

Special

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76988996) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76988996>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	Gen , M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Hayden Pike , Ottawa Centaurs Team Ensemble (Game Changers) , Montreal Voyageurs Team Ensemble (Game Changers)
Additional Tags:	Autistic Shane Hollander , Canon Autistic Character , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Alternate Universe - Post-Canon , Protective Ilya Rozanov , Ableism , Homophobia , Bullying , Light Dom/sub , like blink and you'll miss it , Good Parent Yuna Hollander , Good Parent David Hollander , Good Friend Hayden Pike , Light Angst , Fluff and Humor , Fanwork Creator Knows Nothing About Hockey , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Heated Rivalry/Hollanov
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-03 Words: 10,360 Chapters: 1/1

Special

by [blossombubble](#)

Summary

Shane has grown accustomed to his neurodivergence being used as the butt of a joke.

Ilya has not.

Yuna Hollander suffers no fools.

OR

Living as his authentic self is liberating and Shane wouldn't change it for the world, but it doesn't come without complications. At least he has his husband, his parents and his friends to back him up.

Notes

Soooo I am obsessed with heated rivalry and wrote this off the back of a rewatch why I was on holiday! As someone who is also neurodivergent and who works with a lot of children and adults who are, I really enjoyed how Shane's autism was portrayed, hence feeling inspired to write this fic :)

I haven't read the books yet, but I did skim some of them on my friend's Kindle, so I hope the characterisation isn't too off. I also know next to nothing about hockey as an FYI!

As a disclaimer: This fic contains homophobic and ableist language, as well as mentions of racism. It also goes fairly into depth around some of the bullying and discrimination that neurodiverse people can experience. Shane also has some self-deprecating thoughts about his neurodiversity, so if you find this triggering, I recommend not reading. I also know that Shane isn't officially diagnosed in the show or books (I think?) but for the sake of how I've written this fic, he was diagnosed as a child. The timeline for this fic is a bit all over the place, but consider it post-canon as they are both married and playing for the Centaurs.

I'd also like to say that every person's experience of being neurodiverse is different, and that's okay :) I hope you enjoy reading :)

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

If you were to ask Shane Hollander the first time he remembered being the butt of a joke due to his neurodivergence, he'd probably shrug and elect not to comment. Honestly, recalling those times of snickering were not overly pleasant for him, and confronting the cause of such ridicule head-on as opposed to avoiding it and focusing on more worthwhile pursuits (in his opinion) like hockey and Ilya...

Why would he want to? Shit happened, and he wasn't the only kid who was bullied for being a little different or weird or awkward at times. Kids could be assholes, and Shane had never really craved winning any of the lame popularity contests they had.

He was always more concerned with hockey, with being the best, with *winning*. Even as a child he'd lived by a rigid routine – one imposed by himself due to his...*particularities* and one enforced by his coach and mom and trainers to be the best.

The bullying for his 'otherness' truthfully decreased by a considerable amount when other kids and parents started seeing his potential on the ice. Shane went from being that kid other parents forced their kids to invite to birthday parties out of guilt to being a hot commodity – a 'good influence', parents hoped some of his greatness could rub off on their own kids, who either sucked up to Shane or were even meaner out of jealousy.

Shane would say that never fitting in with the other kids had never bothered him. That he found a place to belong (hockey) where he felt truly content and accepted (this, of course, would turn out to be wistful thinking in later years, you can't truly belong if you aren't being your authentic self and as a consequence constantly anxious from hiding said authentic self) he didn't care that he spent every lunch period either running laps around the school alone or inside the classroom reading up on hockey plays. He didn't care that none of the other kids wanted to pair with him for group projects (he could work better alone, anyway!) he didn't care that his teachers either wrinkled their noses at him or went overboard trying to 'help him' with fitting in.

At the end of it all, he ended up being the second draft pick in his rookie season for the NHL. At the end of it all, he ended up winning two (soon to be three, he was hoping) Stanley Cups. At the end of it all, he was being railed by Ilya Rozanov, in a multi-million dollar cottage he'd had custom made.

He didn't reflect on his past bullying with an air of pettiness, but rather indifference. It simply didn't matter, because it had all been noise. A lot of noise, and maybe sometimes his mom had had to pick him up from school because he'd melted down over a school assembly being too noisy or his costume for the stupid mandatory play had been too itchy or because he'd quietly butted heads with one of his teachers over something they were wrong about – a lot of the time they thought Shane was stupid, he wasn't, he just learned a little differently.

There were a lot of offhanded comments made, comments Shane had either ignored or laughed along with because it was easier, or because he didn't realise he was the butt of the joke. That still happened to this day, sometimes Shane noticed, sometimes he didn't.

If you were to ask Yuna Hollander the first time she remembered her baby being bullied, she'd be able to recollect it with perfect clarity (and a decent amount of vitriol) because the moment had stuck so fiercely in her mind, had never left her.

Shane, at a birthday celebration he'd been reluctantly invited to at the behest of Yuna, being ganged-up on during party games, the other children giggling at his reactions.

Shane, sitting inside with the adults and reading a book whilst the other kids bounced on the jumping castle, running outside wide-eyed when one of them called inside with a snigger "Hey Shane! It's raining cats and dogs out here!" (apparently an inside joke for the children, based on Shane taking the idiom literally when a teacher had made the quip once).

Shane being asked, point-blank, by an elder sibling (who was, fortunately reprimanded immediately by a mortified parent who apologised to Yuna later) "are you retarded, or something?" when he clapped his hands over his ears when the birthday singing became a bit too raucous.

Witnessing all of this, Yuna had been struck with such a sense of helplessness and hurt, unsure how to react when it was children being cruel to Shane, and not an adult she could confront in the usual way. It had broken her heart. Her heart still always broke a little, but Shane had grown into a resilient young man, and eventually she'd learned she couldn't always fight his battles for him, no matter how tempting it was. He was no longer that little boy she could seize by the hand and stalk from the party from.

Shane had been in kindergarten the first time she'd truly noticed he was different in a way she hadn't prepared for. Certainly, she had heard a few snide comments over the years in mother's group, in-passing from strangers, even from an old-fashioned doctor before she'd switched. Most if it, however, had been racially motivated. Some of it had been offensive unintentionally, other times it was on purpose. Yuna had always confronted it head-on, cool and collected. Sometimes people apologised, sometimes she lost friends and it resulted in an argument. Either result was fine with her, as long as Shane didn't grow up thinking that behaviour was something he had to tolerate. She wanted nothing but the best for her baby.

She'd known that (as much as she wanted to) she wouldn't always be able to shield Shane from hearing such rhetoric, particularly when he started school. She'd done her utmost best to prepare him, taught him to tell a trusted grown-up, not to fight back in case he got hurt, drilled in him he had nothing to be ashamed about. All of the suggestions from parenting books, from their paediatrician. She'd done everything she could possibly think of to keep him safe, both physically and mentally, from any bullying he might face for being different.

It wasn't enough.

No amount of mother's groups, playdates, park-runs and mom and baby events were enough, and not for lack of trying. Yuna Hollander didn't suffer any fools, but she was also sharp, charismatic, and very easy to like. Her people-skills had served her fantastically in helping Shane progress in his career, but despite being the ultimate *mom-ager* and cheerleader for her beautiful boy, Shane was just...different.

He didn't seem to grasp social cues. He didn't play like the other kids, and they quickly got bored of trying to teach him rules that came instinctively to them, that was as easy to them as breathing. They would run off to play tag or hide-and-seek and Shane would sit, quite happy to play in solitude stacking blocks or lining up stuffed animals. He couldn't carry a conversation whilst keeping eye-contact, or about a topic he wasn't interested in, he spat out birthday cake because it 'felt yucky' in his mouth (much to Yuna's disbelief, as Shane was such a polite child!) and it was hard to kick thumb-sucking, a habit she later learned was a way of stimming for Shane – he was always chewing on a straw, the drawstring of his hoodie, or even biting his own nails, even after he'd stopped the thumb-sucking.

She hadn't been educated on neurodiversity, and although she'd never been ashamed of her baby there had been a part of her that had been unable to accept that he wasn't perfect. Not because she needed him to be, but because *she* believed he was. Her sweet, serious boy, who could analyse hockey plays like a seasoned veteran by the age of eight, who despite not being the most smiley child was so kind, so clever, even if he learned at his own pace.

David had recognised the signs and symptoms earlier than she had, had broached the topic a few times after they'd both been pulled aside by daycare workers to discuss some of Shane's 'quirks', or received report cards which gently but firmly recommended he be taken to a specialist to be assessed – Yuna had been adamant that there was 'nothing wrong with Shane', and there *hadn't* been, she'd just needed to learn and accept for herself that Shane being autistic was not a failure on her behalf as a parent, but rather a part of his identity, just like his love for hockey, his dry quips, and his heritage.

It had been scary for her to acknowledge that Shane was autistic, because she knew firsthand how cruel the world could be to those that were different, but ultimately getting Shane the extra help he'd required at that time had been a greater kindness than burying her head in the sand and pretending he wasn't different.

Because he was – and that was *okay*.

She just wished others could see it that way as well.

But if they didn't, *fuck them*, because they were missing out on being friends with the most amazing boy! Shane's differences, in her opinion, only made him more exceptional, even if there were struggles along the way. Those people who judged him for being different were the *true* losers, and Yuna wouldn't change Shane for the world. Maybe sometimes she wished he had a few extra friends, but she'd learned early-on that pushing too hard in that regard would usually result in Shane melting down.

Hayden Pike, at least, was a fantastic team-mate and friend to Shane, she could rely on him to back Shane up both in and outside of the locker-room, to check-in on him when he seemed overstimulated, to not get offended by some of Shane's blunter mannerisms.

"I have a kid on the spectrum." He'd said once to her, when she'd thanked him for always inviting Shane to dinner with his family, for accommodating his meal-needs without too much griping. She knew she ought to not get involved in her son's friendships, but Shane always spoke of Hayden so highly, she couldn't help but have a nice chat with him whenever their paths crossed. "Not that I'm comparing Shane to her at all, they're actually really different, and Shane is, y'know, a grown man and all, but...I picked up on a few things and just kind of knew." When Yuna had stared at him over her glass of wine, he'd added, a little nervously. "It doesn't change anything, Shane is still my best bud, and the best fucking captain we could hope for – excuse my language--"

"It's fine, Hayden." Yuna had cut him off, the man clearly becoming more nervous the more he prattled. "I didn't know that about your child. I'm no expert, but I've picked up a bit of knowledge over the years – let me know if you ever want to chat about anything, you or Jackie."

"Oh my God that would actually be fucking awesome," Hayden beams "and you have no idea how great it is to tell someone my daughter is autistic and not be told 'I'm sorry' like she's diagnosed with fucking cancer!"

Yuna holds back a wince. A faux pas, but very common for parents with neurodivergent children to receive that reaction. At least most of the time it wasn't ill-intentioned. "Girls can present very different to boys sometimes, but I'm always here if either of you want to talk." She means it, too. She knows how isolating it can be as a parent, even with the internet and assorted forums available.

"Jackie has actually been dying to have another mom to talk to. She obviously has her own friends but it's...different, so this is amazing, thank you so much, Yuna."

"Thank you for always being there for Shane. I'd always hoped he would have a friend like you." It took a little time, she thinks, but it finally happened.

Now if only he could find a girlfriend (or, as she was rapidly beginning to suspect) a boyfriend who could do the same...

She only wanted the best for her beautiful boy.

Ilya had always enjoyed teasing Shane. In many ways, Shane almost made it too easy for him, and the reactions he gave when the words (or touches) took effect...nothing could compare to the sight of Shane with flushed cheeks, his adorable freckles stark underneath the redness, his full lower-lip turned out in a pout.

Gorgeous. Ilya could wax poetic about the beauty of Shane Hollander for hours (he had on quite a few occasions when intoxicated, Svetlana could attest), but alongside his...*physical assets* which Ilya naturally admired very much, he also loved his brain.

Shane was, obviously, as sports commentators and magazines liked to coin, a ‘generational talent’ an ‘elite athlete’ – his skills on the ice were nearly unmatched, his strategic mind and knack for analytics exceedingly impressive. He was dedicated, serious, and a dutiful captain to his team – he always gave his all, his obsession for the sport as admirable as it could be frightening at times.

He was brilliant and caring, but he was also very funny. It had taken Ilya a little time to fully grasp his sense of humour, to pick-up when he was joking, since Shane’s delivery of jokes was often flat, even when he was practically giggling in amusement, and sometimes he didn’t even smile when he made a quip, so at first Ilya would have to pause and think it over, before realising, and often saying “*ah yes, is funny, Hollander*” sometimes he’d have to think for a little longer if he wasn’t quite understanding certain phrases in English, but Shane, unlike a lot of people, never got frustrated or impatient with having to wait as Ilya struggled to make sense of what was said.

He never rolled his eyes, or over-explained, or waved his hand and said ‘nevermind!’ which Ilya frankly hated. He would wait, quietly, grinning, because he knew once Ilya understood-

He’d grin back, and laugh. If Shane had insulted him, he’d throw back something similarly sharp. Sometimes Ilya would still be a little confused, he might ask a clarifying question, and Shane would explain patiently, without an ounce of irritation – Shane was good like that, was good at lots, was good boy in general.

“You are like teacher,” Ilya tells him, the effect only stronger because Shane was wearing those cute glasses of his, head laid on his shoulder “good at waiting, if only you were always so good.” For emphasis, Ilya ghosts a hand along the length of Shane’s soft dick through the blanket. They’d already gone a few rounds, but there was still at least one more left in them. “With sex you are always such...brat.”

“Shut the fuck up.” Shane huffed, his freckles complimented by a pink dusting across his cheeks. “It’s called the six second rule.” No elaboration. Blunt. It takes him a moment to realise why Ilya has quirked a brow, visibly stifling a laugh. “Not my...not my dick! You know I last longer than that!”

“Mm. Sometimes.”

Shane tries not to pout, knows it will only lead to more teasing, focuses on articulating himself well, explaining, as he truly wants Ilya to understand the method he uses. It was the method his mother had taught him, that both of his parents had been using on him since he was diagnosed. “It’s where you wait for six seconds after you speak, to allow someone to process and reply, it’s useful for a lot of people, not just people on the spectrum.” It has gotten easier to admit he’s neurodivergent over the years, particularly with Ilya. He’d been so nervous to tell him at first, only for all of his fretting to result in Ilya saying, nonplussed:

“*No shit, Hollander.*”

Ilya had known, apparently he'd picked it up pretty early-on into their relationship but had never said anything, doing his own research and wondering if he should ever broach the subject himself, since Shane had never told him he had a diagnosis. It had certainly explained a few things, like Ilya having purchased weighted blankets for his apartments, and how good he was at helping Shane navigate meltdowns. He never mocked him for stimming, either, not after the first time he'd light-heartedly reproached him for 'fidgeting' when they were watching a movie and Shane had all but shut-down in embarrassment.

"I will have to try with team." Ilya says, and Shane feels warm, because although their communication is constantly improving, Ilya is a good listener – he takes Shane's suggestions on-board. "It work for you?"

Shane tries to hold on to the warm feeling, and not let any bitterness tinge this moment with Ilya. He tried not to let his disappointment with his old team enter their bed, if he could help it. Sometimes it was hard, and he'd end up in frustrated tears, but Ilya always helped him through it. He reasoned to himself that they had never been real friends in the first place if they couldn't accept him as he was – if they couldn't accept Ilya, but having grown up feeling like he never fit in anywhere, to have his home he had poured (literal) blood, sweat and tears into turn their back on him because of who he went home with at the end of a game...

Hayden hadn't turned away, and J.J was slowly coming around, but it fucking sucked, and despite knowing he deserved better, and being generally happy and comfortable with his new team, Shane couldn't just erase all of those years playing for the Voyageurs. He may not have been super close with all of his teammates, but he'd considered them to be like his brothers-

"I am sorry, sweetheart." Ilya runs a hand through Shane's hair, softly, soothingly. Sometimes physical touch can be too much for Shane when he's upset, but he's well and truly an expert by now at gauging when Shane truly wants to be left alone for a little while. "Is insensitive question."

"It's okay," Shane looks up at Ilya, doesn't have to force a smile, knows Ilya can read every minute twitch in his expression, in his eyes, a familiarity that has come from spending so many years together, even if they weren't always in the same place "and yeah...it actually did. I don't think any of them have the excuse of being autistic for their thickness, though-"

"Thickness?"

Shane pauses, when Ilya just looks at him in befuddlement, he elaborates. "Not like... actually thick, like a tree trunk or-"

"My cock." Ilya smirks, Shane lightly slugs him on the shoulder for the interruption.

"Not like that. I mean like...dumb."

Ilya's face flickers with understanding, before his brow furrows in a frown of displeasure. "You are not dumb, Shane." His voice is unwaveringly firm, it's enough to (even in this context) have Shane feeling a little hot and bothered, although he instantly makes to defend himself.

“Yeah, I know that. I know I’m not dumb.” Like he’d pushed away the bitterness, Shane tries to push away the memories, of being mocked in school for not picking up certain teachings quick enough, of the snickering when he took something too literal and humiliated himself. “I can just be...obtuse sometimes.” When Ilya still looks primed to fight him on this (he’s wearing that expression he gets when he decides he wants to challenge Shane and his not-dumb brain) “It’s fine, Ilya. It comes with being the way I am, it doesn’t bother me-“

“It bothers me.” Ilya says, sternly. “You, how you say...*process* differently. Does not make you dumb. Am I dumb, for not understanding silly English proverbs?”

“Of course not!” Shane protested, immediately, his return scowl just as fierce. “English is your second language, it takes time to comprehend-“

“Exactly. We are all different, and I remind you that you also speak fluent French, Shane. You are not dumb, you are very smart...next time I hear you say this we will be having conversation over my knee.”

A groan builds in Shane’s throat, he feels his cock begin to stiffen. “That isn’t fair, Ilya.” He complains, managing not to sound like he’s whining, barely. The thought both thrills him and leaves him feeling chastened, a delicious combination that never fails to make him squirm.

“No, what is not fair is I hear my husband call himself dumb. Stop this at once or we will have problem.” Ilya’s tone softens a little at the end, showing Shane he isn’t truly angry with him, just...frustrated. “You are smart boy, you are special boy, you are good boy.” As usual, the praise does something exquisite to Shane, even if Ilya calling him ‘special’ reminds him of-

It doesn’t matter, because Ilya is sincere. He is not using it as a backhanded insult, isn’t saying it to hurt or humiliate him, it isn’t some inside-joke about Shane ‘being special’ that he’ll snicker over...

To Ilya, Shane is just...special. In the purest sense of the word. No offensive connotation, no cruel joke. It’s nice, even if it takes Shane a moment to work past it.

“Need me to say again?” Ilya asks. He knows how much Shane enjoys being praised, and he adores lavishing him with well-deserved compliments and affirmations, because Shane truly *is* good boy.

“Yeah.” Shane nods, and he shifts slightly to allow Ilya’s hand underneath the covers, where long fingers trace along his pectoral, the flat of his thumb grazing over a nipple, making Shane moan softly, sensitive.

“Use manners like good boy.”

“*Please.*”

Ilya smiles, leans down and presses his lips to Shane’s. The movement of their mouths is slow, they’re both a little tired from their earlier rounds, even if they still have energy for more. There is no rush, they have nowhere to be, until practice tomorrow morning.

And Ilya will tell Shane his affirmations as many times as he needs.

As much as they endeavour to keep it professional playing on the same team, there are inevitably times where their relationship begins to fray at the edges of their ‘professional’ personas, where Ilya makes a comment that’s a little too suggestive, Shane sends him a look that’s a little too flirty, they get a little too handsy with one another (particularly if they’ve won a game) and Shane has to reel himself back in, knowing the intense media scrutiny they are both under and the extra chirping from their opponents isn’t worth making a spectacle, even if his new team actually has his back.

But still, they slip sometimes, the adrenaline of a win tipping them into something impulsive. Shane is better at handling it than Ilya, is naturally more introverted, but occasionally he slips, as well, and Ilya never holds it against him. In fact, he usually just grins, like he’s the happiest man in the world.

So Shane tries to have the same energy for Ilya’s own little slip-ups, tries not to let the irritation fester after he’s given him a sharp look and a hissed scold, because it isn’t healthy, and Ilya isn’t trying to make a scene, *most* of the time.

He *has* taken to passionately kissing Shane whenever his old team happen to be in the same vicinity of them in the stadium, usually crossing paths pre and post-game, relishing in the disgusted and uncomfortable look it garners from some of them. It had used to upset Shane, but after the constant-stream of slurs he’s been subjected to by his own ‘former friends’ this year on the ice, he doesn’t care so much anymore, even enjoys being a little petty, even if it’s embarrassing to engage in cheesy PDA.

Let them squirm. Let *them* feel the prickling discomfort for once. As long as there was no cameras around, it was just a little harmless heckling, rightfully deserved after Shane and Ilya had been *harassed* this season.

“We played so fucking good.” Shane murmurs to Ilya, mid-sloppy and mortifyingly public make-out. He can hear their teammates wolf whistling behind them, the Voyageurs pushing past, expressions ranging from unbothered (Hayden!) to borderline constipated at the PDA.

“Yes, my special boy did good.” Ilya says, between pecks. He’s sweet today, gentle as he presses his mouth to Shane’s cheeks, the ridge of his nose, his forehead. “Is due reward later...”

Shane is so busy trying not to get hard over *that* that he doesn’t even notice Drapeau pause as he’s passing by. He shouldn’t have been able to hear much, anyway, not over the Centaurs hollering...

He evidently doesn’t hear Ilya mentioning Shane being rewarded (this might have made the man turn faintly green) but he does hear something.

Enough.

His smirk is self-satisfied and nasty, when he falls in with some of his other team-mates (after sending a furtive glance around to make sure Hayden isn't listening in) he begins to whisper.

The first time Ilya hears Shane's neurodivergence used as the intentional butt of a joke (and not an offhanded remark about his awkwardness or 'quirks' that are attributed to his autism) he doesn't even understand at first, although he only has to see Shane's flinch to realise something is amiss.

The Centaurs won the cup this year, so they're all in high-spirits at the boring awards ceremony, despite the fact it's kind of an open secret a lot of 'upper management' aren't their biggest fans. Everyone loves an underdog story until it's gay, right?

Still, there are some decent players (as well as some not-so decent) who want to shout them drinks. Ilya watches as Shane pulls aside Haas and tells him he doesn't have to do anything he isn't comfortable with, something about 'peer pressure' (Ilya is proud of his fiancé, but almost a little jealous at being out-captained) and despite the fact these parties are *boring* (Ilya has to hold back in scoffing in the faces of a few who babble on about how 'psyched' they are to be there) the team seems to be enjoying themselves. Having fun.

Shane's parents are also present, they greet both of them with hugs and kisses on the cheek, and Ilya is thrumming with happiness at the show of support. To be here with his beautiful husband and his in-laws with a supportive team, *out* and after winning *the fucking cup* is a dream. It's more than he could have ever wanted, and even though the Voyageurs are present and some are sending them nasty looks, they are overall irrelevant in the scheme of things, and Ilya is quite content to ignore them and let them suck on the...what was expression? *Sour grapes*.

Hayden steals Shane away for a chat, and Ilya does a shot with Marlow, who claps him on the shoulder before beginning to scan the room in search of his evening's conquest. He's the only one of Ilya's former team-mates he still speaks with semi-regularly, and he ends up introducing him properly to his new team, who are taking advantage of the open bar.

Still, despite the festivities Ilya is well and truly looking forward to retiring to his hotel room with Shane, who looks impossibly handsome in his well-tailored suit tonight, and who typically excuses himself from these sort of events when he deems it 'polite enough'. Shane is very good at acting like all of the noise and flashing lights don't bother him, but Ilya can see it wear on him throughout the night, opens his arms to his husband when he seeks him out, ignoring the dirty looks from some old geezer as he wraps them around Shane's waist.

Hayden, who has been glued to Shane's side all-night and enjoying a rare chance to catch-up in person, scrunches up his face like a child, but doesn't comment. He isn't disgusted because

it's two men, but rather because it's *Ilya* pawing at his best friend, but he doesn't want there to be any misinterpretation in a room with so many people, so he keeps quiet.

Ilya sticks out his tongue playfully when he thinks Shane isn't looking, Shane elbows him for his troubles. He's getting ready to whisper in his ear about going up to their hotel room, when he spots J.J bouncing over, more than a little inebriated.

Despite J.J not having been outright homophobic to Shane, Ilya still stiffens protectively, shooting him a glare. Every word or action J.J hasn't spoken to defend Shane still echoes loudly in his ears, and Hayden also seems slightly on edge, but relaxes when J.J greets them cheerily.

Ilya doesn't say a word, because Shane seems...happy to be having a conversation with his old friend. It must remind him of old times, and even though they are so happy together now, Ilya would be a fool to think Shane still doesn't miss part of the old times, where he could have a drink with his teammates and talk about hockey, or whatever gossip J.J is bringing up. Being a captain of the Voyageurs was a significant portion of his life, it was natural he enjoy chatting like old times to friends.

J.J is midway through a bumbling apology (far too much alcohol, but again Ilya does not interject because Shane's eyes seem a little misty before he blinks) about not having been in touch more, about not being more 'supportive as a friend' when Ilya sees Drapeau swaggering over, a posse of Voyageurs players (the ones who have *not* been in contact or made moves to make amends with Shane) accompanying him.

Ilya immediately gets a bad feeling, but he doesn't move to shuffle Shane away, because his husband is nodding at J.J, maintaining eye-contact, demonstrating his best active listening skills to show he's receptive. He isn't about to ruin the moment, isn't about to let *Drapeau and his cronies* ruin the moment. Honestly, in his opinion they should all be on their hands and knees *grovelling* in apology for the way they have treated the captain that led them to back-to-back victories, but he doubts they will join J.J in apologising.

Drapeau's cheeks are ruddy from drink, his surrounding group are snickering like a bunch of schoolyard bullies. Hayden opens his mouth, likely to run interference, but he isn't fast enough. "Congratulations lovebirds." He says, and the way he says 'lovebirds' is derisive, he likely would have preferred to use a more offensive word, if there weren't so many people present.

J.J pauses in the end of his apology, and Shane looks to Drapeau instead. Perhaps he's a little hopeful that he's also coming around, because he doesn't immediately tell him to fuck off. Instead, he says, coolly "Thanks. We look forward to beating you next year as well."

Ilya chuckles, and a muscle in Drapeau's jaw twitches. He doesn't throw a punch or an insult, instead shocking Shane thoroughly by drawling "Yeah, we look forward to playing against you again."

Shane pauses, and Ilya can see his brain working in overtime, trying to see if he's missed some sort of social cue, if he's reading things wrong, and maybe Drapeau isn't being a sack of shit for once. His voice is a little sheepish, when he replies "Really?"

Drapeau scoffs, says “Is gullible written on the ceiling, Hollander?” then roars with laughter when Shane looks upwards, taking the jibe literally.

Shane’s cheeks turn pink with embarrassment, despite the fact that J.J (and even one of the players in Drapeau’s own group) have fallen for the cheap trick. Ilya’s grip on Shane tightens incrementally, but when he tries to shuffle Shane behind him he finds his husband has planted his feet, unwilling to be intimidated, or show weakness.

Ilya is proud of how brave he is, even though he is frustrated. If it hadn’t been for J.J coming over, he and Shane could have been upstairs by now. Instead they are dealing with...this.

If this was on the ice, it could be settled easier, but at the after-party of an awards show with so many witnesses and sponsors, it is not so easy. Ilya can be impulsive, he would gladly punch Drapeau in his ugly face with no hesitation, but he doesn’t, because he knows Shane would not like that.

He spots some of their team at the bar taking notice of the situation, nudging at one another before beginning to hurry over collectively, clearly hoping their numbers will convince Drapeau to back-off, and Ilya sees Yuna also pause in her conversation with a sponsor, her pretty smile turning into a fierce glower as she reads Shane’s discomfort easily from across the room.

Ilya sees her mouth move, ‘*Excuse me*’ before she’s heading over as well, and he takes a deep, steeling breath, making a conscious effort not to react, as Drapeau likely wants. With his team and Yuna Hollander to back them up, he has no doubt this situation will be diffused without further...*unpleasantness*, if Drapeau can just keep his mouth shut a little longer-

“In all seriousness though, Hollander,” Drapeau doesn’t look very serious, and Shane isn’t falling for it again, if looks could kill, Drapeau would be ten feet under by now “it’s pretty impressive how you’ve been able to elevate such a shitty team. Guess you really are that *special*.”

Ilya doesn’t understand why Drapeau is smirking so smugly as he compliments Shane. Clearly he’s being sarcastic, but it’s not a particularly clever barb. He looks down to Shane, about to make a *far* wittier comment, and is struck with how...devastated he looks, for the briefest moment, before he schools his expression again. There’s genuine hurt in his eyes, the kind of hurt Ilya will spot whenever something particularly awful is chirped at him, and he....doesn’t know why Shane is reacting this way. Drapeau had called him special in a sarcastic tone, how was this insult on par with the homophobia he’s been subjected to? It doesn’t make sense, but Ilya knows he must be missing something, because Shane wouldn’t react this way without cause-

“Isn’t Hollander so *special*, boys?” Drapeau’s accompanying team-mates suddenly seem a little uncomfortable as well, but in typical schoolyard bully fashion they laugh along, albeit a bit unsurely.

Ilya realises then, ‘special’ must have some different meaning in this context, as Drapeau is emphasising it as he speaks. He must have heard Ilya calling Shane special at some point, and now he was using the word to ridicule him.

“We always knew you were *special*, Hollander, but-“

“Shut the fuck up, Drapeau!” Hayden spits, before his teammate can finish. Drapeau seems a little miffed by Hayden’s visible anger, it gives him momentary pause. “So it’s not enough for you to be a homophobic piece of shit, now you have to be ableist as well?”

Hayden’s raised voice catches the attention of some officials who exchange alarmed looks, Ilya wants nothing more than to drag Shane away, but when he tries again, Shane continues to plant his feet. “Moya lyubov,” he begins, quietly, just for Shane, as Hayden continues to curse Drapeau out. He recognises the word ‘ableist’, knows now how Drapeau was insulting Shane. He feels anger, white hot and burning, racing through him, but he tamps down on it, *hard*, because he needs to be here for Shane, and getting into a fight that would only result in potential disciplinary action was not going to help, even if it would be really fucking satisfying. Shane would only feel guilty about it later, despite it not being his fault, at all. “Come-“

“Hay,” But Shane isn’t listening to him, he’s staring at his long-time friend with worry “Calm down, it’s not worth it.” He reaches out and grasps Hayden’s left shoulder, and J.J does the same with the right, clearly sobering up a bit now with all of the confrontation.

The Centaurs surround them with tense expressions, and Yuna Hollander pushes through them like a woman on a mission. Ilya feels more relaxed at the sight of her, knows that with this fearsome woman present, things will resolve themselves without violence and possible suspensions or other punishment-

“C’mon, Pike,” Drapeau is egging the group on, clearly not caring who throws the first punch, as long as it’s not one of his crew “why are you defending this retard? I would have thought you’d be fucking happy not to keep holding his hand and helping him count to potato every day-“

The slap is loud, resounding throughout the suddenly deathly silent room, hard enough that Drapeau’s thick neck slaps to the side from the sheer power of the strike. Ilya watches with a surge of delight and surprise as blood trickles down from his cheek, from where Yuna’s wedding ring has cut into his skin-

Yuna *fucking* Hollander.

The woman stands with her hand still poised, stinging red from the force, she looks positively fearful, the entirety of the room stares at her with a mixture of shock, bemusement (from those who hadn’t started onlooking) and (at least in Ilya and Shane’s corner) appreciation.

“Mom?” Shane says, his voice is shell-shocked, but his lips are twitching, fighting back a smile at seeing his mother slap the brute so soundly. Harris, who has seemingly appeared from nowhere, looks as if he doesn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

Yuna looks to her son, and her eyes soften for a moment. “Shane,” she says, and her voice is eerily calm “go up to your room with Ilya, take Hayden with you.”

Ilya nearly pouts. Wants to complain about dragging Pike along, but a second glance at the man makes him realise it is a wise suggestion. Despite being taken-aback by Yuna slapping Drapeau, he is still visibly spitting mad, and close to following suit with a punch. “You heard her.” Ilya can’t resist giving the badass woman a salute, resisting the urge to toss Shane over his shoulder when his husband digs his heels in *again*.

“Are you insane?” Shane hisses. “I am not leaving my mom *alone* after she bitch-slapped a player!” It’s so Shane, to say something so brutally honest (and hilarious) with no filter.

Ilya knows it’s inappropriate, but he laughs, loudly. When everyone looks at him as if he has indeed lost it, he manages to wheeze out, gleefully at Drapeau, “You got *bitch-slapped* by Shane’s mother!”

There’s a smattering of tense laughter around them, and it seems enough to snap Hayden out of his rage, for now. He exchanges a look with Yuna that Ilya catches, some sort of kinship between them he can’t quite work out.

Drapeau, nursing his face, snaps “I’ll press charges-“

Yuna steps forward, encroaching in his space with a clack of her heels and a point of her manicured finger. Drapeau, like a coward, falls back. “And I’ll tell every sponsor that’s ever glanced edgewise at you that you hurled discriminatory slurs at my son, *if* they don’t already know by the end of tonight.” Pointedly, she nods at a few poised cameras and phones around the room, and Drapeau pales. “You should be ashamed of yourself.” She says, seething, sharp, *eviscerating*, and Ilya savours seeing the man cut down, hell hath no fury like a mother who’s baby has been scorned! “Or maybe you already are, and that’s why you feel the need to harass my son, the loudest bullies are always the most mediocre losers.”

Ilya watches as the words sink-in, not just on Drapeau, but on the ones loitering at his back, who quickly begin to disperse and leave him standing alone.

Before Drapeau has a chance to storm off and lick his wounds, officials are inserting themselves into the situation, a few security guards rushing over to try and pressure the group to disperse, before there’s further incident.

The Centaur team whoop and cheer loudly until Yuna gives them a reproachful look and sends them a shooing motion, she allows herself to be swept up by the swarm of officials, sternly giving them a run-down of what has occurred in a no-nonsense manner. Coach Wiebe joins her, miffed but even-headed.

Shane sighs a breath of relief when a notable sponsor (and one very fond of Yuna) rushes over to check she’s okay, before proceeding to give the officials a tongue-lashing about what they’ve witnessed, Yuna nodding along in agreement. She’s perfectly poised, unconcerned...

And Shane is...baffled. His mom has always been tough, but he’s never seen her... ‘throw hands’ before. He’s never seen her resort to violence. He’s worried for the repercussions, even as she seems to be smoothly navigating the situation. “I’ve got to call Dad.” He informs Ilya, who finally relinquishes his grip to allow Shane to pull out his phone, calling his dad to

come back downstairs. The man had apparently retired early, probably bored of Yuna's schmoozing...

"It's fine, sweetie." Yuna reassures him, but Shane stays until his dad arrives regardless, only allowing Ilya to lead him away when her husband is there to support her. "We'll talk later."

The crowd has largely gone back to drinking (and gossiping!) dissecting the latest piece of drama when Ilya finally (blessedly) is able to drag Shane away. Fortunately, Hayden seems to have disappeared along with J.J, so he doesn't need to bring him along as Yuna had instructed.

They ride the elevator in silence until Shane starts up a quiet giggle at the absurd turn the night has taken, and Ilya joins in, they're both breathless by the time they arrive in the room, and it takes a little for them to settle, sporadic laughter through a quick shower and getting dressed into pyjamas.

"Hay's daughter is autistic," Shane explains, as he texts his friend to check-in, answering Ilya's unspoken question as they both curl up on the lounge together "she's had a rough time at school this year, Mom has been helping out with some suggestions and stuff. Her and Jackie have gotten pretty close."

Ilya is curious, but he knows it isn't his place to ask questions about something so private, so he holds his tongue, instead choosing to nod and say "Makes sense." No wonder Hayden had been so pissed off, not only was his close friend being insulted, but also his child indirectly. Ilya still didn't like the man, but he respected him a little more for standing up for Shane and his daughter, even if it was better late than never in Shane's case. "Remind me never to get on Yuna's bad side." When Shane grimaces, Ilya holds him a little tighter, wishing he'd brought along one of Shane's weighted blankets. "I joke. I know Yuna is not usually so..." The word escapes him. At first he'd meant to say 'feisty', but Yuna is quite feisty always...

"I can already see the headlines about her being a tiger mom." Shane says. His breath hitches, and Ilya loosens his grip enough to allow him to sink down further on the couch. His heart clenches when Shane chooses to bury his head in his chest, opposed to his own arms or knees, a display of trust. He butts his head a few times, and Ilya allows it, realising Shane is trying to regulate. He isn't hurting himself or anyone else. "She's always looking at everything from a PR angle, this is a nightmare..."

"Yuna is smart woman and will know how to handle." Ilya doesn't bother trying to tell Shane it isn't a PR nightmare, because there *had* been a lot of cameras and people in the room, and he wasn't going to invalidate his feelings or be illogical about the whole thing. He would, however, make efforts to stop him from 'catastrophising without minimising', as he had read in article, and learned in his own therapy. "Publications and internet will talk, but that *kusok der'ma* Drapeau will be in warm water."

"Hot water." Shane corrects, but Ilya's words seem to have had some effect, and his rapid breathing evens out a little. Ilya rubs circles up and down his back soothingly, a firm application of pressure, to help ground him. "Yeah, I wouldn't want to be him checking Twitter right now."

Ilya can't wait to take a peek later – he knows browsing the internet after drama isn't healthy for one's mental health and there is bound to be some, as Harris would say 'bad takes' on there, but he has faith that a majority of the population would find Drapeau's bullying to be inexcusable. At the very least, there would likely be some funny memes from some of their fan-accounts...

"I am sorry, Shane." Ilya's apology is steady, but thrumming with shame.

Shane pauses from rubbing his cheek on the fabric of Ilya's hoodie, looks up, and frowns in confusion. He doesn't ask a clarifying question, assuming Ilya is apologising for not punching Drapeau himself. "You don't need to apologise, the last thing we want is to give the NHL more reason to punish us, and we both know they wouldn't be fair in any sanctions–"

"Not about that." Ilya says. He does the six second thing–

"You couldn't have done anything to stop what Drapeau said. We were minding our own business when he came over."

Ilya doesn't know whether to be grateful or further upset by the fact that Shane isn't understanding what he's saying. A part of him is happy that Shane isn't fixating on it, but a larger part finds it excruciating to have to spell it out right now, the weight of his guilt nauseating. Saying it aloud, verbalising his mistake is terrible. If only he wasn't still so stupid when it came to English, if only he picked up his phone and fucking Googled how the word 'special' could be weaponised, he wouldn't have given Drapeau more ammunition to hurt Shane.

Because he'd seen Shane's reaction before he'd concealed it, had seen how Ilya's praise had been turned into something sarcastic, pointed and horribly cruel – it made him feel like the worst husband to ever roam the earth. It would be easy to just let Shane misunderstand, to deliberately let the subject die, but he knows if he isn't truthful now it will just eat away at him, and he knows the consequences of that, of not communicating properly with Shane. Even if it fucking sucks, he just has to 'bite the bullet', get it over and done with, to spare the dwelling later. "No, not about that. I did not know the word..." Ilya pauses, feels like he's admitting to a fucking murder, or something similarly heinous, he feels like a criminal for putting Shane in this position "'Special' could be used in that way. As insult. If I had known, I never would have–"

"Nope." Shane interjects, a cutting edge of authority in his voice, which stops Ilya short "This isn't your fault. That asshole Drapeau is the one that took something sweet and...*pure* and turned it into something gross." Never did Shane think he'd be describing something Ilya had said to him in the heat of the moment as 'pure' considering the borderline sinful shit that came out of his mouth, but there really was no other word he could think of to describe it, because Ilya had praised Shane with the purest intentions – there had been no hidden meaning meant to make him question or hate himself, or feel self-conscious.

To Ilya, he *was* special, without any offensive connotation attached. Ilya was probably the only person who had ever called him special (asides from his parents, who had stopped using the word shortly after realising how it could be used to bully Shane) who Shane hadn't instinctively doubted, like he was secretly laughing at him.

Sure, his initial use of the word had brought up some bad memories, jealous kids calling him ‘special’ and snickering like hyenas, comments online theorising about his neurodivergence, but Shane had never once questioned his intentions in using the word. Hearing Ilya call him that, without any idea of ulterior meaning, had felt so...nice.

Shane wouldn’t lie and say that hadn’t soured a bit, now. He doubted Ilya would ever use the word again and not ponder over how it could be used as a weapon against Shane, but he didn’t want him to stop completely, either. He didn’t want a loser like Drapeau ruining *anything* for them, least of all Ilya’s sweet praises that always got him *very* hot under the collar, made him feel *so good*.

Shane had spent so long hating and doubting himself that he didn’t want to give anything up, not now that he knew how liberating it was to just be himself, fully. He was Shane Hollander, a prodigy at hockey, but he was also Shane Hollander, Asian-Canadian, openly gay man married to Ilya Rozanov, and autistic. These were all assets of his personal identity, and he didn’t need to hide them anymore, just to make himself more...palatable for others. Just to make it easier on them.

He’d been so overwhelmed by everything that had been happening at the time of the confrontation with Drapeau (honestly, he hadn’t known who was going to throw the first punch, Ilya or Hayden) that his anger had almost become muted as he tried to take everything in, but now he was seriously considering tracking down Drapeau himself. He could take insults being hurled at him (was kind of accustomed to it by now) but he couldn’t tolerate Ilya being made to feel like some kind of ableist-asshole simply because of someone else’s prejudice. “Fuck, I wanna kill that guy.”

Perhaps Shane also *looks* as if he’s about to track Drapeau down (or Ilya can sense his intent) because Ilya pulls him even closer, until Shame’s face is smushed up against his chest, so tightly Shane can hear the *thump, thump* of his heart. It’s a soothing sound, and calms some of his temper. Even though it’s gross (and Ilya will surely bring up the idea of chewable jewellery again, which Shane has been avoiding like the plague), Shane mouths at the drawstring of Ilya’s hoodie, and Ilya lets him.

“Maybe at next game.” Ilya humours him. “If he is not suspended by then.” He still feels like shit for putting Shane in this position, but also a sense of relief for being upfront about his guilt. The momentary discomfort of admitting his true feelings is far better than the lingering self-doubt of wondering if Shane hates him. “And next time we kiss in front of him, I be careful of what I say.”

“Actually, I think you should say worse.” Shane’s voice is a little muffled around the drawstring, the glimmer in his eyes mischievous. “Did you see how purple his face went when Mom slapped him? I want to see if we can make him combust.”

The idea is very...*Ilya*. Ilya himself feels overjoyed he’s clearly been rubbing off on his husband. “This is as coach would say...poking bear? I do not like this comparison for Drapeau though, he is not very bear-like. I bet he has small dick, must be overcompensating for something.”

Shane laughs again, which sets Ilya off. They both know they should probably be trying to gauge the reactions online, coming up with a statement with their agents, checking in on Hayden and Yuna, but for a moment they just...sit. Pause. Collect themselves for the inevitable media scrutiny. Harris will likely call soon to strategize with them, and they'll probably be having a long night (*not* in the way they'd both originally intended, which fucking sucked) but at least they were *together*.

As predicted, it is a long night. Shane's parents and Hayden also end up joining them at some point in their room, which has essentially become a sort of HQ for strategizing over how they will handle the situation. There's a lot of calls being made, a statement released by the NHL hastily posted across social platforms to try and put out a bunch of fires that are sprouting up.

They '*hold all players, coaches and staff to a high standard of conduct and have a zero tolerance policy for the use of discriminatory language, including ableist slurs*' they will be '*conducting a full investigation into what has taken place tonight with the results to be announced after due process has taken place*' and, of course, the NHL is '*welcoming to all*' and '*does not condone violence*' the standard ass-covering bullshit. It's more than they've ever done to address some of the rampant homophobia and biphobia Shane and Ilya have faced, but they are used to the staggering hypocrisy and double-standards by now.

No names are explicitly mentioned, but it's all over social media, a few sports journalists who were in attendance of the after-party seem to be racing one another to release articles about what they'd either glimpsed, or managed to squeeze out of 'eye-witnesses', thoroughly milking the drama for all it's worth. It's widely known the 'offending player in question' is Drapeau, he's being crucified online, which Ilya is enjoying.

There's hundreds of memes spouting up with a grainy picture of Yuna with her palm outstretched, looking far more foreboding than any other player Ilya has ever encountered on the ice. Most are actually pretty funny, and Shane has already chided him for hearting a couple, which instantly turned eagle-eyed fans into a frenzy.

"Ilya," he intones, from where he is sat next to Yuna and David. The three had been in soft conversation for a while, and Ilya had given them a little privacy to browse the internet unsupervised. Even whilst speaking with his mother, Shane has his own phone open, notifications switched on for Ilya, and some fan accounts that update on him "did you just heart react a cringe compilation of Drapeau eating shit on the ice?"

"Da." Ilya answers, with an unabashed grin, and Shane heaves a sigh, although the corners of his mouth are twitching. "Is funny, and good compilation, deserves recognition."

"I know I don't have room to talk, but you should really avoid pouring gasoline on the fire." Yuna says, and Ilya doesn't give a retort because:

1 – he is not stupid.

2 – this woman is his *in-law*, the closest thing he has to a mother-figure since his own passed.

3 – he respects, heeds (and is maybe, just a little) scared of her. In good way.

He just nods, and tucks his phone away, for now.

Hayden, who has spent the last half an hour on the phone to his wife, suddenly cackles, holding up his screen to show another meme. It seems to be from a TV show, Ilya feels he has probably seen similar memes before, although he is not familiar with the show itself. “Fuck dude, look at what Scott Hunter just reposted!”

Shane squints, unable to read as easy without his glasses, before giving up and checking out Scott’s profile himself. It’s a Community meme, with the NHL’s logo clumsily inserted over a character’s face.

< *I can excuse homophobia, but I draw the line at ableism.* >

Then, a really cringy edit of Scott Hunter (what is with the flower crown, seriously?)

< *You can excuse homophobia?* >

Community *is* actually a show Shane has seen, and he understands the reference enough to laugh, although he wonders if Scott Hunter has made a wise decision in reposting it. A lot of people seem to be eating it up, but a few are irritated, telling Scott off for making the issue ‘about him’.

Since Shane finds it humorous (and he was, technically, the one who Drapeau was targeting tonight) he ends up commenting a short: *lol* which will hopefully help cool down some of the fans jumping to his defence and accusing Scott of being self-absorbed.

“You two are just as bad as each other.” Yuna gives a sigh of her own, but there is no denying how fond her exasperation is.

And although Ilya minds Yuna, he still can’t help ribbing her, just a little. “Is hand sore?”

She raises her middle-finger at Ilya, and Shane snorts, but complains “*Mom*” in that patented ‘*you’re embarrassing me*’ voice all kids develop when they reach adolescence and beyond.

“Seriously though, you are hero.” Ilya continues, because Yuna was *badass*, joking aside. “I want to put you bitch-slapping as my profile picture. Can I, Shane?”

“No.” Harris, Yuna and Shane all reply as one.

Pike is suspiciously quiet, which makes Ilya wonder.

He is triumphant when he calls (after doing a quick check of his own) “Pike has already done this!”

“Narc!” Hayden scowls at him, looking rather shamefaced when Yuna sends him a look. Ilya can definitely see where Shane gets some of his disapproving stares from. “And I’m not the only one-“

“He’s right, it’s a trend right now. Some of the team have done It as well.” Harris advises, and Yuna grumbles to herself, David grasping one of her hands as he speaks consolingly.

“You are pretty formidable when you go into mama bear mode, hon.”

“Nobody messes with Hollander cub.” Ilya teases, enjoying how Shane’s pretty little freckles stand out again when he blushes.

“Or my Rozanov cub.” Yuna says, so nonchalantly, so *natural* that Ilya can only bask in happiness for a moment, feeling content in his found-family haze until- “Or my Pike club.”

Ugh. Why must Pike ruin everything? Ilya feels jealous all of a sudden, wants to hoard Yuna’s motherly love and affection all for himself (and Shane, of course).

“That’s why you slapped him, isn’t it.” Pike eyes Yuna knowingly, and when she nods, he whispers “*Knew it.*” Like it’s some great conspiracy he’s solved, and not common-sense.

Ilya and Shane had also realised why Yuna had done it shortly thereafter arriving in their hotel room, hadn’t needed long to puzzle it out. Yes, there was an element of anger there, Yuna had certainly been furious, but she could have settled for a thorough dressing down of Drapeau, or even captured the interaction on film herself for evidence. The reason she had slapped him so firmly across the face (asides from the obvious fact that the asshole deserved it) was because-

“***Fuck him*** if he thinks he’s going to get any of my boys suspended or fined before the next season. They can throw me in jail for assault before that happens!”

“That isn’t going to happen.” Harris looks up from his laptop. “We already know Drapeau isn’t pressing charges. He’ll probably try and lay low for a while, hope this dies down.” None of them delude themselves into thinking the investigation being run by the NHL will result in any worthwhile results, it’ll be a slap on the wrist, some game suspensions or an eye-wateringly expensive fine, maybe some dropped sponsors, if Drapeau had any in the first place. “He’s definitely not winning in the court of public opinion.”

“He’ll definitely be reprimanded for turning his bullying into a public scandal for the NHL to deal with. There were a lot of sports journalists and sponsors at the party tonight, and none of them were impressed with what they saw from him and those Voyageurs players that acted as bystanders. They haven’t demonstrated an ounce of the maturity or professionalism as you boys.” Yuna sniffs.

Professionalism, yes, but Ilya and Shane mutually (and with a quick glance between them) elect not to mention how they *have* been needling the man for months by flaunting their relationship. At the end of the day, they weren’t doing anything wrong, but it hadn’t exactly been very...*mature* of them.

“Yeah, fuck him.” Hayden parrots Yuna’s insult, and Yuna thoroughly shocks the room by dropping her second F bomb of the night.

“Fuck him.”

Shane smiles, the same little smile he gets when he’s thinking of an inside joke, and says “Right up the butt, right Mom?”

“Exactly! God knows, it might release some tension. He might be less of an asshole.”

“*Yuna.*” David laughs, as Shane grimaces, “*Mom*”, the joke now inching back into embarrassing territory.

“It might help!”

“I do not volunteer for this.” Ilya always enjoys seeing Yuna fired-up, it is particularly spectacular to see tonight as she loses her filter entirely. Usually he only sees this side of her when they’re playing or watching hockey. He sends a wink at Shane. “There is only one butt for me.”

“Okay, ew, Rozanov-“

“You have how many children, Pike?”

“Alright, enough.” Shane seeks to end the bickering before it escalates. He looks tired, and Ilya yearns to tuck them both into bed, maybe after a couple of blow-jobs to get them both out of their heads, if they can manage to stay awake that long. “Can we at least agree to not engage with anymore shit-posts?”

“That would be much appreciated!” Harris pipes.

Ilya waits for everyone else around the room to chime their agreement, taking the time to change his profile picture, not to one of Yuna slapping Drapeau (as Shane had explicitly told him no) but another meme that pops-up, a little Mario holding a crown and offering it to Yuna which reads: **YOU DROPPED THIS, QUEEN.**

The picture they have cropped was originally of her and Shane on the red carpet from an event a couple of years ago, Ilya remembers because Shane had looked particularly sexy that night. “Okay,” he says, meandering back over to Shane, and dropping a kiss on the crown of his head “I’m done.”

Shane’s phone *pings* with a notification, he doesn’t even bother looking as he groans. “*Ilya.*”

End Notes

Apologies for the cringy melodrama, outdated memes and rushed ending – but I did have fun writing this! I hadn't originally intended on Yuna being such a big part, but I do adore her and it just ended up that way :)

As an FYI - one of Hayden's daughter's being autistic is a total head-canon, if 15-20 per cent of the global population is neurodivergent, then there could be a chance considering he has four kids :)

Let me know what you think (if you'd like) and stay safe out there <3

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