

the things you buy, the secrets i keep

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77107921) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77107921>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Original Characters
Additional Tags:	POV Outsider , Engagement , Wedding Rings , Fluff , Tooth-Rotting Fluff , hopefully , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Canon Compliant , except shane does know ilyas ring size bc man that's the love of ur life
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of heated rivalry by me ♥
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-05 Words: 3,627 Chapters: 1/1

the things you buy, the secrets i keep

by [sleepberries](#)

Summary

Amélie's work days are usually boring. Sit at the counter, help people find things, process orders. If she's lucky, she'll get great commission when someone shows up to spend money for money's sake. Her only companions her phone and the near constant presence of Shane Hollander's Rolex campaigns.

So, boring.

Until Shane Hollander walks through the door.

Notes

if this is awkward i wrote it at 3am and barely edited it this morning

also if you're here from my subscriber list . do not read . heated rivalry has stolen my heart . i have a couple other anon fics for it but not posting to my acct bc smut 🙄

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

Amélie was staring at the Rolex advertisement when the bell chimed.

The ad had been up in the shop window for three weeks now—glossy and massive—impossible to ignore. Shane Hollander in a perfectly tailored suit, wrist angled just so to catch the light on the watch face, expression serious and focused in that way that made half of Montreal weak in the knees. The tagline read: Precision. Performance. Perfection.

She'd been idly wondering, as she often did during slow Thursday afternoons, what it would take to land a man who looked like that. Probably being a supermodel. Or maybe a brain surgeon. Definitely not being a jewelry store clerk who still had student loans and lived with two roommates in Plateau-Mont-Royal. Her mother kept asking when she was going to meet someone nice, preferably someone who could help her move out of that "shoebox apartment with those odd boys." Pierre had laughed himself sick when she'd told him that.

The bell chimed.

Amélie glanced up from the estate piece she was cataloging, prepared to practice her normal greeting, and *froze*.

Shane Hollander was standing in her doorway. The actual Shane Hollander. From the advertisement. From the billboards. From the Jeep commercials and the charitable foundation PSAs and approximately seventy percent of the Voyageurs' promotional material.

And he looked like he was about to face a firing squad.

Not *nervous*, that was normal for the engagement ring section. This was something else entirely. He was doing this thing with his jaw, clenching and unclenching it, and his hands were shoved so deep in his coat pockets that his shoulders were practically up around his ears. His eyes darted around the shop like he was cataloging exits.

"Bonjour," Amélie called out, forcing her voice to stay warm and professional despite the fact that her brain was currently short-circuiting. "Bienvenue chez Laurier Joailliers."

"Bonjour," Shane replied, stepping inside like someone approaching a bear trap. His accent was decent, actually. Pierre would be jealous.

"Please, take your time looking around," Amélie continued in English, giving him an easy out. Her boss had drilled this into her: make the customers comfortable first, sales second. "Let me know if you need any help."

He nodded but didn't speak. Just drifted toward the engagement ring display with the careful movements of someone who'd rather be literally anywhere else. His gaze skipped over the cases, unfocused, and Amélie gave him space. Some customers needed a minute to acclimate before they could handle human interaction.

After about forty-five seconds, it became clear that space wasn't helping. If anything, he looked worse—shoulders climbing toward his ears, jaw doing that clenching thing again, breathing gone shallow and deliberate.

Amélie had seen a lot of nervous customers. Men who were terrified of picking the wrong ring, of getting rejected, of spending too much money or not enough. But this was different. Shane Hollander looked like he was trying very hard not to have a panic attack in her jewelry store.

"Can I help you find something?" Amélie asked gently, moving closer but not too close. "Are you looking for an engagement ring?"

Shane turned to look at her, and she watched him visibly brace himself. Like he was preparing to take a hit on the ice: that split-second decision to absorb the impact rather than avoid it.

"Yes," he said. His voice was quiet, controlled. The kind of control that came from practice. "Something simple. Classic. Not—" He paused. "Nothing too ornate."

"Of course." Amélie smiled at him, keeping it warm but not overeager. "I'm Amélie. And I'm going to try very hard not to make this weird, but I do have to say—my brother would kill me if I didn't mention that your game against Boston last week was incredible."

Shane's face did something complicated. A flash of pleasure—genuine, unguarded—then discomfort, then a kind of resigned politeness. Like he'd learned exactly how to react when strangers brought up hockey but the pleasure part still caught him by surprise every time.

"Thank you," he said quietly. "That's—thank you."

"He has terrible taste in almost everything else," Amélie added lightly, "so I'm glad he got hockey right. He actually cried when you scored that goal in overtime. Full tears. I have video evidence." She gestured to the display case. "Now, let's talk about rings. Do you have a sense of what style you're looking for? Any preferences on the stone or setting?"

"Simple," Shane repeated. "Classic. Something—" He stopped, clearly searching for words. His fingers drummed against his thigh, quick and anxious. "Understated but—solid. Does that make sense?"

"Perfect sense," Amélie assured him. She unlocked the case and began pulling out options, setting them carefully on the navy velvet pad she kept for viewing. A classic solitaire in platinum, one carat, perfect clarity. A slightly more ornate setting with side stones that caught the light beautifully. A simple band with a flush-set diamond that her boss swore was coming back into fashion. "Do you know your partner's ring size?"

"Yes." The word came out fast, almost defensive. Then, quieter: "Size ten."

Amélie's brain stuttered slightly. Size ten. That was—that was *larger* than average. Significantly larger. She kept her expression professional, neutral, but something clicked into place. Shane Hollander. Getting engaged. To someone who wore a size ten ring. To someone he was being extremely careful not to identify with any pronouns whatsoever.

Oh.

Hmm.

"That's helpful," Amélie said smoothly, laying the rings out on the velvet pad. "These are all popular classic styles. This solitaire is very traditional—it's what most people picture when they think 'engagement ring.' This one has a slightly wider band, which can look nice on larger hands and gives it more presence. And this last one has the diamond set flush to the band, so it's very low-profile. Good for someone who works with their hands or plays sports."

Shane stared at the rings like they'd personally offended him. His hands stayed firmly in his pockets. Up close, Amélie could see the tension radiating through him—in his shoulders, his jaw, the way he was holding his breath. But there was something else, too. Something underneath the terror that looked almost like... hope?

"Would you like to see them on?" Amélie offered carefully. "Sometimes it helps to visualize. I have a ring sizer—"

"I don't think that would help," Shane said. His voice had gone flat, distant. Professional. "These aren't—I need something different."

"Different how?" Amélie kept her tone gentle, encouraging.

"More—" Shane stopped. His jaw worked. "Less delicate. Something with more presence. More—" He made a frustrated gesture with one hand. "These look like they'd break."

And there it was. The pieces clicking together. Here was Shane Hollander, standing in her shop, trying to find a ring that would make sense on a man's hand. Trying to find something that wouldn't look fragile or feminine or wrong. Something that would look right on the person he loved.

"I see," Amélie said. And she did. "Let me show you some other options."

She returned the rings to the case and moved to a different section—the one she usually showed to men buying for themselves, or to women who wanted something unconventional. Pulled out a platinum band with a princess-cut diamond in a low setting. A wider band with three stones in a channel setting. A simple design with the diamonds set flush into the band, geometric and clean.

Shane's shoulders dropped slightly. "Better," he said. Relief colored his voice, unmistakable and sweet. "These are—*better*."

"These styles tend to be popular for people who work with their hands," Amélie offered. "The settings are more durable, less likely to catch on things. They're built to last through real life, not just look pretty in photos."

"Yes," Shane said. The word came out like a breath he'd been holding. "Exactly. Something that won't... get in the way."

He reached for the band with three stones, held it up to the light. Studied it from different angles, turning it over in his hands with the kind of careful attention that made Amélie's chest

feel tight. This wasn't just about buying a ring. This was about finding the perfect thing for someone he loved desperately.

Set it down. Picked up the channel-set design. Turned it over to check the interior. Put it back. His movements were precise, controlled, but Amélie could see his hands were shaking.

"These are all very nice," Shane said at last. "But I don't think—they're not quite—"

He stopped. Pressed his lips together. The look on his face was almost painful—like he knew exactly what he wanted but didn't have the words for it. Or maybe had the words but was afraid to say them out loud.

"Can I ask," Amélie said carefully, "what your partner does? It might help me understand what style would work best for their lifestyle."

Shane's eyes snapped to hers, wary. Defensive. "Why does that matter?"

"Well, for instance, if they work with their hands a lot, or do anything physical, we'd want to make sure the setting is durable. Low-profile." Amélie kept her voice professional, matter-of-fact. She pulled out her tablet and opened the notes app, like she was just gathering standard information. "Just trying to find something that will work for them. I'd hate for you to get something beautiful that ends up sitting in a drawer because it's not practical."

Shane was quiet for a long moment. She could see him weighing his words, deciding how much to reveal. His throat worked.

"They're—active," he said finally. "Very active. The ring needs to be—it can't get in the way of anything. It needs to be durable. Strong." He paused. "It needs to last."

The way he said that last part—*it needs to last*—made Amélie's chest tighten. There was so much weight in those three words. So much hope and determination and love.

"I understand," Amélie said softly. And she did. "Give me a moment. I think I might have something."

She went to the men's jewelry case—not the engagement section, but the display of rings and cufflinks and tie bars. There was a ring that had been sitting there for two months, waiting for the right customer. Her boss had questioned the purchase, said it was too unusual, too risky. But Amélie had insisted. And now, looking at Shane Hollander's desperate hope, she was so glad she had.

A simple platinum band with a black diamond, flush-set into the metal. The interior was gold—warm against cool. Masculine without being aggressive. Striking without demanding attention. The kind of ring that said something about the person wearing it. The kind of ring that was different, distinctive, perfect for someone who stood out.

She brought it out and set it on the velvet pad.

Shane went absolutely still.

For a long moment, he just stared at it. Amélie watched his expression transform—the careful control cracking open to reveal something raw and unguarded and aching vulnerable. His eyes were shining.

"It's unconventional," Amélie said carefully. "The black diamond isn't traditional for an engagement ring. But it's durable, low-profile, and the design is—well, it has presence without being flashy. The black diamond is actually harder than a white diamond, more resistant to scratching. And the flush setting means it's built into the ring, not sitting on top of it."

"It's perfect." Shane's voice was rough, barely above a whisper. "That's—it's perfect."

He reached for it with shaking hands—the first time his hands had left his pockets since he'd entered the shop. Turned it over to see the gold interior. His thumb brushed across the black diamond, and Amélie watched something crack wide open in his expression. Something that looked like pure, uncomplicated joy mixed with terror mixed with so much love she could practically feel it radiating off him.

This man loved someone so much it was breaking him apart and putting him back together at the same time.

"The flush setting means it won't catch on anything," Amélie explained gently. "The platinum is very durable—it doesn't scratch the way white gold does. And the black diamond—it's strong. Distinctive. For someone who's—" She paused, choosing her words carefully. "For someone who stands out. Someone who isn't traditional."

Shane nodded slowly. He was still staring at the ring, and Amélie realized with a start that his eyes were actually shining with unshed tears. Not crying—not quite—but close.

"Can I—" His voice cracked slightly. "Can I try it on? Just to see?"

"Of course."

Amélie watched as Shane slipped the ring onto his left hand. Not his right—his left. Ring finger. The ring sat there beautifully, catching the light in a way that was subtle until you really looked. The black diamond seemed to absorb and reflect light at the same time.

Shane held his hand up, studying the ring with an expression of such tender hope that Amélie had to look away for a second. He turned his hand back and forth. Made a fist, opened it. Tested how it felt. And Amélie saw the exact moment when something in him settled, like a door closing or a decision being made.

Like he'd just found the answer to a question he'd been too afraid to ask.

"This is a size nine," Shane said quietly. He wasn't looking at Amélie anymore. Just at the ring on his finger. "Right?"

"Yes," Amélie confirmed.

"And you have it in size ten?"

"We do. We have this exact design in sizes eight through twelve."

Shane finally pulled the ring off his finger, slow and reluctant, like it physically hurt to take it off. He set it down on the velvet pad with obvious care, like it was something precious. "I'll take it," he said. "In size ten. *Please*."

"Excellent choice," Amélie said warmly, and she meant it. "Let me get everything sorted out for you. And I have to say—I think this is going to be perfect. It's unique, but it's also timeless. Twenty years from now, it's still going to look exactly this good."

"Twenty years," Shane repeated softly. Something flickered across his face—hope, maybe, or longing. A future he was letting himself imagine. "Yeah. I hope so."

As she began filling out the forms, Shane drummed his fingers against his thigh—a quick, anxious rhythm. His gaze kept drifting back to the ring on the velvet pad, like he was afraid it might disappear if he looked away too long.

"When can I pick it up?" he asked.

"Tomorrow afternoon," Amélie said. "I'll have it cleaned and beautifully boxed for you. We have several box options—I'd recommend the black leather box with the gold interior. It matches the ring." She paused. "And I want you to know—we're very discreet here. All of our orders are handled with complete confidentiality. I won't share any information about your purchase with anyone. Not even my brother, who is probably going to interrogate me for hours."

Shane's shoulders sagged in visible relief. His whole body seemed to deflate. "Thank you," he said quietly. "That's—*thank you*. I appreciate that." He ran a hand through his hair, messing up the careful styling. "I'm not—it's not that I'm *ashamed*, or anything. I'm not. It's just—complicated. And I want to—I want to do this right. I want it to be ours before it's anyone else's."

The way he said *ours* made Amélie want to cry a little. There was so much fierce protectiveness in it, so much determination to keep this precious thing safe.

"I completely understand," Amélie said. She meant it. "This is your moment. You get to decide when and how to share it."

"Yeah." Shane's throat worked. "Yeah, exactly."

Amélie turned the paperwork toward him. "I'll just need you to sign here, and here. And a phone number where we can reach you when it's ready."

Shane signed quickly—neat, precise handwriting that looked practiced, like he'd signed a thousand autographs—and triple-checked the phone number before writing it down. Then he checked it again. Amélie pretended not to notice.

"You don't want to put this on a card?" Amélie asked as Shane pulled out his wallet and began counting bills. "We accept all major credit cards, and there's no extra fee."

"Cash," Shane said firmly. "Cash is better."

Of course it was. No paper trail. No credit card statement with "LAURIER JOAILLIERS" that might raise questions. Amélie counted the bills carefully—twentyseven hundred dollars in hundreds and fifties—and tucked them into the register. Wrote out a receipt and slipped it into an envelope along with her business card.

"If you have any questions before tomorrow, please call," she said, handing him the envelope. "My cell number is on the card. Anytime, day or night." She paused, meeting his eyes. "And Mr. Hollander—I hope everything goes well. With the proposal."

Shane's throat worked. He looked down at the envelope in his hands, then back up at her, and there was something so vulnerable in his expression that Amélie had to resist the urge to reach out and squeeze his hand.

"Thank you," he managed. "I—thank you. For all of this. For being so—" He gestured vaguely. "Professional. About everything. For not—making it weird. For understanding."

"It's my pleasure," Amélie said. "Truly. I love my job because I get to be part of people's stories. And this—" She gestured to the ring. "This is going to be a good story. I can tell."

"I hope so," Shane said. His voice was barely audible. "I really, really hope so."

He left quickly after that, but not before giving the ring on the velvet pad one last, lingering look. Like he was already counting down the hours until he could pick it up. Amélie watched him go—watched him check the street before stepping out, watched him pull his coat collar up, watched him disappear into the afternoon crowd with his shoulders still hunched but his step just a little lighter than when he'd arrived.

She stood there for a long moment, processing. Shane Hollander. Getting engaged. To someone who wore a size ten ring. To someone he loved so much it had taken every ounce of courage he had just to walk into this shop. To someone he was protecting so fiercely that he'd paid in cash and triple-checked phone numbers and looked at a black diamond ring like it held all the answers to questions he was afraid to ask.

She pulled out her phone and sent a text to her brother: *You're not going to believe who just came into the shop.*

The response was immediate: *WHO???*

Shane Hollander

WHAT. DID YOU GET A SELFIE

I'm a professional, Pierre

you're the WORST SISTER EVER

what did he buy??? was he getting a watch???

Can't say. Client confidentiality.

I HATE YOU

Amélie smiled, but she didn't tell him the rest. Didn't tell him about the ring or the size or the way Shane Hollander's hands had been shaking. Didn't tell him about the terror and hope she'd seen in his face, or the way he'd looked at that ring like it was the answer to a question he'd been afraid to ask. Didn't tell him about the fierce protectiveness in Shane's voice when he'd said *I want it to be ours first*, or the way his eyes had gone shiny when he'd tried the ring on his own finger.

That wasn't her story to tell.

She did, however, pull up her laptop and add a note to the order: *DISCREET HANDLING. Customer is high-profile. Black diamond/platinum band size 10. Premium box, no external branding. DO NOT contact at team facilities. Cell phone only. Ready for 2pm pickup tomorrow.*

Then she glanced up at the Rolex ad again—at Shane Hollander's serious expression and perfect suit and that watch that probably cost more than her car—and thought about the terrified, hopeful man who'd just been in her shop. The one who'd paid in cash. Who'd needed reassurance about discretion. Who'd tried on a ring that wasn't even his size just to see how it felt. Who'd looked at a black diamond like it was everything he'd been searching for. Who loved someone so much it was written all over his face, impossible to hide despite how hard he was trying.

"Good luck," Amélie said softly to the advertisement.

Whatever Shane Hollander's story was, whoever he was proposing to—and she had a pretty good idea now, though she'd never say it out loud—Amélie hoped it worked out. She hoped he got his happy ending. She hoped the person he loved saw the thought and care he'd put into choosing that ring. She hoped they understood what it meant that he'd been willing to walk into a jewelry store, terrified and vulnerable, because he wanted to give them something perfect.

And she hoped, more than anything, that whoever it was said yes.

Because Shane Hollander deserved that. He deserved love that was brave enough to exist in the light. He deserved someone who would wear that ring proudly. He deserved someone who loved him back with the same fierce protectiveness she'd seen in his eyes today.

Amélie touched the Rolex ad one more time, then turned back to her work.

Tomorrow at 2pm, Shane Hollander would come back. And Amélie would hand him a ring that was strong enough, durable enough, perfect enough for whatever brave thing he was about to do.

She couldn't wait to see him pick it up.

End Notes

thx for reading !!

Works inspired by this one

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