

The Gloves are Off

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76882946) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76882946>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike
Additional Tags:	5 Times , POV Shane Hollander , Canon-Typical Violence , Hockey Fights , Crack , Crack Treated Seriously , Fluff , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Protective Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Can Fight , Egregious Use of Italics , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Romantic Ilya Rozanov , Post-Canon , Coming Out , supportive friends , Hurt/Comfort , but like mostly comfort , Pretty low stakes hurt - promise!
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-01 Completed: 2026-01-04 Words: 7,915 Chapters: 6/6

The Gloves are Off

by [KrissyTutu](#)

Summary

Shane Hollander was an incredible hockey player. His shot accuracy was legendary. He was a fantastic strategist and play caller. He, despite Ilya's insistence otherwise, was one of the fastest on the ice. Still, none of that was what made Shane great.

What made him great was how he cared. Shane would do anything for his team - including get his hands a little dirty.

OR

Shane Hollander can be bad, too. Five times Shane's gloves come off on the ice.

Notes

This chapter takes place around 2013. Other chapters will take place in later years, and do not follow/spoil The Long Game.

Also, fair warning, I like to imagine that Shane's inner monologue includes a lot of cursing. Enjoy!

Chapter 1

“I’m fine, Hollander.”

“That’s too bad,” Shane spit out his mouth piece. “Thorpe went easy on you.”

They both knew it wasn’t true. Thorpe had tossed Ilya around like a fucking rag doll. And fuck him, Shane was worried. So much that his chest *ached*.

“Hollander. Hollander, you look like drowning duck.”

To anyone else, it sounded like an insult. Shane knew what he really meant. *You’re spinning out. Don’t. Please.*

It was hard to stop spinning out when the Boston crowd was *so* loud. The lights were blinding, the ice doing nothing to counter the ridiculous heat trapped under Shane’s jersey. He shook his head, resting his gloved hands on his thighs.

Ilya was so close, for the first time in months. Still, they didn’t even risk looking at each other. Shane settled for the crackling inches between their left shoulders, the periphery of Ilya’s jaw as they faced opposite sides of the ice. Shane wondered when the bruises would start to bloom under his blonde stubble.

Shane couldn’t move. If he did, it would be to go to Ilya. If he looked anywhere but ahead, it would be to check over every inch of Ilya’s skin for injuries. He didn’t trust himself to say a goddamn word.

Fuck. He had to reel it in. Shane took a deep breath. And another.

He wasn’t supposed to care. He especially wasn’t supposed to care right now, in the middle of a goddamn game. Against Boston. Who was winning. Only by one, with half the game left, but still. Shane should care about *that*.

But one of Boston’s rookies, shitty ass Canton, had been *stupid* and got Rozanov caught up in a full on brawl. Canton had skated straight into Shane’s goalie, with Ilya right by him, knowing the refs were shit today. *Knowing* the Metros would enforce their own goalie protection. And then he’d backed away, letting Ilya take the brunt of the fight.

Thorpe should have seen it was Canton who instigated. But, really, fucking *fuck* Canton.

“Rozanov! Thorpe! Five each for fighting.”

Ilya sighed and skated away, taking the last thread of Shane’s better sense with him. Oh, Shane was pissed. Of course, Ilya got the penalty and Canton didn’t. It didn’t matter that Ilya hadn’t started the fight. It didn’t matter that Ilya’s already bruised ribs had taken *another* hard knock. Or two.

“Fucking Canadian wimps,” Canton lamented dramatically to another Raider. Who, to be fair, looked fucking over Canton, too. “Bunch of sissies.” The rookie looked over to Ilya like, for some reason, he was included in the assessment.

What the hell?

It went on through the whole period. Canton didn’t shut up when the Metros scored two goals in five minutes, or when Hayden checked Canton so hard that boards rattled halfway down the ice.

The Metros, to their credit, had caught on that Canton was a masochist on a mission. They avoided him, ignored him, and did just enough to protect their goalie while minimizing penalties.

Ilya tried to stay out on the ice after his penalty, but it was obvious he was in pain. He was favoring his left side, staying clear of the boards. When the third period started, Ilya was on his own bench. Shane tried hard not to glance over every other second. Frankly, everyone should be impressed that Shane wasn’t stripping Ilya down, right here on the ice, to check those damn ribs himself.

With one minute left on the clock, JJ was sent to the penalty box. It was the third penalty against the Metros for fighting.

Why the Raiders weren’t benching Canton was beyond him. Sure, Canton was drawing penalties, but it seemed to be costing Boston even more. His own team was having to run interference on the ice. They were getting sloppy. They were down three goals.

Shane sniped his first goal with twenty seconds on the clock. He smirked. *Make that four.* He looked for Ilya’s reaction before he could think better of it.

At first glance, Ilya was simply chatting with his coach. He was smiling in that way others interpreted as cocky. Uncaring. Shane knew better. Ilya was pale. Under his eyes, bruises were beginning to darken. His left side was stiff in a way that screamed IR for at least for a few games.

Hayden nudged his arm. “You want me to take it?”

Right. Face off. Shane shook his head. *Not a chance in hell.* Face offs this close to the end of games often got hairy. “I’ve got it.”

“All yours, Cap.”

Shane skated to center ice, keeping his eyes laser focused on the ground. And fuck him, he heard Canton before he saw his gaudy little skates.

“Rozanov won’t tell me, so maybe you will.”

Shane’s heart rammed into his throat, bracing for something that would probably hit too close to home.

Canton came to a stop, leaning into Shane's face. "Tell me. Is *every* team captain actually a girl?"

The cheering crowd dulled. The buzzing in Shane's bones evaporated. Everything stilled to a blissful halt, and Shane smiled. *Fuck, yes.*

He knew this feeling. It took so much to push him over the edge, and he was probably going to regret a few things in the morning. But now? Now, it was time to fucking play.

The puck dropped.

Shane won the face off. He took his time weaving with the puck, just slow enough for Canton to catch up.

"Why?" He asked, so only Canton could hear. "Can't find any real ones to fuck you?"

The buzzer echoed in the arena.

Shane barely blinked before his helmet was in the glass, but he was prepared. He jammed the toe of his skate in the ice and flew backwards, using his elbow to get enough room to position right behind Canton.

He took his gloves off.

Canton, for all his posturing, was wildly slow. Better yet, Shane had been watching - Canton's right shoulder was stiff. So, that's where Shane grabbed Canton, pulling him back and yanking him so he fell flat on his ass.

"You motherfucker," Canton panted as he scrambled up.

In his periphery, Shane saw Pike and Thorpe keeping the Raiders at bay. *Good*, Shane thought. This was between him and the shithead huffing into his dented ass face guard.

Canton charged. Shane stepped to the side and cracked his stick along the back of Canton's knees. The rookie was down again sliding along the ice. Shane skated after him, watching as Canton panted and tore off his helmet.

"You should work on your stamina," Shane observed, his voice calm and breathing even.

Shane let him get up one more time. He even let Canton get in a shove to Shane's chest. When Canton moved to punch his jaw though, Shane blocked with his left and swung hard with his right.

Before Canton could fall back on his ass a third time, Shane grabbed his jersey. *That would have been so embarrassing for him.* He must have been feeling more gracious than he'd first thought.

Instead, with his hand still twisted around the jersey over Canton's bad shoulder, Shane skated him backwards. He pushed him all the way to the benches, stopping right in front of where Rozanov sat.

“I think this is yours, Captain.”

Chapter 2

Ilya was in rare form for the last Boston/Montreal game of the regular season. Not in a good way. Not even in a hot way. He was checking players hard - including Shane - every chance he got, chirping like his life depended on it. Shane was used to Ilya playing up the asshole routine during their games, but this was getting grating.

Hayden scored a goal, and Ilya was there, in his face.

Shane skated over. "What the hell is wrong with you, Rozanov?"

"Maybe keep a better leash on your players, Hollander." Ilya jolted forward in Hayden's direction like he was about to shove him, but pulled back before skating away.

"What did he say to you?" Shane looked over his friend. Pike hadn't instigated this, surely.

"Something about playing dirty. I don't know, man, he's off his rocker today."

The only one playing dirty was Ilya, as far as Shane could see.

Second period wasn't any better. It was 4-2 Boston, and Shane was having a hard time keeping his team collected.

"If Rozanov checks like that one more time, I'll -"

"Do nothing, Thorpe. Your knee is barely better. We'll...I'll take care of it. Okay?"

Pike skated past them, smirking. It was the kind of look he wore when he was out for blood. "Oh Captain, my Captain."

It was exactly two game minutes later when Ilya tripped up one of their rookies, Westman. The rook was slow to get up.

"Yeah. Yeah I think that's it." Shane took his gloves off and tossed them on the ice.

"Rozanov! If you've got a problem with my team, take it the fuck up with me!"

Ilya pivoted, raising an eyebrow at Shane's bare hands. His eyes gleamed with a danger that would send most players running. Hollander was not most players.

"Okay." Ilya drifted towards him. "I have problem with your team, Hollander. They are little shits."

Shane struck first. His second and third knuckles collided with Ilya's ribs. Shane didn't give him time to recover before shoving hard. Ilya side stepped quickly, somehow managing to get a stinger of a punch under Shane's jaw. "Shit!" Shane reeled back. "Oh, fuck you."

"I have wet dreams about this, Hollander." Ilya swung hard and they were down.

“About losing?” Shane grabbed Ilya’s shoulders, using his knee to trap his right hand. “What fuck are you on, today?”

They whirled. Ilya managed to get back on top, slamming Shane’s down. “I’m on you, it looks like.”

Shane’s ears rang. He punched up once, twice, and shoved Ilya on his ass. When Ilya tried to escape, Shane grabbed his arm and shoved.

“That’s enough,” a ref barked. Shane was getting pulled back and away, “Five minutes. Five minutes both of you.”

For the first minute, they both sat in their boxes in silence, breathing hard.

“Seriously, Rozanov. What the hell is going on?”

“Like you do not know, Hollander.”

Shane nearly jumped out of his seat. “I don’t!”

“You don’t. *You* don’t.” Ilya scoffed. “You don’t know that your rookies have been harassing my team?”

The blood in Shane’s body went cold. “What do you mean?”

For the first time, Ilya had the good grace to look confused. “You don’t know.”

“Fuck! No, Rozanov, I don’t know.”

“Reece and Peyton. They have been sending... messages.”

God, those two were little assholes. Shane had already recommended they be traded the minute their rookie contracts expired. “What kind of messages?”

“You know what kind, Hollander.”

And fuck him, this time Shane did know. He knew the kind of shit they joked about. “I should have gotten them under control by now. I should have been a better Captain. I’m sorry.”

Ilya sighed. One minute left in their penalties. “It is not your fault. Mostly, I am angry they are on *your* team. Is not a secret they suck. And, yet, they are playing.”

To Boston’s credit, they’d benched Canton after his game from hell a couple years ago. Shane knew the Raiders locker room culture wasn’t the best in the league, but...it was better than Montreal. Shane’s ears went red, knowing Ilya knew.

“Anyways,” Ilya waved a gloved hand. “You are slow and you have horrible tell before you shoot the upper right corner of net.”

Shane scoffed, “Gee, thanks.”

“You are welcome. But, listen,” he paused to glance at the time left. Thirty seconds. “Not everything is something you can fix. You will probably always be...slow old man. Does not mean you are bad Captain.”

The coded language was clear. Ilya didn’t blame him. Worse, Shane realized, he seemed...worried.

Ilya stood, ready to jump back on the ice. “Plus, is possible I like when you are angry. Maybe I should get you to fight more often.”

“Great,” Shane muttered.

“You know you liked it. Felt good, yes?”

Shane smiled. *Yeah. It really fucking did.*

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

It's Shane's birthday. Instead of spending it with Ilya, his mom arranged for a brand photoshoot with a company he's never heard of.

In hindsight, Shane should have been more suspicious of anything named "Loon Vodka."

Chapter Notes

Takes place after the cottage!

Shane disliked photoshoots. There were so many people all focused on him, watching and flashing cameras. The costumes were uncomfortable, and he felt endlessly awkward reading lines.

This photoshoot, though, was sure to be worse than most. First, it was on a rink outside the city, and traffic had been miserable. The brand was unfamiliar to him, but his mom had been insistent it would be a “good opportunity”, whatever that meant. Worst of all, today was his birthday. He could be on the road to Ottawa right now, minutes away from kissing Ilya’s pretty face.

Instead he was here, at a rink that was shockingly quiet. He knew it was low budget, from the email his mom had forwarded him. Still, he was surprised when there was no one to greet him outside, or anyone on the way to his locker room.

At least the instructions included a map.

The locker room was surprisingly cosy. Fresh flowers sat on a vanity the crew had clearly set up for him. A bucket of ice with ginger ale, along with a collection of macrobiotic foods, were assembled along one of the benches. They’d even gone so far as to bring in their own dimmed lights and a speaker.

Shane smiled at the song coming over the radio. It was one of Ilya’s favorites.

At the back of the room, gear hung from a hook. It was a complete hockey uniform all in deep navy blue - jersey, pants, helmet, gloves, even skates. There was no logo, just his name

stitched in shiny off-white along the back. On his gloves were embroidered every award and trophy Shane had ever won.

So that's where the budget went.

He took his time getting dressed, cracking open a ginger ale and pilfering a little through the snacks. The crew could have looked through his kitchen and not chosen better.

Finally, he slipped on his gloves and grabbed the stick leaning against the door.

When Shane saw the rink, he did a double take. It was dark, and there was no crew. Just a single light on the ice and -

“Hollander.”

“Ilya.”

Ilya was here. He was kitted out with his own gear, his back leaned up against the boards across the ice.

“What’s going on?” Was this a joint photoshoot? Shane glanced around, still searching for the missing film crew. “I have a photoshoot...” His eyes drifted back to Ilya.

God, he was gorgeous. The way he was looking at Shane, skating towards him, was fucking deadly. It should be illegal to look so good with all that padding on. His kit was the reverse of Shane’s; everything off-white, with navy stitching.

“Da. This is photoshoot.” He pulled out his phone and snapped a picture, flash on.

Laughter bubbled in Shane’s throat, the shock morphing into excitement. Ilya was *here*, with him. On his birthday.

Ilya tapped his stick on the ground at Shane’s feet. “I am Loon Vodka. I set up photoshoot.”

“You...you did?”

“Yes. Your mother knows, she helped. I rented arena, made sure no one will be in the whole building. Do you like your jersey?”

Oh my god, Shane thought, tears springing in his eyes. *The jersey, the gloves, the flowers and ginger ale. It was all him.*

Shane smiled. He pretended his lower lip didn’t quiver.

“I thought...” Suddenly, Ilya looked unsure. “I have dinner set up for us, later. But, I thought first, if you wanted. We could play.”

“Ilya, you’re blushing.”

“Niet. Russians do not blush.” If it was possible, Ilya blushed harder.

Shane skated closer, leaning his helmet onto Ilya's. "I love you," he whispered. "And I am going to kick your ass."

Ilya laughed, loud and giddy. "I'd like to see you try," he taunted skating backward to center ice. "First to three goals wins."

"What do I win?" Shane toyed with the mouthguard between his teeth.

"So cocky. Of course I had trophy made. Duh."

Of course he did. "Drop the puck, asshole."

Shane got a hold of the puck first, and then he was flying. He zig zagged down the ice, handling the puck straight towards the empty net. Anticipation surged down Shane's spine as Ilya closed in.

Ilya knocked his stick hard into Shane's, sending the puck careening away from them both. Shane got there first, but just barely. Ilya rammed into him and then they were in the boards, fighting over the puck trapped in a corner.

"You think just because it is - " Ilya huffed, jamming his stick towards the puck. "It is your birthday, I will let you win?"

"Never." Shane shot out an elbow to get the puck free, and he was off again. Technically, he could have turned around to the nearer net. But, what was the fun in that? He sprinted to the other end of the rink.

His boyfriend was closing in, but Shane was an excellent shot. He fired.

"Yes!"

"Beginner's luck."

Shane nodded, fishing the puck out of the net. "Totally."

"Okay, round two, lover." Ilya was already crouched and ready at center ice. He was breathing deep, face flushed and eyes a kind of bright that made Shane's knees weak.

"Fuck, Ilya. Really setting the bar for birthdays. How am I ever going to top this?"

"If you ever top? Will be lots of lube, vodka, and spectacular coaching from your very handsome boyfriend."

Ilya won the "face off" next. Shane went to chase him when he saw it.

The name on the back of Ilya's jersey wasn't Rozanov. Embroidered, between his shoulders in big blue satin letters, was Hollander.

"Ilya." Shane froze. He dropped his stick. He took off his gloves and helmet carefully, setting them gently down on the side of the rink.

They were much less careful taking off Ilya's gloves and helmet. Shane was not careful at all when he slammed Ilya into the boards. It wasn't until his hands were tangled in Ilya's hair that he hesitated.

"There is no one here. No cameras. I made sure of it."

Shane only nodded, and then his lips were on Ilya's. He tasted salty and warm, and Shane was certain he'd never get enough. "You're incredible," he breathed.

Ilya smiled, kissing him on the forehead, the nose, and then the mouth. "Happy Birthday, Shane."

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Shane and Ilya play their first All-Star Game together since coming out. Shane just wanted to have a fun, clean game with his fiancé.

It wasn't clean per se...but it was fun.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is where we start diverging from Long Game! I wrote this so as not to spoil Long Game, while still getting to see Shane and Ilya have some fun.

In this universe, Shane and Ilya come out as engaged at a press conference. Takes place at 2021 All-Star Game in January.

So glad folks are enjoying this. Angry/fighting Shane is SO much fun.

Shane was downright giddy. For the second time, Ilya and Shane were on the same All-Stars team. That alone was thrilling for Shane, but this game was particularly special.

It was the first time they'd play together since coming out. Since getting engaged.

Just over a month ago, they announced their plans to get married in a joint press conference. The reception had been overwhelming, and more positive than Shane or Ilya could have hoped for. There were messages from fans and players that Shane would treasure for the rest of his life. And, that was nothing to say of the absolute joy living in Ilya's eyes since the announcement.

There was a small, vocal part of the league and fan base that were upset. Angry, even. But, Shane knew it was temporary. And even if it wasn't - even if this is what the rest of his career looked like, it was worth it.

Shane finished his last stretches, mentally shaking out every thought but this game. He was about to play alongside his very favorite person. Shane wasn't going to worry about playoffs or stats or hot take think pieces. Today, he was going to have *fun*.

"Your captain didn't want the first face off?" Vaughn teased as he settled to meet Shane at center ice.

“No,” Shane smiled around his mouth guard. “Ilya likes to watch.”

Shane got the puck first.

They were up two goals in the second period, and Shane was floating on air. Everyone was gelling, moving like they played together every weekend.

Ilya passed him the puck as they skated down the rink. Shane skirted around traffic before firing the puck back towards Ilya. Ilya handled the puck for two seconds. Three. Then, Ilya sniped it.

The horn sounded.

“Yes!” Shane let his momentum carry him into Ilya’s side, who wrapped him up in a dramatic hug. “Fuck, yeah. Nice shooting.”

“I am very good, yes.” Ilya laughed.

Shane took position as Ilya moved up for the next face off. His grip on his stick was steady, eyes focused on the shifting of his fiancé’s skates.

“Anyone know his face off rate?” A younger teammate asked.

Shane smiled. “64 percent.” The puck dropped. “Except when he plays against me.” He charged for where he knew Ilya would expect him, skates pumping hard into the ice.

Vaughn caught up, skating to his left. “Against you, it’s like 99 percent, right?” Shane just rolled his eyes. Vaughn was one of Shane and Ilya’s most ardent supporters off-ice.

On ice? He was a terror.

Shane dove around Vaughn, weaving back in time to catch Ilya’s pass and shoot it on to another forward. “48 percent.”

Marcus, a defender from Denver, forced a wide shot. Ilya was prepared, though, and raced for it. Marcus chased him down, while another defender attempted to intercept Ilya from a second angle.

Someone miscalculated, and the three of them collided *hard*. One second they were skating, the next, Ilya was laid out with two defenders on top of him.

Marcus, a big defender from Denver, scrambled to his feet first. “Shit, I’m sorry.”

“It’s a fucking All-Star Game,” Vaughn yelled, “The fuck are you two doing?”

The other defender - a Flyer, Shane thought - was slower to get up. Ilya didn’t move.

Shane’s gloves were off before he could blink. “Ilya.” He kneeled down by Ilya’s helmet. “Ilya, are you okay?”

“Fuck.” Ilya groaned.

“Fuck is right,” Shane let out a shaky breath. “Don’t move.”

“I am fine. Did not even pass out.”

Medics began to move around them. Shane shook his head, trying to ignore the tears burning at his eyes. “You could still have a concussion.”

“You need to back up, Hollander.” Shane didn’t even look to see who’d said it.

“Shane, it is okay. I am okay.”

“Hollander. Now.”

Shane let himself be pulled back, just a few feet.

This wasn’t supposed to happen. All-Star games were supposed to be *fun*. He whirled around, eyes landing on the Flyer brooding a few feet away.

Shane’s hands were twisted around the defender’s jersey before he could blink. “What the hell were you thinking?”

“Hey! I wasn’t gunning for him.”

“Bullshit.” Shane’s hands tightened as prickling anger raced through him. He just wanted *one* nice game with Ilya. Was that too much to ask?

“Back off, Hollander.” A ref put a firm hand on Shane’s shoulder. He didn’t budge.

Vaughn, breathing heavy, stopped beside him. “Hollander. I’ll take care of it,” he offered calmly. Meaningfully. Like Shane was a child on the brink of a grocery store tantrum.

Finally, Shane released him.

Miller chuckled. It was not a kind laugh. “That’s what I fucking thought, f-”

Vaughn swung so fast, Shane barely saw the hit. He sure as hell heard the crack though, *damn*.

Miller cursed and made for Vaughn again, but Marcus got there first. “I think that’s enough, yeah?” Marcus held Miller in a way that left little room for argument. Especially when two other Second Team players and a ref came to intervene, too.

“I know, I know, penalty box,” Vaughn said to the ref. “Hey, have you thought about getting better cushions for the benches?”

Shane’s heart was in his fucking throat as he followed behind Vaughn to the box. “That was...thank you.”

“*Shit*, that hurt.” Vaughn shook his hand out, flexing his fingers.

“Seriously, Vaughn. You didn’t need to do that.”

“I did.” He said it so easily, as he ambled into his seat for the next few minutes. Shane didn’t think he’d ever been more grateful in his life. “You two have enough to deal with right now. Let your friends have some of the fun, too.”

Suddenly, cheering erupted in the crowd. Shane whipped his head around, and nearly fell to his knees. Ilya was standing. *Thank fuck.*

“You’re okay!”

Ilya rolled his eyes. “Yes. I said this.” He took the C patch off of his jersey and held it towards Shane.

“Wait, why…”

“I am fine. But going to do concussion protocol.” He waved a hand when Shane tried to argue. “Nothing is wrong. If it is, you are emergency contact, they will call you. Promise. Be captain and kick their wobbly asses. Please?”

Shane hesitated.

“I’ve had bell rung before. Yes? Trust me.” Ilya winked. *He winked.* Shane was defenseless.

“Ugh! Fine. Fine. Fuck you. Fine.”

The team slowly drifted over and huddled around Shane. They were expectant. Accepting. More than a couple offering encouraging squeezes and stick taps.

A rookie lifted an eyebrow. “What are your orders, Captain?”

Shane rolled his neck, taking a moment to bring himself back to the game. To his team, and his friends. They had a whole period left. And even though it was 3-0, Shane wanted more.

He smiled. “Let’s wipe the fucking floor.”

It was a complete shutdown. Shane had one of the best third periods he’d ever played, and it felt *good*. He was barely off the ice before he was whipping out his phone.

--

Yuna: No concussion, just a nice bruise or two. We brought him back to our place for ice cream.

--

Ilya: They should call you Hat Trick Hollander

Ilya: You are very hot when you are kicking ass

Ilya: Other ass, not mine

Ilya: Maybe my ass

Ilya: Come home, I miss youuuuuu

--

Vaughn leaned over across the bench. "Everything good?"

Shane smiled. Everything was just fine. "Yeah. Yeah, he's okay."

--

Shane: I'm on my way. Save some ice cream for me.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Husbands Shane and Ilya go to the 2022 Olympics. There's a little angst on the ice, but a whole lot more comfort.

“Guys, this is the one we’ve been waiting for.” Shane looked around the locker room, making contact with every Canadian in red and white. “Team Russia is all that’s left between us and the finals. They’re good. We’re better.”

He paused while the room cheered, tapping their sticks on the ground. “Before I continue,” Shane shouted, then waited for the room to calm. “Before I continue, I am exercising Captain privileges for a moment. Rozanov, you wanted to say something?”

Ilya nodded, uncharacteristically tentative.

“The floor is yours.” Shane squeezed Ilya’s shoulder.

“When...” Ilya took a deep breath. “When Shane and I came out, I thought I would never play in Olympics again. Which would have been okay. Few people get to go to one Olympics, and I had already been to two.”

Shane’s stomach twisted at the reminder of all Ilya had given up for them. He knew Ilya didn’t regret it, but even still. Shane was so proud to be that man’s husband.

“Team Russia will not choose gay player. Even if they are clearly best hockey player ever.”

Chuckles and groans echoed in the room in equal measure.

“I would probably be there still, about to kick your asses, if things were different. I was proud to represent Russia, even if they did not want...” Ilya turned his back to the room and took a breath.

“We want you here,” Hayden whispered.

Other players uttered their own affirmations and nodded their heads. Warmth filled Shane’s chest.

When the national team coach found out that Ilya was seeking citizenship, he promised both of them spots.

Two days after Ilya’s citizenship was finalized, Coach West called. Ilya and Shane stood in their kitchen, on speaker phone. “If any player questions whether you deserve to be there,”

Coach swore, "they're not playing for Team Canada. You worked your ass off to be Canadian. You've earned it."

Coach West kept his promise. Every single player in the room supported Ilya being on their team. They all believed it was his team, too.

"I am glad to be here," Ilya continued. "And to be Team Canada highest scorer ever."

Shane rolled his eyes, "I still hold that record, thank you."

"You will not in two games. But it's okay, I will still love you."

He ignored the quip, because *God*, it still brought tears to Shane's eyes to hear him say that in public.

"Anyway, I am almost done, promise. I just wanted to say, well thank you. I will yell and be scary Rozanov for the game tonight. But, first...thank you."

After a moment of hugs and shoulder squeezes, Shane stood up again, sure a cheesy smile was plastered on his face. He cleared his throat; it was time to get to it.

Shane reiterated the schedule for practice and the rest of the day. "Russia this year is fast. Not -" he put up a hand before Ilya could interrupt. "Not as fast as they could be. But, fast. They're also doing their level best to instigate fights."

He paused, making a point to look each player in the eye. "We do not fight in the Olympics. Anyone here for the first time, listen because I'm going to say it again. *We do not fight in the Olympics*. Do not take off your helmet, do not remove your gloves. International rules mean that the penalty for fighting isn't the box, its ejection. You could be disqualified for the rest of the Games."

A rookie from Vegas raised a hesitant hand. "So...what do we do?"

"We use our words," Hayden quipped. He blushed. "Sorry. Muscle memory, honestly."

"Hayden's not wrong," Shane agreed. "Focus on the game. Ignore them. If you absolutely need it, sub out so you can calm down on the bench."

Shane sighed and looked at Ilya. This was the hard part. "There is only one player allowed to fight today. Me."

Ilya jolted forward. "You will not fight Russia. No way."

"I don't plan to, I promise," Shane kept his voice low - calm but firm. "It's a last resort. But, if we need it, and I get ejected, we have another center who can take my place."

"Then let me be enforcer! If it is just because we are both good centers."

Shane shook his head. "You will not fight today, Ilya. If I think you're going to, I'm benching you."

“Bullshit!”

“Team Russia will target you. If you fight, they will not stop at a black eye. And, in any case, *you don't have to*. You're not going out there to face Russia alone. You don't have to defend against their bullshit alone. Trust us to have you.”

Ilya blinked hard and shook his head. “Coach agreed to this?”

“Coach suggested this,” West affirmed. “You know I believe in you, Rozanov, this isn't about that. If you want to be designated enforcer for the next Olympics, I will wholeheartedly support you. But not today. Not this time.”

Ilya was quiet through the entire morning practice. After it ended, Ilya mumbled a promise to be back for lunch before taking off. Shane knew this would be hard for him; they'd talked about it a lot before traveling to Beijing.

Still, Shane hated this so much it hurt. He was just so *fucking* angry. Angry at Russia, angry at Ilya's dead fucking father. Angry at himself, a little, for not being better at helping Ilya through this.

“What did the turkey do to you?”

Hayden slid into the table, smoothie and sandwich in hand.

“Sorry. What?”

“You were just staring at your turkey wrap like it insulted your mother. What's up, man?”

Shane picked at the wrapper of his wrap. “Ilya is upset.”

After a long drink of his green smoothie, Hayden nodded. “Of course he is. Today is fucked up. Like, *wildly*, fucked up. But you're both doing the best you can.”

“Am I?” Shane's eyes stung. *Fuck*.

“Hey,” Hayden put his food down and reached across the table. “You just made a big deal about Ilya not doing this alone. You don't need to, either.”

“No one else is enforcing,” Shane interjected.

“That's not what I mean.” He sighed. “You're a good Captain, Shane. Not because you're a great player - which you are. Like, one-of-the-greats best. You're a good Captain because you care. Because you'll risk being benched for a gold medal match because your players matter more.”

Well, fuck, now Shane really was going to cry. Thank god their team had lunch catered privately for semifinals. No way could he have this conversation in the Village cafe.

“You're a good Captain,” Hayden continued. “If you want to be a great one, there's really just one more thing to do.”

“What’s that?”

“Let your team take care of you, the way you take care of us.”

Ilya walked into the cafe with ten minutes left for lunch. He looked better, his eyes a little brighter.

“I have idea.” Ilya dragged a chair over, flipped it around backwards, and sat down. “I watched Team Russia games again. Petrov is biggest asshole on the team. He is...”

“The instigator? Starts things to draw penalties?” Shane supplied.

“Yes, Petrov is big instigator. I know Petrov, we played a lot together. He has weak side.”

Hayden leaned forward. “This is one of the guys you briefed us on.”

“He is very good defender when puck is on his right. His left is absolute shit. Pretty sure he is only on team still because he is good at making other team mad.”

Shane smiled. “So we force him to the center, as much as we can. Keep him distracted.”

“Yes. Exactly.”

“This is great,” Hayden affirmed. “I’ll talk to the other forwards.” He moved to collect his things, pausing at Ilya’s shoulder. “You know, Ilya, you’re still an asshole.”

Shane groaned. “Pike, really?”

“I’m just saying. Roz still has it, you know?”

Shane didn’t actually, but Ilya was smiling like he really did.

—

Team Russia, unsurprisingly, came in hot and never let up. Petrov was nowhere to be seen. *So much for their distraction strategy.*

Russia’s forward checking was aggressive, and they scored two goals early. Shane quickly changed their whole offensive plan, and Canada adapted.

It was evident Ilya was Team Canada’s most lethal weapon. He knew nearly every player. Before the game, he’d shared briefs and profiles so the rest of the team could learn, too. Even still, Ilya more than anyone else flowed through Russia’s defense like a knife through butter.

A very *hot* knife.

When his string was resting, Shane watched from the bench as his team worked magic. Ilya and his right forward, Bellion, passed the puck quickly all the way down the ice. The weakness of Russia’s checking strategy was that their defense was light. Ilya made

embarrassingly quick work of them, handling the puck until Bellion was in the perfect spot. Ilya passed. Bellion sniped it.

“Yes!” Shane grabbed his stick and hopped the bench with the rest of his string. “Good work guys.”

Players from both teams, including Ilya, skated towards the benches to sub in the next string.

“Izmennik.” *Traitor.*

Shane’s head whipped towards the Russian players. *Who said that?*

Ilya froze. Shane watched as he took one breath. Two.

When Ilya reached the bench, Shane pulled him aside. He didn’t have much time. “Ilya, who said that?”

He shook his head. “Your Russian is getting better.” Ilya, for once, didn’t sound happy about it.

“Yeah, I have a really good teacher. Seriously, Ilya, tell me.”

Ilya hesitated.

“Trust me.”

“It was Kuznetsov. Thirty-eight.”

“Thank you.” Shane took a breath. “Pike, trade with Haas for this string.”

Pike grinned, not wasting a second to hop the bench. “Yessss. What’s up?”

They skated to their positions for the next face off. “When you get a chance, check thirty-eight so hard they have to change the glass.”

“My pleasure.”

Three minutes later, Kuznetsov stole the puck from Canada’s right wing. He handled it tight to his stick, aiming to take it down the boards. Hayden gave him all of two seconds before the boards rattled.

Shit, that was a hard hit. Shane couldn’t fight the grin on his face. He charged after the puck, broken free in the struggle.

Kuznetsov tried to recover, but he was still disoriented and slow. Shane was nearly to center ice before there was any real pressure at all.

He passed to his left wing, who took it the rest of the way. He shot hard, but the Russian goalie blocked it and held on.

“Damn,” Shane muttered. “Good attempt, Peters.”

No one scored in the second period. Russia was up 2-1. In the locker room, Shane mentally raced through strategies. They had to change what they were doing, right now. They needed something to get their team out of their heads and back on the ice.

“Rozanov,” Shane called. “How do you feel about playing left wing with the first string?”

Ilya smiled. “Miss me when you are playing, Hollander?”

“Yeah, actually. We need to get a spark going. And if we play together...”

“Mmmm, yes.” Ilya nodded and tapped Hayden’s shoulder. “You should get water ready. There is about to be *fire* on the ice.”

Hayden rolled his eyes. “Marriage has made you cheesy.”

“Good, Shane likes cheese.”

From the second Shane won the first face off with Ilya behind him, everything was better. The fans were thrilled to see them play on the same string, and Team Canada could feel momentum at their backs.

Peters once again had possession, but defenders were closing in. He turned at the last second to evade, and shot the puck to Shane.

Shane sniped it straight in.

“Fuck yes!”

Team Canada descended, cheering and slapping each other’s backs.

2-2 with three minutes left. The finals were so close, Shane could taste it. They had the momentum, they could do this.

Shane took the next face off, but lost the puck to Kuznetsov of all people. Why they had a defender do a face off was beyond Shane. But, Ilya was there.

Ilya passed to Shane, but Kuznetsov intercepted again. Shane got there first, checking him into the boards nearly as hard as Hayden had.

“Fucker,” Kuznetsov spat.

Peters found the puck and passed it back to Ilya. After a few hairy cross-ice passes, Ilya finally found a clear line to the goal and fired.

The puck hit net.

Holy hell, Shane thought, whooping like he’d won the lottery. They were so close. One minute left, they just had to defend for one more minute.

Kuznetsov was irate, yelling in Russian and gesturing to his teammates. Shane picked up some of it, most of it slurs and demands to get their shit together.

Shane won the next face off against Russia's center. Canada kept possession for nearly the whole minute while Shane watched the seconds tick down.

They lost the puck, but Shane got it back. A Russian defender slapped it away again, and this time Ilya slammed into him and broke the puck free. He iced it, knowing the clock was nearly at zero.

Kuznetsov made it straight for Ilya. He was yelling again, crowding Ilya against the boards. Ilya smiled, whispering something in Russian. Kuznetsov dropped his gloves.

The second Kuznetsov put his hands on Ilya, Shane's was there. He didn't even remember taking his gloves off before muscling Kuznetsov into spinning around.

"That's enough." Shane pulled the defender's jersey, giving Ilya space to step out from behind.

Kuznetsov laughed, eyeing Shane's bare hands. He swung. It was too fast for Shane to block, Kuznetsov's fist colliding with his jaw hard enough to send his helmet flying. Shane's ears rang as he tried to shake off the hit.

There was no break before Kuznetsov was on him again, grabbing at his jersey and punching his ribs and face. Shane wanted to curl in on himself, pain flaring along his sides and across his nose. He felt blood running along his cheek, out the corner of his lip.

Everyone was watching. Ilya was watching. Shane took a breath and *shoved*.

Kutzentsov reared back, and Shane attacked. Shane landed a hit on his jaw, his ribs, his cheekbone. Shane didn't realize they were moving until Kuznetsov slammed back into the boards.

"Leave." Shane shoved.

"Him." He shoved again.

"*The fuck.*" Again.

"Alone."

The refs finally got there, or maybe Shane finally noticed them. He felt himself pulled away.

"Shane!" Ilya was yelling, eyes wide and worried, while Hayden held him back. Only when both Kuznetsov and Shane were off the ice did Hayden release him.

"Holy shit, Shane, what the fuck?" Ilya grabbed at Shane's face. He moved it back and forth, wiping his fingers across the blood streaked along his cheek.

When Shane flinched, Ilya released him like he'd been burned. "Sorry," Shane whispered. "I'm okay. Really."

"You're not." Coach West and a medic pulled Shane behind the benches.

The pain started to bloom and then pulse. His nose, his jaw, and his ribs all kept the same quick rhythm. "I'm okay." Shane repeated, maybe more for himself than anyone else.

The medic prodded, flexing his joints and checking for more serious injuries. God, everything *hurt*.

"Why did the ref not get Kuznetsov off him?" Peters asked, voice shaking. Shane wasn't sure with what.

"Russia players crowded them, was hard for refs to get through," Ilya said, his breathing still heavy. "They will get penalties."

"Hell yes, they will," Coach West grumbled. "And if Kuznetsov ever plays again, the IOC and I will get *real* cozy."

Shane tried to shake off the aching in his bones. There was a fuzziness to everything that made him want a warm bed and cool pillow more than ten Stanley Cups. "I'm sorry Coach, I...well I'm not sorry I did it, but..." Words felt clunky in his mouth. Or maybe that was his split lip.

West threw a hand out. "I saw, Hollander. You did good."

—

Shane was finally back in his room - five hours in the Olympic medical center, a host of X-rays, and ten stitches later. Everything still hurt, but more like he was just one big bruise.

Ilya had never left his side.

"You gotta stop looking at me like that," Shane groaned.

"Like what?"

"I don't know. Like I'm dying." Shane shrugged, ignoring the twinge in his rib. "I didn't even break anything. No concussion. It's fine."

Ilya jumped to his feet. "It is not *fine*. Your face is purple! I know your ribs hurt like truck hit them. You...you cannot play in gold medal game."

"Come here." Shane held out his hand. When Ilya didn't move, he stretched further. "Ilya, come here."

"Okay, okay." Ilya weaved their fingers together.

Shane smiled. It was amazing how touching Ilya chased away pain faster than any drug.
“Better.”

They stayed like that, just breathing, until Shane began to feel his eyelids grow heavy.

Morning light was filtering through the window when Shane opened his eyes. His husband was still there, the other twin bed in the room pulled close so that Ilya could lay down and still hold Shane’s hand.

“I am so mad at you,” Ilya whispered.

“Ilya...”

Ilya shook his head. “I would have done the same, if I were Captain. But, I am still mad. And mad at Pike. I should have helped. I should have -”

Shane just squeezed his hand.

“Coach is talking to IOC to let you play gold medal game, but it will probably not happen. The fight is all over news.”

Shane knew that being benched for the finals was likely. He had accepted the risk, but it still stung to hear.

“What are they saying?”

“Some said I should not be on team, but not really more than who said that before fight. Mostly people are proud of you. They are showing Kuznetsov’s record - it is bad. Lots of fights and maybe some other bad things off ice.”

Tears burned the corners of Shane’s eyes. “This wasn’t your fault, Ilya.”

Ilya nodded. “I love you,” he whispered. “I am...I am so proud of you.”

—

Two days later, Shane was feeling surprisingly good. It was probably the painkillers still coursing through him, and he would be stiff as hell tomorrow when they wore off. All in all, though, Shane would be good as new in a week or two - save, perhaps, for a new scar on his left cheek.

Even though he couldn’t play, Shane still suited up. He was still Captain, even if he had to ride the bench. Shane thought it would be hard to not play today. He thought it would be sad, or embarrassing, or at least stress him out to not be helping his team on the ice.

It was anything but. His team was prepared. They were strong. They asked for advice when they needed it, and filled in the gaps Shane’s absence presented. Ilya stepped up, every bit of the center and leader Shane knew him to be.

As the game clock ticked down, Shane realized there was something better than winning a Gold medal.

Watching Ilya win Gold with his team, with Team Canada, was better than any dream Shane ever hoped to have.

Chapter 6: Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Shane takes his gloves off on the ice, one more time.

Chapter Notes

This was so fun to write! Had to get one more cute as heck scene in there. Thanks all for the kind feedback and support!

Seven. Seven Stanley Cups. *Fuck*, Shane actually did it. Tears welled in his eyes as he held the trophy in the air.

The crowd was in uproar, screaming and waving their signs. So many with his name or number emblazoned large.

God, he wanted to live in this feeling. Shane handed the trophy to Haas, and their eyes locked. "Don't let them stay out too late." He let the implication reverberate - Haas was next. After this year, he'd finally get to be Captain.

At 41, Shane knew this would be his last game. In theory, he could have gone another season, maybe even two. But he wanted to stop while he had knees that still worked. At least, knees that still worked most of the time. Speculation that Shane might retire had ramped up in the playoffs. He was still playing well, Shane had one goal and two assists today, but change was in the air.

The players' families began making their way down to the ice. His eyes instantly found Ilya's, one hand cradling Dave, the other grasped around the fingers of -

"Daddy!"

"Irina, no running on the ice!" Shane called, eyes wide as Irina bolted.

She froze, a smile still plastered on her face. He loved that mini Rozanov smile. Shane skated over, scooping her in the air just in time for Ilya to finally meet them.

"I'm so proud of you," Ilya said into his ear. "You finally fixed your backhand."

Shane laughed, "Fuck off."

The team descended, shaking Shane and hugging Ilya and Irina, waving little waves at Dave.

Even though he'd retired three seasons ago, the team still adored Ilya. The fans, too. Shane was sure the media would talk about this moment tomorrow.

Is this the last time we see these two greats share the ice?

Yes, it probably was. At least until Irina needed little league coaches.

Ilya gave Shane a soft, knowing look and squeezed his hand. "Let us show them, yeah?"

Shane nodded, and took off his gloves. With one arm wrapped gently around Dave and Ilya's back, he leaned in to kiss his husband.

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