

Winter Fling

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Winter Fling

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Summary

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“I don’t do them and I am better than him, so no. Or maybe they do help and I could be best hockey player ever.”

“Mm. Hey, if he wants to put himself in that position it’s on him, I guess. I’m not gonna complain about the show.”

Ilya froze, turning himself on the ice to face Summers properly.

“The... show?”

or

Boston's new rookie has the hots for Shane. Ilya does not cope well.

Notes

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

Spending time with Shane in his cottage had been... perfect. Life changing, in more ways than one.

Being back in Boston, back in the normal season, back to only seeing Shane when their paths happened to cross... it was going to be difficult. It was only for one more year, and Ilya *knew that*, but it would still be difficult.

Ilya made sure he walked into the locker room with the same confidence as always. He couldn't have anyone on the team noticing how reluctant he was to be there, it wouldn't be good for morale. It wasn't good for *his* morale to be this far from Shane after their weeks of bliss, but that was besides the point.

"Rozy!" Marleau's pumped greeting settled something in Ilya as he came to a stop at his locker beside the other man. "How was your summer? How was Russia?"

"I, uh..." Ilya began, panic flaring briefly in his chest before he shoved it down. "I did not go to Russia this year. Stayed home."

"Ah, shit. Wish you had said something man, I would have had you over all the time. Next time you let me know, yeah?"

"Yeah," Ilya said agreeably, an awkward laugh escaping him. "Next time."

He was saved from any more small talk about the summer by a loud chorus of whoops coming down the hall. It was something Connors had started doing a couple years ago and the rowdiest members of the team had quickly joined in on: a series of loud cries to welcome the year's rookies.

In this case, the only rookie they were getting.

Ilya and Shane had gone over their upcoming rookies together, fighting playfully over who had better chances, pitting the new guys against each other just like the media had done to them all those years ago. It had been fun. It was made even more fun by the fact that Ilya was clearly the winner of the fight.

Andrew Summers was the type of person Ilya would typically find unremarkable. Average in stature, a mop of mousy brown hair in a truly terrible cut, and a cockiness that reminded Ilya of who he pretended to be when he was younger. In short, he looked and acted like just about every other rookie in the league that year.

The only difference was the fact that he had not missed a single shot on goal in any game Ilya had seen him in before drafts. He wasn't even a damn center, the puck just seemed to find its way to him— whether from a good pass or from Summers shoulder checking the shit out of the opposing team.

So yes, Shane's rookie— that Ilya hadn't actually bothered to memorize the name of— was fine, sure, but he was not going to help them beat the Boston Raiders, not if Ilya and his new rookie had anything to say about it.

Ilya allowed a smirk onto his face as the man in question finally entered the locker room, something self-satisfied on his face as he dropped his duffel bag onto a bench and gave a sweeping bow to the crowd of people still whooping behind him. Marleau snorted a soft laugh beside him, an elbow digging into Ilya's side.

“Reminds me of you.”

“Mm. Yes,” Ilya agreed, his eyes narrowing on the other man. “Not as good, of course.”

“No one's as good as you, Roz. Still glad to have him.”

“Hm.”

It was going to be a good season, Ilya could feel it deep in his bones.

The first practice with Summers had gone good. Better than good, even– it had been remarkable.

Summers fit in with the team like he had always been there, effortlessly accepting a pass from Connors, shooting the puck over to Ilya when Marleau tried to cut him off– they were a well oiled machine on *day one*.

Ilya grinned to himself as he entered the locker room again, beelining over to his bag to grab his phone.

Lily: you are screwed, Hollander

my rookie fits well

kiss cup goodbye

He continued to smile to himself as he changed, one eye on his phone as he waited for Shane's response. There was a good chance the other man was still in practice and wouldn't see the messages for a while, but still. It was worth checking.

"Summers!" Marleau called, shaking his head in disbelief. "That was damn good. Why didn't you join the NHL earlier?"

"Cause earlier I was a child," Summers snarked, "bet I still could've skated circles round you, though."

Ilya snorted at that, nudging Marleau with his elbow. Summers was clearly pleased at the success of his chirp, shrugging out of his padding with a grin.

“Well, we’re happy to have you now,” Connors cut in, slinging an arm around the rookie’s shoulders. “And hey, couple more years and you’ll be able to come for after practice drinks!”

“I’m happy to be here,” Summers said, his voice oddly genuine for the middle of a hockey locker room. “Seriously, man– I mean I got drafted to the *Boston Raiders*. This has been my dream! Only thing that could make it better is if we were playing Monreal, like, tomorrow.”

“Montreal?” Connors sounded just as confused as Ilya felt, and he turned fully away from his locker to listen to the response.

“Yeah, I just– I’ve always wanted to play against Hollander, you know? And we’re Montreal’s biggest rivals, and– it’s gonna be *perfect*. ”

“You *want* to play against Hollander?”

“-first time I’ve *ever* heard–”

“Good luck, kid–”

The locker room was suddenly awash with even more noise than usual, the team all talking and shouting over each other. Ilya couldn’t tear his gaze away from Summers, though– stood in all of the chaos with a stupid cocky smirk on his face.

“Hollander,” Ilya said eventually, the team falling silent as their captain spoke. “Why Hollander?”

“Well, no offense Cap, but– he’s the best in the league. I want to beat him.”

“He is not best in league,” Ilya sputtered, “he is— second best if lucky, third best on normal day.”

“Yeah, saying Hollander is better than Roz— no way. Some of those idiot Montreal fans might believe that, but you’ll see how wrong you are.” Marly’s voice was strong beside him, his confidence in Ilya’s skills as unshakeable as ever.

“Well, I’m sure he’s struggling a bit more now after that hit last season.”

There was a collective intake of breath at the comment, and Ilya turned back to his locker so no one would see how unsteady he felt at the reminder of that day. How dare he just— just—

“I didn’t mean to do that. It was a clean fucking hit—” Marleau stammered, his voice tense.

“Hey, I’m not saying it wasn’t! I just—”

“Whether Hollander is at his best or not,” Ilya cut in, “he will never be number one player. You think he is number one? Go play with Metros and watch as Boston wins cup.”

There was a chorus of agreements around the room, and Ilya straightened his shoulders, thankful for the show of support. Summers lifted his hands in a show of surrender, an uneasy smile on his face. Ilya would feel worse about making the rookie so uncomfortable on his first day if it weren’t for the kid thinking *Hollander* was better than him.

Sure, Shane was great, and Ilya would always love to watch him play for multiple reasons, but— better than *him*? No way.

Ilya pulled out his phone, a tight feeling in his stomach that he couldn’t quite place. He let the continuing conversation in the room drift out of focus as he thumbed his way to Shane’s contact.

Jane: You'll be watching me win the cup from the comfort of your couch, Rozanov.

Doesn't matter how good your rookie is.

Ilya scoffed out a laugh despite himself, sinking to the bench behind him as he typed out a response.

Lily: mm I will be happy to go over highlight reel of my victory from your couch, yes preferably with you in my lap

And then, because he couldn't help himself, not after the reminder from Summers:

Lily: you are feeling ok, yes? your arm and your head?

Jane: All good. I swear, you sound like my mom.

Lily: I would not mind sounding like Yuna

she is scary lady

that is a compliment

Jane: She would love that you said that.

The season continued as it always did. They played against Buffalo and crushed them 4-1, played against the Admirals and barely beat them 2-1 in overtime. (Ilya refused to believe it had anything to do with newly-gay fossil Scott Hunter. The man may have had skill in 1960, but he was far beyond his prime.)

Finally, a week and a half into the season, they were playing Montreal. It really wasn't that long— Ilya had only left the cottage two short months ago to prepare for the new season, but it felt like *years*. Gone were the days where he could go six months without even texting Shane Hollander, replaced with a deep yearning to see the man that couldn't be satisfied with their daily texts and twice-weekly calls.

Ilya sat in the locker room before the game unable to suppress the grin on his face, his head tucked into his equipment locker to hide it from Marleau's prying eyes.

Lily: you come ready to lose?

Jane: In your dreams.

Lily: you have been in my dreams all month

Jane: Fuck I can't wait to see you later.

Lily: don't worry, I will win quickly

“Roz!”

Ilya's phone clattered onto the shelf below his equipment as he spun around as casually as possible. Summers was waiting for him, an eager look in his eyes and his hands practically vibrating on his stick.

“We're gonna crush them, right? My buddy doesn't think we can manage three wins in a row, but I told him—”

“Of course we will crush them.” Ilya flicked his hand lazily, finally taking a seat on the bench to lace his skates. “Montreal will not know what hit them. We are best team in league. Will be easy.”

“Hell yeah, Rozy!” Marleau cheered, clapping Ilya on the shoulder. “Let’s go show those fuckin’ Canadians what real hockey is!”

Ilya’s lips curled up at that, anticipation building within him. He didn’t love hockey the same way Shane did, but he did love to *win*. More than anything, he loved to win against Shane.

It was always more fun later in the night if he had something to brag about.

With that in mind, Ilya led his team down the tunnel with a roar, excitement flooding his veins as they followed him onto the rink. It still wasn’t quite time for the game to start– there were on ice stretches to complete, chirps to fling at the Metros, other miscellaneous pre-game activities– but Ilya could already feel the rush that he always got when competing against Shane. Obviously the Raiders didn’t win *every* game they played, but when they did lose it was never because one person on the other team was better than Ilya– it was always just something that could be attributed to bad luck or the other team having better synergy. The Metros, on the other hand, had something that no other team did.

A captain that could genuinely give Ilya a run for his money.

The only man in the world that Ilya secretly thought was better than him at hockey. Sometimes. In certain aspects. Not that he would ever admit it.

Shane was just across the ice, his back arched in one of those ridiculous stretches he insisted were *absolutely necessary for peak gameday performance*, and Ilya allowed himself to look just a bit longer than he usually would. Surely no one would blame him for admiring the show, right? He could always say Hollander looked stupid or weird or anything other than insanely attractive.

“You think those stretches actually do anything?”

Summers had appeared beside him, the sound of his skates muffled under the blood rushing through Ilya's ears— and elsewhere— as he stole another glance at Shane.

“I don't do them and I am better than him, so no. Or maybe they do help and I could be best hockey player *ever*. ”

“Mm. Hey, if he wants to put himself in that position it's on him, I guess. I'm not gonna complain about the show.”

Ilya froze, turning himself on the ice to face Summers properly.

“The... show?”

“Yeah. I mean, obviously it's not quite the same, but he's got a girl's ass doesn't he? You can't tell me you've never noticed.”

As if Ilya hadn't noticed Shane's ass. As if Ilya wasn't *intimately familiar* with Shane's ass. As if this fucking kid had *any right*—

“You should not be speaking like this,” Ilya said tersely, his jaw tight.

“What? I heard you talked to Hunter at the MLH Awards, I figured you probably weren't—you know. Was I wrong?”

“No, I am not— homophobic,” Ilya sputtered, “but you cannot seriously— no. Don't talk about *Hollander* like that.”

He tried to keep the edge in his voice just right. Don't talk about Shane Hollander like that because he is the enemy. Don't talk about Shane Hollander like that because you need to

focus on the game. Don't talk about Shane Hollander like that because he's *mine*—

“Alright, alright! I forgot you're weird about him.”

Ilya's stomach felt like it fell through the ice at that, panic freezing him in place. “What do you mean?”

“You know— I forgot you two hate each other. I guess I always assumed some of it was media bullshit, but I must have been wrong.”

Ilya hummed noncommittally, unwilling to say that he hated Shane but also knowing that a denial would only make the situation worse.

“Enough of this,” he said eventually, tapping the ice firmly with his stick. “Let's go destroy them.”

“Oh, I'd like to,” Summers said easily, with a light in his eyes that made Ilya think he was meaning it in a different way.

The buzzer sounded just as Ilya opened his mouth, a response on the tip of his tongue that would surely have outed them. Probably for the best, but frustration flooded him all the same.

Jane: I'm coming to yours, right?

Can't believe it's finally fucking time.

Promise I won't brag about the win.

Too much.

Rolling his eyes, Ilya typed out a quick confirmation and shoved his phone into his bag. Shane was *absolutely* going to brag the entire night, but he couldn't really find it in himself to mind.

The mood in the room was dismal, but Ilya didn't have any inspiring words to say to them. After all, they probably wouldn't appreciate their captain smiling his way through a consolation speech. He just couldn't help it. He was about to see his boyfriend. His *boyfriend*.

"That goal, though— I'm pissed he made it, I'm pissed we lost, but— wow. It was crazy."

Summers hadn't stopped talking since the end of the game. Ilya had been tuning it out until then, more focused on getting out of his gear and into his car than on post-game gossip, but that sounded like he was talking about—

"I mean seriously, Hollander is even more impressive up close."

"Seriously, rook, I know you're just starstruck or something, but can we talk about Hollander on a day when he hasn't just knocked us all on our asses?" Marleau groaned, rolling his eyes.

"Yes, yes. Hollander made good goal, is very impressive for him. Usually his goals look like shit. We can discuss how shit his goals are at practice, da? Maybe while you run some drills to make sure you can get the puck from him next time."

It was maybe a harsh thing to say to a rookie, but Ilya couldn't help himself. Summers was practically *drooling* talking about Shane's goal. Ilya had every intention of looking over the footage later, maybe telling Shane how beautiful he looked when he focused in on the net like that, maybe drooling a bit himself...

Summers had no reason to be doing that. Shane would never go for him.

“Right,” Summers said, suitably chastised. “Sorry, Captain. And I’m sorry, Marleau. Sometimes it just... doesn’t feel real, you know? I get to play with hockey greats, I get to play *against* hockey greats... it’s so fuckin’ cool, man.”

“Hm,” Ilya huffed, “Will be ok. We forgive easy, right Marly? See you all at practice.”

With that, he swept his way out of the locker room.

His apartment was quiet when he arrived, the lights all off. They had exchanged keys at the end of their stay at the cottage, so Shane must have been caught up in an interview at the stadium. Ilya let out a frustrated sigh as he kicked off his shoes and dropped his bag to the floor, gazing forlornly out the massive window beside his door.

...And then pushed his shoes into a neat line and hung his bag on a hook on the wall. He didn’t really care, but Shane had a tendency to spend an extra second fixing Ilya’s mess when he came in, and Ilya didn’t want to lose even a moment of his time with the other man. After all, Shane would be flying out again in the morning. There was no time to waste.

As if in agreement, the sound of a key turning in the lock rang through the apartment.

Ilya leaned against the nearest wall, watching faux-casually as Shane slumped in the door.

“Congratulations.”

“And here I thought you’d be too proud,” Shane teased, smiling briefly at Ilya as he toed his shoes off. “You had a nice goal earlier. It’s a shame I got two of them.”

“Mm. I didn’t see any nice goals from you. Was that tonight?”

“Oh fuck you, Rozanov– even your rookie thought it was a good goal!”

What.

“My– Summers? He said something to you?”

Shane winked playfully, finally coming closer to Ilya, his body tipping towards him as if pulled by a magnet.

“Don’t worry, I’m not gonna steal your star rookie.”

“That’s not what I– when did he even talk to you?”

Why had he talked to Shane? Sure, he apparently thought Shane was hot and also good at hockey, but those were objective facts. Everyone in the country knew Shane was hot and good at hockey, but they weren’t lining up to give the man compliments to his face.

“We didn’t really *talk*,” Shane said slowly, his eyes narrowing. Ilya schooled his face, knowing that Shane had picked up on something being wrong and was trying to figure it out. “He just said something while we were shaking hands.”

“What did he say?”

Shane frowned, one of his hands coming up to cup Ilya’s jaw. “That the shot looked good. Ilya, seriously– what’s going on? Is there some issue with him?”

He thinks you’re attractive. He was looking at you. He thinks I’m weird about you.

“No. Did you come here to ask me about Summers, or did you come here so I could fuck you?”

Shane rolled his eyes at the abrupt change in subject, but he also grabbed Ilya’s hand and started dragging him towards the bedroom.

Victory.

Things seemed to go back to normal after the strangeness of the game against Montreal. Summers didn’t bring Shane up again in the few weeks that followed, and Ilya slowly allowed himself to relax. He really couldn’t afford to start disliking the kid for a couple comments that probably meant nothing anyway. It wouldn’t be good for the team, and it wouldn’t be the kind thing to do— not that that was something Ilya used to care too much about, but he was trying. For Shane.

Besides, they worked well together. Games with Summers felt almost *too* easy— he received every pass well, he didn’t hog the puck, he didn’t get into too many fights that wound up with him in the penalty box— he was a dream teammate.

If only he didn’t think Shane was hot.

Their next game against Montreal had finally arrived, and Ilya had spent the flight over torn between listening in on Summers’ conversation with Connors or tuning them out. On the one hand, he wanted to know if Summers was talking about Shane again. On the other hand, he really *did not* want to know. Thankfully, nothing he overheard seemed to have anything to do with hockey in general or Shane in particular.

Now, once again sitting in a locker room preparing for a match against his boyfriend, Ilya ignored his phone buzzing with messages from said boyfriend in favor of listening in on the conversations around him. Summers hadn't managed to stay away from the topic of Shane Hollander for long, and was now bragging to anyone who would listen about how Shane had followed him back on Instagram.

Shane hardly ever even *used* Instagram, Ilya couldn't fathom why the hell he had done that. As far as he knew, the only Raiders Shane had followed previously were Ilya and Marleau, Ilya because— obviously— and Marly so that Shane could dm him and let him know there were no hard feelings after the hit.

“I mean seriously— *Shane Hollander!* Can you believe—”

“Kid,” Marleau cut in, “you’ve gotta keep the hero worship to a minimum on gameday. Especially when we’re playing *against him.*”

Ilya muttered a silent thanks as Summers ducked his head in embarrassment and finally, blessedly, shut the fuck up about Shane.

“Ok!” Ilya shouted, jumping up from the bench. “Last time was— well. Does not matter, does it? Tonight we *kill* Montreal! I want them crying on their drive home, I want them wailing to their wives like little babies— can we do that?”

There was a general chorus of “Yes, Cap!” around the locker room, and Ilya gave them all a satisfied nod. He stole one moment to look at his phone while the team filed out of the room, a smile growing on his face as he read the messages that awaited him.

*Jane: Ready to lose again?
Think I might go for a hat trick today.*

Hayden says you're going down.

Lily: Pike does not know his left skate from right

he does not frighten me

Ilya skated onto the ice with a pep in his step that he would deny if anyone were to ask, his eyes scanning the rink for— there.

Shane Hollander was at center ice, chatting with Hayden amicably as he finished the last of his stretches standing up. Ilya cursed under his breath at the realization that he had missed the more exciting of Shane's stretches, but he skated over to say hello all the same.

"Hollander," Ilya greeted, nodding at him stiffly. "I see you are preparing well for your loss. And this is— your new rookie?"

"You know damn well who I am, Rozanov," Hayden snarled, his face scrunched up like a rabid squirrel.

"Ah, of course. Pint, yes?"

"Pike."

"My mistake!" Ilya said breezily, his eyes locking on where Shane was suppressing a laugh. He looked beautiful under the lights of the rink, his cheeks flushed from the cold and his eyes shining.

"Good luck, Rozanov. You're gonna need it."

Ilya hummed in response, winking at Shane before he spun on the spot and began to skate away. He could just barely hear Pike saying something about him being an asshole as he left, and he laughed to himself.

"What were you saying to Hollander?"

Ilya startled at the voice beside him, his eyebrows raising as he found Summers beside him with a starstruck look in his eyes.

“I– what?”

“You were talking to him, right? Man, I wish I had the guts to talk to him before a game.”

Frowning, Ilya balled his hands into fists in his gloves. “Hollander isn’t scary. Why would you not have guts?”

“I know he’s not *scary*, but what if he... I don’t know, thought I was lame or something?”

“Lame? Hollander is most boring person on Earth, if anything you will speak to him and fall asleep at his response.”

“Huh,” Summers huffed, his face tensing as he considered Ilya’s words. “Maybe I’ll have to give it a shot.”

Wait, no.

Before Ilya could even begin to think of a protest that wouldn’t expose exactly *why* he was protesting, Summers had already skated away. Thankfully the rookie only went over by the bench to drink some water and chat with Connors, but Ilya found himself tracking the man’s every movement regardless.

What if he approached Shane during the game? What if he approached Shane *after* the game? What if Shane didn’t realize that Summers was into him and agreed to meet him somewhere or talk or–

What if Shane *did* realize and didn't mind?

What if Shane realized how much easier it would be to date *any other* man? Even dating another MLH player would be easier than dating famed womanizer and longtime asshole Ilya Rozanov.

Ilya shook himself off, trying to force his mind back on track. They had a game to play, after all. He couldn't lose to Shane twice in a row, the man would never let him live it down.

The game was a disaster.

Ilya struggled to focus the entire time, only managing one messy goal in the third period. Thankfully, Connors and Summers worked well together throughout the rest of the game and also managed to score one goal each, leaving them with a narrow victory over Montreal, 3-2.

The way they struggled to get the victory almost made it feel more embarrassing than a loss, but Ilya didn't have time to think about that.

He expertly dodged the press on his way out, his phone in his hand as he searched for the car he had called.

Jane: Are you on your way?

I've missed you.

Lily: be there soon

missed you too

Ilya shoved his phone back into his pocket and stifled a smile as the car finally pulled up. The ride to Shane's apartment passed in a blur, with Ilya deep in thought the entire way over. The car came to a stop at a deli a few blocks away from the apartment, and Ilya got out with a soft thanks. The walk was short and cold, the chilly Montreal fall helping to clear his head.

Finally, Ilya came to a stop at Shane's door. His front door. He input the code to it like second nature, his heart hammering his chest at the thought of what awaited him at the top of the stairs, until—

“Finally! I was starting to think you got murdered on the way over.”

Shane's voice was like a balm to his overactive mind, and Ilya fell into him with a huff. His boyfriend was *here*, finally, real and in front of him in baggy sweatpants and a shirt that Ilya had left behind at the cottage. He looked so soft.

“You look... cuddly.”

“Cuddly? What reason did you have to learn that one, Rozanov?” Shane teased, pulling back to look him in the eye, their foreheads bumping together.

“Mm, just came to me when I looked at you.”

Shane giggled at that, and Ilya felt his chest warm with love for the adorable man in front of him. He was so grateful for every moment he got with Shane Hollander. Every second was worth cherishing, every touch another thing to be thankful for—

“Your rookie messaged me on Instagram after the game.”

Ilya's chest went cold.

“What did he have to say?” He could hardly recognize his own voice. It came out steely and hard, no longer soft and loving like it had been moments ago.

“Just– Ilya, what’s wrong?” Shane’s eyebrows were furrowed, his eyes taking on that pleading kitten quality that he was so good at harnessing without ever realizing. “Do you not like Andrew?”

“*Andrew?*”

“Yeah, he said to call him– Ilya, seriously, what’s going on?”

“What did *Andrew* want to talk to you about?”

Shane didn’t respond for a moment, taking a step back to consider Ilya with one eyebrow raised. “Ilya, are you *jealous?*”

“No, I am not *jealous*,” Ilya said, his voice higher than usual, “I just–”

“Oh my god, you totally are!” Shane sounded far too pleased with this development, his cheeks flushing as he grinned at Ilya. “I can’t believe you’re seriously– Ilya, the kid is like 18!”

“He is 20.”

“Ilya. I love you. We have a five year plan. Why are you jealous of a rookie?”

Ilya groaned, scrubbing a hand roughly down his face. “I don’t know,” he muttered. Then, because he couldn’t *not*: “I love you, too.”

“Do you want to know what he said?”

“No,” Ilya said petulantly, ignoring the way his mind was racing with the *need* to know.

Rolling his eyes, Shane pulled his phone out of his pocket and handed it over, the screen already lit. “Go ahead, you freak,” he said, his tone dripping with affection. “At least see what you’re so jealous about before smoke starts pouring out of your ears.”

That was enough to break Ilya from whatever spiral his mind had been in, confusion creasing his face as he turned to Shane. “Before what?”

“Stupid English expression. Just look, Ilya.”

Steeling himself, Ilya glanced down at the phone in his hand.

Huh.

AndrewSummers56: Hey! I don't think we've actually met before, I wanted to introduce myself.

I'm Summers, the new player for Boston?

Call me Andrew though, please.

I was wondering if maybe we could grab a drink after the game or something?

Just to talk about hockey! I really look up to you.

And that was it. The words ‘*maybe we could grab a drink*’ did have Ilya questioning the merits of pummelling Summers during their next practice, but—

“You did not respond?”

“Why would I? I didn’t even realize I was following him; I think I must have misclicked or something. If I did respond it would just be to say no, obviously, but I didn’t really want to encourage him.”

“Right,” Ilya said slowly, “but– you are sure you do not want to go out with him?”

“What the hell?” Shane came closer as he spoke, until they were toe to toe and nose to nose. “Why would I go out with him? I had you coming over– I have you *here*, now, finally. We’ve been waiting weeks for this, why would I waste time with some random guy chatting about hockey at a bar?”

“He likes you.”

“You *love* me. And more importantly, I love *you*. I could not care less about your rookie outside of playing against him on the ice.”

“Shane,” Ilya started, freezing as he realized he didn’t know how to phrase what he wanted to say. He didn’t even really *want* to say it at all, it just felt like he should.

“Ilya.”

Eventually, Ilya forced himself to take half a step back, his hand rising to rest on Shane’s waist. “It would be... easier. If you were with someone less... high profile.”

“I don’t give a shit about *easy*, I thought you got that? We’ve been hooking up in hotel rooms for 8 fucking years Ilya, I could have stopped that and gotten with some random guy at any point during that time if I wasn’t already stupidly obsessed with you.”

Ilya grinned suddenly, his hand digging into Shane’s hip. “You have been obsessed with me all this time?”

“No— that’s not—”

“You *have!*” Ilya cheered, dragging the other man closer and pressing a loud kiss to his cheek. “You have not even looked at another man, have you? Too busy thinking about me and my—”

A hand suddenly covered his mouth, Shane pulling him even closer and tucking his head away just below his jaw. “I shouldn’t have said anything,” he groaned, his breath tickling Ilya’s neck.

Ilya wrapped his arms around his boyfriend, tugging him until they were pressed cleanly together. He was almost ready to put the whole thing behind them, get along with his original plans for the night, but—

“I don’t like that he messaged you.”

“I’m not gonna respond,” Shane reminded him, nuzzling into the space between his jaw and shoulder.

Ilya raised a hand to his hair, running his fingers through the strands and basking in the moment. “No, I know,” he assured him, turning his head to press an awkward kiss to the top of Shane’s head. “But I don’t like that he thought he *could* message you. I don’t like that people think you are... available.”

“Just a few more years,” Shane murmured. Ilya’s breath hitched as a gentle kiss was pressed to his skin before Shane pulled away. “A few more years and everyone will know that I’m yours and you’re mine.”

Humming agreeably, Ilya began to drag Shane down the hallway. “I think I will tell Summers that you are celibate. Or perhaps you have had some horrible accident and your penis is mangled beyond repair.”

“Jesus, *Ilya*—”

“The rumor would spread quickly, you know how locker rooms are. No one in the MLH would try to come after you again.”

“Yeah, and I would never hear the fucking end of it. Absolutely not, *Ilya*.”

Ilya whined playfully, finally dragging Shane into his bedroom.

“Fine, fine. You are no fun.”

“Love you, *Ilya*.”

“Love you, too.”

End Notes

Heated Rivalry has grabbed me by the throat and shaken me. Hope you enjoyed this one, there will be more.

MWAH

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