

The Hollander Guide to Fighting

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The Hollander Guide to Fighting

by [strawhat_star](#)

Summary

Shane Hollander's experiences with racism, fighting, and hockey prior to his rookie season. And the conversation he has with the Centaurs after they find out.

A prequel/sequel work to "Blood Upon The Snow", but you don't need to have read that for this to make sense, though it might help.

Notes

NOTE: use of slur

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

Chapter 1: To Know What is Said Without Knowing What it Means

Shane is seven years old, holding a bloody tissue to his nose and sitting in the rink's lobby waiting for his mom to finish talking with his coach. He'd been playing a fun practice game, had just scored a second goal for his team and was thrumming with the excitement from it, when one of the kids from the other team grabbed the front of Shane's jersey and slammed their fist into his nose. Shane had fallen flat on his butt, while his mother yelled from the sidelines and their coach skated over to them. Getting hit sucked, and Shane could feel the warm blood dripping down his face, but Shane was more focused on the word the other kid had sneered as he did it.

"Gook."

Shane didn't know what it meant, not really, but at the same time he knew exactly what it was. He was seven years old and the only mixed kid on his team, the only mixed kid on every team he'd played against so far. Shane knew people didn't like that, he knew people had a problem with him because of that. Shane thought it was stupid, he played far better than any of the other kids did, and his mom loved him enough to show up to all of his games unlike theirs. He didn't understand, really, why him being mixed was such a problem, but he knew for some people it was and he knew what it sounded like when they voiced it.

Shane waits until they're in the car, his nose no longer bleeding and his mom sitting quietly in the driver's seat, before he asks. "What's a gook?"

Yuna Hollander freezes, hands tight on the wheel and foot pressing back down on the break, shoving the gear shift back into park and just sitting there, frozen for a moment, because her sweet, darling, seven year old son was asking her to define a slur with the tone of voice that said he knew what it was. Yuna knew hockey wasn't the nicest sport, she knew it wouldn't be the nicest to her kid, but she'd thought she'd have more time before they had to talk about this.

"It's a mean word, right?" Shane continues, leaning forward in his seat to try and look at her.

"It's—" Yuna starts, stops quickly and takes a deep breath because she won't cry, not now when Shane is twisting in his seat to look at her because he won't unbuckle his seat belt while the car is on. "It is a mean word."

"Why?" Shane asks, sort of frowns a little as he says it and then clarifies. "I know it's mean to me and not to the other kids. Why is it, though?"

"I don't know the history." She says honestly, because she's never cared to look into the origin of some slurs, because she's never wanted to give them that power, because she can pretend it hurts a little less if she doesn't know the history behind it. "Did that kid... Did that kid in there call you that?"

“It’s not a big deal.” Shane says, and Yuna takes a slow steadying breath, grips the steering wheel a little tighter. “Why is it mean to me?”

“Has this happened before?” She asks, because it’ll only be worse if she speculates.

“Sometimes.” Shane replies, shrugs and shrinks in on himself a little. “Not that word before. But other things. Sometimes.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” She sounds devastated by the question, and Shane can mostly recognize that but he can’t put together why.

“Did I do something wrong?” Shane whispers, suddenly uncertain.

“No, baby, that’s not what I meant. You did nothing wrong. Nothing.” Yuna says, turns the car off and turns around in her seat so she can look at him. “Did you not want to tell me? I’m just, I’m trying to figure out why you haven’t told me this has happened before. Did you not think I would defend you?”

“I knew you would.” Shane says, and there’s no hesitation but the words still come out slow. “I didn’t think it was a big deal.”

“*Baby.*” Yuna whispers, horrified by the idea of how many microaggressions she must have missed for her kid to be so unphased by the idea of slurs and racism even without having a name for them. “It is a big deal. It’s not okay and it’s not your fault, but it is a big deal. It’s not okay for anyone to say things like that to you, and I don’t want you to think that it is.”

“Then why do they do it?” Shane asks, frowning now.

“Because some people are mean.” Yuna says, the most concise way she can put it. “There are people who are going to say mean things to you because they can. And I’m so sorry, baby.”

“Why are you sorry?”

“They’re saying those things because of me.” Yuna murmurs, and then quickly wipes the tears from her face and tries to pull herself together because she can’t break down like this now. “There’s a name, for why they say those things and it’s mean to you and not the other kids. It’s called racism, and it’s a word used for when people are mean to someone because of their skin tone or where they’re from.”

“That’s stupid.” Shane says blankly, brows pinched a little like he’s trying to work through every possible reason those characteristics would make someone else say mean things.

“It is stupid.” Yuna agrees, reaching out and squeezing his hand. “But some people are. And they’re going to say things like that to you, and they’re going to use words that are mean to you and not the other kids. It is not your fault when they do, you didn’t do anything wrong for them to say those things. I need you to remember that, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Shane nods, squeezes her hand back. “Did I make you sad?”

“No, baby.” Yuna shakes her head, wipes her cheeks again. “No, baby. You are perfect. I love you so much.”

“I love you too.” Shane murmurs, and Yuna nods, takes another steadying breath and then turns back to drive them home because if she sits in this parking lot a second longer she’s going to lose it.

Chapter 2: How To Start a Fight, by Yuna and David Hollander

Chapter Summary

Shane Hollander is nine years old the first time he hits someone.

Shane is nine years old, sitting in the front office at his school and waiting for his mom to come and get him. Henry is sitting in the chair across from him, holding an icepack to his cheek and crying. Shane thinks he's overreacting, he's taken harder hits in hockey and never cried over it, but he's not going to say that out loud.

"Shane?" His mom shouts, and Shane pushes up from his chair quickly, darts across the little lobby area to hug her. "Shane, baby, what happened? They said you got into a fight. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, mom." Shane promises.

"Mrs. Hollander?" The secretary calls, and Yuna straightens up to look at her, Shane hugging her a little tighter. "Principal Myers would like to talk to you, if you have a moment."

"Are you okay?" Yuna repeats, leaning back a little and grabbing Shane's cheeks so she can see his face.

"I'm fine, mom." He repeats, stepping back and moving back to sit in his chair as his mom slowly follows the secretary around the corner to the principal's office.

Henry is still crying, and Shane glances at him for a moment and then focuses on his shoes, staring at the evenly tied little bows on his sneakers. His mom returns ten minutes later, and she glances at Henry with a slight pinch to her brows and then holds her hand out to Shane, grabbing his backpack from the chair next to him and leading him out of the school.

"You hit him with your textbook?" Yuna asks once Shane's buckled in the back seat.

"He called you a slur." Shane murmurs. "I didn't mean to. I just, he said it and I reacted."

"Baby." Yuna sighs, because she's proud, secretly, that Shane's willing to stand up for her like this, but he can't go around hitting people like that. "I love you very much, and I'm thankful you wanted to defend me, but you can't hit other kids with textbooks."

"I won't do it again." Shane says, and Yuna knows he won't.

"The school wants you to stay home for two days." Yuna tells him, and Shane's face scrunches suddenly, horrified by the sudden change to his schedule. "As punishment for hitting that kid with your textbook."

“But he started it.” Shane complains quietly, and Yuna turns back to him, squeezes his hand and tries not to think of their last conversation that went like this.

“You hit him first.” She says, and Shane’s nose scrunches even further. “He might have said something mean first, but you escalated it by hitting him. Like in hockey, yeah?”

“Five minute major for fighting.” Shane says, because hockey is easy, because the rules stay the same and he understands them. “I didn’t mean to.”

“I know.” Yuna tells him, because she does know but Shane won’t realize that until she tells him. “But you can’t go around hitting kids just for saying mean things. You haven’t ever done it before, what made this time different?”

Shane resolutely snaps his mouth shut, turns his head so he’s not looking at her. Yuna frowns, because after that first conversation Shane has always told her when someone called him a slur or asked if something that happened was racism. He’s never reacted like this, even when Yuna and David both thought he could, even when he would have been completely valid for it, he has never once resorted to violence as a response.

“What did they say?” Yuna tries, because sometimes it’s the way the question is framed that messes him up.

“I don’t want to say it.” Shane tells her seriously, as he finally turns back to look at her.

“Okay then.” Yuna agrees, because pushing this now will only make things worse. “We’re going to go home, and you’re going to finish your homework. Then tomorrow, you’re going to get ready for school like any normal day and we’re going to go to the store to buy you those new pads you need. The day after that, we’ll do training.”

“Homework. Hockey gear. Training.” Shane echoes, eyes moving sort of back and forth around in front of him like he’s watching a schedule get rearranged. He nods slowly, accepting the changes. “Homework. Hockey gear. Training.”

“Homework. Hockey gear. Training.” Yuna repeats, sends a quick text to David to tell him what’s happened and then pulls out of the parking lot and drives home.

“Never throw the first hit.” His father says seriously, sitting across from him at the dinner table. “If you hit them first it’s on you, you’re responsible for it. But if they hit you first, and you hit back, then you’re defending yourself.”

“What if I want to hit them first?” Shane whispers, ashamed to even be asking the question but needing the clarification. “What if they hit someone else first, and I want to hit them back?”

“Defending your teammates is okay. But if you want to do right by your teammates you should focus on scoring more goals in their honor rather than getting into a fight.” His mother

smiles at him, reaches out and lightly pinches his cheek. “And if you really want to hit them first, then you give them a reason to throw the first punch.”

“That’s not an option. Two minute minor for instigating, five minute major for fighting, ten minute misconduct. That’s worse than just hitting them first.” Shane says seriously, shaking his head and turning to his dad for help. “And I’m bad at chirping.”

“Just stare at them.” Yuna tells him, and he turns back to her quickly. “They say things like that because they want a response from you, they’re looking for a reaction. If you don’t give them one, then they’ll back off or they’ll get mad enough to throw the first punch.”

“What if they back off and I still want to punch them?” Shane asks.

“Beat them at hockey.” David says, Shane and Yuna both turning to look at him. “They’ll feel as bad as if you hit them, if you score a goal on them after they failed to rile you up.”

“I already beat them at hockey.” Shane says, the least humble thing he’s ever said, and it has both Yuna and David fighting back smiles because if they do he’ll back track.

“Go for a natural hat trick.” Yuna tells him after a moment. “If someone says something to you, and you want to make them feel really bad, then you focus even more and put your all into the game. Don’t get a penalty because of them, that’s letting them win.”

“Don’t get a penalty because of them.” Shane repeats, nodding to himself. “I can make them feel bad by making them lose, I don’t have to hit them to win.”

“You don’t have to hit them to win.” Yuna repeats, because the repetition helps to settle things in Shane’s head.

“And if you really want to hit them still, wait until the game’s done. No rule says you can’t throw a punch after the clock’s run out.” David adds, Yuna shooting him a pointed look as Shane makes a little ‘oh’ face.

“Hit them when the game’s done.” Shane repeats with reverence, nodding to himself seriously. “Don’t get a penalty because of them.”

Chapter 3: How Not To Throw a Punch, A Study by Shane Hollander

Chapter Summary

Shane doesn't hit someone again until he's thirteen, and his knuckles crunch sort of awkwardly as he punches the other kid in the face.

Chapter Notes

NOTE: use of slur and racist microaggressions

Shane doesn't actually hit anyone again until he's thirteen years old, angry and once again reacting to a comment about his mom. Shane had heard her crying to his dad the night before, because at the game yesterday one of the other players had shouted racist stereotypes at Shane loud enough the whole rink could hear him and Shane had just stood there and taken it. He'd heard her sobbing about it, about him having to deal with that because of her and how he was such a good kid that didn't deserve that. His dad had comforted her a lot, but Shane could tell by the slightly puffy look to her eyes in the morning as she made him breakfast that she was still thinking about it.

It made him mad, that his mom had probably had to deal with this her whole life too, and that she was blaming herself for it happening to Shane when she wasn't the one who was saying anything. It wasn't her fault other people were mean, but Shane didn't know how to word that in a way that would be comforting, so he didn't bring it up.

He's angry then, when he starts the game and the opposing team's starter chirps, "Can you even see the puck?" as they line up for the face off. Because it's stupid, and Shane's heard it 37 times after this one, and really he thinks, if people are going to be racist they should at least be marginally original with it. So he's angry, and he focuses hard on the game to make up for it because he won't let this stupid kid win by getting a penalty.

"Yes!" Shane shouts, as he scores a hat trick and a buzzer beater, beaming as he turns to find his team only to turn directly into the opposing team's center.

"That was just stupid luck, chink." The other player spits at him, glaring.

"I'm sorry you only score when you get lucky, but some of us have skills and can score all the time." Shane says back, and he knows it's a horrible try for a chirp but he's not entirely

going for one.

“At least I’m not the unwanted child of a prostitute!” The other player sneers, and Shane’s gloves are off and he’s launching forward before he recognizes it.

His knuckles crunch sort of awkwardly as he punches the other kid in the face, grabbing at his jersey as they struggle. The other kid manages to hit Shane’s cheek with a blow he knows will bruise, and Shane’s knuckles ache but he manages to get another solid hit against the kid’s face and he doesn’t care all that much about the hurt when he hits the kid in the same spot he’d smacked Henry with his textbook two years ago and the kid screams in pain.

It makes a sort of sick glee well up in Shane’s chest, as the other kid lets go of his jersey and drops to the ice holding his nose while Shane skates two steps back away from him and cradles his hand to his chest.

“That was wicked, dude.” James, their team’s goalie, says as he skates up next to Shane and smacks his back approvingly.

Shane shrugs and tries for a smile, winces a little when it pulls at his split lip. Shane didn’t realize it had split until then, but now he can taste the blood in his mouth and it makes him a little nauseous, so he skates over to the bench and grabs his water bottle quickly to try and wash the bloody taste out of his mouth.

“Shane.” His mother breathes out, having run around from the stands through the tunnel to get to the bench.

“Mom.” Shane says, suddenly overwhelmed with a feeling of absolute shame.

Yuna Hollander just grabs his shoulders and hauls him in for a hug, squeezing him tight and then pushing him back to check over his face before yanking him back in again, whispering into his hair. “I’m so proud of you.”

“I didn’t realize you had that in you, kid.” His coach says, returning from the bench after talking with the refs. “They agreed that the other kid instigated, and since you fought after the game ended you won’t be facing any official penalties. I got their coach to agree not to push anything too, but you’ll have to run some bag skates next practice, okay?”

“Okay.” Shane nods, he doesn’t really mind running bag skates to be completely honest, but he figures it’s probably best not to say that out loud right now.

“You did good.” His coach nods, shaking his head and then shouting to round up the rest of their team, herding them towards the locker room.

“How do you feel about ice cream?” His mom asks, and Shane blinks as he looks up at her.

“Sure.” He agrees, because it’s rare for her to suggest something like this. “Can we look at my hand first?”

“Did you hurt it?” She worries, careful as she pushes him back enough that she can gently take his wrist and look over it.

“It just aches.” Shane says, because he’s almost positive he hasn’t broken or actually sprained anything.

“Let’s get this checked out.” Yuna agrees, helping Shane pull on his skate guards and then leading him down the tunnel towards the medical room. “Thumb outside next time.”

“Outside?” Shane echoes, making a fist with his uninjured hand to check that he understands what she’s saying.

“Like that.” Yuna nods, tapping the knuckle of his middle and index finger. “And keep your wrist straight, you want most of the hit to come from here.”

“Got it.” Shane nods, stepping into the medical room after his mom and letting their team doctor look over his hand.

Chapter 4: The Hollander Guide to Fighting for Rookies

Chapter Summary

Ilya shakes his head, stepping closer to him. “You have fought who? I want list. Now.”
“Ilya we’re in the middle of a game.” Shane says pointedly.
“I kind of also want this list as well.” Bood admits, shrugs when Shane turns to him exasperatedly.

Shane is thirty years old, playing hockey with his husband for his hometown team. It’s thrilling, to play good hockey with Ilya, to be back in his hometown, to be out even if he’s still reserved about showing affection in public. His life is going pretty well, in a way he wishes he could go back and tell the seventeen year old Shane about. It helps too that they’ve been on a win streak, that they’re on course to make it to the playoffs.

Shane smiles as he thinks about it, looks up from where he’d been heading back towards the bench for intermission when he hears the sound of a stick hitting the ice and quickly changes course. Shane’s a fast skater, so he’s there in seconds, sliding between LaPointe and Luca and one of the New Jersey players and swinging back around to stand behind the rookies.

“No.” Shane interrupts, grabbing the back of Luca’s jersey and tugging him back from where he’d been pushing closer to one of the New Jersey players. “You’re not getting into a fight right now. Drop it.”

“You need mommy to—” The New Jersey player starts, and Shane raises an irritated brow at him, grabbing the back of LaPointe’s jersey as well to keep the kid from launching forward at him.

“Don’t.” New Jersey’s 18, Anderson, yelps as he smacks a hand over his teammate’s mouth and looks horrified. “No. Nope. So sorry, Hollander. Won’t happen again.”

Shane watches them skate away, stares after the other New Jersey player pointedly until he’s certain he’s gotten under his skin, and then turns back to Luca. “The hell was that?”

“He said,” Luca starts, makes a face because he doesn’t want to repeat it. “Bad things.”

“Racist or homophobic?” Shane questions, skating Luca and LaPointe back over towards their bench.

“Both.” Luca murmurs, and Shane sighs and shakes his head.

“Don’t react.” Shane instructs, gentle as he pushes them up to follow Young and Holmber towards the locker room for intermission. “That’s what they want from you. If you give them

a response they're going to do it more because they know it works, just ignore them. Tune them out and focus on what you're doing."

"It crossed a line." LaPointe spits, angry but not at Shane.

"Then you score a goal and make them feel like shit. If that doesn't do anything, then you ignore them on the ice and wait until the game's ended or you're off the ice to hit him. Don't pull a penalty because he's being a dick, that's what he wants." Shane says tiredly, pinching his nose and missing the shell-shocked look that passes over the faces of the players around him.

"You've hit people off the ice?" Holmber echoes, louder than he means to, and the whole Centaurs locker room turns to look at them.

Shane shrugs, unperturbed. "When I needed to, yes."

"What constitutes needing to?" Wyatt asks, suddenly very interested in their conversation. Rephrasing when Shane's face pinches. "Who have you hit off the ice?"

"A few people." Shane starts, thinking about it. "There was this Philadelphia player who injured Hayden a few years ago."

"I watched that game." LaPointe says, thinking of it. "It was a bad hit."

"Wait, when did you fight him?" Young questions. "Pike posted pictures of you two together after the game."

"You follow Pike's social media?" Chouinard asks, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees to better hear them.

"He posted more than Hollander." Young shrugs, not at all embarrassed to admit that.

"When did you fight him?" Wyatt asks, curious and deciding to let Young off the hook for now.

"He stopped me in the hall after I checked in with Hayden, before I went to change." Shane says, willing to answer because Ilya, Bood, and Coach Wiebe are still talking strategy in the other room and so this isn't interrupting anything. "I think that's the first time I swung first, actually. Well, not counting Hunter."

"Do people regularly swing at you off the ice?" Luca questions, horrified by the realization and Shane just shrugs again like it's nothing.

"Most of them I instigated."

"You instigated them?"

"How?"

"You can't chirp." Wyatt says seriously.

“Thanks for that, Hazy.” Shane bites back at him.

“Wait, wait. Are you instigating on the ice, so they’ll hit you after?” Young realizes, jaw dropped. “You are!”

“He is?” Holmber asks, looking from Shane to Young quickly. “What?”

“You ignore them until the game’s over.” Young loosely repeats Shane’s advice from earlier. “The blank little stare thing he does when people say shit to him on the ice, and the Roz-like smirk after he scores sometimes, he’s silently instigating! Oh my god.”

“Oh my god.” LaPointe agrees.

“Wait, wait. New Jersey’s 18 just now,” Luca points in the direction of the New Jersey players. “He totally just... You’ve fought him?”

“Rookie year.” Shane shrugs, he and Anderson were sort of friendly now. “It wasn’t really a fight back then.”

“What wasn’t really a fight?” Bood asks, entering the locker room with Ilya and Couch Wiebe.

“He got into a fight his rookie year with New Jersey’s 18.” LaPointe announces.

“Hollander’s been in fights off the ice.” Luca says.

“He gave us his blessing to start fights after the game ended.” Young and Holmber chorus, and that’s not really what Shane said but he doesn’t say that.

“Hollzy just admitted to instigating.” Wyatt adds, looking impressed.

“You what?” Bood questions, blinking at Shane.

“Why did I not know this?” Ilya asks, frowning at Shane.

“I didn’t tell you.” Shane says blankly, glancing at the clock to make sure they aren’t eating too much into intermission with this conversation. “Besides, it’s hockey. Fights are a sort of natural part of it. I didn’t think I needed to clarify that.”

“You are Shane Hollander.” Ilya says, staring back with this annoyed pinch to his brow. “You are boring Canadian. You do not get into fights.”

“He’s gotten into several apparently.” Dykstra corrects, holding his hands up when Ilya glares towards him.

“Not that many.” Shane says, thinking about it. “I mean, like the average number of hockey fights, I think.”

“Go back to the instigating part.” Bood interrupts, pointing to Wyatt because he’ll get the clearest answer from him.

“He admitted to baiting players into approaching him off the ice.” Wyatt says, and Bood frowns at him and then turns to the rookies.

“He pointedly ignores whatever trash they say to him and then scores goals and smirks at them to make them angry.” Young explains, Holmber nodding along.

“He fought New Jersey’s 18 in their rookie year.” LaPointe says again, because the group clearly missed that the first time he said it.

“Their left wing?” Bood questions, because he still hasn’t fully wrapped his head around the fact that Hollander has apparently been getting into fights off the ice, and LaPointe nods quickly.

“He looked terrified of him.” Luca adds seriously, and Shane frowns a little at that.

“I don’t think either of us was good enough at fighting for him to be afraid of me for that.” Shane says seriously, glancing at the clock again. “What’d you guys talk about?”

“Not important.” Ilya shakes his head, stepping closer to him. “You have fought who? I want list. Now.”

“Ilya we’re in the middle of a game.” Shane says pointedly. “You guys were discussing our plays, right? What’d you decide on?”

“I kind of also want this list as well.” Bood admits, shrugs when Shane turns to him exasperatedly. “We’ve got a 4-1 lead, I’m not that concerned about the game right now.”

“We’re in the middle of a game.” Shane repeats, turning towards coach Wiebe for help this time but he looks over the locker room and then shrugs too.

“They’ll play better if you tell them, I think.” He says, and it’s not at all because he too is curious about the list of people Shane Hollander has fought. “Be more focused.”

Shane groans, looks absolutely put out and annoyed as he starts. “There’s a few from before rookie year but I honestly don’t remember them, most of them were just like kids tousling.” He thinks about it, trying to put them all together in his head. “New Jersey’s 18, rookie year. Atlanta’s 48 and Nashville’s 3 the year after that. San Francisco’s Anderson the year after that, he and New Jersey’s Anderson are brothers. Scott Hunter in 2014, but that was on the ice. Then Philadelphia’s 14, after he injured Hayden during a game. Some Vancouver player in a bar, I don’t remember which one. Some drunk guy in the hotel hallway in Tampa during the All Stars, that wasn’t really a fight though. At the game you all came to watch I baited that Texas player into drawing a penalty so Zaytsev would come out because he’s a shit player, and then that happened.”

“You fought him for me, yes.” Ilya says, fond as he remembers it. “Was very hot.”

“I think that’s the last one?” Shane says, thinking about it. “There’s probably a few others in there, but they weren’t big things and I really don’t remember them. Can we talk about our play strategy now?”

“No.” Ilya says, frowning again. “When did you get in fight in Tampa?”

“Ilya.” Shane tries, and Ilya’s eyes narrow further.

“When?”

“After we talked.” Shane says, because he’s not going to go into more details on that here.

“Game strategy? What is it?”

“Wait, you two have been together since the Tampa All Stars?” Holmber questions, blinking between them.

“We have a period left of this game.” Shane reminds the room, ignoring Ilya’s frowning and turning to look over the rest of them. “I’ll join you all for whatever after game drinking plans you made and answer any question you can bring yourself to ask if you’ll all focus back in on this, deal?”

“Deal.” Young says instantly, nudging Holmber and whispering something quickly.

“What’s our strategy?” Shane asks again, turning to Bood because Ilya’s still trying to work out the timeline of what Shane told him.

“We want to try putting you on a line with just the kids.” Bood tells him, pointing to where LaPointe, Luca, Young, and Holmber are sitting together in front of their stalls.

“Okay.” Shane agrees, looking over the group as well. “What’s your plan if that starts to sour?”

“We’re up by three. So we’ll leave you for a while. If they somehow manage two goals, we’ll switch out for our line.” Bood says, pointing to himself, Dykstra, Chouinard, and Barret.

“Okay.” Shane nods, glancing at Ilya worriedly. “You good?”

“You did not tell me.” Ilya says, and Shane blinks, doing his best to switch his brain from hockey to this because it’s so clearly bothering his husband and he feels bad about that.

“I didn’t tell anyone.” Shane offers, thinks over it. “And I told you about that one San Francisco player. Kind of.”

“Stupid Andersons.” Ilya mutters, and Shane squeezes his hand.

“After the game, yeah?”

“After the game.” Ilya agrees reluctantly, and Shane sends a silent prayer that New Jersey’s Anderson won’t be on the ice at the same time Ilya is for the rest of the game.

Chapter 5: Hollander's Fighting Spirit(s)

Chapter Summary

"I've lived my whole life like this." Shane says, because this he knows, this part he understands. He'd had this conversation with his parents several times throughout his life, had this conversation with Hayden and J.J. and the entirety of the team back when he was playing in Montreal.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They're gathered at some bar Dykstra recommended, a little quieter and calmer vibe than the usual after game bar they go to. Shane downed a beer when they got there and had been sipping intermittently at a second he was sharing with Ilya, knowing he'd need some liquid courage to get through their questions. Most of them have been tame, the team asking a few perfunctory questions about how his and Ilya's relationship started before they started asking about Shane's fighting history.

"Okay, wait." Harris interrupts, staring at Shane. "You've been getting into fights since your rookie years?"

"Since before." Shane says, shrugs. "It's part of hockey. I don't know why everyone's so surprised."

"Because it's not part of how *you* play hockey." Harris says point blank. "You're 'Canada's Pro Hockey Golden Boy'. The league's marketed you as this perfect little not-fighter for years."

"And they marketed Ilya as only some cocky bad-boy Russian when half of his brusque answers were because he was still learning English." Shane waves him off.

"Brusque?" Ilya repeats, because he hasn't actually heard that one before.

"Short and blunt, in a kind of cold or offhanded way." Shane explains instantly, continuing when Ilya nods. "The media says a lot of stuff to sell what they want, and part of that was juxtaposing everything we did for their perfect rivalry."

"Juxtaposing?" Luca questions, and Ilya looks a little unsure of the word as well.

"Comparing." Shane summarizes. "To show contrast, or differences between two things, by showing them together."

“When was your very first fight?” Troy asks, curious, once it’s clear that Luca and Ilya have understood Shane’s explanation.

“I mean, that depends on your definition of a fight.” Shane says, pausing to take a sip of his ginger ale. “The first time I hit someone first I was nine, but there was stuff before that.”

“When was the *first* one?” Wyatt pushes.

“When I was like five or six?” Shane answers, shrugs and won’t look at them as he explains. “One of the kids on my youth hockey team kept hitting my helmet with his stick and saying ‘dance monkey, dance’.”

“What the fuck.” Bood swears, setting his beer back down on the table because he needs a moment.

“I was the only mixed kid on most of my teams—” Shane shrugs, waves his hand like it’s nothing. “—shit like that happened.”

“What happened when you were nine?” LaPointe asks, already horrified by what Shane’s going to say if he didn’t react to that.

Normally, Shane would try to brush it off and say some kid crossed a line about his mom and he reacted badly, but he’s had about a beer and a half at this point and is feeling a little tipsy, so instead he says, “This kid in my class called my mom a ‘fucking nip’ and asked me if she was here as a sex worker and I just snapped.”

The table is silent for a moment, because Shane looks angry at that but there’s also a resignation to his voice, like it’s just another day. Like such comments were commonplace, not something even worth getting angry or thinking too hard about. It makes Luca flinch, because he’d gotten so worked up over a comment that didn’t get near that, and Shane clearly heard things so much worse regularly and didn’t react. LaPointe seems to be thinking the same thing, staring at Shane with this sort of pitying look that reflects a newfound pride in him too.

“Stop looking at me like that.” Shane requests, ducking his head a little.

“People say shit like that often?” Bood asks, because he’s having this awful realization that Shane has heard things like that his whole career but also since he joined Ottawa, and that he hadn’t told any of them about it.

“Sometimes.” Shane nods, shrugs again like maybe he can physically push off their staring. “It’s gotten better and worse since we came out.”

“You did not tell me.” Ilya repeats. It’s the first thing he’s said since they got to the bar, and he sounds so distraught by it that no one at the table but Shane turns towards him because it feels like an intrusion if they’d look.

“I’ve lived my whole life like this.” Shane says, because this he knows, this part he understands. He’d had this conversation with his parents several times throughout his life,

had this conversation with Hayden and J.J. and the entirety of the team back when he was playing in Montreal. “I knew you would’ve defended me, I knew you’d get upset on my behalf. Don’t start thinking I doubted that. I just, sometimes it’s easier to pretend it didn’t happen, that it doesn’t happen or that it doesn’t mean anything. It’s easier than thinking about it and having to live everyday so angry and upset about it. I’m tired of being upset about it, honestly.”

“Has it happened since you joined Ottawa?” Luca asks quietly, and Shane frowns for a moment and then nods, because he’d promised to answer anything they could bring themselves to ask him and he wasn’t going to go back on that.

“A few times.” Shane says, thinks about his answer. “It’s not, most of the stuff I hear now is about my sexuality. I’ve spent twelve years getting poked at about my race, they’ve started running out of stuff to bring up there, but my relationship with Ilya is new to the public.”

“You mentioned it in your interview after the Texas game.” Young says, putting the pieces together. “Chirping is not throwing slurs.”

“It’s not.” Shane nods quickly, because he feels the need to encourage and reinforce that thought among their rookies. “And I did kind of mention it, yeah. I probably could have said that better, actually. I let my anger get the best of me.”

“You said it really well.” Harris says, shaking his head. “Chirping is not throwing slurs is concise and easy to remember, and the rest of what you said was maybe a little brash for you, but it’s what people needed to hear.”

“People made shirts of it.” Holmber tells him, doesn’t say that he and Young had both purchased them and that they wore them around the house sometimes.

“What?” Shane chokes out, so genuinely surprised as Young tugs his phone from his pocket and pulls up the shirts quickly.

“It’s memorable, and a good reminder for a lot of players and fans.” Young says as he turns the screen to show the shopping results with four different versions taking up his screen.

“There’s dozens of them.”

“You’re even more of an icon.” LaPointe comments.

“Why aren’t we monopolizing this?” Dykstra asks, pointing to Young’s phone.

“Make him handwrite it and then put it on the merch or something.” Chouinard agrees, and Harris looks like he’s genuinely considering it as Shane flushes.

“Tote bags are big.” Young suggests, tucking his phone back into his pocket. “We could have like handwritten things from each of us.”

“This is just because you want ‘be gay, play hockey’ stuff but you don’t want to make it yourself, isn’t it?” Holmber asks, because they lived together and he’d heard many of Young’s rants about this particular topic.

“Be gay, play hockey?” Wyatt repeats, raising a brow at him.

“It’s a better promotion towards kids than ‘be gay, do crime’ is.” Young points out, defensive. “And ‘be bi, play hockey’ doesn’t sound as good, so yes, ‘be gay, do hockey’.”

“Bi’s save lives.” LaPointe suggests, and Young beams at him as Holmber drops his head into his hands.

“Don’t encourage him.” Holmber pleads.

“Too late!” Young cheers, shaking his head. “Harris you have to capitalize off of this. Please, please, please.”

“I’ll see what I can do.” Harris promises, phone already out and texting someone.

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you.” Shane whispers to Ilya as the rookies continue to debate tote bag slogans.

“Is okay.” Ilya says, shakes his head and grabs Shane’s hand in his own. “Just tell me from now on, yes?”

“Yeah.” Shane nods, leans his shoulder a little firmer against Ilya’s. “We’re good?”

“We’re good.” Ilya promises, kissing his cheek and then turning back to talk with Wyatt and Troy about some action movie he’d seen recently.

Shane settles back into his seat, surrounded by a team who loves him and the person he loves, by people who support him. He knows he and Ilya would have to talk more later, to properly discuss it all, but for now they don’t have to. For now it’s nice, to just sit back and listen to Dykstra and Chouinard suggesting worse and worse tote bag slogans just to make the rookies groan. To know that the next time something happens he’ll have a whole team at his back to be angry with him, to be angry for him. That his anger won’t have to simmer in his chest alone anymore, because as he’d gotten older he stopped telling his parents every time someone said something to him because it started to be more often than not.

Shane used to have Montreal, but that support started fading once he came out and was non-existent in the last month after he and Ilya were outed. He still has Hayden, but not in the same way anymore, not on the same line. He’s starting to get J.J. back, a little bit, too. But it’s different now, and it’s a relief to have Ottawa this way, to know he won’t be the only one facing this anymore, that the team around him not only cares and will get angry with him like Montreal did but that they’re actively trying to change it, too.

Shane lifts his can only to find it empty, and he slides it back over towards the empty beer bottle he’d finished earlier and debates standing up to get a new one when Bood slides a new can over to him, and Shane knows he’ll be okay here.

And that's it! Hope you liked it. ♡♡♡

End Notes

The conversation Shane and Yuna have in the car about putting a name to racism is a sort of mirror to a conversation I had with my brother when I was a kid after a similar incident, and I did tear up writing that actually.

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