of the crowd blends with the rushing in his ears as the cold metal of the Stanley Cup is pressed into his hands for the fourth time in his life. The feeling is unreal and indescribable even after all these years.

As Shane raises it above his head to the Ottawa crowd, the sound is deafening and seeps into his bones like the warmth of the fireplace back home. The lights above are blinding.

Only when he lowers it again to his waist level, adrenaline back in his blood and lungs heaving, does the man, wearing the same jersey colors, that he desperately loves skate closer to him again.

A warm large hand with rough fingertips cups the back of his head, caressing through the short hairs at the base of his skull and thumb finding the pulse in his neck. Shane turns to him like a sunflower finds the sun, dark eyes meeting hazel as the moment sinks into both their brains, their blood, their shared story.

Shane can feel his eyelids droop just a touch, conscious of the thousands of eyes on them, but not quite able to care with the feeling of a Stanley Cup win in blood, the metal in his hands, and the heat of Ilya's eyes in his stomach.

"Мне так повезло, что ты мой".

With those words, despite not knowing what they mean, Shane lets his fiancé tilt his head back a tad and kiss him passionately in front of the blinding stadium lights, the entire NHL, and every hockey fan in existence, just like he had promised to all those years ago.

-~-

He can still feel the stick of champagne on his skin even after a hot shower. Shane had moved quickly through his after game routine; pads off and stacked in his locker, tape removed from his socks and shin pads directly into the trash, grab the blue towel he always has and the vanilla body wash he buys in bulk, then head directly to the furthest end of the shower and count to 60 with his eyes closed under the scalding water.

Perhaps it wasn't really the leftover alcohol that was sprayed across the team in the locker room, maybe it was just newly gathering sweat as he sits with his teammates, side by

side, lights and cameras glaring.

Shane had managed to avoid the cameras and questions down on the ice as the team celebrated, cup being passed hand to hand and group shots taken with screaming fans in the back. Now he couldn't escape, face to face with tens of reporters, microphones in hand, hounding them all with questions, and him and Ilya especially with questions unrelated to the game.

They didn't even get to sit next to one another.

Most of the press conference goes through one of his ears and out the other, no matter how much he tries to listen to his fellow professional talk about the sport he loves. He answers his own questions in perfect French, thankful he can recognize the few reporters that ask him things directly. He had practiced these answers earlier, leaving blanks for himself to fill in after the game, knowing that no matter if they had won or lost tonight he would need something to hold tight to.

The questions about his relationship always throw him off, however.

"Do you have anything to say to your former teammates after being ostracized for being gay, now winning a Stanley Cup in your first season away from them".

Shane can't say he didn't expect a question like that, it doesn't mean he really knows how to answer it.

Next to him Boyle claps his hand against his shoulder, giving him a small shake as the large man leans forward over the table, eyes dark and directed at the middle-aged woman still standing in the crowd.

"I believe Hollander winning the cup for Ottawa is enough of a statement towards them".

And with that the questions continue like Shane hadn't just hammed up a basic question in front of a live audience with his mouth hanging wide open.

For once he's looking forward to the escape to the Centaurs celebration at Hayes' house. At least there there would be only the team and their families, somewhere where he can be awkward in a little more peace.

-~-

The whole night is still humming under his skin in the car, the lights, the smells, the alcohol, the people and the loud conversations, the anxiety and adrenaline crash.

The warmth of the cottage melts part of itch, the gorgeous Russian man that he's loved for almost a decade now makes the rest of the world fuzz away as he's carefully corralled against the front door; Ilya's favorite place to pin him.

"Do I get reward? For scoring final goal? Winning us cup?"

Never mind, all this man does is piss him off.

Shane still huffs fondly at him, grinning, nudging the man's shoulder lightly with his hand before gliding his hands down the man's chest. He still sounds incredulous, "Oh, fuck you, what about my reward for scoring first?"

"Yes, you are usually first, Hollander".

"You're such a dick", it's said with no small amount of affection.

"You looked so sexy holding it, моя любовь". *My love*

Shane shoves at the man's chest, putting more into it than before, more than Ilya expected, sending him backwards a step and a half.

He takes the opportunity of having the space, turning off to continue deeper into the cottage, their shared home. He pries his shoes off as he walks, shoving them to the side more careless than he would usually allow himself. Over his shoulder Ilya is straightening up his spine and raising his chin, the feral grin overcoming his face as his eyes stalk Shane as he moves further away.

At the rustle of a shirt being thrown off behind him, Shane grins wider and speeds up to a trot down the hallway, deeper into the house.

Now he's not one to run in the house, always abiding his mom's rule and understanding the necessity of it for safety, but in this moment, he can't quite find it in himself to care and something in his subconscious laughs at making the man he loves work for it a bit.

It obviously surprises his fiancé, a word half-formed in Russian half-shouted at his back, then the pounding of feet as Ilya follows him at speed that Shane hadn't even started at. He can't help but let out an involuntary giggle as he picks up the speed, skipping half the few stairs to the bedroom door.

He doesn't quite manage to get the door open, loosing his footing a bit as his socked foot hits the hardwood floor just a tad wrong. Bracing himself on the doorway gives the man behind him enough time to wrap arms around his waist and push him fully into the wall, hips snug against his own.

"иди сюда, котёнок". *Come here, kitten*

Lips go to the skin behind Shane's ear, Ilya's breath warm and tongue wet as he lathes across the back of his jawbone.

Shane lets him continue what he's doing, large hands now up under his shirt and tracing the muscle of his abs, instead trying to focus on finding the doorknob with his hand and getting them into the room. As they both tumble in, Ilya doesn't let go, instead thrusting the long sleeve shirt he's still wearing up and over his head, letting Shane stumble forward blind for two steps. Once he can see again, he's being manhandled to the sheets in front of

them, large hands on his shoulder and waist, till he's laid on his back with Ilya practically ripping his jeans down his legs, boxers going too.

As Ilya turns to rustle through their bedside table for the bottom of lube and a condom, Shane sits up and reaches for the man in front of his, letting himself feel the hard plane of Ilya's abs and v-line. He slips the tips of his fingers under the waist band of the loose track pants he had changed into after the earlier press conference, letting the elastic pull then snap back to his skin.

Ilya tosses his finds on the sheets besides him, then reaches down to tuck his hands under Shane's knees and tip him roughly back on his back. The laugh he let's out as he's moved is swallowed up the lips now pressed against his own, tongue peaking out to run along his bottom lip. His fiancé swallows the moan that comes out as well, responding with his own into Shane's molars.

This time when Shane pulls at the elastic around his waist, he shoves it down, though he's not quite able to do much as the 6-foot adonis of a man above him presses his knees into his own chest, pressing him down further with his chest, occupying his mouth with his tongue.

Rough thumbs press into his calves, massaging into the tight muscle there. The combination of the press of fingers and Ilya's cock lined up against his own, one layer of track pants between them, is enough for Shane to let his head fall back with a quiet whimper.

The only thing that could be better than this was more skin on skin, and Ilya's dick buried inside of him.

Like it's always been since the first day they met, the first time their eyes met, the first time they did this, Ilya reads his mind, lifting him slightly to center them both more in the center of the king-sized mattress. The fancy memory foam one Ilya insisted on after seeing the small bed Shane used to sleep in by himself.

Ilya resumes his press on top of him, seemingly determined to keep him folded in half and pinned where he wanted him. Each of their hands find each other's; fingers linking, Ilya pressing the back of his hands against the soft sheets.

"Я люблю только тебя". *I love only you*

"I love you too, only you".

Shane only gets a second to admire his future husband's face in the soft light before lips are pressed to his neck, the overhead lights having never been turned on, the only light from the outside garden lamps and security lights through the open windows.

Shane can feel himself winding tighter. One of Ilya's hands leaves his own, his other hand wrapping around one wrist, then two, pressing them above his head as he leans up over his body. The click of lube makes Shane shiver, his spine tingling with electricity, his feet and toes flexing. Ilya's eyes follow the line of his body for a second, gaze dark, before they return to that previous feral energy.

He always seems to think Shane will crack one of these days.

Shane presses at the hand holding his wrists useless above his head, and his fiancé's sharp grin falls back in place. With one hand the man above him squeezes lube into his palm, running it through his finger and over thumb, warming it before pressing two fingers into him with a quick slide.

The surprise of the stretch sends Shane arching below him, fighting the grip on both his wrists. Ilya's grin widens, teeth showing, before leaning forward to press kisses across his pecs. He glides his teeth over one of his nipples as a third finger joins the others inside him, Shane's head slams back into the pillows. At the feeling of his knuckles crooking deep within him, he groans loud enough to fill the room.

It's times like this they both are glad that their days of hooking up exclusively in hotel rooms are over.

The fingers inside his continue to press and spread, glancing off his prostate once, before avoiding it purposely. Above him Ilya is watching his facial expressions, his own face fond and adoring, hungry on the edges.

Shane tilts a bit off center as his wrists are released and fingers are removed from his hole, calves still sitting on bare shoulders the only skin on skin; the whine he lets out is something he would be embarrassed about if he didn't want this so much.

Ilya coos at him, shushes the secondary whine that he lets out in complaint. Shane opens his eyes open on a crack, giggling at the sight of Ilya struggling to open the condom with lube covered fingers. His eyes flash at the sound, switching to teeth to tear the foil, slipping out the condom and slipping it over himself with languid pulls of his hand. Shane can practically drool at the sight, his fiancé's head tipped back in a second of self-pleasure, track pants tucked under his balls revealing over six inches of manhood.

"На тебя невозможно смотреть спокойно".

Shane's fingers skimming the hand Ilya is using to touch himself, snapping the rubber waistband of his pants against his skins, is all the words the man needs.

Slipping out of the last of his clothes, Ilya settles above Shane, thumbs tucked in the back of his knees, pressing him in half. The kiss languidly, before the skim of Shane's teeth against his fiancé's lower lip sets him alight again, and the kiss turns dirty and messy, saliva dripping down Shane's chin and smearing across Ilya's cheek.

One hand links again, pressed against the sheets as if Ilya needs to make sure that he's below him. His fiancé's other hand goes down to the hard cock rutting against Shane's own, giving himself another indulging pull before guiding the tip to where Shane is stretched for him.

They moan into each other's mouths, sharing air, as Ilya presses home, familiarly deep and heavy atop of him.

“Ты меня обезоруживаешь, ангел”. *You disarm me, angel*

The spikes of their heartbeats together, syncing, makes them both pause in the ecstasy of the moment. The joy of a win side by side, the love between them, the nonverbal connection. Everything is tenfold, and they can only shiver in each other’s hold as everything connects.

Ilya mouthing at his neck is the only warning he has before his hips pull back, swivel in a tight little circle before sliding home again. At Shane’s resounding moan, his fiancé continues his movements, slowly find his momentum, driving home harder and harder, determined to break the man below him.

Shane is shouting to the ceiling, barely coherent enough to thank the heavens his neighbors are acres away.

Ilya’s fingers are gliding over his wrists, both wrapping tight around his own hands, pressing him into the mattrass and if he was determined to send them both through the foam.

The larger man knows when he’s close, Shane’s moans and pants turning higher pitched, whinier on the end, starting before he’s even completed each hard thrust. The sight of his fiancé losing his mind below him is enough to drive Ilya close to the edge, never mind the rhythmic squeeze and pulse of the Shane’s tight hole around his cock. It’s driving him insane, the feeling sitting in the back of his gut and behind his molars.

His fiancé’s hand wrapping loosely around his cock is enough to send Shane arching and tensing, the first touch to his dick besides grinding it on the beautiful abs above him, his now free hard wrapped tightly in the sheets.

Shane’s winding higher, his stomach tightening, spine tingling and the small of his back itching with an unfamiliar want. Sweat gathers there and Ilya runs his fingers over the spot, tilting his spine in a sharper arch as he moves in desperate motions, the Russian man’s lips panting above him.

“Мой ангел”. *My angel*

Shane feels like he’s grasping at sand, particles falling though his fingers as he pants and gasps. It’s Ilya’s voice that tips him over the edge.

“Дай мне”, A harsh groan ripped from the man’s chest, “Дай мне сейчас”. *Give me, Give me now*

The orgasm feels like it torn out of his stomach, euphoric and sending his skin buzzing. His toes are still curling near Ilya’s ears as the larger man presses forward over his chest harder, thrusts hard and uncoordinated as he nears his peak, groaning deep and long into his ear as his dick pulses within him, filling the condom and he slows to a soft grind. Shane tries not to tighten against, but the feeling of warmth within in him and the scrunch of Ilya’s face as he comes makes him shiver head to toe, his fiancé responding with a soft moan of painful pleasure as Shane squeezes around the now spent length of him.

Despite the stick of sweat and come, something Shane is usually quick to want off, tonight they both let the minutes pass still pressed together, breath returning to their lungs the only sound in the quietness of the cottage, hidden inside the Ottawa wilderness. Ilya presses his lips to his again, just panting into each other's mouths, sharing air as their heart beats slow.

When he finally pulls out of him, Shane can't help the furrow of his brow and the twitch of his leg, still sensitive and needing the connection of intimacy. He needs it more than air these days now that he's allowed himself to want it.

His eyes don't follow his fiancé's form are he ties off the condom, disposes it in the little trash can Shane keeps by the bed, and strides off for the ensuite bathroom. He lets himself drift in the feeling of his body, the liquid in his muscles and the soreness of his hips.

He'll have to stretch tomorrow, do his yoga routine out by the river in the backyard. He lets his head fall to the side, gazing out past dimly lit bushes and out to where the moon shines over the water. It's peaceful, and so so quiet.

When Shane starts to squirm, the feeling of dried cum sticking to his chest, Ilya comes back from the bathroom, shining in the moonlight having already wiped himself down. The washcloth he uses on Shane is thankfully warm, and as he lifts on of his knee to wipe the sweat and lube from his thighs.

Shane takes the opportunity, like he always tries to do, to sink his fingers into the blonde curls just starting to twist over his forehead, still messy and slightly damp from sex.

When Ilya is done, he turns his eyes up to study Shane's face, eyes glinting over freckles and the redness of bitten lips. The smile on the larger man's face is soft, fond, and something that makes Shane want to weep as much as he wants to kiss those lips.

Using a hand in the man's hair, Shane guides him down on top of him, the washcloth being thrown towards the laundry basket in the meantime. Ilya goes with him, settling half of his body on top of his, setting his head into the crook of his neck, tucked under his chin.

He inhales at the deliberate press of Ilya's nose to behind his ear, but settles further as heavy arms wrap around his waist and he's pressed into the mattress for the second time tonight.

"I love you, Ilya".

"Ты для меня всё, Shane".

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@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: STANLEY. CUP. CHAMPIONS. 🏆 THIS ONE'S FOR YOU OTTAWA

@PuckChaser_Wild: I need to watch that last Rozanov goal on replay, for science

@RozanovIceLegends: LETS FU*KING GO MAN

@OttawaTitan: So glad I stayed loyal to my team, my dad would've loved to see this

@HollanovHockeyHQ: WHAT DO YOU MEAN WE GOT HOLLANOV STANLEY CUP KISS

@HollanderHockeyFan: I was actually dancing around my living room, best thing since Hunter paved the way, my brother thought I had officially lost it

@ESPN: Centaurs win Stanley Cup 4-3

@NHL: Ottawa Centaurs Capture Stanley Cup in Historic Run, Defeat Chicago Titans 4-3

@SportsIndustry: Ottawa's Epic Comeback; How a Team That Has Not Made Playoffs for the Past Decade Changed Their Luck Winning Stanley Cup Late in the Third Period

@NHL_Fanatic2013: Insane story, every NHL fan has got to admit that

@notasportswriter: They stole Rozanov from Boston, then picking up Hollander sealed the deal that guy is a beast

@TheGist: Checks and Balances; How NHL couple Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander Destroy the Critics and Competition Together Throughout Their Stanley Cup Winning Season

@ESPN: How the Ottawa Centaurs Broke Their Early Knockout Curse After 12 Years

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: Thank you to all the fans for an amazing season of hockey, the Centaurs are proud to bring the Stanley Cup home for you all. Stay tuned for updates as our team passes the cup between grateful hands to show to their fans and communities. Our media team is currently working on bringing you around as our team celebrates winning our first Stanley Cup in 12 years.

@trustmebro: I neeeeed footage of the partying the Centaurs will be doing tonight

@HollanderHockeyFan: I need to see Hollander take shots with the rookies, man's always been the little brother of the team despite being older than like a third of them XD

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: @trustmebro @HollanderHockeyFan We will try our best 🫡

@FirstShift: If I go bar hoping enough what are the chances I see Rozanov or Dillan with the cup

@CentaurBoodX: I hope Boodram post pictures of his baby in the cup

@OttawaCentaursFanatic: Those types of pictures are essential

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: The Ottawa Centaurs feel it is important to acknowledge the history made on our team this year by our team captain Ilya Rozanov and his fiancé Shane Hollander. Despite the hardships faced after being outed almost two years ago, both men have made even bigger names for themselves, leading Ottawa to their first cup in over a decade. Together they made history as the first couple within MLH to win a Stanley Cup together. The Ottawa Centaurs are proud to have the future Hollander-Rozanovs as teammates and look forward to next season #Loveislove #LoveWins

@TeamHollanov: I'm not crying you are

@HollanovHockeyHQ: The picture ❤️ the caption ❤️ I'm dead

@NHL_Centaurs81: Poor guys can't even win a cup without people bringing up the fact they got outed

@TopShelfOnly: Most are homophobic af in that game, they just have to make sure they don't ruin their rep like Montreal did

@HollanderHockey_Updates: All-Star MLH Shane Hollander, newly traded to center for the Ottawa Centaurs, helps lead his team to victory in the fifth game of the Stanley Cup Finals. Emotions were high as Hollander held the cup aloft during only his first season with a new team after facing scrutiny from his former, the Montreal Voyageurs, for his relationship with fellow MLH player Ilya Rozanov

@HollanderHockey_Updates: [Shane Hollander stands on the ice of the Canadian Tire Centre wearing an Ottawa Centaurs jersey holding the cup above his head and looking towards the crowd. Shane Hollander's mother can be partially seen in the blurred background, partially cropped]

@FiveOnFive_91: Dude deserves it after all that shit

@OttawaIceLegend: I bet the entire Montreal team had a watch party and ended up crying together

@RozyCentaurs27: Id bet, they ostracized the only reason they were winning cups

@HollanovHockeyHQ: Hollanov shows these pride colors don't run in the 5th and final Stanley Cup game here in Ottawa, On. In a sequence of tear-jerking moments, fans watched as Shane Hollander's parents embraced Rozanov as they had their own son just moments before, all three watching as Hollander raises the cup above his head for the crowd. Fully breaking the minds of the fans of the Hollander-Rozanov family, just like the ending of a romance novel, Rozanov showed off his love for his fiancé with a passionate kiss as he holds the Stanley Cup they have just won together

@HollanovHockeyHQ: This was the most coherent I could be I needed this more than air

@HollanovHockeyHQ: [Image of Shane Hollander holding the Stanley Cup in Canadian Tire Centre as Ilya Rozanov stands to the right, both wearing Ottawa Centaurs jerseys, a hand obviously positioned on the back of Hollander's neck turning his head to face Rozanov. Both their eyes are closed and are clearly trying not to grin into the kiss they are sharing. Shane Hollander's parents can be seen in the blurred background]

@AfterTheHorn93: I can never be normal about them I just love them too much

@LateSkates: God I wish these guys were around back in the day when I was the one queer kid in the high school ice hockey team

@WaitingForFaceoff: Idk If I want to be one of them or be between them

@BreakoutSide: The amount of love you can see when they interact gives me hope

@Ottawa_puckmasters: It's insane that they managed to keep it a secret all those years, you can see the love in their eyes

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Inside the front doors of the little Italian restaurant in central Ottawa, Shane tries to roll out his shoulders, still soreness still lingering from a hard check in the final game. The Hostess at the front is looking at him weirdly, so he instead chooses to ignore her loose jaw completely as he slides through the archway of the main sitting room to their usual table.

Rose Landry looked like a princess in the small dark booth, red hair in waves to her shoulders, gold jewelry paired with a floral yellow dress that poofs at the sleeves. He can recognize the chunky necklace she wears; the one he had given her for her last birthday with advice from his mom.

When she spots him her face lights up into a bright smile, one that easily puts a smile on his own face. He hugs her tight when she jumps out of her seat to greet him, her chunky sandals bringing her to a height he doesn't have to lean down much when they embrace.

Shane lets her tilt them both back and forth a bit, her hands squeezing as she congratulates him for winning the Stanley Cup this year, her voice so high pitched and excited he can hardly understand her. The grin on Shane's own face is enormous, he can feel it, but he doesn't have many friends that fully know him and still show up for him, so he soaks up the warmth Rose is radiating like a sponge.

They finally sit down in their respective booths, the waiter coming to take drink orders just as Shane is starting to carefully unroll the cloth napkin holding the utensils. The speed in the service startles him for a second, but Rose just orders him a Ginger Ale and herself a glass of red wine before waving the man away.

"So, tell me, does it feel different winning a Stanley Cup with the man you're in love with". Rose's eyebrows raise.

Shane huffs out a laugh in response, rubbing his palm over his face as he scans the menu in front of him, “Yes, I guess it did”.

Her fingertip lands on the edge of the menu, pushing it down till he places it back on the table and makes eye contact with her.

“How was the sex after?”

The bluntness breaks an incredulous laugh out of him, his head swiveling automatically to check if anyone around them heard her ask that. If anyone was going to be able to figure out his relationship to a certain hockey hall-of-famer.

Except people already know. Have known for a year.

It’s why he switched to the Ottawa Centaurs despite them just starting to raise their record with Rozanov as team captain.

It’s why he was able to kiss the man he loves as he held the Stanley cup just like week, just like he saw Scott Hunter do two years ago; rewriting his and Ilya’s relationship for the better.

“Uh, yeah, it was, ya it was good”. Shane can feel that his cheeks are on fire.

Her eyebrows wiggle as she hums at him, leaning forward on her elbow to study him carefully. He tries to study the menu again.

“You already know you’re getting that salmon salad thing you always get when we come here, now spill the beans, did the man even wait to get you home first?”.

“We had a press conference after! My parents were still around!”.

“And? You’re telling me Rozanov didn’t pull you into a supply closet or something for a quick celebration?”

She’s laughing at his sputtering attempts to defend their professionalism in the workplace when the waiter comes back, their drinks in hand and notebook ready for their order.

Again, Rose speaks up first, diverting the intense eyes of the waiter away from Shane’s face and shoulders, ordering herself a pasta dish that was on the chef’s special menu and the salmon salad for him, dressing on the side.

Shane takes a moment to gaze around the restaurant, glancing over the group of young men sitting behind Rose, to the family with two small children tucked into the corner, lingering on the older couple sitting and holding hands as they share a bottle of wine.

The restaurant is lively, enough so that he can occasionally make out what a nearby table is saying, voices loud with enthusiasm.

Shane tries to only spares a moment for the commotion occurring up by the Hostess's podium, the owner of the restaurant appears to be giving a stout man in a suit with a large camera a verbal lashing. The pap doesn't seem to be too happy with what is being said to him, hands waving in the air and long hair whipping with his movement.

His eyes follow the large man in a black suit that steps up to the conversation, having previously sat, eyes watchful, at a table near the door.

Rose follows his eyesight, rolling her eyes at the argument happening across the room, "Thank goodness I hired James to deal with all this paparazzi bullshit. They've been following me everywhere since that one zombie movie I got to beat up Andrew Garfield in, *Raining Hell*".

Their food finally comes, each eating slowly as they catch up on life outside of their demanding jobs. It's nice to talk about his fiancé like they were a normal boring couple, something Ilya would loathe to sound like, but one Shane treasures as their relationship is finally separated from their work schedules. Rose talks about her recent frustration in the airports as she was trying to get to Chicago for an audition, just barely making it after two connecting flights.

Just like always, though, with jobs like theirs they are quick to fall back into stories about movie sets and hockey games.

He enjoys explaining play strategies and player trades with her; someone who knows enough to understand hockey terms, curious enough to want to learn to him from him as a newer hockey fan, and kind enough to actually listen to him as he rambles about everything that has happened in the last few weeks between the playoffs and the Stanley Cup finals.

His salad is halfway gone now, and Shane reminds himself to keep eating and let Rose share next.

In the next second, however, Shane attention splits, Rose's words disjointed for a split second as he accidentally makes eye contact with one of the college boys in the nearby booth, the young man's eyes dark and shadowed by thick brows. He forcibly moves his eyes back to Rose's face, the bridge of her nose, her left eyebrow, her chin, before consciously focusing on the words coming out of her mouth.

Thankfully she is still talking about the narcissistic traits of her recent co-star behind the scenes, which, as she says, made it almost impossible to flirt with him, never mind kissing him, for their romance scenes. Shane is thankful he doesn't have to kiss anyone he doesn't want to for his job.

The man is still looking at them when Shane looks over Rose's shoulder again to try to focus on the wall behind her. He can feel his spine stiffen at feeling of eyes on his skin.

Rose must take notice, she's observant like that, and she tilts back the rest of her second glass of wine before pinning him with a look.

“You look anxious, Shane, quite honestly I’ve noticed you practically buzzing out of your skin for weeks now”.

Her eyes soften as she loosely holds her fork, setting it down quietly on her plate. “I thought it was just the Stanley Cup Finals coming up, you’d drive yourself into the ground if your parents and Ilya weren’t there. You still look like you’re waiting for someone to come over and punch you.”

Shane plays with the last few bites on his plate, a bit too embarrassed to make eye contact.

“I hope you know if any homophobe came up to you, you could easily beat their ass, and if you don’t do it first, I know I am one of people next in line to knock someone out for you.”

The gentle way Rose promises violences makes him laugh, a bit airless.

He scratches the back of his neck with his nails, ruffling through the hair at the back of his head, “It’s not that, it’s really not. Ya the media hasn’t been the greatest all the time, but I’m not worried about being like, uh… hatecrimed or whatever”.

The look on her face says he was not convincing.

He sputters a bit, wanting to explain but not quite finding the words, “I just keep having the weirdest feelings, like my skin wants to crawl off my body”, he cringes a bit at his own words, “Not gross like that, just I don’t know… I feel like people have eyes on me everywhere I go these days… all the cameras and stuff. Doesn’t help much when there’s multiple sport news sites following my every move, as well as some of those fan accounts I keep seeing”.

Rose nods at his explanation, leaning back in the booth with her arms crossed in thought, and he feels a moment of joy at knowing he communicated his thoughts well this time.

“No, I totally get it Shane, you saw how it was before I hired James to be my bodyguard. Not saying you need one, but like before, yah I have definitely felt like I was getting watched from every corner of a room. Took me awhile to stop convincing myself someone was going to put cameras or some other stupid creepy thing in my hotel room one day”.

Shane grimaces at the thought.

“It not that bad, like, I didn’t exactly want to play hockey professionally for the social aspects”. Rose snorts, but he continues, “I’m still trying to get used to all the focus on my career and personal life. It’s been both worse and better than when I was a rookie. Theres a couple accounts that post about Centaurs games like I’m the sole member of the team though. I’ve seen whole blogs dedicated to my relationship with Rozanov”, the thought makes him pause “I can only imagine the type of shit you get on the daily”.

“Those celebrity pages can get chaotic so fast, I know; I’ve seen whole wars about Justin Bieber potentially getting back with Selena Gomez recently”,

“Who?”

That sets her off giggling, still not containing herself when the waiter slides up to the table to drop the check in front of him, clearing the utensils and plates from the table.

He doesn’t give Rose a chance this time, he easily dodges her small hand attempting to reach past the waiter as he buses their table, finger going for the check. Shane shoves his card quickly into the little plastic slot, handing the checkbook back to the waiter as he balances plates on his forearm.

He can’t quite tell if the expression on Rose’s face is surprised, confused, incredulous, or angry, her mouth open in a small circle and she stares at him.

“This was supposed to be your celebration dinner Mr. four-time-Stanley-Cup-winner! You’re not allowed to pay for yourself!”

Shane smiles fondly as she continues to mutter to herself, her hair shaking into her face, she groans at his with an exaggerated eyeroll as he fills out the tip and signs the receipt.

“Buy me dinner next time. Are you going to be able to get home safely?” Rose was not holding her two cups of wine the best, most likely the past stress catching up to her, her giggling high pitched and expression cheerful, “Where are you staying in Ottawa, did you get James to drive you?”

“Nope!” She pops cheerfully, “We took an uber, I hate driving in this area, I’m staying at that one fancy hotel towards the center”.

“You’re always welcome to come back to my place and crash tonight if you don’t want to go back just yet, Svetlana is sleeping over to hang out with Ilya for a while, but I know he’s been dying to get you two to meet”. Shane shrugs, “I think he’s convinced the two of you will take over the world together”.

Rose’s eyes glint in the candlelight, smile firmly in place and lashes fluttering as she leans across the table towards him, as if sharing a secret, “You said she loved my taste in fashion, I’m sure we’ll get on amazingly”.

“She is a very nice woman, very uh…fashionable”.

-~-

@UsWeekly: Breaking News: NHL All-Star and Fiancé of Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander, seen holding hands across candlelit table with ex-girlfriend Movie Star Rose Landry

@RoseForWife: No way are they getting back together

@CityCrowd77: At best this is a lavender marriage

@NHL_BreakoutSide7: Who goes out to dinner with their ex boyfriend who is publicly with a man??

@SeenItAllToday: Almost like men and woman can be friends

@RoseOnRepeat: just friends with Rose fucking Landry???

@TheSkimm: Masculinity and Misogyny in Sports; Why is Hollanov Receiving so Much Attention Compared to Rivals-to-Lovers Stories involving Queer Women

@NeutralShift: Penny Cula-Reid and Mia-Rae Clifford my loves

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Shane Hollander seen out for dinner with ex-girlfriend Rose Landry, without fiancé, after Ottawa Stanley Cup Win

@ShaneHollanderFan: Rose is so cute! I just know the two of them are the best of besties

@CentaurIceStorm: surprised Rozanov is okay with them getting caught by paparazzi like this, if my fiancé was hanging with their ex???

@ShotStopper_78: @CentaurIceStorm she was like the one girlfriend Hollander has ever had and he's like 28, pretty sure he's full gay for Roz

@HollanovInAction: This dude's trying to imply something…

@BostonBrewCrew: Finally realized your supposed to date girls I guess

@NHL_FansUnited: get out of here with that shit, plus it's *you're

@BruinsBrawler87: Why are these pictures so blurry???

@NHL: As the Stanley Cup finishes making its way across the country our hockey heroes make their ways home for the summer. We'll see you in the preseason!

-~-

If Ilya would stop glaring at him from where he currently was sitting at the kitchen island, maybe Shane wouldn't be as clumsy as he cooks, but he's not about to say that out loud.

The man across from him has his eyes trained on his hands as he peels and chops, heating up the pot to his right with the oven hot behind him. More specifically, the band aid he had just slapped on as he had nicked himself earlier with a knife. If Shane said anything about the watching, Rozanov would turn it into a battle of wits while wrestling the kitchen utensils from his hand; taking over dinner just like he always seemed to do.

But today the sides were his task. The main was Ilya's. His parents would bring dessert.

Shane could cook. He really could. Not just what his fiancé calls ‘rabbit food’, the asshole. However, ever since Ilya has moved in with him and has spent days of training alongside him, the other man has taken over the cooking for not just both their dinners, but every meal of the day. He’s still not really used to having someone control the meal he eats, and yes, his dietitian recommended things, but in the end, Shane had decided. Maybe it was easier not to think about it when it was Ilya making the plans these days.

Another thing he didn’t want to think about.

The asparagus with garlic was already cooking in the oven, set to be ready a few minutes early then just kept warm. The water in the pot finally starts to boil so he adds in the potatoes he had just finished chopping and a large amount of kosher salt.

Ilya looks like he’s going to jump out of his seat and over the counter as Shane flinches back from the splashed hot water.

“Why don’t you get the steaks out and season them, maybe start up the grill. Mom and Dad should be here any minute”.

Giving Ilya something to do gets his intense eyes off Shane, and as much as he usually loves the passion and focus in the other man’s eyes, something about his watchful eyes tonight was just setting him on edge. He kept his eyes on the potatoes in the water as Ilya moved around behind him, grabbing what he needed before moving towards the back doors. As he passes behind him, he presses a lingering kiss along the tendon of Shane’s neck, then one behind his ear after receiving a neck tilt and a sigh, before finally heading outside to start working on cooking the steaks for dinner.

Shane rubs his hand up and down his face, careful to use the hand that didn’t have the band aid on it but deciding that the potatoes would not cook any faster if he stared at them. He turns the oven down, wipes his hands on the kitchen towel hanging from the handle, then pockets his phone in the track pants he stole from Ilya.

He takes the second to take a full breath, inhaling for seven, holding for three, then letting out for ten. Outside the windows he watches the beautiful figure of his fiancé light the grill with the slowly setting sun acting as a frame. Tearing his eyes away, a glance around the kitchen shows that he’s already mostly cleaned up, only the milk and butter for the mashed potatoes sat out, premeasured.

Shane can hear breaks creaking from afar so he turns and pads down the hallway to the doorway, knowing his parents would only text that they were there as they pressed the doorbell.

What he isn’t expecting as he opens the door is an empty front porch, as well as an unoccupied parking spot alongside his SUV and Ilya’s Lamborghini. He most definitely doesn’t expect a large black truck idling on his driveway, windows darkened, that jolts in reverse away from the house and backwards up the driveway as the front door creaks on its hinges.

It’s gone before Shane can really process it. His body, however, imprints the sight of it into his very DNA, his spine ramrod straight, the skin of his back and neck already wet with sweat, his heart beating double, his feet frozen against the front porch.

It can’t be more than a minute that he stares up the driveway of the cottage, brow furrowed, eyes focused on the grove of trees on either side of it, eyes searching but also not quite seeing. He flinches at the sight of another car coming down towards the house, and it takes him a second to recognize his parents’ car. The one Shane had bought for them with his first NHL paycheck.

It’s the closing of their car doors that truly jolts him out of his frozen state, his mom’s eyes already locked on him, eyes wide in worry and moving closer. His dad stays by his car door studying him from afar, eyebrows furrowed in a mirror image of his own.

Shane’s ears start working slowly, and behind him he can hear the water boiling over and hitting the hot stove top, the kitchen timer going off, and…and Ilya.

“Милый, ты в порядке?”. *Sweetheart, are you okay?*

-~-

Dinner comes out great, despite overboiling the water and the asparagus almost burning, everything about the night is going great for Shane Hollander.

If only someone would convince the three people sitting around him that he loves so much of this fact, as none of them have taken their eyes off him, even as he plates up their food and pours them each another glass of wine. It itches in a way he’s not used to.

Ilya’s eyes burn on his skin as Shane swallows half of his second glass.

“Shane, were you thinking about going out to that Rolex brand party, maybe you could bring Ilya along, it’s not often those parties happen it’s been a while since the last one”.

Shane hadn’t been invited last year.

He lets out his breath slowly, quietly, willing his thoughts to slow and the itch in his organs to stop. He takes another sip of wine before answering trying to find his answer.

At least he would’ve answered, but Ilya looks determined, gaze intense like it has been all day, quite honestly ever since the Stanley Cup adrenaline finally left their bodies.

“I think it is time for break, season has been hard work for cup, lots of eyes”. Hazel eyes trace his face, his freckles, before turning back to Yuna. A large warm palm settles against the back of his neck, “Time away is needed, Shane needs no more cameras nor shouting out”.

Yuna nodes understandingly, her own eyes still worryingly tracing the stiffness of his shoulders. Shane takes a deep breath, counts to seven, then three, then ten, wills his shoulders to leave his ears.

“Those gossip magazines don’t know what they’re talking about, baby, they just need the clicks on their page. It’s easiest for them to cause all that drama bringing up the past. I have, however, enjoyed those new social media accounts these days! David, what was it that we were looking at?”

“Was it twitter?”

“No, what was the other ‘T’ word?”

“That gymnastic website? Tumbling or something?”

Yuna brightens up a bit as she continues, “much more complimentary. Pages dedicated to celebrities and athletes. Ilya, I’ve even seen a few all about you, a lot of fantastic photos. Have you thought about working with Calvin Klein? I can call them tomorrow for you, sweetheart, it’ll be set up in no time”.

Chapter End Notes

I loved writing this chapter, next one will take a bit it's got a lot of plot

But it's what you're waaaaaiiiiiiiitttttitnnnnnnggg fooooor

Russian translations of things Shane does not understand:
“Мне так повезло, что ты мой” - I am so lucky you are mine
“На тебя невозможно смотреть спокойно” - It’s impossible to look at you calmly.
“Ты для меня всё" - You everything to me

Chapter 3: When The Glass Breaks

Chapter Summary

‘I thought the promotional stuff was going past nine, did they let you out early?’

‘I swear I’m going to be so mad at you if you’re trying to scare me or something right now, Rozanov.’

‘I’m not going to suck your dick for a week I swear.’

Chapter Notes

Is liar, liar told you that...

This chapter is just a bit shorter than the previous one, guess I got ahead of myself with the Stanley Cup and smut.
Remember to read the warnings people!

Russian translations are, as usual, next to the dialogue if it is understood, or translated at the bottom for stuff you shouldn't know what it means right away (this means its either Shane not understanding the words or it's in Ilya's POV and he doesn't translate his thoughts for you) You can look them up as you read if you want, I just think it's sometimes fun to hear his own language in his head. Rozanov has to translate for Shane verbally, he doesn't need to do so inside his own head, so he gets to use Russian a bit more authentically

Every chapter has basic amounts of editing; I refuse to use AI to edit but I also am usually editing sleep deprived so I try my best XD

(Real Hockey Talk) Finished this off while watching the hockey Winter Classic... I was losing my mind the entire time, if you haven't picked up on it, I am a New York Rangers fan, I legit had no hope in my team playing against the back-to-back recent Stanley cup winners and coming out on top (we honestly suck right now)... Now its a superstition to mention my team in the notes because they won 5-1...

ANYWAY enjoy chapter 3!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It takes Shane's parents a good bit of convincing to head home for the night to sleep peacefully in their own home.

It's not like the guest rooms aren't already made up just in case, Shane had just switched the sheets. It also wasn't like he didn't want them there; he loved having his parents over, it was just that he knew they wanted to stay for all the wrong reasons, and Shane couldn't do that to them, wouldn't be able to handle it.

His fiancé was no help on the matter, standing back, arms crossed, observing him silently as he tried to reassure his parents that he was doing perfectly fine. Yes, he had taken his anxiety medications right on time. No, he hadn't really been following those gossip sites. Yes, he has been letting Ilya help him with lunch and breakfast more often. No, he wasn't already thinking of next preseason; Shane had all offseason to relax with his fiancé before their small wedding in late September.

He can feel his shoulders relax a bit as he watches the taillights of their car pull off down the driveway after hugs and kisses on cheeks, Ilya having wrapped them all up in one big group hug with a toothy smile before Yuna and David walked out the front door.

Shane stays to watch the driveway, lined with little garden lights, for a moment more.

A loon calls from the forest nearby.

He turns around on socked feet, shuts the door softly with a click, and locks both the doorknob and the deadbolt.

Shane can feel the click of each in the back of his teeth. He can feel Ilya's eyes on the back of his neck.

It's just like that night last week, only different. After winning the cup Ilya was predatory, chomping at the bit to celebrate in his favorite way in the world. This time, Shane feels much more like actual prey; one wrong move and his guts are going to go spilling across the floor.

The two of them never really get angry at each other, yes sure there is fighting and glares and words said wrong, but it's never spitting or cutting these days. Ilya hates shouting, Shane says stupid stuff when he just tries to understand.

It's not often Shane sees his fiancé truly angry at him. If anger is what you could call the tense face of Ilya Rozanov as he stands in track pants and one of Shane's softest flannel shirts.

He's definitely angry at something.

Shane doesn't quite know where to look. Logically he would be meeting the man in front of him's eyes, but that would feel like admitting something, something Shane doesn't understand himself, so he let's himself trace the front entrance of their home.

Wood cabinets. The wine racks that he barely touches. Ilya's socked feet. The shoe rack with three pairs of his own shoes and seven pairs of Ilya's. The little bowl he puts his keys in as soon as he enters the house. Ilya's arms crossed and tense, the veins prominent. The entry rug that is slightly crooked.

He wrings his hands. Shane stretches out a foot and gently pulls the woven rug straight and flat.

Ilya's heavy sigh finally brings his attention to the man's face. His fiancé is rubbing his face with both hands, shoulders drooping. He presses his palms into his eyes for a second before dropping his hands to his sides.

Shane drops his gaze as the man looks at him closely again.

"You not telling me something, Ангел мой, you… more than worry… scaring, darling". *My angel*

The way the man's voice cracks makes Shane's own eyes water, he blinks hard, once then twice to clear his vision. Rolls his shoulder's back and tries to look back at his fiancé with all the bravery he does not feel.

"It's just, it's just that I've been… well I guess I just haven't been feeling well". Shane grimaces at the weakness of his voice, "It's just, I've been so anxious lately, and with all the media shit that has been going on…" He clears his throat. "I just haven't felt myself I guess."

The Russian man raises his chin as he studies him, and Shane cannot help the blush he can feel over his face and neck.

"There was just this, uh, this big SUV that took a wrong turn down our driveway a bit ago. I guess it just, just struck a nerve for a bit there…"

Ilya hums shortly, sculpted eyebrows raising, hands landing on his hips. He takes a few slow deliberate steps towards where Shane still stands, back against the front door.

Shane rushes to make him understand, "It's just that we are kind of in the middle of nowhere, the last two times an unexpected car showed up it led to my dad and Hayden walking in on us, and I guess I'm still getting used to the whole world knowing we're going to spend the rest of our lives together, seeing us next to each other, interacting, I just, jump to random conclusions" He's losing the words, "I guess I just feel like everyone's watching our every step just like back when we were rookies and they wanted us to hate each other, I don't know, they saw me at that restaurant with Rose, and now I'm just anxious about everything to the point where I'm freaking out about some random person's wrong turn."

He pulls his eyes away from his fiancé's shoulder and looks into eyes that are soft, wet at the corners, "They just keep waiting for us to hate each other again, or for it to all fall apart so they can laugh, and I don't know if that's how everyone feels or if I just keept hearing and seeing all the wrong shit online".

Shane's hands find his own hair, pulling at the roots, "And I can't lie and say I don't hate what our relationship has done to our careers in some way. You are the best thing that's ever happened to me, I swear! But sometimes, I just… sometimes I miss the days when I got asked about hockey and plays and scrimmages and future playoffs, or just ignored because my answers are so scripted, but now all they want to talk about is shit like if we have sex in the locker rooms after games or if I feel like I'm letting down every gay guy in the world by missing a shot!"

"Everyone wants something out of this, something that used to just for the two of us, and I guess I just feel like the entire world thinks I'm failing at my own relationship, even the fans who own my jerseys are acting like my aunties, dissecting the two of us till they find something to poke at and giggle when it squirms, keeping watch for the moment they can tell us they told us so."

Shane's breath is still fast as he stands there, his hands creating pressure in his scalp as he tries to ground himself. His eye sights unsteady, but he can see Ilya is closer to him now, shoulder more relaxed, hands outstretched for him.

Large warm hands wrap around his wrists, flexing gently to loosen the grip he has on his own hair.

"дышите, моя любовь. Пожалуйста, дыши ради меня." Ilya's hands are steady and grounding, but his voice and eyes betray the helplessness the man feels, tears collecting, "Eyes on me, Ангел мой." *breathe, my love. Please, breathe for me. My angel.*

Shane lets him remove his hands from his hair, grip firm and gentle. Ilya brings both his hands forward, gathering them into his chest, letting Shane feel the beat of his heart and steady breathing.

His head tips forward to rest on Ilya's chest, his own shuttering as he takes control of his own lungs. They rock side to side as one being, the motion guided by his fiancé.

Lips against his ear are gentle and soft, "давай ляжем", Ilya whispers. *let's lie down.*

At the tight nod of Shane's head, his arms drag heavily down to his upper arms, guiding him gently forward back towards the kitchen and living room.

Shane moves his own heads away from the center of Ilya's chest, instead reaching up to wrap them around the man's shoulders and neck, pressing closer for comfort.

The larger man swings them down the few steps to the pitted living room, before sending them both tilting over onto the couch, Shane laid out with his shoulder tucked between the back and lower cushions, his fiancé's weight along his side, boxing him into the pillows. The weight is welcome on top of him, the press of Ilya's body against him, the calm sharing of air as the pressure slows Shane's heartbeat.

Above him Ilya is murmuring to him, soft and gentle, luring him away from the panic and forcing Shane to focus to make out the comforting words more clearly.

"…okay baby, you're okay, I'm here. It'll all be okay, you're okay. I'm right here…"

When Shane meets hazel eyes, they both melt into each other further.

"Сделай вдох. Всё будет хорошо. Держи взгляд на мне, моя любовь." *Take a deep breath. Everything will be fine. Keep your eyes on me, my love.*

Ilya's voice, mixed with the way his mind has to work to translate the words being said to him, he slows his breathing down even more. Shane's focus is only on the two of them, the outside world falling away.

It had been a while since he felt like this, this calmness, maybe many weeks now. The steady weight and love of the man he loves back erases the tension in his spine that he's only now realizing has been plaguing him. That itch of watchful eyes nonexistent, providing bone deep calmness, and Shane curses his brain for convincing his past self to act like a preyed upon rabbit.

Jumpy and wary.

The silence passes in one that Shane does not quite know if he is comfortable with, his ramble still hanging around their heads in the air. Ilya seems content to just hold him for awhile.

He doesn't know how much time passes they lay there, maybe a half hour, that Shane lets the love of his life hold him safe and secure, comfortable weight on top of him, the buzzing in his skin receding. He knows Ilya notices him coming back to himself, Shane's hold both gentling and firming around his shoulder, no longer in desperation.

Hazel eyes trace his face, his freckles. Shane doesn't think he can speak first. Thankfully, his fiancé knows him well.

"I have noticed your anxiety, Трусливый котёнок, I am sorry I did not intervene with your thoughts earlier." *Timid kitten*

Shane tries to protest but he's shushed gently.

"You say too many eyes on you, yet here at Наше маленькое убежище, you still are scared, jumping at noises." Ilya's fingertips follow the same path his eyes have taken only seconds before, "tell me, is this about Rose Landry and her ducklings with cameras?" *Our little sanctuary.*

"Wha- no!" Shane hadn't even thought about the dinner a couple of days before with Rose, guys trying to talk to her or staring at her were normal when they went out, she was a beautiful woman and an amazing actor.

Not that Shane agreed with the behavior, it was a creepy way to treat a woman, he mostly got them to back down by playing more into her side instead of their usual friendly distance. No wonder the media gets compromising photos.

“You came home jumpy, I had wondered if she said something to make you so, she is better than you some days at reading your emotions.” The soft smile on Ilya’s face softens the blow of the truth.

Still, Shane scoffs.

“No, there wasn’t even paparazzi that day, the guy got stopped at the front door.”

Ilya hums at him.

“You worry about media and our relationship, get self into a tizzy that is not needed-”

“Since when do you know the word ‘tizzy’?”

“-and make worries in head that do not exist. Our love is here, between us. ESPN journalist is not in our bedroom or locker rooms. We now have secure future. Captain of great team and newbie with weak backhand-”

“Hey!”

“Team that works well, Stanley cup with both our names on the same plaque, and a place on the Ottawa Centaurs till retirement. We will get old and grey together, Shane Hollander, others cannot comprehend love as deep.”

“I know we will, you’ll probably lose all your hair, it’s just everyone is so focused on us, even more than when we were rivals.”

Ilya’s brows furrow at the hair comment but chooses to only retaliate by digging his fingertips into his sides. Shane giggles at the tickle.

“We continue to play good hockey; show fans we play better together than against. In future they will talk about us, first and second draft pick, competitive but in love off the ice. Children and dogs, die together in our sleep. I hold you now through stupid media and we ignore stupid comments and questions, is all we can do, continue to be us.”

This time it’s Shane who hums, fondness obvious resting his head against Ilya’s collarbone.

“And this car’s wrong turn, you see car before? Know owner?”

Shane thinks back on it, the three seconds of it is seared into the back of his brain.

Black SUV, tinted windows, large and bulky. Sitting there on the driveway and lurching to a start as Shane had opened the front door.

“No, it was just this big black car I saw coming down the driveway, I guess when they saw the house they realized it was the wrong address and left.”

“Made you anxious, no?”

“It just kind of added on to everything else, the media has been so feral these days I guess I just convinced myself that it was all the time, 24/7.”

Ilya is quiet again, listening carefully.

“When did you see car?”

“I’m really not that worried about it, baby. It left as soon as it came, I heard it pull up. I thought my parents were pulling up or something, I could hear it outside, but I didn’t recognize the car, and the team knows the address, but they know it’s invite only.”

Ilya’s eyebrows furrow again, before raising at him, “Except Hayden.”

“He only did it twice, once was because Amber had a blowout and she had already gone through all diapers in the car.”

“The other time I was close to being inside you, yet Pike comes in and ruins mood for day. He already has ten, ruined making one.”

“Okay, you can shut up now.”

-~-

Shane wakes up pleasantly warm. Without opening his eyes, he raised one hand to rub the sleep from them, struggling a bit under the heavy arm wrapped around him.

Smiling, not opening his eyes just yet, he allows himself to bask in the morning. Skin to skin cuddling, both their shirts off. A soft comforter wrapping them both, body heat trapped. The combined dent in the mattress that they have built through the recent years, content to be in each other’s skin as they slept.

When he finally does pry his eyes open, he does not quite expect the first rays of the morning to just barely be peaking though the open windows of their bedroom. The clock sitting on his bedside table says it is just past four in the morning; way earlier than he typically woke up.

Shane knows he’s an earlier riser, but that’s what the 6am alarm is for.

This is even too early for him.

He spends ten minutes trying to fall back to sleep, eyes closed, focused on the comforting weight of the man behind him against his back. Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10. Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

He still can’t fall back to sleep. If anything, Shane’s still wide awake, the urge to get up and do something under his skin.

Shane rolls in his fiancé’s arms, the man grumbling in his sleep and tightening his hold, keeping him close. Chest to chest, he can admire the features of his face without

judgment; the mole on his chin that he loves to kiss, the purse of his lips as he murmurs in his sleep, the skin around his eyes relaxed.

He can't help but skim his lips over the side of his face, his dry lips sensitive against the slight stubble that Ilya will shave away when he wakes up, and his mole. His palm ghosts over his naked chest, fingertips barely touching the cross and engagement ring that hang from the chain always around his neck. Shane traces the man's jaw softly with his lips once more for good measure, before finally succumbing to the grossness he feels in his mouth and makes to get up out of bed.

It seems the lack of alarm this morning makes getting out of bed three times as hard even if he did wake up naturally. The arms around him are heavy with sleep, and even unconscious seem set on keeping him close.

When Shane finally sits up, Ilya's face presses into his lower back, a long deep groan making him shiver. Now semi-awake, the man still does not loosen his grip on his waist. The asshole actually makes an attempt to roll over to his over side, trying to send Shane backwards over his body and back in bed.

Shane takes advantage of being the one who is fully awake, resisting the half-assed yanks at his waist, slowly getting himself to stand, and untangling wandering hands and fingers as Ilya tries to keep a grip on him. The entire process of it has Shane laughing at how domestic they were becoming, the sight of his fiancé pouting and his hair everywhere makes him laugh louder, not bothering to hide it.

"Кровать недовольна — так рано вставать запрещено." *The bed is unhappy — getting up this early is forbidden.*

"It can file a complaint with manager."

"Yuna will take my side. You know this."

Shane stares down at the men still wrapped in the sheets, golden curls chaotic on the pillow. His eyes are half lidded, staring back up at him on his back, pout on his lips.

Ilya lazily lifts his hand, dropping it back down heavily, eyes soft, "Я помогу тебе снова уснуть." *I'll help you fall asleep again.*

Shane hits him in the head with his still warm pillow. The 'whump' of it hitting Ilya's face satisfying until the man does not move to remove it, seemingly content to go back to sleep under it.

He lets him, moving to the walk-in closet to change into his workout clothes. His next steps were protein shake for breakfast, yoga in the backyard, maybe head to the sauna downstairs after, then shower before he comes back upstairs to make sure Ilya gets out of bed before noon.

They may watch a show or two after lunch on the patio, maybe they'll stay outside and enjoy the sunlight. Then Ilya will have an early dinner before heading to the promotional

video he has scheduled with Boodram, leaving the house at 4:30pm for a 5pm shoot.

Shane had tried to convince him to leave earlier, but the man was determined to do the drive in less than the thirty minutes the GPS calculated.

While Ilya is working, Shane will watch the documentary he had recorded earlier, warm up and eat his dinner from the fridge, then maybe he will just scroll on his phone on the living room couch till his fiancé gets home. After that he will see what the other man wants to do with the rest of his night.

Leaving the overhead lights off as he moves through the cottage, he uses the outdoor lamps to provide some form of vision, otherwise following the sight of the nightlights he had placed along the house.

The quietness was cozy. He chugs the chocolate protein shake down without thinking about it too much, tossing the empty bottle in the recycling container. In the closet at back door, he grabs his yoga mat and outside sneakers.

The backyard is a bit darker than he had anticipated, his Fitbit saying its 5:15, way ahead of his usual routine. But his lower back is screaming at him, legs tight, so he flicks on the additional patio lights and heads to set up a bit closer to the house than usual.

-точка зрения влюбленного-

It wasn't often he felt like this. Тревожное предчувствие. What Marlow had years ago translated for him, a 'gut feeling'.

The wording makes sense, Ilya had woken up with this feeling deep in his stomach, hands unconsciously grasping at Shane as the man tried to leave the bed. To do what, Ilya had not known at the time nor cared, he had just wanted to keep that gorgeous skin pressed against his front, sharing body heat.

He had still let him lightly shove him away, a smile glowing below freckles that stood out in the rising sun's light. After loosing the man to the rest of the house for the morning, Ilya had rolled over and fell back asleep, Shane's pillow on his head.

When he next awoke, he was granted with the truly angelic sight of Shane Hollander, bathed in morning light, dressed in sweatpants and a cut-off tank top, doing one of his silly yoga poses with his back arch and legs tense in the back garden.

'Ты сво́дишь меня́ с ума́'

Now he's sitting in this little white room, on an uncomfortable plastic chair, with the stern face of Zane Boodram next to him. As much as Ilya loves the man, he is hard to joke with, Hayes would be easier. Honestly, he wishes they had invited Shane to come with him, even if they did not want him in this stupid promotional video.

Sitting Shane beside the camera would be good incentive to pay attention. Lights on the softness of his smile and the dusting of freckles across his cheeks.

‘Будто свет живёт на его коже.’

It was pretty standard of an interview, questions about the season that had just ended, their favorite moments on the road, what it was like in the locker rooms before games.

Boodram enjoys telling his perspective of Ilya’s invigorating pregame speeches, laughing at the look Ilya cannot hold back when the man next to him admits he sometimes misses a word or two because of the Russian accent mixing with his adrenaline.

Ilya may have to write something out a bit more next time, but his mother tongue coming out when he’s passionate about something is a thing he doesn’t think he’ll ever crack.

The next question for him is about the transition from Boston to Ottawa.

Ilya knows the answer they want, the one where he moves for love, leaving his team to move to a team closer to the man he loved. For the relationship that would be revealed only months before the end of his first season by an ill-timed make out session, a badly taken photo, and homophobic teammates.

Instead, he lies.

“Needed more challenge in game of hockey. Won cups for good team, but can Captain of Boston become Captain of Ottawa and become, what is it again, story of fire bird?”

Boodram pipes in, “Pheonix?”

“Da,” Ilya gives him a nod in thanks and leans back in his chair, “More fun to build then easily float.”

“How does it feel to play against your old team? Are there any regrets.”

Ilya weighs his options in his head for a second, thinking through his statement, takes a second to translate it, “My past teammates are good men and talented players, I enjoy the competition with those I know work hard on game. I am happy where I have been and now where I am, even more so as new team holds Stanley Cup together.”

“What’s it like having your significant other on your team now, one that used to be your biggest competitor for draft picks, the Olympics, and scoring records.”

The thought of Shane is enough to make Ilya smile for real for a second, picturing his fiancé in his old Montreal jersey, their matching all-stars jerseys, the pajama pants that he had laid out for later tonight; the one’s Ilya had already planned to take right back off him.

“Shane Hollander is a great hockey player, good scorer, is very friendly with teammates and cares much for them all. Some games he makes effort to assist goals over scoring, wanting rookies with good statistics to show off to others”, He finishes it with a wink, remembering when he told Shane he knew what the he was doing, the shorter man had gone red, sputtered, then avoided him all morning skate.

“He has played long time for one team, change is difficult to adjust, suddenly new team to pass to and score for. Hollander adapts well, works hard. Does not break easily.”

The smirk on his face is not on purpose.

“Как резиновый” *like rubber*

The little blonde woman next to the camera man laughs falsely, barely listening and not understanding, nudging the man in front of her hard to get him to move to the next question.

Rozanov tries to keep a relaxed smile on his face.

‘Улыбка без причины — признак дурачины.’ His father would say.

A smile without a reason is a sign of foolishness.

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@Buzzfeed @OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: Team Captain Ilya Rozanov and Alternate Captain Zane Boodram share about the team’s path to victory this year, including all the totally necessary details about team club crawls, Young’s inability to keep his shirt on after one drink, and the Centaurs favorite #Hollanov BTS moments. Also included is the requested Centaur’s BTS. Overall, the media team expresses their belief in repeat performance next season.

@TroyBarrettOttawaHockeyOfficial: Of course, but are you supposed to be predicting on the main?

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: @TroyBarrettOttawaHockeyOfficial oh c’mon I can feel it in the air, you’re saying you’ll lose?

@TroyBarrettOttawaHockeyOfficial: @OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial hm

@RightWingWarrior: I need to hear more from the media team! And by media team I mean the exact person Troy Barrett is talking to!

@TeamHollanov: Just listening to him talk about Hollander makes me want to cry and redownload hinge

@OttawaHockeyHero: Please show more Young and Haas videos, they are such sweethearts!

@CentaurSlapshot: Dykstra needs to pass more next season

@ESPN: Captain Ilya Rozanov and Alternate Captain Zane Boodram discuss the season leading up to Stanley Cup win with the Centaurs

@TheSkimm: Rozanov gushes about fiancé, now four-time Stanley Cup champion Shane Hollander, in Buzzfeed video to commemorate the Centaur's recent win after breaking 12-year curse

@thirdperiodbrain: Shane Hollander is the reason they won the cup man makes any team double their stats

@Professionalbenchwarmer: Rozanov is so smitten with his man, you can tell he loves to gush

@HollanderHockeyFan: Did you see the interviews on ice after they won the cup!!!!! Could not keep his eyes off his man ❤️

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Ottawa Team Captain Ilya Rozanov steps away from family to attend media session with Alternate Captain Zane Boodram and the Ottawa Centaur's media team. Team captains talk vigorous training sessions and the mistreatment of teammates in Buzzfeed video.

@NHL_FansUnited: You make it sound like they're sticking the team in a torture chamber

@OttawaTitan: Can't wait for games to start back up I have no life right now

@HockeyHollander1: I thought this was a Shane Hollander fan account not an Ilya Rozanov hate account

@OttGoalie81: They come as a package deal now imo

@CenterGemCents: @OttGoalie81 Attached at the hip, fused if Roz had any say

@HollanderHockey_Updates: @HockeyHollander1 It is not an Ilya Rozanov account. This page focuses on events relevant to Shane Hollander.

@HockeyHollander1: So like an 'I hate on the dude's fiancé' account?

@HockeyHollanovHub: I wish they would let Hollanov play at the same time

@CentaurSkater97: They're both centers so they won't ever, unless Rozanov wants to move to right wing

@PenaltyPending66: He did in the all-star games just a few years ago

@HollanderHockeyFan: @PenaltyPending66 Going back and rewatching that game it's so obvious they were in love already, like that kiss on the cheek 😍

@GoalLine_Warrior: I need to see Shane Hollander score in person again this year, for my mental health

@IceCold_Center: I've never seen a Hollander account hate on the guy's fiancé before, the audacity of some people

@CenteredOnHockey: They better draft that one kid from Penn State for left wing, or maybe that one guy from Michigan, if anyone knows who I'm talking about

@TheGist: The Centaur's Ilya Rozanov and Zane Boodram talk team camaraderie beyond the ice, their superstitions that have now lead to the first Stanley Cup for Ottawa in over 20 years, and the absolute power house of a combination Rozanov and Hollander are both on and off the ice

@TheAdvocate_US: Centaur's Captain Ilya Rozanov proudly discusses working with now fiancé Shane Hollaner, four-time Stanley Cup champion, on the ice after recent outing

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It was weird with Ilya not home for dinner, so Shane throws a new set of workout clothes on and heads downstairs.

This was his sanctuary.

Shane had had this room built below the outer porch, off the fully done game room/basement with the fancy pool table his father insisted on. He called it the gym. His fiancé calls it the 'sweaty purgatory'.

Where he learned that word Shane would never ask.

Its still one of Shane's favorite rooms in the cottage, one of the first rooms he laid out as he discussed the layout with his architect. The floors are black rubber padding to prevent slipping, one long wall he had completely covered in mirrors, and he had had almost too much fun buying all the equipment a couple of years ago.

Theres three of everything, for when Ilya or Hayden, sometimes even multiple Centaurs, come down to join him in training.

Ilya's favorite part is the sauna room and small locker room, complete with shower stalls. He has only managed to convince Shane to join him in the sauna for sex a handful of times, but Shane is thinking about giving in as their wedding approaches.

Maybe the man would relax a bit more. Ilya hadn't been this tense during an offseason since Shane was making his best attempt at liking girls with Rose.

Svetlana still loved to laugh about it these days while Ilya pouted in his lap.

The beat in his headphones is so loud Shane can feel it pounding through his body along with the blood to every muscle. He hunches over farther on the stationary bike and takes the time to breathe as he watches his legs move; up and down, up and down, in and out, in and out.

The ache in his legs was a familiar feeling. Comfortable in the centered focus and repetitive movements. Shane lets himself sit there, pedaling steady, resistance medium, head on his folded arms.

The movement erases the constant running of his thoughts, the music replacing them. The ache in his muscles is a welcome pain from the onslaught of overstimulation of cameras, journalists, and fans; all with their eyes on him.

Here he wasn't NHL Player Shane William Hollander, second draft pick, holder of four fucking Stanley Cups, now well know LGBT athlete that just so happened to not really be rivals with their rival.

He only stops when he can't really take the strain on his muscles anymore. Facing the wall of mirrors, Shane ends up slumping back against the wall, his legs sprawled out in front of him. Letting his headphones wrap around his neck, he downs half his metal water bottle in one tremendous gulp, stopping to take a breath before finishing the bottle.

The silence around him is tangible; the beat off now, his breaths quieting down as he settles, the emptiness of the house surrounding him. Usually around this time he would be able to hear Ilya playing video games in the basement game room, the door to the gym purposely open so Shane can hear the tap tap tap of the controller.

Shane's knees creak a bit as he hauls himself up again, the door squeaks a bit on the hinges as he moves to head upstairs to shower in the ensuite bathroom, the upstairs floorboards groan overhead.

His spine strengthens where he is standing, prying off his workout shoes by the door.

Shane had this house built; it was not windy enough in this area for this building to creak. At most one can hear the thumping steps of his father and fiancé as they walk about the house, both heavy-footed on a good day, and occasionally when one of them finds themselves abnormally clumsy and drops something heavy.

He wipes sweat from the back as his neck as he heads up the stairs, thumb scrolling through his Instagram feed; replays of the Stanley Cup finals and cooking videos make up its entirety.

The floor above him creaks again, Shane stops halfway up the stairs at the sound.

"Ilya?" He shouts out, checks his Fitbit, it is too early for the man to be home.

There is no response, only silence. The dinner he had eaten earlier sinks into his stomach a bit.

Shane knew he shouldn't have eaten before working out, but Ilya had assured him that he would get some sort of reward if the prep meal he made was gone before he came back, and damn did Shane like to please the man.

He closes the doors to the basement steps behind him and turns to head to the bedroom when he really starts to feel like he lost his mind. Cause somewhere in the house

there was a thud, dull through his insulated walls, but loud in a home otherwise soundless.

Shane knows what he's heard.

"Ilya, baby?" Shane calls out again, socked feet shuffling across the hardwood floor of the living room. There is still no response; Shane clutches his phone tighter in sweaty hands.

He doesn't really look down as he texts, water bottle tucked in his armpit, eyes kept up and alert; instinctual - checking for someone on his peripheral coming for the puck.

'I thought the promotional stuff was going past nine, did they let you out early?'

His phone stays silent as the text to Ilya stays on delivered.

'I swear I'm going to be so mad at you if you're trying to scare me or something right now, Rozanov'

Still delivered.

'I'm not going to suck your dick for a week I swear'.

Shane's not one to use their sex life to threaten his fiancé, but something in his blood was boiling. The lack of reply was making him want to rip his skin off. The electricity in the air connected straight to his veins.

He slips his cellphone in the trackpants he stole from Ilya earlier today, the ones that are Ilya's favorites just because they are his favorite to steal. The grip he wraps around the metal water bottle, drained from his workout, makes his knuckles creak.

Moving slowly, deliberately, Shane moves up the few stairs of the lowered living room, facing down the hallway that leads to the front door.

Something is shining across the rug he had straightened only yesterday.

A cold sense of dread is starting to line his stomach.

Something is wrong.

Shane should call the police.

He spins quietly on his feet, hand delving into the deep pocket at his side to fish his phone back out, thumb pressing to his home button to unlock it.

Looking down at the bright screen, it does not really register at first. Did the light of his phone just explode into his eyes like a nuclear bomb?

The pain spreads out from the back of his head, down his neck and shoulders into his spine comes back in, electric agony, as his nose and face hit the flooring.

He doesn't remember the feeling of falling.

Shane feels like he's been checked hard into the side walls, just like all those years ago, his nose aching and spilling blood onto the ice below him. His phone clatters somewhere, noise piercing, blood pounding in his ears. The hockey padding he usually wears did nothing to stop the blow. Was his helmet knocked off with the hit?

Prying his eyes open is hard, the floor tilts dangerously beneath him. He exhales through the rush of nausea, grateful for being stationery, Shane does not think he would have been able to hold the bile in if he were still on his feet.

The wood beneath his cheek is cold, but not the ice rink cold. He chose this one out years ago out of a line of samples. Shane's eyes squint at the light in the room, the overhead lights still dark above him.

It is hard to focus on anything as it feels like the back of his head is melting. The muscles of the back of his neck, his spine, his shoulder set afire; nerves screaming in pain as he tenses in agony. He swears his body is melding with the floor beneath him.

Where were the medics? He could not see any skates in his eyesight, surely his teammates were busy fighting the entire opposing team. They were going to have so many men in the penalty box.

Shane feels like his brain is melting as pressure settles on the small of his back, sort of comforting in the weight, as his arms bent to the points his shoulders were screaming.

Had he scored? Montreal really couldn't win without him; Shane hated to admit.

He was cold and on fire. His skin in a cold sweat, his brain melting at the seams.

Trying to straighten his arms back out at his sides, to a point they wouldn't be pulling on his shoulders, but it was a useless endeavor. One wrist seemed determined to follow the other. He could barely send the signals out to his hands to move, brain swirling with light and pain, he doesn't quite know where he is.

Was that blood on the ground?

Who was bleeding?

God when he moved his arms it just pulled more.

Over the sound of the rushing in his ears he can hear something, a chant, maybe a song. Shane can't make out the words. He doesn't know if he wants to.

The weight on his back leaves for a second, there's a clatter, and the song in his ears stops; but it's silent again and Shane can now only hear the agony in his nervous system.

Something is lifting his head off the floor, gentle fingers, Shane groans at it, heavily displeased with being made to move away from the cold floor soothing his face. He wants to spit the copper taste from his mouth.

Cloth slides under his head, and his cheek is gently lowered on top of it. Shane lets out a low moan of pain at the continued movement and attempts to crack one of his eyes open.

It's blurry, but someone's fingers are petting through his hair and murmuring about him. Language is shaky to him at the moment.

"…okay baby, you're okay, I'm here. It'll all be okay, you're okay. I'm right here…"

The fabric cuts off his vision, but provides a mercifully dark place, away from the light that was stabbing his brain.

Blinking doesn't help him stay awake. It only proves to him that one of his eyes can't quite open and that maybe it was better if he just rested a bit. Tried to get his bearings.

"…baby, I really am. I'm so sorry. You'll be fine, It's fine. It'll be okay, it's just a little blood, I really am so sorry baby. So sorry, you're okay…".

Cold hands caress his neck, fingertips rough, and Shane tries to focus on the unfamiliar touch, itchy and poisonous, instead of the pinch in his skin.

And then he cannot focus on much of anything.

-~-

@OttawaPoliceDispatch: Police have been dispatched to a house alarm in Galetta, On. Possible break in, destruction of property. 8:43 pm.

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya already feels like shit, hours of sitting there faking a smile, reminiscing on the good moments of the season that only he had seen the anxiety in his fiancé behind each. The need to impress.

He had at least gotten to gush about the other man, brag about their connection on the ice, the joy they find being open with their teammates and how they have found a spot of happiness in this world.

Ilya hopes Montreal watches it and cries. Is reminded of their faults that have not only ruined their reputation, but will set them on a losing streak that will put them all in early retirement.

That thought is one of the only things this night that makes him actually smile. It already passed nine, he had promised Shane he would call as he left, a half hour drive still awaiting him before he can wrap the man in his arms. Feel the warmth of the home they have created together. Perhaps press him into their living room couch, sending all those throw pillows to the floor.

Powering his phone back on as Ilya walks to his Lambo, he makes to call his fiancé before he starts the car, knowing the man would never let him talk and drive at the same time.

Lit up, under the large 21:05, a barrage of text messages from the man line across his home screen.

‘I thought the promotional stuff was going past nine, did they let you out early?’

‘I swear I’m going to be so mad at you if you’re trying to scare me or something right now, Rozanov.’

‘I’m not going to suck your dick for a week I swear.’

The texts make him pause. Ilya’s too aware of his feet on the ice of the parking lot, then before he can consciously take note of what he is feeling, he’s sprinting towards his car, uncaring of the danger of slipping on dark ice, car unlocking with loud beeps.

The call rings out till the voicemail.

“Hi, this is Shane Hollander. I am not available to answer the phone right now, so please-”

Last he had checked Shane had nothing to be annoyed at him with, besides the possible excess worry Ilya’s been laying on the man. But he had been acting weird lately, before the Stanley Cup games and even now as they were supposed to be in peaceful bliss away from everyone else in the world. Ilya had an excuse to worry. His fiancé had reassured him that despite his odd behavior, it was only a lingering anxiety from the spotlight.

His current texts are just as weird.

Тревожное предчувствие.

He really should’ve just convinced the shorter man to stay in bed with him all day this morning.

The next call goes automatically to voicemail as Ilya wretches his car door open. He pulls the cellphone away from his ear, presses the contact again, and starts his car. He doesn’t bother with his seatbelt.

“Hi, this is Shane Hollander. I am not available to answer the phone right now, so please leave me a message and I’ll get back to you as soon as possible. If you are looking to contact my manager, please contact Yuna Hollander at-”.

Ilya doesn’t bother leaving a message.

He switches contacts, praying to everyone above, asking his mother for hope and continued safety, before pressing the call button on his future mother-in-law’s number.

-~-

@OttawaPoliceDispatch: Potential break in and person abduction in Galetta, On. Reports as Updated. 9:04 pm

@OttawaPoliceDispatch: Galetta Abduction Suspect currently unknown and at large. Neighbors report unknown large 4-door black SUV, tinted windows, make and model unknown, idling in area over the past week.

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Missing Person's Report filed for Shane William Hollander at 9:25pm in connection with home break in and abduction in Galetta, Ottawa

Chapter End Notes

It's okay, baby. It'll be okay, you're okay.

You thought Ilya Rozanov didn't clock his baby shaking out of his skin? Please...
Shane is too worried about being burdensome

I love me some mirroring and references!

Hope everyone has a great year ahead of them! We all need all the luck we can get.

Russian translations:
точка зрения влюбленного - the viewpoint of someone in love
Тревожное предчувствие - A sense of foreboding
Ты сво́дишь меня́ с ума́ - You drive me crazy
Будто свет живёт на его коже - As if light lives on his skin
Как резиновый - like rubber

Chapter 4: Cut Deep and Bleeding

Chapter Summary

> “Where the fuck is my fiancé?”

Chapter Notes

> Read the tags besties, I swear there is a happy ending, but I need them both to go through it a bit :)
>
> Angst angst angst, we are only getting started my lovelies
>
> Anyone else turn back into their teenage self when back home in their parents' house? In like.. not the good way Xp

See the end of the chapter for more notes

-точка зрения влюбленного-

“Hi-” “Yuna, you heard from Shane?” “-this is Yuna Hollander, NHL Shane Hollander’s manager and mother, I am currently not available to come to the phone at this time, so please leave a message with a good number to call you back on, and I will be in contact as soon as possible, have a nice day!”

Ilya’s gas pedal hits the floor.

When he gets to the cottage there’s nowhere to park on the driveway.

Ilya could see the flash of red and blue through the tree from down the street. He barely manages to turn the car off, forgetting to lock it, before setting off in a dead sprint towards the front of his own home.

The entire cottage is lit up, every light in the house turned on and windows wide open. He can see police crawling inside, and the few that linger outside the house are given little thought as Ilya attempts to barrel through.

Arms wrapping around him from the back stop him from flying through the police tap wrapped around his own front porch and the men standing nearby.

Somewhere to the left of him he can hear Yuna, not hysterical, but yelling like a drill sergeant barking orders.

The sudden grab is enough to send Ilya off kilter, flinching heavily; there's not many people that touch him off the ice, especially a bear hold. When his vision focuses again on the trees out front the house, cottage to his back, he tries to shake weakly out of the hold.

"Calm down, kid. I've got you. We've gotta keep our heads."

The strong hug of David Hollader is more familiar after recognizing the man's Canadian accent.

Ilya still gives a slight shake, trying to keep his feet under him, trying to turn around.

"Что случилось? Он где? What is going on?" Ilya knows he sounds hysterical, flat in that way he always does when he does not know quite what he's feeling. *What happened? Where is he?*

David's arms tightened further. Like he is trying to keep Ilya's organs inside his body.

"Breathe first. We need to breathe. Nothing's going to get fixed if we don't breathe." The man's voice is shaking.

The lights of the cottage light up the trees before them. Ilya can't help but think Shane must be so mad that all the lights were turned on at once.

"Where's Shane."

"We've got to go talk to the police; Yuna is figuring it out. We've got to keep our heads."

It doesn't answer his question. It also doesn't really help him feel better either, but Ilya leans back into the arms wrapped around him, for once desperate for any sort of anchor he can get in this nightmare.

David lets go slowly, leaving an arm wrapped around his shoulders. Together, the two of them walk slowly towards the police tape wrapping around the front of the cottage, a few officers standing around listening to Yuna as her hands fly around her head.

Ilya knows he's going to be seeing this behind his eyelids next time he sleeps. If he ever can sleep again.

One officer breaks off from the others, meeting them halfway, and the look on his face makes Ilya want to lose the dinner he had eaten just earlier with Shane by his side.

"I'm sorry, we can't let you into the house just yet, our guys are still looking around." The man points to one of the rocks by the driveway, "Why don't you two take a seat and we'll talk."

The man barely finishes his sentence, "Where the fuck is my fiancé?"

Ilya can't sit down without knowing *something* at least.

The man, Wilson by his police tag strapped to his chest, holds up hands as if to deescalate a fight. His eyes are wide, and it's unclear if it's because he's face to face with NHL star Ilya Rozanov or a frenzied Russian man who was currently losing his grasp on the English language.

Lowing them slowly he removes a little notebook from his pocket, flipping it open and clicking a pen.

The sound makes Ilya want to take it from his hands and throw it.

"When was the last time you saw your fiancé, sir?"

"What? Before I left for video. Where is he?"

"What time was that?"

"I do not know! Before 5, I leave late!"

"Was he home alone when you left?"

"Yes! He was, where is he?"

The man sighs slowly, "Have you noticed anything suspicious lately? Anything at work?"

"Suspish.. suspishes?"

David is quiet, "Weird, not normal."

The officer continues, "You're both pretty famous guys, notice anyone weird hanging around, any messages or threats?"

It sends Ilya's head spinning. Shane, anxious and shaking in his own skin for weeks. The increased media attention around the Stanley Cup Finale. The car the man had seen on their driveway after a supposed 'wrong turn'.

The words don't translate for a long minute. Officer Wilson and his future father-in-law watch him flap his mouth wordlessly, faces dropping.

His hands are in the air like he can somehow catch the words, "Car, there was a car, Shane mentioned on driveway." He's still looking for the words, "Is anxious man, but recently…"

Ilya tastes the words at the back of his mouth, "jumpy, frightened. He is not one to go online, paparazzi annoy increasingly."

The officer writes quickly on his notepad.

“Did he recognize the car? Describe it all? See who was driving?”

“Uhh, no. No. Did not recognize, not teammate nor neighbor. All he said was large black car came down driveway, left when see him or house.”

Officer Wilson continues writing; David’s head is now in his hands where he sits nearby still.

“Where is my fiancé”, Ilya can’t help but let his voice crack with the desperation he’s feeling. Cause this cop was not giving him anything, just asking stupid questions instead of letting him hold Shane in his arms till this all was sorted.

“For now, we have no reason to believe Mr. Hollander is majorly injured, but it does seem that that he was forcibly taken at some point during a break-in into the residence.”

The officer is still talking, but the English language is not something Ilya knows right now.

What he does know is pressing his back to the tire of this police car is the only thing keeping him tethered to the ground.

-~-

@OttawaClearALERT: Missing Persons Report filed for Shane William Hollander, last seen at home address by fiancé before 5 pm. 5 foot 11 inches, dark hair, dark eyes, mixed Asian and Canadian descent, wide shoulders, strong build, no tattoos. Last seen wearing a black Ottawa Centaurs T-shirt, blue sweatpants, white socks and no shoes. Any tips please contact Clear ALERT Ottawa, Ottawa Crime Stoppers, or 911

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: The investigation into NHL player Shane William Hollander’s disappearance is currently ongoing, more details to come in emergency press release scheduled for 6 am ET. If you have any information call Ottawa Crime Stoppers or 911

@CNN: Breaking News: Star Hockey Player and Four-Time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander Abducted During Home Break In: Condition Unknown, Details to be Updated

@TheGist: Four-time Stanley Cup Winner and Hockey LGBT+ Icon Missing After Home Break-in; Details Sparse

@Sports_Illustrated: Four-time Stanley Cup Holder and Former Montreal Voyageurs Captain Shane Hollander reportedly abducted from Ottawa home; Police to give more details at 6 am ET

@NHL: NHL player Shane Hollander Reported Missing in Ottawa Only Week After Winning Fourth Stanley Cup

@ESPN: Newly Traded Ottawa Centaur Shane Hollander Reported Missing from Home shared with Ottawa Captain Ilya Rozanov; More details to follow

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: Our team has received messages about the recent abduction of our beloved teammate and center, Shane Hollander. At this point the Ottawa Centaurs are working with local police and internal connections to aid investigations in any way we can. Please give Hollander's family and friends space but keep them in your thoughts during this very critical time. If you have any information please contact Ottawa Crime Stoppers or 911

@TMZ: Police seen swarming Hollander-Rozanov residence after apparent break-in and abduction of hockey star Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov seen pulling up fast to residence after attending scheduled promotional recording session with Buzzfeed

@FameSignal: WTF WTF WTF

@SidelineFire_CA: Who the fuck takes photos of a man showing up to his own house covered in police tape, where's the empathy

@JustinTrudeau: I have long since followed Shane Hollander's extraordinary hockey career and admire the man's commitment to his sport, his team, and his family. I am keeping his loved ones in my thoughts, and I pray for his safe and swift return home

@TeamHollanov: SHANE HOLLANDER KIDNAPPED FROM OTTAWA HOME SHARED WITH FIANCE ILYA ROVANOV NO SUPSECT KNOWN

@TeamHollanov: I'm crying like what is going on

@CityCrowd77: What the hell is happening???

@HollySmiles: I'm in shock, I bet Rozanov is freaking the fuck out

@PuckChaser_Wild: That man is frenzied

@ShotStopper_78: Yo bad time to be a Russian man

@TeamHollanov: @ShotStopper_78 YOU THINK THEYRE GONNA BLAME HIM??? 😭

@HollanovHockeyHQ: BREAKING NEWS SHANE HOLLANDER NHL STAR AND ALL-AROUND SWEETHEART ABDUCTED DURING BREAK IN INTO HIS OTTAWA HOME HE SHARES WITH NEW FIANCE

@HollanovHockeyHQ: I genuinely don't know what to say besties, like WTFFFFFF, I hope he's okay, his poor family

@IceColdTakes: Holy Shit

@notasportswriter: Did not have this on the bingo card

@LateSkates: I HOPE HES OKAY

@ShaneHollanderFan: 😭😭😭😭😭

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Hockey Star and Four-time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander missing from home. Police called. No valuables taken and no sign of a struggle.

@RozanovIceLegends: Hollander wouldn't have gone down easily, praying for his family and fiancé

@noahonthego: What hockey player let's themselves get kidnapped?

@HockeyWire: @noahonthego Bro Shane Hollander is a fucking beast, get out of here, he took down Scott Hunter with a couple swings… he must've been real hurt if someone dragged him out of there

@OfficialTeamMontrealVoyageurs: The Montreal Voyageurs would like to send their thoughts and prayers to Shane Hollander, his family, and friends during this desperate time. If you have any information please contact Clear ALERT Ottawa, Ottawa Crime Stoppers, or 911

@CentaurIceStorm: THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU ASSHOLES

@TeamHollanov: UGH

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Hayden Pike joins him sitting on the back porch of David and Yuna's home, the one Shane had built his own only two streets away from here.

He must have started driving as soon as the missing person's report hit the media.

Ilya doesn't look at him, not directly. The man looks worn and tired, pale in the dark. He knows he doesn't look much better, having already gone through half a pack of cigarettes as he sat here in a white Adirondack chair.

It's not often he smokes anymore. Ilya had purchased packs in rare moments of weakness, when the bad days are too hard, when the sky is gloomy on his mother's birthday. After one, the regret typically sets in, not wanting to see the look on his fiancé's face when he smells the smoke on his clothes and the taste settling funny in his stomach.

The barely used boxes had collected in a flowerpot on the back porch of the cottage, mostly forgotten.

He had emptied it out as he packed his bag earlier.

Ilya doesn't say anything as he finishes the cigarette in his mouth, replacing the butt and lighting the next one. He slides another from the box; lighter held next to it and doesn't watch as Pike takes both and inhales deeply next to him.

"I didn't know you smoked."

"Don't tell my wife."

He’s halfway done this one before Pike breaks the silence.

“We’re gonna find him. Shane’s not going to let himself disappear like that.”

Ilya squeezes his eyes tight, then looks up to the stars up high in the sky. It’s too clear a night for the type of day he’s had.

He tries not to let the day sink back into his head the way it has been in circles the last 5 hours since he arrived home to half a police force outside his home and the desperate rant of Yuna Hollander.

Ilya had had to walk the house, 3 men in police uniforms following him closely as he tried to keep the grief, the agony, the absolute rage off his face. The window near the front door had been shattered, glass scattered across the front hallway. Whoever had come in had either left by another door or closed this door behind them.

He didn’t want to look at the blood spotting the wood flooring further in. Not the headphones scattered to the side. Not the shattered remains of Shane’s phone halfway down the kitchen.

Nothing else in the place was out of touch. Not a single piece of jewelry in the bedroom was missing, the one’s he had kept from his mother’s collection. Every medal and trophy in the ‘office’ still in place.

The only thing off was Shane’s gym door open and the stationary bike still set to medium resistance. It was unlike the man to not reset the equipment and close the door fully.

Ilya replaces his finished cigarette with another.

Pike is still choking down his first one.

He can’t help but hate the quiet. It’s not silent, can’t be out in the middle of fucking nowhere Canada. Fucking birds and water creatures.

“There was blood.”

Ilya doesn’t know why he says it, maybe because he couldn’t tell Shane’s parents; the two of them not having been allowed into the house. His voice is ragged from the sobbing that had only fizzled out an hour ago.

He pulls smoke in his lungs again, “Nothing stolen.”

The thought sits deep and dark in the pit of his stomach. There were only so many reasons someone would break into the house of an NHL player, especially the property that they had been staying at, and not take anything.

Ilya really didn’t want to think about it.

He can feel the nicotine sticking to his fingers.

Pike is exhaling heavily next to him, rubbing his hand over his face. He sits unnaturally in the chair, stiff.

Finally, it seems the man has found the words he was looking for, “This entire situation is fucked, so fucked. With the whole investigation, and the online threats, just to pile it on top of all the other shit you two have had to deal with. Man, it’s fucked up. I’m so sorry man, but like, we have to believe he’s going to be alright.”

Ilya turns to him and makes eye contact with the man for the first time that night. They both pause, let the silence sit for a second.

A moment of shared grief, both clinging to the fact that the case has stayed a kidnapping, not a murder.

Pike runs his hand through his hair, continues, “He’s one of the strongest dudes I’ve ever met, and he’s got his head on straight, well like, you know… uh anyway, the police are already on it and we just gotta hope that Shane’s holding his own with whoever, uh, took him.”

“Blood on ground, Pike.”

“Well ya I know that but like, Shane’s played games even after splitting his eyebrow open on ice. Like, surely, they want him alive, or something would’ve happened right there.”

Ilya is not sure if the words are comforting, or even meant to be, but Hayden Pike’s stupid American optimism is at least quieting the scenarios running through his head.

So he just nods.

“Police will find man, and him. This I have no doubt.”

Cause if he listened to doubt, where would he be but under the ground with his fiancé.

His phone buzzes in his lap.

‘Я в пути, Илюша’ *I’m on my way, Ilyusha*

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya doesn’t end up sleeping in Shane’s old bedroom like David had guided him too when he first got here. He had left his bags there, had changed, but after his long time outside with Pike, he couldn’t find it within himself to go back in there.

He wakes up on the living room couch, the light streaming in through the windows, the house quiet around him. Someone is moving around in the kitchen, and Ilya allows himself the time to just lay there and listen. To the sounds of someone else in the house.

When he finally sits up, Jackie’s tired smile greets him as she stands over the oven, spatula in hand.

He messes up his hair, trying to get it a bit out of his eyes. He's still wearing the shirt he wore yesterday.

Jackie's gaze doesn't falter from where she's studying him. Ilya grunts a bit at the silence.

The woman was observant as hell. Why she ever married the forever frat boy from Montreal, he would never know. The man created lovely children but did little else.

Ilya eats the pancakes Jackie makes at the kitchen table with a silent nod of thanks. Shane's parents are somewhere else, he doesn't know upstairs or out of the house, but he can hear Hayden's snoring through the open guest bedroom door.

Jackie fills her own plate and sits down across from him; pancakes covered in syrup. They both let the quiet sit as they finish eating. Ilya takes the plates silently and moves to put them in the dishwasher.

She breaks first.

"Are you doing, okay?"

Ilya's heavy sigh is probably answer enough for her.

Her hair is still pulled up in a messy bun, face void of makeup, and the most worried look in her eye. One Ilya can't really look at, hating that he put it there, scared that someone was looking right through him.

"Ya, I know you're probably not okay, I get that, but how are you, like, how are you holding up? It didn't seem like you slept all that well last night, and, and we should probably go by the police station to see if there are any updates or things they need."

A loud snore breaks through from down the hallway.

Ilya sighs louder.

"We're going to do everything we can to find him. And all of us are going to be right next to you the whole time too. Hayden and I are staying for a couple of days, my parents took the kids, it'll be easier if we all stay close. It's not good to be alone right now."

She smells like lavender and those natural baby wipes she prefers to buy. Ilya focuses on it as her arms wrap around him, and for the first time in a while he feels like he can break in front of someone.

-~-

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Police share additional details in morning press conference about investigation into abduction of Shane William Hollander. Suspect is still unknown. Signs of forced entry and a struggle between Hollander and the assailant. No sign of robbery, motive is believed to be abduction. Neighbors report frequently seeing suspicious

black SUV with dark windows in the past week. Unlikely for Suspect to strike again, but may act out if threatened

@Star: Shane Hollander missing from residence after targeted attack, speculation on motive ranges from crazed fan to potential held-for-ransom

@People: Four-time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander Abducted from Home in Targeted Attack; Speculation held around recent sighting with Rose Landry as trigger

@RadarOnline: Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander Last Seen by Fiancé in Shared Home Hours Before Abduction; Possible Motives Listed Below Including Possible Close Individuals Involved and Russian Ties

@UsWeekly: Attention on Shane Hollander Skyrocketed After He and Fiancé Are Outed Two Years Ago, Could This Have Led to His Kidnapping?

@NationalEnquirer: NHL celebrity Shane Hollander kidnapped from home just a week after winning Stanley Cup, Coincidence?

@TMZ: Blood Found in Hollander Household; Rumors Swirl Around Potential Murder-for-hire or Hate Crime

@Buzzfeed: We would like to respond to the messages we have received about the disappearance of Shane Hollander. The Buzzfeed company sends our thoughts and prayers to the Hollander family as well as Ilya Rozanov, who was attending a prescheduled shoot with our team here in the offices at the time of the crime. If you have any information about the case please contact Ottawa Crime Stoppers or 911

-Somewhere on the border of New York and Pennsylvania-

Shane's alarm doesn't go off, and for a second, he's really pissed off.

Everyone he keeps close knows not to touch it.

Then he notices the agony of his entire upper body and the way his brain feels like it's been blended on high.

Shane pries his eyes open, despite the crust, and the lack of light makes his pulse rocket. His pulse picking up makes his head hurt even worse.

When his breathing starts coming faster the air turns stuffy, trying to reach his hands up does nothing but hurt.

Shane doesn't know what makes him more nauseous at this point, the lack of clean oxygen, the obvious stick of tape over both his hands, or the jerky movement of his body back and forth.

He moves his feet around, thankfully untied, and just keeps feeling fuzzy plastic, evident through his socks.

Hysterically he can't help but note that whoever is driving sucks at it, two-footed and fast. Without a seatbelt in the trunk, he's just rolling back and forth, unable to stop himself with his hands.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

His brain is absolutely pounding. The bumps in the road don't help.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

The pressure around his arms is almost a welcome nightmare. He can recognize ropes, and Shane can feel them wrapped tightly around his arms bringing them up in front of him as if in prayer, looping back around his shoulders and back.

Pulling against them, trying to find something loose, is almost bliss against the sensory nightmare of duct tape covering his hands, removing the use of both. The pressure is nice. Grounding a bit. The only thing he really has in the dark.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

He's still trying to wrap his head around what was going on. Shane had remembered the gym, heading upstairs, the unease, but not much else. Whatever was happening was obviously not good, his skin screaming at him separate from the actual physical pain he still felt.

If something had happened, Shane would have been waking up in a hospital. Not wrapped in rope, in a stuffy car, probably still bleeding, and obviously heading somewhere that was not a hospital.

Trying to understand the situation at hand doesn't help him calm down much, it only really sends his adrenaline running again, rage at the forefront.

Shane's not one to express his anger physically, preferring to just crush the other team by scoring, but he couldn't help but think this whole thing was ridiculously pointless. Absurd. Bullshit.

All these weird fan accounts these days.

The paparazzi around every corner.

The focus on him and Rose.

The press questions about his relationship.

The staring on the street.

The car in the driveway.

His house that was supposed to be empty.

Just like that day on the ice, before Scott Hunter and he were friends, when the old guy responded to a gentle chirp with an accusation in front of cameras, Shane lets the fear fuel the anger and puts it into action.

His feet shuffle, and it takes a couple of rounds with socked feet to really feel out what is around him. Shane feels over the sides, the floor, then up to where the trunk lid sits. He finds the corner, pressing his heel into the plastic. The adrenaline, not knowing where he is or where he's going ignites him to ignore the pain in his body as he sends his right heel hard towards where he hopes the car's taillight is.

Once, two, three, four, five.

Breathe in one, breathe out one.

Once, two, three, four, five.

Once, two, three, four, five.

Once, two, three, four, five.

Once, two, three, four, five.

He feels it when his foot goes through plastic, physically at least, the fear writing out the pain. His ears are ringing in his head, and Shane swears he can taste the plastic of the car.

Breathe in one, breathe out one.

Breathe in one, breathe out one.

Shane wrenches his aching foot from the plastic shell of the car with a crunch, hoping that he had taken the taillight out like he had seen in one of his father's cop shows once. His breathing was returning slowly, but when the car swerves hard and stops harder, Shane's lungs catch again.

He shoves himself back against the back seats and raises both his feet out as if he could block himself from someone he can't even see.

Breathe in one, breathe out one.

Breathe in one, breathe out one.

The trunk clicks unlocked.

"Baby, let's not do this now."

The calmness in the man’s voice freaks him out.

When the trunk fully opens, Shane still can’t see anything, whether due to the bag over his head or it was dark outside; he doesn’t know. He kicks out anyway, hoping to catch, but screams when the man’s hands wrap around both his ankles to stop him.

The touch radiates pain up his right leg, and he kicks out again in reflex, but the hold was only getting tighter, sending him yelping.

“Now you’ve gone and hurt yourself, we’ve only been together a couple hours and you’re throwing a fit.”

Shane whines and hisses as his legs are tossed next to him again, the pain of his entire body sending his brain offline for a moment.

The grip on his shoulder sends him fighting again, but there is only so much he can do when his arms are tied together and then to his chest.

The pinch in his neck is the last thing he wants to feel. The last thing he needs is unknown substances in his bloodstream.

Ignoring the pain in his ankle and body, he’s frantic as he kicks and attempts to shove, only huffs and grunts coming out of his mouth as he moves against the ache.

His left eye won’t open again, and his legs won’t lift anymore when Shane admits to himself that maybe he can’t fight the chemicals now in his blood.

Shane hopes the guy understands him when he mumbles, lips numb and tongue heavy.

“You’re an absolute dick.”

The trunk clicks shut.

Chapter End Notes

Next two chapters are going to be the meat, so they might take me a couple extra days, I am also on the last week of my winter break before heading back to college so I'm crunching in some last-minute family & friend time, so bit of delay

I hope I'm doing well writing more emotionally charged scenes, I'm much more used to writing and reading horror and mystery
Actually, the Game Changers series will be my first attempt at reading actual romance books that aren't just Jane Austin, delivered tomorrow!

Warnings:
Injury sustained, mention of suicide

Chapter 5: Patched Pain

Chapter Summary

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

How were his parents doing, not knowing where their only child was?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

What was Ilya doing right now, would he be okay if he lost Shane too?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Chapter Notes

Read the tags, extra warnings in lower notes, please be careful besties <3

I try to read all your comments and respond when I can <3
Love you all though

I am also fully aware it's not this easy to cross the border, I don't care though it's for the plot

See the end of the chapter for more notes

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: License plate identified and tracked toward Canadian border in connection with Ottawa home invasions and Shane William Hollander's apparent abduction. Lost tracking near Brockville, On. Offices canvasing area. 7:25 am.

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Shane Hollander case License Plate identified as stolen from Ilya Rozanov's Silver Lamborghini Reventon located in home garage 7:36 am

-Somewhere???-

Shane's not comfortable when he comes to.

His thoughts still feel like syrup in his brain, but at least when he opens his eyes he can see; very blurry but still seeing. His spine is aching within his body, his shoulders tight, and the front of his face is throbbing. Sitting up like this doesn't help with the pain. He closes his eyes as he tries each of his limbs.

Both his wrists are tied to the chair he sits in, rope wrapped up around his forearms to keep them against the arms. His shoulders are tied back as well, forcing him to sit upright and straight.

Trying to move his ankles was a terrible idea, Shane should've just assumed he was tied. He squeaks a bit at the pressure he puts on his right ankle, the pain shooting up his leg and making his hip jolt against the ropes.

Shane's had injuries before; they come with having a life-long career in hockey. He knows how to take stock of his own body, although it's usually done as he lays on the ice after a bad check. He's only been to the hospital a few times, but he's gotten the wind knocked out of him a good number of times.

This feels a lot different, and too similar in a strange way. The concussion he knows he has is evident behind his eyes, probably small, but no doubt this fucker did not help by drugging him to sleep. Twice, maybe. The last hours were a blur. He doesn't know how long he's been out.

The ankle and his broken nose are the other two main sources of pain. It's hard to breathe out his nose, his mouth taped shut, and he can feel the blood that's run down his face and crusted over. When he wiggles it, it smarts, but not as much as Shane expected.

Had this wacko set his nose?

He obviously hadn't done the same to Shane's ankle, the ropes around it not strangling but tight enough so that it was impossible to ignore. The frantic kicking he had done sometime probably hours earlier was the only clear memory he had of the last day, the adrenaline sticking it to the back of his eyelids.

Shane doesn't know if it was a good idea looking back on it, if it had even helped him at all. But now he's stuck with a very messed up ankle, fractured or broken.

Breathing through the pain helps, Shane tries to focus on counting his inhales and exhales.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shuffling in his seat as much as he could gave him no progress. The chair was metal, not easily breakable, and not moving across the floor as he wanted.

Shane slowly peels his eyes back open, tears and a bit of crust blood gluing his eyelids together. He wishes he could rub them clean, but instead he just settles for blinking, trying to clear the gunk out of his eyes, trying to make them focus.

Blink, press, blink, press.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Blink, blink, blink, blink.

The room coming into focus is not what he expected. He thought the rug was grey, but now looking closer at it, it was just worn and old, darkened by the years it lived through. The rest of the room is much the same; worn, old, and reminding Shane of his one friend from elementary school's grandma's house.

Shane had expected some metal room, maybe a warehouse; the shit you always see on tv.

Not this, with floral wallpaper colored by smoked cigarettes and a wooden four-posted queen bed, hastily made with mismatching blankets. There were no lamps on the side tables, the only light came from the overhead fan. The slowly swinging blades were creaking, swinging the entire thing against the popcorn ceiling. Next to the only door to the room sat a dresser, dark hardwood. An old antique mirror sat next to it with wipe streaks on it.

Was he in someone's grandma's bedroom?

There weren't any pictures up, as you would expect a sentimental old woman to have. Everything was carefully bare, like a very messy housemaid had come through and striped it all.

The curtains were open to his right and the ominously loud tik-tok of a clock somewhere in the house were the only clues that time was passing. Shane watched dust mites pass by for what had to be several minutes. Resigned to that fact he was going nowhere fast in his state.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The pattern of roses was 6 up and down before it repeated across the wallpaper. Whoever had placed it had done a good job.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Don't panic.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

God his parents must be freaking out.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane doesn't want to think about Ilya's mental state at this point. He can only hope that someone was at least staying with him at home while all this shit goes on.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

He's so focused on breathing, the repetitive pattern of roses, that the sound of the door opening sends him jolting in the chair he's tied to.

The man doesn't open the door all the way, slipping in and leaning against the doorway, blocking anything beyond this room from view. Shane eye's dart to look at the man as he came in, before rocketing off to the wall in front of him to avoid eye contact.

Clearly the man does not take the same cue, intense dark eyes rake over him, cataloging, analyzing. It sends a blazing itch over Shane's body, like just the man's eyes is enough to give him hives.

It sadly was a feeling Shane had become familiar with in the last couple of weeks.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Don't panic, Shane, hold yourself together.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

He was tall; lankier than the hockey players Shane worked with. He had longer black hair, curly like Ilya's, and thick eyebrows on a deep brow bone, eyes intense and as dark as his hair. The sharp facial features and nose only added to the unblinking gaze the man had set on him.

Almost as soon as Shane started twitching, uncomfortable and nervous, did the man's face change, suddenly alight with toothy grin, childlike.

That might freak him out more than anything.

"Well hello beautiful, I'll be your doctor today! Hah!" The man laughed at his own joke.

Don't panic.

The man walks forward like he owns the room, confident. Not menacing, but like he's waltzing back into a get together. Casual.

"I'm really sorry, but I don't have much in the way of medical skills, baby, but I got google, so let's clean you up a bit why don't we?"

Holding a wet washcloth in his hand, he kneels in front of Shane, searching for eye contact that he's not about to get. Letting out a long sigh the man stands back up, looking down at him, hands on his hips.

"What are we going to do with you, messy?" the man actually tuts at him.

Shane's teeth grind in his mouth, and he has the fleeting thought that his dentist was going to kill him after all this. But he had played hockey all his life and he needed something to chew his agitation on.

The wet washcloth dabbing at his face wasn't exactly gentle, neither was the hand that grabbed his chin with rough fingers. Harder swipes go under his nose, around his eyes, over the tape still covering his mouth. He turns the cloth around occasionally as it's stained red repeatedly.

Shane doesn't know when he had squeezed his eyes shut, but it was easier than watching the man's face so close.

The washcloth runs over his neck, behind his ear a bit, and Shane scrunches his face tighter.

All it earns is a chuckle and another hand on his face.

"C'mon, baby, eyes on me."

Shane tried his best to look past him, towards the top of the wallpaper and the endless popcorn ceiling, but the shake of his head sends his gaze wobbling, blurring at the sides, rolling his stomach. It's enough to make Shane make eye contact, however reluctantly as he tries to focus his eyes. The man's eyes are somehow blazing and dead at the same time.

"There you are!" The man smiles, "you were hiding under all that blood! It's all good now, I really didn't mean for you to fall on your face like that, I didn't think that far ahead!"

He pulls out a small flashlight, teeth flashing, "I looked this up earlier, we're going to make sure I didn't hit you too hard, that's what the drugs were supposed to be for, so keep your eyes on me".

The light shines into one eye, then the other, then back and forth a bit. It moves too quickly, disorienting and blinding. Shane tries to pull his head back, but the hand holds firm.

"Your pupils aren't too different, it's really not that bad, we'll just monitor you for the next day, alright baby, lots to talk about, and I know you're nervous so it might be hard to sleep tonight anyway."

Both hands return to his face. As the man rambles one thumb starts moving slowly over his cheek, under his eye. Shane closes it as it touches his eyelashes. It moves to trace what is likely a dark circle under it, then to the side of his nose. The touch is light at first, but as the other hand mirrors the other hand, both thumbs press together into the sides of his nose bridge.

The whimper he lets out is involuntary. The feeling in his nose sends his stomach rolling again and breathing stuttering, the hands on his skin making him want to scream.

Shane can feel the man's eyes on him as he feels up and down his nose. He didn't know if the man was testing to see if the break was righted correctly, causing him pain on purpose, or just enjoying putting his hands on him.

The long moments of heart stuttering uncomfortableness tell him all three.

The tall man finally sighs loudly, a little too close for comfort, then removes his hands from his face all together.

Shane slowly opens his eyes to watch the man as he speaks, excited, hands moving to emphasize words. It's all a little too normal. A little too casual.

"It should heal up alright; it's not like you haven't broken your nose before. I would know! Thankfully I set it when you were still sleeping, it was a long drive, and I felt bad that your breathing might have been impacted."

Where were the threats? Did he not want money or something? There was a while till training camp and preseason, so it couldn't be about hockey, unless it was about the Stanley Cup?

He had a strong suspicion it wasn't the gay thing. Shane was bad at reading people sometimes, but not that bad.

Shane mumbles around the tape, hoping the washcloth had loosened the stick of it a bit.

The man's eyes trace him.

"Anyway, this will be your room, so you have your own space, a little privacy. It's not like you'll be able to lock the door, I already had the lock flipped, but I respect a closed door, I promise I'll knock", the man nodded along with his own words, "I know this is all really confusing, I promise it'll all make sense after I explain, things are just better like this, well not quite but we're working on it, aren't we baby."

Don't panic

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"Let's get your ankle wrapped a bit then we can talk over dinner."

He walks around behind Shane's chair, his shoulder's tensing as the man goes out of view. Metal sounds against metal, clicks, then the chair is moving. Well, rolling very badly on a shitty carpet. It squeaks loudly, protesting and grating.

God his fucking ears.

"Sorry, I never had this old thing fixed after my Granny died last year. I'll look for some WD-40 in the basement when I get a chance," The man chuckles.

When the wheels hit the hardwood floor outside the room, the sound tempers a bit but the chair still protests its movements. Out here in the hall, Shane feels like he suddenly has a much clearer view into the man's life, and he doesn't know if he likes it that much.

The yellowing wallpaper out in the hallway is absolutely lined with photos, almost not enough wall room for all the frames above the wainscoting. There was absolutely no

pattern; frame colors, pictures, or shape of frame. It's hard for Shane's eyes not to jump from photo to photo, taking it all in, as they slowly move down the hallway.

A little old woman and a little boy in one.

A photo of him holding the Stanley Cup in his Montreal jersey.

The same little old lady with a toddler and a young woman.

The man's graduation photo, face sour and breaking out.

Shane at a press conference, not one he recognizes.

A photo of a newborn baby being cradled, the same older woman as every other.

The man stops, eyes on the same photo, leaning heavily on the handlebars behind him.

"Granny named me Gaten after her own father, my mom wasn't in my life much anyway, so it didn't matter to her what my name was."

The sigh the man, Gaten apparently, *the man who had hit him over the head and kidnapped him*, lets out is long, sad, and tired, "She only passed away last year, she was old, yah, but no one really likes to think about it too much, yah know? Cause then it was just me here, and I always have found it hard to make friends."

Shane can hear the shrug in his voice. The man seems content to carry on the conversation one-sided.

"I was born outside Montreal, always have stayed a Canada hockey team fan even after I fully moved in with my Granny in Illinois when I was like six. Mathieu Renard was my first ever jersey, but I got yours for Christmas your rookie year." Gaten says next to his ear, turning them slowly onto the tile floor of the kitchen.

Shane presses against the ropes around his chest.

The kitchen fits the house, grainy, yellowed by time and smoke, outdated and falling apart if you look at the seams. The cabinets slightly crooked. Gas burning stove probably years out of commission. Countertops are beige and speckled. It also fits the definition of a bachelor pad well; sink full of dishes, table full of papers, stacked precariously, laptop open nearby.

Gaten, *oh god am I referring to him by his first name*, leaves him in the middle of the floor, back to the door. He moves to open multiple drawers, rummaging around with fast hands.

Shane scans the room, he can see the living room from where he sits, both TV and sofa outdated. The windows are all shuttered, curtains not pulled, letting in the slowly fading sunlight outside. He would consider it homey if half the photos didn't pay homage to his own fucking face.

The taller man turns back to him, grinning at his findings. His arms are filled with dish cloths, three wooden spoons and a straight spatula, and kitchen scissors. He uses a foot to drag out a dining chair closer to the wheelchair, dumping his armful on top of it, then grabs two more of them placing them in front and to the other side of Shane.

Gaten's quiet as he sits in front of him, bringing them down to the same eyelevel, the man all leg.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

He's got to get through this.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"So, the trip here wasn't the easiest", the man starts with, eyebrows raising in his direction, like this whole thing is Shane's fault.

"You hurt yourself pretty badly kicking out my taillight back there, thankfully I had some duct tape with me so I could patch it up, heh."

When Shane just stares back at him, wide eyed, Gaten hangs his head a bit.

"Ugh, I hate this. You know that whole saying 'this is going to hurt me more than you', well I never thought I would understand it, but here we are." Gaten, tips his head, contrite, smile small, "We gotta do something about your ankle though, we can't just leave it like that, as much as I would love to have you limping the rest of your life, safe in bed, we've got to at least try to set it so you can walk around the house a bit."

The casual way he says it is insane. Shane's eyes have grown wider with every word the man has said. He pulled at the ropes wrapped up his forearms and wrists. Nothing of it made sense, Shane needs a hospital, there's no way a man with no medical expertise can fix what is very likely a broken ankle.

But it was obvious that a hospital was not happening. It sounded like leaving the house wasn't either. The man in front of him was insane, truly delirious, talking to him in the same tone Ilya does when he comforts his panic attacks.

Instead, it was a man who had taken him across country lines, gave him a concussion, and is now intent to keep him in his house forever.

As what? A fucking lover? A pet? Some sort of weird trophy?

"It's going to be okay; we're just going to make sure it's stabilized a bit more, then we can go cuddle on the couch, I'll even reward you if you're good through this!"

Shane wants to be the opposite of good and pulls harder at the ropes on his arms to show his protest, attempting to talk really for the first time since this whole thing has gone down. This was becoming too real, too fast, earlier it had just felt like a movie, a show, now Shane was more in his body, head here, staring danger in the eyes.

The dark-haired man only moves to the chair on his right, next to his injured ankle, ignoring his struggle.

He leans over and grabs a few of the dish cloths, then points his focus in the direction of Shane's ankle, still tied to the chair.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

When the man unties it, it hurts, like fire, like Shane can feel the shifting of broken bones underneath his skin. Shane relies on the ropes again to hope him up, head hanging as he tries to breathe through the nausea of the movement.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

When Gaten starts to lift his foot, straighten his leg, he half screams and groans behind the tape, dry heaving, praying that he can get this under control before he's forced to get sick with nowhere to go.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

His foot is set gently across laid out hand towels on the chair in front of him, rope still around his ankle newly tied between the wooden gaps of the dining table, forcing his leg straight. It hurts, the pressure on his heal, the ache in his knees after hours of being bent, the bones moving.

Shane tips his head back in the chair towards the popcorn ceiling, not being able to watch and keep the bile in his stomach. He feels the cold metal of scissors up his calf, cutting away at his track pants. Not watching helps Shane tune it out; if he focuses enough on the pain in his nose, the ache behind his eyes, the rope burns on his bare arms, maybe he can ignore what was actually happening.

The room was partially dark as the sun set below the tree, a half dead light in the ceiling barely lighting anything.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

How were his parents doing, not knowing where their only child was?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

What was Ilya doing right now, would he be okay if he lost Shane too?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The hand towels were the easier part, meant for cushion, but as Gaten ties a rope around his ankle and foot, up his calf, Shane groans to the ceiling and makes to grab at the man's hands. He continues weaving it around, tying the spatula to the bottom of his foot, the two wooden spoons on either side of his ankle to stabilize it, then the last one just above his Achilles heel.

The process is excruciating, the rope tightening sending bones grinding against each other. Shane grits his teeth against it, shoulders shaking, sweating, and it's only as the tape starts loosening at the edges does he realize he's crying, tear pouring down his cheeks.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

His head is still tipped back, begging for air in his lungs, mouth gasping. Breathing through the pain that was ever so slightly receded now, his leg finally no longer moving. Shane can still feel it, radiating through his body, unlike any hockey injury he's ever received. Usually, he had strong medications in an actual hospital for that shit.

He just needs to get through this. Just has to breathe through this.

Just enough so he can make a run for it.

"You did so good, baby!" Gaten cooed, leaning forward to kiss the sweaty skin of his cheek, "We'll have dinner, watch some TV on the couch, and then maybe a nice reward, what do you think?"

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@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Stolen License Plate and Fitbit in connection with abduction of Shane Hollander found near Fulton, New York. Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be taking over case as charges rise to Human trafficking, False Imprisonment, and Unlawful Transportation of an Individual Across Borders, and Aggravated Assault. Any information contact the tip line at (x)xxx-xxx-xxxx. 2:43 pm.

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Black SUV with tinted windows still at large, believed to have crossed over Canadian border with additional stolen license plate*

@UsWeekly: Kidnapping of Shane Hollander just months before scheduled wedding ceremony later this summer, Fiancé's license plate used to avoid security cameras to Canadian border

@TMZ: Shane Hollander is still missing after scene of crime is shown to have blood and broken glass, speculation on motive continues as no ransom is made

@RozanovIceLegends: Ottawa Captain Ilya Rozanov cancels Stanley Cup Post-Season Short Press Tour Amongst Investigation into Fiancé's Kidnapping; Fans worry about Star NHL player's state of mind amongst case investigation, send wishes for Shane Hollander's safe return

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Police scramble to find leads in investigation into disappearance of NHL Star and Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander, Items found across country lines sparking escalation in jurisdiction

@IceCold_Center: The hockey world is set on getting its hero back

@RefYouMissedIt: how the hell do you cross the borders with Shane Hollander in your fucking car??

@StillWinterHere: Idk maybe he dropped the other license plate then used a different one to cross

@RefYouMissedIt: It's not like Hollander is that small of a guy??????

@HollanovHockeyHQ: NHL Star Shane Hollander Missing Now Almost 24 Hours, Suspect and vehicle still at large, Hollander reported injured at home before being forcibly removed from home, fake license plate obtained from car in garage, believed to be switched out before crossing over into America

@FiveOnFive_91: This is so fucked up

@HeatedRivalryUS: I want to apologize on behalf of America

@SeenItAllToday: Has no one gone through their DM's for threats yet?? Maybe Rozanov's or Landry's? If you are stupid enough to kidnap a celebrity, you're stupid enough to leave tracks

@HockeyWire: I can't believe some news sources think he's dead already

@ShaneHollanderFan: They also are trying to say its Rozys fault which is actually insane

@TheSkimm: The Dangers of Fame; How constant eyes on celebrities and athletes has led to interrupted privacy, harassment, and in Shane Hollander's case, an aggravated kidnapping, as internet speculates suspect is a fan gone too far

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: Police are still looking for leads into Ottawa Centaurs and beloved friend Shane Hollander, as the case crosses country lines we would like to please remind you that if you have any information, please contact Ottawa Crime Stoppers, 911, or the newly set up tip like at (x)xxx-xxx-xxxx

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya passes Yuna the cutting board and knife when she turns to him, not waiting for her to get the words out. She takes them just as silently, chopping various colors of peppers in slices.

The entire house was quiet except for the low volume of an early baseball game in the living room. It had been turned on to kill the silence, no one really had cared who was playing.

The whole group of them had been pushed out of the police station earlier, politely, but assured that their presence there wasn't aiding in what little they already had on the case. Ilya had stayed the longest, across the table from two cops with too many irrelevant questions.

They all knew who he was before he had stepped in the room. Had seen the articles that news and gossip magazines were publishing; capitalizing on any tragedy they can get. Ilya's manager had already been working on getting some of the more defamatory articles about him down, it didn't stop people from believing it.

It had been a long afternoon before they had finally let Ilya out of that room. Thankfully, Ilya was tired of repeating four to five times about where he was, who he was talking to, and especially why the fuck would he want to lose the man he has spent the last ten years fighting to love openly.

They hadn't known what to say to that, and by that time Ilya hadn't wanted to stick around, deciding to come back tomorrow. Yuna, David, and both Pikes followed him out of the front doors, and none of them said anything as they got back in Pike's mom van and drove back to the Hollanders house.

No one really said anything at all, even as they had walked in the front door, Yuna and Ilya moving off to the kitchen to start dinner, David and Pike moving off to not really watch the game, and Jackie off to call her parents and children.

Ilya hates to ruin the silence, the gentle buzz of tv, but as the food finishes cooking in the pan, and he knows that the house will gather for dinner soon, and the thoughts that have been plaguing him since last night's smoke session come bubbling out

. "Um, Yuna." She turns to look at him when he speaks, which makes it harder, so Ilya just leans heavier on his arms that are braced in front of him.

It's hard to say, he's worried the sentiment doesn't translate well, but here Ilya is with his fiancé's parents, while Shane is somewhere out there, probably hurt. Scared. He still tries to keep his voice carefully neutral as he stares hard at the countertops.

"I just want to say I am sorry, that I should've done something before it became" His voice crack as he gestures for a word out of his reach "this."

She's already shaking her head at him, starting words, but he can't hear them over the rush in his ears. His shoulders rise slightly as she approaches, and Ilya holds out a hand as he continues, desperate to get it out.

"I just should have done more, seen something, and... seen Shane's anxiety. More lately than ever before. Yet I did not do enough. And now your son is hurt somewhere."

Ilya has turned away from her again as he spoke, trying to hide the way his eyes were tearing up and threatening to fall.

"When I find the guy, one day, I promise I kill him."

Her arms are soft when they wrap around him, his arms and all. One of her hands starts to rub up and down his back; a comforting gesture he hadn't received in ages.

He lets her go when she pulls back a couple of inches, looking over his face.

“Hey, eyes on me.” Yuna’s voice is soft, “It’s easier looking at the past and seeing signs, there’s nothing we can do now. We are going to get through this, all of us. Then you, David, and I will never let him out of our sight again.”

Her words and tone send the tears in his eyes running down his face. She sniffs softly, hiding her own tears, and then wraps him up tightly in her arms again. Ilya returns the hug, gentle, then firmer as she holds him longer.

Ilya’s hiccupping a bit, like he did when he tried to hide his crying from his dad. Ilya uses one hand to wipe his face, cover his eyes a bit, embarrassed for crying in front of Shane’s mother, the one missing her only child.

She doesn’t let go though, the food taken off the burner is probably getting cold. Ilya hunches down around her, and its long moments before either of them let go to serve dinner.

-~-

Gaten’s eyes are watching him closely as Shane tries to choke down chicken alfredo, only his right arm untied to use the fork to get the food to his mouth.

It’s not something he’s used to eating; store bought rotisserie chicken with cheese sauce bought in a container. Despite his stomach’s protests, Shane knows he needs the calories and energy fast.

He had wanted to stab the man with the fork but knew it wouldn’t help him much in the end. Plus, Shane didn’t know if he had it in him to actually stab someone.

Like theoretically, maybe.

But really?

Shane had cried at home after seeing the bloody replays of Scott Hunter’s face after he had punched him repeatedly. Ilya had shaken the story out of him, then made him hold off from messaging Hunter an apology first.

Right now, the adrenaline might see him through, the fear. But he was at a disadvantage; tied down with a broken ankle, not even still in Canada.

What had the man said, Illinois?

It would make all the décor make more sense, especially the taxidermized duck above the fridge. Its eyes were just as beady as the man watching his every breath.

The man, Gaten, couldn’t be any older than his age, more likely a couple years younger, college or post grad. He had the look of one of those theater kids Shane saw in 90’s movies, skinny, shaky, and grin-happy, with an air of danger under the fake front they were putting on.

Like that one crazy boyfriend from the movie Rose had made him watch with her, he can’t remember if it was Mean Girls or Heathers.

The thought of her kicks starts something. Looking at the man now, without his brain melting and skin on fire, multiple Advil given straight from the labeled bottle, Shane tries to again rationalize more. Cause really, *who ever fucking expects to be tied to chair stuck in a house by a total stranger.* Eyes following his browbone, Shane quietly accepted that maybe they were not total strangers, he's seen those dark eyes once before, having met them in a dark restaurant over Rose Landry's shoulder.

Was this about her? Maybe. It was obvious Gaten was a fan of his, the sheer amount of his own memorabilia in the house said it enough. There were photos everywhere from where Shane currently sat at the small table in the kitchen, among the piles of papers. Every year with Montreal, all his all-star games and the winter Olympics, his new team. A framed Montreal jersey of his sat above the couch through the doorway, signed. Next to it was a newly framed Ottawa Jersey.

None of it explained why the man had taken him. A man younger than him. A man who didn't even live in Canada.

Most of Shane's fans *wanted* him to keep playing hockey. Wanted him to play till he was old and grey, on the ice even when he's bleeding. Encouraging him back when he's out on injury.

So why the fuck does this guy want to keep him confined in a home in Illinois? Impact his healing so at this rate he'll never play again if he doesn't get it fixed professionally? *It just didn't make sense.*

Shane doesn't want to talk first. It's what little control he has.

Not like the guy was fishing for any small talk or deep conversation.

When his kidnapper finally realizes that Shane has just been pushing around the last few congealed bites of pasta on his plate, he rises from his chair across from him slowly.

His hand moves just as slowly towards where Shane's hand sits on the table, still holding the fork, and Shane tenses. The man tsks at the movement, wrapping long fingers around his right wrist, and using the other and to take the fork from Shane's limp fingers.

He takes both the plates and forks to the kitchen sink and Shane winces as he just sets them on top, already piled high, not even rinsing them off. When he comes back, the man uses his foot to unlock the wheel on the wheelchair below him, the other hand reaching for a slowly tipping stack of papers to settle half where their plates were just before.

Shane swears there was still sauce splattered on the tabletop.

Gaten moves them into the living room, encountering the rug again and forcing the wheels over it. He rotates Shane, making it so he's positioned in front of a love seat, couch to his left, TV in eyesight. After clicking the locks on the wheels again, he picks the controller up from atop the tv and turns it on.

"I think Chicago is playing Detroit tonight, do you watch baseball?"

Shane doesn't realize he's supposed to answer till the man's head swings down to look at him, eyes intent.

He flounders for a second, not sure what answer was best. Lying a bit Shane croaks out, "occasionally."

It almost looks like Gaten is looking for the lie, checking each twitch of his face. Shane notices the man doesn't blink much.

After a too long moment, the man's face breaks out into a grin again, "Perfect! That'll give us something to watch and at least have on in the background. It's our first night together so I figured we would take it slow and stuff, get to know each other better."

He laughs at his own words, channel switching, "Well, I definitely know more about you, but we'll catch up! Plus, the only stuff of your personal life was through your window. Great views, if only that blonde haired douche bag wasn't there." His voice growls out at the end, eyebrows scrunching, eyes darkening at a place on the far wall.

Shane just watches the static switch to cable network to static to cable network.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Don't fucking panic Shane, it'll only end badly.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane's biting at his fingernail, right hand still free.

"How often."

Fuck why did he say that? He didn't want to know.

"Huh, baby? Oh, only a good few times, Stanley Cup night was honestly my favorite. I was hanging around a bit, and then you saw my car that one day and I figured, you know what, I knew it. You just knew I was out there, and looking for me too, didn't yah baby. I fucking hated leaving that night without you, I swear, but your parents were having dinner with you that night and I really didn't want to make things too complicated."

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"Oh, here it is, we missed the first inning, but it's whatever, I don't really care who wins."

He turns to look down at Shane again, breathing fast, eyes probably a bit bug-eyed, and sighs heavily. His hands go to his hips again, studying him and the chair with an eye for a problem to solve.

"If I untie you from that chair, will you behave so I can sit you on the couch? Wouldn't that be so much more comfortable?"

"Uh," Shane starts.

"I think so, that chair never had much padding. Plus, if I untie you from the chair, I can move you in and out of it easier," The man's decision made, he moves off towards the kitchen.

Shane removes his fingers from his mouth and goes for the ropes still tying his left arm to the chair. He tries to slip parts off, but when that doesn't work, he goes for the knots. They're strong, tied well, and Shane's habit of chewing off the ends off his nails to stubs leaves him with nothing to pry at the fibers.

At the footsteps returning, he stops suddenly, eyes darting back to the game on the tv, breathing low.

"Gorgeous, I know you want those ropes off, but you just got to give me a second. I figured I would just cut them off; it'll be much faster"

The metal of the kitchen scissors returns from earlier, sliding cold against the bare skin of his left arm under the first coil of rope.

Blood pressure rising, Shane instinctively reaches for the wrist holding the scissors. The man's left hand smacks Shane's away, hard, eye's flashing to his before refocusing on his task.

"Leave that hand on the armrest, I don't know how to set wrists any more than ankles."

That leaves him quiet, Shane has no intention to push the boundaries before he can find his way out of this house.

When his left hand is freed, it's wrapped in long fingers, his right wrist grabbed as well. Shane pulls a bit as his wrists are brought together in front of him, and Gaten, this college kid that kidnapped him, bends down to meet his eyes, and whispers fondly at him.

"This will all be so much easier if you behave, I don't like to hurt the one's I love, but to keep you safe, even from yourself, I will not hesitate to take drastic measures."

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The rope around his wrists isn't too tight, and his left leg is untied. The right was never retied to the chair, so Gaten moves next to him, rounding his shoulders.

"Okay, let's see if I can do this better than earlier. When you wash up later you're gonna be real mad about the bruises, but I really did try to be careful, I just wasn't expecting the dead weight of a hockey star to be so heavy," He huffs "Not that you're heavy, I mean, I just wasn't as prepared as I should've been on getting you to the car."

One arm goes under his knees, and Shane grits his teeth. When the other arm goes behind his shoulders, he closes his eyes and squeezes tight through the awkward bridal lift.

It hurts, obviously, and his hands clenches in the shirt covering the man's chest involuntarily.

When he's finally settled against the worn fabric of the couch, he lets out all the air in his lungs, happy to not be in that chair anymore, happy to not have the man's hands on him. Shane settles his tied hands in front of him.

The moment of peace doesn't last too long; Gaten leans back over to grab the remote from where he left it, moving the wheelchair farther away from the couch.

As it creaks something sits cold in the pit of Shane's stomach.

Gaten sits close, much too close, for comfort. Their shoulders and thighs are only inches apart, and Shane feels like if he breaths too hard the man will look at him. Both keep their eyes on the game, Chicago at bat. Shane can barely see the ball move towards the batter.

"I did promise you a reward, baby cakes."

A heavy hand with long fingers settles more than halfway up his thigh, finger dipping into the space between his legs.

It sends Shane jumping, both legs kicking out. He uses the leverage he can with his hands to push at the man's forearm, determined to at least move it away from his crotch.

Instead of moving, the fingers tighten. His kidnapper turns dark eyes to him, unblinking, sliding closer to his dick. Shane pushes harder, frightened eyes darting around the room before finally making eye contact.

The pause holds long and uncomfortable, staring contest tense.

Shane's voice is weak, "Uh, no thank you."

The man's eyes soften a bit.

"I just thought I would do something nice for you baby, get your mind off everything. You earned it, you did so fucking good earlier letting me set your ankle."

Shane shakes his head again, small and quick, eyes wide eyed, focused on the man's eyebrows.

The man's eyes stay unblinking, studying the different parts of his face, looking over his freckles. Then he drops his head back against the couch with a heavy sigh at the ceiling, hand sliding heavily off Shane's leg to drop between them.

"What's with it, baby? You let that stupid fucking blonde Russian fuck you for his own pleasure, and the minute someone comes along offering you pleasure you turn it down. I may not be a Slavic fuckboy, but it's not like I can't make you feel good! Plus, I bet you have the prettiest dick."

Shane doesn't look at him; Chicago has filled the bases.

"What's so fucking special about that fucker, anyway, just some other piece of meat with a dick on it, can't even speak English"

"It's a second language." Shane whispers, nervous.

"Oh, real fucking impressive. I don't even have a college degree and I'm supporting this house myself. Put myself through trade school. I cared for my Granny while she was fucking dying! Is that not impressive enough for people? I care about everyone, and they never care for me back, do they? I put so much energy into other people that all it does is piss me off! For once, I just wanted something that I always put energy into to give me something back, is that so weird?"

Shane swallows hard, *was he the something?*

Gaten has stood up now, yelling, arms waving and legs pacing, to himself or to Shane, it's unclear.

"I do fucking everything in my life to make it better for people, especially fucking you! I fucking hate this shit state but at least here I had a house for you to live in! I got a stupid fucking job with overtime so I can support the both of us! I sing your praises online, defend your name! I offer to touch your dick! And what do I get? Fucking ignored the entire time! Not a single DM! Not a single comment or like!"

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

His face is dangerous looking, the neighbors must be able to hear him by now, "I bet you don't even know my name!"

"It's Gaten! It's... it's Gaten."

The sight of Shane's fear or knowing his name melts the anger off the man's face, switching fast to an adoring look, softening.

His grin is wide, childlike again, “Aw, I’m so sorry baby, it’s sucha dick move of me to quiz you about me, like of course you know my name! It’s just, I guess I thought our first night together would go much smoother. And I get so pissed off remembering your previous lovers. I know things have been a bit complicated lately, it’s hard to settle and stuff, I just get so angy, but we’ll work it out.”

Shane shutters and closes his eyes as the crowd roars on the tv.

“Besides, it’s no matter, really, we’re together now!”

-точка зрения влюбленного-

It’s inching towards one as Ilya lays awake, his spine protesting the couch cushions beneath him. Instead of sleeping he’s spending the minutes staring out the large windows of David and Yuna’s cottage, a place they had built all those years ago to be a safe haven.

Why couldn’t Shane’s be theirs?

When the lights are out and everyone has fallen asleep hours ago, it’s easier to fall into his head. Let the thoughts of *what if* and *what am I doing* run through his head, let the moments of his childhood play out again before his eyes. The stillness feels pressing, heavy, much too quiet in a room with no one sleeping besides him.

He had been seeing a therapist recently, every two weeks, trying to pull himself from the dark place where he sometimes finds himself. It was always easier when Shane was there, even back in the days of secret meetings in hotel rooms, those few minutes of holding someone he loved close had started bandaging his heart.

Ilya doesn’t want to imagine going through life without Shane by his side, now that he had finally gotten him. He didn’t want to think about it too much, because it felt like thinking about it was already giving up on finding him. Shane had to know that he would never stop looking, until they at least could be buried in the ground together.

Again, if he thinks about it like that, *will it be his fault if it comes true?*

Ilya ignores his phone buzzing at first, not up to answer whoever is determined to bother him. All of his Ottawa teammates had texted, asking how he was doing and for updates, but they had trickled out as he was slower and slower to respond and as the media coverage picked up speed.

He had deleted the social media apps from his phone, tired of the notifications.

It buzzes again, then starts to ring softly, Ilya answers it without looking at the ID.

“Пусти меня, пожалуйста. Я не хотел звонить в звонок и будить всех.” *Let me in, please. I didn't want to ring the doorbell and wake everyone up.*

“А?” Ilya’s not sure what Svetlana is really asking.

“I just took two flights to get here, Ilyusha, Да пусти ты меня уже.” *Just let me in already.*

He stands up, and moves quietly for the front door, phone still pressed to his ear, “I am at Hollander’s parents house, not Ottawa home.”

“I would hope so, Под родительским крылом и буря не страшна, and all that. You think I do not track your phone, I also double checked with Rose, what do you take me for, an idiot?” *Under a parent’s wing, even a storm isn’t frightening*

When he opens the door, Svetlana is standing on Yuna and David Hollander’s front porch, purse in hand, suitcases by her side. She looks tired, still beautiful, but at the sight of him her eyes are watering.

Ilya doesn’t bother to say anything, just stuff his phone in the pocket of his track pants and wraps his arms around her shoulders. Her arms wrap tight under his arms, taking some of the weight of him as he sags.

He tries not to cry, hold himself together, but at the sound of her sniffling into his shoulder, he can’t help but fall apart in her arms.

For all she has seen him work for, now being pulled out of his hands.

-~-

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: As 24 hours passes in the investigation of the aggravated kidnapping and potential human trafficking of NHL Player Shane William Hollander, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has extended their search to potential recovery on the United States side of Lake Ontario. 10 pm.

Chapter End Notes

Warnings with spoilers: Shane's ankle is either fractured or broken, so Mr. Kidnapper sets it in a way you should never do at home by making a half assed cast/compression thing and it hurts, also he touches Shane's thigh (above the clothes) and offers him a blow job, nothing more happens

Chapter 6: Summer Warm-Ups

Chapter Summary

In. Out. In. Out.

Chapter Notes

HOLD ON TO YOUR MENTAL STATES PEOPLE

Please take care of yourselves, read the warnings, read the tags, take breaks, skip what you need, have some weed or a glass of wine...
Warnings with spoilers in the bottom

fluff soon I promise!

Does the girl sitting next to me on public transportation as I post this count as my beta?
No ai and no beta

Big shout of to this fics biggest fan over on twitter, and happy belated birthday @saltedsan. Thanks for sending a bunch of readers my way and thanks for all the love! <3
I've never had so much attention on a fic I wrote, I love reading all your comments and such. Some of yall are great guessers, plus for those who are like "yo is this criminal minds" let's just say I got a degree that people go "oh Spencer Reid!".

See the end of the chapter for more notes

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Dayton, Ohio resident reports seeing black SUV with tinted windows and suspicious broken back right taillight day after Shane Hollander's kidnapping and believed human trafficking. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has extended the search to the states of Ohio and Indiana. Any information please contact the tip line at **(xxx)-xxx-xxxx**

-~-

Waking up the second morning is not any better than the first one. Shane wakes up when the light from the window hits his eyes, making him immediately wide awake.

Everything still hurts. His wrists are still rope burned from the day before. His ankle was on fire. His shoulders and nose ached.

He can't help but be thankful for the little things as his kidnapper was obviously too agitated last night to do much more than lock him in what was supposed to be 'his bedroom' after all his yelling. He had only pushed the wheelchair that Shane had been sat in again through the door, then the man had turned and locked the door behind him. Shane had listened as the back door slid shut as the man left.

Last night, in the dark of what was totally the grandma's old bedroom, Shane had peeled himself from the chair and shuffled toward the door to try the lock, just to make sure. He had balanced using the chair until he could lean against the door to the room. The knob hadn't turned, never mind opened, and Shane had taken the time to slam his shoulder against the door a couple times, just to see if it was stuck or if he could get it to move.

Shane had stayed quiet for a moment, listening carefully to the sounds of the house. No footsteps came back, so Gaten must have left the house.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane had braced himself, shoulder slamming next to the lock.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight.

When it didn't budge, Shane had used the wheelchair as a crutch, hopping on one foot, to get to the one window in the room. He had traced his fingers around all its edges, but the window didn't open and had been upkept very well, no cracks along its seams and flush to the wall.

He had ended up dropping himself into the slightly musty bed, the nerves, the stress, the fear, the depression, at the entire situation pulling him down into the mattress. Shane had fallen asleep fast, his brain still recovering from a concussion and processing all the information in his head.

Now he just laid here, in a bed he hopes an old woman hadn't died in, not moving as the sun beam glared into his eyes. The Advil the man had given him had worn off, leaving his entire body heavy, his nose twitching.

Shane doesn't know how he's going to get himself out of here if he can't move without screaming in pain.

But he has too, Illinois is far from Ottawa and for all he knows the police still think he's in Canada and aren't even looking for him anywhere near. So, he must come up with something, some way to at least get someone's attention or even just make it to the street outside.

The back door was sliding, blocked by a wooden beam for extra security. There would be no way for him to move it without causing some sort of noise. Shane is also not confident he would be able to scale the man's back fence with one foot.

His window was sealed shut, so it was obviously not an option.

The front door was his best bet, if there were not too many locks on it or extra secured to keep a hostage in.

It would be hard to go for the front door without being grabbed again and tied up, so Shane would either have to hurt his kidnapper somehow or cause a big enough distraction to get himself out the front door with a headstart. He didn't have many options to do either, however, as everything that could possibly be used to hurt a man had been locked up in the basement. There were no kitchen knives out, heavy pans stored downstairs, even the kitchen scissors Shane had grabbed, and the fork during dinner he had tried to hold on to were moved down below a locked door. It's not like he had many chances to break anything, perhaps the mirror, but Shane figured he would hurt himself more with that than anyone else.

Plus wasn't that bad luck. He didn't really need that.

It's a backup plan.

The heavy knock on the door startles him, sending him out of the distracted headspace he had gotten into; a way to minimize the pain he felt.

Gaten pulls the door open without waiting for a response, eyes falling to Shane still laid out in the bed, blankets pulled up to his chin. The man rests his head against the doorframe, a bad mimicry of some sort of fond admiration of seeing one's new puppy sleeping in their cage.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane scowled, heaving out a heavy breath as his ankle throbs. Anger is the easiest emotion to feel.

He's quiet as they move out of the bedroom and into the living room, chair squeaking as normal, light dancing through the hall. Gaten acts like this is a typical day, humming under his breath as he pushes the chair down the hallway.

When a hand comes up and runs through his hair, unwashed and oily, Shane moves away from it, squeezing his eyes shut as the fingers find him again.

It's not often Shane forgoes his typical routine, a shower before bed and a face wash in the morning, but now he has none of it and he feels dirty, on his skin and in his bones.

Gaten doesn't stop humming.

Breakfast is simple; fried eggs and frozen hashbrowns all cooked in the same pan.

They settle together on the old worn couch, side by side, thigh to thigh, and turn on the news. The local station drones on, and old man before a green screen predicting cooler temperatures as the end of June came through.

Shane watched the man on TV speak, the movement of his arms, the way his suit was tailored. The weather forecaster was enthusiastic, excited about the next coming days.

Shane wasn't as excited.

"You warm enough?"

Shane nodded softly, fingers picking at the individual yarn threads visible throughout the blanket he had picked up off the back of the couch and placed half over himself. The weight was nice, and while the temperature didn't call for it, the added coverage and warmth was nice when it felt like he was constantly in danger and freezing. The lines of the knitted afghan were easy to follow with his finger.

Over and under. Over and under

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"My Granny made that for me when I was 8, I think I slept with it every winter night till I hit 15."

Shane holds his breath and keeps following the threads.

"My Granny was the fucking best; she took me and my older brother in when my mom stopped kind of caring. She did a lot of drugs, usually heroin or cocaine, and honestly, I don't even know if she's still out the somewhere…" Gaten trails off with a thoughtful expression.

Shane turns to look at him, brain trying to listen as his body tries to process greasy food.

He shrugs, "Honestly, I don't blame her for the cocaine usage, it's a hell of a drug, but then again, she could've stayed around, I can do it and be a normal person, yah know? My brother used to get real fucked up on it, though, my grandma said he left Illinois to follow the buzz," The man stops to think for a while, then chuckles "honestly knowing my old woman he probably OD'd in the shed out back and she buried him in the front garden to keep collecting his government assistance checks."

Shane's going to fucking die here isn't he.

"I stayed home to take care of her, dropped out of hockey, went to trade school and all that stupid shit, then she goes and dies on me only a couple of years later," Gaten scoffs to himself, "I gave up so much shit for others. I could've gone pro. Beer league isn't the same, they just don't know hockey like you and me."

He turns to study Shane again with focused eyes, looking for him to twitch.

Shane hardly moves, the man's life story making him afraid to interrupt.

"I went to that charity signing you did with Montreal back in 2012. Do you remember me? I was like a foot shorter back then, bad teeth and everything."

Shane nods quietly.

“God I was the biggest fucking fanboy, honestly, I still am, I run a fan account for you on twitter that’s pretty popular. You probably don’t go online much so that’s why you don’t know about it. It’s the best way to talk to people who actually care about hockey and its players. Then again, half the people on there love to talk shit. Bunch of assholes.”

Gaten’s sigh is heavy.

“See baby, that’s why I needed you here with me, we’re perfect for each other and I can treat you better than any of those assholes out there in the world. Those Ottawa fans don’t give a shit about you like I do, Montreal threw you away the first moment they could, they all love to watch you hurt out there. And don’t even get me started with that stupid fucking Russian.”

The smile on Shane’s face is so forced its painful. It hurts his nose and his muscles and internally he’s panicking.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The man claps his hands, like a thought just came to him, “Now let’s check your ankle! How’s it feeling? I know it’s not going to get better for a while, but like, any major aches or pains?”

Gaten lets the words hang in the air, the silence growing uncomfortable. Waiting for an answer.

Shane hesitates at last, “Uh, ya it kind of hurts, I guess.”

Gaten stands, patting his hands on his own knees as he goes, then stands taller and imposing over where Shane sits on the couch still. The man’s hands rest on his hips, his usual pose for studying him.

“Well, I’ll give you some pain meds and then I think I want to do something fun.”

As the man strides off, heading for the basement, Shane sits there shivering. He looks around, and there is not much in the way of objects to grab as a weapon. The front door was to his right, knob locked and two sliding ones above it.

It looked standard.

“Alright here you go baby, these should make you feel a bit better, then I thought we could play a game or something.”

Gaten walks back into the room, swag in his step, with only a little white pill and a water bottle in hand. When he holds both out, Shane doesn’t move, just stares at where the pill sits in the man’s palm.

When he raises his eyes to the man’s face, his eyes are the usual dark intensity that the man adapted when he particularly wanted something from him, and Shane was messing up his part. With shaky fingers, Shane holds out his hand for it.

The pill falls into his hand, and Gaten watches him closely as he pops it into his mouth, only then unscrewing the water bottle and handing it to him.

He tries to keep the pill under his tongue, tries not to swallow it, but it's chalky, and dissolves in the small amount of saliva still in his mouth.

Shane takes it, taking a quick sip, before trying to hand it back.

Gaten raises an eyebrow, "Don't be difficult baby, I want us to have fun together. It'll help that ankle of yours not to feel so bad, plus I'll even give you the chance to have the ropes off your hands! If you're good for me, you get more privileges. I don't want to have to lock you in your room for a day or two."

The man tilts the bottom of the bottle, gesturing for him to finish the entire thing, and it sends the pill down his throat eventually.

Gaten smiles when he hands back the empty plastic water bottle.

"Good boy, I didn't want to have to share my cocaine stash with you, I'm running out a bit."

Shane gags a bit, throat retching.

The man ignores him and picks the tv remote off the side table, switching through a couple of the channels before finally settling on an old episode of Jeopardy. Shane can hear the cheering of the crowd like they're in the room next to him.

He's getting cold so he pulls the blanket more on top of him.

The light from outside is really bright in his eyes.

Gaten turns back to him after answering one of the questions wrong, eyes scanning over his face, then standing back up in front of him.

Raising a finger in the air to make a point, his grin is wide, "A reminder of our rules!" Gaten counts on his fingers as he goes, "No going near the front door or backdoor, and especially no trying to get into the basement."

The man points at him, "I will not be happy if you even try to open that door… okay? I lock it for both our safeties."

Shane nodded silently at him, shivering at the look in his dark eyes, the man's pupils large. When he bobs his head the edges of his brain blur, concussion still in place behind his eyes. His head throbs a bit, but it honestly was starting to feel a bit better, he could admit.

"And remember, no hitting, we're not trying to make things difficult, are we?"

Shane can feel his shoulders loosening, fingers relaxed. His ankle didn't hurt as much anymore.

Gaten crouches down in front of him, knees cracking loudly, childlike grin wide. Nausea rolls through Shane's stomach at the man's giddiness.

"How you feeling baby? They kicking in yet?"

Shane tries to meet his eyes, his own wide, but he thinks he misses, "What… what did you give me?"

"Oh, just one of my grandma's old medications. We had to hide them cause my brother kept stealing them, but then she forgot where she hid them. Never know when things are going to be handy again, ya know?" He pats Shane's thigh, friendly, "Now let's see if we can get you up."

"Wha… what?" The words tumbled out from his mouth, lips starting to feel a bit numb.

Gaten just tips his head to the side and smiles at him.

"Remember? Game time! I've seen you play this one before!"

The man's pries his relaxed fingers from the fibers of the afghan, Shane whining under his breath as it's tossed away from him. He's shivering, cold and shaky, the room growing cold and claustrophobic.

"C'mon, it'll be fun, maybe it'll be more fun with me that idiot communist. I've been thinking about this since the night you won the Stanley Cup last week! Stand up baby!"

Gaten's hands grab his wrist tightly and he uses the grip to yank Shane up from where he's sitting on the couch.

Shane moves with a yelp, shoulders having been pulled roughly, and now balancing on one foot as he hangs his right ankle uselessly.

The man points down at it, no worry in his voice as he says, "You're going to want to try to put some weight on that spatula under your foot, you're going to need both feet for this."

Against his better judgement, and with the fuzziness in his head, Shane looks his in the eyes and give him a very confused, "What?"

"Well, were going to play a game, you're going to run around the house for me and I'll chase you down, then we don't need to get out of bed for the rest of the day! I'll give you a 5 second head start baby."

Shane can feel his jaw drop. Gaten's face is serious.

In fact, he almost looks annoyed with him.

"I want you to run baby, then I can catch you and I'll make it good for both of us."

Shane's eyes are wide, searching the man's face for what the man fucking wants from him, hazy through the drugs.

"One"

That sends it clear through his mind, and he doesn't wait to watch the man say the next number, turning and using the living room chair as a crutch to propel himself halfway across the room.

"Two"

Shane grabs the doorway into the hallway to steady himself, almost slipping as carpet gives way to wooden floorboards. He hops on his left foot.

"Three"

In the hallway he doesn't bother to watch out for the photos lining the walls. He braces himself back and forth hopping on his good leg, tapping the spatula only when he needs to. It still hurts through the drugs.

"Four"

He swings open the first door in the hall, but it's obviously the man's bedroom, bedsheets unmade and half on the floor. Shane yanks open the door next to it, the lights already on in the bathroom. He doesn't hesitate to throw himself to the tile floor.

"Five, baby, here I come!"

Shane closes the door with a slam, first turning the doorknob lock, then the old little sliding one that's seen better days. Then he presses his back to the door and gasps for air.

In. Out. In. Out.

Is he going to die in this fucking bathroom?

In. Out. In. Out.

Had the man really watched him and Ilya have sex that whole night?

In. Out. In. Out.

What the actual fuck was wrong with this dude?

In. Out. In. Out.

The footsteps are heavy to the door. The knocking was even louder. It picks up pace as the repeated shouts of his name go unanswered.

In. Out. In. Out.

“You weren’t supposed to lock the fucking door, what’s the fucking point of that you stupid slut!”

Shane presses his back hard against the wooden door, shoulders pressed tight as he tries to pull himself away from a panic attack. He can’t have one here, he needed to keep his head. His feet slipped against the tile floor sprawled out in front of him, he couldn’t curl around himself, his knees weak, legs jelly, ankle throbbing.

“You give it up willingly for that jackass but play the nun act when it comes to some who actually fucking loves your dumbass!”

The pounding on the other side of the door keeps going, louder, closed-fisted, and getting faster and more desperate the longer Shane keeps the door shut and locked.

“Baby fucking listen to me, don’t fucking do this to me right now!”

Shane can’t feel his face. The blurriness in his eyes tells him he’s crying.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

Oh god are his lungs collapsing.

The banging continues, the door shaking behind his back.

“I’m sorry baby, it really is my fault. I should’ve known you were a bit skittish still; I just moved too fast and wanted to play with you. I really am sorry, and It’s also my fault that you’re locked in that bathroom baby. All scared and terrified, not letting me comfort you up close. I should’ve known better than to leave the locks inside the door baby, the temptation, I’ll fix it in the morning I promise.”

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

“Just unlock the door, baby.”

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

Oh my fucking god I’m never getting out of here.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

Shane's still trying to pull air into his lungs when he realizes it's gone quiet. The only sounds were him gasping, voice croaking as he sobbed. He lets his head fall back against the door, the pressure of pushing against it helping the throbbing of his head go away a bit.

Breathe in for 3, out for 3.

Breathe in for 3, out for 3.

He not too sure he's much fonder of the silence of the house, he can't hear Gaten's footsteps, doesn't know where the man was. It's almost scarier not knowing what the man was up too.

With shaking sweaty hands, Shane slides away from the door to the bathroom, dragging his legs behind him across the tile, heavy with that chemical feeling.

He stops to pull open the lower cabinets of the sink but finds nothing in there but extra toilet paper. No chemicals, no heavy products, not even a plunger to hit someone with.

Breathe in for 3, out for 3.

Don't fucking panic.

He settles down in front of the combination shower and bathtub, pushing the bathmat to the side against the wall. Shane lays his right temple against the tile and tries not to think about the grime that is probably still there, now on his skin.

He tries not to think about the sound of the screwdriver taking off the door handle.

-Света-

They all waited for the phone to ring in Hollander's parents' house, tension felt in every corner.

It had almost been 48 hours since her best friend's fiancé was kidnapped from their shared home, blood stains and no clues left.

As soon as the news hit her phone, she had booked plane tickets, the fastest ones she could find. Svetlana had missed Rose's first couple of calls during the first flight, but she called back as she sat on her transfer and waited to take off.

Rose had sent her Shane's parents' house address, because she knew Ilya would not have been able to sleep next to a crime scene.

Seeing where Shane Hollander, NHL Star, Shy Guy, and her best friend's fiancé, grew up is a marvel. Everything is clean and homey, decorated colorfully. His mother had fed them

all scrambled eggs and sausages for breakfast, then chicken stir fry for lunch. His father sat in the old recliner by the windows and read the newspaper and filled out the crossword puzzle.

She can tell why Ilya loves to spend time here, even in the depth of grief and sorrow for a missing son, the house felt like a home, one someone would raise a good man in.

It's why it makes it hurt even worse, watching Ilya fall into despair and agony about the unknowns, wrapped in a family-loved blanket on a well-used couch among the throw pillows.

She had finally convinced him to do something with his brain besides pace, wait for the police to call with news, and scroll through news apps on his phone. She knows he redownloaded them, but he won't admit it to her.

Now he's playing his hockey video game. Ilya doesn't even smile when his character, Ottawa 24, scores.

Now she was laying on the Hollander's couch with him, her toes tucked under his leg as he played. Hollander's parents were preparing dinner in the kitchen, and she was making sure not to eavesdrop. She had ended up on Twitter after Instagram, having scrolled through Shane and Ilya's last couple posts' comment sections.

Twitter was a little more hostile when talking about hockey; old men writing slurs and angry fans with long threads. Svetlana didn't go on it much, her account practically blank, but she was thankfully still logged in.

She scrolls through the Ottawa police account and then America's FBI account, looking through reactions of fans to haters to other celebrities. It's a lot of shouting and disbelief, and she scrolls past the gossip sites and their articles.

When she looks up the term 'Shane Hollander' there are thousands of posts. She scrolls through them quickly, most incomprehensible yelling or stupid theories.

She adds on to her search term. 'Shane Hollander fan account' brings up less results, but a lot of it is pictures upon pictures of him, as if he was already dead.

The TV screen cheers loudly as Ilya's team wins the game. She watches him quietly start another one, choosing the same team and player again.

Typing in 'Ilya Rozanov hate account' gives her even less tweets, and she scrolls through slowly, scanning each one. One of the top posts is from someone who is obviously a Hollander fan, thousands of likes on it, in reply to a tweet made just about when Ilya had been out at his BuzzFeed video thing, a couple hours before this all went to shit.

-

@HockeyHollander1: I thought this was a Shane Hollander fan account not an Ilya Rozanov hate account

-

Svetlana presses on the reply and it opens, showing many more replies to the same tweet. It doesn't have many likes compared to comments, obviously not being a very popular opinion.

-

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Ottawa Team Captain Ilya Rozanov steps away from family to attend media session with Alternate Captain Zane Boodram and the Ottawa Centaur's media team. Team captains talk vigorous training sessions and the mistreatment of teammates in Buzzfeed video.

-

Svetlana's taken aback by the tone of the tweet. Whoever posted it obviously did not like Ilya very much.

It's not like the fans hadn't known they were filming the video that day, some Buzzfeed employee having posted a selfie with the guys as soon as they had showed up, but still, it's not like this person would have known what they had talked about? Were they an employee too who got to sit in on the interview, or did they just take a lucky shot to insult them?

The account itself doesn't regularly post about Ilya it seems, much more focused on what Shane Hollander was up to, retweeting gossip magazines and ESPN articles alike.

One of the top posts is from just about a week ago, Shane Hollander in his Ottawa jersey holding the Stanley Cup above his head, large smile on his face as he gazes out on the fans.

-

@HollanderHockey_Updates: All-Star MLH Shane Hollander, newly traded to center for the Ottawa Centaurs, helps lead his team to victory in the fifth game of the Stanley Cup Finals. Emotions were high as Hollander held the cup aloft during only his first season with a new team after facing scrutiny from his former, the Montreal Voyageurs, for his relationship with fellow MLH player Ilya Rozanov

-

In the background of the photo is half of Yuna's body, out of focus, cropped out in the editing of the photo. Svetlana had seen the originals posted by the NHL, and Yuna had been standing with her husband, Ilya between the two of them as they had all gazed at Hollander.

Why would a Shane Hollander fan crop out the man's fiancé, especially the first cup with them out of the closet?

The comments are more mundane on the post, most celebrating the win, others raving about the couple and their win together. A couple comments down, with quite a few likes

points out that the tweet only mentions Hollander, despite not being a captain, but giving him full credit for the win.

Svetlana rereads the tweet, but she doesn't see anything too wrong about it, it's just a fan account focusing on their Star.

She doesn't really know why she keeps scrolling, moving through some more retweets before finding another post, this one later that same night.

-

@**HollanderHockey_Updates:** The Ottawa Centaurs were seen partying it up in downtown Ottawa, attending various music bars and clubs to celebrate their win against the Detroit Angels tonight. The real question is what is the effect of the Centaurs of their newcomers? Rookie Kyle Young was seen propped up by long-term Centaurs members and Shane Hollander was last seen with a beer in his head, a big difference than his previous years of sobriety at public events

-

Svetlana reads it twice before moving into the comments, and many of them are not exactly positive. While some are cooing over the attached picture of Shane and Ilya on the dance floor, others are ridiculing the poster for how they talked about the team.

She had to agree, who insults your favorite players team during a Stanley Cup celebration? Shane was not even holding a drink in his hand in the photo.

Looking closer, it's obvious the photo wasn't professionally taken, camera lens unclean, the lights streaky. It's taken from far away, across the bar perhaps, and the other Centaurs can be seen behind them crowded in booths.

Svetlana hadn't remembered many paparazzi photos coming from the celebrations, she knows the bar they go to is private and good with security.

Something settles cold in her stomach, and she tucks her feet further under Ilya's thigh.

She screenshots the tweet, then sends it to Rose.

Svetlana keeps scrolling, multiple celebratory articles are reposted, congratulating Shane Hollander on his fourth Stanley Cup.

Then another post, odd in tone.

-

@**HollanderHockey_Updates:** Shane Hollander seen out for dinner with ex-girlfriend Rose Landry, without fiancé, after Ottawa Stanley Cup Win

-

She rolls her eyes at first, the poster obviously trying to imply some sort of scandal. Just like every other gossip site. She can't help but think it's weird that a fan account would post in such a negative light about the focus's relationship.

The rest stops her in her tracks. Staring at the photo attached to the tweet, Svetlana feels her hands start to shake around the grip on her phone.

A very blurry photo of Shane out with Rose, the same night Rose had told her that Shane had been acting all jumpy despite the recent win. Paparazzi had tried to get in the front door.

But this was the back of her head, red hair curled in the back perfectly, and fully of Shane's face, the man's eyes focused on the woman in front of him. The lights of the restaurant were streaking like the phone was moving fast as it was snapped. Unprofessional in quality.

How close was this picture taken?

Ilya looks over at her as she fully sits up on the couch, feet moving to the floor, her head bent over her phone, the situation now too weird to stay laid out on the couch.

Her thumb shakes as she scrolls hastily to the top of the page to look at the most recent posts.

-

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Hockey Star and Four-time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander missing from home. Police called. No valuables taken and no sign of a struggle.

-

Her heart drops. 9:41 pm.

Shane had only been reported missing at what time? She screenshots the tweet then goes back to Ottawa's official account. 9:25 pm the missing person's report was filed by the police.

Ilya had gotten home to police in front of his house only 5 minutes before that.

Articles about Shane's disappearance had hit the news only about 10 minutes after the report, everyone from TMZ to the Prime Minister responding in minutes.

The police's press conference wasn't held till the next morning, 6 am. No details had been released beforehand, TMZ pushed pack and paparazzi stopped before the street even started.

No valuables taken.

That was true, but it wasn't like the public had known that, the report still having had potential burglary on it.

No sign of a struggle.

Her stomach flips, nauseous at the scent of the cooking food in the next room.

The blood on the wooden floor of the cottage. A smashed phone. Headphones thrown aside. Glass shards on the carpet.

Who the fuck would say there were no signs of a struggle, hours before details are given out? No struggle, when there is blood on the floor?

Without thinking her hand reaches out for the controller still held in Ilya's hands, accidentally sending it skittering across the floor.

"Что за хуйня?" *What the hell?*

"Ilyusha get the fucking car, I'll explain on the way to the police station. Mr. and Mrs. Hollander, turn off the oven, we've got to go!"

-~-

The third day is no better.

His head was pounding from lack of sleep, his skin shaky with adrenaline, his wrists burning, nose aching. Mostly his ankle was killing him, burning bright and hot beneath the dish towels. The heavy arm laid over his waist wasn't tight, just lazily thrown over him, as to make sure he's still where Gaten last left him.

The door to the bathroom wasn't allowed to be closed anymore, no matter what Gaten had said last night. Shane thought the rule was stupid, it's not like the bathroom even had a door anymore.

No, that had been taken off the hinges and set aside as the man who kidnapped him stormed the bathroom, only to see Shane curled up on his side, head pressed to the floor, shivering through the side effects of the opioids the man had given him only an hour or two earlier.

He wasn't nice about dragging Shane out, and the drugs and stress were leaving him loopy and loose, so Gaten had taken him under the arms and pulled him backwards to the room a door down.

Not his room.

Shane had kicked, albeit weakly, as he was dragged over the threshold of the man's own bedroom, carpet blue and dusty. His brain was pounding behind his eyes.

He had fought the hands pulling at his clothes, only letting the man take his shirt before conceding to Shane's swats. He had been given a new one and pulled it on slowly. The movements felt monumental as his muscles jellied below his skin.

Now he woke up for the third morning, held hostage in a cigarette scorched house in Illinois, with a delusional man who thought they were in love with each other.

Maybe the lack of sleep was a good thing. That and the adrenaline, the stress, the anger, the fear, the need to see his parents and fiancé and tell them he's going to be okay. *Cause he has to be*. He had thought about it all night, running through the possibilities in his head, his own stamina with his injuries. Something of a plan had formulated, it was dodgy, and he was going to probably ruin his ankle even more in the process.

Which means Shane really only had one shot at this if he ever wanted to play hockey again.

He keeps silent as the man unlocks the handcuff keeping his wrist close to the bedpost then helps him into the wheelchair he retrieved from the living room.

Shane just follows the movements.

The first stop was the bathroom, the door still leaned up against the wall next to the open doorway. Hard wheels slid gratingly across tile. The arms barely fit through the doorway. Gaten stopped them in front of the tub, leaning forward to turn the faucet on and cranked the water to hot.

Dark eyes under bushy eyebrows turn to meet his, careful and calculating, scanning over Shane's face. Shane gulps at the sight of it and clutches the arms of the chair.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

I can't fucking do this.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Eyes still on him, Gaten reaches out to feel the water temperature. Satisfied, the man turns to plug up the tub, letting the water start to collect, and turns to walk out of the bathroom without another word.

Shane doesn't turn to watch him leave; he just watches the water start to rise.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

When the man returns it's halfway full, water carefully steaming. He puts clothes on the sink counter, carefully balancing them, and has a towel thrown over his shoulder.

Shane gulps, but this time, when the man hands him the small white pill, what Shane knows is a prescription opioid not intended for nonpatients, he takes it without hesitating.

Gaten's eyes light up, grin widening, watches him swallow.

"You're doing so good baby, I knew you would come around. I'm just trying to keep you happy and comfortable. No more fighting, no more stupid cameras, just us and watching sports and making love for the rest of eternity."

He tries to keep his face neutral, focuses on the feeling of the drug going through his body. The feeling would last a good couple of hours, but he really only needed to the afternoon, at least he hoped.

"Now how about a bath? You're still in the same clothes as two days ago, which I bet you feel pretty gross about, and you can wear mine! I grabbed all my oversized stuff, so you'll be extra comfortable. Let's get you out of that gross stuff."

Shane's smacking his lips against the tinge of numbness when fingers go to the hem of his t-shirt. He bats at hands, leaning further away, but the man's hand grabs his shoulder and presses him back in the chair. He keeps shoving at his kidnapper as the fabric is brought up under his arms, but Gaten uses it to his advantage and yanks the shirt over his outstretch arms. It gets flung somewhere behind him.

The man's hands are in tight balls on his hips, "Are you going to make your sweatpants as fucking difficult? Sweetheart you can barely fucking move, let alone get yourself undressed. I told you I would take care of you, but you're making it real fucking hard to not just lock you in the shed outside for a while till you figure your shit out. I'll even leave your boxers on while I wash you, if you're so worried about your goddam modesty. You'll overcome that shyness one of these days."

Shane holds back his nausea. The drugs and this man's delusional words were getting to him.

The man's hands go to the tie of his track pants, and Shane's hands go to push at the man's shoulders again, sending him off balance. Dark eyes glare at him, then refocus on his waistband as Shane keeps pushing with arms that were quickly growing relaxed and uncompliant.

It's when the man's left hand goes down to apply pressure to his right ankle that Gaten gets the advantage over him and shoves the left side of his pants down. Shane is too busy grabbing at the hand on his ankle and groaning loudly that by the time it lets go his pants are already around his knees.

Panting from pain, Shane just lets the man take them off the rest of the way. At least he had left his underwear on.

"You can be real fucking difficult, baby, can't you?"

Shane keeps his eyes closed. If he opens them, he might puke.

They work together to get him into the bath, Shane not keen to brain himself further, pushing himself up out of the chair and the man helping him swing around to sit in the warm water.

It's nice for all about 2 seconds as Shane lets the heat sink into his skin and his eyes shut.

Gaten's eyes are heavy on him. Admiring. Fond. And more things Shane doesn't want to think about.

Shane takes one of the washcloths sat on the side and wets it, then suds it up quickly with a bar of soap just off to the side. He fights the drooping of his eyes and the weakness in his body as the drugs kick in more, scrubbing his chest weakly.

When Shane's head starts lolling to the side a bit, and he puts more focus on avoiding slipping and keeping his head above water than washing. Gaten takes the washcloth from his limp hand and soaks it in the water nearby his ankles, eyes dark and intense on where Shane's eyelids are fluttering.

The man isn't gentle as he scrubs it over Shane's forehead, wiping down the sides of his nose and his cheek. Shane doesn't watch his face, knowing that the smile there was probably some mix between fond and dangerous, definitely delusional.

The cloth washes over the tip of his nose, then one side of his mouth. Gaten rewets the washcloth then cleans his neck, then back over his lips.

Shane isn't expecting it when the hand presses over his mouth, fingers pinching his nose.

It sends his eyes flying open, weak right arms attempting to grab at the arm braced against the rim to hold the cloth over his mouth. When he tries to suck in air, there's nothing but water.

When Shane's own hand gets a hold of the man's arm, another hand comes down hard on his shoulder, sending him slipping further, left foot bracing against the opposite side of the tub to keep himself upright. His fingers are slipping and loose.

He can't fucking breath.

"What's so fucking good about everyone else, huh? You let everyone touch you, let that stupid fucking braindead moron come inside you then leave you there? Letting him fucking have you, put a ring on it so he knows he's got a fuck at home?" The next shove is harsher, "We could've had such a fun time together last night, but you had to go and ruin it, didn't you. I'd do fucking anything for you, don't you fucking understand baby?"

When Shane finally gets nails on Gaten's face he lets go, dark eyes furious, red scratch on his cheek from the one finger Shane hadn't chewed the nail off yet. The wet washcloth is thrown to the tiles with a wet slap, and the room goes silent except for the still agitated water splashing about and Shane's heavy breathing.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out.

The man continues to watch him catch his breath a moment longer before getting up from his knees and storming out of the bathroom. It's all too quiet, wordless. There's no door to slam behind him.

-~-

Shane takes the opportunity of being left alone in the tub to wash the rest of himself, scrubbing under his arms, across his neck, and down his legs. He also uses the time to starve off the panic attack lingering under his skin.

He's not going to sleep well tonight.

When he's as clean as he's going to get, Shane pulls the drain of the tub and watches the dirty water spin in circles. Shane tries not to go headfirst into it as it swirls, head still foggy from panic, gasping breathes, and what must be a strong fucking opioid.

The doom of it settles under his skin, he's driving himself insane.

Shane dries himself off quickly, still sitting in the tub, before sliding his wet underwear off and replacing them with Gaten's sweatpants.

He kneels up, not bothering with trying to keep his pants dry, and clumsy hoists himself out of the bath. It takes a bit of focus to get the foot over the edge without tripping, but he gets it. With another swing he gets himself in the wheelchair and pulls his wet and damaged ankle out of the tub.

Shane takes the moments to rest, lean back in the chair and breathe.

Because what the fuck was he going to do. Yesterday the adrenaline had made it so much easier to move.

When his kidnapper comes back Shane doesn't open his eyes, he just breathes through the panic, pain, and dizziness. It's either things will continue as normal, or the man will lash out again.

"How was your bath, baby? I bet fresh clothing feels good!"

He hates how his shoulders relax at the tone in relief.

Shane is brought back into the living room, Gaten's hands unhelpfully trying to hold his shoulders as he transfers himself, swinging his ankle a bit. It was really starting not to hurt. Wordlessly he grabs the knitted blanket again, pulling it across his own lap to follow the threads. The man leaves the room, without fanfare, and Shane's eyes trace up to watch the man leave then over to the front door.

Two upper locks, sliding.

On lower lock, twisting.

As far as he knows and heard, there was no screen door on the other side.

Breakfast is served on the couch today, just a bowl of frosted flakes in milk. Shane drips milk on his shirt as he tries to get the spoon to his mouth, and his kidnapper giggles at him. He ignores it and keeps eating. The TV is playing Wheel of Fortune, and Shane answers in his head and the man next to his calls out weird letters.

When they're finished with the food, the man brings the bowls back to the kitchen, again piling them on top of the previous day's dishes. He didn't seem to bat an eye at his own actions, despite the sink being full and the pile spreading to the countertop nearby.

Shane keeps his eyes on the television as Gaten sits down next to him, picking up the edge of the blanket and tossing it over his own lap.

Shane's voice is quiet, hesitant, "Would it be helpful if I maybe did the dishes later?".

His kidnapper's eyes are immediately on him, dark and direct, scanning over the side of his face. Shane very slowly turns his head from the TV to meet his eyes.

He could do this.

"I just think I could maybe help out around the house, while my ankle is feeling a bit better".

"You tryna be my little househusband?" The man's laugh is grating, "Baby, how the hell are you going to stand there while you wash? I know I got you on the good shit, but yesterday you ended up crying from all the pain of it all."

Shane remembers crying for a very different reason.

"Well, I can just keep something like a… uh like a chair or something to kneel on so I don't have to put pressure on it." Shane hopes his smile is convincing.

Maybe it being combined with words makes it so, because Gaten's face lights up and his head tips towards him on the couch cushions. One heavy hand is draped over the back of the couch, fingers lightly touching the back of his neck.

"You're the fucking sweetest baby. Maybe after we eat lunch and watch the game."

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya is still sitting in the police waiting room, head in his hands, his sweatshirt hood pulled over his face the next morning as the sun rose. He had watched Svetlana pace through the beginning hours of the night, screenshots on her phone, practically begging for an officer to listen to her.

Ilya himself had tried to get their attention first, but when he started losing his grasp on the English language the officers had started to get jumpy, so Sveta had taken over.

The old fucks were just as unlikely to listen to her. When not even Yuna or David could get them to listen to their ideas, they had sent the Hollanders home to sleep for the night while the two of them would bully and wait out the cops.

They had so little to go on that it pissed Ilya off that they weren't taking any sort of lead they could get, no matter how much it may seem like jumping to conclusions.

Svetlana's finger is in an older man's face, the guy's wrinkles barely moving as she yells and lectures, her phone clasped tight in her hand. The man doesn't uncross his arms.

Ilya's leg shakes up and down, his hands are sweating like crazy. He's had a headache for almost the last three days, sleep far away and too much espresso in his stomach.

The younger man behind the officer is starting to shuffle where he stands, and as Sveta raises her volume higher he visibly goes to scratch the back of his neck, nervous. He stays where he was when his partnering officer walks away, eyes rolling and hands up in the air, back turned to them.

When the older man is down the hallway and out of sight, the young man rings his hands as he steps forward.

He scratches the back of his neck again, eyes almost popping out of his skull as Svetlana rounds on him, he shoulders back and chin up.

"Are you going to at least look at what I found? Are we all going to just assume a woman can't be of any help and social media is too much for law enforcement?"

The young man clears his throat, fingers shaking, "Uh, I can, I can talk to you guys in room 3, we can look at those pictures and take a look at the account, if you're so certain."

"Yes, I'm fucking certain!"

The walk to room 3 is deadly quiet. Ilya follows along a couple paces behind.

-~-

When Gaten sets him up in the kitchen at the sink later that day, the man does it with a prance in his step. He pulls a dining chair over to where Shane is still sitting in the wheelchair, setting it up beside the sink and gesturing to it with an over-the-top wave of the hand.

Shane gives him a small nod and quiet 'thank you' as he's helped to stand and kneel his bad leg on the chair.

When he's settled, Gaten turns around and heads to the basement door, unlocking it with a key from his pocket, then heading downstairs.

Shane hops back half a step, opening the cabinet beneath the sink. No cleaning supplies. No extra sponges or a hand duster. No fire extinguishers.

When he can hear the steps coming back up the stairs he straightens up quickly, quietly closes the door, then reaches over the pile of dishes to turn the tap on and grab the half-deteriorated sponge next to the faucet.

Gaten locks the basement door again behind him, then moves back to where Shane is testing the water temperature to see if it was actually going to heat up.

Leaning with one hand on the counter, the man cocks his head at him, eyes trailing down the side of his face to his bare forearms. Then he lifts his hand and lets something dangle from his fingers, the chime of it tells Shane what it was without glancing over.

“It just so I can make sure you don’t try anything stupid, baby. I know you’re not, but I’m going to be in my bedroom fixing the window, and we rather be safer than sorry, don’t we?”

Gatens movements are slow, like approaching an injured animal. Shane feels a bit like one, leg caught in a trap.

He’s about to gnaw it off essentially.

Shane doesn’t move when the man carefully ties the bell the rope around his broken ankle, he just grits his teeth and focuses on the fuzziness of the drugs in his system.

He’s just got to add adrenaline.

Once the bell is secured, Gaten nods approvingly at it with his hands on his hips. Shane ignores him and tests the water temperature again.

Warm, but not hot. Good enough.

The first bowls are easy to get clean, fresh from this morning. The pots are harder to get the starch off, having dried to the insides.

Gaten walks out of the room, whistling as he goes like he’s in some fucking cartoon.

Fucking wait a bit longer Shane, just wait.

He grabs a couple of plates, scrubbing them roughly then placing them in the drying rack on the other side. Shane moves through all the same sized plates first, before moving to the smaller ones that don’t match.

With one arm he sweeps the last few cups and bowls sitting on the counter, the clanking as they fall in loud and grating. It covers up the click and spark of the stove as Shane’s other hand lights the gas stove to his right.

He stands quietly for a second, listening. When no footsteps come, he slowly cranks the dial up, the flame growing in his peripheral vision.

Shane moves a couple of the dishes around, cringing at the sound of ceramic against ceramic.

The dish cloth sitting to his left gets tied into one big knot, clumsy and loose, but enough.

He pivots away from the sink with small hops, just enough that the bell doesn't ring too loud as he turns ninety degrees. Still no footsteps in the hallway.

The kitchen table is still stacked with papers; bills, receipts, print outs, and whatever else the man kept out all the time. They cover the entire surface, requiring you to move them to eat at the table. Shane keeps his eye on the hallway to the bedroom as he sticks one end of the towel knot into the flame of the gas stove, the fiber quickly catching fire.

He doesn't hesitate to give it a slight toss, landing on the nearer end of the table amongst the stacks.

The fire catches on the paper quickly. It moves from one stack to another, moving down junk folders and singing the wood table below them.

Shane slowly backs up, pulling the chair with him under his knee, as the wood of the table is slowly catching with the flames of the papers. The bell tied to his ankle jingles lightly, but he doesn't reach for it. The chair screeching a bit on the tile, but he ignores it, eyes on the table. The smoke is clouding towards the ceiling gray and black, smoky and sharp smelling, but sending off no alarms.

He keeps moving further on the tile, then onto the carpet of the living room. Slowly, little movements. One small hop, shift the chair. Shane's closer to the couch now as the dining chair pushed in close catches fire as well.

"What the actual fuck?!"

Gaten comes barreling in from his bedroom, turning sharply around the corner. His eyes quickly scanned the quickly growing fire, sparking towards the wallpaper, then glancing over to the sink. When he sees Shane gone, his eyebrows tighten, but when they land on him in the living room, Shane simply points a finger out at the *clearly* bigger problem in the house.

With quick movements the man turns to the basement door, fumbling with his keys as he tries to unlock it.

Shane hops a bit more than scoots the chair.

The basement door gets thrown open wide, Gaten speeding down the steps.

Shane can't quite feel his face, but he can feel his blood running hot below his skin. As the man's foot hits the top stair, he lets go of the dining chair and grabs on to the back of the living room chair. He swings himself around to the back of it, balancing on his left foot as he reaches for the door.

One slide.

Two slides.

His fingers fumble with the third lock, but as it comes undone, he spins the knob and wretches the front door open.

Shane doesn't bother to look back to see what's going on in the house.

One foot in front of the other is all he really tells himself, ignoring every feeling in his body that tells him to stop fucking moving *it hurts*. He's barely keeping himself upright as he moves across a small walkway then a driveway, pavement easier under a fucking makeshift cast than grass.

Shane doesn't really know if he puts much weight on it really, more so just enough to propel the other leg forward.

Once he's off the driveway he just turns right, not thinking about it, just moving. Shane doesn't think he's ever felt like this since he was in the hospital on morphine that one time or his first rookie game.

Shane's slowing down as he passes the third house, no car in the driveway, but he can't stop now. He doesn't look back, and honestly, he couldn't hear a thing over the rushing of blood in his ears.

He loses his balance and almost falls into the street as a large black pickup truck pulls up alongside him, horn honking, and Shane knows his eyes are wide and probably crazed at this point.

Without really wanting to he looks at the person currently rolling their window down.

Shane doesn't think he's ever been happier to see the most generic fucking frat boys in Illinois.

"No fucking way, dude, are you Shane Hollander?!"

-~-

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Shane William Hollander has been found by local college boys in state of Illinois and is currently receiving medical care. He is believed to be in stable condition. Suspect is still at large, known vehicle is large black SUV with tinted windows and broken rear taillight. 2:56 pm

Chapter End Notes

Ummmmmm this turned out darker than originally planned...
Shane was almost Stephan King 'Mercy-ed' earlier, but I decided not too... had to make up for it?

Two more chapters left! Next should be out in a couple of days!

Warnings with spoilers: Shane has a terrible time, he is chased in a sexual way, but nothing happens, kidnapper forcibly strips him, forced to sleep in same bed, drugged

with prescription medication, fire is set, descriptions of pain, bathtime waterboarding, near panic attacks

Chapter 7: Pre-Season Scrums

Chapter Summary

Four seconds is both a short time and a long time.

He keeps trying to breathe.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

Chapter Notes

I had no plans for this chapter to be this long, but here we are lovelies
I have a feeling ya'll are going to be yelling in the comments again <3
Any inaccuracies in police work are for the plot, don't complain

I do read all your comments even if I don't always answer! Love you all <3

One more chapter after this! I swear it's a fluffy epilogue!

Russian translation from one scene in bottom notes

As always, more warning with spoilers in the bottom notes as well

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ilya was already in the front seat of his favorite 2009 Ferrari, driving down through Kitchener, Ontario towards Dayton, Ohio when he gets the call.

Earlier, after leaving the police department after combing through a creep's social media account, Ilya couldn't not do anything. Not when a man was so obsessed with his fiancé, dangerously so, everything from Shane's hockey skills and brand deals to his personal relationships.

Disturbing cropped professional photos. TMZ paparazzi photos. Shitty streaky greasy iPhone photos.

The young officer they ended up talking to had looked through every tweet back to the year before their rookie year; a year after the app was invented. The earlier ones had seemed normal, focused on Montreal hockey and written with the bad grammar of a preteen boy. As the years had progressed, so had the frequency of the posts, the app becoming increasingly popular and the account following.

Svetlana had stared the young officer down as he had taken notes and careful screenshots, sweating under the collar of his uniform. After about an hour he finally stopped just writing things down and read off his little notepad, pen clicking nervously in his right hand.

Young officer Chambers had only been in the force a few years, but his sister loved crime shows and often made him watch with her when he was home on the weekends. The real police work, not the fake stuff. He had theorized that the poster was younger than the two hockey players, but at least 20. Maybe his own age. Obviously obsessed with hockey and most likely played at some point. Probably stopped playing after high school or college, either to an injury or skill level. Potentially from an unstable home, as no one was monitoring the kids' internet usage. The late-night timing of some of the earlier posts would back that theory up as well. The wording of tweets indicated a male and based on the more recent photos and posts about Shane's relationships, had romantic intentions with the man. There were, however, no posts during pride month or any other time giving any other clue to the man's sexuality. As the weeks got closer to the most recent Stanley Cup, the pictures turned from photos already posted in articles, cropped and edited, to shitty personal phone ones, camera lens oily and streaky. Overall, the man believed Shane Hollander was the next coming of hockey Christ, didn't think anyone deserved to be around the man, and wanted him desperately.

Ilya had had to excuse himself to the bathroom to wretch a bit at it all. Then he had kicked the bathroom stall hard a couple times, shoved his shoulders back, and went back to the room to sit back at the computer.

So ya, he couldn't just sit there after all that while they tried to find other accounts held by the same emails and phone numbers. Tried to track what computer the posts were coming from. Perhaps a fucking name.

Ilya had dropped Svetlana back at the Hollanders' house to explain what had gone on, grabbed his hockey-go bag and hopped in one of his sports cars.

The last location the police had been given was Ohio, someone having seen a car similar to the description with a busted-out taillight.

Ilya knew his Hollander would not go without a fight.

He's still about five hours out, not even over the border yet, when his phone rings with a call from Officer Chambers, and he doesn't hesitate to pick it up and put it on speaker phone.

"Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Illinois. Two guys just dropped off Hollander to the ER, found him running down the sidewalk,"

Ilya jerks his wheel to the right and pulls off on the side of the road, pulling up his maps and typing in the name of the hospital. He doesn't think he's breathing. He definitely doesn't signal getting back on the road.

From the cup holder Officer Chambers is still speaking fast, “Broken right ankle with repeated trauma, he’s currently in surgery. They have high hopes for a full recovery. There are opioids in his system, but not a dangerous amount. Broken nose, but it’s been set. Signs of a couple day old concussion, but despite everything it’s not healing too bad, they’re going to do a brain scan to make sure everything is okay. Bruises and lacerations, but those are the easiest to heal.”

“Trauma? What does that mean? Lassations? He heal?”

“Yes, they have high hopes for a full physical recovery, the break isn’t too bad. And oh uh, trauma, he probably walked on the broken ankle, so he hurt it more than just breaking it. And uh, lacerations, on his wrists, like uh rope burn.”

Ilya rubs his hand over his face as he steps on the gas harder. He’s determined to turn a 9-hour drive into at least a 6 hour.

“How long surgery? You call parents?”

“Maybe like five hours? They can’t take him into surgery right away, and uh no, not yet. I figured as his fiancé you should hear first. The FBI is going to post about it in like an hour or so, so either you or I can call them before that happens. I don’t have their number right now, but I can find it, then some of guys up here who have also been working on the case are gonna take a charter plane down to the hospital, meet up with the Federal agents also assigned to it. It’s just, it’s not all good news. Are you ready for it?”

Ilya cuts off a blue minivan and pumps the gas a bit, the car revs loudly. The signs for the American border start popping up alongside the road.

“They still haven’t found the guy. Hollander escaped by himself, and with him unconscious we don’t have a name, description, or location. Illinois officers are aware of the situation as well as hospital security.”

“So, you just wait for crazy man to show up? Now I will find first, is promise.”

“Rozanov, we don’t know anything about this guy, the IT department is still waiting for the privacy to be overridden by the company. For all we know this fucker could be on drugs with a gun.”

“And I am angry Russian man, he hurt fiancé, I handle. You call Hollanders, I call other friend and see you in middle of nowhere Illinois hospital.”

“Alright, man drive sa-”

Ilya hangs up on him and scrolls through his contacts.

Svetlana should still be with Shane’s parents like he asked, she would probably catch a ride with them.

The phone rings a couple of times before it is picked up, Jackie obviously surrounded by little Pikes, “Ilya, you don’t usually call, what’s happened? What did we miss?”

There talking in the background, Hayden Pike perhaps, and she cover the phone, but he can still hear her, “Hayds, be quiet, we leave for one night and stuff happens, so let me listen.” A pause. “Go on, Ilya.”

“Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Illinois, Shane got himself out and to hospital with witness, is in surgery but will be okay.”

“Holy shit,” Ilya can hear Hayden Pike yelling something as Jackie calls out to her parents “Mom, take the kids, we’ve got to go!”

“They don’t have guy yet.”

“What do you mean they haven’t caught the guy yet?! Hayden put your shoes on faster!”

“No information on man yet, Shane in prep for surgery, ankle, people found him on sidewalk, I will drive fast enough to arrive before he wakes up.”

“We’ll be a couple hours behind you then; Hayden I thought I told you to put gas in the car!”

-~-

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Shane William Hollander has been found by local college boys in state of Illinois and is currently receiving medical care. He is believed to be in stable condition. Suspect is still at large, known vehicle is large black SUV with tinted windows and broken rear taillight. 2:56 pm

@ForgotMyStick: HES STABLE PEOPLE, OUR BABY WILL BE OKAY 😭❤️

@HollySmiles: WTF DO YOU MEAN THE DUDE IS STILL AT LARGE

@WaitingForFaceoff: Does this mean that Hollander got kidnapped and escaped or something?? How do you only find him but not the fucker who broke in and brought him over state lines?

@IceCold_Center: If I see that suspect it’s on sight, im booking my plane ticket now

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Shane William Hollander found by University of Springfield Illinois college boys on a Springfield, Il, sidewalk. Hollander has been cleared for surgery and is expected to make a full recovery, currently remains unconscious. Suspect has yet to be identified and is still at large. Currently wanted on charges of Human Trafficking, Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Kidnapping, Felony Drugging without Consent and Unlawful Imprisonment. Known vehicle is large black SUV with tinted windows and broken rear right taillight. Any information call 911 immediately.

@TMZ: Shane Hollander found by University of Springfield Illinois frat brothers, Phi Kappa Tau, while out on weekend fishing trip. Describe finding NHL Star on suburban sidewalk and the drive to Lincoln Memorial Hospital

@Latebusimjogging: Could these chucklefucks be any higher?

@WaitingForFaceoff: Probably

@AfterTheHorn93: It's what prairie stars do

@WaitingForFaceoff: @AfterTheHorn93 what did you just say to me?

@trustmebro: I was about to ask where the fishing poles were ☠️

@OttGoalie81: Sure, let's just tell people what hospital the guy is at… not like he hasn't just been KIDNAPPED

@WeekendHustle217: Those paps are gonna try to get into his room and Yuna Hollander is going to beat them with a bed pan, 10$

@OttGoalie81: I'll take you up on that, 20$ that Rozanov beats them to a pulp first

@BruinsBrawler87: It's not like the hospital won't have security

@NHL: MLH Star Shane Hollander found alive and in stable condition in Illinois hospital. The NHL community wishes the man a safe and swift recovery and sends their well wishes to the family. We would also like fans to know that the suspect in Shane Hollander's aggravated kidnapping and human trafficking is still at large. No description is known with Hollander remaining unconscious after his admittance. Any information please call 911 or the tip line (xxx) – xxx - xxxx

@notasportswriter: Yooooooooo hockey is glad to have him back, hope he's recovered by next official season

@ShaneHollanderFan: Can the man not heal first????

@notasportswriter: Hey if anyone is excited for Hollander to get back to playing hockey after spending three days kidnapped in fucking Illinois, it's Shane fucking Hollander

@CityCrowd77: I would've died without him

@BostonBrewCrew: If Hollander died Ottawa would've lost Rozanov as well

@HollanderHockeyFan: CAN YOU NOT HES GOING TO BE OKAY 😭

@ESPN: The Sports world sends their well wishes for a speedy recovery as Hockey Star and Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander is found alive by local University of Springfield students and is now in stable condition in Illinois hospital. Last updates reported Hollander being prepped for surgery, but outlooks for recovery are high. No arrests made in connection with aggravated assault, human trafficking, and false imprisonment charges. Any information please call 911 or the tip line (xxx) – xxx - xxxx

@OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial: GLAD TO SEE YOU SHANE! The Ottawa Centaurs want to send their well wishes, prayers, and love to Shane Hollander and his family during his recovery. The team is excited to welcome Hollander back to Ottawa and aid however they can as he works his way back to the ice. The Centaurs look forward to the upcoming Hollanov wedding! Shane's case, however, is still ongoing, any information please call 911 or the tip line (xxx) – xxx - xxxx

@BetweenTheBenches: WE ARE STOKED, glad to see the legend himself is alive and is going to be okay, we just know he's going to hit the ice twice as hard when he's back

@SeenItAllToday: The best teammates, Montreal would never

@HollanderHockeyFan: I needed this news today 😭😭😭😭

@TheGist: Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander found alive in Illinois, transported to local hospital. No suspect in custody; It's believed that Shane Hollander freed himself from captivity and witnesses later brought him to local ER after discovering man walking on suburban sidewalk. Hollander is currently unconscious and in surgery, no description given on attacker

@TeamHollanov: ❤️ BREAKING NEWS: SHANE HOLLANDER FOUND ALIVE BUT INJURED IN ILLINOIS, TRANSFERRED TO LOCAL HOSPITAL TO RECEIVE SURGERY; EXPECTED TO MAKE FULL RECOVERY, SUSPECT STILL AT LARGE

@OttawaCentaursWAGS: Too many cooks in the kitchen! The Centaur WAGS and their Puckbrains have gathered to soldier out prepared meals for the Hollander family in preparation for their return to Ottawa. The baby Centaurs are working hard on a large assortment of get-well-soon cards and well-wishes crayon drawings.

@RoseAmeliaLandryOfficial: TOO CUTE ❤️

@Ottawa_puckmasters: Who's dog is that??? ❤️❤️❤️

@RozanovIceLegends: Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander, fiancé of Stanley Cup Champion Ilya Rozanov, found alive in Illinois, transported to local hospital. No word from Ilya Rozanov or Shane Hollander's parents themselves. Suspect is still at large.

@BostonLegendary: I bet Rozanov hopes he gets his hands on the sick fuck ☠️

@OttBenched69: Me in California hearing Roz break the sound barrier to get to fuckass Illinois

@RozyBostonBear: I'll be surprised if we ever hear from either of them ever again after this… Rozanov probably wants to forcibly confine Hollander himself. Only beer league hockey

@HollanderHockey_Updates: Hollander found in Illinois. Full recovery expected.

@RoseOnRepeat: THANK THE LORD ❤️

@LateSkates: How the fuck did he end up in Illinois???? That's like at least a 12-hour drive from Ottawa?

@FiveOnFive_91: Why the hell would a Chicago Nightwings fan kidnap a man who has only ever played in Canada??

@SmilyRayGun: I root for Boston but I'm from Louisiana, Rozanov was hot as hell as the captain

@FiveOnFive_91: Your team choosing process is stupid

@LateSkates: THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING

@LDSgiveME: yo people move?????? ☠️

@warmuplap: I can only imagine what this guy has been through in the last couple of days, crazy that psycho hasn't been found yet

@TeamHollanov: SO GLAD HE'S GOING TO BE OKAY!!!!!!

@HollanovHockeyHQ: SHANE HOLLANDER FOUND ALIVE WITH BROKEN ANKLE AFTER BEING MISSING FOR THREE DAYS; Suspect still at large, reddit theories focus on Shane Hollander fan accounts in recent weeks

@Sports_Illustrated: Four-time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander transported to Illinois hospital in stable condition. Expected to make full recovery, future NHL season still unknown. Suspect in kidnapping and human trafficking still at large; Police looking for information

@TheSkimm: Hockey Star Shane Hollander found alive after being kidnapped three days prior. Suspect is still at large, and little is known about them. Online speculation continues to grow, theories focusing on a disgruntled rival fan or a fan obsessed with Ottawa, Montreal, or Shane Hollander himself

@OfficialTeamMontrealVoyageurs: The Montreal Voyageurs want to express their gratefulness that former team captain Shane Hollander has been found alive and is currently in stable condition. Our team extends our prayers and well wishes for a swift recovery. The case is still ongoing; any information please call 911 or the tip line (xxx) – xxx - xxxx

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya pulls his car into the parking deck nearby, barely remembering to park between the lines or take note of the parking meter code. He doesn't bother taking the elevator down, instead choosing to skip stairs as he heads down four flights, bag flying off his back as he goes.

He pulls the hoodie up over his head as he heads for the main desk of the hospital, ignoring the check-in line to some's complaint. Ilya ignores them but gets flagged down by an officer by the doorway as he tries to get the desk ladies attention.

The man approaches slow, “Mr. Rozanov, Hollander was put in room 221 and is being monitored after surgery, we have been getting ti-”

Ilya doesn’t stick around to listen to the man after hearing Shane’s room number; nothing at this point was going to keep him from seeing the man he loved alive and breathing.

His heart was still picking up speed as he made his way up the staircase to the right of the front doors. The adrenaline that carried him from Ottawa to Illinois was still humming through his veins and most likely would not calm till he saw freckles and tan skin, lungs inhaling and exhaling. The type of electricity he always felt when he knew something good was on the other side, he just couldn’t mess up now before he reached it. The same thing carried him through hockey games and almost illegal checks, reaching for the puck and the win in the end.

Ilya didn’t stop his half-run-jog as he came out of the staircase fast and quickly scanned the signs on the wall, deciding to just go right towards the bigger numbers instead of stopping to be precise. There were nurses walking both ways around him, only a few bothering to give him a glance as he goes rushing through the middle of the corridor.

When he turns the corner going left, the resounding clang of a metal medicine cart hitting the floor causes everyone in the hallway to look up, and at first Ilya thinks he’s the one who has hit something or someone. Then he looks up ahead, as the sound of something metal goes skittering across the hallway and jumbled yelling picks up where a group of nurses gather.

Ilya slows down for only a second, the rubber soles of his shoes squeaking on the floor. Then one nurse down the hall goes falling down backwards, back to the floor, as a man in jeans and a dirty t-shirt attempts to crawl on top of her and punch her in the face, only stopping to flail about as the woman’s coworkers attempt to pull him off.

Four seconds is both a short time and a long time.

It gives the dark-haired man the time to really shove another nurse back into another cart standing nearby; supplies going scattering to the ground. It also gives Ilya just enough time to pick up his momentum up and drop his right shoulder down just right.

Ilya had never played American football before, his father called it a sport for idiots, but he knew how it worked. The dirty haired man didn’t see it coming, obviously, as Ilya lands his shoulder into the man’s back, sending them both down to the hospital floor in a tussle.

Ilya’s rage at the day itself is enough to power him through the ache in his shoulder, dodging flailing nails and sporadic kicks as he works to keep the man pinned on the ground. He’s tall, but the same height as Ilya is, much skinnier than him, so once Ilya gets his weight centered, he has the advantage.

Behind him, three sets of footsteps come running up behind; officers having followed his desperate run through the hospital now having seen him tackle some random crazy

person.

Ilya lets them slowly start taking over the pinning and work to put the handcuffs on the guy. The man was still thrashing about, erratic. Ilya didn't really care now; he needed to find his fiancé.

-~-

@Official_IllinoisStatePoliceDispatch: Reported disturbance at Lincoln Memorial Hospital, police have been dispatched

@NightwingGoal98: I hate that hospital, everyone there is an asshole

@TeamHollanov: Isn't this the hospital Shane Hollander is at?

@SpringSportsFB: Not everything is about Shane Hollander, holy shit

-~-

He couldn't stand this feeling anymore. Chemicals in his blood sending him swimming, muscles unnaturally relaxed, thoughts falling through his fingers like sand. He was so done with it all. He wanted to keep his feet on the floor.

The air tasted like pennies and grossness.

Shane's eyes didn't really want to open, and his arms didn't want to wipe the crust from his eyes. It kept them glued shut, but it's not like he would be able to see the floral wallpaper with the way his brain has felt lately.

It's melting. Fuzzy. Or maybe it was the bed he was laying on that was floating. It made him nauseous.

The tears coming from his eyes helped clear out the gunk, but the water and chemicals in his veins left him with little sight except for the sun streaking through the window. The dust mites danced in the air. Something was beeping.

Outside, there was a lot of yelling, Shane hoped someone had come to save him from this cigarette-stained bed hellhole.

He tries to focus on the sounds outside, on words, on his own thoughts, but he loses the fight to his heavy eyelids.

-точка зрения влюбленного-

When Ilya finally regains his footing, the crazy man is still kicking around on the floor; attempting to dislodge both the officers and take Ilya's feet out from under him.

He steps back from dangerous legs and rolls out his shoulder, watching the nurses tend to their coworker on the floor instead of the two officers attempting to haul the man to his feet.

“I’ll fucking kill him, let me go! I just need to fucking kill him! He took him from me!”

The man doesn’t go without a fight, twisting and spitting in the officer’s grips till they are forced to bring him face down to the floor again, hands behind his back. Ilya thinks they call for backup into their little phones with wires.

It’s hard to catch his breath. What had Shane always said?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Another officer is trying to calm down one of the nurses who hadn’t been hurt but had been on the sidelines. The woman’s hands going everywhere as she explains.

Ilya scans the door numbers on his right, 218, 220, 222.

“And he was pulling out the monitors and everything and when Allison and Grace pushed him out of the room he just started swinging at them!”

The door to 221 is still hanging open a bit, the room quiet behind it.

Ilya can feel is the twinge in his shoulder.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

All he can hear is the blood in his ears, and the hysterical shout of the man in handcuffs as he struggles to a sitting position against now three officers. His face is red as his dark eyes, spacy but bright, focus on where Ilya stands just feet away.

“I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU, YOU STUPID RUSSIAN CUNT, I LOVED HIM FIRST”

When Ilya makes eye contact, it only seems to set the man off in more of a rage, officers struggling to pin his limbs to the ground. They are shouting at the guy to calm down, but the man’s eyes stay locked on him, crazed.

“YOU THINK HE’S FUCKING YOURS? I’LL KILL YOU AND YOUR FUCKING FAMILY AND BURY YOU IN MY BACKYARD, ASSHOLE!”

Two uniformed officers are pushing the man’s shoulders back with little success: the man still sitting up and fighting back. A hospital security guard was doing much better, getting the man’s feet to stop kicking them and the surrounding nurses, restraints on.

Their focus is so much on the struggling maniac that they don’t give much thought or notice to Ilya approaching the pile of them. It gives him just enough time to wind up and get close.

The officers definitely notice him approaching when the knuckles of Ilya’s dominate fist come down along their arrestee’s jaw, the man going limp in their holds at the strike,

slumping back to the floor. Ilya's shaking out his fist before they really realize the man has stopped fighting the restraints below them.

Another officer comes up behind Ilya, quickly grabbing his shoulders and pulling him from the pile as the commotion picks up again. He just shakes the hands off, moving to the side of the hallway where the blonde nurse is stilling being interviewed by an officer. He's cradling his right hand to his stomach examining the damage. The officer who grabbed him's face is a little incredulous, but then he shakes himself and moves to help his colleagues pick the dead weight off the ground.

Sadly, the man was still breathing.

Ilya can feel his own shoulders heaving, the rage still boiling under his blood and erasing most of the pain in his hand. The injured nurses are no longer in the hallway, the one with the high blonde ponytail still clutching her clipboard to her chest tightly, eyes wide at where he stood against the wall.

Next to her, the officer conducting her interview, an officer with a large mustache pretty much covering his mouth, also openly stared at him.

Ilya just scratches his chin, wiping a bit of the blood from his torn knuckles off on his sweatshirt. He looks at the wall in front of him.

Room 219, 221.

He doesn't hesitate this time to go inside.

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Ilya remembers that first time he saw Shane Hollander, back when he was only fifteen and his father was making him watch clips of up-and-coming hockey players that were the same age as him.

He had not taken much away in how to play against Hollander. Ilya had been way more focused on how natural the boy played, like he was born on the rink. The way he smiled when he stole the puck from the opposing team. The line of his shoulders and waist in his hockey pads.

Ilya hadn't known what to say that day in Susquehanna, Shane Hollander approaching him first and telling him that smoking was bad for him. He had wanted to put it out immediately. He had wanted to pull three more out of the box and light them all at once. He had wanted to listen to the man complain about his cigarette smoking while he lay spent and exhausted in the bed next to him.

Through secret rendezvous in hotel rooms and meeting up at each other's apartments, Ilya had always known it was going to be Shane. It had scared him at first. More than almost anything else in his life, but now he let the fire of it all consume him. He had come to terms with the idea that he wouldn't be able to live without Shane Hollander in his life, he would take him in any way he could. When they had finally gotten together officially, Ilya was the

happiest he'd ever been, but he had still been waiting for the other shoe to drop. For his luck to run out.

He almost thought it had.

But looking at Shane tucked into a hospital bed, monitors hooked back up and beeping softly and steadily, Ilya thinks he breathes for the first time in days. He takes the moment to thank his mother above him, for looking out for the both of them.

He's still shaking a bit from earlier.

"Как же я раньше выживал без твоего лица." *How did I ever survive without your face.*

Shane's face is soft where it lays among the hospital pillows. His mouth is open ever so slightly as he breathes quietly, bandages wrapped over the bridge of his nose to set it. His freckles stood out across his cheek bones even in the terrible glow of hospital overhead lights.

"Ты — ангел, посланный, чтобы спасти меня." *You are an angel sent to save me.*

The tips of Ilya's fingers were gentle against the skin of Shane's cheek. As if he pressed too hard the skin under his hands would break. That if he tried to touch more, he would find nothing and wake up back on the Hollanders' couch in Ottawa.

"Ты — всё, что мне нужно. Останься со мной, как обещал." *You are everything I need. Stay with me, like you promised.*

He uses both hands to cup Shane's face and slowly leans down to press a lingering kiss against Shane's forehead, just to feel his skin under his lips. It's oily, unwashed, and Ilya has half a mind to find a washcloth to clean the man's face. Shane will hate it when he wakes up, but for now Ilya just holds him, doesn't mind the feeling, can hardly care, because Ilya can hear the soft rasp of Shane's breath and can feel his skin against his own. Alive. Here.

"Без тебя всё теряет смысл." *Without you, everything loses its meaning.*

-точка зрения влюбленного-

There are still two nurses flitting about Shane's room when the Hollanders, Pike couple, and Svetlana pile in through the door of the hospital room. The two couple's beeline for the hospital bed Shane was currently sleeping on, the attending nurse eyeing them warily as they moved closer but stepping away as Yuna's hands go to feel over her son's face.

The Pikes step back as they all watch Shane breath slowly, turning to set bags upon hospital chairs and choosing to dig through them to give Yuna and David some privacy with their son.

Svetlana's eyes immediately landed on him, her eyes scanning over his face before landing on the blonde nurse standing above him. Her hand tightens around the phone that's pressed to her ear, she says something fast, then hangs up as she moves closer.

“Прощай, моя роза.”

She crosses her arms as she studies where the nurse’s hands are on him. The young woman is poking lightly at his right shoulder. The one he had used to take down a man most likely on drugs.

Ilya’s currently ignoring the girl to focus on Svetlana’s expression of disapproval.

“Ну, я же не один раз за тобой присматривал, а вот смотри — ты снова сумел себя поранить.” *Well, I didn't keep an eye on you just once, and look — you've managed to hurt yourself again.*

Ilya sucks in his cheeks before responding, using his left hand to adjust the ice pack pressed to the knuckles of his right hand, “Я никогда не обещал луну”. *I never promised the moon*

The nurse giggles at the sound of his native tongue, prodding again. Ilya fishes the chain around his neck out from under his shirt, his mother’s golden crucifix sitting next to his engagement ring.

Across the room Jackie is pulling out one of her Hallmark blankets, handing it to Yuna to spread overtop the hospital sheets.

“Безрассудный мальчик,” Her hip pops out as she looks at his hand, then the nurse’s hand. Her eyebrows rise higher. *Reckless boy*

Ilya shrugs a bit, leans away from the fingers on his shoulder. At the movement, Svetlana’s fingers reach out to fix the hair that’s peaking out from under his hood.

“Во что ты опять влез, Илюша? Кого ты ударил?” *What have you gotten yourself into now, Ilyusha? Who have you punched?*

Ilya just shrugs again, closes his eyes, and leans into her hand. The blonde-haired nurse finally huffs loudly and stops prodding at his right shoulder, leaving the room and shutting the door quietly behind her.

Svetlana rolls her eyes as the door clicks shut, fingers not stopping in his hair, but her gaze moving to the hospital bed. The Hollanders and Pikes have settled in the hospital chairs closer to Shane’s head. Yuna’s fingers keep smoothing out the blankets. Everyone’s eyes are on Shane’s face.

“Я же говорил, что убью этого человека, если когда-нибудь его увижу” *I told you I would kill that man if I ever saw him.*

Her fingers had been tracing the side of his face absentmindedly, but now she grips his chin firmly. Ilya’s hand reaches up to grip her wrist. His eyes crack open and meet hers, pleading.

“Я смог ударить его только один раз. было очень быстро. Полиция увела его. А теперь я здесь.” *I only got to punch him once. It was very fast. Police took him away. Now I*

am here.

Svetlana's quiet. Pike is watching the both of them instead of focusing on his unconscious best friend.

Ilya's glad the man isn't intelligent enough to learn Russian.

"Один в поле не воин" *One man alone is not a warrior*

"Я в порядке, Света. Мне просто нужно, чтобы он проснулся." *I am fine, Sveta. I just need him to wake up.*

A knock rings out through the room, everyone falling silent, even the remaining nurse who was quietly talking to David by the monitors.

The door creeps open, a man with a bushy mustache and long brown hair peeking his head through the doorway. He's tall, and his smile is large. Ilya does not have the patience for this anymore.

"Hiya, I was just checking to see if Mr. Hollander was feeling well enough to give a statement for us, with the suspect in custody now and everything. But I see he's still asleep, though, so you lovely folks can just let me know when it's best. I'll give you my number."

It seemed Yuna Hollander also didn't have the patience today. She stands up before the man can put a foot through the doorway.

"Why don't we discuss this outside, officer."

The room is silent until the door to the room clicks shut again.

Svetlana is the first to break the silence.

"Я люблю эту женщину. Мне нужно чаще оставаться в Оттаве." *I love that woman. I need to stay in Ottawa more often.*

-~-

'*I'm really fucking warm*' is the first thought that comes to Shane's mind as he pulls himself awake, eyelids still a bit too heavy to get the picture as well. There's light on his face, warm, less harsh than those last mornings where it woke him up with a jolt. This time it's just nice. The drugs aren't though. Shane's lips smack numbly; dry. All his limbs were warm, heavy, and sleepy. They didn't want to listen. If he couldn't move, he might as well fall back to sleep, but someone is touching his face.

It's not the worst.

Shane's hello comes out in just a hum.

When he pries his eyes open finally, crust in the edges, Shane's rewarded with the sight of Ilya's face, and who although pale with dark circles, still looks absolutely beautiful.

Shane should tell him that.

“Yo...ou. Are s— sso b—eaut…tiful.”

Ilya’s face does something complicated, but he’s still smiling. It’s hard to focus on him, Shane’s glasses are somewhere else, but he squints hard to make out the lines of the man’s face, the mole on his cheek, his eyebrows.

Shane’s still trying to meet his eyes when the hand leaves his face. It makes him sigh heavily, which in turn sends his head falling weakly back to his pillow.

He squints up at Ilya, his eyebrows furrowed as he reaches out for his fiancé, wanting to hold his hand.

“Heeeeyy,” When Ilya’s expression only gets fonder, but he doesn’t move closer, Shane grows more insistent, hand stretch as far as his muscles will allow, “Heeeeeeeeeyyyyyyyyyyy.”

“накручиваешь себя, Ilyusha, just hold his hand before he starts crying.”

Ilya gathers both of Shane’s hands to his chest as his eyes skitter across the room, getting lost for a second, before landing on a beautiful woman with curly hair dressed in an oversized hoodie.

“Hiiiiiiiiii Svetlanaaaaa” Shane finally gets out. She smiles at him, so Shane smiles back.

“Котёнок, посмотри на меня,” when Shane manages to turn back to Ilya smiles softly again, “Hello мой дорогой, Я очень скучал по тебе. How are you feeling?”

“Funny words.”

“Keep it to one language, love boy.”

“I’m sorry, Котёнок. Are you feeling any pain? How is ankle? You sleep well?”

Shane pays more attention to watching the man’s lips form words instead of actually listening to them. He hums in a positive way and hopes it answers the question.

Ilya eyebrows furrow a bit and he leans over him, eyes searching his own.

Svetlana is watching them both with a smile, although her own eyebrows are pulling together.

Shane closes his eyes and tries to do the same expression.

He opens them again when the door to the hospital room opens. Sadly, it wasn’t his parents or the Pikes, but a little old nurse in pink scrubs. Shane frowns at her heavily despite the beaming smile she sends him, instead turning his attention to Ilya who still stands to his left.

Except Ilya is smiling charmingly at the woman, one hand now placed on Shane's shoulder to keep him still.

"He's feeling pain. Seems very out of it. As you say… floaty."

The older woman chuckles, stepping up to the equipment by the bed.

"I'll give him something to help with that. And ya, kids going to be floaty, he's got a lot of injuries and just came out of surgery, plus we figured we would give him something for that anxiety, situations like these sometimes call for it."

Ilya's smile shifts for a second on his face before falling back in place, "Thank you, Ma'am. Rather he not panic and is comfortable."

"I'm fine. I can't even feel the fucking thing."

Three sets of eyes landed on him, only one set amused. The nurse nods knowingly at him, smiling still, and Shane smiles back for a second, but then his spine is more jelly than he remembers it being and the hospital bed is trying to suck him into its cushions.

Shane sniffles a bit as his vision wobbles, blinking slowly to clear sunlight and slowly building tears.

The room is very quiet. He can only make out Ilya, Svetlana, and the nurse in the room. The walls are really far away. The bed is rotating.

In. Out. In. Out.

He tries not to cry. The snort he lets out is gross.

"I'm sorry, котёнок, you're okay."

Shane rolls the words around in his mouth a bit before he manages to get them out, "Where's my parents?"

Svetlana is the one who answers, Ilya keeps holding his hands.

"Your father has gone to find us all food that is not made by a hospital. Your mother is handling a lot of media things as well as stuff for the upcoming hockey season. I believe she's also out there with the American FBI. Pikes are saying goodnight to their children, that will take a while."

The door opens and shuts.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"You woke up at wrong time, my love. But they will be back soon."

The petting hand is nice, it's easier to focus on some nice touching than the sight in front of his eyes. Too many layers, no glasses, concussion, drugs. The walls were blurry,

faces hard to make out.

Shane can't fucking see.

"Your dad was going to see if he can get vegetable wrap you like, rabbit food for your recovery."

The man's eyes try to hide pain when Shane only hums at him. Shane leans more heavily into the hand caressing the side of his face.

Fingers trace over his cheeks and freckles.

"Я тебя люблю"

Shane eyes squint up at the man standing above him, "I know that one."

Ilya's laugh is fond, a little surprised, "I'm glad, мой дорогой. I say it all the time."

Shane just hums at him again.

"How are you feeling, моя любовь. Any pain? Doctors believe good recovery. Maybe start of official season? No worry about hockey."

The door clicks open suddenly, and Shane jolts where he's still laying down, panicking for a moment. Ilya's hands go to his shoulders to push him back on the pillow, and though his head is swimming, he can feel himself calm when he sees his mom and dad moving quietly into the hospital room.

Shane can't make his eyes focus on them or what they are holding. His stomach flips a bit at the fuzziness and building panic, and he tries to sit up again.

Hands stop him when he tries to grab the drip for the IV administering him more and more drugs.

"Hey, hey, Я здесь сейчас, всё будет в порядке." Ilya tries to shush him a bit, but as the tears come they only make Shane feel worse, which makes him cry harder.

Hands are soft on his face, trying to break through to his growing anxiety, "Baby, you're okay!"

Shane's hiccup-sob rings out through the room unobstructed, and it results in an overwhelming moment when Ilya and the rest of the room freeze.

Svetlana is the first to move once the fourth or fifth hiccup is paired with a gasp for breath. She's quick to pick up the trashcan sitting in the corner of the room, ramming it hard into Ilya's back till he takes it, the man then rushing to move it closer to where Shane is sitting up struggling for air.

His mom is on one side of him. His dad is somewhere at the end of the bed. Ilya is right in front of him, eyes filled with worry and fear.

Shane loses bile in his stomach to the dizziness and grossness in his body, fight leaving him. Heaving only makes him cry harder, shoulders shaking as he wretches.

He wishes his head would stop swimming. He wishes there was a way to make sense of what was going on around him through the pain and the numbness and the fuzz.

Ilya keeps shushing him as he cries, hiccups, and gags into the outstretched bin.

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@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Suspect arrested in connection with aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, human trafficking, and unlawful confinement of NHL Star Shane Hollander. 8:34 pm.

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Twenty-three-year-old Gaten Kulick was arrested in connection with Shane Hollander case in Springfield, Illinois. Suspect was caught by hospital staff attempting to remove hospital monitors for Hollander during surgery recovery watch. After apprehension, officers started search in Kulick's residence and found evidence linking him further with the case. More details to come.

@BostBeerNeed: I neeeeeeeeeeed these crime scene photos, like what do you mean evidence in connection??????? How obvious was it???

@XRoseXLaw: Bet dude had a fucking shrine or something

@PaisleyTomorrow: My crime class has been discussing this entire case as it's been happening; I want to know what the trigger that started this all was!

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Suspect arrested in connection with kidnapping and trafficking of Four-time Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander in Illinois. Suspect attempted to remove Hollander's medical devices after surgery, potentially in an attempt to reclaim the victim after his escape hours prior. Suspect scuffled with nurses who were attempting to remove him from the room, fight was stopped by Hollander's fiancé Ilya Rozanov and responding officers. Twenty-three-year-old Gaten Kulick is being held without bond and will be extradited to Canada for sentencing and American trial.

@AfterTheHorn93: WHAT DO YOU MEAN ROZANOV STOPPED THE SCUFFLE

@HollySmiles: I would pay good money for the security video

@AfterTheHorn93: Maybe they'll release the body cam video one day

@CityCrowd77: Fucking creep x2000

@IceColdTakes: It's all TMZ's fault

@Official_IllinoisStatePoliceDepartment: New charges filed regarding kidnapping and trafficking Suspect of Canadian NHL Star Shane Hollander. 23-year-old Gaten Kulick has

been charged with two counts of aggravated assault in connection with the physical attack that took place on two nurses in Lincoln Memorial Hospital while attempting to remove Hollander from the premises.

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Canadian authorities have agreed to federal sentencing in America for Gaten Kulick in connection with the human trafficking and false imprisonment of Shane Hollander, as well as the felony aggravated assaults of hospital workers Allison Gaudy and Grace Novak. After processing in America, Kulick will be extradited to stand trial in Ottawa, Canada for consecutive sentencing.

@trustmebro: anyone got one of those legal bros online who can explain what this means for years in prison????

@Official_IllinoisStatePoliceDepartment: Shane Hollander reportedly is in stable condition as he recovers from surgery on broken ankle. Injuries included a broken ankle, broken nose, mild concussion, lacerations and bruises. Brain scans came back clean. Full recovery expected.

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Suspect Gaten Kulick in aggravated kidnapping and human trafficking of celebrity and NHL star Shane Hollander found to be connected to Shane Hollander fan account title /@HollanderHockey_Updates.

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It's quieter when Shane wakes up the next day. He's not as loopy and artificially relaxed. His stomach isn't rolling like it has been. It's nice to just lay in the hospital bed for a while with his eyes closed. He had been worried earlier that he would never be able to close his eyes in a safe environment again. Now he can just be, foot not stabbing him and nose not beating against his face.

The anxiety is buzzing in the back of his head behind a wall. Shane wonders if they gave him something.

"Hello Mr. Hollander. My name is Detective Sanchez with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, this is Detective Lansby with the Illinois State Police Department. We wanted to ask you a couple of questions about your recent incident, if you are willing to share with us at this time."

Ilya's and his mom's eyes are both staring holes into the sides of his head. In the corner of the hospital room his dad is sipping at hospital coffee in a Styrofoam cup.

"Uh, sure. I guess so."

Ilya holds tight to his left hand. Shane has a feeling it's just as much to comfort him as it was to reassure Ilya that he was here and safe as Shane recounts stuff he'll probably end up wishing he never told the man.

"First, if at any point you need to take a break or want to continue this another day, just let me know. Otherwise, I'm going to let you take the lead. I want you to start from the

night you were abducted and go from there."

Shane just nods mutely. The detectives take the go ahead to open their notebooks.

He starts by describing the normal evening he had. How he had sat beside Ilya as the man ate an early dinner. How he had kissed him goodbye at the door as he had left. Going down to the gym to workout with his headphones on.

It's a little weird to talk and watch someone write down every word you say as you say it.

Shane pauses when he talks about heading back upstairs after hearing the floorboards creak above. It was at this point he had texted Ilya to see if he had come home early.

Ilya squeezes his hand hard and closes his eyes.

"So, the floorboards made you think someone was in the house? Did he answer you, when you called out loud?"

"Uh, no. The house was quiet after that. My floor doesn't creak that much at all unless you are a heavy walker. It's a new build."

He recalls walking towards the front door, not going further, then not much else.

"So, you didn't see him in your house?"

"Not that I remember. After seeing what I thought was glass on the floor I decided to go and call the police, but I think he must have hit me over the back of the head or something as I turned around, because I woke up the next day with a concussion."

It's quiet for a moment as both men write.

The other detective speaks up, "So you woke up in the house?"

That makes Shane hesitate. His eyes flicker over his moms' then his dads' faces. Then out of his peripheral, even if it sort of hurts, he looks quickly at Ilya's. His eyes are still closed.

"No, I woke up at some point in the trunk of his car."

Another squeeze of his hand. Shane keeps his eyes on the little notebooks.

"I ended up kicking out one of the back taillights. He had only tied my arms together and then to my chest, my feet were free, so I kicked in where I knew the plastic was weakest. He ended up pulling the car over and drugging me again after hearing it."

"Was that what happen to your ankle, or did he do that?"

"Uhh. I think I did it in the trunk, yah. I woke up again in the house and it was broken. So was my nose, but he had set that when I was out. That was from falling face first

in my house."

"When you first saw him, did you recognize him? A name? Seen him anywhere?"

Shane is quiet for long enough that Ilya finally opens his eyes and focuses on his face. Shane is trying to bite through his lower lip, not knowing quite how to word anything as they go.

It had been a lot.

It was even harder having to re-explain it with his parents and fiancé next to him. But if he didn't let them sit in on this, they would either read the report later or some gossip magazine's version of the events, so he might as well let them listen to the first account.

That way he only has to do this once.

"I've seen him a couple of times." He chews on his words a bit, "At a bar. Once at the airport. At a restaurant this one time. Maybe multiple bars. He never talked to me before, I usually would catch his eye by accident, he would already be looking at me. I didn't know him by name, never said anything to him before, just noticed him around."

"Would you recognize him if we showed you a picture of him?"

"Uh yah, of course."

The picture they show him is the high school graduation photo Gaten had framed in the hallway alongside the other family photos and memorabilia with his face and number on it.

He just nods slightly, "Yup, that's him." Shane carefully doesn't look over to where Ilya is glaring at the blotchy black and white printed photo.

Shane continues through what had happened in that cigarette-stained house. Learning his name and location from an offhand statement. The rules. The creaky metal wheelchair. The 'setting' of his broken ankle. Sitting side by side as they watch baseball and old game shows. The first night being shoved into his room to handle himself and not being able to find a way out. The second day the new heavy drugs and hiding in the bathroom. Staying pressed to the tile, shaking from opioids and fear. Being forced to sleep side by side with the man, hand stuck to the headboard. Taking the drugs the next day since he knew he would need the pain relief. Asking to wash the growing pile of dishes to have an excuse to be in the kitchen, hopefully alone. How he had set the fire after knowing that the fire extinguisher was not in the kitchen, so it had to be locked downstairs in the basement. Taking the chance to run despite the pain he felt.

When he's done talking the room is silent. Both his mother and fiancé look like they are bent over in prayer; eyes closed and hands clasped together. His dad is staring at his coffee.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

“Had Mr. Kulick ever threaten your life at any point?”

Shane pauses, then slowly admits, “Uh I guess just in passing, like in the rules. I guess it was implied. Closest it got was after the whole locking myself in a room thing, he uh, tried to stop me from breathing for a couple seconds…”

“How?”

He grimaces, then looks over at his mother, her eyes are shiny.

“He put a wet washcloth over my mouth for a few seconds, but I fought him off quickly.”

The sounds of pen on paper and Shane’s breathing are the loudest in the room. Ilya is keeping very carefully quiet next to him. The grip he has on his hand is almost painful, but grounding for them both.

The pen clicks before the detective looks up at him.

“Did Mr. Kulick make any sort of sexual advances towards you?”

Shane grimaces. He had carefully skimmed over the areas that he didn’t really want to talk about. Didn’t want to think about. It’s awkward enough to talk to two grown men about another man making unwanted gay advances on him, even though he knows this situation isn’t one to be taken lightly. It another for his family to know.

He and Ilya had been outed years prior, only after posting about their engagement to the world. It had led to so much media attention, hate, and scrutiny even from Shane’s own team at the time; the one he had been drafted to in his rookie year. This story was going to be everywhere as soon as the arrest details were made more public. Once the trial started more details would come out, and everyone would know that a young man with a gay obsession on the one of the few out hockey players went through all the trouble to physically overpower him and try to lock him in his house.

Shane knows logically it wasn’t embarrassing. No of this was his fault. It’s just that it’s one of the last things he needed recently; more people looking at him. More people looking at Shane Hollander and seeing a gay man before a hockey player. More people asking the age-old question; are his everyday actions aligning with gay stereotypes and how does he feel about that? Is this whole thing a sign that he’s weak? A bad player?

He hated it all. But he couldn’t really lie to the police, especially in the case of his own kidnapping. Ilya’s eyes were dark with worry, glued to the side of his face. Shane doesn’t think they’ve looked over at the officer the entire time the men has been in the room.

“Yes. He did. Twice. I guess.”

No one moves. His dad stopped drinking his coffee a while ago.

“Can you tell us about those two times, and the situations where you may feel it doesn’t count but may feel are important.”

Shane takes his time thinking over the words before he speaks. He's starting to feel bad for how sweaty his hand is in Ilya's palm.

"On the first night. He touched my thigh over my pants and offered me a 'reward', I think maybe a blowjob? He got mad when I said no and pushed his hand away, he ended up yelling for a while before shoving the wheelchair in the room he kept me in. That's when I was left alone that first night. He flirted quite a bit. Touched my hair and stared a lot, I think he genuinely believed we were in a relationship."

Ilya's breath is careful and steady next to him; forehead now pressed to the back of Shane's hand on the hospital bed arm. Like he's counting his breaths.

"And the second time Mr. Hollander?"

He hesitates even harder this time, his right hand going to grip the other arm of the bed, but his mom catches it in hers. Shane squeezes hard, and she cups his in both of hers and squeezes back.

"I think the first time he gave me the opioids. After they kicked in, he wanted to see if I could walk on the spatula he tied to the bottom of my broken ankle. He said he wanted to play a game he had seen me play before," Shane's mouth opens and shut a bit, and he tries to get it out, his stomach rolling, "He had said…he said he had seen me and my… my fiancé have sex one night… and I… I must have run or something as like…uh foreplay." He carefully doesn't look at his parents.

Determined, he keeps going, "So he told me he wanted me to run…so he could uh… could chase me and uh… yah…and he counted down from five, but I made it to the bathroom in the hall before he finished. I locked myself in there and he got angry, ended up taking the door off the hinges and dragging me out after a couple hours. That was the night I ended up stuck in his bed." He pauses, then clarifies, "Nothing more ever really happened. But he tried. After the second time I knew I had to get out of there or I wouldn't be able to get away a third time."

Shane's pause is more thoughtful than tired. As the drug's influence started receding and he could actually feel the pain in his body a bit, it was easier to process his thoughts about the previous few days.

It had happened. He had survived.

Shane didn't know why he wasn't breaking down in this hospital bed, scared of leaving this room.

Maybe it was simmering under his skin. Maybe he had already hid it all deep underneath his need for routine and understanding. Kept it under lock and key. It had been a straightforward situation. He had played along, then found an escape route, then found someone to get him to the hospital. Gaten had been arrested. Now he would heal.

The calm still feels artificial.

-точка зрения влюбленного-

Seeing Shane dressed in fresh pajamas, still soft from the shower, and curled up under the blankets of the queen-sized bed in his childhood bedroom squeezed Ilya's heart in his chest.

He can't help but hesitate a second in the middle of the room, eye's trained on Shane's peaceful figure. Moonlight shining through the small crack in the curtains. Ilya didn't want to disrupt him if he was falling asleep, he just wanted to take in the sight of him; alive, breathing, safe, comfortable, vulnerable, and near sleep.

His fiancé was beautiful, even drained and tired, slumped across an aging mattress wrapped in old sheets. His freckles shown like stars across his face, traveling down the man's neck to his bare chest. Shane's breathing was slow, his mouth opened slightly, and it made Ilya want to cry and worship him.

Ilya had almost lost this. The sight of the man's skin. His freckles. The warmth of his body next to him on the mattress. The press of body to body. Shane's laugh and the look on his face when he was annoyed. Someone had tried to take this from him, from both of them, unwillingly.

Ilya wishes he had gotten more than just one punch in.

Shane's eyes crack open from where he's still lounging on the bed, the sheets barely pulled over his hips and legs. His smile is lazy where it's half pressed to the pillow, and Ilya returns it with a grin. When the man reaches a hand out for him, Ilya takes it and crawls into the bed next to him.

He settles against the pillows piled up against the headboard, slightly pulling Shane to move to lay his head on his chest. Shane needed no prodding, however, as he moves himself half over Ilya's body, face tucked into where his neck meets his shoulder.

Tracing the freckles that dot Shane's back is one of Ilya's favorite past times. There are always 12. In the summer there are usually more than 30.

Tonight, it's a comforting, familiar, 12.

"Are you okay, мой дорогой? I do not want you to have nightmares."

Shane hums into the skin of his neck. It's gentle, but Ilya still smiles as it tickles.

"I'm okay, I just need you to hold me."

The drive back to Ottawa from Illinois had been long, longer with the many breaks they had to allow Shane to stretch his legs every couple of hours. Ilya had allowed Svetlana to drive his car back home for him the day earlier, much happier tucked in the backseat of the Hollanders' SUV with the love of his life.

Any amount of time they are together in the future was still too little for him. They had lost three days together unwillingly, and Ilya will spend the rest of his life making up for

those 72 hours.

Shane's lips are soft against his chest as he breathes in softly. Even with his eyes bruised from a broken nose, he still takes Ilya's breath away.

"Ты для меня всё, моя любовь," His voice is soft as he stares down as beautiful eyelashes, "Я тебя люблю" *You are everything to me, my love. I love you.*

Shane's smile is soft, words spoken against his skin, "Я тоже тебя люблю." *I love you too.*

The world around them is quiet, and Ilya hopes Shane feels safe, here, with him. He'll never let anything happen to him ever again.

He can't help but think of the one other place Shane had felt safe. At ease.

Had it been ruined for him like it had been for Ilya?

"Yuna was offering, she knows company that cleans homes very well. They clean up cottage for us before we go back. Or do you…?" He leaves the opening for his fiancé, not wanting to pressure the man to make a decision, but wanting the man to think about what he really wanted.

Shane is quiet against his chest for a bit, finger tracing the chest hair and moles doting his pecs. His voice is quiet when he finally answers.

"I don't think I can go back there again. Not without seeing…"

Ilya quick to wraps both his arms tight around the man, shushing him softly, rocking them both back and forth, wanting to shield him from the world, but at least getting to hold him close and safe against his chest. Shane is trying not to cry inside his arms, his shoulders hiccupping as he holds back the tears.

"No, my darling, anything you want. You want move to Boston? Stupid Florida? We on next plane. What about Ottawa apartment? You are Mr. Real Estate, you have other place near rink?"

The conversation helps distract Shane a bit, not one to not take the opportunity to talk about architecture and his properties. Ilya keeps rocking them both.

Shane's breathing slows down a little more.

"I have one closer to center city Ottawa, 12th floor penthouse. Garage below it. Security at the door. Maybe like 15-minute drive from the ice rink. I bought it a couple of years ago and ended up redoing the kitchen, thinking it would be nice for if I visited my parents but then wanted to go into the city. I never really used it though. It took forever to finish the kitchen anyway, so I never really got around to getting it rentable."

Ilya hums at him, continuing the motion of their bodies together as one.

“I think change of scenery would be good for you. Just as recovery happens and season starts. We split time between there and parents’ house for good wine and vodka with chicken and noodles. And while you heal, you plan new cottage.”

Shane’s eyes land on his face, searching for a second. Ilya doesn’t know what he’s looking for.

“I could plan one that’s more us, then just for me.”

Ilya smiles at his fiancé, kissing him quickly on the lips. “We need yard for animals. Doggy doors.”

Shane’s face grows into a soft smile, eyelids soft, “Yah? Maybe a large kitchen and a better game room?”

“Sauna room for steamy sex.”

“You’re an asshole.” It’s said with no small amount of fondness as Shane drops his chin on his chest. Ilya’s smile grows; he can feel the creases form next to both his eyes.

“You were so beautiful, though.”

“I am not going to build the perfect in-home gym and spa just so you can fuck me in it, it was sweaty and gross the first time.”

Ilya’s grin is a bit wolfish, but he gentles it with a couple lingering kisses to Shane’s mouth.

“I remember differently. You were very loud. New cottage needs more sound proofing.”

Shane chuckles and counts off on his fingers as he lists aloud, “Better soundproofing, heated bathroom floors, separate level heating, better security cameras, maybe an indoor jacuzzi or something, I’ve always wanted a cold plunge, and one-way windows…”

Ilya continues to listen to him talk about floor plans and locations, possible color themes and whether he should hire the same interior designer as his Montreal apartment. It’s soothing to listen to him, to know that he’s here beside him and still the same Shane as before. He keeps up the gentle rocking of their bodies, determined to keep his fiancé in this happy lull, one without panic, one where he can talk about something he loved and not think about anything else.

It draws Shane down into sleep eventually, still talking about possible landscaping options and something about stone pathways.

Ilya stays up another couple of hours, unable to take his eyes off the man’s face, soft in sleep and splashed in freckles.

-~-

It takes Shane a minute to work himself up to opening the front door of the house even if it's been a couple days that he's been home from the hospital. He knows it's a cop out there, his parents' new security cameras hooked up to his cell phone as well, but it doesn't help the unease under his skin. Ilya had gone out to talk to the coaches to prepare for preseason, meetings mandatory. His mom was in her office, his father taking a nap in the sunroom.

When Shane finally opens the door, the officer just nods and hands out the packet of papers that he came with. He's young and his expression is trying to hide being pitiful as he looks over Shane's face down to the cast on his right ankle.

He hadn't gotten much sleep lately, only just last night finally getting a chance to shave the stubble from his face. His nose and eyes were just as bruised as a couple days ago in the hospital.

Shane grimaces but takes the files without really looking at them, leaning heavily on one crutch.

The young officer hesitates for a second, before finally saying, "If you have any questions, or anything else you can remember, just let me know, I'm Officer Chambers. We'll stay in touch as the trial starts over here in Canada, Mr. Rozanov also has my number."

Shane just nods quietly. The officer nods back, then turns and starts down the porch without another word.

Shane makes sure to lock each lock on the front door before turning to walk down the hallway. The house is quiet around him, the crutches not making much noise as he moves back towards his old bedroom, the motion practiced now as he refuses to sit down.

Halfway there he can't help but skim over the packet given to him. It's a good couple of pages long, a good stack, each page covered in small writing. Shane had left his glasses on as he answered the door, so as he skimmed words stand out among the first page.

Glass. Blood. Forced Entry. Dragged. Unconscious.

His stomach turns, but he flips a couple pages.

Fire damage. Hoarding. Memorabilia. Cocaine. Locks. Basement. Garden. Body.

Shane doesn't notice when he drops his right crutch till it clatters loud on the hard wood.

"Shane? You okay sweetheart?"

He doesn't answer his mom's call. He doesn't hear her.

The black and white printed photographs attached to the back were worse than the words.

The hallway memorabilia. The handcuff on the bedpost. The wheelchair. The kitchen half burnt away, cabinets charred, wall open to the backyard. The locked basement door. The shelves of pots and pans. The cleaning supplies shoved in a concrete corner. Kitchen knives and firearms neatly arranged. The table and chairs in the corner, covered in drug paraphernalia. The pictures hanging along the concrete walls by the table, each way more inappropriate than anything in the living area. The front garden dug up by construction equipment, dirt and flowers thrown to the side.

Shane doesn't realize he's in the hall bathroom till he can feel the bottom of his left foot pressing against the cold tile of the shower and the bottom of his sweatpants grow wet. He's tucked into the corner of the walk-in shower, surrounded by glass, but opposite the door to the bathroom.

He must've locked the door at some point on the way in.

It's with a dull sort of detachment that Shane realizes he doesn't have his crutches with him. The packet isn't anywhere either. He doesn't remember dropping them, but he must have between the front door and the bathroom down the hall.

Everything feels a little more real, a little less fragile, when his back is pressed hard against the cold tile. It feels nice. Grounding. He tucks his knees into his chest and keeps his eyes on the door.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

The dust mites are easy to follow with his eyes. They float in the air, dancing in the light of the bathroom window.

Shane had forgotten to turn the light on.

No matter. He was fine here. No one could get him here behind this locked bathroom door.

He pressed his sweaty palms against the tile below him. The water left behind from someone's earlier shower both doesn't help them stop being wet but it also cools him down a bit.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

Shane loses count of his breaths when a fist bangs on the other side of the door. It starts softly, but the longer he doesn't answer the more often it comes. Shane can hear it speed up, and so does the intensity. It keeps getting louder, and it's banging around in his head.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

He can't really make out whatever the person on the other side is saying. It's loud, but Shane doesn't really care. He's safe here until someone pries him off the tile. Till someone takes the door off the hinges.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

The doorknob keeps shaking. He hopes it holds.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

His socks were wet; it was kind of gross.

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

Where was Ilya?

In. Out. In. Out. In. Out. In. Out.

Shane doesn't know how long he ends up sitting on the wet floor of the bathroom. He does know when he starts getting a better handle on himself the tile below his is starting to fully dry as well as his pants. There's no banging on the door anymore. It's quiet except for Shane's breathing in the dark bathroom.

He hadn't noticed the sun go down outside the window. Shane should've, because now he can barely see in the soft glow of the moonlight. His back kind of aches, and so does his ankle. Overall, his head is still swimming, and his lungs are still a bit tight in his chest, but the anxiety he had felt was slowly receding.

Shane crawls over to the door of the bathroom and sits quietly next to it for a moment. When it's still quiet outside he slowly twists the lock open. He was tired of being in this room, tucked in a corner and scared. What else he wanted to do, he didn't know, but he did not want to stay here. It was cold. He was tired. He had started to recognize this bathroom.

When the door swings inwards it moves faster than he expected, Ilya catching himself on his palms as the door is taken out from behind his back where he's sitting on the floor in front of it.

The man's eyes are tired when they turn to him, worried. Dark circles sat under his eyes and his knees clicked as he stretched out his legs in front of him. His curls were messed up and sticking everywhere.

It didn't take away from the fondness still swimming in them. Shane tears up all over again at the sight.

"It's going to be okay, котёнок. We'll figure this out together."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry, this was like 20% fluff 80% angst, it should be more than half fluff at least in the epilogue... I can't just break them I have to fix them both a little more

Прощай, моя роза. - Farewell, my rose.
накручиваешь себя, Ilyusha - *you're psyching yourself out, Ilyusha* in a way
Котёнок, посмотри на меня - Kitten, look at me
Hello мой дорогой, Я очень скучал по тебе - Hello my dear, I missed you very much
Котёнок - Kitten
Я тебя люблю - I love you
мой дорогой - my dear
моя любовь - my love
Hey, hey, Я здесь сейчас, всё будет в порядке. - Hey, hey, I'm here now, everything will be fine.

Warnings with spoilers: Shane recounts attempted sexual assaults to officers, Mr. kidnapper attacks some nurses, implied body hidden in the front garden (maybe multiple, who knows), football tackles, panic attacks, speeding?, Shane on hospital drugs not illegal ones

Chapter 8: Not Benched Yet

Chapter Summary

> “Do you, Shane Hollander take this man as to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, in destitution and fortune, in sickness and in health, from this day forward?”
> “I do.”
> “Do you, Ilya Rozanov take this man as to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, in destitution and fortune, in sickness and in health, from this day forward?”
> “I do.”
> The cheering fades into the pulse of blood in Shane’s ears, giddy, as he connects his lips to the man he’s loved since 2008.

Chapter Notes

> Welp here it is folks, the last chapter
> Again, it turned out way longer than I anticipated (14k words!!!)
> This is fic is as long as some novels... it may exceed the actual Heated Rivalry word count umm
>
> Fun statistics about this fic in the end notes!!!
>
> Also sorry for the wait I moved back to my school apartment which I live in by myself, so I lose all ability to be a normal functioning human being of society...
> I hope this satisfies as the end of the story, no cliff hangers, just fixing things and a good helping of fluff
>
> Thank you to all who have supported this story! And hello and thank you to all the readers who have chosen to wait for this story to be completed before reading, I hope you enjoy! <3
>
> I have plans for a Hayden find out fic with the Pike woman in it, but I'm a graduate student so who knows if I'll have the time as the weeks go on... I'm gonna try
>
> Now that the story is over, I am going to try to reply to some more comments than before, some of ya'll were guessing the fan account chapter ahead and I was over here like I'M NOT IGNORING YOU YOU'RE JUST RIGHT TOO EARLY

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The apartment in Ottawa is beautiful, just like Shane had remembered it. The kitchen had been finished fully; the island in the middle gleaming marble and the wine cabinet by the fridge up to the ceiling. Ilya had looked almost giddy as they walked the place the first day; a team having been hired to bring their belongings from the cottage to here.

It was open concept, like most places Shane had bought over the years, the windows opening up to the surrounding city view. It made him more nervous than it used to, when he had last seen the place or lived in one of his own properties. As discretely as he could he drew the curtains tight, hiding the sun, then fixing them again as he walked past them each time.

Ilya hadn't commented.

The first days they lived there, just the two of them again, were quiet, comforting and safe. Exactly what Shane needed. What they both had needed. Ilya held him like if he let go again, they both would evaporate into the air, so Shane let it glue his insides back together again.

As much as he loved his parents, missed them and hated worrying them during everything, he needed his space after a while. He couldn't stand all the eyes on him, waiting for him to break down again.

Here on the couch with Ilya, eyes on him didn't itch or burn, lay heavy or burdensome. Shane could still feel them, Ilya's eyes somewhere on the side of his face, where the morning light was catching opposite the side he had pressed against the man's chest. Ilya's breathing hardly changes when Shane shuffles in place, pushing closer, skin to skin, chest to chest.

The both of them lay there trying to hold each other's pieces together as they themselves avoided falling apart.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane was much too content in Ilya's arms, needed the pressure, the warmth, having thought about being right here every hour he was in that dreadful house in Illinois.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

It's no surprise Ilya breaks the silence first.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"Я не знал, как бы я жил без тебя. Прошу прощения. Мне следовало сделать намного больше. Вместо этого я был слаб без тебя." *I didn't know how I would live*

without you. I'm sorry. I should have done much more. Instead, I was weak without you.

Ilya's fingers were soft in his hair. At the sound of the soft Russian words falling from the man's lips, he opened his eyes to catch his eye.

"Ilya."

The man shushes him softly, eyes reverent and shiny, and whispers, "Я был так напуган. Я не могу не иметь тебя в своей жизни. Пока ты страдал, я ломался. With people who didn't deserve it." *I was so scared. I can't not have you in my life. While you were suffering, I was breaking down.*

His hands are still soft, just ghosting, "бессильный. Helpless."

If Shane could melt into the man's bare skin he would; turn the two of them into one being and live out their days as one entity. Just them. Together. Melded. Shane and Ilya. He closes his eyes tight to fight off the tears, not wanting them to meet his fiancé's skin as he was still pouring his heart out.

"Ilya. You couldn't have done more. It's not your fault."

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Ilya's scent is comforting in his nose. His tobacco and woodsmoke scented body wash. The clean soap of his shampoo. The distant smell of cigarettes is not grating, but familiar, warmer and cleaner in a way.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"Мне следовало сделать больше, когда я его увидел. слишком рискованно. и мне нужно было увидеть тебя. Быстрый. Я так испугался, моя любовь." *I should have done more, when I saw him. Too risky. And I needed to see you. Fast. I was so scared, my love.*

It's not often Shane hears the man at a loss for words, voice choked up. Ilya's eyes were intense, dark beneath his eyebrows, and Shane didn't fear them, only fell more in love with the familiar ones.

"*I cannot lose you*."

When Ilya's hand comes up to cup his jaw, holding him, Shane closes his eyes and leans into the touch.

"I could not breathe without you. I asked my mother above to bring you home to me each hour. After everything we have worked towards, I couldn't let you be taken from me. I didn't want to lose another good thing far too soon in my life. I needed you safe."

"Ты пообещал остаться со мной. Чтобы я мог любить тебя. I cannot lose you, моя любовь." *You promised to stay with me. So I could love you. My love,*

“I will. I promise.”

“I cannot handle when you are hurt. I take care of you with purpose. I will do better job in future.” His hands are still soft as they glide over his jaw and cheekbones. “Of this I swear.”

“моя любовь, eyes on me,” the man waits a moment for Shane to open his eyes and connect with his, “Я люблю тебя больше всего. Кто-то обидел тебя, но больше никогда, я этого не допущу. Я обещаю, что всегда буду защищать вас, несмотря ни на что. I will do anything for you, my love. I need you to know that. Пообещайте мне. скажи мне, что ты понимаешь.” *My love…I love you more than anything. Someone hurt you, but never again, I won't allow it. I promise I will always protect you, no matter what… Promise me. Tell me that you understand.*

Shane could feel it in his heart, could trust the pleasant burn of it all. The fire.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

“Я понимаю. Я тоже тебя люблю.” *I understand. I love you too.*

-~-

Shane had only been down in the apartment building’s gym for a couple hours now, working through his physical therapy exercises and what he could of his usual routine before coming back upstairs. Apparently, it was just enough time for the place’s energy to shift.

At first the feeling of something ‘not quite right’ in Shane’s apartment makes his skin crawl. Part of him wants to just turn around and go back downstairs. Not move past the front door. Maybe get another couple of reps in then never come back up. Move.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane’s hand tightens on the doorknob.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Had Ilya left the house at some point?

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane’s still standing in the doorway, front door open behind him, self-combusting, when the click of nails against wooden floorboards pulls his focus back to the present.

The black lab tapping closer to him doesn’t hesitate at the sight of his panic or the open door, just comes to his feet and sniffs his shoes, then his bare legs. When Shane looks down, he’s greeted with wet black eyes on the sweetest droopy face, so he drops his gym bag to the side to scratch the dog’s ears with both hands.

The dog sits in front of where he crouches, between his knees, seemingly content to put all its weight into its head and let Shane hold it up. It blinks slowly up at him as he keeps

scratching its head, marble eyes looking over his face and wiggling from its wagging tail.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The footsteps in the hallway don't surprise him. Shane recognizes them.

"милый." *Cute*

Shane doesn't look up at his fiancé as he pads closer, still focused on the sweet puppy in front of him, "Whose dog did you steal?"

Ilya's chuckle is deep, amused, obviously pleased with himself.

"I am not cartoon Russian; I do not steal puppies." He shrugs, standing above him, "I pay money, I talk to Harris about Chiron then I buy us puppy. Or really, you puppy, I name, because I spend money and buy food."

Shane huffs a bit and rolls his eyes, still surprised at how his afternoon was turning out, "So what, you just bought us a dog? We've always talked about one, but we don't even have a yard anymore. Where are they going to go when we travel? And what do you mean you already chose a name, you asshole, did you really name them Anya? Is she even a girl?"

"Anya is a princess and needed home. She come with us to games, watch daddies play. Is perfect job for princess Anya, she is support dog, specially trained. She come with us to games for cheering and cuddle you during press conferences and hotel after."

Shane tries to blink away the tears in his eyes. It's considerate. He doesn't want to accept it out loud. He swallows down the budding fear in his throat.

"I've been perfectly fine lately; I don't need more help. I have you and my parents. I've been doing my physical therapy exercises. I'm fine."

"I never said you weren't. Anya is companion for when I am not here. Help with anxiety. Upcoming weeks I have practice and you have physical therapy and regular therapy, home alone. Anya watches over you for us both. Yuna and David already see pictures of grand-puppy. Cannot return princess."

"You sent pictures of her to my parents?"

"I make sure new girl is approved before bringing her home. They offer to babysit, but Anya will have own passport."

"I can't believe you."

Having Anya around is nice. Amazing even. When Ilya is gone, she provides that other presence that Shane needed these days, the warmth next to him comforting and reassuring in the cold of the house. He loves her, a lot. She shaves off the edges of his anxiety and makes him feel like he's not spiraling alone in his own home, bugs under his skin.

Shane is not used to pets, so it's a bit to get used to. She accompanies him on walks out to the park across from the apartment, helping him work to longer and longer periods outside the house. Stretching his slowly healing body. Anya loved to press her face hard against your hip or hand when she sensed something wrong, and it helped, knowing that sometimes just focusing on her pressure against him will bring him back from the panic and help him relax a bit more. She helps Shane's anxiety curb, no longer pacing the walls of his apartment like he was before. Any help that grounded him was welcome when his brain started spiraling.

She doesn't, however, tear his eyes away from the open windows in the living room, curtains open for sunlight, even if they are multiple floors off the ground. Even when she's curled up next to him, tail wagging in her sleep as they watch documentaries, the house quiet. Shane still stays awake some nights, staring at the door to the master bedroom, adamant in his head that someone was going to throw it open soon, despite Ilya and Anya's heavy breathing on either side of him acting as barriers from the world, content in their sleep.

Shane's just paranoid, he knows he is. He's safe in his bedroom with his fiancé. There were security and cameras around the building and doors. Ilya and Anya were both sleeping, vulnerable and calm, not worried at all.

So why couldn't he sleep?

He supposed it was normal after what he had been through; his safe places violated, his trust in his home compromised, sitting afraid in his own skin and afraid of noises. Gaten was in prison in America, hours away; there was no way he was getting free without the police knowing about it and contacting him immediately. Shane wouldn't need to see the man's face for months as the investigation was wrapping up, the house in Illinois documented, and the trial being set up.

Shane's mom had taken the initiative on all the legal aspects, and though Shane felt he was an adult enough to handle them himself, she had insisted upon it. So now there was nothing to do but sit and worry about it till the dates came.

He couldn't play hockey till regular season, couldn't even get close to a pair of ice skates till the cast then the boot came off.

The creaking of the building, shifting in the weather, made him jump. Anya doesn't look up from where she's breathing slowly in front of him. Ilya doesn't move except to pull him closer in his sleep. Shane tries to focus on the man's breathing as he pets though black fur.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

But what would happen in a couple of months?

Shane had already talked to Couch Weibe a bit, more to catch up and see how he was doing than anything more. The older man had told him to take his time recovering, after they

would see how he was doing and then place him straight back in his previous position. It was reassuring to know the team looked forward to having him back just like before, even after a major injury and missing pre-season.

They had thankfully understood that he would also be missing games through the next two seasons too as this trial went on.

Shane didn't want to think about it all.

Back to press conferences and questions about his personal life would be coming soon. He would be married by then, so a lot about his wedding and his husband and their dating history. Shane would be asked how he had recovered, what his off season was like; dancing around the questions they truly wanted to ask.

The thought of that many eyes on him sets panic in his lungs.

Anya presses to his side harder, rumbling softly.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Little details were already making their way to the press, leaked from what's most likely nosy nurses and rookie cops. TMZ had posted pictures of that dreadful house in Illinois after seeing the absolute swarm of cops and police tape around it; putting two and two together quickly.

The garden had been torn to shreds by that excavator.

The case was all anyone talked about online these days.

Shane had deleted the social media apps from his phone, tired of seeing his name in every other gossip magazine that wanted to speculate on what had gone on in that seemingly normal suburban house. Frustrated with the constant pinging of DMs from journalists and random accounts alike.

His mom had been fielding all the phone requests for interviews. The more that came in, the less Yuna Hollander was polite in informing journalists that Shane was still recovering and there was an active police investigation going on.

How was Shane going to handle sitting in front of all those cameras now? Knowing that somewhere out there there was another person just as dysfunctional and hyper focused on him as Gaten had been. Hell, there were probably a few for each hockey player in the league.

How was he going to do this again?

Anya pressed harder, like he was trying to meld with him.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

-~-

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Official conduct thorough investigation of Illinois home NHL Star Shane Hollander was held captive for three days. Evidence of accumulated hoard of memorabilia pertaining to Hollander, heavy drug use, as well as two bodies found buried on the property. Basement darkroom equipment currently in the process of being collected as evidence. More at 8pm press conference.

@OttawaOfficialPoliceDepartment: Investigation continues into Illinois home that where Canada All-Star Shane Hollander was held captive for multiple days. Items locked in basement, the bathroom door taken off its hinges, excessive fire damage, and two bodies buried in the yard. More information to be discussed in Federal Bureau of Investigation's press conference at 8pm EST.

@TMZ: BREAKING NEWS: FBI to release more information on investigation of Springfield, Illinois house where Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander was held captive for multiple days by crazed fan; What we know is that this fan has shown evidence of drug abuse due to an unstable living environment, the suspect having been raised by their grandmother after their mother's abandonment. Click for more details.

@UsWeekly: FBI to release more information regarding investigation of Springfield, Illinois house where Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander was held captive for multiple days by crazed fan; Front garden reportedly ripped to shreds, next door neighbors tell all about quiet young mechanic taking care of grandmother

@RadarOnline: Shane Hollander Suspect house raided by police; Evidence of large amounts of cocaine usage as well as darkroom set up in basement for developing inappropriate unconcesual photos; More at 8 with details.

@Star: Obsessed Shane Hollander Superfan keeps Illinois house as shrine to Stanley Cup Champion, including memorabilia, dedicated photo dark room, and additional door locks; Holds man hostage for multiple days

@FederalBureauofInvestigation_Official: Abduction suspect of NHL Star Shane Hollander, twenty-three year old Gaten Kulick not currently charged in investigation into two bodies found in front garden, further scientific testing needed. According to confession statement, one died from drug overdose, the other from natural causes, and both were buried on the home property to continue receiving government assistance checks.

-~-

Ilya's eyes go wide in surprise the first time Shane pulls him into the shower since he got home. Despite the way the man had held him lately, not wanting to let go, nothing more

intimate was initiated by the Russian man.

Shane could understand, he really could. But the want in his stomach for his fiancé's hands on him far outweighed the lingering feeling of his kidnapper's eyes and hands on his skin. He needed to share these types of moments with the man he loved again. Shane had missed the feeling of Ilya pressing them together, skin on skin, like they were trying to melt into one.

Shane had missed the everything about the man tremendously.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Anya tries to follow them in but they both chuckle and shoo her back out of the walk-in shower, at least letting her stay in the bathroom to enjoy the heated floors.

Ilya was as gorgeous as ever in the water, rainfall showerhead above leaving his hair plastered to his forehead. He closes his eyes for a second, letting the water pour over his face, and Shane watches closely as it moves over the man's cheekbones. Past his mole and sculpted lips. Ilya soaps up a washcloth before moving it carefully towards him, then starting to gently wash his chest and upper arms.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane ends up turning the temperature up in an attempt to fry off his lingering nerves.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

He let's the man wash his hair as well, closing his eyes slowly as finger find comb the shampoo through.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

When he finally got all the suds washed from his hair, Shane was too focused on his own breathing to catch his fiancé's expression, eye's intense and studying.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Outside the water, warm tile beneath his feet, Shane felt a bit better, less untethered. Less adrift at sea. The towel he had wrapped around him was warm, catching the falling water drops. He doesn't bother to raise it to dry his own hair.

Shane's smile was wide, eyes down, as he watched Anya try and succeed in licking stray droplets of water off of Ilya's bare ankles. The man's laughter filling the room as he danced away from the black lab's tongue.

Towel tucked snuggly around his waist, Shane moves forward to kiss his fiancé, sighing at the feeling of the man's lips on his own, the lingering taste of his laugh.

It was like coming home.

They moved slowly together through the doorway and deeper into the bedroom, Ilya spinning them around to sit Shane on the edge of the bed. As Shane falls, Ilya pulls both their towels away, throwing them somewhere in the room for him to complain about after.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Looking at the man stood naked above him, Shane couldn't imagine himself ever being luckier. The man was sculpted by the gods. The embodiment of an athlete. After years of will-they-won't-they Shane was beyond happy to end up here, with Ilya.

This feeling in his belly must be the returning butterflies.

"Come here, котёнок." *Kitten.*

Shane leans towards him without thinking about it. They are both still shower-warm, skin still slightly damp from the hot water, hair still dripping. None of it stops their lips from meeting, crashing into each other, Ilya's tongue asking for permission to enter his mouth before sweeping in.

His tongue traces Shane's teeth like they're re-remembering him.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane moves his own tongue against the man's, his hands coming to grasp his large biceps, strong and hard from years of exercise. They're solid, warm below his fingers. Familiar and beautiful.

Ilya's hands trace his sides gently before gripping harder around his waist.

The building creaks around them in the wind.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The sound of heavy kissing fills the room, Shane panting as he tries to catch his breath, blood sharp in his body.

He doesn't expect when Ilya pulls far away, pushing him back to sit on the bed when he tries to follow. The cold that settles in Shane's blood isn't just from the sudden lack of body heat, his hard-on wilting fast.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"Котёнок, breathe, please. For me." Kitten.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"*Thank you*, my love. Keep going."

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

When Shane finally catches his breath again, he notices he's been wrapped in the extra throw-blanket he has always kept at the bottom of the bed. Anya is looking at him from the floor, black marble eyes wide and head near his leg, Ilya is sitting side by side with him on the mattress.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

"I'm sorry."

Ilya shushes him quickly, trying to meet his eyes despite Shane's avoidance.

"No, моя любовь, never apologize. 'Tis not your fault. We are okay." *My love.*

"Doesn't really feel okay… I just had a fucking panic attack while trying to have sex with you."

"Shane, 'tis okay. You are healing from bad experience. We work together for you to be comfortable again. Is normal."

"I don't even understand why I'm panicking though; it's not like anything happened. I worked hard to make sure it wouldn't…"

Ilya's eyes are shining next to him, trying hard to keep his expression neutral as he fights back tears.

"Body remembers fighting off touch. I do not blame you nor your beautiful brain, you are still fighting to protect self." Ilya's fingertips are soft where they comb his bangs back

from his forehead, “We work together to remind you you are safe. You lean on Anya and me and parents and perhaps Pike if he lucky. We go slowly, together.”

His lips are soft on Shane’s when they meet, soft kisses pressed over and over again.

“I love you. Много.” *A lot.*

“Я тоже тебя люблю, мой дорогой.” *I love you too, my darling.*

-~-

It hadn’t started like one of those days. He had woken up feeling fine, ate breakfast then took Anya on a walk in the park nearby, only one crutch in hand. Shane had thought it was going to be a good day when he had managed to make it the entire walk without taking out the one earbud he had worked himself up to. When he had got back home, Shane had showered, Anya watching through the glass door to catch the drips, then he had made his way back to the living room to watch TV. Ilya had woken up soon after, eating some breakfast before rushing out the door for team practice.

The first couple of times Ilya had left him alone in the house for hockey responsibilities, Shane had almost driven himself up the walls. He missed hockey and working out to his full potential. Hated not being on the ice. He hated the crutches. Hated being home alone in the quiet.

On the other hand, the panic had driven him to lock himself in the main bedroom, at one point even tucking himself in the back of the walk-in closet, holding Anya close while he tried to steady his breathing. The additional security in the apartment complex was comforting, as were the new security cameras set up inside the house. Maybe Shane was a bit paranoid, but it was mostly because when he was home by himself, he was at a disadvantage with a broken ankle.

Anya was too much of a sweetheart to do much protecting if anyone broke in, but she helped Shane calm his nerves in the quiet house, helped him catch his breath again through the rapid-fire thinking.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Today it was only helping so much.

Ilya had left for team practice after leaving a lingering kiss on his forehead and a pet for Anya, having her promise to look after him while the Russian man was gone.

The two of them had stayed on the couch for another hour, Shane watching the Charlie Brown Thanksgiving despite the holiday being months away and resting his foot on the coffee table, Anya curling up next to him with her head on his lap.

Petting her was comforting, the weight of her head a welcome pressure, but something under Shane’s skin was weird. It felt like he had put on a skin suit two sizes too small.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Anya looked up at him curiously when he stood up from the couch, disrupting her nap and taking the warmth away. She watched Shane pace for a moment in front of the sofa before stretching and getting up to follow him further into the house.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane's movements are jolty with his thoughts, finding himself starting and stopping across the wooden floorboards. He had stretched his arms a bit as he walked, pacing to the kitchen and staring into the fridge, then walking past every window in the living room and drawing the curtains shut tightly.

The apartment was much darker without the natural light, Ilya and him usually preferred to keep the windows open even into the night to get even the moonlight.

Today all the windows are driving Shane insane. He had chosen the 12th floor apartment for a reason, and yet he couldn't help but think about who may be looking in the window.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Peppermint Pattie was yelling about Thanksgiving food.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane hadn't planned it out at all, which was unusual for him.

He didn't call Ilya; he called his dad.

Shane invited him along for some of that gentle support he always provided, no questions asked, but also to make sure he didn't end up going crazy by himself. Anya came too, but Anya came everywhere with him these days.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The shelter they ended up at wasn't very far away, only about twenty minutes. Shane had let his dad drive without argument, his foot still in a cast, and the man hadn't asked him any questions besides the directions, only drove and listened quietly to the old country rock bands that the man had raised him on.

When Shane walked through the rows of cages, he couldn't help but feel sad for all the animals. When he got home, he would give the place a generous donation, something they can use to update everything and get all the animals the medical care they needed.

Every dog and cat is cute, and while Anya is his first pet ever, Shane has always loved animals. It doesn't mean he knows what he is looking for, however. The fluffy gray cat, 3 years old and a little lopsided, snaggletooth prominent, makes eye contact with him through the cage and then proceeds to throw herself against the bars of her enclosure, determined for him to give her love. It's all it takes for him to flag down an employee to let her out and carry

her to a small room off the hallway to meet privately. The little gray cat takes all of two seconds to sniff out corners of the room before flopping in his lap, purring loudly, arching into his scratching fingers.

Anya watches from the corner of the room, tail wagging hard and eyes focused on the gray fur in Shane's lap. The cat ignores her.

It was not ten minutes later that he was filling out the paperwork for the sweet girl, now lovingly named Lucy after the Peanuts character, and sitting in the back of his dad's car with a cardboard carrier in his lap.

Anya was still trying to sniff her new sister, but Shane would only let her through the box for now. Lucy's nose was still attempting to push out the top.

The trip to PetSmart after goes by in a blur; new cat trees and beds, two nice automatic litter boxes, cat toys and food and treats, a new collar with a name tag, and some new toys for Anya so she doesn't feel left out. Shane's glad he has his dad with him again, the man just quietly suggests new things for Lucy, picking up the heavy things as Shane balances his crutches, getting it all into the car much larger than the one he owns himself.

Once everything is piled high by the living room sofa, Shane lets his dad leave him too it, thankful for the company but honestly tired of interacting with anyone for a while. His dad just gives him a pat on the shoulder, a kiss on the forehead, and makes him promise to call if he needs anything at all.

Shane listens to the locks click shut as the man leaves.

"Ack."

Lucy stares at him from where she sits feet away on the carpet, seemingly deciding to watch Shane open her new things instead of exploring her new home just yet. She was also steadfastly ignoring Anya who sat beside her and was practically inhaling her.

"Was that supposed to be a meow? I didn't know cats could make that noise. Why didn't you say anything earlier?"

She just blinks large golden eyes at him, licking over her snaggletooth.

"ack."

It makes Shane smile.

They end up on the couch together for a nap, Shane and his two girls. Anya curls up by his feet, head on his toes over the blanket. Lucy makes herself comfortable curled up into where his shoulder meets his neck, her little face, tooth still out, laid over the bridge of his nose, uncaring of the slowly clearing up bruises from a healing broken nose.

The sound of her purring and the wiggle she does, like she's trying to somehow get closer, are what send him off to sleep for the first time outside his locked bedroom in a long time.

That's where Ilya finds them a few hours later, still asleep even as Anya's usual dinnertime comes and goes. Shane doesn't stir as the wiggling dog gets up for dinner.

After feeding the girl, Ilya stops to take out his phone and take pictures of his man and their new fuzzy baby.

After the sound of the shutter, Lucy stretching out like a fuzzy scarf and re-pressing her face to Shane's own is what wakes him up. Ilya's coo sends her pressing even closer, and he finally opens his eyes to see his fiancé taking photos of him.

"Котёнок и котёнок. Милые пушистые твари размножаются." *Kitten and kitten. Cute fluffy creatures are multiplying.*

Shane just blinks sleepily for a second. The grin on Ilya's face is fond.

"Ack!"

"Котёнок, that is not how котёнок sound. You get duck?"

"Ack!"

"She's telling you to go fuck yourself. Leave us alone. We're napping."

"What a lady! You have spicy girl, Hollander! And is dinner time."

"Ack!"

"Cheating on me in own home, Hollander. You melt into each other. You have fuzzy mole. Growth."

When his fiancé goes to pet her, she strikes out with fast paws, batting him away. Ilya yips and dances away from sharp claws.

"Как вы смеете! In my house, on my husband! Stealing!" *How dare you!*

Lucy responds with another swipe, apparently not fond of sharing, only tolerating others. Shane can't help the giggle that escapes him, already endlessly found with the ex-street cat, a scraggly little lady that has apparently decided that Shane was hers and no one else's.

Anya goes to comfort Ilya on the other side of the couch when he sits down with a pout, but it doesn't stay on his face long after he pets her for a moment, eyes admiring Shane and his new cat.

"You did not tell me you were getting another pet. You had worried about having Anya. You not trying to make her jealous?"

Shane chuckles a bit, Lucy bouncing but not caring, "I didn't really plan to get her. It was just one moment it was just Anya and I in the house and I just couldn't settle or

something, next I was out the door to the shelter and there she was. I love Anya, she's awesome for my anxiety, really, it just…"

Ilya's smile is fond, "You are what they call cat person, котёнок, 'tis not surprising. You need extra comfort."

"I don't *need* anything. I just wanted a pet a little more, I don't know, attuned to their surroundings."

They both look down to where Anya is pushing her head harder into Ilya's hand for scratches.

"I mean, yah, Anya is good with emotions and helping me calm down, my anxiety about being alone and all that, but like, she doesn't flinch at the floor creaking and open curtains on windows like Lucy and I do. I think it helps to not make me feel like I'm hearing things. That I'm not going crazy."

Ilya hums at him, eyes still watching where Lucy is trying to attach herself to Shane's face.

"You now have fuzzy baby to guard home."

"Her name is Lucy, like the one character from the Charlie Brown movies, we watched them last Christmas."

Ilya just nods solemnly, "She is bossy like Peanuts girl."

"That's not why she's named Lucy, asshole, I was just watching one of the Charlie Brown movies earlier, where Lucy takes away the football."

"Lucy is accurate name."

"Ack!"

When Ilya stands up to head to the kitchen to whip them both up a late dinner, he reaches out even slower than before to let Lucy smell him. She turns her nose away as he moves closer.

"Ack!"

"Learn to put tooth in mouth, then, моя королева." *My Queen.*

Shane had her for maybe a month before Lucy truly showed off her former street cat personality.

She was usually meltingly sweet for Shane, content to be carried like a baby and wanting to get underneath his skin. She tolerated Anya, Ilya less so for stealing his attention away. So when she sits straight up in his lap where he and his girls were watching old Stanley Cup games, Shane's immediately alarmed. Anya doesn't do much but watch the grey fluff

ball run across the room and wag her tail, content with letting the Queen of the house conduct the research.

Anya does, however, get up and follow him when he goes to follow Lucy, only to find her sitting patiently, tail swooshing slowly as she stared at the front door. Shane stood behind her, matching her stillness, as together they watched the hardwood door stay silent. Anya sat down to watch Shane carefully, pressing close, hearing his heart start to pick up pace.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

“Ack!”

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Someone knocked politely at the door three times.

For a second Shane doesn’t know how to breathe, how to react. His phone buzzes in his pocket, cameras alerting him to someone at the door. It still takes him a second to get his bearings.

“Ack!”

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The video camera shows him it’s the man from the front desk, a package in hand. A text at the top of his screen is from a half hour ago.

Ilya’s text reads, ‘Ordered new things for королева, do not know if will leave at front desk or in mailbox, let know if issue.” *Queen*

Shane breathes slowly. Lucy watches the door. Anya leans harder against his knee.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

“Ack!”

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane opens the door just as the man looks like he’s about to leave, the house too quiet. He’s worried he startles the man when he does it, the man’s eye’s going wide, but Shane tries to smile and takes the package from the man when it’s handed to him, signing quickly.

He musters up a smile and a thank you before shutting the door fast behind him. The lock clicks shut familiarly, safely, the top two clicking shut just as smoothly.

Shane ends up sitting on the couch for far too long, Lucy pressed to his chest, purring loudly, the package still on his lap, Anya covering his feet. The only thing that riles him is the later repeated ring of the song Rasputin, over and over, Ilya's ringtone, coming from his phone.

It still takes him a second to answer, but Lucy is still purring and Anya is still sleeping, so everything should be okay. There's no knocking at the door.

"моя любовь, you lock me out of house. Let me know you okay, please, моя любовь." *My love.*

It's only a couple days after the concierge showed up at the door with the package that had got delivered earlier, Lucy staring the man down like he had committed a large sin by trespassing on her territory, that she takes a stand again. Her hatred for strangers was perhaps more comforting sometimes than Anya's sweetness and love.

Ilya's determination to win her affection was definitely funny at times.

Today, Lucy is determined to show the window washers on the other side of the glass who the true threat of the house was.

Even Ilya had steered clear once he had seen her pacing along the windows, scoping out the advance on her domain and potential targets.

"моя королева, you and poor tooth. Please sit." *My Queen*

"Ack."

Shane was on Lucy's side; this was the first time this had happened since they had moved into this apartment. He stood by the windows in his sweatshirt and sweatpants and watched the two men carefully clean each window then squeegee it down, panel by panel of glass. Lucy changed her path to rub against his feet as she went back and forth, eyes also focused on the window washers.

Who knows how long they will take?

"Вы оба ещё не завтракали. иди сюда. Сидеть." *Neither of you have eaten breakfast yet. Come here. Sit.*

The breakfast of eggs, toast, mushrooms, and cottage cheese is one of Shane's go-to's, and it's nice not having to cook for himself. Despite that, he still pushes the food around his plate, carefully stacking each bite before chewing, then the next. Ilya is done way before him but doesn't leave the kitchen island where they sit together.

Shane doesn't focus on the time passing, just on each next bite and chewing, the nice press of skin to skin where Ilya touches their knees together, and his own breathing.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Anya's head is resting on his lap, he moves his hands to scratch her ears, done with eating his breakfast and okay with not washing his hands again for a while.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Her fur is soft beneath his hands. Ilya's hand is going up and down his back, gentle, rhythmic. Shane can feel his breathing start to slow down more

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Lucy jumps up on the counter, ignores their plates, and instead goes to inspect the sink that was placed in the marble of the kitchen island. There are no dishes inside, so Shane doesn't worry when she plops herself inside, sniffing at the faucet and sides like her fur wasn't getting wet.

Ilya's the first to chuckle, amused at the sight, before turning his eyes back to Shane. Shane, however, is still focused on where Lucy is now making herself comfortable in the basin of the large kitchen sink.

"Lucy, моя королева, sink is not bed for royal butt. We clean dishes there." *My Queen.*

Lucy seems to not care much about whatever Ilya ever has to say, today no different, choosing to ignore him and making herself more comfortable.

Shane ignores his fiancé continuing to argue with a cat that neither understood English nor cared to listen to him, instead turning to look out the windows of the open concept living room. There's no one there anymore, each window squeaky clean and already mostly dry in the sun.

Lucy settles further in the kitchen sink.

Anya's head presses against his knee and he keeps scratching her fur, the dog rumbling contently.

Because surely, if Lucy wasn't freaking out on a daily basis, only when there were window washers and people at the door, Shane supposes he doesn't have to worry as much as he used too about people looking in. She seemed to have a good eye on her own territory, already looking for peekers and trespassers. Lucy was much more attuned to what was going on outside the windows than he would ever be.

Maybe if Shane left the curtains open more often, she could enjoy watching the birds fly past.

-~-

The new cottage Shane has built sits only about five minutes from his parents', on the other side of than the old one, tucked back farther into the wildlife and backed directly to the lake. About an hour or so to the rink. Good cell service and top of the line security cameras. One-way windows and tall landscaping. A small gate at the entrance of the long driveway.

It's still the modern kind of architecture Shane has always preferred, but this time he scaled down from the wall-to-wall windows and opened up the entryway more. For once there was a second floor to the place; the only use of platforms being the sunken area that carved out the living room, only a step down.

The windows overlooked the same lake as his previous cottage, but this time the back porch went right up to the water. Off a small right-side staircase there was more yard space; open and flat with large trees and bushes lining the perimeters.

Private.

The place had several guest bedrooms on the second floor. One Shane had even taken the time to plan out with built in bunk beds, two on each side, for when he and Ilya inevitably picked back up on their uncle duties. Ilya had grown soft-eyed when he had found the room while touring the finished product.

Shane had had the colors and themes flow throughout the place. Decorative cream curtains with automatic ones behind them framed the windows. They matched the dining chairs and the clean countertops of the kitchen. The whole place was made of dark wood and beams, the cabinets, carpets, and pillows all a dark green that made the place even homier.

The bedrooms and bathrooms kept the same forest theme, the children's bedroom and bathroom being the most fun to shop for when he had gone on an online shopping spree. He had enjoyed finding the monkey towels with hoods.

The master bedroom had the most flare to it. Dark green walls and paneling all the way up, the ceiling painted to match. Even the bedspread was the same color. Shane had even opted not to have overhead lights installed in the room, as the two of them only ever used the lamps in the bedroom.

Shane opened the door to show Ilya inside, smiling as he watched the man's expressions as they toured together. Anya clicks in through the door behind them, Lucy not far behind.

"And this- is where we will be sleeping."

His fiancé's face is soft, happy, as he explores the room, opening up the doors to the on suite bathroom and peaking in the walk-in closet. The sun that shines through the open windows catches on the man's skin and moles, muscles highlighted as he moves.

Shane knows the man is ignoring his obvious salivating at the sight of him, focused on the room instead, appreciating the design. Trying to give Shane space.

When Ilya moves closer to the bed to touch over fabric of the comforter, Shane takes the opportunity and moves closer, shyly pressing into the man's side. A gentle hand settles on his waist.

"I thought the dark colors would make the place look more comfortable, homey, now I'm also realizing you look really good in green."

"Do I?" Ilya raises an eyebrow at him, smirk growing on his face as he looks over Shane's blush, one hand going to lift his chin to make eye contact, "You think of me when you design bedroom, naughty Hollander, thinking of such things. And here I was imagining you on bed with no clothes, freckles and as you say, homey bed."

Despite the man's words and the grip on Shane's chin, the kiss is soft. Shane presses in for more, and gets it, but finds himself having to be the one to shuffle closer and press against the man's body.

Ilya's touch was still gentle on his waist, so Shane takes the arm around him and uses it to move the man on top of him as he starts to recline against the bed.

Ilya resists it for a second, staying upright, and Shane pouts a bit at him from where he's lying back now, knees bent over the sides of the mattress. The man's eyes are worried and intense on him, but dark with want still.

"Ilya, c'mon."

"You do not need to push yourself for me, моя любовь. I will wait a thousand years and still love you each day." *My love.*

"So, you're saying you don't even want to make out with me?"

The man's sigh is light, expression fond, "No моя любовь. I will never say no to chance to kiss you. However, you are nervous lately, I do not push for more. I will not harm you."

Ilya eyes fall on where Shane's hands are still resting on his forearms. His brow creases before he tries to smooth out his expression, "I will never scare you like bathroom door again, nor watch you tense under my fingers like days before. I not listen enough to your signs, мой дорогой, and for that I am sorry." *My darling.*

The room is quiet around them. Anya settles after a couple turns in the dog bed in the corner, content to take a nap, Lucy is making herself at home on the very top of the cat tree in the corner of the room.

"I'm sorry too. I wish this was easier."

"котёнок, you have been through a lot. There is no easy. Let yourself heal slowly instead of forcing alone. Hockey and I are still here for you. There is no rush. Just us."

"I just wish things were right back to what they were before. I hate that he's affected me. I don't know what's wrong with me anymore."

“Nothing is wrong, моя любовь. We continue, adjust. None is your doing, only us adapting together. Being in love.” *My love.*

“I can’t stand that he still lingers in the back of my mind.”

Ilya’s eyebrows furrow, eyes dark, “I wish I could erase. We get you someone to talk to. You have Anya and I by side, we will not let fall. My love outshines anything anyone will ever offer you.”

“What if I’m never normal again?”

“You? Shane Hollander? Normal? моя любовь, I fell in love at first sight, deeper at folding clothes before sex. Was hot. I love you for who you are, no change or hard situation will change that.” *My love.*

Shane’s teary eyed, his hands tightening against soft skin, still slightly shaking, but pulling Ilya closer.

“God, I love you too. I’ll get better at this again, I promise.”

“There is no rush. I want you no matter what, in any form. Я люблю тебя больше всего, мой дорогой.” *I love you more than anything, my darling.*

“Kiss me, Ilya, like you’ve actually missed me.”

Ilya settles heavier on top of him, one leg between his own. He’s close enough that they are sharing the same breath.

“I have. Are you sure, котёнок?” *Kitten.*

“Maybe… maybe just the kissing tonight.”

The man studies his face closely, looking for a sign of uncertainty.

“Anything you want, котёнок. Do you want to close curtains?”

Shane thought about it for a second,

“No, it’s all good. Just kiss me, Ilya.”

The man raises his eyebrows before softly brushing his lips against Shane’s own.

“Is Lucy going to be watching this whole time?”

“Ack!”

-~-

Harris was trying to make them both pose together for photos, despite neither being in their tuxedos yet, Ilya was without a shirt, and Shane was in his boxers still brushing his teeth.

He had been so preoccupied running around making sure everything was ready for the inner wedding party to show up that when the doorbell had ended up ringing, Shane was only just starting his morning routine.

Ilya doesn't have any shame in his shirtless appearance, however, grinning widely as he opens the door to the Hollanders, Pikes, and some of their teammates. Barrett nods as he enters last, helping his boyfriend already by starting to haul chairs in from his car to the backyard.

Shane's mom comes in the door like she's a woman on a mission, and she was, as she had been planning this wedding since they had gotten engaged. She stops to hug both Ilya and him quickly on her way to the kitchen. His dad just follows her through, stopping longer to wrap an arm around each and press an extra-long kiss to Shane's forehead

At the door, Ilya takes baby Amber out of Hayden's arms without asking for permission.

Jade and Ruby run off after Shane's parents into the kitchen, the Pike parents' eyes tracking them as they go, then relaxing at the sound of his dad greeting the two little girls again and asking for their help.

Hayden takes the opportunity of being free from his gremlins to trap Shane in a careful bear hug, the new boot on Shane's foot allowing him less metal in the hug than before.

"I missed you buddy."

"We were over for dinner just last week."

"I guess so," He claps him hard on the shoulder, "But this is the first time I've been over in a while! I want to meet the new lady who can't stand your fiancé! She sounds like my kind of girl."

"Lucy is warming up. She is tough lover."

"Ilya, she's going to take your eye out one of these days." Shane sighs, "Lucy's staying in the master bedroom for the day, she's not a huge fan of people so I let her hide out in there. We'll probably see her watching us through the windows later during the ceremony."

"Do not let little Pikes meet her, she dislikes people who aren't Shane. I work hard for second place."

Later, they are standing in the living room, breakfast fully eaten, Hayden's watching through the windows as Harris and Troy set out tables and chairs along the path, the arch and flowers already having been set up earlier this morning.

"I don't know why I thought you guys would both stand at the end of the aisle or something. I guess I just didn't think about it too hard. Did you guys like choose or did you play rock paper scissors?"

Ilya's still walking around barefoot and shirtless; however, he's lost the baby to Jackie again who was currently wrangling her kids into the kids' guest room for containment till the ceremony.

"'Tis because Shane's the woman."

"What does that even mean, man?"

Shane stops where he's folding a nearby blanket that didn't really need folding, Anya watching the process closely, "Ilya, shut the fuck up, that's stereotypical. It's because I approached him first when we first met. It's reminiscent."

"I wait for bride or groom at end of aisle, beauty of being bisexual Pike, as you know. Don't forget, Hollander, I made first move."

"We're not talking about that!"

"I don't think I'm following."

"Tis okay, Pike. Do not think too hard. We agree Shane is beautiful and move on."

Hayden merely rolls his eyes and walks away from the man and the window, seemingly looking for his wife and kids. Shane sigh is heavy at the sight of Ilya's large grin, the man's arms coming out to gesture in a casual shrug.

"Is good day, мой ангел!" *My angel.*

-~-

Rose slips through the door of the guest bedroom without knocking, instead just giving out a happy shout of '*hello!*' as she covers her own eyes with her hands. In the other hand she's dragging her suitcase with her extra bags, heels tied in a bag hanging off the side. Her hair is up in curlers.

Shane laughs quietly at her, moving closer in case she trips on something.

"No one's naked anymore, you're all good."

Barrett is somewhere on the other side of the room, "Speak for yourself, Hollander, I can't find my pants."

"I just won't look over there."

Rose wraps her arms around his waist, and despite just getting off a plane, she still smelled good. She rocks them both a bit, holding tighter, and Shane holds her back for a moment longer even with a face full of curlers, content in the contact and comfort.

"How was the flight? Did you say 'hi' to Jackie yet, I don't know where she is right now." Only then do they pull back slowly.

Rose's smile is bright, like it always seems to be. It helps cool a bit of Shane's nerves.

"It was fine, nothing too exciting. I finished my book. Everyone seemed mostly dressed in the other room when Svetlana and I got here and visited. The rest of the Pikes are over there now but I think the twins were getting rowdy, so they are heading outside for a bit."

"Did Ilya grab a hold of Svetlana as soon as she walked through the door?"

"Your dad was pulling out the nice vodka when I left the other room. It of course attracted all the Russians' attentions."

Shane turns over his shoulder, only half joking as he calls out to his other best friend, "Hayden, you had one job today, maybe two, keep them sober and wear the correct suit to the ceremony."

"Ya ya, I'm on it, Captain."

-~-

Shane's mom ties and reties his bowtie for him, standing back to look at him before redoing again. The room is peaceful, just the two of them, his mom making sure he was ready to go before she would walk him down the aisle to marry the man he has loved for the past decade.

"I don't think it can come out more perfect, mom."

She huffs at him, not really annoyed, "I know, I just need everything today to go perfect for you, honey. It was not a small amount of planning, thank God Jackie helped with the decorations. You deserve some joy these days, after everything you've gone through, in and out of hockey. And don't let Anya get dog fur on your jacket, it will never come off."

"You won't even see it in photos, plus there's photoshop."

"You have guests here Shane. They'll see."

She brushes out over his suit jacket, adjusting the flowers in his pocket.

When she looks over his face, her eyes are calculating but soft. It's the type of look she always has before she's about to say something she isn't sure if he is going to like to hear.

"Mom, just say it."

"I'm not thinking about anything, honey."

"Mom."

She sighs heavily, but doesn't break eye contact, determined as she usually is to get her words out correctly.

“I just worry about you, honey.”

“I’m fine mom.”

“There’s a lot of people in the house right now. I just want to make sure you’re comfortable.”

Shane had left the meeting and greeting to Jackie and Hayden as he had finished getting ready. People should be filing into their seats soon.

“I’m excited about this mom. I’ve been looking forward to this.”

“I know, its just everyone would have understood if you had needed more time. A couple more months. Everything has happened so fast since last season, I just can’t help but worry about you, honey.”

Shane doesn’t mean for the look he sends her to be sharp, but it is, “I’m fine mom, I’m not going to cancel my wedding to the man I’ve loved for a decade now just because some rabid fan decided they wanted a chunk out of me and dragged me across state lines. *I’m fine*.”

Her eyes are worried and soft when he finally looks up, and it immediately makes Shane feel bad, he sighs loudly, looking down at his dress shoes.

“I’m sorry mom, I promise I’m doing better. I’ve talked to Ilya more. I have a therapist. I’ve got Lucy and Anya. I’ll be able to go back to playing hockey soon. It’s been rough, but they haven’t benched me just yet.”

Shane ends it with a soft smile and smirk, hoping his mom finds him at least a bit funny, and his mom returns it, hand darting out to fiddle with his bowtie for the hundredth time.

“I know. But I’m your mom, so I’m allowed to worry about you. I just remember when I used to have to tie your skates for you before every practice, now you’re getting married to the second-best NHL player of your time.”

“Mom.”

“Maybe if you two look into surrogacy you can see how they can potentially mix your genetics. No matter what your children would be amazing hockey player, they do say nurture over nature sometimes.”

“*Mom.*”

She fixes his bow tie again.

“I’m just so excited for you, honey.”

Her eyes soften again as she stares at him, Shane avoids eye contact and tries to stick his hands in his pants pockets.

“You both deserve to have this together, lord knows how many years you two have been hiding. From your parents, from the world. From yourselves. I’m just so glad to see you find someone who you fit with perfectly, that’s all I’ve ever wanted as a mom” his mom fights the tears building in her eyes, “And to see that man love you, especially worry about you lately, is all I ever hoped you find.”

She cups his face softly, and it’s a silent moment, filled with love and tenderness that goes beyond words.

It doesn’t last long, a knock on the door startling Shane and drawing his mother’s hands from his face. Hayden slides through the slightly opened door, whistling lowly at him in his suit, Shane’s dad following close behind, shutting the door tightly behind him.

“Look at you, Hollander, you clean up well!”

“Surprised to see one of your many kids hasn’t ruined your suit yet.”

“Ouch, man, I’ve been working overtime seating guests. Thank God some of your new teammates have girlfriends with baby fever, I dropped both Amber and Arthur off with a swarm of them. I think even Jackie has lost the twins for a bit.”

“As long as they don’t end up in the lake.”

“*Shane.*”

“Sorry, dad.”

“Everyone’s dressed and ready to go, Svetlana is calling for things to get started on time and frankly I don’t want to get in her way. I can also confirm the groom is not trashed, your welcome, only nervously sipping vodka.”

“Hayden.”

“Hey man, I tried. You try to tell Russian hockey machine Ilya Rozanov it’s going to be okay before he goes and spills his heart out while crying in front of a large group of people who know him personally. I knew when I did it I needed a couple shots before, you had to take the bottle from me. Actually, if you guys were allowed to see each other in your tuxes before walking down the aisle, I would bet money you couldn’t calm his spiraling before.”

“You don’t know my methods.”

Yuna claps her hands together, “Okay everyone out and to your places. Get everyone ready. Remind everyone to listen to Jackie for when to walk and listen to the music for cues, we’ll see you all on the other side of the aisle.”

-~-

Shane makes it through the beginning of the ceremony without ugly crying, his grin too large on his face for anything else but watery eyes and aching cheeks. Ilya had already

started trying to wipe his eyes discreetly since the moment they made eye contact across the aisle.

They both were fighting it hard, eyes too focused on each other to really hear what the priest was saying, and both started losing fast to tear again as Shane begins reading his vows first.

"Your favorite thing to call me is boring," It gets a chuckle from the crowd, Ilya's eyes are watering, "but over the years of getting to know you, I know that maybe that is one of the things you like most about me."

"Because I know those are my favorite memories, when it was just the two of us, and time slowed down, and neither of us had anywhere to be and no one looking for us. Just the two of us in our own little bubble. It was through those times that I realized the boring, relaxing, do-nothing moments with you were the times that it was truly just us. Not award-winning hockey players, or men who have played since they could walk. Just us."

"To know we get to continue doing that, for the rest of our lives, even continuing our careers together, it's one of the best things I could have ever asked for."

"Marrying you in front of our loved ones is a dream come true, something we both have wanted for years, to share our love with each other without fear of what other people are going to think, how the people we love are going to treat us."

"Even through the years of hockey, working hard to improve my game, one of my greatest achievements is still being the one to get to love you out in the open for the rest of your life."

Shane is still trying to get himself together as Ilya pulls out his own piece of paper, vows written out for him beforehand in English. Seeing the man he loved across from him already choke up before he can even start reading makes Shane pull his handkerchief out from his pocket to wipe his own eyes, uncaring of the crowd.

Ilya's voice shakes as he starts.

"Standing in front of our friends and family with you is culmination of greatest dreams, side by side our hockey trophies together down the hall in our shared home."

Ilya wipes at his mouth as he reads, squaring his shoulders, as if that would keep him from crying.

Shane's not doing any better watching him, face hot, eyes burning.

"Our rivalry on ice makes me better player and brings back love of sport. Our love off ice makes each day worth living for. I am grateful each day for meeting you 10 years ago in Saskatchewan, I fell in love at first sight, your freckles and kindness."

"Loving you out in the open is a blessing. Your family has welcomed me with open arms. And all I can offer in return is loving you and everyone you love with everything I have

for the rest of my life."

"To lose you is to lose my senses. My gravity and balance. I will show you how much you mean to me every day we spend together and I will remind you how much I am willing to do to make you happy every morning."

"I cannot ask for more but for your love each day, for the rest of our lives to continue side by side, because life would not continue to exist without your presence. I cherish each moment and touch, word and minute with you. To promise me forever is to promise me the world."

"Я люблю тебя, мой дорогой, навсегда и вечно." *I love you, my darling, forever and always.*

Both their eyes are stinging, the priest's words barely registering in their ears.

"Do you, Shane Hollander take this man as to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, in destitution and fortune, in sickness and in health, from this day forward?"

"I do."

"Do you, Ilya Rozanov take this man as to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, in destitution and fortune, in sickness and in health, from this day forward?"

"I do."

The cheering fades into the pulse of blood in Shane's ears, giddy, as he connects his lips to the man he's loved since 2008.

-~-

@**OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial:** A successful Hollanov wedding! Congratulations to our Team Captain Ilya Rozanov and First Line Center Shane Hollander on their recent wedding! Having met back in 2008, before the start of their rookie season, this has been a long time coming! Here's to the continued PRIDE in all sports leagues! #lovewins #hollanov

@TeamHollanov: GOING TO CRY LOOK HOW CUTE THEY ARE

@HollanovHockeyHQ: SHANE'S DAD STANDING FOR ROZANOV, JUST TAKE ME OUT BACK AT THIS POINT 😭

@SeenItAllToday: 20$ Montreal was homophobic and that's why Hollander left the team THAT DRAFTED HIM AND HE BROUGHT 3 STANLEY CUPS, 2008????

@HockeyWire: No like legit who cares if he was fucking other hockey players, his stats don't lie, plus he single-handedly got those cups for Montreal, there's a reason they haven't made the playoffs since they lost him

@NHL: Congratulations to Hockey All-Stars and Stanley Cup Champions Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander, the two marry in private home ceremony surrounded by family, friends, and the Ottawa Centaurs.

@HockeyGaysOfficial: SCREAMING CRYING SENDING MY HEAD THROUGH A WALL ❤️❤️❤️😭😭😭

@ESPN: Congratulations to Hockey All-Stars and Stanley Cup Champions Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander on their recent wedding.

@TheGist: Canada's beloved Stanley Cup Champion Shane Hollander marries long-time boyfriend, current captain of the Ottawa Centaurs, Ilya Rozanov in private home ceremony surround by family and current teammates.

@ShaneHollanderFan: My favorite celebrity wedding ever, no fancy bullshit just them ❤️😭

@CentaurSkater97: Glad Hollander is looking better and has a smile on his face, can't wait to see him play again

@HollanovFan90: I would've felt so sad for them if they canceled the wedding after everything that's happened lately

@IowaPuckBunny: What happened?

@HollanovFan90: Just google or read man's wiki honestly at this point

@HollanderHockeyFan: Yooooooo shout out to @PikeHockeyOfficial for being the only Voyageur to still be cool after hollanov got outed

@TwoPointsAhead: Didn't he out them?????

@IceColdTakes: Kind of, but not really. He accidently caught them in the background of a video once making out and the teammate he sent it to posted it online

@TwoPointsAhead: wtf?

@SportsIndustry: Stanley Cup Champions Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov marry in backyard wedding; Become the first married LGBT+ couple in the NHL

@TheSkimm: Long time Hockey Stars Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov Tie the Knot in Small Backyard Wedding. Click for more details on the timeline of their careers together

@TheAdvocate_US: Russian and Canadian Hockey Stars Tie the Knot in NHL's First Ever Marriage Between Players; Their speculated relationship timeline below, from Junior Championships and draft nights, Rose Landry, and their recent marriage

@OfficialTeamMontrealVoyageurs: The Montreal Voyageurs extend their congratulations to former team captain Shane Hollander, who recently married fellow teammate Ottawa

Centaurs Captain Ilya Rozanov in private backyard ceremony surrounded by family, friends, and Centaurs teammates

@BlueLineBitch: It's like my ex all over again when I announced my engagement last season, pretends to be happy for the clout on main but dying inside

@AustinRackAdams: Sydney please respond to my texts

@CityCrowd77: No one cares, let him go, move on

@OttawaTitan: Almost two years now, they've got to give it up they lost him

@OttGoalie81: Does it not say something that Hayden Pike was the only one invited to the wedding after Shane Hollander being on that team for almost a decade???? Homophobes I bet

@HollySmiles: No doubt in my mind, the events line up too closely

@FiveOnFive_91: So nice of them to congratulate the guy despite trading him just two years prior ❤️

-~-

Ilya tips Shane back on to the couch cushions like he has always loved to do, crawling over him with a large smile, teeth on display. Their teeth clack against each other's as they make out, both with too large grins to make it really work. Ilya's hands are soft around his waist, just holding him, not really pressing him down at all.

Anya and Lucy had already been fed, both girls content to sprawl somewhere in the living room by the fireplace. All the guests had already left, Ubers called for the ones without designated drivers. They had no honeymoon planned, both of them content to stay together in their own home and personal oasis, no traveling needed.

They had all the time in the world to freely sprawl on the couch in their living room, lips locked together.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Ilya is tucked between Shane's legs, hard cock grazing against his own, but he doesn't press, doesn't even grind down onto him or press him down into the cushions below them.

Shane attempts to pull the Russian man closer, more on top of him, heavier. He tries to raise his hips to meet his, but Ilya just stays hovering above him, content with turning his lips numb and sticking his tongue in his mouth.

Shane loosens his arm in response and Ilya pulls away almost immediately; eyebrows furrowed with worry.

"You okay, котёнок?" *kitten.*

“Ya, uh… it just didn’t seem like you wanted to go any further.”

Eyebrows relax at Shane’s words and lips are pressed hard again against his. The smile returns to Ilya’s face.

“Is wedding night, I do not want to pressure. We do whatever you want, красивый муж.” *Handsome husband.*

Shane pouts a bit at the words, “What do *you* want to do?”

Ilya’s response is to raise up on both his arms, pulling his face away from Shane’s and leaving his lips cold. He doesn’t hesitate to pout harder and whine.

His now-husband smirks, looking over his face, probably red and lips starting to swell from all the attention.

“I wish to please you, мой муж. Just tell me whatever you want, Я живу, чтобы радовать тебя.” *My husband. I live to please you.*

“Then I want you to touch me, *please*, show me I’m yours. Remind me.”

Ilya moans at his words, hips pressing harder against his own, hard dick pressed against Shane’s.

“Are you sure, мой ангел. There is no pressure.” *My angel.*

“Rozanov, I swear to god if you don’t fuck me right now, on our fucking wedding night, I’m going to kill you.”

“So sweet, котёнок. I will make you forget mean words.” *Kitten.*

There’s a bottle of lube tucked into the far back of one of the living room table shelves, just for moments such as this. Ilya finds it quickly, his other hand fumbling with the button on Shane’s dress pants, not even bothering with the belt.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane lifts his hips to help his new husband, his dick straining painfully against the inside of the fabric. Ilya moans softly as he watches him, scooting back on his knees on the cushions, dropping down to put his mouth on him.

Shane presses his head back into the throw pillows behind him at the feeling of Ilya’s mouth on his cock through the fabric; moist warmth pressing close.

He doesn’t know who is moaning louder at the feeling.

Shane’s pants come off first, belt with it, then his boxers, his nice dress shirt being pushed up under his armpits by wandering hands. The touch sends sparks through him, settling in his lower stomach. There’s no nausea like those weeks before.

Ilya wraps his mouth around him, sucking him down far, as skilled fingers find his nipples. Shane arches into the touch as the hand rubs and tugs, alternating with the other one after a minute. It all leaves Shane singing to the ceiling.

Hazel eyes are watching him from where his husband has settled between his legs, and meeting them only sends Shane's head back moaning against the pillows again.

The man is focused, eyes reverent as he brings Shane closer and closer to completion.

"Holy shit, Ilya, you have to… I'm not gonna… I'm gonna come."

It doesn't do anything but encourage his new husband to speed up his mouth, the sounds pornographic and echoing in the living room, dark eyes intense on his chin.

It's with a heavy sigh and high-pitched moan that Shane comes into the man's mouth, unrelenting, watching it all being swallowed with a smirk.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

Shane is still catching his breath when he hears the click of the lube bottle opening, hiccupping a bit at the sound, both excited and shaking for it.

"Красивый муж, you still want? We no need to continue, моя любовь." *Handsome husband. My love.*

"I missed you, I want you so bad, please Ilya."

-~-

@**OttawaCentaursHockeyOfficial:** GET EXCITED FOR REGULAR SEASON 🎆🎇. The Ottawa Centaurs are looking to make a repeat of last year's Stanley Cup Victory. The team is excited to welcome back Shane Hollander as he makes his return to the ice during the start of Ottawa's regular season as their first line center after his successful recovery over the summer.

-~-

The announcer is loud overhead, lights bright, but it's still drowned out by the surrounding Ottawa crowd, roaring and feral for the first game at the start of a new hockey season.

"INTROOOOOOOODUUUUUCING YOUR FIIIIIIIRST LINE OOOOOOOOTTAWA CENTAURS. ON DEFENSE NUMBER #34 EVAN DYKSTRAAAAAAAAA AND #13 NICK CHOUINAAAAAAAARD."

The crowd roars as the men skate towards the line.

"ANNNNNNNNND OTTAWA RIGHT WING, #28 LUCAS HAAAAAAAAAAAAS."

“NEEEEEEXT UP IS ALTERNATE CAPTAIN, AND LEFT WING, #74 ZANE BOOOOOOOODRAM.”

“AAAAAAAND OTTAWA WELCOMES BACK THE TEAM’S FIRST LINE CENTER AND MULTIPE STANLEY CUP WINNING CHAMPION, BACK FROM RECOVERY, #24 SHANE HOOOOOOOOOOLLAAAAANDER.”

The sound around Shane is deafening, the lights almost too bright from where they bounce off the ice.

The fans are loud around the glass, the whole room shaking with enthusiasm and excitement. It doesn’t itch; it only invigorates. Shane can feel it all pumping through his blood.

Both anthems play, America’s and Canada’s, Shane goes through the motions, keeping his head down.

Along the line of boards, fans have pressed homemade signs against the glass of Ottawa’s home ice rink. Hand’s hit hard as they drum.

“Welcome back Hollander!”

“Good to have you back!”

“We missed you!”

“Congratulations Hollanov”

“Get us another cup please, Hollzy”

Some even trailed over to the darker humor.

“We love you Shane Hollander (the normal amount).”

"Can’t take our star player away from us! Looking at you Chicago!”

The lot of it draws a smile from him, even as he moves over to the center of the ice for the puck drop.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

The Florida Wildcat across from him at the center just nods in greeting, so Shane nods back, then focuses all his attention back on the ice in front of him. The lights above focus in, and the Ref drops the puck.

Shane moves fast enough to send it back to Dykstra, who sends it back up to Haas. They lose it in the opposing team’s territory but work to get it back when in the neutral zone.

Boodram steals it from the Wildcat’s defense line, passing it back up to Chouinard. The man weaves around one of the Wildcat’s offensive players, sending it around the back of

the goal to Haas.

Shane lines himself up and Haas's pass is clean through two opposing players. Shane tips it a bit, then redirects it into the top right corner of Florida's goal, the buzzer sounding loudly from above.

It's still ringing in Shane's ears when his team surrounds him, a lot of them coming off the bench to enfold him in friendly shakes and head pats, all yelling for a goal well scored and a season well started.

Through the chaos of it all, Shane makes eye contact with his husband and team captain, the smile on the man's face and the proud glint in his eye better than any of the praise.

He's missed playing hockey.

Shane scores again in the third period and assists on two others that night.

-~-

Just like every other time he's done this, Shane hates the lights, and cameras, and microphones all gathered in a bunch in front of him. Despite the bright stage lights taking away most of his sight, he can still see the clamber of journalist to make it the closest to the front to ask him the first question.

Ilya had volunteered to come with him, as his team captain. Shane had rolled his eyes and assured his new husband he would be fine attending his first press conference back by himself. He needed to do this. He had prepared for this.

Shane regretted that now.

"Shane Hollander, what is it like back after such a bad injury during the offseason?"

"Hollander, congratulations on your recent wedding, do you care to tell us more about it?"

"Who walked down the aisle in your recent wedding? Did your parents attend?"

"Hollander, care to share with us what your team's reaction was to finding out they would be having you return this season after your injury?"

"Shane! How does your recent change in relationship status affect your ability on the ice? Do you believe your game is only going to continue to improve?"

"What is you and your husband's opinions on prenuptial agreements? Have either of you looked into such contracts?"

"Shane Hollander, can you tell us more about your recovery this summer?"

“Hollander, what is it like to be married to a teammate on the ice? Will you ever play on the same line?”

“Shane Hollander, are you and your new husband thinking about having children one day? Any type of family plans?”

“What is the impact on the Irina Foundation? Any differences in contracts since your marriage to your cofounder?”

Shane struggles through some of them, but only for a few seconds, mostly prepared with prewritten answers. Anya presses hard to his knee under the table, and he takes a moment to pet over the short hair that covered her forehead.

Breathe in for 7, hold for 3, out for 10.

“I have no comment currently.” “Announcements by the foundation are coming soon, look forward to them.” “As the case is still ongoing, I feel it’s best to keep all details to myself for now, thank you.” “My healing went well. The doctors were confident I would return by the start of official season, and I worked hard to follow through.” “I enjoyed the summer with my family. My wedding to my husband was perfect.”

-~-

It was easier to breathe when he was back home, tucked into his husband’s arms. The press conference had gone well, as well as he had hoped for anyway, and now he felt he could be rewarded with not having to think about those types of social interactions for 24 hours.

“Have we not watched this movie before, is same bird dancing for lover on screen. I dance better.”

“No, sometimes the documentaries just talk about the same animals. These birds have interesting mating dances, so they get featured in a lot of them.”

Ilya’s hum rings out across the room, the man’s hand pulling pleased grumbles from Anya as he pets her, the dog pressing close to them both, “I do better mating dance for you. Shower dance. Shane Hollander cannot resist. This I know.”

“Do you ever shut up?”

“No, котёнок, you make mouth run off. And brain. And hand.” *Kitten.*

“Sometimes you get on my nervous really quickly, and I’m surprised when I get surprised.”

Cold fingers dip under the edge of Shane’s t-shirt, but he doesn’t flinch. Instead, he just turns his eyes to where Ilya is trying to act nonchalant.

“красивая сердитая котёнок.” *Beautiful angry kitten.*

The bird continues dancing on the screen; its little background dancers coordinated behind it. Bright feathers spread wide to attract. The female bird looks surprised but intrigued at the display.

Shane's words surprise him and Ilya both, breaking through the silence of the room, disrupting the peace of the moment a bit, but he doesn't want to take them back once they're out.

"I think we should go out to dinner together soon. Maybe that new Italian place nearby that I heard about."

The birds continue singing on the TV for their lovers, Lucy watching their dance closely, while Ilya's eyes slowly widen where he's still focused on the screen.

The man's eyes go tight at the corners, almost pained.

"Красивый муж, I am not so sure is good idea. Maybe best to stay away from public." *Handsome husband.*

"Hey hey, eyes on me." For the first time in a while Shane waits till he has eye contact with the man, "I'm done with hiding now. From everything."

"котёнок." *Kitten.*

"I need to keep working on trying to get out of the house. I feel like I've been doing better. We travel next week, and I lived through my first press conference back just fine, with a little anxiety. I get to play hockey again, on a team with my husband, I can't let that fucker destroy everything I've worked towards."

"котёнок."

"And we're official now, I want to be seen with you out and about. Shits already gone wrong for me once in the public eye, and we've both been outed already. I've got Anya and Lucy now. Plus, I think it will help me a lot when it comes to getting back into the public eye, with games and press and stuff, doing it with you by my side. There's going to be cameras and fans no matter what no matter where we are; We can just ignore them on a date, get some good food, then come home and fuck on this couch."

Ilya's quiet as he studies his face, eyes tracing his freckles and the growing glow of his cheeks.

"Of course, моя любовь, okay. You are very smart man. 'Tis why I married you. Я так сильно тебя люблю." *My love. I love you so much.*

"Я люблю тебя сильнее." *I love you more.*

Chapter End Notes

Shane Hollander is a cat person, you can fight me on this. He loves Anya, but that man is a cat person.
You can tell I am too by how much screentime Lucy gets.

Anyway, I hope you all enjoyed, it healed enough for you, and all that. I'm way better at writing horror scenes than fluffy, so tell me I did good with the fluffiness.

Number of times Ilya calls Shane 'котёнок': 22
Number of times Ilya calls Shane 'моя любовь': 17
Number of times ‘hockey’ is said: 148
Number of times ‘Stanley Cup’ is said: 78
Number of times Shane feels Gaten watching him before being kidnapped: 6
Number of times the paper filled table is mentioned in chapter 5: 2
Longest chapter: Chapter 8 - Not Benched Yet at about 14,400
About 2,000 words of this gay hockey fanfiction actually includes on ice hockey time, or a little more than 3%
Lots of yaoi to hockey...

The best notes from my outline as I wrote:
FAN ACCOUNT?
Wins to Chicago Titans in Ottawa in game 5
Winning sex at home
Ilya goes to something for Centaurs captain thing
Shane is home alone and hears someone come in
Has his headphones on working out so he cant hear shit being broken
Collapse into David's arms?
Yuna is already yelling at police
Gaten comes over and is like "baby go back to sleep" big eyes emoji
Cleaned up and Offered blowjob
Sitting and watching tv together
(Day 2) waking up in bed with the dude - next morning sorry for freaking out at you
Svetlana goes through media accounts all night and is the best
Offers to help in kitchen for dinner day 3
Purposely set something on fire so that gaten has to go downstairs to get fire extinguisher
Makes a break for it out the back door
pro hockey player fast af boi adrenaline af
Guy pulls up and is like holy shit you’re shane hollander
Shane wakes up in hospital and is woozy af druggged
Commotion????? I go back to sleep
Ilya and family shows up at the hospital like running
Gaten fighting with nurses near shanes room so Ilya fucking body slams him no question (thinks hes just hurting nurses)
Police show up and arrest Gaten, hes screaming for shane
Ilya is like fuck I should’ve killed him
Cat and dog - emotional support dog for the road but the cat is to keep the home safe
Short bit about wedding - I am rewriting it how I want fuck yall

Chapter 9: Epilogue: It’s Not Over till the Puck Stings

Chapter Summary

Counseling, Courts, and Christmas.

Chapter Notes

Hello again :3

I never really planned on writing this epilogue, technically chapter 8 was supposed to wrap everything up but a lot of people wanted to see the trial, and it had me thinking...

Sorry if the ending seems rushed. I hope you all know court is actually boring AF and I can only make it so dramatic before it could act like a case study of a very terrible judge and chaotic court. I try to stay very true to how cases actually work (American system sorry everyone), like a good portion of this is Shane recalling the events of his kidnapping
Anyway, I hope it is what ya'll wanted, and as always, be safe - things that have happened previously are talked about again. More specific warnings at the end.

This took me a while to write, the season depression is hitting hard and all the new friends I made in my new city are ghosting me, so that's a lot of fun! As the sun comes out, I'm starting to feel better so hopefully I can write other things.

Look out for more from me, I am working on a smaller chaptered Hollanov fic but I lost my writing spark 2/3 way through. Hopefully my upcoming spring break helps. I want to finish most of it before starting to post, but I am also months away from getting my masters and working on a research thing so there is a lot going on. Love ya'll... Uh!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nancy was a very small woman. She was on the older side, but she gave off the aura of someone you did not want to mess with and had jewelry hidden in the ceiling panels. Someone who kicked ass when she was at her most agile. Nancy had told him about becoming a psychiatrist despite her now ex-husband’s protests, and how her youngest son just had his first child. When she bundled him into her office, she pressed a hard caramel candy into his hand then sat him on the couch briming with throw pillows and quilts.

He had popped it into his mouth without a second thought.

The first day had been easy, talking about his life and career, his husband and his family; mostly just the good parts he wanted to remember. Later, he had found that it was nice to tell someone about falling in love with Ilya over the years, even the complicated parts, and to talk about hockey again to someone who genuinely wanted to learn more. Nancy said both her sons had played football, so she never followed the NHL and only really watches the Olympics.

Every appointment starts the same; a warm voice and a hard caramel pressed into his palm.

-~-

"And how have you been doing, getting back to normal life?"

"I guess it's been hard…knowing that even though I'm playing hockey regularly again, I'm going to have to miss games and practices, plus it's just all been tainted by all the shit in the news recently. It's the only this the press after games wants to ask me about. That and being gay and married to a man. I hate that I almost wish it went back to the way it was when I was a rookie, but even then, there was press. And that wouldn't be fair to my husband."

"It's understandable to feel like those days were easier, you've gone through something that has changed how you now have to approach your life, whether you want to admit that or not. It's okay to mourn who you were before it all happened."

"Hm."

"Things may have changed for you, but there are still constants in your life. You've worked hard alongside your support networks to heal physically and mentally. Can we talk about what you were looking forward to in getting to return to hockey?"

"Well, I get to work besides my husband again. It's something I had been dreaming of since the All-Stars game where we were co-captains. It's good to be back on the ice and playing with the team too, I'm really just starting to get to know the other guys more, but Ilya is close with them all."

"I can see you husband is one of your biggest supports."

"Oh definitely, I think he always has been, in a weird way. I try to be there for him just as much. Break out of my own comfort zone for him a bit."

-~-

PDA was not something that came naturally to Shane Hollander. Having spent years not even realizing he didn't like woman, then years in the closet, plus additional years secretly in love with his rival, he almost doesn't know how to touch someone he loves in public without being a weirdo about it.

Ilya had no such reservations. Once Shane had let the man take his hand over the small dimly lit table, the man's smile had grown wide and happy, grin not going anywhere and thumb rubbing the back of his hand.

The Russian man doesn't let go when the waiter comes to take their orders, simply asks for a beer and a ginger ale for Shane. When they say they don't have it Ilya gets Shane a water instead.

After the waiter leaves to pour their drinks, Ilya reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket, then holds out a can of ginger ale.

"мои извинения, not the coldest." *My apologies.*

Shane thinks his heart simultaneously starts and stops, "Um, thank you."

Ilya's eyes are molten as he licks over his bottom lip. It's almost too much for public.

"You are welcome, Красавчик-муж" *Handsome husband.*

Shane rolls his eyes fondly at the man when he pops open the can for him, but he's smiling widely back.

Shane lets his eyes scan over the room as he takes the first sip from the can, Ilya looking through the menu with one hand still holding his. It's busy, but the booths allow for privacy and he can see the front door.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

He had talked to Nancy about this, wanting to get back out of the house again and do something in return for his husband. Ilya had always wanted to be out and proud about their relationship, a natural flirt who would ravish Shane in public if he could. Shane was still getting used to not having to hide the two of them anymore, so now, more and more, he was trying to reciprocate and allow Ilya's PDA.

It also had the advantage of getting them home earlier than planned when it sent Ilya feral.

But he could do this, despite his nerves. There were no paparazzi. No one was looking over at them.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

Last time he had been at a restaurant Gaten Kulick was staring at him from a couple booths over.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

Ilya's hand squeezing his brings him back to reality, and the man's smile is soft and sweet.

“Красивый мальчик, you are okay, we are okay. I am here with you, and we are about to enjoy good meal.” *Beautiful boy.*

Shane squeezes back, tracing the man’s eyes and brows, “I’m okay,” then he shakes his head and looks down at his own unopened menu.

He fiddles with it for a second, and Ilya squeezes his hand again.

The man smiles when he meets his eyes.

“Let me order for you, Красавчик-муж. I know Shane foods.” *Handsome Husband.*

It turns into one of the best nights of both their lives, their true first date. For them they had done everything in reverse, strung in out over too many years and hidden their feelings from themselves and each other. Tonight was a night they had both been dreaming of; good food in a romantically lit restaurant, neither too worried about if this ends up on twitter the next day.

The time is spent gossiping about their friends and teammates, about what board game they should try to teach Yuna and David next time they go over for dinner. Ilya enjoyed baiting Shane into footsie under the table as they finished their food.

They leave the restaurant hand in hand, tipsy off the feeling of being together without worry.

Shane thinks the man is going to open the passenger door of his fancy sports car for him, but instead Ilya presses him back against the outer metal.

They kiss once. Twice. Three times before it gets too much for public, too much tongue.

Ilya pulls away first to look at him with dark eyes, illuminated by the nearby streetlamp like he’s some character from a romance movie.

Ilya lets the words roll off his tongue, “Спасибо за сегодня вечером, Красавчик-муж. Я тебя люблю.” *Thank you for tonight, handsome husband. I love you.*

Shane’s already breathless, “Я тоже тебя люблю.” *I love you too.*

-~-

“How are you feeling being home just the two of you?”

“Well, it’s nice to always have him around now. In our dating years we were pretty off and on, so over the last two years when we became really serious it was always amazing to be able to just be together all the time. It still is, he just treats me more like glass now. Like I’m going to break.”

“You seem upset by that. Is it affecting the intimacy between you two?”

“Uhhh.. hem, it’s better. These days. It took some working to, I guess there’s some things that make me more nervous than they had before, uh heh, but uh, we make it work.”

-~-

“Oh my god, you’re going to kill me, Ilya.” Shane groaned out as he tossed his head back on the pillow, one of the decorative ones he’s had forever now.

“I am taking my time with you, котёнок. Be patient, let me taste.” *Kitten.*

Shane kicks at his shoulder, despite the pleasure of the man’s tongue, “You’ve been taking your time for the last fucking ten minutes, I’m going to get myself off at this point.”

Ilya chuckles at him from between his thighs, “Whiny, whiny. Not even a please?”

“Fuck off.”

“Such sweet words, маленький зайчик, all for me. Hold.” *Little bunny.*

Shane doesn’t need to be asked twice to hold the backs of his knees, bringing them up to his shoulder and spreading them over Ilya’s shoulders.

Like they have always, Ilya’s eyes go molten as he bends himself in half.

The first touch of Ilya’s tongue is soft, exploratory, before lapping up from his hole to the base of his dick in a long swipe.

It’s all enough to send Shane’s head back to the mattress, his grip tightening on his legs.

Ilya presses them further into his shoulders as he eats his out like a man starved, licking around his hole before wiggling the tip of his tongue in. At the introduction of the first finger Shane lets out a loud moan, and Ilya returns it with his own as he laps at the space behind his balls.

He feels the spit hit his sensitive skin before he really registers the noise, but then a second finger is added and he’s moaning to the ceiling.

The pleasure of it all sends his head spinning, then his breath stutters oddly in his chest as he squeezes his eyes tight at the sensations.

Ilya hears, bringing his head up from between his legs to remove Shane’s hands from the back of his knees, taking the weight and lowering his back back to the mattress. When Shane meets his eyes, they are concerned, eyebrows furrowed above blown wide pupils, so he reaches a hand out to smooth over with his thumb as his heart starts to slow again.

Ilya’s hand traces over his own face, “Are you okay, моя любовь.” *My love.*

Shane gapes at him a second, not really knowing the answer himself or how to put it in words.

“I just had a moment I guess, I closed my eyes and was dizzy for a second. I scared myself a bit, but I’m fine now, Ilya.”

Ilya’s eyebrows show he’s not convinced, so Shane continues, desperate to get that look off the man’s face and back to the pleasured one of before

“It was like when you pat your pocket and don’t feel your phone for a second, I’m okay now. I’m truly okay.”

“Did I do something?”

Shane shakes his head so hard he can feel his hair static against the pillowcase, “No, no. Not at all. I want this. Please. I want to keep going. I’m okay I promise I just had a moment or something.”

Ilya’s eyes slide over his face for a long while, intent on reading everything that Shane is not saying. But Shane knows he’s okay, a split second of muscle memory panic before it was gone. He was still mostly hard between them, the momentary skip in his heartbeat not enough for the blood to leave it.

The soft touch of Ilya’s hand around his dick sends it jumping again, ready to get back into action. They kiss softly as Shane’s own hands wonder to the man’s dick, encouraging him with a swipe of his palm over the tip before giving him a squeeze.

Ilya groan is soft, eyes still watching his face, fingers tighten softly as they coax Shane much slower than Shane’s own hands.

It has him whining, not caring about what he looks like throwing his back in complaint.

“Move faster, I’m not going to break, Ilya.”

Ilya looks conflicted, “*Моя любовь*.” *My love.*

Shane takes one of his hands off the mans to grab Ilya’s chin, tilting his head towards him like the man has done to him so often.

“You need to trust me, Ilya. I just told you what was wrong and we fixed it. Please, I’m okay. Let’s go back to the fun part of the night.”

Ilya kisses him slow and sweet, pulling back only inches.

“I trust you, Красивый муж. I never want to hurt you.” *Handsome husband.*

“I trust you too, Ilya. Now трахни меня жестко.” *Fuck me hard.*

-~-

“There are still times where I get sent into a panic attack by something my husband does, and I always feel bad after because he blames himself. I keep telling him it’s not his

fault, and he know it's really not, sometimes *I* don't even know what will cause them, but he beats himself up whenever it happens."

"Hm. Have you ever talked about the triggers you've identified with him before?"

"Of course, sometimes I have to because he's there and he helps me through it, because I don't really realize something *is* going to make me panic. The first week I was home we found that banging on doors was not something I could handle. He ended up sitting outside the bathroom door waiting for me to come out for hours."

"You seem to think a lot about his mental state. Are you worried about how your husband is handling your trauma responses?"

"I just know he thinks he should be doing more for me, or something. He thinks every time I flinch he can't touch me for days. Or, like the first time I had a panic attack, he had called me baby in the hospital, and I had to be sedated. He… uh, always used to call me that before. I flinched away too, and I hate doing that. Like I'm scared of him. I don't want to… It's just sometimes my brain just can't comprehend that I'm not still in that house. He has depression, and his uh, mom committed suicide when he was younger, and I just worry that I'm *distressing him* by being *distressed*."

"You're right, this could be a very hard time for him. But it will make him more distressed if you shut him out rather than let him in. He's worried about you, and that is a normal state to be in when your loved one is dealing with mental health issues."

-~-

His breath is still coming out fast, even as he presses his back to the wall and his feet to the cold wood floor and rocks himself back and forth in an attempt to comfort himself. Anya's body moves with him from where she's pressed to his legs.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

For once Shane hadn't bolted for the bathroom like he had done every time before this. Now, he just folds himself into the little corner of the living room between the sofa and the blanket basket. It's dark here and it's not in a straight sight path of the door.

He had gone outside to do some yoga on the back porch, but the faint smell of cigarettes near the outdoor table sent him flying back in time to Illinois and that yellow bedroom.

And now he was pressed into a corner trying to breathe through the fear coursing through his blood. Anya was pawing at him, trying to get her head into his lap for comfort and pressure.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

He knew he wasn't there anymore, but moments like this made the memories of it all too fresh, plus the upcoming criminal trial that Shane had to speak at as the primary witness

was getting closer. It all was driving him a bit insane within his own skin.

The arms that wrap around him smell like fresh soap and warm skin; it takes a second to recognize them as Ilya's; fresh from the shower and no longer smelling like cigarettes or sweat.

He lets them press tight around him and dictate his rocking.

Back and forth.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out

"Я здесь для тебя, моя любовь." *I am here for you, my love*.

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out

"Я держу тебя." *I have you.*

In. Out. In. Out.

In. Out. In. Out

"Ты в безопасности." *You are safe.*

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

When Shane stops shaking Ilya takes over even more of the motion, helping him stretch his legs out straight in front of him. This allows Anya to finally crawl into his lap, joining the pile on the floor.

Lucy watches closely from the nearby armchair armrest.

The sight of her snaggletooth and judgement look pulls a breathless laugh from him, still feeling a bit raw. Ilya's hands run up and down his arms slowly coming to a stop.

They stay like that a long moment, Shane catching his breath as he watches Lucy watch him and pets over Anya's head.

"How are you feeling, love?"

Shane let's out a tired sigh, exhausted from the rush of emotions he had felt. He closes his eyes and lets his head fall back on Ilya's chest, trust the man to take his weight.

"Tired. Can we go take a nap?"

Ilya squeezes him and ghost his lips across his forehead, “Of course, Моя любовь, anything you want. Do you want to talk about it first?” *My love.*

Shane doesn’t really want to, not right now at least. But he will. In a little bit. He’ll ask him to finally quit smoking all together.

He already knows they’ll all be thrown out in a second.

“Not now, I really just want to nap with you in bed. Later.”

-~-

“Sometimes I can’t get myself into a small safe space and it makes it worse. During one of my panic attacks, I crawl into the closet, but I forgot to close the door.”

“What kinds of triggers are leading you to run and hide?”

“It was mostly the smell off cigarettes before. I can’t take baths anymore or eat chicken alfredo.”

“Hm. What other triggers have you recognized in yourself?”

“I don’t like feeling dizzy, or drugged, it just makes me freak out. When I was in the hospital, at first I thought I was still in that house with the pills. I ended up using none of the prescription pain killers I was given after. I haven’t been able to put both of my headphones in yet, I guess, I need to hear my surroundings. I had to get new ones because all I had was over-the-head ones.”

“Could you perhaps start trying to ease your restrictions on headphones more in a room with people you feel safe with? You could start learning to stop associating the lack of noise with danger?”

“I guess… I’m still getting used to feeling safe in the house, right now. Even with Anya and Lucy and Ilya and all my security cameras, I just feel like I’ve got to continuously watch my back.”

-~-

The first time he sees Gaten Kulick outside of that dingy house in Illinois, months between them, Shane still feels his body lock up in fear like the first time he opened his eyes.

Ilya and his dad are sitting between him and the aisle, to his left, and his mom is holding his hand tightly on his right. Anya presses tightly to the front of his legs. The tie around his neck is stifling, but not more than the air in the room.

Shane doesn’t know how anyone else is breathing.

The jury is filled with more woman than men, more on the older side than young. They each watch Shane’s face as he walks by them in various emotions of pity and suspicion.

All their eyes look away from him when a commotion starts on the other side of the courtroom.

Kulick is up from his seat and screaming by the time Shane's foot hits the wood of the stand. Anya presses to his side tighter as he climbs.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

The judge's gavel is loud and thunders through his head with the words that the man in handcuffs is spitting.

"You're mine. You're fucking mine. Baby, just come back to me. You can't FUCKING LEAVE ME."

"Order, Order!"

The yelling gets less intelligible and angrier as he goes, multiple officers wrestling him back into the chair. Ilya stands up in the gallery between his parents, looking like he wants to launch himself across the seats at the man. Finally, it seems the man prioritizes air and gasps heavily, slumping down to his seat to catch his breath, eyes focused where Shane is now sitting at the witness stand.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

Shane can feel himself sweating through his suit as he sits. Anya presses the top of her body between the desk and his legs, applying pressure to the tops of his thighs. It helps him drag his next breath in.

The judge speaks up again, "Mr. Kulick, if you do not behave yourself and watch your mouth in my court, I will not hesitate to have you removed."

The man gives out a whiny grunt, like a whipped beast. His eyes down stray from the witness stand.

Shane's attention is brought up from the wood of the desk when the prosecutor stands up in front of him. She reminds him of his mom, not in age, but in style and confidence. The woman's dark blue pantsuit was ironed and pressed, her shoes shined. Dark hair perfectly in place. The smile on her face was friendly as she introduced herself and then addressed him directly.

"First, I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, then we'll talk more about the reason from your presence today. Please state your name for the court record."

Shane's glad he has a little microphone, because he doesn't think he can muster up speaking much louder than a mutter, "Uh, Shane William Hollander."

"And how old are you Mr. Hollander?"

"29"

“How old were you at the time of the incident in question?”

“Uh, 28.”

Surely, they must know that.

“And what do you do for work, Mr. Hollander.”

“I’m an uh, professional athlete… NHL.”

“And what team do you play for, Mr. Hollander.”

Shane’s mouth twists, feeling like he’s at game press conference. Only with more violent eyes on him.

“I play center for the Ottawa Centaurs.”

“Thank you, now I’m going to start by asking you more about your incident involving Mr. Gaten Kulick earlier this summer.” She shuffles her papers in her hand, “First, where were you living at the time of the incident?”

“Uh, my house, I guess? It’s in Ottawa, Canada,” She nods as he tells her the rest of the address.

“Did you live there with anyone?”

He nods, “Yes, with my fiancé at the time.”

“Can you describe what you were doing on the day of the incident?”

“Uh I woke up like normal. After lunch I just did chores around the house. I was working out in my basement after my fiancé Ilya left for work.”

Some video or something.

“A what time did he leave for work?”

“I think a bit before 5. He ended up getting to work late.”

“What did you do after he left?”

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“I went downstairs to workout. Then when I was done, I realized something was wrong and went upstairs to look around.”

“Did you *see* your kidnapper in your house?”

Shane squints as he tries to recall, “Uh, no. I was knocked out from behind before I saw anyone, but I was about to call the police because I knew someone was in my house.”

“How did you know someone was in your house?”

Shane scratches his head a bit at the question, “Well I could hear someone walking around and my, uh, then fiancé was out at work, so I was a bit paranoid about the sounds. He didn’t answer when I called his name either. Then when I went upstairs to check to make sure the front door was locked, I saw glass on the floor. That’s when I realized someone was really in the house, so I turned to go, I don’t know, go back to the gym maybe? But then I got hit really hard over the back of my head and I fell face first to the floor. It wasn’t enough to knock me out at first, but I didn’t see anyone.” He rubs the back of his neck as he recalls the memory.

“Can you repeat that for me? The hit was not enough to render you unconscious?”

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“Uh, no.”

“But you recall being knocked out; do you remember how you were rendered unconscious?”

Shane shifts in his seat, he hadn’t told his family all the little details yet, “He had an, uh, syringe of something. I could feel the pinch in my neck. I don’t know what it was, but I was out pretty fast.”

The room is tense and Shane doesn’t look up from the woman’s face. The prosecutor moves on, face straight.

“What is your first recollection after you were rendered unconscious?”

Shane rubs the back of his head, “I woke up in the back of a car, I don’t really remember much but freaking out a ton.”

“Were you restrained in any way?”

He rubs a hand over top of Anya’s head. It presses harder to his thighs.

“Yes.” Shane blinks for a second before continuing, “I had duct tape on my mouth, and my hands were tied together in front of me then to my chest. My legs were not tied together, though.”

“Do you know how long you were awake in the trunk for?”

Shane cringes at the memory, grits his teeth, “Not very long, maybe a minute or two, maybe longer. I ended up accidentally letting him know I was awake by kicking at the inside of the car.”

Theres a grunt from across the room. Shane doesn’t look away from the prosecutor’s suit collar.

She looks up at him in curiosity, eyes bright at the information, “What happened when you kicked at the plastic?”

Shane knows what she’s looking for, so he gives it to her, “I kicked through the corner of the trunk, what I was hoping at the time to be the taillight or something, anything to get someone’s attention. I think that’s when I broke my ankle too. He ended up hearing the plastic break and stopped the car to open the trunk to drug me again.”

“How did he administer the drugs?”

Shane squints at the memory, “With a needle.”

“When did you first see your kidnapper’s face?”

“When he opened the trunk.”

“Did you recognize the person? Have you ever seen or talked to them?”

Shane racks his brain. The months that have passed since this all had occurred and the weeks just before ‘the incident’ were a little blurry.

“I didn’t know him personally at all. But I’ve definitely seen him before at some point. I think at a club once, but definitely when I was at a restaurant with my friend Rose Laundry a couple days prior.” He thinks harder, “Maybe a couple of games of mine, watching the players get in the bus? And autograph signings. I don’t know if it was his, but I once saw a car in the driveway that I didn’t recognize, just the day before I was uh, yeah. I didn’t recognize it, but it could’ve been his.”

“Can you describe this car?”

“A, uh, black four door SUV with tinted windows.” It still showed up in Shane’s dreams some nights.

“Did you recognize where you were when you woke up?”

“No. No, I was laying a bed in someone’s guest room.”

“Can you describe the room for the court?”

Shane closed his eyes. It was still painted on the back of his eyelids.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“It looked like every grandmother’s room in the movies. Faded rose wallpaper and mismatched blankets on the bed. Everything was kind of yellow colored. I’m guessing from cigarette smoke or something. There was a, uh, mirror in the corner of the room and a window on one wall. I tried to open it one night but it was like cemented into the wall shut.”

“Were you restrained in the bedroom?”

“No. My ankle was still messed up, so I guess he knew that would keep me in one place.”

“Can you tell me what happened next?”

“He put me in a wheelchair and brought me out to the kitchen; there were a lot of family photos and my… uh hockey memorabilia on the walls everywhere. He said something about moving in with his grandma in Illinois, then that she died recently.”

“When you got to the kitchen what happened.”

Shane doesn’t look over to the gallery seats. He breathes like his therapist and he had been working on. He repeats the question he had been preparing to ask in his head.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“He said he was going to set my ankle so it wouldn’t be useless, but he was not going to give me anything for the pain because I, uh… did it to myself.”

“I HELPED YOU. I WAS TAKING CARE OF YOU.” The man screams from his seat despite his public defender’s attempts to calm him.

“Order in the court! Mr. Kulick, please, control yourself. One more word out of turn from you and I will have you removed from my court room and charged with contempt of court!”

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

He can survive this.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

Shane can see where his family looks green and tearful in his peripheral. He presses his lips tighter together and looks back at the wood desk in front of him.

“Please continue, Mr. Hollander.”

“In the kitchen, he uh, propped my foot up on a chair and used some cooking stuff to like, act as sticks to set it in place I guess.”

Shane winces at the memory, “Then he wrapped it in dish towels and tied it all together with a rope so it would stay in place.”

“Were you restrained during this time.”

“Uh, no. I don’t think I was. I don’t remember much of it.”

“Were you ever given pain relieving drugs?”

“Uh, not till after. Not till after he brought me out to the living room.”

The prosecutor asks what the day to day was like, whether he was given food or water, allowed to bathe, and what they did to pass the time.

Shane describes the hours spent in front of the grainy old television watching old game show reruns with the man sitting too close next to him on the couch. He confirms he was not starved but hesitates when it comes to whether he had gotten to take a shower.

“He ran me a bath at one point.”

The prosecutor eyed him, her dark eyes looking through his soul.

“Can you walk me through it?”

“I uh woke up in his bedroom. He wanted me to take one, uh. He first unlocked the handcuff keeping me to the bed post in the morning then used the wheelchair to take me to the bathroom. When the water was running, he got a, uh, towel and clothes as well as like this opioid pill that his grandma had been hoarding.”

“Did he hand it to you?”

“Uh, yeah he did. I took it because I was already in a whole lot of pain and I was planning on making a run for it later that day, so I figured I wouldn’t argue. Plus, I really wanted to bathe after like three days.”

Shane cringes at his past self. But he would have done almost anything to survive to the next day.

“What happened next.”

Shane gulps around his saliva and rubbed his fingers on Anya’s ear. They felt like velvet.

“He waited for the drugs to kick in if I remember, then uh, undressed me while I fought against him. I couldn’t really move that well drugged up so I mostly was just trying to make it as difficult as possible so he would give up, it was enough at least to keep my underwear on.”

“Did he physically place you in the tub?”

Shane nods, “Uh, yeah. He grabbed my ankle, so I was pretty out of it at that point.”

“Did he stay in the room while you bathed?”

Shane hesitates, but doesn’t move his eyes off her eyebrows. He doesn’t really want to talk about this anymore.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“Yes.”

“Did he touch you when you were in the water.”

He squeezes his eyes shut for a second before returning to the woman’s eyebrow, “I was, uh, having trouble keeping my head up and he uh took the washcloth from me. He cleaned my face a little with it, and my neck, but not my body.”

Shane stops to clear his throat before continuing.

“When the washcloth, was uh, wet, he um held it over my face for a bit and yelled at me. I ended up scratching at him a bit to get him off.”

“Did he impede on your ability to breathe using the washcloth?”

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“Yes.”

“IF IT WASN’T FOR ME, YOU WOULD BE DEAD. I TOOK CARE OF YOU WITH EVERYTHING I HAD. THEY WERE KILLING YOU.”

It takes both courtroom officers to restrain the Kulick as he attempts to jump over the table he was sitting at, despite the wrist and ankle cuffs holding him down. The orange jumpsuit gives away how skinny the man is, eyes crazy with obsession and active substance withdrawal, hair greasy and long. Shane knows he’s going to have nightmares about this for the rest of his life as the man is dragged out of the room, kicking and screaming, shouting Shane’s name as he goes, the judge hollering just as loudly back.

The prosecutor sighs, “I think that is enough for today.”

Shane agrees.

-~-

“Have you been working on your breathing exercises?”

“Uh, ya. I have. They help a bit, I guess. It at least cut the time of the panic attacks in half.”

“That’s what we are working towards, sometimes progress is slow. It’s important to remember to focus on your body and to stay grounded. Remember that you are safe and will leave the room with your loved ones. We’ve prepared your answers, correct? Have you gone over them?”

“Uh, yeah. I can’t really say I’m ready for this, but I think I might just be able to survive it.”

“Sometimes that’s the important part. Trials can be traumatizing in themselves, especially when you are asked to recall situations in front of a large group of people and the perpetrator themselves. You’ll just keep your eyes on the prosecutor, breathe, and let Anya hold you. Keep your eyes off the gallery, the jury, and the defense.”

“I’m nervous about them hearing what happened. In more detail, I guess.”

“Do you think you could discuss what your answers at trial will be with them beforehand? Would that make you feel more prepared going int?”

“I uhm… I don’t think so. I don’t really want to go into it more than when we talk about it and when I have to stand up at trial and talk about the guy offering to suck my dick.”

-~-

When he and Anya get to the witness stand of the court room the place is so silent you could hear a pin drop.

The prosecutor is the same. Today her hair is up and her pantsuit is black. Shane likes the shoulder pads.

“Please state your name for the court.”

It’s just like before; beady eyes and the feeling of sweat soaking his collar.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

“Shane William Hollander.”

“First, I’m going to ask you some questions about the events leading up to you being found by the two college boys in the pickup truck. Do you recall?”

Shane nods his head, easy, “yup.”

“Can you start from the beginning of the day for me?”

“Well like, there was the whole bath thing first, we already kind of talked about that,” The woman nods at him to continue, “and when I got him off of me, he just left the room, so I uh, actually cleaned myself.”

“Did he ever come back to the room?”

“Uh yeah, but I was already dressed again and had gotten myself back in the wheelchair by that point.”

“How did he act when he came back in?”

“He was not like mad at all, I guess? I thought he was going to try to hurt me again, but he just asked he how the bath was.”

“And then what happened.”

“Well, he wheeled me back into the living room and we just watched TV again, but while I was in there, I was looking at the front door’s locks and stuff. I ended up asking if I

could do the dishes because they were all piling up and I knew the kitchen table was covered in papers and stuff."

The prosecutor raises an eyebrow at him, "And why was this table covered in papers important?"

Shane swallows as he leans to the microphone, "I was, uh, planning on setting the house on fire. Kindling."

He doesn't look over at the sound of cuffs rattling across the room.

The prosecutors' eyes are curious as she watches him. Then she raises the other eyebrow.

"So, this was a planned escape."

Shane nods, "*Yes*. Yeah. I didn't sleep when I was in his room so I was just coming up with all the scenarios I could think of. I couldn't get out the window so once I knew there were easier locks on the front door I figured I would make a run for it somehow. The whole fire thing was just a distraction. To give me time to run. His fire extinguisher was downstairs and everything was pretty flammable, so I figure it was my best shot and causing a big enough commotion to get out the door."

"So later, when you started on the dishes, what happened next."

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

"I made noise to cover the sound of the stove being turned on. It was uh, gas lit so I stuck a towel in it and threw it at the table. I uh, didn't say anything I just slowly moved into the living room, so once he was going downstairs I was at least a little closer to the door."

"And then you unlocked the door?"

"Yeah, I unlocked the door and just made a run for it. I don't really remember much after that honestly, I was in a whole lot of pain and honestly, I thought he was right behind me the entire time. I thought for a second maybe he figured he would grab me first then put out the fire. So when the truck pulled up, I thought it was *him* at first. I don't really remember the drive to the hospital after."

The prosecutor turns to direct her words to the jury, "We have already seen through much of our evidence the violence that Shane Hollander had to endure at the hands of Gaten Kulick. The man used various forms of physical harm and restraint to keep Mr. Hollander against his will inside his home. My next questions will be directed to seek further information on how deep Mr. Kulick's obsession went."

She turned back to face Shane, her face staying neutral, "Mr. Hollander, besides his attempts to remove your clothing before allowing you to bathe, did Mr. Gaten Kulick make any form of sexual advances on you during your captivity?"

Shane swallows hard but then simply just answers, "Yes."

The court room is so silent except for the click clack of the court writer's keyboard.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

"Did Mr. Kulick attempt to pressure you into having sex in any way."

Shane pauses, squeeze his eyes shut, "*I guess,* yeah. Like, he thought I *wanted* to have sex with him so he just sort of, offered, the first time."

"I LOVE YOU, DON'T YOU DARE LIE ABOUT THIS! YOU LOVED IT!" The man bellows, shoulders shaking.

This time the judge doesn't take any time throwing the man out, four court officers appearing from the shadows to drag the man out of the court room as he screams.

"I STILL LOVE YOU, BABY PLEASE."

Even pinned down and squirming on the carpet Kulick doesn't stop, some how convinced that less than 200 pounds of skinny college kid could overpower four cops. They each end up grabbing a limb and carrying him out like a tantruming toddler.

How anyone could act like that in public, Shane would never know.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

After the interruption, the prosecutor is eager to move on with her questions, "When was this offer of sex made?"

He keeps his focus on her eyebrows.

"I think the first day I was there? After I woke up the first time."

"And how did he offer you sex?"

"He uh, offered, I think, maybe oral sex? After he wrapped my ankle. He put his hand on my thigh and offered it as a reward, but I pushed it off. He started ranting for a while, then left me in the room I woke up in."

"What was he saying?"

Shane tries to recall the words, but he had disassociated pretty hard over those three days. "I think a lot of stuff about how he loved me, some stuff about other people not being good enough for me. I don't really remember quite honestly."

He was actively trying to forget the sound of the man's voice.

"Were there any other instances of sex being offered or talked about."

It takes a couple of swallows to clear the extra saliva in his mouth. He pets over both Anya's ears as she presses even harder against his legs.

He focuses on the wood. Wood or eyebrows. He doesn't want to see his family's faces.

"Uh, yeah, the next day. He uh, said something about watching…" Shane swallows again, his throat clicks. "Um, watching me and my now husband have sex through, our, uh… window one night. And I must've let my, my fiancé chase me before. He… he wanted to recreate it…"

Shane tries to let the light of the room blur out the gallery, but it's still not enough to hide their faces when he knows he's kind of looking for them. The stone-still looks of horror on his family's faces and the tears in their eyes turn his insides into rocks. Maybe more than having to go through this stupid trial.

"What day did he say, that he did this, Mr. Hollander? Do you remember?"

"Uh, the night of the Stanley Cup. He said he was outside the windows before that I think too. I don't remember exactly."

Ilya looks murderous. Like his jaw is fracturing from how hard it's clenched.

"What happened after he said that?"

Shane closes his eyes, smooths over Anya's forehead, "He uh, started counting down. When he first told me to run I though he was kidding, but then he, um, said that once he caught me he would have sex with me." Shane's throat clicks as he speaks, "So I just ran for the nearest room. I ended up in the bathroom with the door locked behind me."

"And can you confirm your ankle was already broken at this point, and you could not walk without help, correct?"

Shane could feel his ankle throbbing even now fully healed, "Yes."

"But he had you run."

"Yes."

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

7 seconds in, 3 second hold, 10 second release.

He wants to go home.

"Were you under the influence of any drugs during this time?"

"Yes, I was. The, uh, same opioids that he had on hand."

"And once you were behind the locked door, Mr. Hollander. What happened?"

Shane can still hear it in his head, or it's the sound of his pulse, he barely manages to get out the words, "He banged on the door, and was screaming. I don't remember the words,

but it started angry before, I guess, like pleading? Maybe sorry? I was pretty out of it on the floor at that point."

"How long were you in the bathroom?"

He shakes his head, "I don't remember."

"When did you leave the bathroom?"

"Whenever he took the bathroom door off it's hinges to get into the room. Then he dragged me to his room for the night to sleep. I was still pretty out of it on the opioid. I guess that was when he handcuffed me to the bed."

"And what did you think would happen if you had not run away from him when he began counting?"

He doesn't feel like sugar coating it, "Then he would have assumed that I wanted to have sex with him."

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"How are you feeling today, Shane?"

"You can just say it, Nancy, my name has been in the news all week."

"I can honestly say I steered clear of the headlines. But I do know you said that next time we should meet the trial would be over? I expect that's a lot emotionally no matter what process or outcome."

"Yeah, I guess it is done now. Doesn't really feel like it when every time I do post-game interviews they're asking about the case like they can't just read about it. Ilya said someone on this site called reddit already found the case documents. I don't go online anymore, and I don't answer questions about it for the media. With the guy convicted for life, I just want to finally stop talking about all the little details with absolute strangers."

"It can truly feel frustrating when everyone seems to be asking the same questions over and over again about unrelated topics. You've experienced that in your interviews before with your sexuality. I can say I'm glad to hear the man will be going to prison for the rest of his days. How are you feeling about the conviction?"

"It was, uh… not exactly what I pictured. I wasn't there when they read out the changes, which I was glad about. They got him on the human trafficking, felony kidnapping, and aggravated assault. They didn't really try for the unlawful imprisonment, but uh… they didn't charge him on any of the sexual assault charges."

"Do you want to tell me more?"

"It's just… I guess I can understand why the charges didn't stick. He didn't really, I guess touch me like that much without me getting him off of me, so I don't know. The

prosecutors think it's because it wasn't worse… which is terrible to even say out loud because what did they want the guy to *actually assault* me?"

"Shane. There were situations that we both have previously defined as moments where sexual assault or harassment had occurred during your kidnapping, just because the courts say one thing does not erase your own lived experiences. No one wishes you were hurt further, we are, however, seeing your case treated as so many others. Where the line between what is considered consensual and too far blur and the courts argue over definitions. We discussed in prior sessions what to do if this trial did not go as planned or wished, did you talk to your husband or parents?"

"Yeah, Ilya was probably the maddest of anyone, well maybe besides my mother, when the charges didn't stick. I think it kind of helped to see others be outraged for me, so I could just try to process it. I guess I was disappointed and sad, but the trial has just made me feel kind of numb overall. I'm so tired of seeing the guy's face, and I'm just glad I never have to sit in the court room again unless some how he gets his sentenced lightened and can get probation in like 60 years."

"Is that the worst case of scenario?"

"Well, I guess the worst case could be he escapes prison, but the guy is an idiot, and they put him in one of those supercenters in America, I think. Logically it would be him petitioning his sentencing and gaining the right to see the probation courts. That means I would have to go and give a witness testimony or something to convince people to keep him in there. I don't really think they would let him out, really, but I don't want to have to go talk about it all again in front of him."

"That is a scary thought, but what are the chances he's able to successfully overturn his original sentence?"

"Not very high. My mom said he wouldn't have even a chance for another like ten to fifteen years."

"That's a long way away. What do we think could happen positively in your life in the next ten to fifteen years?"

"Well… I guess in that time I'll probably have retired, Ilya too, or at least close to it. We'd probably be still living in the same cottage we had built together and are in now and maybe have another dog. Um, uh… Ilya's always been so good with kids, he'd be a great dad. He always joked about becoming my WAG when we threw team parties. We have a couple of rookies that he's taken under his wing, and it's really cute. Honestly hanging out with the team more and seeing them with their families makes me want the same. A little family with Ilya, just running around one day. They're all just great, amazing, every one of them. They've helped me a lot over this time in my life, with me missing games to just being good friends."

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It took Shane and Nancy a few sessions to work up to this, more than he would like to admit if he was honest. The Centaurs team was filled with great guys and even better SIGs, or significant others, people both he and Ilya loved. Some things were just hard some days.

Bood had offered to host the annual team holiday party this year, but Shane was insistent that he and Ilya would be able to handle it.

When they had gotten home after practice that night after talking about it, Shane promptly had a panic attack over the thought of hosting people, then cried over the fact that he was scared to have his sweetest friends like Hayes and Haas in his home. Ilya had held him through it all, and once his breathing had become steadier, he had pulled out his excel sheet and began planning as well as scheduling extra therapy appointments.

Despite it all, Shane had been determined to do this. Maybe for himself. Definitely for his husband.

The Christmas tree rose high above their heads, to the top of the high ceilings, and Ilya kept adding more decorations to it. Shane was proud of it, even though Lucy was determined to break half the bulbs before the actual party came. The first days it was up Anya would routinely bark at the tree, and Shane was convinced she had hated the angel on the top. Ilya was confident she was singing holiday songs for them.

It had ended up only being Lucy watching over her domain from the top branches.

The outside of the cottage got professionally decorated, Shane not wanting either of them to end their careers early by climbing high ladders and breaking their necks. Ilya had managed the crew, thankfully, and it came out looking just as they had envisioned.

Shane did not expect how excited his husband would be for the holiday season. Growing up as an only child and his grandparents passing when he was young, Christmas was only ever him and his parents, and while always nice, it was small and homey. Ilya, on the other hand, had spent too many years by himself on Christmas day after his mother passed. It was not often he had an opportunity to festively decorate or give gifts to anyone except Svetlana.

So, while Shane took over the menu and the activities and managing his anxiety, Ilya had taken full advantage of a blank canvas and seemed determined to transport them into one of his Hallmark movies. The entire place was decked out with evergreens and red ribbon, fake candles and tinsel. The man had even gone out and found a nicely made menorah and kinara to place on the tv stand nearby.

The party was planned for Boxing Day, so on Christmas Eve the two of them bundled their family, Anya and Lucy included, into the car with the presents for his parents.

Lucy ended up hating the carrier, loudly complaining, so the Queen ended up secured on Shane's lap like a baby for the short drive. He had made Ilya drive under the speed limit.

Getting to his parents' house, his mom had cooed at Lucy all wrapped up and asked when a real grandbaby was going to happen. Ilya had laughed as Shane had gone red and

sputtered, then just handed her Lucy.

The Queen seemed to allow it.

After getting all their stuff in the house, the two of them plus Anya and David ended up lazing on the couch watching Home Alone 2. Dinner was lasagna, as tradition, and Shane allowed his husband to place a small second portion on his plate as he served himself up a third. The man's dancing happy shoulders were distracting.

After dinner had been board games, so the well-loved Jackass box was pulled out of the tv console. It always got competitive, particularly among Shane's parents, as you slowly received clues and had to be the first to guess what was being described. It had ended up being a lot of fun, for once someone was there to combat his mother in the geography questions. Ilya had laughed at him fondly for knowing almost none of the celebrities.

After the Yuna won they all retired to bed and the two of them, plus their fur babies, ended up curled in Shane's childhood bedroom, fast asleep in each other's arms.

Christmas day started with a lazy morning in bed before Anya forced them up for her morning walk. Ilya and he ended up taking their time with it, admiring the snow-covered trees and foliage as Anya sniffed around, holding hands and enjoying the quiet.

When they got back to his parent's house, they had a new pot of coffee already made and pancakes cooking on the pan.

His mom served Ilya first before plating him up the uglier one, which Ilya and he had fun arguing about as they both smiled and ate.

Everything was perfect.

They all exchanged presents by the Christmas tree, then rolled around the new bell toy and squeaker for the animals.

After another day of lazing around with his loved ones, they pack up the truck for the short ride back home.

It's almost as if the change in atmosphere is enough to send him reeling in anxiety again, the sudden knowledge that they would have people in their home tomorrow hitting him all at once as he walks through the threshold.

It didn't leave even after he scrubbed down the guest bathrooms and washed the windows. He even made sure to go back through all the kitchen cabinets to make sure they were organized.

The anxiety for tomorrow wasn't leaving his body no matter what he did, making him squirm and adjust in the bed that night as he struggled to get comfortable. Shane's eyes kept opening to stare at the ceiling or the wall or his husband's face. Even when Ilya pulled him tight to his body, he could still feel himself vibrating.

His husband ended up making him come in his mouth once, then twice more on his cock to tire him out enough to sleep.

Waking up to his alarm the next morning was a bit jarring. Ilya had not been in bed next to him, although the bed was still warm, so Shane pried himself out of the covers, brushed his teeth quickly, and headed downstairs to look for him and start on breakfast. He ended up finding the man curled up on the couch with Anya, nursing a cup of coffee and staring at the Christmas tree.

Shane presses a soft kiss to the top of his head, then tips the man's head to press their lips together. It was soft and languid, gentle. He pulls back just slightly to share the same air.

"Ack!"

All three of them, Anya included, look over to where Lucy is seated on the coffee table. Her stare is unblinking.

"Моя любовь, she is complaining about our love." *My love.*

"Did you feed them this morning?"

"Umm, I uh."

"Ack!"

Shane places another kiss on his lips then his head, "I've got it." He reassures, then to all three pairs of eagers eyes he asks, "Who wants breakfast?"

Breakfast ends up being eggs and toast for the two of them, then another cup of coffee as they both head up to get dressed for the day.

Shane ends up in a green long-sleeved shirt, a little thicker than his usual T-shirt, and some jeans. He's buttoning them up when his husband steps out of the closet, arms proudly on his hips to display a very hideous Christmas sweater. Depicted across the front of it was a winking Santa Claus, then above and below were the words 'Ask your mom if I'm real'.

The shirt makes him roll his eyes, but Ilya's triumphant look is enough to make him chuckle.

He still gives him a kiss when he asks for it.

When they head back downstairs Shane takes the time to switch out Lucy's collar for one with a little red bow on it. It takes her a couple of minutes to get over the change before she settles on the couch. Ilya has much better luck getting Anya into her Christmas sweater, the dog happy to wear anything they put on her.

Lucy's familiar 'ack' meow and the notification on his phone are the first indications that the catering truck was coming down the driveway. He lets Ilya handle the small talk with the delivery driver while he collects the food and moves it into the kitchen.

The rest of the day includes them both in a flurry of motion, sweeping and organizing, wiping down surfaces as they prepared to host. Anya decides the chaos is too much for her and settles in the corner in her dog bed where she could keep an eye on Shane. Lucy is less polite and follows him throughout the house, regularly attempting to get in the way, including wanting to be swept with the broom like a little rug as he was sweeping the kitchen floor. Ilya is also less subtle, trying to kiss up his shoulder as Shane pulls out the nice glassware after finishing his own chores.

Shane swats him away like a fly, they didn't have time for that when people could be arriving any minute.

Ilya ends up groaning and following him around to help just like Lucy.

The team slowly trickles into the house as the sun sets outside, and the party really starts as drinks are poured and Christmas cookies are being snacked on. The ovens are set to warm the food up by the time most people arrive.

In the living room people make themselves comfortable, Ilya arguing with Cassie Boodram and Hayes on what Christmas movie to put on the television in the background. They all thanked the two of them for hosting, most of them able to pass off their children to grandparents for the night and get a break from having the responsibility.

The terrible trio, Holmberg, LaPointe, and Young, arrive together with beers in hand. When Shane opens the door, they wrap him in a group hug with a cheer then bustle inside, popping their shoes off into the growing pile by the door and heading straight for the kitchen.

Dykstra arrives only ten minutes after with his wife and Luca Haas, and they quickly meld into the group building in the living room. Scrabble and Clue have been pulled out, and the original *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is on the tv on low volume.

He is just calling everyone to dinner when Troy and Harris arrive with his farm's Christmas cider, and the fact Shane lets everyone eat in the living room without a flinch is something he'll take as a good sign about the night.

Anya's good about not begging for food, but she is smart enough to follow the crowd of people with plates and look for any weak links. At the end of the couch Luca is balancing his plate on the armrest, Lucy loafed in his lap like she was mad about cuddling him.

Shane can't help but comment on it when he sits next to the young man with his own plate, "You know, I've never seen Lucy like anyone but me. She'll attack Ilya if she thinks he's a threat to our cuddling."

Luca's eyes are bright and a little start stuck, quickly chewing the food in his mouth to answer, "Um, uh… she just came and sat on me like this. She tried to bite me when I pet her, but she didn't leave?"

"That's cats for you, she wants you to think she's tolerating you but she's *choosing* to sit there." Then to Lucy who's slow blinking up at him, "Are you being nice, Queen Lucy?"

Theres a couple chuckles around the room as they watch Shane talk to his cat. For most this was the first time they had seen her since she was usually hiding from company.

On the floor Ilya and Bood are arguing about the rules of Scrabble, Ilya trying to use Russian words that no one knew and arguing discrimination when it was kicked off the board. Caitlin Dykstra and Lisa Hayes were curled up together in a large lounger they had by the window, both with a glass of wine in hand and eyes focused on Cindy Lou Who talking to the Grinch.

It was warm and comforting. There were none of the feelings he had spent nights agonizing over potential feelings with so many people around that would somehow ruin the party. His husband's smile was large, everyone was laughing and chatting, and they had a home game the next day that they were all prepared for.

It's after he gets up to get another plate of food for him and Luca, the man still trapped by Lucy, that Harris and Troy join them on the couch on his other side. Shane asks about the man's ideas for the upcoming social media videos for the Centaur's media page and gets taught about what internet trends were currently going on and what they were. Shane didn't really go online much; he'd always been lucky and grateful to have his mom handle that stuff.

At one point Harris is slowly peeling the label off his cider, leaning heavily into Troy behind him, "I'm really glad you had us over tonight; everyone's been missing having you around lately."

Shane takes another sip of his own drink before responding, "I missed you guys too, everything has just been fucking crazy. I hate that I had to miss games and practices just to sit in a court room for hours. Was not a very fun time."

Luca pipes up from his other side, "I'll bet. I watch too much court tv to know that that shit is anything but easy."

Shane chuckles, but kid gapes at himself tries to rectify, "Not like I know what happened in your trial, honest, I'm just saying in general."

At that Shane raises an eyebrow at him, "You haven't read anything about it? They were blasting it everywhere when the trial was happening, then when the court documents came out it was a whole other shit show. Lots of reasons I don't go out in public as much anymore."

Luca doesn't look at him, just shrugs and sips his beer and runs a gentle fingertip over Lucy's forehead. She allows him to. When Shane turns to Harris, he's just watching them.

Then Harris shrugs, like it wasn't a big deal, "The guys on the team tried to stay away from the headlines, we didn't want you to come back to the locker room and feel like everyone was all up in your business like the media was. I'll be honest, I did read them, but as Head of Social Media I needed to make sure things being said weren't going to impact you or the team. I wouldn't be surprised if some of the guys managed to avoid what happened with the sentencing entirely."

Shane can barely respond to that, a little choked up and a very grateful for the team around him. He settles with a hum, a nod, and a quiet, “Guilty, life with no chance at parole. I wasn’t there on the sentencing day.”

Luca’s “Thank fuck,” is not quiet, and it makes Shane chuckle and lean back on the couch. Lucy moves to tuck herself between his and Luca’s thighs.

It gets late into the night before things really calm down. After The Grinch finished up Die Hard was put on, and now they were all lazing around on the couches watching The Muppets Christmas Carol. It was Ilya and Luca’s first time seeing the Muppets and both were vaguely confused and amazed by what they were seeing.

Shane starts dozing off on the back of the couch, at one point not even trying to keep his eyes open anymore as he listened to the shift of the people around him and the murmur of the television.

He’s woken up to Ilya standing in front of a black screen, “Okay everyone, party is over. Leave me and my pretty husband alone now. I can call uber for you drunks. Merry Christmas, gross animals, and all that.”

The room was filled with sleepy chuckles and grumbles as everyone begins to pry tired bones off of cushions and collect their belongings.

In a somewhat sleepy haze Shane joins Ilya by the door to see everyone out and make sure everyone had safe rides home. As the last person slips out the door with a ‘goodnight’ Ilya wraps his arms around his waist to press his nose behind his ear.

“I’m so proud of you, Shane. You were so brave. You did such good job being host.”

Shane leans back into his chest, eyes half lidded and sleepy, “You did great too, this went well. I enjoyed it.”

Ilya hums in his ear, “Bedtime, Красавчик-муж. I have Christmas present for you.” *Handsome husband.*

Chapter End Notes

Insert Sirius Black getting his mugshot taken and going crazy gif <- that's you Gaten

This is the official end; I don't think I have any more in me for this universe. This is to show that the kidnapper got charged and Shane is spending good quality time with his husband, family, and teammates. What's a better ending then that?

Again, you can look out for more by me because I'm working on another chapter fic that is supposed to also have underlying creepy vibes as well *wink*

Specific warnings: Sex scene with panic attack during it, discussing of sexual assault, recalling memories of sexual assault, discussion of sexual assault charges not sticking*

*I wanted to discuss this part for those who don't understand why it was included. As someone who studies the system it is very hard to charge sexual assault for a lot of reasons and blah blah blah definitions and he-said-she-said and biases, I can go on forever honestly. This is based on a personal experience where I tried to report a fellow student to my school for sexual assault and I was also told it wasnt 'sexual enough' in nature for them to do anything about it. I feel like Shane's situation is something that a jury would argue heavily on; he's a larger man who also actively fought off the man's advances and never was touched skin to skin. I'm not saying it's right, I'm just saying this is how I think it would work if this actually went to trial.

Please take care of yourselves out there.

Also, no one gets to argue that Ilya didn't get to do more damage to Gaten's face at the end, he's lucky he didn't get arrested when he punched him after he was already cuffed XD

Works inspired by this one

Cover for Eyes On Me by 1100200 by Strangemagpie

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