

don't leave me this way

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don't leave me this way

by [frenchleaves](#)

Summary

The sound of joy has begun to settle down into a tense silence, some muttering and asking about what was going on.

“Be careful with his head,” Hayes is saying, voice thick with something. It is disturbing to see him so serious. Bood nods, and starts moving a lump out of the seat.

Ilya raises an eyebrow, confused. “Who is passed out in my seat?”

That is when Ilya finally sees what Bood and Hayes are crowding over. It is himself, his own body, passed out and slumped against the seat in the row in front of him. There is a worrying amount of blood coming out of his nose and a cut by the back of his head.

Head wounds are terribly dramatic, but Ilya feels worried about this one. Mainly because he’s floating around like a ghost.

ilya gets hit on the head during the emergency landing in Tampa and thus begins his week-long stint as a ghost. whatever bad thing that can happen, the proceeds to do so. it's definitely not fun for ilya, and definitely not fun for shane either.

Notes

please suspend your disbelief for most of this (especially for the medical part), i've been sick and my country is lowkey getting... intervened by the us right now so my mind has been elsewhere. i immigrated but damn being on top of the news have taken me away from what really matters (heated rivalry)

oh title is from the song "don't leave me this way" by the communards but i also think it's hilarious to link it to charli xcx's "beg for you" ft rina sawayama from her album crash. haha get it.

anyways, have fun.

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

The plane dips again, and someone is screaming about a fire. Ilya's mind is somewhere else, between frozen and scrambling to make amends with the fact that this was it. They were about to die.

What if Ilya died? What would Shane do? Would he mourn?

His traitorous mind is just spinning a singular word in the web within his mind. *Shane. Shane. Shane.* He had not even been fully honest with him about everything going on with his mind, and at this point, if he had ever thought of setting off to meet his mother early, now all Ilya wanted for this plane to land safely and for his calm and boring life in Canada with his stupid boring boyfriend to last forever.

Ilya makes a singular decision at that moment, and grabs his phone. Even if he has no signal, he has the shitty plane WiFi that only loads Instagram DMs. He opens the app and then the private message tab with Shane's profile.

There were no messages, because they have constantly deleted their chats. Maybe Shane will not delete these ones, for once.

Now, there is no time to think about hiding, and Ilya has to let Shane understand how much he truly meant to Ilya. If English fails him now, at least Google Translate is not in the plane crashing with them. Shane can translate Russian to English, or learn Russian and decode this later, in a few years. Or in a week, if perfect Shane decides he's also perfect in Russian. Shane has all the time in the world, and here Ilya is, on a burning plane, his heart about to give out.

Shane 3:32pm

You re the best thing in my life 3:34pm

I loev you. Alwyas. Maybe from the first time I saw you. 3:35pm

His mind keeps repeating hidden moments spent with Shane. At the cottage. In several hotel rooms. In his apartment. In Shane's stupid landlord building. On the rink, at a face-off. At the

parking lot in Saskatchewan, that fateful cold morning. Everywhere.

***Сейчас я думаю только о тебе. Миллион воспоминаний. Спасибо тебе за них.
3:38pm***

Что бы ни случилось, я с тобой. В твоём сердце. Я верю в это. 3:38pm

Ilya feels a warm embrace coming from behind, the old memory of his mother's warmth enveloping him as the plane struggles to glide down safely. He is close to her, close to meeting her after years of missing her smile. The crucifix is cold between his fingers, his eyes closed tight and breath coming in bursts. Someone is screaming, maybe it is him. Someone else moves next to him, maybe they got jostled by the turbulence, and they are trying to balance themselves back to their seat. The planned dips once more, turbulence hitting their miserable ride again. Something loud thuds behind him, but it is not the first time so he pays it no mind. The gas masks had already come down from above, scaring them all even more. This sound is harsh, similar to the engine exploding outside.

Please do not let this plane crash. Please let this team be safe on land.

Ilya has a singular moment after this thought before there is another loud thud coming from above him. Then, there is a sharp pain in the back of his head before he knows no more.

After he opens his eyes, Ilya notices the plane has safely landed on the runway. He releases a jubilant roar, noting he is not the only one happy to be alive.

There are flashing lights from several emergency vehicles waiting for them outside of the plane. Right... the plane has landed. This Ilya does not remember, maybe he had passed out? It is entirely possible, and he feels the phantom pain of a bruise on the back of his neck. It is very faint regardless, Ilya feels like he could actually play a game right now.

He turns to smile at Bood, but finds him a few meters away, back in their row. Why is Ilya away from his seat? Did he sleepwalk out while the plane was landing? Was the trauma so harsh he does not remember the past few minutes? It is a possibility, but this feels weird. Different.

Everyone is bouncing with joy, hugging each other. No one is hugging him. Instead, those around him seem to pass right through him, ignoring Ilya in their joy. Why would they ignore their Captain? Canadians were normally boring but nice, they would give him a hug as well. Ilya liked hugs, this was a known fact.

Boodram crouches down and starts screaming something at Hayes, looking incredibly serious for a second. Hayes' face too changes to something grim, the happiness shooting out of him. It is weird to see them both so serious. Ilya's too elated, and his brain still mushed, to get all of what they're saying, but it does not fit the joyous atmosphere around them. Bood pushes a carry-on (Haas's, his brain supplies helpfully) out of the row, which is supposed to be on the overhead bin. The bin is itself open, and there's a smaller bag on the aisle, laying there as if thrown out by the turbulence.

"What is happening?" He calls out, but still no one answers. Not even Haas, who's looking where Boodram and Hayes are with worry in his eyes.

Ilya decides to walk closer, careful not to bump into anyone. He's already in his Captain mindset, serious and willing to do anything to help out the others. He's resourceful that way. Yet it's curious that he seems to go through the crowd like he's invisible, even as more people start surrounding their row and Ilya's seat— 4A.

He manages to pass Barrett by virtue of having become almost invisible, and comes closer to the aisle. The sound of joy has begun to settle down into a tense silence, some muttering and asking about what was going on.

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That is when Ilya finally sees what Bood and Hayes are crowding over. It is himself, his own body, passed out and slumped against the seat in the row in front of him. There is a worrying amount of blood coming out of his nose and a cut by the back of his head. Head wounds are terribly dramatic, but Ilya feels worried about this one. Mainly because he's floating around like a ghost.

This feels wrong. His body is pale, almost as white. His eyes are closed, unmoving. He remembers vividly the last time he saw a body strewn like this, and it was when he found his own mother.

Shit. Is he dead? Is he going to be haunting the Centaurs for life?

Maybe Ilya should've been a better person, more open, more loving, and he would have gone directly to his mother. None of this purgatory ghost bullshit. Was he going to be cursed to live around a team that did not even know him fully? Could he choose to be by Shane instead?

Something like panic starts to flow in his veins. Is Shane going to lose him?

"Rozanov is out!" Boodram calls out, a bit of desperation in his voice. Ilya has never heard it filled with that much worry. It makes something settle hard in his stomach. "Call one of the ambulances! The paramedics! Coach?!"

One of the flight attendants is scrambling to open the plane door, and after she manages, she calls out for the paramedics, who are conveniently waiting right outside of the stairs they have by now deployed. Ilya can't think much, what between being now a ghost and having no one notice him. He has always been noticed, so this is disconcerting. There is probably a nerdy explanation Hayes could pull out from one of his stupid comic books, but the man is currently busy carrying Ilya's body out of the row.

The paramedics, two of them, are now in the plane with a stretcher. The team has to settle back by their rows to let them pass with it. It is very small, and Ilya's not sure if he will fit ("*Not the first time I have ever questioned that, ha!*" he thinks, feeling a bit crazy).

All of the team are now in an eerie silence, watching as the two paramedics carry Ilya's incredibly unconscious body out of the plane. If this were to happen on the rink, a collapsed body after an accident, the murmur of the crowd would cushion the tension. It would lessen the grief of the moment. There is no crowd here, just teammates standing in silence. Ilya's body is slumped in a way that has continuously featured on his nightmares, only it is normally Shane laying on the cold ice of the rink. He has never even considered the opposite, because Ilya has always considered himself invincible. If he were to fall, it would be by his own hand, no one else's.

Ilya thanks whatever God is up there, and he thanks his Mother as well for good measure, that Shane is not here, and is playing a stupid game against the Jets. What a stupid team. He at least hopes Shane is winning, because this feels strong enough of a loss.

In a moment, they have his body inside the ambulance, and Boon gets on as well. It's a last minute decision, because Coach Wiebe has to stay and organize their return to land. They did just have an emergency landing after their plane caught on fire, after all.

Thankfully no one else is hurt as badly as Ilya is. Young did hit his head a bit, and apparently Chouinard has some bruises on his shoulders and back, but everyone else is fine.

Ilya also gets in the ambulance, just in case, and once again sends a prayer to his Mother after he remembers that he at least managed to tell Shane how much he loved him while Ilya was alive, and how he still will be with him. He apparently has no other choice, and if Ilya Rozanov will haunt anyone, it will be Shane Hollander.

The doors of the ambulance close with a sharp sound, and so start the blaring of the sirens. A paramedic takes his vitals, and he has thankfully never stopped breathing and has needed no resuscitation. Still, his nose had been bleeding, the trail still visible over his lip. The paramedics managed to at least stop the bleeding on the wound by the back of his head.

"What happened?"

His teammate looks up from the stretcher. "Hayes saw a carry-on flying around at the last second. We had one last bit of turbulence before we landed, I think. Maybe it hit him?"

“That’s common enough,” one of the medics nods, then asks. “Who’s his emergency contact?”

Bood sighs, turning to see Ilya’s body and back at the paramedic. “I don’t have that information, I’d have to call our manager.”

The paramedic gives him a look that Ilya will translate to ‘*so ask, asshole.*’ It is funny on the petite woman, but Boodram grabs his phone, and types in the contact information. Iya sighs.

Well, looks like Shane will be getting information on Ilya, at least.

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

Huge 4-1 win for the #OttawaCentaurs. Many are disappointed!

5:23 PM · 04/01/21

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

Barrett scores two goals in Raleigh game #OttawaCentaurs

5:32 PM · 04/01/21

pol @BARRETTSS

replying to @PuckReportNHL

hey you can sound a little bit more excited i swear

NHL ✓ **@NHL**

Ottawa's Centaurs 'emergency' landing after engine explosion. At least three injured, one in critical condition. News ongoing.

4:30 PM · 05/01/21

dynananana **@yellowjacketlesbian**

replying to @NHL

WHAT???????????? ARE THEY OKAY????????????

CTV News ✓ **@CTVNews**

“A total shock.” No casualties confirmed as the hockey team, the Ottawa Centaurs, have to emergency land in Tampa after turbine explosion mid-air.

5:02 PM · 05/01/21

CNN ✓ **@CNN**

Canadian hockey team “mostly fine, very shaken” after emergency plane landing. At least one in critical condition.

5:12 PM · 05/01/21

alex @chironcentaurs

replying to @CNN

do we know who is injured????

iMessage

Yuna Hollander

Shane, whenever possible, please answer my calls. It is urgent. *5:18pm*

Call me. *5:18pm*

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

#Voyageurs Shane Hollander faces terrible loss tonight for the first time in the season

7:33 PM · 05/01/21

The ghost thing loses its fun aspect after five minutes. Ilya wishes he could teleport to wherever Shane is, but no luck. He is for now stuck just a few meters away from his body.

(He tried to walk away from the hotel room to explore, but was tugged back into it and nestled next to the bed. It was a weird feeling.)

Ilya's body still looks kind of dead, but at least he is now just normal pale, not dead-pale, and there's no blood now. There are still bruises around his neck, and some on his temple. There's many lines over the hospital bed: one IV by his wrist, a pulse meter on his index fingers, and

another IV on the inside of his arm. There's also an oxygen tube right under his nose. Ilya has only seen this setup on mediocre hospital movies when he watched them with Shane. In those, the patients always miraculously got cured, even after several close calls.

He hopes that's also the case here.

Hayes is currently in the room with him, alongside Bood. They both look tired, dirty, and shaken. It is not a good look on them, but it's been many minutes since they called his emergency contact, and the two just recently were allowed to see Ilya. Not that Ilya was currently much company. He was both in a 'coma' or whatever (doctor's words) or a ghost. Neither option let him talk to his friends, who needed motivation desperately. They look as if they had lost to the worst team in the NHL, which was still the Centaurs themselves. Wiebe is outside with some of the nurses on a call with Ilya's emergency contact, talking about authorizations and whatnot.

Silence reigns in the room, only broken by the continuous beeps of the heart monitor.

"Rozanov's emergency contact is Yuna Hollander," Hayes says after a second, as if he had just realized. It's not the first time he's repeated the statement since they got told, and both of them look like they're still trying to believe it.

Ilya knows the goalie sees much more than others, and so he's not surprised that Wyatt is not as shocked as he could've been. Maybe. Ilya's not sure. There is still a bit of confusion. They don't know Ilya that well because he hasn't let them in, so having this type of information without any context must be confusing.

Even if Ilya and Shane had come together to create the Irina Foundation and are now considered friends, it's not as if many people believe them. Ilya has seen their 'friendship' be called a 'PR stunt' to help Ilya's own public persona, or whatever bullshit the press says about him. It's not as if they're fully wrong, they are hiding something, but they don't need to know that yet. Bood turns to look at Hayes, who is still looking weirded out. "Shane Hollander's mom."

The heart monitor keeps beeping.

“Get over it, Hayes,” Ilya laughs, knowing by then that no one will hear him. He had already tried many times to talk to his team, but nothing. He adds a wink for good measure. “I like older women.”

“I didn’t think they were that close...” Bood raises a hand to massage his temple. Wiebe’s voice filters into the room, accepting something the nurse had just asked of him. Ilya does not catch what it is. “I mean they have the Foundation thing together named after Rozy’s mom, but still. Has Hollander ever visited Rozy?”

“Yes, duh. But you do not need to know.”

Ilya, while unable to become tired in this form, sits down to rest next to Bood, and tries to poke him. His hand goes through, as it has the past twenty seven times. He settles back on the couch, where, for some reason, he can actually sit. He must make no indentation, because Hayes (who is normally superstitious) would’ve called out the ghost in the room.

“Shane Hollander’s mom is Ilya Rozanov’s emergency contact.” Hayes says once more, not any less confused. Boodram sits back as well, and gives Ilya’s body a look over. Ilya wonders if Bood thinks the unconscious body will reveal any secrets. “I don’t know what that means.”

“It means his mom likes me more than Shane.” Ilya rolls his eyes. He hopes Yuna is not that worried. He knows she likes him to an extent, but it’s not as if they are family like *that*.

Ilya had not been able to go out and hear the doctor’s conversation with Wiebe and Yuna (who is there on the phone). So he knows about as much as Bood and Hazy decide to let him know, or whenever Wiebe and the doctor come back.

“It means there’s more to their friendship that we know of.”

The heart monitor keeps beeping to the beat of Ilya’s erratic heart, and it actually seems to go slightly faster. Ilya puts a hand to his chest, willing for it to go back to normal. The beeping calms, and Ilya looks at it, searching for the connection. Did any of the two men notice the change?

It seems so, because Hayes looks at the monitor as well, eyes slightly wide. He huffs out a laugh that is not at all humorous. Bood is looking at Ilya's body as if analyzing the opposing team in the middle of the game, but says nothing. "I wonder if he can hear us."

"Babushka cursed me to hear these idiots in afterlife. Or maybe my asshole father did from the afterlife." Ilya says out loud, maybe a bit sad that they still can't hear him. It is not as if he is dead, but he feels like it. Maybe he was indeed cursed by a jealous witch. It happens all the time back in Russia. "I would rather... meet the maker."

"Maybe— There's studies that prove the theory," Bood smiles for the first time since before the plane. It barely reaches his eyes, but it is there. "Maybe he's here with us, screaming like he does before a game."

The door opens, and Bood's lips fall flat again as Wiebe and one of the nurses enter the frankly tiny hospital room. Ilya's a millionaire, he should be in a suite, with a view. And a nurse that's just Shane in a tiny dress. That'd be a dream.

Without a preamble, Coach rests his back on the wall by the door, looking over the two men. He seems calmer, and not as shocked. Did he know that the Hollanders and Ilya were close? I mean, he could technically see the medical files of all the players, but did he take note of who exactly had been Ilya's contact since he signed with the Centaurs? "Well, Mrs. Hollander is back home right now, but she has authorized me to sign the release forms when that happens. Only if it's quick— She did sound like she was coming by tomorrow."

"That's insane," is what Hayes says after a moment, before he slips a hand down his face, scrubbing at his eyes. Ilya's fucking tired, and he's *unconscious*. He can't know how beat these two—well, three, counting Coach—actually are.

The nurse then proceeds to explain that visiting hours will be over in a few minutes, and while Ilya's family (both Bood and Hayes cringe at that. Ilya frowns next to them) is far, they have allowed Wiebe to act in representation. He's the only one able to stay the night, basically, and so he will. She also mentions that they're going to move him to a bigger room, courtesy of Yuna Hollander. Ilya knew she liked him at least that much. A win!

Bood, as Assistant Captain, should return to the hotel. While Ilya is unconscious, he's taking over his captain duties and cheer up the Centaurs. The rest of the team are obviously not in good spirits, what with their captain being hospitalized after they all almost died in a tragic accident.

It's been a hard day for all of them, Ilya supposes.

"Hey Rozanov, don't be an asshole and wake up!" Hayes calls out after standing up and gathering his things. Bood is quick to follow. Ilya wishes he could scream at them about how stupid they are. "You have to explain why the Hollanders are your emergency contacts."

As if he had anyone else, Ilya thinks bitterly. Because he can right now, he says to them as they leave the hospital room: "I have a boyfriend, it is Shane Hollander. His mother is like a sergeant, general of military. She was the obvious choice, duh."

It doesn't feel as liberating as it should.

Shane Hollander announces he's in Tampa General Hospital by coming in before 11am the very next day that Ilya had been hospitalized, looking like he had thrown up, gotten no sleep, and cried for more than ten hours. All three would probably be accurate. Ilya hears him before he can even see him, and perks up at the sound of his boyfriend. "Where the *fuck* is he?"

There is a rustle of things being moved and discussed right outside the room, and Ilya has to fight a smile back from his face. It's been less than 10 hours, and Shane was playing a game states away from them. Shane is *here*?

"What the hell, Hollander?" Hayes jumps from the seat next to Ilya's bed as Shane decides to slam open the door to the hospital room. Which was a private suite now! What an upgrade.

Hayes had been dozing off, almost as unconscious as Ilya himself. At last he had the privilege of waking up as suddenly as he now did. Ilya... eh, not so much.

Now that Shane is here, he could get into a tiny nurse outfit and nurse him back to health.

As if hit by a flying bag (which would be the second day in a row), Ilya remembers the last time both of them had been in Tampa. It had been years ago, in that All Star game where they finally *talked* after years of supposed nonchalance. They've been connected on the rink, passes so seamless Ilya didn't know where he started and Shane ended. He had been so relieved when he learned Shane and Rose weren't even a thing. It's almost funny, in retrospect.

That whole relationship, even if it would have failed regardless, had always made Ilya's jaw tight.

Tampa, as bittersweet as it was because of all the secrets they had to keep and boundaries they couldn't cross, had held such good memories for them. Shane now looks nothing like he did back then, looking like he aged ten years in a night. He probably did. He must have been so worried. Did he get on a flight for this?

Ilya suddenly remembers the messages he sent through Instagram DMs, and he hopes they have at least kept Shane's heart steady. Did he manage to translate them? Ilya's pretty sure, even through the haze, that some of them he wrote in Russian.

Coach Wiebe comes in as well, a worried look on his face and his hands holding a shitty machine coffee. Behind him, in all of her glory, is Yuna Hollander. She looks well dressed, proper, yet she is just a degree more pulled together than Shane currently is. Which is saying a lot, because Shane looks terrible. As if it was him that was in the almost plane crash. Half of his heart was.

In haste, Hayes wakes Bood up, who had been fully napping next to the man. They had returned to the hotel last night, but were back on the chairs the moment visiting hours started. He rubs at his eyes, which proceed to widen as he takes the people in front of him.

“Damn, wasn’t Montreal playing Washington last *night*?”

Shane doesn’t even glance at their direction. Instead, he crosses the room as quickly as the fastest player in the league can. “Ilya—”

“*Ilya*?” Hayes mutters.

Ilya hears Bood as he slaps Hayes in the arm. “Don’t be a dick, Hazy.”

“дорогой, мой маленький неудачник,” Ilya laughs, still in disbelief. “Bood mentioned you lost your game. Terrible, Hollander. You lose game, I lose awakesness. Not a good look on us.”

“Ilya,” Shane reaches the side of his bed, and he grabs his boyfriend’s cold hand. Ilya himself, looking at the scene, feels nothing physical, but his heart calms. Maybe they’ll be okay. “You’ll be okay, you’ll be okay.”

The line of Shane’s shoulders is tense. He seems to be saying this mostly to himself, but Ilya can hear him. Not that he knows this. Regardless, he’s with him.

They will be okay.

Hayes and Bood watch in silence now, but Ilya has no space in his mind for them. Wiebe and Mrs. Hollander stay in a corner, discussing some of the following steps: the press, the season, the recovery. They are quiet, but Ilya pays them no attention either. He just looks at Shane, who looks wrecked and not in the way Ilya would normally enjoy. There’s a tense line to his shoulders, and his hand moves retroactively towards the body before he stops himself, takes a breath, and comes closer to the top of the bed.

His hand reaches out to Ilya's knotted curls, fixing them to no result. Ilya smiles, remembering just how cute Shane is. He loves him so much. He wishes he could bite him on the cheeks, at least just a little bit.

The last time they saw each other, even after they apologized, Shane had suggested some distance between them would be good. It tore into Ilya like a knife, to be far from Shane, but now he could actually see what the distance was doing to the man he loved.

Shane didn't seem to want any distance either.

If Shane was feeling this terrible about being unable to reach Ilya, then the answer to all problems was simple.

They needed no distance, they needed to be together. Never apart. Now, it looks like Shane is starting to understand this.

"You're *such* an asshole," Shane mutters, his eyes shimmering. The cold hospital light makes it seem as if ice could start falling from them at any moment. He grabs one of Ilya's curls and twists it with a finger, coiling it tightly before letting it go. Normally, Shane's touches feel electrifying, which is why Ilya had a hard time backing off from their hook ups at the very beginning. He can't feel anything right now, and it only feels like a loss. "Please come back to me."

Shane's voice is thick, and he visibly takes a deep breath.

From the couch, Bood coughs into his fist, looking at Shane in a new light. Hayes is just looking between them, something clicking in his brain.

Whatever Boodram was about to say is interrupted by the sound of the hinges of the door announcing its opening. Ilya's doctor, a woman named Dr. Morales, enters with a clipboard in hand. Yuna and Wiebe stop their conversation to turn towards her. Dr. Morales looks between Shane and Ilya's body, and places the clipboard by the foot of the bed.

“Mr. Hollander,” she starts, a severe look in her eyes. She’s an intense sort of person. Ilya can respect that, it reminds him of his old home. Shane turns to her, haggard and tired, and retreats his hands back, crossing them over his chest. “As next of kin, you must sign the final hospitalization slips.”

“Next of *kin*?”

“Hayes!”

“I’m next of kin?” he looks between Dr. Morales and his mother, who nods. Another breath comes out of him, this one stuttering as it is exhaled. His shoulders slump. “Okay– yeah, okay. Where do I sign?”

Ilya decides to do something for himself. It won’t work, but he follows Shane as he moves over to read the hospital documents, and drops a hand by Shane’s lower back. It is what he does when Shane is feeling overwhelmed, and Ilya is not really fully alive (or conscious, whatever) right now so he expects what happened with Bood to happen with Shane. He truly expects his hand to fall through. To his surprise, it stays when he reaches the fabric of Shane’s hoodie. He can’t feel much of the fabric

Shane shudders, and Ilya almost gets whiplash himself with how fast Shane turns. There is a clang of the pen on the floor as Shane unconsciously reaches out to where Ilya touched him, but his hand goes through air.

The suite falls into silence, the heart monitor beeps and noises of people walking outside in the hallway doing nothing but raise the tension within Shane’s body. The line of his shoulders is tense again, and he shudders out a breath. Ilya doesn’t understand what just happened, but something feels off, and the bottom of his feet start to grow warm enough for it to be uncomfortable.

“What happened?” Mrs. Hollander quickly grabs Shane by his shoulders. She lifts his head up, pressing her palms against his cheeks. “Are you okay?”

Shane's eyes are wide and watery, and no words come out. Just a stutter, but Ilya knows he's calling for him. Ilya tries to move, chasing that warmth he just felt for the first time since before the plane, but his body feels too warm, too itchy, too wrong. The heart monitor is too loud, all of the sudden, and it is rising and rising and rising, the beeps spurring everyone into action.

Dr. Morales immediately calls for the nurses stationed right outside. Yuna drops Shane at the same time that Shane twists back and rushes right into Ilya's face. His body, he sees from far away, is doing some weird movement. Ilya's heart rate is high, too high. Hayes and Boodram also stand up, looking concerned over the scene, while Hayes whispers to a nurse about what is happening. Shane is grabbing at his face, which lays still and emotionless, as Ilya's body starts twitching and moving uncontrollably. *Convulsing*, his mind provides unhelpfully.

"Give us some space! Leave now," Dr. Morales says, having another nurse usher them out of the room. "Grab some Benzodiazepine for IV, quick!"

There is so much noise in the room, so many people moving around. Some nurses come in, while another doctor drags Shane back so they can work easily. He is crying, his Shane, his sweetheart, as Ilya's body seizes on the bed. The heart rate is impossible to measure in the heat of the moment, but Ilya can only look at Shane, following him in the sea of people.

He tries to reach out to him again, grabs at his arm right before he goes through the door, right before he leaves Ilya behind again, and feels his throat constrict as his hand manages to circle around Shane's bicep fully. Shane all but stops breathing in contrast to Ilya's frantic heart. The energy it takes for Ilya to grab at Shane makes him impossibly hotter. Maybe this is what sends him to hell. His mother will never see him, and he is stuck forever where his father had been sent to. It is what he deserves, after everything.

A nurse rushes into the mob carrying one of those clear IV bags and hooks it deftly into Ilya's own perch. Several nurses are holding him down, while Shane is stuck at the entrance, unmoving even as a nurse tries to send him away.

"Sir, you should leave—" the nurse presses on, but Shane is looking at Ilya as if seeing his (actual) ghost.

Their eyes meet.

The heart beat monitor starts slowing down, and some of the nurses sigh in relief as Ilya's body stops seizing on the bed. He hears as one of the nurses heads out, probably to update Yuna and Wiebe on Ilya's status. Ilya wonders if Hazy and Bood are fine. He wouldn't be, if the situation was reversed.

The nurse by Shane lets him go, and while Shane comes running back, he doesn't touch Ilya.

Did he *see* him?

Even if he doesn't need to breathe (ghost), Ilya feels his chest grow lighter. The uncomfortable warmth leaves him, the chill of the hospital sweeping back into his bones.

"Ah, Ilyushka," Shane says in Russian with his perfect little accent but limited vocabulary. With his eyes slightly red, and the flush of his skin highlighting the freckles around his nose, Shane Hollaner is the most beautiful Ilya has ever seen. He wishes he could kiss every single one of those freckles. "Please come back to me. I miss you."

Ilya has truly been cursed by a witch, he believes. It must've been his brother, at this point. Why else would he be forced to see his love suffer this greatly with no way to console him? Ilya already has been unable to help out his loved ones, is he being cursed to repeat history? Will he always be cursed to grieve from afar?

"я тоже по тебе скучаю, дорогой."

An hour passes before Hayes and Bood come back. They probably went to have lunch, get a quick break before going back to their comatose captain and his weird... Well, whatever they thought Shane was to him.

Shane is asleep over Ilya's legs, both of them breathing together in tandem. Ilya, as the ghostly audience, thinks they look cute. He has never seen them both together, for obvious reasons, and he has to admit there was something religious about the way they fit together so well. He thumbs at the cross in his chest, because he could, weirdly enough. Ilya doesn't know how ghost mechanics work and honestly he doesn't give a fuck.

He notes then that his body doesn't have the cross. His mother's cross. Who took it? Did it get lost?

If it did, then Ilya will have lost everything that is left of his mother. He doesn't want to think about it, but all he can do now is *think*.

It is just the four of them in the room now. Yuna had left a bit earlier to figure out a room for her and Shane in the nearest hotel.

Ilya's teammates share a look before gazing back at Shane. Bood's eyes are curious, but Hayes has a knowing look on his face. It is fine that they were here, Ilya supposes, but if they touch a hair on Shane's head or even wake him up, Ilya is going to hit them hard enough to take them out for the season (whenever he wakes up).

After a beat, Bood just shrugs and sits down on the couch, unknowingly next to Ilya, and pulls out his phone. Hayes does basically the same, but Ilya can see he is reading some of his nerdy shit.

Silence reigns in the room, a stillness to them all that only comes in photos. Maybe also statues, like the ones outside of churches. Ilya always forgets the name of them.

It is after more than half an hour, if the clock on the wall is to be trusted, that Shane wakes up.

The unguarded way he looks at Ilya, eyes filled with devotion, is almost enough for Ilya himself to hitch a breath. Shane smiles, a bit loopy, a bit tired, a bit sad. Ilya wants to grab his

unconscious body by the shoulders and set him right, awake and with his love.

Shane's smile falls flat for half a second when he turns and notices Hayes and Bood are looking now at him, and when the smile returns it feels fake, rehearsed. It is a look Ilya knows for sure, he's given it to Barrett enough times during their talks, when he avoids all his questions about Shane.

"Morning, sleeping beauty," Bood calls, lowering his phone on the couch. "Sleeping beauties."

"It's been two hours," Shane mutters, not looking away from Ilya. Ilya himself wishes he could look back.

Hayes points at the obviously garish get well soon balloon arrangement placed by Ilya's table. "Who left that there?"

"My mom," Shane laughs, rolling his eyes. It was a stupid thing to try to cheer him up, Ilya knows. It did get a laugh out of him. His mother wanted to make Shane feel better, but she also looked... bad, for lack of a better term. Mrs. Hollander looks *scared*. Yuna was scared of losing him just as much as Shane was, especially after Ilya's early seizure. It tightened something in his chest, making him feel something he has not felt since before he was twelve.

Shane grabs Ilya's hand and caresses his thumb over the palm. "My mom likes him better than me, at this point."

"So," Hayes says after a moment. Both Shane and Bood turn to him. Shane drops Ilya's hand. Ilya, from away, can feel its loss. "I am curious, sorry."

"I believe that," Shane sighs. "I would be curious too."

There is a moment where no one says anything, a weird tension between a before and an after none of them have the courage to cross. Ilya, who bears no consequences for his actions for the first time in his life, is relaxed.

“He is my lover,” he says, lips lopsided. He imagines Shane’s face whenever he says they are lovers, the funny disgust in his face at the word. The way his nose wrinkles. It was funny the first time, it is still funny now. “We fuck, it has been a decade of fucking.”

Bood nods at Shane, not knowing what else to say. The problem is Hayes, who has always enjoyed getting up in other people’s business, both in and out of the ice.

“You and Rozanov are friends, very good friends.” He says, but something in Hayes's tone feels... off. Weird. It is as if, after Shane arrived, he realized something important. Something must have clicked for him. “I know you have the Irina Foundation together, and the hockey camps obviously, but I believed it to be some sort of... truce between you after a decade of being rivals.”

“Well, it isn’t that simple.”

This snaps something in Bood, who had kept quiet. He’s not curious by nature, but it seems as if he remembers then that Ilya, unlike his time with the Bears, has been extremely closed off with the Centaurs. Ilya knows this, but there was nothing he could do. If he let them in, they would just know. He loves Shane too much for him to not let something slip. “Hm, you know what is simple? Rozy has barely mentioned you since he was traded. Actually, he barely mentions anyone other than the team. Maybe Marlow, when we’re back in the U.S., you even less”

Shane nods, and his throat wobbles. Ilya knows the look on his face, the thoughts crossing through his mind. He can see when Shane reaches a decision, and sighs. “He mentions you. You had a team party on Christmas, a barbeque, Ilya– Rozanov told me. He– We– Well, we have been friends for years now. He mentions you a lot, actually. He invited–”

It is then that Ilya truly wishes he was awake to stop Hayes from talking, because he knows too much and he looks mad, and when he is mad he will be telling you exactly why. “Don’t spill my secrets, Hazy!”

Obviously, no one hears him.

“He doesn’t mention you at all, actually. I know you’re friends but only because I saw it during the summer,” Hayes’s voice is like gravel, and with each word Shane grows paler. Everything feels like it’s hanging from a thread. Hayes continues, “He barely introduces friends to the team, not a single significant other. Rozy used to be a bit of a playboy, no? But he moves to Canada, from one of the most important teams of the NHL to the worst ranked. He has never even bothered to lie as to why, he just refuses to answer.”

Ilya tries again, to no avail. “Hey! Shut up, Hayes!”

Whatever Hayes is implying spurs Boodram into action, because he sits up and looks at Shane seriously. “Rozanov is very friendly, very nice, and an amazing Captain, but we barely know him because he has not let us in. Not many of us have noticed, but it’s a trend Hayes and I have spoken about before. Can you explain this to us, Hollander? How you’re his supposed next of *kin*? Shit, how your *mother* is his emergency contact when the team has not even met you as even an acquaintance before?”

“I am *sorry*, okay! I—” Shane is red in the face, and he looks like he’s fighting back tears. Ilya wants to punch Boodram in the face for the first time in a while. “I couldn’t— We can’t!”

“Hollander, calm down.” Ilya wishes Shane could hear him. He wishes he had opened up at least a tiny bit to his team. He wishes he were happy with all he already had. Ilya wishes for a lot of things.

Shane’s shoulders move up and down alongside his breathing. He looks in between Hayes and Boodram, eyes wide. He looks confused, as if he doesn’t exactly know what he’s feeling. Ilya does know, having catalogued the way Shane experiences his emotions over the years, and he can see that he’s angry. Shane looks angry but it is an anger he’s gearing towards himself.

“I am *trying*, okay! He knows this, we planned for this. He wants a dog, okay! Several dogs, in the cottage, in his house, in my own in Montreal. He was scared of the loons at my cottage but now he calls after them whenever they start making noise.” Shane is rambling and he

can't seem to stop. The way he is breathing should start worrying either of the other men, because he sounds on the verge of a panic attack.

The thing is Hayes knows how the both of them interact. He had seen them during the hockey camps last year after Ilya had asked him to come. It's why he's not as surprised about how close Ilya and Shane actually are. Even over the year and a half they have been teammates, Hayes must notice the little things that connect Shane back to his captain, but they've never actually talked about it.

Hayes only brings it up once he has a final conclusion, and now it seems this is it.

"Hollander, calm down," Hayes places a hand over Bood's shoulder, urging him to shut up. "What are you trying to say?"

"He— We have the Foundation *and* our Hockey Camp together because we've been close for years and we wanted to soften the blow on everyone around us by doing something that mattered together!" He bursts out in one singular breath. Everyone's eyes become wide, but it is as if a dam has burst. Shane keeps speaking, the inhibitions that kept this held all of this for years breaking apart. He can't seem to stop. "They have pitted us against each other from the very first moment, even before we met, but we've never hated each other, not really, not fully. It's the opposite! Do you think I would be here otherwise? I'm here, my *mother* is here, because he is my *family*. Sure, okay, we like competing against each other, it's fun! Hockey has always been amazing but with him it is fun! He— He means everything to me, okay? and I *love* him so much.

"And yes, whatever. He calls me boring, he calls me annoying. We don't agree on most things, but I love him. He hates all the diets I do but he leaves me my food ready in the fridge whenever he's over. He has everything I could ever want. And I tell him I need distance, and he does. I tell him to quit smoking, and he does, even after years of his team telling him to do so. And we plan to be closer together and he moves, and what do I do? You're right. He never mentions me because I am scared of losing hockey and losing him. I'm scared because I'm a public figure that people look up to for representation. It's already hard enough for me. But you all almost just died, my boyfriend is hospitalized and could have brain trauma, and he never knew that even after everything I would give it *all* up for him. Everything!"

Shane suddenly stops, looking as if he's thinking something over. There's not a gram of regret in his eyes, only unshed tears and a furrowed brow. There is a flush to his cheeks that

bring out his beautiful freckles, Ilya notes in a haze. Hayes and Boodram sit, looking properly chastised. They should be, because even if Ilya would maybe agree with some of their points, it is something he agreed to do.

It is something they know *nothing* about, something they could never understand.

Ilya hopes Shane knows he too would give everything he has left for him. If it were down to leaving hockey for good or leaving Shane, Ilya would make a decision in a heartbeat.

Hayes is looking at Shane in a new light, as if he finally has every piece of a puzzle. On his side, Boodram looks shocked, but the line of his mouth suggests respect. He's always been a bit of a romantic, so Shane's whole declaration would move him.

Maybe if Ilya ends up not waking up, Shane can take over the Centaurs. He has two of them on lock already.

Shane grabs his phone in haste, and thumbs expertly, as if going through apps had always been as easy as it is for him to play hockey. After just a few seconds, and without saying anything else, he throws the phone at Boodram, who barely catches it.

"What? These are your DMs with Roz," he says after a moment. He doesn't immediately look back at the messages, though Ilya can see that his resistance ebbs by the second.

Whatever was stopping him fully melts away when Shane next speaks. "Only Instagram works on plane wifi."

"Shane," Ilya's voice cracks. He wishes he could cry, maybe even scream. Hayes hitches a breath next to Bood, who is reading the texts at a pace, mouthing them almost word by word. They're both looking intently at the screen, not knowing Ilya himself is also next to them, looking at whatever he sent Shane during the flight the day before.

Only a day has passed, a singular day.

Shane 7:32pm

You re the best thing in my life 7:34pm

I loev you. Alwyas. Maybe from the first time I saw you. 7:35pm

Сейчас я думаю только о тебе. Миллион воспоминаний. Спасибо тебе за них.
7:38pm

Что бы ни случилось, я с тобой. В твоём сердце. Я верю в это. 7:38pm

Hayes, forever curious, looks up. His eyes are shining, but everyone else's also are, so it goes ignored. He points at the cyrillic. "What do those last two say?"

"Right now I think only of you. A million memories. Thank you for them." Shane's voice cracks with almost every single word. There is no word that isn't filled with emotion, and whereas Shane normally sounds... flat, his voice wavers as he speaks. *"No matter what happens, I'm with you. In your heart. I believe in that—* I've been learning Russian for over four years now."

"I am so sorry, Shane." Ilya steps away, but there's nowhere he can go, and there's nothing but waiting for consciousness to return to him. "I miss you."

The silence that hangs between them is tentative, and while Hayes looks like he wants to say something, Bood takes the initiative.

"Hollander—" he says, coughing away the tightness in his throat. "I'm not going to be sorry for defending my captain."

Shane shrugs, and takes his phone back when Bood extends it to him. It is immediately pocketed. "And I'm not going to apologize either, Boodram."

“For how long?” Hayes asks.

“Do you need to know that?” The way Shane crosses his arms is too on the defensive, so much it makes Ilya laugh. He has a fire in his eyes famous for making players scared on the ice.

Even after everything, this *is* Shane Hollander.

“No, but I—” Hayes cringes, and he looks very awkward, but Shane must see that he has good intentions, because he sighs and lets his arms loose. “We would just like to get to know both of you more?”

“It’s been fully serious since July 2017.” The answer comes after a minute of considering silence, and it makes both of the other men raise their eyebrows. Bood whistles, crossing a leg as he leans over.

Ilya didn’t think Shane would so easily tell two of his own teammates, but there is a tentative sort of respect between them now.

“For me, was always serious.” Ilya rolls his eyes, waving a hand in front of his face. “Boring Canadian.”

Four years, Hayes mouths. “Wasn’t that after Scott Hunter came out?”

“Well, yes, I suppose—”

“But it.. started before?” Ilya should’ve told Shane at some point that the Centaurs' goalie was a psychic, that for some reason he knew things he shouldn’t. He was an expert in connecting any type of dots, even if it seemed impossible. “Shit, how?”

“No,” Shane says, but after a second he takes it back. “Yeah.”

Has Shane ever told someone the whole story? His parents did not count, because them knowing the full story was off limits as Shane preferred to be a sexless entity to them (They still obviously knew). Maybe Hayden knew a bunch, but it was not as if he knew details, he actively told them to tell them nothing he wouldn't want to know. Same with Rose, Ilya's mouth twisted, who knew the basics and also for some reason that Shane bottoms? That was a funny conversation to have.

Now that he thinks about it, Shane has actually told many people about them. Who has Ilya even told? Galina, and it's because most of his issues seem to wander around them being together. That was why Shane and him had been fighting over, at the end of the day. Svetlana maybe knows, but they haven't spoken in months. Ilya has told his mother, whenever he prays, but Ilya doesn't think that counts.

"Hollander loves my dick too much." Ilya shrugs, looking out the window instead. "He is a slut for it."

"I— I am being an asshole," Shane says, not knowing he's basically doing Ilya a favor. It's better if they all just knew, for team synergy. He slumps back into the seat, hand covering his face. "I'm outing Ilya to his team."

"It is fine, Hollander." he mutters, caressing his own earlobe. It's soft. He shifts to fully block whatever is going in the room, but he can't get away fully from the sounds of the conversation.

While Bood grimaces, Hayes just shrugs. "I think he would be fine with it. He's a Centaur, at the end of the day. Barrett would've knocked his teeth out if he acted otherwise. I thought he wouldn't be okay with gay people at first, with Russia and hockey and all, but damn he does like gay people a little more than I thought!"

"He likes both, but that doesn't matter here." Shane says without thinking, which makes Boodram laugh. His eyes grow wide. "You can't tell anyone that."

Bood's lips fall flat, and Hayes bursts in. "We wouldn't do that to our Captain, are you crazy? We won't even tell the rest of the team, not that they would mind— I mean, they know you're

here, and that *a* Hollander is Rozanov's emergency contact, but that's it."

Shane hesitates, and the two other men grow blurry right before his eyes. "I'm glad the Centaurs think that way."

Ilya knows what *that* means, because he knows Shane, and because he knows that stupid ass team. Stupid Montreal. Ilya needs to take out all of their tongues and throw them in a lake. Canada has a lot of lakes, maybe he will choose one per player. He turns back to look at Shane, who looks like a kicked puppy. It is a sad sight, especially because Ilya can't kiss him better right now.

"I will kill everyone in dumbass Montreal team. Stupid idiot asshole motherfuckers with no hope and ambition in life. Throw away best player because he takes dick better than any of them. Stupid bitches, with all tiny cocks. They bring dishonor to the league."

In his muttering, Ilya doesn't hear the door as it opens, but he does hear the recognizable voice of Yuna Hollader, who sounds slightly better than she did this morning.

"Is everything okay here, boys?" she asks, taking in the mood of the room. Seeing as Hayes and Boodram only answer her with non-chalant noises, she turns to Shane. "Sweetie, Farah has been trying to get in touch so the Foundation can release a statement."

"A statement?" Shane asks, "Why?"

Yuna sighs, raking her hand between the strands of her hair. She tames it down over one side of her shoulder. "Well, so people know Ilya will be fine."

After Yuna goes to sit down next to the balloon arrangement, for a moment everyone exists in companionable silence. It lasts around twenty seconds, because Boodram is allergic to awkwardness.

“We need to get back to the team,” Boodram slaps the top of his thighs as he stands up, and well, he should act as the Assistant Captain he is while Ilya is out of the count. He’s right, they should go. “We have practice in a few hours.”

“Of course,” Yuna sounds diplomatic, just as she did when she first found out about Ilya. It is the way she sounds when she has something in mind. “Go make Ottawa proud, you need to still bring home the cup, if not Ilya will be put off when he wakes up.”

Hayes salutes, and the smile is back on their faces. “Right! You’re all from Ottawa, forgot for a second. Aye, Mrs. Hollander!”

Boodram pats him on the back, and says some platitudes as he leaves. He feels quiet, but a scheming type of quiet. Yuna was right, they have to strategize to bring home the cup, if not Ilya will actively haunt them.

Suddenly, it is Shane that stands up, phone in hand. “I should call Farah.”

“Isn’t it better to call her here?” Yuna doesn’t say it, but it is true that the hospital suite is quiet, more private.

“I need some air,” Shane shakes his head, looking like he is about to blow up. Yuna must also see it, because she just sighs.

“Tell me what she says, after.”

The door closes behind Shane, and Yuna sighs, looking back at Ilya with concern in her eyes. “Shane needs you, son. Wake up soon, please.”

“I am trying,” is all Ilya can say without crying. He feels a stupid ghost tear slip over his cheek, but he doesn’t swat it away. If no one can see him, then there’s no use putting up a front. “I am trying.”

Ilya spends the rest of the day looking over as Shane and Yuna cycle through every emotion known to man. It is almost a choreography, the way they tend to Ilya's unconscious body. Whenever Shane comes, Yuna follows, moving together with a synergy Ilya supposes comes from knowing each other and having the same goal.

It reminds Ilya of a pack, the way animals protect their wounded. He saw a documentary once with David about it, on a cozy Sunday morning.

The next morning, Wiebe finalizes all paperwork on behalf of the team and checks on Ilya before the team has to travel for the next game. After this, only Shane and Yuna stay behind. They look tired, and Ilya is sure they have barely used that hotel room Yuna went to get by at a nearby hotel. They have left, at some point, but it seems they did only so to shower. Shane has a bit of a stubble now around his jaw and chin, the patchy kind as he has never been able to grow a full beard. Ilya wishes he could rub his cheeks against them, kiss him roughly and make him pant into his mouth.

Instead, Ilya sits unseen next to his boyfriend and his mother, all three of them waiting for him to wake up.

A few minutes pass before Dr. Morales comes into the room. She looks proper, probably because she might be the only one who had a full night's sleep. She adjusts the glasses on the bridge of her nose, and clears her throat. "Good morning, family. How are we doing?"

The look Shane gives her would definitely kill her if it could. Yuna, from his side, smiles at her, but it doesn't reach her eyes. "Hi, not that great. Do you have any more news?"

"We don't exactly know why he isn't waking up," the doctor says without a preamble. It is good she's not bullshitting, Ilya doesn't believe the Hollanders would appreciate that. "We've confirmed several times that there is no brain bleed, but there's no way to know if there's any trauma after such a hard hit. Otherwise, he has normal brain activity. He has only gone through one convulsion event, but it hasn't repeated, so the forecast is generally good. You

know he is being treated for a broken rib and a bruised collarbone, but it's brain trauma we can't assess until he wakes up."

"What are our current options?" Yuna asks, ever the planner. Shane has stopped even looking at the doctor, gaze focused on Ilya. It makes Ilya chuckle, Shane is so expressive sometimes and he doesn't even notice.

For a split second, while Ilya laughs, Shane turns to look directly at him.

Both of their eyes widen, but Ilya looks away and shrugs immediately. It's probably just Shane looking around the room. He pays it no mind.

The doctor continues. "Well, it would not be the first time we have a situation like this, only the celebrities have become comatose under different conditions. We are fully equipped to handle Mr. Rozanov's case here, but we know both of you are Canadian citizens, and Mr. Rozanov is not far behind. He does have a Canadian work visa, no?"

"Yes, but he does have American health insurance as well."

Dr. Morales nods, "Yes, we talked about it with Mr. Wiebe yesterday. The NHL can cover most of the costs of the hospitalization, and his personal insurance covers some of the rest. I've been assured there's otherwise no other problem within that area. We will keep running tests during the following days."

Yuna's lips are flat, eyes as intense as a general that is about to lead an army. Ilya has always found it scary how much Yuna can dive into a project fully. She's amazing, in that sense. "Is there an option to have him moved back to Ottawa? You've said it yourself that we're all basically Canadian citizens, and we do have the means to transport him back. Is it safe?"

Both Shane and Ilya turn to the doctor, waiting for her answer. Yuna's right, this would be the safest option. Plus, Ilya would not have to be conscious on that plane, which is a plus. Sure, he wouldn't be scared, he's stronger than that, but he did go through the whole plane explosion thing just two days ago.

“Honestly,” Dr. Morales sighs, “I could not confirm right now, the head of neurology would have to give the go, but it *is* a possibility. The flight shouldn’t be a problem in itself, but some days have to have passed so we can confirm full stabilization. If you can get a medical team on a plane, it is a possibility.”

Yuna nods, “Yeah, that sounds okay. Keep us updated.”

“Of course,” the doctor grabs the clipboard, moving to read something. “We have some other tests scheduled for the next hour, a CT scan to update the brain images, and we’ll do a blood test to check his levels as well.”

That means Ilya will get a trip down to the lab, as he is basically tied to his body. It would be the third time he’s able to leave the room. Ilya doesn’t want to leave Shane, but maybe it is for the best. Maybe he should be saying his goodbyes instead of hanging on, instead of waiting for something that might not even happen. If the doctors don’t know when he wakes up, wouldn’t it be better to just let himself go?

Ilya shakes his head. *No*. He couldn’t do that to Shane. This is something he can do. Unless—Well, unless he can’t help it, and his body gives out. He doesn’t even know what he prefers anymore.

The doctor leaves, closing the door behind her, and Shane hides his face on his mother’s shoulder. It is because Ilya is so close that he can hear the muttering.

“I’m scared,” Shane says into Yuna’s shirt. He looks up, and his eyes are red. “What if I lose him?”

Yuna wraps an arm around Shane, bringing him close. Shane looks comfortable in his mother’s embrace, and Ilya tries to not feel the jealousy that festers in his bones. He wishes desperately he had something like that. He can’t blame Shane, who needs all the support he can right now, or even Yuna, who looks like she needs the comfort as much as her son does. Still, Ilya can’t help it.

“Everything will be fine, baby. He’ll come back to us” Yuna’s arms tightens around Shane, then she sighs, and releases Shane. He looks at her, eyes confused as she stands up. “We should eat something, it’s past noon.”

Shane lets out a grunt, not willing to speak. He gets like that sometimes, unable to voice out what he is feeling whenever he’s overwhelmed. He nods, and turns back to look at Ilya’s body, only his eyes wander off to stare at where Ilya (as a ghost, maybe a spirit?) is sitting. They stay there, and Shane smiles sadly before he turns to look back at the bed.

With no answer, Yuna sighs. There is probably no way Shane would leave Ilya right now, and she knows that. She grabs her purse and mutters something about the cafeteria before she leaves.

Shane, uncaring, taps his fingers to the beat of the heart monitor, and it makes Ilya let out a small laugh. Shane is so ridiculous sometimes, and so very cute.

“I’m finally going crazy, Ilya.” Shane speaks out after a minute, closing his eyes and breathing in deep. He’s grabbing at the fabric of his joggers, gripping it tightly. “I keep– I keep hearing your laugh? You’re still here but you’re already haunting me.”

Everything stops for a second, because Shane had been looking at Ilya at some point, but it never seemed as if he had actually been *seeing* him. Ilya’s eyes widen, and he scoots closer to Shane. He should not be entertaining the thought, but this is the closest he’s felt to being alive in a few days.

“Like that, yeah,” Shane looks down at his phone, opening Instagram expertly. There’s so many notifications, and even more coming in, that Shane just ignores. There’s a bunch of missed calls from Pike. Ilya sees that he’s instead looking at the texts Ilya had sent during the emergency landing. A drop falls onto the screen, but Shane doesn’t move to wipe it away. He also doesn’t wipe away the stray tears on his cheeks. Ilya wants to hug him, but it will either go through him or make him have another seizure, and if he wants to be taken to Ottawa, he should refrain from anything that can give him another fit.

“I am not haunting you, because I am not dead,” Ilya mutters, then moves a hand around. “Yet.”

Shane looks up at Ilya, not the body but himself, and laughs. It sounds sad, resigned. “Yeah, he would sound exactly like that. You did say you would always be with me. At least you kept that promise.”

“Oh, Shane.” Ilya wants nothing more than to be awake right now. “I will come back to you.”

With eyes unseeing, Shane turns back to the bed where Ilya’s body rests. As he pockets his phone, he swipes away the tears in his cheeks. No one speaks after that, silence reigning in the room, even if Ilya wishes he could say everything in his mind to Shane. It is strange, the fact that Shane can see him, but Ilya doesn’t have it in him to tell him that it *is* him, that it is real. What if he doesn’t wake up? He doesn’t want Shane to go crazy, even if he believes he already is.

The door opens after another ten minutes pass, and Yuna comes in carrying a tray of food with a sandwich and a salad on it. Shane doesn’t look like he could physically leave the room and Ilya behind, so it makes sense that Yuna brought the food to the room.

Still, at some point, Shane should go out for a little while.

“Okay, the doctors have confirmed that if more than a week passes, we can have him moved back to Ottawa. I have a contact that could lend us their plane— Yes, I know, but this will be better for everyone,” she says as she steps around the machines and lines, sitting on the couch.

Shane looks at her with a deadpan look after she mentions the plane, but it is a plan that makes sense and that the doctors agree will be fine. He lays back onto the couch, salad open between his legs but going untouched immediately. It is as if the food wasn’t even there.

He must be truly worried, because Shane mentions nothing about the dressing on the day-old lettuce, or even on the assorted pieces of fruit in it.

“Yeah, okay,” he turns to look at the ceiling, while Yuna takes a bite or two of her sandwich.

She looks at him in concern. “Shane, you should eat something—”

“She’s right,” Ilya says for the first time in a while. If Shane can hear some of the things he says, might as well haunt his boyfriend into eating some lettuce.

Shane looks between his mom and Ilya, then sighs. “Okay.”

He eats just three forkfulls before a nurse comes by to pick up Ilya for the tests they’re about to run. Shane just looks at Ilya’s body as if they’re taking him away forever, but he says nothing. Ilya feels the pull of the tether to his body, and is forced to leave Shane and Yuna behind.

Before the door closes behind him, he sees Shane leave the salad and lay down on the couch, all while Yuna looks over in concern.

ray @tampabayspuck

i just saw THE shane hollander looking absolutely terrible at the Publix next to my house???
do the voyageurs even have a game here right now ????

4:29 PM · 07/01/21

rose landry’s left ear @R0SEL4NDRY

replying to @tampabayspuck

where do you even live???

ray @tampabayspuck

replying to @R0SEL4NDRY

lol tampa obviously but ... i'm so confused ???

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @tampabayspuck

he's WHERE??????????????????

scott hunter's flower girl @admiralsfan444

replying to @shanehollanderrssss

isn't that where the centaurs landed after the emergency landing? huh

THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE JESUS EITHER @hollanovtruther

replying to @admiralsfan444

guys.... listen.....

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @hollanovtruther

kate it's literally not the time for this c'mon

The Irina Foundation ✔ @IrinaFoundation

[Image attached: statement over white background]

Last Tuesday, the Ottawa Centaurs experienced engine loss during a flight from Raleigh to Tampa. During the emergency landing, Ilya Rozanov, co-founder of the Irina Foundation, suffered head trauma due to an accident with turbulence, and has been placed in the ICU of the Tampa General Hospital. The doctors at the hospital expect for him to make a quick

recovery after he gains consciousness. We extend our thought to his family, friends, and team as the season continues. Thank you for your understanding.

10:00 AM · 08/01/21

Ottawa Centaurs ✓ **@Centaurs**

replying to @IrinaFoundation



Ottawa Centaurs ✓ **@Centaurs**

Captain Rozanov has been pulled from the season after hospitalization due to critical injury. This happened due to an unforeseen situation that resulted in head trauma during the emergency landing in Tampa. Please respect both the team's and Rozanov's privacy as he recovers.

10:13 AM · 08/01/21

Wyatt Hayes ✓ **@WHayes**

replying to @Centaurs

Our Captain is strong! He'll be back soon.

NHL News ✓ **@PuckReportNHL**

The #OttawaCentaurs have released a statement regarding the injured party during their recent emergency landing. #Rozanov suffered head trauma and has been hospitalized. No news if he is still in critical condition, but he is out of the season. Team prospects for playoffs low.

11:10 AM · 08/01/21

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @PuckReportNHL

bro who cares about the season they all almost died and rozanov is in a coma. get a grip

haasy trick @lucahaasenjoyer

replying to @PuckReportNHL

this is insane....

Two more days pass without nothing of note happening. Ilya is stable, but unconscious, and Shane grows shiftier by the second. The scans the doctors make show nothing new, and his levels remain stable. It is the comatose state he is in they can't explain.

Ilya would just tell them he is cursed, but he has no way of confirming this, and also no way to tell the doctors.

Shane looks even worse after two days of sleeping in bouts at the hospital. The stubble has grown more, and if Shane could grow a beard then he would look like any other hockey player after playoffs. He keeps ignoring all of his calls, and while Yuna keeps bringing him hospital cafeteria salads, he has maybe managed to eat half of one. Yuna had at least got him to shower, but it's been more than a day since he left to do that. He keeps vigil at Ilya's bedside, which does give Ilya some company. He would go crazy if he was alone with his unconscious body and no knowledge of his condition.

He sometimes talks to Ilya almost as if he's talking to himself. Everyday, he sounds more like Ilya's own self-talk, which Galina has told him countless of times is not exactly a good way to talk to yourself. Ilya's been working on it.

Shane hasn't.

With each day, Ilya watches as Shane becomes a shell of himself, and there is nothing anyone can do except for having Ilya wake up.

It is about to reach a point of serious consequences, when on that next morning, the door opens to reveal no other than Svetlana.

Shane takes a second after the door closes to look away from Ilya. His eyes take even longer to focus, and while Ilya's heart warms at seeing his Sveta, Shane's eyes grow dark. Thankfully, Svetlana is not really looking at Shane, but instead she's pale and staring at Ilya's unconscious body.

"Fuck," she mutters in Russian, and Ilya has never even seen her look as disheartened as she is now. Her curly hair is immaculate, twisted to perfection, and even her makeup looks fresh and clean. Her clothes even look ironed. She's the perfect foil to Shane's scruffy jogger look. It is her eyes, the way her hands fall flat to her sides, that show how out of sorts she actually feels.

"Oh, you're Svetlana," Shane's Russian is rusty, but Ilya loves how perfectly he pronounces the words. It is funny that he's using it, because Shane knows Svetlana is also American, so the Russian is kind of random.

It makes his heart warm, that Shane is willing to learn Russian for him.

"And you're Jane," Svetlana raises an eyebrow, and while she still looks sad, she grins in a way that feels wild. It's as much of a threat as it is an understanding of who Shane really is, who he is to Ilya. *"I didn't know you spoke Russian."*

“*That’s not—*” Shane pales, because he’s never been confronted by someone about his relationship with Ilya so directly. Even after everything the past few days, Shane had maybe referred to Ilya as his boyfriend to Hayes and Bood, but he had been overwhelmed with emotion then, overwhelmed by tragedy. Now, after calming down, mentioning the *before* felt like walking on a minefield. “*Whatever. I’m learning, I’m not as good.*”

Ilya can’t help the smile that grows on his lips. “*You are very good and I love you.*”

“Eh, you’re good. Your accent could do some work,” Svetlana still looks impressed, and that should be enough. It’s never enough for Shane, who has always felt the need to excel at whatever he does.

“Mmhm,” he says, turning away to look at Ilya’s heart monitor, breathing alongside the beats.

“I thought I would be called,” Svetlana mutters after a minute, approaching the bed slowly. It is almost unnatural for Ilya to be so still. He has always needed to be in constant movement, at least around other people. If he stops, and starts listening to the thoughts going through his head, he feels like he could become insane. It’s why he’s always moving, joking, touching. She pats his hair, which Yuna has been cleaning every morning. She sighs when she does, and then cradles his cheek. “He is my best friend, isn’t he?”

She lets the closeness between them hang in the air like a line looking to hook Shane into saying something bad, into becoming a villain in this story. Svetlana has always been good at bringing the worst in people whenever she wants, just as much as she can bring out the good. She doesn’t mean anything necessarily wrong with it, it is just the way she protects *her* people.

Instead of letting whatever was on the tip of his tongue escape, Shane just looks at her, eyes filled with grief. “I’m— I’m sorry. I don’t have your phone.”

“You have Ilyushka’s phone, no? Didn’t they give it to you?” She asks, and brings up a good point. It is almost impossible, but maybe his brother called. Ilya would rather finish dying than talk to him, but they could’ve called Sveta.

“True, do I have to get a new phone now? That would be so fucking annoying.” Ilya mutters, but then Shane takes out a black block from the pocket in his jacket, and the screen flares up with a picture of the sunset at Shane’s cottage.

Not that it shows the cottage itself, just the sunset. It reminds Ilya during the rough nights alone that he’s not dreaming Shane up.

“Oh, yeah. Yeah, you’re right.” Shane looks at the locked screen with a small smile as he notices the background. He doesn’t move to unlock it. Has Ilya told Shane his passcode? “Sorry, I’m not much help right now. I don’t know the code.”

“It’s okay, Shane Hollander. I wouldn’t be, either.” Svetlana turns to look at him again, and stares intensely at the screen. “The code is 1919.”

“Huh?” Ilya would normally feel exposed, but this is Shane. Shane, who remembers exactly *why* that is his code. It is Shane who knows him the most. He would’ve tried it eventually, it is the code he crafted himself after all. Shane looks down, the corners of his lips lifting, and unlocks the phone with the code, and it opens up to his Instagram immediately. Shane’s smile falls at the reminder of the last thing Ilya had done with his phone. He locks the phone again, and carefully places it on the couch.

Svetlana walks around the bed, moving to sit on the couch. She leans into it right next to Shane, who is back to staring at the ceiling. Instead of copying him, she looks at him, searching for something. “I was worried about him, you know? He hasn’t answered my texts in months. We’re both busy people, but we’re used to only having each other. We are friends for life. But ever since he moved to Canada he’s become withdrawn, he doesn’t really talk. I don’t know if he’s talking to anyone, but he’s definitely not talking to me. He’s gotten very hard to read.”

She blows a curl away from his eyes. It reminds Ilya of when they were kids, looking at the stars on the hot summer nights.

Ilya wishes he could take Shane to the backyard in his childhood home, so he could see the beauty of his country. He misses Russia sometimes, but not what they would do to him now,

if this ever got out.

“I’m not stupid, I know he got traded to Ottawa for his lady *Jane*, but you’ve been doing whatever this is for years, and suddenly everything about Ilyushka changes from one day to another. It worries me.” She places a hand under her chin, and breathes.

“You are also telling Shane this? First Hazy, now you, Sveta!” Ilya says, because he needs to break this sad fest now. Not that he can, but he still tries. Neither of his two favourite people should be this down on their feet. He laughs, but it sounds forced, awkward. “Nothing is sacred anymore.”

Shane’s eyes are still stuck to the ceiling, almost unmoving. The droplets do not fall because Shane doesn’t let them. “I didn’t realize. I didn’t think Ilya was this... isolated. One of his teammates told me the other day.”

“Which one? So I can send flowers.”

“Do not inflate Hayes’s ego like that.”

“Hayes,” Shane eventually mutters out with a dry laugh. It is then that he closes his eyes, rubbing at them with harshness.

“Ah, goalies tend to see more than others. I would know, ha,” Svetlana gestures with her hands in front of her. Even with her practiced aloof attitude, Ilya can still see how stiff she is, how much distance she leaves between her and Shane.

It is then that Shane sits up, finally turning to look at Svetlana. He immediately looks away. “I didn’t– I didn’t want this to affect our careers.”

“I mean, his has already gone to shit, at least until the team is finally built,” she also sits up, and folds a leg under her dress pants. “Not that he would care.”

“What?”

Svetlana looks at him, truly, and manages to get Shane’s eyes on her. She raises a perfectly made eyebrow. “Ilya doesn’t truly care about hockey, not like you do, at least. You know this, right?”

“Of course he does—” Shane turns red to an impressive degree. It’s why Ilya has always compared him to a tomato. Or his heart. Or his cock. Whatever is redder that day.

“Listen to me, Shane Hollander.” Svetlana leans forward, posturing like she does when explaining the benefits of a deal. Ilya has seen her at work, it is like witchcraft, what she does. “Of course he likes hockey, it is fun for him. He cares for his team, wants to see them win. He likes *victory*, he likes being the best at the game, but it is not a hunger for hockey that he has. He’s just a very good player, and he likes to win, of course he’s going to keep playing. I’ve grown up with hockey, I know how people who live and breathe the game look like. They look like *you*, but Ilyushka craves greatness, and freedom. Hockey gave him both. Can’t you see that? He gave up what he really loves, what he *lives* for, for you. It is not hockey, it is *victory*.”

“Sveta is right, kind of,” Ilya says, finally being able to put in words the feeling he has had for years. Svetlana has always been able to see right through him. He really does adore her. “I do love hockey, but I love *you* more.”

“Oh,” Shane stares dumbly at her, having never considered the thought.

It’s not even outlandish, because Shane *is* some sort of... hockey machine. A hockey robot. He was born to be on the ice, and only retire after getting physically taken away from the rink. Even then, Ilya thinks, Shane would find a way back to hockey until he died.

“I’m not saying it to make you feel bad,” Svetlana says, making Shane feel bad. It’s probably not even on purpose, and at the end of the day, what she is saying is correct. “Maybe a little bit, but it is mostly because he looks very sad these days. I’m worried he will do something drastic.”

“He wouldn’t,” Shane says, but doesn’t sound sure.

“I would not,” Ilya says to himself, sounding as unsure as Shane. *What if he couldn’t help it?*

“Maybe, but he needs more than pretty words and a plump ass to make him happy.” Svetlana looks away from Shane, turning to Ilya on the hospital bed. Shane follows her movement, eyes falling on his boyfriend. “Ilya has never liked hiding, it is why he has never wanted to live in Russia, why he’s moved to Ottawa, why he’s done many of the things he has for the past three years. It is why I figured you two out.”

“Yeah— How did you even know to come here?” Shane looks like he does not even want to think about *that*.

“I read the news,” she shrugs. The leg under her must grow tired, because she takes it out and folds her ankles together. “And I managed to get a deal for some pretty rides over here. Florida people love their sports cars.”

“I guess.” *Shane knows nothing about cars*, Ilya doesn’t say, because he is tired of not being heard.

“Tell me how he is,” Svetlana asks, rubbing her hands together. The hospital room is cold, way colder than the Florida weather outside.

The heart monitor continues to beep its stable rhythm.

“The doctors keep telling us everything is fine. He just isn’t waking up yet. They keep running brain scans to see if anything has changed, but everything is *fine*.” Shane’s voice cracks on that last word. Without even clearing his throat, he continues. “We’re moving him to Ottawa tomorrow, my mother managed to get a plane from a friend, and we are renting a medical team for the trip.”

“Damn, good idea.” she takes out her phone, unlocking it but leaving it open in her hand. “That’s safe, right?”

“Yeah, I hope so. We got the best of everything for him.”

“He deserves the best,” Svetlana doesn’t say it, but Shane must understand what she’s implying. Ilya doesn’t like it at all, that anyone would consider that Shane could be bad for him, but the hiding... It is hiding his love that keeps holding Ilya back.

“Yeah,” Shane does not really reply, but his eyes look resigned. He knows.

Svetlana sighs. They all keep sighing. Ilya wonders if they will deflate at some point. “He never said anything to me about you.”

“I wouldn’t have minded,” Shane’s voice is small, unsure. “As much.”

“I’m just saying he didn’t even have to. I figured it out after a few years, you are very obvious if you know where to look.” Svetlana opens Instagram finally, scrolling through her home. She punches the screen some more, before she even looks up again. “He looks at you like he’s in love.”

“It is the fucking heart eyes,” Ilya finds himself saying, a laugh or maybe a sob stuck in his throat. “I *told* you, Hollander.”

Shane smiles. For the first time in days, it looks sincere. “He said the same thing.”

“I’m sorry you’re going through this,” Svetlana locks the phone again and places it back down on the couch. It is ringing, but she lets it be. “At least your mother is helping. Does your team know? It is the middle of the season and you *are* Captain.”

“I told them it was a Foundation thing, but they must be suspicious. I asked my mom to get me a leave of absence. I think she asked for leave due to mental health. They give that one pretty easily, if you are like me,” he shakes his head, tilting it back. Shane gestures, hands moving as if trying to find meaning. “They know I am gay, but they’re still not... keen to know I actually do like Rozanov as a person.”

“That’s rough,” she says, not looking happy at all. Sveta grew up surrounded by hockey men and the way they talk, and she has never liked it. Not how they talked about women, and definitely not how they talked about any minority.

“Stupid Montreal,” Ilya feels rage in his bones, as much as he can *feel* anything. “They will catch my hands.”

Shane looks like he doesn’t want to think about it, but he’s Ilya’s beautiful neurotic boyfriend. It is impossible for him. “I know I got a leave of absence for two weeks. I’m sure the team can handle without me for that long.”

Svetlana snorts into her hand, letting out a chuckle after.

“With Pike and Boiziau on the line they should be fine, but they should be careful against San Francisco and Chicago if they play without you.” Here she goes. This is where Ilya sees how he and Sveta differ. He has known hockey since he was around ten, but Sveta was born into it. She’s got hockey in her blood, even if she decided to never play professionally. It is why Ilya has always thought Shane and Svetlana would get along well. “I mean, you *are* the best player in the league, I’ve been telling Ilyushka for years. He bagged a good one.”

“Oh, thank you?”

“Sveta! Don’t flirt with him without me!” Shane, who the entire time has not heard Ilya, looks at Ilya, the ghost, for a split second before turning fully red again. “It is fun watching him go red, yes? He is very pretty.”

“No need, it is amazing to watch you play.” Her head tilts forward, almost as if giving away a secret. “But your backhand could still be better.”

“Ha! I keep telling him!”

“My backhand is fine, Christ,” Shane leans back into the couch, smiling behind the hand he brings up to hide his face. The freckles around his nose seem to glow by the light filtering through the window. Ilya wants to kiss them one by one.

“Eh,” Svetlana's phone starts ringing again. She looks at it, and frowns. “Scott Hunter still does better.”

“Scott Hunter is so old, Sveta. Don't let your old man fetish get in the way.”

Shane and him must be connected, because he says, “Hunter is a season away from retiring.”

“I'm just saying,” she grabs the phone, and moves to answer the call. Standing up, she looks down at Shane, and raises her eyebrow in a way Ilya knows means she liked him. “Let me get this.”

She quickly leaves the room, going to the hallway to take what seems to be a work call. Shane closes his eyes, crossing his arms over his chest. His arms look pretty nice, even if Shane needs to shower again. Not that Ilya really minds.

“She's nice,” he says, not moving from his spot. “I can see why you like her.”

A second after, Svetlana saunters back in, not bothering to sit down. Instead, she stands by Ilya, and leans on the foot of the hospital bed. Shane cranks his eyes open to look at her, and straightens up a bit so he is comfortable.

A beat passes while they look at each other, assessing.

“I need to go and finish my deal with Porsche, but thanks for being here with Ilyushka. Can I give you my phone? Update me how everything goes,” Svetlana stands again, arm reaching out for Shane to hand over his phone. “I don’t want to get updates on my best friend through a twitter account anymore.”

“Yes, of course,” he unlocks his phone, opening the call app. “Here.”

“Pike is literally calling you right now,” Ilya notes that Shane has not talked to anyone his entire stay at Ilya’s hospital room, not even Hayden. Not even Jackie. They would be worried, no? Shane declines the call and passes the phone to Svetlana.

“Here,” she says after adding her contact and calling herself. She must’ve seen Hayden’s phone call, because she continues, “Don’t forget about your team. Having people in your corner is never bad.”

From the couch, Shane groans. He says nothing else, so Svetlana turns to leave. She needs to finish deals, be a girlboss or whatever it is they call women that know their shit nowadays.

“Goodbye, *Jane*,” she opens the door, giving Shane a look.

“Very funny,” Shane stands and rolls his shoulders back. He gestures at his phone, for some reason. It is endearing, Ilya finds. He laughs, and for another moment, he locks eyes with Shane again. It is for a singular moment, because Shane is not entertaining whatever hallucination he thinks is going on in his head. “I’ll keep you updated.”

“You better,” and then the door closes behind her, the click of her heels going further and further away until they get lost in the sea of sounds outside.

The look in Shane’s eyes is heartbreaking as he approaches Ilya’s body. He nears the bed, and grabs his hand tightly. Ilya’s fingers look lifeless within Shane’s grip.

“You have good friends,” he whispers. Shane lets his other hand trail down the features of Ilya’s face carefully, cataloguing the slope of his nose and the feel of his eyelashes. “How could you agree to keep us a secret from them?”

“I would do anything for you, Hollander. Do not be stupid now,” Ilya doesn’t want to look at Shane like this. He wants to grab him, hug him, take all bad thoughts away. Since he can’t do that, he turns again to the window, watching the people in the yard as they walk around.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry,” he hears Shane say, voice wobbling. His breath had hitched before, as if listening to Ilya. Maybe he does, maybe he can actually see him. Maybe they are truly the half of the other, and can feel even if the other is far away like Ilya is. Maybe. Maybe.

Ilya decidedly does not turn around.

Half an hour before Shane, Yuna, Ilya and the whole medical team need to board the private plane to Ottawa, Shane decides to finally answer Hayden Pike’s calls.

“Hayd,” Shane is not even fully into it, having the phone on speaker while he moves around the hospital room. He’s picking up everything he has left while they have stayed in the suite, packing everything into neat piles and onto his duffle bag. It is not much, because Shane is as organized as a person can be. He is still taking more than twenty minutes to check that everything is packed. He has even packed the garish balloon arrangement Yuna got him days ago. Some of the balloons were deflated at this point. Ilya will not even ask how he managed that.

“Holy shit, Shane,” Hayden sounds actually distressed. Getting news about your best friend from either his mom or the news must be rough. Not that Ilya cares much about how Hayden feels. “I’ve been trying to call you for days now!”

Ilya, who is sitting on the couch like an old lady would sit on the street to watch children play, gestures around him. “Should have tried harder, but what does the 15th best player on the Voyageurs know about trying?”

“I know, I know. Sorry Hayd. It’s been—” Shane frowns, trying to recall how long he has been looking after Ilya. He makes an odd sound, and gives up after a second. “It’s been a rough couple of days.”

There are a bunch of people talking in the background on Hayden’s side of the call, but it seems he walks away, because he’s surrounded by silence a second after. “How are you? Are there any updates? Yuna updated me like two days ago, but she must be super busy as well.”

“Yeah, sorry for the radio silence.” Shane does not sound sorry, but something about it bothers Ilya. He figures why, when Shane then asks, “How's the team?”

“The *team*? Shane, how are *you*?” Maybe Hayden is not as bad. He did marry Jackie, after all. The kids are also very nice. Sometimes, he is a good friend to Shane. Ilya will never tell him this. “We’re good, stumbling without you, Captain, but are *you* good?”

Another point for Pike for admitting that Montreal is nothing without Shane. It might as well be the only point he will ever score.

“I’m good, we’re getting on a plane to Ottawa in half an hour.” Shane finally stops moving around, having successfully packed everything. He grabs the phone, but doesn’t turn it off the speaker. Instead, he sits on the couch, right in the comfortable middle, and leaves his phone by the top, next to his ear.

“Good! Jackie was worried about that. Florida *sucks* ass.”

“Florida is not bad, is fun! You have Disney here, it is like Capitalism park. So fun,” Ilya also leans back, enjoying the way it feels to lay down next to Shane, even if Shane doesn’t know. He’s missed this.

There is the roar of an engine next to Hayden, which dies after a minute. A car door rings out, and then the voice of J.J. Boiziau joins Hayden's. "Is that Hollander?"

"Yeah, wait—" Pike must have moved to the rink's parking lot to have more privacy, but as always, he fucks that up as well. Boiziau clearly takes the phone from Pike, and holds it over the frankly tiny man. Why is Pike even that tiny? He is even smaller than Scott Hunter's gay artsy husband.

"Hollander! When the fuck are you coming back?" Boiziau boasts over the phone. It doesn't even sound like a question, it's more like a claim. Ilya doesn't like his tone. "Don't tell me you're still playing nurse with Ilya fucking Rozanov."

Shane frowns, probably not used to having one of his close teammates speak to him like this without a joke in between. He leans forwards, and his voice turns hard. As hard as Ilya's cock would be if his body was conscious. Shane always looks extra hot when he is angry. "I am, is that a problem?"

"Yeah, I mean—"

"J.J., give me the fucking phone back!"

"Boiziau will die by my hand," Ilya says after Shane keeps quiet. He looks mad, the kind of anger that makes Shane become reckless. "No external Russian method, just plain murder."

"Captain, you should be on the ice! We're nothing without you," Boiziau basically yowls, like a sad, dying puppy. *Wah*, Ilya does not care.

"Well, he is correct for once!" He finds himself laughing, vindicated that they know that without Shane they are *nothing*. They can't treat him like he is expendable for months just because he is gay, then turn around and act as if it isn't for their Captain that they even have a first or second or *third* Stanley Cup to talk about.

“Oh fuck off, Boiziau!” Hayden clearly grabs the phone again, because the other very stupid man sounds further away.

“I’m right! You have better things to be doing—“

Shane breaks his silence, and his eyes are closed as he breathes in deep. “Boiziau, my b— best friend has been in a coma for a week after his plane had an emergency landing because the engine was on fire. He’s had seizure fits and the doctors do not fucking know when he’s waking up. I am his emergency contact. I don’t care if I have to play nurse for months. He has no one else, *I’m* going to do it. Got it?”

Ilya would say something about having Shane call him best friend, but he’s outed both of them to so many people the past few days it’s not worth it. Especially not to J.J. fucking Boiziau’s annoying ass. Maybe even Miitka would be better. It’s been Boodram and Hayes and Svetlana and even Wiebe and it hasn’t even been a week.

The silence hanging in between them doesn’t even last a second before Boiziau is off screaming again. He’s clearly grabbed the phone back, because his voice sounds awfully near. “Your *best friend*?”

“Boiziau! Give me the phone before our *Captain* figures out a way to kill you through it!” Maybe Jackie should enroll his husband into those baby martial arts classes they were thinking of for Arthur. That way they wouldn’t be in this situation.

“Is there a problem?” Now Shane just sounds plain mad.

Boiziau sounds as if he’s gesturing wildly on his side of the call. “I mean this is Ilya fucking Rozanov, you hate him.”

“Maybe sometimes, but he likes me too much,” Ilya crosses his legs, and leans back into the couch. So much for a few relaxing moments before the plane.

Not that he's letting himself think much about that.

"I don't hate Ilya, no," the tone Shane uses reminds him of when they were getting Amber to understand to not draw on the walls that one time they babysat while Jackie and her husband went to her cousin's house. It does feel like talking to toddlers sometimes, whenever Ilya has to talk to his team. They're all like overgrown babies.

"Okay, but he sucks. He is, like, a terrible person!" Even Hayden makes a sound at that. Ilya might be an asshole, but it's not as if he killed the President of Canada. Or whatever it is they have. The Prime Minister, that. He doesn't really pay attention to that, but if it's anything like Russia, then that's not even that bad of a thing to do.

"You decided that?"

"He's a whore!" Boiziau says, and it's good that Pike decided to move away from the rest of the team, because he is being too loud. Then, because he really has nothing better to add, he claims, "He played Boston!"

"Wow," Boiziau should think better before throwing rocks at a glass house. Ilya can also read the news, and Boiziau was in them a few months ago. "Didn't he get caught drunk driving?"

Also, if anyone was a whore it was Hayden Pike and his fifty kids.

Why does everyone in Montreal keep having a thousand kids? Do they think that, as terrible players as they are, they will be able to get a kid with hockey talent after ten tries? Ilya doesn't think so. Either way, they're bigger whores than he is, at least he doesn't have tiny kids running around. And if he did they would be tiny monsters and terrorize Montreal at night.

"It's been two years," Shane sounds two seconds away from hanging up, but something in him doesn't let him. It is like he's trying to prove something. "We run the Foundation *together*."

Then, Boiziau decides to be a full-on asshole. Ilya has known that this man doesn't know how to shut his mouth, but even this is too bad. "Man, I know you have a, what's it called, unrequited crush on him. We can find you a better man!"

"You *what*?" Even Hayden sounds weirded out. It's stupid, because anyone could see Ilya has probably been in love with Shane for more than ten years. Then again, the NHL is filled with oblivious hockey players that would not even consider their teammates to have different preferences than them, or that they would like sucking dick. Honestly, Ilya would recommend they all do. It does bring some perspective to life, maybe even new considerations. Everyone can learn something new about themselves.

Boiziau, for example, will learn what it is to be dead by Ilya's hand.

"I have a ring in my pocket, right now, to propose," Shane says, forgetting he is still keeping up appearances with Boiziau. Everyone stops breathing for a moment, even Ilya. It's right then that Shane realizes what he said, because he mutters out a curse.

"Oh, I do not deserve you," Ilya wishes he was conscious right now so he could kiss Shane silly. And then propose first, obviously, because he has to win. Also because he *also* has a ring to propose, but it is back at his house. They are technically married by Pike standards, considering their beautiful wedding officiated by the twins. It was a beautiful wedding, with lots and lots of toys and plushies. That is enough for Ilya.

He really has to look into counter curses for Russian spells. Ilya was definitely hit with one, there is no other reason for him to experience this. Maybe the Etsy site Harris mentions sometimes has something on it to counter the effects.

Pike grabs the phone again, and he sounds like he is actually smiling. "Shane, shit! Why don't you tell me these things?"

"I told my mom," Shane shrugs, as if that doesn't change everything. Yuna is okay with this? She is okay with Ilya marrying her son?

“Rozanov?” Boiziau seems to be out of the shock, and Ilya truly rolls his eyes now.

Shane finally seems to have enough of his stupid ass teammate. He scoffs. “Holy shit! Did he kill your mother? He’s just a guy who got pitted as my rival. We have never even hated each other, get over yourself.”

“J.J. if you don’t shut up right now, even Jackie will find your address and kill you,” Pike is correct. Jackie runs the WAGs like a navy, as well. So Boiziau will have a lot of angry women against him. He should probably go into Witness Protection. “Give me the phone.”

Boiziau mutters something over the line, which Ilya doesn’t understand. It’s probably in French, it definitely sounds like it.

From across the call, Shane and Ilya hear how Hayden tears into the other man. He seems to put a hand over the mic, but they can still hear him. “This really isn’t about what you’re feeling, Boiziau. Think! If your wife was like this, would you even have time for this type of conversation?”

There is the telltale sound of stomping feet, and Boiziau’s voice drifts away. What a baby.

“Sorry about that, Shane. You know J.J., he’s spent too many years hating on the dude,” Pike shouldn’t be defending him, but Ilya knows that Pike had a similar understanding of their relationship at first. He got over it eventually, but Ilya will always remember.

Honestly, Ilya gets that they have all hated him because of the Montreal-Boston rivalry, but it’s not as if he plays Boston anymore. He’s currently on a team that is known for its losing streak, and Shane and him are public friends that do charity together. It’s been years since Hollander and him had been at each other’s throat, and it was never even that serious.

“It’s not like you like him much either.” Shane mutters, and Ilya can hear as Hayden sighs into the call.

“Jackie loves him, so do the kids. He’s not bad, I hope he wakes up the moment you land,” Pike says, as empathetic as he can sound. Jackie has truly trained him well. Ilya will ask for tips later. “He makes you happy Shane, the team might take their time, but I’m sure they will see that?”

“I have *no* time, this whole thing proves that,” Shane rubs his eyes, and stands up. They need to go. A nurse enters the room then, followed by some of the medical team they have hired.

“Shane—” Hayden tries to comfort his best friend, or whatever he is doing. It is not going to work, because Ilya sees how Shane retreats back into his head. Between the flight, and Boiziau, and Ilya being comatose, there is a lot going on in there.

“I have to get on a plane right now, don’t fucking lose the next games,” He says, voice stuck in his throat. He sounds distant, and his eyes are not looking at anything in particular. “Good luck.”

He hangs up just as Yuna comes up to him. She’s carrying a bag and several bouts of paperwork in her hands, all carefully organized in folders that seem to be color-coded.

“Everything alright?” She asks, brow furrowed in concern. The medical team starts moving Ilya around so the lines and the machines are ready for transfer to the plane’s medical bay. They change him from the hospital bed to a fancy stretcher, and carefully strap him to it. Probably so he doesn’t fly around the plane if they hit any bit of turbulence. It’s not as if Ilya has been having much luck with turbulence, all things considered. They should be careful.

Shane looks over at the whole process, not one looking at his mom. This makes the concern in her eyes grow. “Yeah, I was just talking to Hayden.”

“Are you sure?” The nurses take Ilya out of the room, and Ilya feels the pull of his body’s connection to him. He has no choice but to follow, and leave the Hollanders behind for now.

It seems that Shane also feels even the slight discomfort of distance, because he follows out with the team. He has a bag in one hand and one of the only fully inflated balloons in another. “Yes, mom! C’mon, let’s get on the plane.”

The transfer to the plane is simple. Since it's a smaller plane, it fits into the helipad on the rooftop. Ilya truly thanks whoever is up there with his mother that he's a millionaire, because if he had to stay in fuckass Florida and maybe even die there he would riot. The medical team is filled with experienced experts, so they bring Ilya's body seamlessly into the plane, placing everything they would need in place for the flight to go perfectly. Shane still looks stressed, eyes fluttering around as he looks at the medics, the plane, the seats, the bags, everything he can.

As they board the plane, the head of the medical team approaches Yuna directly. Most of the team started referring directly to Shane's mother after the third time Shane was accidentally rude to one of them. He apologized profusely, but Shane doesn't notice the tone he speaks with sometimes, seeming rude and mean when he's just tired and sad. These days, he just can't help it.

"We'll arrive in Ottawa in around three and a half hours," the medic says, hands gloved and ready to work. "The medical team is ready for any situation, and we have everything we need on board."

Yuna smiles at her, still not quite reaching her eyes but honest. "Perfect, thank you for being so accommodating."

There's no free seat for Ilya to lounge without going through someone (or whatever could happen with Shane), so he stands next to the Hollanders, whose seats are facing the medical bay.

"We'll be home soon, sweetheart," Mrs. Hollander grabs Shane's hand tightly, pulling into her embrace over the arm rest. Her voice is hoarse, a bit dry. Both of them feel as close to crying as Ilya is, scared for what is to come.

"It's still not good," Shane whispers, and Ilya almost doesn't catch his words. He moves slightly close to them, as close as he can without trying to touch them. Shane's eyes are firmly on his lap, gaze intent on their hands. "He's not getting any better."

“He *is* stable. We’ll have him with the best doctors, right next to home, with everyone he loves.” Yuna sounds confident that this will be the best option, and Ilya, for a second, hopes. “We will be fine.”

“I love you, I love you, I love you,” Ilya feels a bit crazy then, as the sound of the plane closing rings around them. It is almost like a point of no return. But Yuna is right, they will all survive this. They will arrive back home, Ilya will wake up, he will propose to Shane. They will be happy. “I will come back.”

He dares to hope, and for once wants to be right.

Pop Base ✓ @PopBase

Russian Hockey Player Ilya Rozanov Moved To Ottawa Hospital After Plane Crash Injury

12:15 PM · 12/01/21

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @PopBase

why are you in my house (also there was no plane crash, report correctly)

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

replying to @rozanovism

GET THEM

pol @BARRETTSS

okay are we ready to talk about the fact that shane hollander and ilya rozanov are genuine best friends or

1:24 PM · 12/01/21

hayden pike's wife @pikepilled

replying to @BARRETTSS

this is hayden pike slander

pol @BARRETTSS

replying to @pikepilled

babes this is NOT a safe space for you

THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE JESUS EITHER @hollanovtruther

i'm not gonna say it but you know what i'm going to say

2:03 PM · 12/01/21

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

Ilya has been transferred to Ottawa Central. No other updates! Let's continue to have him in our thoughts

2:57 PM · 12/01/21

ed @EdwardJohnson

replying to @RozanovUpdates

He should stay dead lol

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

replying to @EdwardJohnson

literally kys i'm serious

ed @EdwardJohnson

replying to @RozanovUpdates

He's a russian commie whore that just punches people on the ice. I wouldn't be surprised if he also took it up the ass

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @EdwardJohnson

you shouldn't be this brave considering you look like a worm and work at Target in Gallatine, TN. I've contacted your supervisor (initials G.H.) over this behavior. Have a terrible weekend!

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

Montreal on a loss streak after Captain Shane Hollander takes two weeks off mid-season. Do we even know where he is?

5:05 PM · 12/01/21

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @PuckReportNHL

are we still acting like we don't know where he is

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @rozanovism

why are you even here

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @shanehollanderrssss

hey this has something to do with ilya, i'm supporting my man

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

#MontrealVoyageurs J.J. Boziau scores goal for the first time in the season. Are the Voyageurs coming back?

5:31 PM · 12/01/21

j @H0LLANDERS24

replying to @PuckReportNHL

i think they need hollander for that lol

Voyageur Updates @VoyageurUpdates

Insider information shares that the Voyageurs locker room has breathed a sigh of relief with their Captain on break. What does this mean for Shane Hollander?

6:09 PM · 12/01/21

alex *@chironcentaurs*

replying to @VoyageurUpdates

it means montreal sucks major ass

iMessage

Svetlana: Hey Jane

Shane: Stop that

Shane: Hi

Svetlana: How was the trip? Everything alright?

Shane: Yes, the medical team was super professional and there were no complications.

Svetlana: I'm asking about Ilya

Shane: Okay yeah sorry

Shane: He's okay. His team is visiting tomorrow.

Svetlana: Have the doctors said anything about his condition?

Shane: No

Shane: Everything is the same. Stable but unconscious.

Svetlana: That's alright. Let me know if anything changes.

iMessage

Hayden: Shane please answer my calls

Hayden: Jackie's worried

With the way things have been going for him, Ilya does believe that the second plane will also have something happen to it. In the end, everything is fine and they arrive safely, to everyone's relief. The medical team transfers him to a hospital suite in Ottawa General, setting him up for however long he will be unconscious, and they leave as swiftly as they had arrived.

Shane has yet to leave Ilya's side. He saw his boyfriend leave for the bathroom to take a quick shower, but other than that, he's been holding Ilya's very cold comatose hand, almost willing it to move.

The next day, once everything has been settled, Shane still remains by his side. Ilya will marry this man the moment he wakes up, a thing he decided more than five years ago, the first time he dared to hope to do anything for himself instead of what was expected of him.

This next day is also when the Centaurs start visiting Ilya in bouts. He's their captain, and Wiebe had texted Yuna, but it feels like a little too much too soon.

Hayes and Boodram already know about Shane, considering they caught him in a moment of desperation for understanding, but now that things have calmed down, having Shane speak

up is much more difficult. Again. Not that Ilya doesn't understand, but it feels like going back several steps when they had already already crossed many doors.

"Huh," a voice comes from the door. Shane looks up, not letting Ilya's hand drop, but his eyes are sharp. He visibly puts up his walls, Ilya notices, and his face betrays no emotion.

"What?" he asks, looking up at what he would consider an intruder but Ilya would consider a friend.

"I thought they were lying," says Troy Barrett as he enters the room. Ilya would be happier to see him if he could shove Barrett around and pull a laugh out of him. Maybe if they could both share a cigarette. But not if Ilya is unconscious in a bed while his recently outed boyfriend sits miserable right next to him. Troy, while looking sadly at Ilya on the bed, looks slightly vindicated. Considering he's been the first person to ever confront Ilya about maybe him and Shane being together while Ilya adamantly denied this, there is no wonder why there is a bit of triumph in his eyes.

"Hm," Shane doesn't even bother answering the chirp. He knows who Barrett is, and Troy obviously knows who Shane Hollander is. Shane definitely knows he's an asshole by Rozanov standards, and he's an expert in most things Rozanov. He knows how to handle this.

Still, Barrett can't help it. He answers with the normal bite his conversations lead with. Ilya gets it, within the quips is where he shows his care (for the people he cares about). "When they said Shane Hollander was moping over our Captain."

"You know nothing," Shane lets Ilya's hand drop, and crosses his arms over his chest. He's still leaning over the bed, and doesn't dare move away.

"I think I do, actually." Troy bites back, but then his eyes look at Shane, considering. Ilya can see how he tries to formulate whatever question he wants to ask differently in his head before he speaks. It is something Harris has been teaching him for when they do social media shit. It's definitely been helping Troy not be as terrible of an asshole as he was before the trade. "Nothing bad, or against you. I just had a feeling. Roz was very against my idea that you two were together. Look at you now."

Aaand he should not have said that, Ilya thinks, but Shane looks comfortable with this conversation. It is the most comfortable he has looked in a week.

“You’re such an asshole,” the way Shane’s mouth forms the words is tried and practiced. Ilya smiles in his corner of the room, remembering some of the times it has been directed at him. He can’t remember all of them, obviously, but there are some memorable ones.

Troy sighs, and he sounds defeated. It is the most vulnerable Ilya has heard him ever since that night at the hotel, with his father. “I’m not that much of an asshole, Hollander. And I get it, okay? The secrecy, the hiding, you don’t have to worry about me.”

From his spot, Shane remains quiet, but his eyes seem to catch what Barrett is implying. There was not much room to be wrong considering everyone involved, and while Shane still has his walls up, the tense line of his shoulder relaxes.

“So,” Shane turns to Troy again after a few seconds of them not speaking. Troy is smiling, eyes sharp. “How’s Montreal?”

“Fuck off,” Shane rolls his eyes, grabbing Ilya’s hand.

They just sit there in silence, and more than five minutes pass without a word. Ilya rolls his eyes. The people he cares for are really so awkward.

Shane breathes in deeply, hand tightening around Ilya’s. He looks cute, a bit disheveled, but as pretty as ever. He seems to be figuring out if he should say something. Troy is a difficult person to understand at first, he’s like Ilya in that sense. Ilya would notice Shane trying to figure him out, and take the reins himself. It is what he does.

“I’m not surprised to see you here, all things considered,” is what he breaks the silence with. Shane tilts his head, eyes narrowed. Troy’s face betrays no emotion, nothing other than slight worry. The team is probably all worried, trying to finish a season under Boodram. Ilya sympathizes. “He didn’t have to mention you directly, you know? There have always been layers to what he says, but it’s easy to see that he cares about someone very deeply. The

closest people he has right now other than the team are you and maybe Marlow. It's not hard to get it once you have most of the context."

"What did he tell you?" Shane asks after a beat. Ilya supposes he's been giving out information too freely the past week, and now wants to test people before actually saying whatever.

Maybe then, he had wanted someone to simply *know* that they were in love, before anything worse could happen to Ilya.

Barrett crosses the room, and sits on a chair near the bed, still far away from Shane. He looks at him with a raised eyebrow. "Nothing much. Rozanov has been clocking all the queer players left and right. He found me that way."

Ilya hitches a breath. Has Barrett ever told that to anyone else other than him? Even then, he had told Ilya under certain duress and a lot of alcohol. Shane's eyes widen a fraction.

"It's not like we can tell each other our entire experiences without outing people, but we do know about each other," Troy continues, fingers tapping his thigh. "We room together on the road so we braid each other's hair and paint our nails together and tell each other our secrets."

"You do *what*?"

God bless Shane Hollander, the cutest hockey player in the league, and the weirdest. He is Ilya's sweet weird boyfriend. Ilya hopes he never changes.

"Oh my god, Hollander," Barrett laughs, not unkindly. He sounds genuinely overjoyed that Shane believed him for a second. "I can see why he likes you."

It does come to Ilya's attention that while maybe Shane and Troy have crossed paths before, they haven't really met before. Same goes with most of the Centaurs. Shane knows a lot of

players in the league considering that he has played against them, but he's unlike Ilya in the sense that he doesn't really hang out with them. Other than Rose and Hayden, Shane doesn't really *do* friends. He hangs out with the Pikes, maybe Boiziau, sure, obviously with Ilya, but even with all of that, he is kind of isolated, alone at the top.

Ilya used to be there with him, technically still is, but their level of greatness is not quite the same now. Ilya's okay with this.

Shane does not answer Troy, instead looking at Ilya with sad eyes. It's silent, but then he mutters, "I like him too."

A sigh leaves Troy. "He *will* wake up. Rozanov is strong, he's not going to leave you or our team like this." He sounds like he has much faith in Ilya, and Ilya is glad for that, but he can't do anything to help it. He feels useless.

"I have to go," Troy stands up, dusting imagined particles from the top of his thighs. He seems awkward now, uncomfortable with having been too vulnerable in front of a hockey player he doesn't really know. If it was anyone else, this whole situation could have gone a lot worse, but if it was anyone else, they wouldn't be by Ilya's side, waiting and waiting for days. "We have practice. Maybe after, some of the others will pass by. They want to see their captain."

It is unspoken, the question of if Shane will be fine with this, but Shane has always been happy with people caring about Ilya. He smiles, a small thing that could be lost if you blinked. He nods, and Troy leaves without any other preamble.

Alone again, Ilya sits down across from Shane, where Troy was before. "He is right. I would not leave you like that."

From the other side of the bed, Shane closes his eyes and slumps forward, as if trying to close off everyone sound around him. Shane must be overwhelmed, because his breathing is short and heavy, but as he's technically not there, Ilya can't calm him down. He can't tell him he loves him, can't rub the small of his back or kiss him or caress his hair.

Ilya also closes his eyes and leans back. They stay like that for what seems like forever.

He doesn't feel time pass, but at some point Shane looks up directly at Ilya, like he has sometimes. This time, whoever, Shane stays looking at him as if he's seeing a ghost. Apparently he is.

Shane breathes in sharply, and rubs his eyes with the palm of his hands roughly. "I'm going crazy."

"Eh, you were crazy already."

"Not helping," Shane replies, and Ilya freezes. *What?* "Even in my head, you can't be nice to me."

Ah, so Shane thinks he is hallucinating. Well, he could probably be. If Ilya were in his position he would think so as well. It is kind of outlandish that Ilya would be there, haunting him while being comatose. If he were in Shane's position though, Ilya would have been hearing Shane's voice from every single corner of the room. If Shane had been injured on an emergency landing and was stuck in a coma, Ilya would have maybe also become comatose himself by his own personal volition. He doesn't know how Shane hasn't actually gone fully insane.

Ilya will not try to convince Shane he's actually there, this is not what Shane needs, on top of everything else. Maybe, once he wakes, if he remembers, he will tell Shane, but not now.

Still, he tries his luck. "I love you, мой медбрат."

"I'm not much of a nurse. Honestly, I'm not much help here," Shane looks up at the ceiling. "And I'm hallucinating now. My parents will be worried, and I will have to go to a mental hospital and I'll never have hockey again because they'll throw me out of Montreal for being gay and insane."

Ilya scoffs. “You are having bad thoughts, Hollander. Breathe, relax. If Montreal does not want you, everyone else still does. You are *the* best player in the league for a reason.”

“And I really miss you,” Shane acts like he doesn’t hear Ilya, maybe he doesn’t. It’s been a few days of Shane keeping it together, it’s normal he breaks at some point. Ilya just wishes Yuna was here. “And I’m sorry we can’t tell everyone about us, or that I didn’t notice you were so alone, or that I am so scared to even try to be out with your friends, or even meet them. They’re so nice, they really care about you. I’m sorry.”

“Shane,” Ilya will try to get his point across, corporeal or not. Shane needs to know this. “I love *you*. I want it to be with *you*. I don’t care about other people, other people can go fuck themselves. We will figure this out.”

“He *would* sound as mushy as that,” Shane’s eyes are filled with tears, none of them falling. They’re as much on the verge as Shane himself is. “So nice for no reason.”

“That is my secret, Hollander. Being so mushy and cute, but only for one person.”

Shane smiles into his hand, a single tear running down his cheek. “Yeah, only for one person.”

Ilya has been laughing for a full five minutes. This is the most fun he’s had in a long time.

“You’re Shane Hollander,” Luca Haas repeats for the third time, eyes wide looking at a very sleepy Hollander, whose hair is sticking out in different directions. He had been napping before Haas had come in, bursting into the room with Hayes behind him, effectively startling Shane awake.

“Luca Haas, nice meeting you,” he extends a hand, which Shane looks at for about five seconds before he even dares to shake it. Haas looks as thrilled as he would if he had just won a game. Shane’s eyes are still unfocused, sleep still in them. Ilya remembers once when he fucked Shane as they were waking up, eyes similar in state. His boyfriend always looks incredible, but like this? Shane looking sleepy and tired and cuddly is a menace to Ilya’s well-being. Haas continues speaking, because meeting people you look up to always brings up this nervousness in him. Ilya had been a victim. “Well, not nice because we are here, but nice because it is you.”

Considering they’re all decorated NHL players, Ilya believes that Haas will get tired of this pretty quickly, but he’s a baby by hockey standards. He was born like, yesterday.

“Yeah, uh,” Shane looks confused, because he doesn’t feel starstruck when meeting people (except Rose, he’s been told, but Ilya doesn’t think about that because he *will* hit a wall). Well, also when he met Ilya. Actually, Haas reminds Ilya of an 18 year old Shane introducing himself to Ilya Rozanov on a cold December morning in Saskatchewan. Even the awkward stance and nervous rambling is the same. “Ilya has mentioned you.”

“Ilya— Rozanov talks about *me*?” Haas is definitely blushing, and Hayes pats him in the back, laughing as much as Ilya is.

“We talk about hockey, all things considered, so yes,” Shane drops both of his hands to the side, fingers pulling at the threads in his joggers. The corners of his lips twitch, hinting at a smile.

“Well, when we are *talking*,” He wiggles his eyebrows, voice light. Ilya loves how the blush on Shane’s cheeks make his freckles look even prettier.

For a second, Ilya feels dizzy and flickers out into darkness. Then, he is back.

Huh?

“Haasy, you’re in the big leagues, relax,” Hayes looks between everyone in the room, before he then settles on Shane. He nods in acknowledgement. “Hi, Hollander.”

“Hayes,” Shane nods back. “Where’s Boodram?”

“With his wife, they do have a five month old baby.”

“Mmh.”

“Shane Hollander...” Haas mutters, and they both turn to him again. Shane is a bit more reserved, definitely awkward, but after everything, this is a welcomed interaction. Ilya is still feeling off about flickering into nothingness, so he misses the look Luca makes as he gazes between Ilya and Shane.

A text rings into Shane’s phone, and he checks it before putting the phone down.

Because he thinks he is funny, Hayes keeps ribbing Haas. Luca, for all the starstruck that he is, seems down. Seems like his Captain (and idol, if Ilya can be slightly conceited) being in a coma has been weighing him down. “Haasy, c’mon man! You have a poster of Rozanov in your childhood bedroom.”

“No I don’t,” Haas denies immediately, fully knowing that his family had sent pictures of it by accident. Once they reached Harris, well, everyone learned about it before the day was over. “But I see him most days! I’ve gotten used to it!”

“Not so much, but it is funny,” Ilya recalls that Haas still can’t look him in the eyes without blushing. “Cute baby player.”

“We’ve played you before,” Shane points out, because he remembers everything about hockey. What games he has played, how many, who he has played—his brain stores this so easily it’s actually crazy.

Haas opens his mouth, then closes it, then opens it again. “I guess so... yeah.”

Shane clears his throat, and turns to Hayes. “How is the team?”

“Eh, we’re not giving away our secrets to the enemy,” He says, voice light but strict. It is not as if Ottawa is anywhere near beating Montreal in any way, but team strategy is sacred. Shane gets that, and Wyatt probably knows this, which is why Hayes just sighs. “It’s not the same without our Captain.”

“Yeah,” It is obvious with the way Shane’s jaw tightens that he’s thinking about his own team and the fact that they seem better without him. Coach Theriault has just been updating him on the most important things and asking his insight on some game plans, but it’s been scarce. Pike has basically taken over. “Yeah.”

Even on leave Shane has always worked. It feels weird that he hasn’t been getting any calls from anyone other than Hayden.

Ilya will beat their asses once he’s back.

Inexplicably, for what still feels like a second, Ilya is submerged into darkness. It is the type of void that feels like swimming through honey, and Ilya feels stuck, scared. Then, he’s back again.

Everything is silent except for the heart monitor. While Hayes looks down at his phone, Haas keeps looking between Ilya’s body and Shane, who’s decidedly looking down to the floor. Shane’s hand keeps twitching, wanting to reach for Ilya’s but uncomfortable with the audience.

Ilya wishes someone could talk to him. The weirdness of the darkness sticks to his brain, not letting him fully hear what they’re speaking about.

Another text rings from Shane's phone, who grabs it, sends something, and then looks up.

"Uhm, my mom is getting sandwiches. Do you guys want any?" He asks the other two.

"Your mother," Haas says, voice still filled with wonder. "Yeah."

"Sure, man," Hayes says, and returns to scrolling through what Ilya thinks looks like Instagram. He's not even liking anything, just looking.

The hospital suite is quiet, everyone too into their heads to say anything. A few minutes later, Yuna and David enter the suite, a bag of sandwiches in David's hand. Ilya hasn't seen David at all, but Yuna had mentioned a work trip a few days ago. Plus, he couldn't take days off to travel to Tampa before. Ilya is glad to see him. The Hollanders probably know this, but David is his favorite one. Shane had sold him as this boring dude but he is super smart and buys great Russian vodka and can make a puzzle in less than an hour and hugs him and calls him son. It feels like having an actual dad, not a Father. Ilya had always wanted that.

David, like Yuna, looks sad and tired, but he also looks like he just came back from said work trip. If he came to visit Ilya directly, that is... Yeah.

Something he has never had before. True family, like in the movies. Like he has always wanted.

"Hi, mom, dad," Shane greets as they come near. Yuna gives the top of his head a kiss while David drops the sandwiches on the table next to the window.

"Hi sweetie," she says, noticing the teams are there as well. Maybe she thought they were passing by later. "Oh! Hello, I didn't think you would be here already. Practice is already over? The season isn't even midway, you should be training and running through strategies with your coach and cap—"

Everyone holds their breath. Yuna sighs.

Hayes takes sympathy on Yuna and just shrugs. “We decided to pass by after practice, Haas hadn’t seen our cap since the— since Tampa.”

Regardless, Yuna is right. Ilya knows they’re a good team but their strategy isn’t the best. Maybe their synergy isn’t what it could be since even their captain is closed off from the other players, or because they’ve been on a decades long losing streak. They’re all doing what they can. Either way, there is nothing they can really do about it, and it’s already late.

“David just got back from a work trip in Vancouver, so we do have to leave his things at home in a bit, but we’ll be back before visiting hours end.” Yuna is filling in the silence, desperate to control the tension in the room. Ilya understands her so much, and wishes he could hug her. David, from the table, mutters something Ilya doesn’t catch, and lays the food on the table.

He grabs one of the sandwiches and gives it to Shane, who looks at it before taking a bite and leaving the wrapper on his leg. David pats him in the back, still not saying anything, and sits next to him, looking at Ilya’s body.

“Yeah, of course. Don’t worry about it.” Shane says, and gives in to the need to hold Ilya’s cold hand. Just doing that, Shane looks like he’s breathing easier.

Haas, who never sat down, is pulled by Hayes, who stands up after finishing half of a sandwich. He gives Luca the other half, and announces, “We should also go, my wife wanted to be the first WAG to feed our baby player. Her shift just ended down here.”

“Oh, she’s a doctor?” David asks conversationally. Both Yuna and Shane remain quiet, moving around the room and grasping Ilya’s hand tightly, respectively.

Hayes eyes glint, proud of his doctor wife. He always mentions her, which is nice. Ilya shouldn’t be jealous, but he kind of is. He would love to show off his partner as well. “Yeah, she works down at the ER. Today she got the day shift, thankfully, so we made plans. Thanks for the sandwiches!”

“Thanks for visiting—” someone replies, but Ilya doesn’t hear it.

There is a moment, just a singular second, where everything goes black around Ilya. He prays to his mother for the second time since he looked out the plane window and saw the engine on fire. Everything around him feels like needles on every inch of his skin, his bones, his muscles.

It is nothing but excruciating, but it lasts for a single second.

He feels something warm in his hand, and seeks it out. He hasn’t felt warmth in days. It is like being under the rays of the sun after being by the shadows on a cold winter day. Even with the pain, it is such an amazing feeling. He grasps it as tight as he can, before the strength leaves him. Then, just as if it never happened, he’s back to standing next to where Shane is seated.

Everyone has stopped breathing, it seems, because they are all looking at him (his body, on the bed) as if he decided to start dancing Trepak.

“Holy shit,” Shane looks pale, the tears that normally remain between his eyelashes flowing freely down his cheeks.

For all that Ilya is basically a ghost right now, he feels faint. The phantom pain (*ha*) of whatever just happened is still cursing through his body. Everyone is quiet, almost too quiet. The moment is suspended just as it would before the referee calls a game.

Hayes has a smile on his face, one real. “Rozanov moved his hand, no? He did that?”

Oh? Ilya thinks. Did he? Maybe. Maybe not. He just remembered darkness and so much pain, but also warmth. Touch. It was so vivid. Is he waking up?

“I’m calling a nurse,” Yuna says, already going out of the room.

“Sweetheart, there’s a button here to do that,” David calls after her, but she’s gone immediately. Shane’s dad sighs, but he looks happy. He calls the nurse with the button, and it turns red, blinking intermittently.

Hayes and Haas are still there, almost stuck in their exit. Haas is looking between Shane and Ilya and their joined hands, considering. He doesn’t say anything, but it’s obvious to see what he is thinking. It is the face, Ilya knows, of someone who’s considering his options for the first time in his life. Either way, Ilya clocked it the moment he saw the guy.

They still need to go, but seem to want to stay. At least Haas does. This feels monumental, the first time Ilya's body has consciously moved since the hit to the back of his head.

With a tug to his arm, Wyatt hauls Haas out. “Hollander, DM me any updates through Insta or whatever. I’ll try to come by tomorrow when I pick up Lisa. And call Wiebe!”

“Bye!” Haas calls, before the door closes, leaving David and Shane alone with Ilya’s body.

It will be a minute before the nurses burst in with Yuna commanding them. She will come in guns blazing and eyes set into having Ilya get the best treatment. She already has, over and over again since the accident. Yuna has been getting him the best possible care, taking care of him like you would your own child. Right then, Ilya feels invincible. He looks between his boyfriend and his father in all but name, and his heart feels full. He’s getting better. He can do this. He will go back to Shane, to his family, to his team.

He can do this.

Ilya Rozanov wakes up from a coma nine days after he gets head trauma on the emergency landing in Tampa.

Everything is black around him, and every inch of skin hurts. Still, something feels liberating, and he takes a deep breath. As if for the first time, he encounters the feeling of warmth, of the textures around him, of *touching*. His body feels both weightless and as if it was being pushed down by an anvil. After a few minutes, Ilya considers that maybe everything is dark around him because he has not opened his eyes, and even though it feels like an actual nightmare for him to do that, he tries. Nothing happens, but Ilya is not about to give up. He *needs* to open his eyes.

He hasn't felt this weak in his life, but he tries.

There are sounds around him, a beeping from what sounds like a heart monitor, a nurse shuffling out of the room, Shane Hollander's deep breaths. He can barely catalogue most things, but he knows what Shane sounds like. He knows what Shane smells like. He knows everything about Shane.

Ilya needs to open his eyes.

It feels impossible, and his throat feels like something died in it. It feels scratchy and dry and raw in a way he's never experienced. Still, it feels easier to open his mouth and breathe than it is for his eyelids to move.

"The heart monitor is going crazy—"

"I'll call a nurse—"

Within all impossibility, Ilya manages to form a word around his mouth. It is what he's been thinking about, what has been keeping him alive. It takes so much energy off of him, and it feels like screaming but it must come out as a whisper. "Shane?"

“Ilya. Ilya!” Someone is right next to him, and Ilya feels complete. The person grabs his hand, and moves it around. Are they kissing it? Who is this?

Oh, he called for Shane. Shane is here. Maybe it will all be fine.

“хм? что?” Ilya feels confused. He is disoriented. Where is he? The last thing he remembers—

“Are you awake?” Shane must have kept talking to him, but Ilya hasn’t caught most of it. It’s tedious, a work out, and he’s so so tired. Still, Shane is here, and something happened right? He was on a plane— The plane was on fire. He’s alive? He survived. Did the rest of the team survive?

Something tells Ilya they did, and that everything was alright. He hopes it’s true.

Ilya has not answered Shane, and then remembers that everything is still dark around him. It’s even worse than speaking, but with all the strength he has, Ilya manages to open his eyes. They don’t immediately, and it feels weird, like velcro pulling apart, but then light invades him and everything is in color.

“Ilya— Ilya, love, are you awake?”

His eyes take a second to take in everything. Most things are blurry, the colors mixing together with the white lights of the room. It is almost too much, but then he sees Shane. His face close to him, eyes wide and shiny and face red and brow furrowed. He missed his Shane. Shane has never looked more beautiful.

“You are pretty,” he mumbles, hand coming up to cup Shane’s face. Something in Ilya’s hand feels wet when he caresses Shane’s cheeks. He is warm, Ilya missed warmth. “Is tiring.”

“What is?” Shane is looking at him, and Ilya wants to see Shane forever, but his eyes close. He can’t help it. He feels like someone ran him over with a zamboni.

“Awake,” he manages to say before he coughs. It sounds like it rattles every bone in his body. There’s sounds around him he can’t place, but there’s shuffling all around the room. His hand drops, but it is still linked to Shane’s. He feels as he slowly fades back into nothingness. His brain feels like mush, he wants to sleep. He wants to rest so badly. “Body hurts, want to sleep.”

Shane’s voice fades, mixing into the sounds of the background, and Ilya already misses him. He needs to sleep, he feels so much pain. Where is he even?

“Nurse!” someone calls, but Ilya returns to the darkness.

Ilya Rozanov *truly* wakes up from a coma nine days and five hours after he gets head trauma on the emergency landing in Tampa.

He just... wakes up. Everything around him feels muted seconds before sensations flood his senses. Ilya doesn’t dare open his eyes, and even breathing feels like a lot of work, but after what feels like an hour of consciously breathing, he manages to open his eyes. Comparing when he woke up before with now, everything feels like a walk in the park, to blink his eyes open and to twitch his fingers.

Eyes slowly open, blinking carefully as they adjust to the light. The room isn’t as bright as it was before, which is honestly the only other thing he remembers. And Shane. But that was inevitable.

He takes a look around, looking at a purse that looks like Yuna’s left on a couch, and several chairs around the room. He notes that there’s some stupid ‘get well soon’ balloons next to the

bed. They're new ones, and as he is trying to remember *how* he knows that, he notices Shane asleep over his legs, his mouth slightly open and hair messy.

He looks beautiful.

Ilya doesn't want to wake him, but he has not seen Shane in a while. He's still trying to piece thighs together, how he's in a hospital, where his team is, what happened to their plane, how he remembers a lot of things he definitely has not experienced. But he wants his Shane, so he bumps his leg up, another almost impossible task, and slowly places his hand over Shane's hair. It is soft, but clumpy. "We are taking a nap?"

It takes Shane a moment to wake up, but when he does it's almost as if they're back at their place, waking up after a movie that ends with neither of them having watched it. The sunset is filtering in, and it shines over him, making Shane's skin glow.

Ilya feels like a scene in a movie.

"Ilya!" Shane scrambles up. His eyes are wide, but they are happy. Ilya remembers how sad they've looked the past couple of days. He remembers vaguely about looking over himself, but his brain is not fully up yet, still so tired. "Oh, love, how are you feeling?"

"Zamboni ran me over, yes?" It does feel like every single one of his muscles decided to revolt against his body. The needles in his hand feel weird, and he scratches at it. The tube in his nose is also annoying, but he can only twitch his nose. He's weak and tired but he feels great being close to Shane. "Feels itchy."

"That's the IV, don't touch it," Shane takes his hand off the needle, and then his eyes widen fully. "Shit. Let me call a nurse."

Before Ilya can answer, which is great because he's too tired to do so, Shane presses a button, grabs his phone and dials someone, and opens the door to call someone in.

The medical team is quick. Two nurses come in and start checking on Ilya with precise motions. Ilya feels someone else come in while the woman in front of him flashes a light over his pupils.

“Everything hurts,” Ilya tells the nurse as she takes his tension and checks his oxygen levels. She gestures to the man next to her. He then moves to change the bag connected to his IV, placing a new pouch on the perch and connecting it to his line.

“We’ll help with that, don’t worry Mr. Rozanov,” she says matter of factly, and then Ilya feels as if the new liquid burns a little bit more. It only takes him a minute to become slightly drowsy. This must be a strong medicine.

“Is he good?” Shane asks from behind. Ilya can’t see him from the nurses checking over him, but he sounds worried.

“I’m still checking him.” The nurse says, but she sounds positive. The nurse seems to check off the tension, the eye movement, and the reflexes, all seemingly fine. Ilya is getting better, even after everything. He still wants to sleep, but he will be fine. “He’s okay. How are you feeling, Mr. Rozanov?”

Ilya closes his eyes and breathes deeply. He catalogues what his body is feeling, before settling on the obvious. “Like shit, hurts like motherfucker.”

“What hurts?”

“Body,” he shakes his head, then mumbles. “Head.”

The nurse nods, and then Ilya’s ears ring a little bit. He winces, but the ringing fades. “That’s normal, Mr. Rozanov. What was the last thing you remember?”

“Instagram,” his brain is mush, but this is what he remembers he physically did last. Images flash before his eyes, reminding him that he has been walking around hospital rooms,

watching as people took him to the hospital and visited him, but it feels weird. It feels like something he shouldn't be able to remember. He also thinks of Shane, of their fight, of the distance. Where is Shane? He misses him. He was here when he woke up, no? "We had fight, did not want to leave it bad."

"With who?"

"My bo— My friend, Hollander."

The nurse seems to figure out what he's saying, and nods knowingly. She still looks serious, but slightly softer, more empathetic. "Ah, don't worry about that, Mr. Rozanov. The Hollanders have been here since the transfer from Tampa."

Ilya is confused. What does that mean? Transfer from Tampa? "I played in Boston, not Tampa."

Another voice comes from behind the nurse, closer and closer until they reach Ilya. It's Shane. Ilya missed Shane, where was he? He should be by his side, maybe in a tiny nurse outfit. But only Shane, and everyone else should leave. Only Ilya should see Shane in a tiny nurse outfit. What a great idea. "The nurse means when we moved you here from Tampa."

"I was in North Carolina, no?" Ilya fights to remember things correctly, but between the drugs and the headache and the sleeping for more than a week are fucking his head up. He does remember something then, about the team. About hockey. "*Fuck*, the season."

The nurse's tone turns hard as she fixes the oxygen pump next to his bed. "Mr. Rozanov, if you think about going back to the season, I have terrible news for you."

"You're on bed rest until further notice." someone else says from the other side of the room, and Ilya turns to see who it is. "The Centaurs will have to keep playing this season without their captain."

Ilya doesn't bother to hear the doctor. The smile in Ilya's face grows when he sees the two people standing right next to the couch.

"Yuna! David! You're here," his voice takes on a pitch it hasn't ever before. He feels so happy, he feels like smiling. His headache is still going, but every one of his muscles that hurt feel kind of dull now, like a pain of weeks past. He wants to think about the season, about his team, but his brain is like a cloud. He wants to sleep. He wants his mom. "Team lost too much, what is new?"

He wants—

"Of course," Yuna says, smiling. They don't come closer as nurses are still going around Ilya's bed checking some other things. Things seem fine though, and Ilya just wants—

"Where is Shane?" he asks, brow furrowed. He swears Shane had been near, but he can't see him.

"Well, Mr. Rozanov," the nurses seem to have finished checking him over. She smiles, ignoring his question. "Everything seems alright, but we'll come back in an hour to run over some tests with the CT scan, as well as some X-Rays to check on your collarbone. For now, please rest."

"Yes, yes, great. Thanks," he tells the nurse, growing slightly agitated. "But where is Shane?"

"I'm here," Shane says from behind the nurse, who grabs a clipboard and leaves with the other two medics.

Ilya's heart beats faster when he approaches, and he almost laughs at the way the heart monitor reflects this.

Shane looks tired, and he's never been this messy and disheveled, but he's beautiful and in front of him. Ilya's eyes light up, and he gets some strength in him that he thought didn't

exist for now. Shane looks at him and Ilya can see love there, worry and stress as well, but so much love. He smiles.

“Shane,” Ilya needs Shane inside of his skin if possible. If not possible, he will ask the nurses for help. He doesn’t want to be apart anymore. He urges Shane with a hand, still unable to move much in the bed, connected to all these IVs and oxygen tubes. “Shaaaane.”

“That’s not fair,” Shane breathes, but he still comes close. No one else is around them, no one that Ilya cares for right now. Not when Shane is here, and he’s happy and wants to be by his side forever.

“Shane Hollander,” he grabs Shane’s hand and brings it to his lips. “Where is my kiss?”

“*Kiss?*” Someone *else* says as the door opens and closes. It sounds like Hayes but also Ilya doesn’t care. He can say hi after he gets his kiss. “Man has not been awake for more than five minutes and he’s already on a roll.”

Shane smiles. He fully smiles, the dimple on his right cheek deep enough that Ilya could swim in it and freckles shining in the light. He loves Shane’s freckles. “You are *such* an asshole.”

“I like your asshole.” Ilya wants to sleep again. He feels energy coming and going from his body. But sleeping means not looking at Shane, and how he blushes whenever he says any of these things. “But your mouth... Is better.”

Someone laughs in the background. Shane turns red, and Ilya feels like a winner.

“I hate you.” Shane lies, and he smiles but he still looks embarrassed. Wait, are his parents here? Oops. “My parents are here. Hayes is here.”

“You do not. You *love* me.” He feels as his own smile turns blinding. “Yuna and David are here?”

“Yes, son, we are,” David says, and it’s a testament to how long this has been going on that they’re all here and apparently Hayes is also here and they’re all acting normal. It’s not something Ilya would have thought he could have.

“Wow,” his eyes widen, taking Shane’s hand and kissing it.

Shane, for his part, carefully leans down and presses a small kiss to Ilya’s lips. It’s like returning home, and Ilya immediately crashes into it, closing his eyes and kissing him back. It lasts nothing, because Shane’s parents are there, but Ilya doesn’t care. He missed kissing Shane.

“This feels weird,” the person who *is* actually Hayes says from his spot. He’s sitting on a chair next to the balloons. While there’s many that say ‘Get Well Soon!’, one says ‘It’s a Boy!’.

Something inside of Ilya feels giddy, like fireworks about to explode. He’s with Shane, and people are okay with it. Maybe they will be fine. Plus, Hayes is already fine. It’s why he’s been included on their hockey camps.

Still, Ilya can’t help but chirp at him. “You are homophobic man, Hazy?”

“My older sister is a lesbian,” Hayes says way too quickly. Probably to anyone other than Ilya, who already knew this information.

Ilya shrugs. That technically can mean nothing, so he says. “My brother is not a very good man, and look at me.”

The silence that waves around them turns awkward, but Ilya looks at Shane and smiles.

“There was a line in the bathroom? Weird,” someone else enters the room, and Ilya laughs even more. His heart is full. His teammates are here, even if they don’t know him as much as Ilya wants, they care for him.

“Barrett!” Ilya exclaims and then immediately starts coughing, the oxygen in his lungs not enough to be talking as loudly. Shane’s suddenly closer, propping him up. It hurts like shit, but the position is much more comfortable.

“Holy shit, Rozanov. You’re awake?” Troy *motherfucking* Barrett manages to look worried. This is a new one, Ilya’s almost proud of him. “You stupid asshole, you had us all worried!”

“I’ll update Wiebe,” Yuna says to his left, already pulling her phone. David has already sat down again, and seems to continue playing a sudoku.

Hayes, from the other side of the room, shows his phone. On the screen there’s a sleight of messages pouring in. “I already updated the team, they’re going crazy.”

The whiplash of looking from side to side like a boring ping pong match makes Ilya’s vision swim. Shane is now caressing his hair, pulling lightly at the curls.

Ilya is in heaven.

“My favorite losers,” he closes his eyes, taking everything in. He’s awake, everything is fine. Maybe all the struggles have been worth it. He turns to Shane, voice light. “My favorite winner.”

While Barrett and Hayes settle down to laugh about the Centaur’s group chat, Shane comes a bit closer and whispers to him. “You’re feeling okay?”

“Now... better,” he whispers back, complicit in their conversation. It reminds Ilya of that first time in the cottage, when they were still figuring each other out seriously. His smile becomes sharp. “Head is... what do you call when you hit something over and over?”

“Knock out?”

“No, no, what I also do to you,” Ilya says, and he sees when it clicks on Shane’s brain what he’s trying to say.

In his embarrassment or joy or endearment, Shane burrows his head on Ilya’s shoulder. Ilya feels the wisps of hair on his cheeks, Shane’s breath hot on his neck. “Oh my god, Rozanov, shut up.”

“Pounding! My head is pounding and you want me back in coma. Terrible nurse.” He smacks a wet kiss on Shane’s forehead.

“I know it’s not the time, but,” Barrett pops up from whatever corner he was in, giving Ilya a smirk. “I totally knew, you asshole.”

“Boo,” Ilya extends the vowels, feeling childish. “You are an asshole.”

“And you’re an asshole that likes Shane Hollander. Called it!” Barrett laughs in a way that genuinely does not sound mean, but Shane still raises his head and glares daggers at him.

“I will go back into week-long coma,” Ilya blows a raspberry, and Shane turns to glare daggers at him.

“Don’t joke about that,” the way Shane’s voice takes a truly dark tone makes Ilya take a shaken breath. Still, he can’t help but joke about it. What else would he do otherwise?

“It is long enough,” he shrugs, which doesn’t feel like a shrug because he can’t move much. The drugs must be working overtime, because he can’t feel most of his body.

“It’s been ten minutes since you got out of a week long coma, captain.” Hayes says, because he’s always caring and considerate. Now that Ilya thinks about it, Hayes probably discovered that Ilya at least likes Shane too much by his own crazy goalie deductions. Or maybe he also saw them kissing at hockey camp and kept quiet. Everyone in the team knew you couldn’t keep a secret from Hazy. “Leave the man some room to breathe.”

“I knew you would like him,” Ilya feels himself nod slightly off, the painkillers working well. He’s loopy and he knows it, and he normally would be much more careful but everyone here already knows and they all still care for him. He’s never felt like this before. And he gets to share everything with Shane. It makes the pulsing fear in his heart lighten. “My Hollander, very cute.”

Hayes is about to answer when the door opens to reveal the nurse from before, who looks at the gaggle of people strewn around the suite and sighs.

“Visiting hours are over in a few minutes, and we should let Mr. Rozanov rest,” she says as she reaches the bed. Shane subconsciously steps away, but Ilya grabs his hand and gives him a look, so Shane stays in his spot. “And we need to take him down to get a CT scan before our tech leaves.”

“Of course,” Hayes stands up, taking Barrett with him. “We’ll be downstairs, I’m waiting for Lisa.”

“I’ll go home,” Troy lets himself be taken away by their goalie, something he would not have done a year or so ago. Something not one of the people in the room would have expected. Honestly, just having these people together in Ilya’s hospital suite is not something that could have happened months ago. “Bye, Rozanov.”

“Bye, losers,” he sticks out his tongue, laughing as they leave. He still feels so tired, but he’s wired and he’s sleepy and he wants to cuddle with his boyfriend and maybe fuck. They haven’t fucked in a while. Will the doctors be against that?

Probably.

“Hazy is so stupid. Glad they visited,” he tells the rest of them. The nurse and her assistant change his IV medicine again and check the levels of his oxygen.

Yuna smiles, also happy his team is supportive. With whatever is going on with the Voyageurs, Ilya is not surprised Yuna has a favorite team. “Hayes has been visiting whenever he comes to pick up his wife. Their second car’s currently at the mechanic, so they’re driving together.”

Then Hayes must pass by a lot, because everyone was comfortable with him there. Ilya wonders if anyone else other than him and Troy had visited. He knows Bood is busy, what with their captain being out for the season and having a newborn child. He has a vague image of Coach Wiebe and Haas, not exactly knowing how, but it is true he remembers some bits of when he was unconscious when he shouldn’t have been there.

“Cute,” Ilya says, deciding not to think about it much. His head hurts and his body aches and he needs to get better immediately so he can be with Shane and play some hockey and continue with his life. “M Tired.”

“It’s okay, Mr. Rozanov can rest,” the nurse says after she finishes up. “We’ll be back in a few minutes.”

For the CT scan, right. Ilya taps the finger with the oxygen meter to the bed. His eyes seem to finally give in, and his breathing is shallow.

“It’s okay, Ilya,” Shane says, going back to caressing his hair. His smile is much more contained now, happy that Ilya is awake but sad to still see him on a hospital bed. “You can rest. We’ll be here when you wake up, love.”

“I meant it,” Ilya says suddenly, remembering something important. They haven’t talked about it, but Ilya needs Shane to know now.

“What?”

“Что бы ни случилось, я с тобой,” Ilya mumbles, looking into Shane’s brown eyes. The color is so deep, Ilya wants to dive into them, never leave. He wishes he could stay in Shane’s gaze forever.

Shane seems to understand immediately, eyes widening and growing wet. Ilya closes his eyes, lets himself relax into the weakness he feels. He has never done it before, never given up even a bit, but now he understands that his body has spent all of his strength.

“I’ll be with you *always*. I’m here, rest.” A hand cups his cheek, and Ilya feels the softness of Shane’s lips against his. It’s chaste, and Ilya can’t do anything more than twitch the corners of his lips, but he sighs contentedly when Shane pulls away.

“I love you,” Shane whispers, kissing his cheek.

“I love you too.”

With Ilya awake, Yuna is much more of an enforcer when it comes to Shane moping. The moment she decides she has had enough was when Shane first complained about his neck being stiff. She sends him off with David to their house to shower and sleep on an actual bed. Yuna takes a day off from whatever meetings she has, and stays overnight with Ilya.

Ilya starts off the day early for once, breathing in and opening his eyes. It doesn’t take as much of his energy to do this, but his body is still definitely weak. He managed yesterday to stand up and walk around the room with the help of the nurses and Shane, but he was very dizzy after, and promptly passed out.

Right now, he feels the muscles of his legs ache as if he'd played three games back to back. Apparently, physical therapy is a thing that you need to do after a coma that lasts more than a week, because muscles atrophy with disuse.

So, he will do physical therapy and brain therapy because Ilya is now fucked in every single way possible.

"Oh, good morning, sweetie," Yuna looks up from a book, something motivational about becoming a better person. The Hollanders really need to update their reading list to something fun. He will tell them about it for their new years resolutions. The room is still dark, but there's some light, so it must be early enough.

"What time is it?"

Yuna raises an eyebrow, "It's seven pm."

"So, it is night, not good morning," Ilya figures then that the light must be the sunset. Well, sunsets are good. They mean he has lived another day.

"You just woke up," Yuna argues, closing her book. She grabs the chair and pulls it next to Ilya's bed. Without even asking, because she knows him, Yuna props him so he is more sat than laying down. It does wonders for his back.

They look at each other as Yuna sits back down, both of them unwilling to say anything at first. Ilya feels awkward. He loves the Hollanders, but even after three years he feels like he's still not fully a part of the family. Don't get him wrong, he loves them, he even loves them as he would parents in an ideal world, but David and Yuna are *Shane's* parents, and they treat him well, but it's not the same. It can't be the same, right?

"We're glad you're getting better," Yuna looks like her body is holding back movement. She gets closer to Ilya, placing her clasped hands next to Ilya's arm.

“What have the doctors said?”

Yuna sighs, knowing the question was coming. “Well, your brain looks fine, there is no brain bleed according to the CT. You remember most things from before the accident, so the trauma itself should not worsen. You still should be careful. You’re out of the rink for a month, and you’re not going back to the team until March.”

Overall, she looks like she regrets this information, but her words are sharp, strict. Ilya remembers how she was when Shane got injured that one time on the ice. Strict with screen time, rigid with physical therapy schedules. Ilya feels a headache coming from it all.

“What is the date today?” Ilya decides to ask. He remembers their last game was a day after the new years, or something like that.

“January 15th,” Yuna has to look at her phone to answer him. Their days have probably blended in together as much similarly as how for Ilya they had just passed from one moment to the other.

For a second, Ilya remembers a plane ride with a worried Yuna and a terrified Shane, and he wonders if he really was cursed to be there, awake and observing but never allowed to be fully present. He remembers thinking about an Etsy bitch, or whatever Harris calls them.

“That’s so long,” Ilya mutters, counting down the days he was unconscious. He knows it’s more than a week, but put into perspective, he’s losing half a month to this. He realizes he never got an answer for how the team itself was. “The rest of the team is fine?”

“Yeah, I think Chouinard and Young had bruised ribs and your social media manager sprained his wrist, but everyone is fine.”

“Except for me,” Ilya says, looking at the ceiling. He sighs, feeling the way it hurts to take a breath and how his eyes swim whenever he thinks too hard. His neck is killing him, he desperately needs a massage. He feels old, he wonders if this is how Scott Hunter feels all of the time. “I will get better now.”

“Of course, sweetie,” Yuna says, moving her hand to grasp Ilya’s. They are cold, recently moisturized. They also feel warm, a touch he hadn’t felt close since before he was ten years old.

Yuna is normally not a very physical person. David isn’t either. That’s fine with Ilya, who in Russia wouldn’t be greeting people affectionately (other than the three kisses, which he had to unlearn when he moved to America). Still, whenever they hug him or kiss his cheek or even pat his back, Ilya returns momentarily to his childhood.

“Mrs. Hollander,” He feels weird. He wouldn’t normally feel this out of sorts, but he feels guilty that the Hollanders have felt Ilya’s accident and injury this harshly. He feels guilty that Shane has paused his entire life to be here, and the feeling is even worse when he thinks about his boyfriend’s parents doing all of this for him. “I know we talked about you as my emergency contact, but it was fine, right? That they called you?”

“Obviously, who else?” Yuna caresses Ilya’s palm with her fingers, the movement soothing. She smiles, the lines in her eyes deep, worried but happy. “It could’ve been any of us three, I’m glad it is me.”

Ilya has to look away as he feels his eyes moisten with unshed tears. He doesn’t want Yuna to see him like this, it is not something she should worry about.

“None of that, Ilya. Hey, look at me,” Ilya doesn’t want to, he really doesn’t, but Yuna sounds too worried. He turns, a tear falling down his cheek in the process. Yuna wipes it off, softly caressing Ilya’s cheek. “You know I agreed to be your emergency contact when you moved to Ottawa for a reason.”

Ilya shrugs, and while he tries to look unaffected, his voice cracks. “I had no one else to add.”

Yuna takes a deep breath, sound rattling in her throat. She closes her eyes, hand still on Ilya’s face. She looks tired, and Ilya doesn’t need adult supervision, she doesn’t *need* to be here. He is almost thirty. He can call a nurse on his own now. If Yuna needs to rest she should also get a real bed.

“If you’re tired, you can go, Mrs. Hollander,” he says, face pressed to her hand. He looks at her from under his lashes, and turns to look down at his hands. The IV looks scary. His skin looks too pale. Ilya doesn’t really like hospitals. “I can sleep alone.”

The statement hangs between them, and Ilya wishes he was alone. If he was alone there would be no one to disappoint. But he also wants family, he craves it. He doesn’t want to be alone, not really.

He wants Shane Hollander. He wants warm Sunday mornings waking up together. He wants Christmas dinners with David and Yuna where they laugh and talk and act like a family.

Ilya wants.

Yuna’s voice seems airy in the stiff air of the hospital suite. Ilya doesn’t want to look at her, but her eyes fix him in place. Her lower lip wobbles. “I thought you had died. I was worried we were about to lose you.”

He hitches a breath.

“I did not— I am sorry, Mrs. Hollander.” He finally looks down at his hand. His fingers tap nervously at the bedding. It’s soft, he muses. “I would not want Shane to be sad because of me.”

He doesn’t say that that is one of the main reasons keeping him alive at all before this accident was even a thing. Ilya doesn’t think about it much, too busy to let his mind wander, but it is a fact. He couldn’t burden Shane with another thing. Sure, Shane could move on, but he wouldn’t do that while they both were still active players. Plus, he will get better, eventually. He hopes.

“What?” Yuna says, sounding surprised for the first time. It’s the most expressive Ilya has seen her today.

Ilya opens his mouth, not sure where to start. He goes with the simplest explanation. “If I died, Shane would be sad, and he would need help.”

“If you died, I would be losing a *son*,” Yuna cuts him off, eyes genuinely teary. Her face has blotchy patches on her cheeks. In a change of tone, she puts her hair up with a clip, and Ilya catches the glint of a golden chain. She expertly moves around to remove it, and Ilya feels the gasp that leaves him rattle his lungs.

It’s his mother’s chain, hanging from Yuna’s hand.

He had been wondering if it had been lost, who had taken it, if he had lost the last piece of his mother. Yet here he is, in front of someone that cares for him, handing his most precious treasure back to him.

Yuna comes closer, and she carefully bypasses all the lines surrounding Ilya’s face and clasps the chain around his neck. The weight of the cross on his chest makes it easier to breathe, suddenly. Yuna smiles sadly. “I would never dream of replacing your mother, but you make Shane happy, Shane makes *you* happy. You make us happy, David and I, and you’re already part of our family, regardless of what happens.”

In that moment, something in Ilya softens. He’s never gotten confirmation, really. Sure, he jokes that he is Yuna and David’s favorite son, but he’s always thought of it as a bit the perfect family found funny enough to let him into. He’s accepted that that is all that this was. If they truly care for him as much as he cares for them, maybe they could be a family, really. Maybe they already are, and Ilya has been too into his head to notice.

The past couple of months have been hard.

He twists his fingers around his mother’s cross, movement practiced.

“Thank you for bringing her to me, Mrs.—”

Yuna keeps talking, almost as if she can't stop. She had not spoken much to Ilya since he woke up. It's been hockey updates and hospital procedures, how their conversations have always been. Shane didn't inherit this from her, keeping every emotion inside until it bursts. Ilya relates to her deeply for it. "When I got the call that you were being taken to a hospital after your plane almost crashed... Ilya, I was scared I was about to lose both my sons, one to death and one to grief."

"I'm sorry," he starts saying, and his eyes are blurry rough he can't see. He closes his eyes, taking Yuna's hand into his.

"Don't be sorry, Ilya." Yuna says, and it reminds him so much of his mother. Yuna and Irina would get on so well, it is too bad she can't be here. She would love the Hollanders. "It's not your fault, accidents happen."

Ilya does not feel like smiling, but he feels lighter. He looks down at himself on the bed, IV plugged and oxygen on, and he jokes. "Well, now I am stuck in bed at stupid hospital."

"Now, you will get better so you can live your life," Yuna smiles, and hugs him. It is awkward, but the embrace is exactly what Ilya needs. She laughs into his hair. "And maybe win some hockey trophies."

They break apart, and both have small smiles on their faces. Ilya shrugs, feeling way better than before, even with the headache pounding on the back of his cranium. "Again. Team might take longer, with our shitty plays."

"Then get better so you can make the strategy seamless." Yuna pats his arm. Something in her also feels different. Not happy, not sad, but relieved.

English is hard, especially over the past few days. He's tired, and it's late. Being emotional takes even more energy from him, especially now. "I don't know what seamless is, but yes. Brain is tired."

He might have spent the entire day sleeping, but walking around had messed his body up. His muscles are tight and his brain is shutting down. Even yawning hurts, but the nurses might come soon to give him more anesthetics. Everything will be fine. His family will be here when he wakes up. He feels his mother's embrace around him.

Yuna picks up her book back up, but Ilya doesn't see her, having closed his eyes already. "Sleep, Ilya."

There's wind blowing through the window and the room feels slightly cold. Ilya is wrapped warmly in a blanket and he breathes deeply as sleep takes him. The heart monitor feels like a lullaby and he's achy but he's content.

"Mhmm, I love you, mom," he murmurs.

"I love you too, baby."

The Irina Foundation ✓ @IrinaFoundation

Our co-founder Ilya Rozanov is awake and his recovery period will be short, doctors say. We thank you all for the kind messages for our Foundation and his team. Please respect his and his family's privacy as he recovers.

12:45 PM · 15/01/21

Pop Base ✓ @PopBase

Russian Hockey Player Ilya Rozanov Finally Awake After Week-Long Coma

1:00 PM · 15/01/21

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

replying to @PopBase

why are you stealing my job

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

GUYS HE'S OKAYYYYYYYYY WE MOVEEE

1:02 PM · 15/01/21

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @rozanovism

i'm glad you guys finally have some good news !!!

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @shanehollanderrssss

do we have to act like we're friends now fr

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @rozanovism

dude stop being so mean i might be into it

THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE JESUS EITHER @hollanovtruther

replying to @shanehollanderrssss & rozanovism

even here....

jules @shanehollanderrssss

replying to @hollanovtruther

grandma escaped her bed again

iMessage

Shane: Hey

Shane: Ilya's awake. Everything is fine. He is still recovering from the injuries, but the doctors are saying the head trauma is minimal.

Svetlana: Oh hi! Amazing. How long is he staying in the hospital?

Shane: Until he fully stabilizes, but probably three more days.

Svetlana: Send me your parent's address

Shane: Why?

Svetlana: Are you going to send him home alone? You do have to return to the season you know. Or else your team is mega fucked.

Svetlana: Let me know if I should make some easy money betting on MTL's downfall

Shane: Yeah, I'll be going back next week. Ilya's staying with my parents

Shane: [Address]

Svetlana: Thanks Jane :)

Shane: Oh stop that

Svetlana: You should introduce me to Rose Landry, we need to form an alliance.

Shane: Why?

Svetlana: I just think we have a lot in common :)

After three days, Ilya finally starts having a semblance of a schedule. It feels like everything is going back to normal. He's been taken off the oxygen since his levels have been consistent, and the CT scans show healthy brain activity. He's supposed to be getting discharged tomorrow into what is basically house arrest for at least a month. But it is a month surrounded by family, surrounded by his team.

He's still recovering, but life couldn't be better.

In a bout of freedom, Ilya walks around the room with his IV perch before pushing a seat next to the window. There's no one in the park between the hospital buildings by virtue of it

being January and filled to the brim with snow, but there's a certain beauty that reminds him of Russian winters. Since he probably will never go back, he can at least reminisce about his childhood home.

The door opens, and Shane comes in holding hot tea to-go cups in each of his hands. He smiles at Ilya once he comes in, looking much more rested than when Ilya had first woken up (and well, also before).

Ilya hasn't really told anyone about the fact that he was basically a ghost while in a coma. He's not sure what the procedure for that would be, but he for sure does not want to stay any longer in the hospital.

"Ilya, hey love!" Shane leaves the cups by the table with the balloons, most of which have deflated. They look hilariously ugly, and Ilya loves them. Shane grabs another chair and pulls it next to Ilya's. "How are you feeling?"

"моя любовь," Ilya extends a hand, and Shane passes him the tea. He's been told by the doctors to only take decaffeinated tea without milk, which seems like psychological torture. He's even going to be on a Shane-like diet for a few weeks before his body gets used to actual food and not fluids again. "Like shit from a butt."

He should tell Shane at least, no? About the ghost thing? Shane basically saw him a bunch of times. Maybe it will help him as well.

"Oh, I missed you so much." Shane quietly laughs at his description. Ilya keeps thinking about this while Shane looks down at his tea. It's not lost on Ilya that Shane hides his eyes whenever he's upset. He doesn't want people knowing he could cry, even if he is kind of a crybaby. "I was so scared."

It can be a state secret between them only.

The tea is too hot, so Ilya waits for it to cool down. Instead of sipping, he looks at Shane, eyes curious for a reaction. "I was here, just not awake."

“Huh?”

“Like a ghost, yes?” Ilya tries to explain to a very confused Shane, whose eyes have narrowed. He waves around his hand, as if that explains everything. The IV twitches in his hand. “But chained to my body.”

There is no more heart monitor, so the silence is genuine for the first time.

“You were?” Shane breathes, voice suspended in disbelief. Then, his tone falls flat, like it does whenever he is overwhelmed. “You’re telling me you were there the entire time.”

Ilya rolls his eyes, but he is worried. He hopes Shane doesn’t believe Ilya is making fun of him. He’s trying to be serious, but English is still hard these days with all the medication they’re pushing straight into his blood. “As ghost, Hollander. Not much I could do.”

“You were actually there,” Shane deadpans, and sips at his tea. He’s never had a problem with hot drinks or food. Ilya’s tongue is too sensitive for that. Ilya can see Shane’s hands are shaking.

“Yeah– Yeah,” Ilya is using his ‘Let’s Calm Shane Down’ voice, as David started calling it. Shane might be disbelieving, because it is a difficult thing to believe and Ilya has no true explanation, but Shane should still know. “You saw me, yes?”

Eyes wide, Shane turns to the window. With his free hand, he grasps Ilya’s. “I didn’t want to– I mean that sounds impossible.”

Ilya’s eyes soften. “Nothing feels impossible with you.”

“Oh my god, shut up,” Shane is blushing and with the winter morning sun, he looks like he is glowing. He buries his face in the tea, almost, and looks at Ilya from the side. Even

embarrassed, his eyes are filled with love. “I love you.”

His own eyes are probably like that as well. Ilya just can’t help it.

“I love you too— Thanks for being here. I did not know if you would come.” He says, finally feeling able enough to have an actual conversation. His strength is slow to come back but it’s been building back up. He’s not as pale anymore, either.

“Obviously I had to,” Shane looks at him, mouth flat.

“You *had* to?”

He splutters, and leaves his tea by the table so he can rub at his eyes. It must feel good, because he does it some more. “I– Well, I had to tell my Coach about you, basically. Not about everything, but that I needed a mental health break, or leave of absence for recovering family members.”

Considering this, Ilya muses over his conversation with Yuna, how he is basically family now.

Ilya nods. “Hah, I am Hollander now. The press will have a field trip.”

“Yeah, yeah. They will.” Shane is back to looking at him again as if he were the entire universe. Pale, dirty, and in a wrinkled hospital gown, Ilya doesn’t really feel like the renowned hockey player he is, much less fully human.

After a second of sipping the tea, Ilya dares to ask. “Your team knows?”

“Uh, probably.” Shane does not look sure. He has not looked sure about anything regarding his team ever since he came out to them. His eyes even turn sad. Ilya knows that Shane had wanted to spend his entire career with Montreal, retire there, keep the number under his

name. Become a legend with them. For his part, Ilya wants to blow their home arena to smithereens. “I’ve only talked to Hayden.”

Ilya has a flash to a scene, a phone and a conversation with some of the Voyageurs. His lips curl.

“And Boiziau, no? I will send Jackie a gift.” he mentions conversationally. “Then, I kill all Montreal Voyageurs.”

“You are out for the season,” Shane replies, before he turns again to Ilya with wide eyes. He still has a smile on his face. It should *never* leave its place. “You can’t do that.”

“I’m not out of life,” Ilya reasons. And he is right. He could call Svetlana and basically doom the team publicly for something that actually would matter to the NHL and its fans. Ilya knows they wouldn’t really care about a team being homophobic. “I have scary Russian ways.”

“We’re going home tomorrow,” Shane rolls his eyes. His tea is done, so he scoots the chair closer to Ilya, and rests his head on Ilya’s shoulder.

“That is good,” Ilya says, grabbing Shane’s arm and placing it closer to him, basically embracing him. He looks at him, close enough to kiss, and smiles. “I will finally have your cock—”

“The doctor said no physical activity, Rozanov,” He looks at Ilya seriously, and he scoffs when Ilya doesn’t seem to take him seriously. “You almost died, please.”

They silently look at each other, not daring to come closer but hating to be apart. Ilya’s eyes are focused, but they’re not as serious as Shane’s are. Even the line of his shoulder tightens. Ilya sighs, Shane must be actually upset.

“I can’t want my boyfriend because doctors will come after me. What tragedy,” Ilya jokes, but he isn’t smiling. Instead, he turns Shane’s head and kisses him deeply, deeper than he has

since they saw each other before the plane and the fight and the distance.

“You’re ridiculous,” he manages to get Shane to smile, although it’s small. “I love you.”

“I love you too, and when I am better, we will get married,” Ilya says matter of factly.

Shane turns around so fast that his neck cracks. “What?”

“You have ring, no?” Ilya says, remembering the call with Hayden. He lightly shrugs, not exactly knowing how to lead with this. “You told Pike and Boiziau.”

“You heard that?”

Ilya raises his brow, eyes narrowed and judging. “I tell you, I was haunting you.”

“Oh,” Shane mouths the vowel, and he breathes out. Their joined hands move around as Shane taps his fingers. His lips are pursed and he’s not looking at Ilya.

He turns to Shane, adjusting himself so they sit face to face. Even if Shane won’t meet his eyes, Ilya wants to see his expression, the way his eyes move.

“I will act surprised,” he kisses Shane, just a quick peck, who then finally looks back at him. He looks pretty, with his eyelashes curled and cheeks soft. Ilya grins, teeth showing. “And you should too when I show you the ring I chose.”

Ilya hopes he doesn’t give Shane a heart attack. They’ve spent too much time in hospitals already.

“What?”

“We are not very original,” he says, kissing Shane again. He wishes he could do that forever, every time he wants to. “I also wanted to propose to you.”

Shane laughs, properly this time, his eyes wide. Then, he kisses Ilya again, way harder than before. He can. They can kiss. They’re together and maybe they will get married and live together for real. “I love you so much, what the fuck.”

“Yes, we should fuck.” Ilya nods seriously, face still stuck in a smile. Shane slaps his chest between laughs. Ilya grabs his hand and kisses his palm. “After doctor agrees, don’t worry.”

“No,” Ilya doesn’t know what Shane answers. He grows shy then, his small turning something small, much more intimate. “We’ll get married?”

“We could get married today, if you wanted,” he looks down at his grey-ish hospital gown and then to Shane’s full black athleisure outfit. “We’re basically bride and groom already.”

That does bring a laugh out of Shane. He moves in closer, putting his head back between Ilya’s neck and shoulder. “My mom would kill us.”

“She will understand,” Ilya knows she wouldn’t. Yuna would genuinely kill them, bring them back to life to congratulate them, then kill them again. “No, she won’t. Yuna will kill me first.”

Shane laughs into Ilya’s neck. Ilya’s skin runs alight with goosebumps. “No, I’ll be first, you’re her favorite.”

They both look out of the window. Birds are still flying even with the winter cold, and the sun still shines down on them. The metal in Ilya’s IV shines with the sun’s reflection, and Ilya looks down to their joined hands. He can picture them both, older, retired, hanging out together when they can’t even try to play hockey anymore. It is not something Ilya has ever pictured for himself.

He can now.

“We can– we can plan for the next months,” Shane says, breaking the silence suddenly. His voice is so close to Ilya’s ear he can feel it directly inside of his head. “We can be husbands.”

Now that is something like a siren’s song to Ilya. The corners of lips can’t help but lift. “My husband, my lover, my everything.”

“Hey! We said lover was disgusting!” Shane is laughing, slapping Ilya’s arm like he does whenever he finds something Ilya says annoyingly funny.

“There was that one Taylor Swift song Jackie likes and you said it was cute,” Ilya is still looking at their hands, but then he looks up.

“Still!”

Half an hour later, Shane and Ilya are cuddled on the couch, just because they can. The bed is nice but with all the lines Ilya has, it’s slightly uncomfortable to just relax. So sitting on the couch it is.

They’re not even talking, just holding each other. They had kissed a little, but it made Ilya too dizzy and so they had to stop.

Stupid recovery.

The door opens, and in comes Wyatt Hayes, who is probably waiting for Lisa to be done again. Ilya really wonders if the Centaurs are doing well enough to let their Main Goalie go around like that. Then, he remembers he currently has no concept of time, and so he doesn't really know what the team should be doing. Probably some shit, like always, but Ilya's too tired to think strategy right now.

"Rozy, you up?" He looks around before eyeing the couple on the couch. His eyes widen. "Oh, sorry! Boods tried to visit earlier, but you were getting some tests done. He says hi, but he's mega busy taking over your job."

"I am at hospital dying, Hazy," Ilya has his arms around Shane, looking entirely content. He cracks an eye open, narrowing it at the man. "Dying of boredom."

"Oh, hi again, Hollander," Hayes stands still. He's so dumb, he knows what a couple looks like and that Ilya and Shane have been in love for years. This is the first time he actually sees them both conscious, so Ilya is unsurprised that he would be shocked by their joint beauty. They are a really beautiful couple.

"Hi, Hayes," Shane says, sitting up. Ilya groans as he looks up, praying to his mother to give him back the comfort of his beautiful Shane's arms.

Too bad Shane has never felt comfortable showing affection in public, much less the romantic kind. They still act like teenagers whenever they go to his parents house. Ilya would find it annoying if it wasn't so thrilling to be sneaking around.

There, it felt like an adventure and not a chore.

"You two are so dry," Ilya also sits up, gesturing between them. "Hayes, this is my future husband, Shane Hollander."

"Ilya!" Shane turns around, eyes wide.

“What? You told him we were together. I saw,” he pulls the IV closer, making the needle settle more comfortably with the line straight. “He probably already knew.”

“You saw that?”

“Ghost,” Ilya points at himself.

Shane is no fun. He gives Ilya a *look*. “You can’t keep saying that to explain how you know things.”

“Future husband?” Hayes looks between them, finger swinging like a pendulum. “Since when?”

“Right before you knocked,” Ilya clicks his tongue. “Maybe half an hour.”

Hayes whistles, and because he has no decorum, he pulls a chair in front of them like some fucked up interrogation scheme. “Damn, the girls are going to be jealous you’re bagging the best player in the league.”

“They can be jealous all they want, Shane Hollander is mine,” Ilya’s voice is airy, but his threat is real.

“Hmm,” Hayes leans back. He looks like he wants to say something. He’s been trained by his wife to have more tact, but the filter in his brain is still almost nonexistent. “I didn’t even know you were...”

His hands move awkwardly in front of him. Ilya understands. Shane keeps quiet.

“Bisexual,” Ilya loves saying the word. Something about it feels... liberating. “Eh, Barrett knows.”

“Barrett—” This is the most dumbfounded Ilya has seen Hayes since Shane first showed up. They’ve known each other longer than they have known Troy as he is now. There should be more of a surprise, but it is known that Ilya and Barrett had clicked over something, everyone just assumed it was because they were assholes. Which was also true. “Why didn’t you tell anyone else?”

Ilya winces. There are so many reasons, it should be more like ‘what worries him more today?’ “I couldn’t. I still— It is difficult for me, because of hockey, because of Russia.”

“There’s not many people that know, Hayes,” Shane sounds small. He must still be thinking about the fact that Hayes and Boodram knowing about them is because of him. “It’s a difficult situation.”

“Yes, but we’re a good team, no, Captain?” Hayes doesn’t look betrayed or anything, he just looks like he wants everyone to be friends. Ilya wishes for that too, but it is more complicated than that.

“I never said that.” Ilya tugs at his ear. His voice is steady. These are thoughts that are constantly in his head, conversations he’s already had even if the others did not fully understand. “I told Barret this, that I never said I was straight, never implied, but with hockey players, so much gets lost because a lot do not want to think their teammate likes sucking dick. They do not consider this.”

“I don’t think any of us really care, we’d accept you.”

“But you never know that until you’re there,” Shane says, because he used to have a team he trusted and close friends who had his back that now sometimes acted like he was not there at all. Ilya grabs Shane’s hand and squeezes it tight.

Hayes notices, he always does.

“Yeah, I don’t know that— I didn’t know that fully,” Ilya mutters, then turns back to look Hayes directly in the eye. “Barrett almost got that Shane and I were a thing after I mentioned I also liked men. I could not— Could not out Shane and bring his career down.”

“I don’t think he has a problem with that,” says Hayes, eyes fluttering. “I mean.”

Shane would probably always have a problem with that. Ilya will probably too. But the issue isn’t that. They can be out to him and a selection of people because they had to spend more than a decade getting comfortable with even the idea that something could happen between them and be real. Considering all the time they spend apart, sometimes they still have unspoken silences and stolen looks where they silently ask each other if this is real. If this is something they can have.

But that is something only *they* can see. No one else. No one else could understand.

Even now, it still feels weird, because they had a fight about Ilya wanting more people in the know and Shane not being ready for it, but mortality became a very high risk for them, and then hiding from everyone just was not a choice they could have. What happened if one of them died and they were isolated from the rest of the world? How would they mourn? How could they continue to live? Ilya knew he couldn’t.

“Well, he did,” Ilya’s voice is maybe too harsh. He doesn’t particularly care. Hayes is a friend, if he can’t fully understand at least Ilya wants him to *know*. “And he was right. I agree with him, but we had plan. Plan went to shit with me, but it was a good plan.”

Shane speaks up again, this time with more poise. He looks at Ilya, and he imagines this almost as an apology. It is not, but it is a start. “The plan was setting us apart, but we didn’t know what else to do.”

“Leaving everything behind for him?” It’s not something that is out of pocket. Hayes must know, considering his wife left her fancy job in Toronto to work in a public hospital again. His eyes seem easy, so he definitely considers this. “Not that I don’t like that you’re with us, but you could’ve easily won the cup again—”

Ilya's voice breaks. "I would leave everything for Shane."

"Ilya—" Shane looks back at him, eyes glistening. He doesn't cry, not really. Ilya also feels like that. But even after everything, he can't let himself cry in front of a hockey player that isn't Shane.

At least not sober.

"That's not—"

"Shane, I want some orange juice," Ilya cuts in, smiling too sharply for it to be anything but an order. "And a cookie. Can you get it for me?"

Shane doesn't immediately stand up, but he does stare at Ilya, quietly asking if he's okay. "But—"

Ilya nods, "Please, I love you."

"I love you too," Shane kisses his cheek, looking at him one last time. He finds nothing, so he sets out to find some orange juice.

Shane understands privacy, and they understand each other. They've done similar the other way around, when Hayden was first introduced to the idea of *ShaneAndIlya* instead of Shane vs. Ilya.

"Huh."

Hayes and Ilya look at each other in silence, reality suspended. Ilya is still in his hospital gown and Hayes is in a frankly old disgusting hoodie from some nerd movie he loves. Now,

they look at each other like a Captain and his Goalie.

“Hayes, I was saying—” Ilya starts.

“Yes, you would leave everything for him,” Hayes cuts in, but the idea is not something everyone can wrap their minds around. It’s fine, Ilya wouldn’t do this for anyone either. “But—”

“You would not understand, that is fine,” Ilya crosses his arms over his chest, careful not to tug at the IV. He sighs, deeper than he has in the entire day. “But Shane and I have been hiding for decade, and we are close to being happy together, after everything. I’m winner, I’m millionaire, I’m in love. I already got what I wanted. If I have to give the rest up, I will for him.”

They both let that hang in the air between them.

“Well, then I want to be invited to the wedding.”

“We *are* getting married,” Ilya can’t help the smile that grows in his face. He’ll figure out later that the first person they actually told is Wyatt Hayes, but now he doesn’t care. He could shout it from the window, given the chance.

Hayes smiles, truly this time, fully understanding. “Holy shit, Roz! For real?”

“Yes, maybe? yes, holy shit,” Ilya’s hands go to the top of his knees. He feels like a stupid child making friends for the first time again. He almost giggles, it’s disgusting. He can feel himself blushing. He hopes Hayes tells no one about this. “I love him.”

“I know, Roz, I know.” Hayes must’ve seen a lot this week, maybe even before. He’s been a close friend to Ilya for more than a year, he probably noticed something was up. You never know with him. “It seems he loves you too.”

“Of course, he is *mine*. Can’t get enough of my—”

“Yeah! I do *not* need to know that. Go back to sleep!”

“Ah, so you want me back in coma.” Ilya grins, laying back on the couch. It is really comfortable. Maybe he could get it for his house, but it’s kinda ugly. He raises an eyebrow at Hayes, who is still laughing at him, slightly scandalized, slightly overjoyed. “I will haunt you in death.”

It’s only slightly more serious, but Hayes still says it lightly. “Roz, don’t say that!”

They’re both chuckling and Ilya imagines a team where they can all be open like this. A team where they can gather together with their families and have a nice outing at a lake, or a barbecue, or whatever, after destroying every team in the league and winning every trophy. He sounds too idealistic, and slightly boring. Maybe he is a true fit for the Hollanders, after all.

“I’ll tell the team you’re getting better,” Hayes looks at his phone, a few messages lighting the screen up as they come in. “Lisa’s out. She had the night shift, so I’ll go before she starts terrorizing the incoming patients.”

“You’re not getting rid of me soon,” Ilya points at him, looking seriously at the man.

“Hell no, we still need to get the cup,” he looks serious, like a goalie that truly wants to win. Ilya knows he’s very fucking good at the game. His intuition works like magic whenever he sets out to discover all the team’s strategies on the rink. It’s amazing to see how Wyatt will just *know* where someone is trying to shoot the puck at. Ilya couldn’t do that, mainly because he likes shooting the puck too much. And scoring.

“Go cook your wife some breakfast, Hayes!”

“Don’t die on us, Captain!”

Ilya is then left alone. Shane must have really gone to get him some orange juice even though he had tea already.

There is so much silence that Ilya can hear the IV drip and the whistle of the wind. His brain spirals into the tiny details of what comes next. He hasn’t gotten his phone yet, with Shane and Yuna being mega strict about his screen time, so he needs help with notifying people that he’s alright. People like Galina, who must worry.

Two minutes later, if the clock on the wall holds any truth to it, Shane comes back in with a bunch of things in his hands. There’s orange juice and there’s a small pack of pudding and mineral water and about five different spoons.

Shane’s cheeks are red from the cold, so he must have gone to the supermarket in front of the hospital. The cafeteria food here probably doesn’t meet Shane’s standards, even if it’s doctor-approved. “I didn’t get you a cookie, but there was some of the chocolate pudding you like.”

“Hollander,” his voice goes deeper and scratchy, and he coughs to let some of the pressure out. Ilya knows he sounds hesitant, reverting back to himself, but he doesn’t know exactly how to approach this. “I, uh– I need your help.”

“Is something wrong?” Shane drops everything on the table, carefully placing each thing in its own place. But he does it quickly, because a moment later he’s right next to Ilya.

There’s nothing to lose. He almost died already, he might as well let what he’s been hiding for months out.

“No! No. I, eh, need you to text my therapist.” Ilya tries to sound casual, knowing it has never really worked on Shane. Not ever since they met. He doesn’t look at Shane, but to the pudding. “Tell her sorry for missing appointment. You have my phone?”

Shane's mouth hangs open for a second, not exactly knowing what to answer. "Your... therapist?"

"Yes. I— I did not tell you because—" Ilya feels immediately bad. He hasn't wanted to burden Shane with his stupid mental problems but he's been hiding and lying to him, and even though he wants for Shane to just *know* he knows that that is impossible. Can they even be together if Ilya has been keeping to himself all this time? Should they even get married? Ilya wants to, but is that good for Shane?

He must be breathing hard, because Shane places a hand on his back, where he can touch his skin directly through the fastenings. "It's fine, love. I'll call her. Do you need me to tell her anything specific?"

"No, no. It is 'Galina' on my contacts." Ilya looks at Shane, who looks conflicted but understanding. There is a look in his eyes that is searching for something in him.

"You're good?"

"Yeah, getting better," Ilya sighs, twisting his fingers together. He wills himself not to cry, but Shane always makes that impossible. He sniffs, the sound too watery to hide. "Yeah, yeah. I am sad sometimes, so I found a Russian therapist here. I don't— I don't want to have an accident like my mother's."

"Oh," Shane looks down at Ilya's hands, wondering. Ilya doesn't know what he wanders about, but he is silent.

Everything is silent. Ilya hates it. Maybe he should have not said anything and waited until he recovered. There are news about him, no? Galina could read them. She would understand.

Ilya almost doesn't catch it when Shane whispers, but they're close and Ilya believes he could reach Shane from anywhere in the world. "You can always talk to me, you know that, right?"

“Yes, but I can’t, uh, put all my emotions on you. Is not healthy for us,” Ilya sighs, heart heavy. He didn’t want to have this conversation now, maybe ever, but Ilya can’t promise forever without telling Shane what he is getting into. They were so happy just ten minutes ago, giddy with affection. Again, Ilya has ruined it.

“I wouldn’t care,” Shane says after a moment, voice louder. He comes closer and carefully wraps his arms around his boyfriend. Ilya drops his head to Shane’s shoulder, and closes his eyes.

“It’s a lot,” he mumbles into the hoodie.

Shane pulls at the curls in the back of his head. It doesn’t hurt, if anything, it is comforting. “Not if it’s for you.”

“I’m still going to Galina,” Ilya looks up, nose almost touching Shane. He can see himself reflected in Shane’s dark eyes.

“Therapy is good,” Shane smiles, still reserved but happy. After all, Ilya is there and they have things to look forward to, even if some are daunting. Like actually coming out publicly, like trying to live their lives knowing people will refuse to support them anymore. Like fighting the NHL as an organization in itself. “I’ll always be here for you.”

“Me too,” Ilya wants to be in this tiny nook forever. Being held by Shane and knowing that maybe some things will be alright. He smiles. “Forever, because we are getting married.”

It’s like being pulled by a magnet, the way their mouths slot together. It’s not a hard kiss, if anything it’s calm and chaste and intimate and everything they weren’t allowed to be at first. Ilya smiles into the kiss, and the kiss stops because they can’t stop smiling.

Their foreheads touch, and they rest like that for a moment. Shane’s skin is warm to the touch. Some of Shane’s now longer hair falls around Ilya’s eyes, but Ilya doesn’t care. He lets the strands tickle his cheeks.

“So many people know now, I’m sorry,” Ilya whispers, voice almost going directly into Shane’s mouth.

“Don’t be, Ilya. I think— I think it was bound to happen.” Shane sighs, and Ilya inhales his breath. Ilya opens his eyes to Shane’s intense gaze set on him. Even with the normal flatness of Shane’s voice, there is something urgent behind it. “I was not paying attention to you, what you were feeling. Your team is great, and my parents are here with you, but you’re so alone. And I kept pushing you away, and then you almost died.”

“It’s okay.” Ilya lowers his head and hides within Shane’s neck. It’s the warmest place in the entire room. He feels as Shane’s skin grows goosebumps when he breathes. “I agreed with the plan.”

“No it isn’t,” Shane counters, his hand tugging at his hair again. Ilya smiles at the feeling. “Because Hayden knows, and technically J.J. as well. My parents have known for years as well, and Rose figured it out months after them. Price doesn’t count, but from your side who even knows? You could’ve died and not one of your friends would know who to call. Svetlana, your *childhood best friend*, learned about us this week.”

“She has third eye, she knew,” he mumbles, but remembers Svetlana will probably kill him for hiding this.

Like in most cases, she would understand, but she’s also definitely going to slap him in the face and curse his dead father (rightfully so). Other than Galina, that’s who Shane should really text. He knows she visited, but Ilya is not sure if they’ve been updating her. They really should.

“But we didn’t tell her,” Shane’s hand travels down Ilya’s back, hovering over all the beauty marks there. He sounds worried again. “She told me you haven’t talked in months,”

“Yes, it has maybe been a little bit hard.” Ilya admits, mainly because it was. But he shrugs, still not moving from the comfort of his love’s embrace. He kisses Shane’s neck and feels triumphant when his breath hitches. “We could have gotten over it.”

Shane sounds distracted, tracing all the marks in Ilya's back behind the fastenings of the hospital gown. "But we shouldn't have to— I want everyone to know how much I actually love you. Hiding it is so painful."

"I know, мой любовник."

"Hey! That word is disgusting in every language," Shane laughs, pulling Ilya away from him. Ilya mourns the touch, but Shane cups his face, looking deeply into his eyes.

"We can talk about this later, but it's probably okay if more people know," he says and Ilya's eyes widen. It's a consideration to throw out their agreed plan. In his head, Ilya would have been the one to propose such a thing, with Shane basically telling him off or leaving forever. "We can— Maybe we can talk to Farah about a new plan. We tell our friends first, we have our wedding, and slowly we can let everyone else know. They can't really make us get a divorce, my mom will sue them."

"Yuna definitely would," Ilya would be scared to cross any Hollander, if he's honest. "You would do that for me?"

"I will do that for *us*," Shane says before giving him another kiss. He keeps talking between kisses. Ilya has not felt this content in a very long time. "Because I love you."

"What about your team?" He has to ask because he doesn't want Shane to have any regrets about being with him. Ilya hates Montreal's team. They're dumb and have never appreciated their Captain, but Shane loves them, and it would destroy him if they genuinely turned their back on him.

Which also has been looking like the most probable result if Ilya and Shane come out. Ilya will be there for Shane whatever happens, but he hopes the assholes know what they're getting into if they don't support their captain.

"I— I don't know," Shane kisses him again, his hands holding his face tighter to hide how they're shaking. "I don't know. Maybe they will understand, maybe they won't. I'll figure something out."

“If they do anything we won’t worry about Montreal because there will be no team left,” Ilya nods to himself. He could probably get Svetlana and Jackie Pike on this. “I will do it myself.”

“Ilya,” Shane says, tone threatening but eyes loving.

“Shane,” he retorts back, knowing they have each other whatever happens.

Thinking back on everything that has happened the past year, Ilya can see how much they just want to be together, no matter what happens. Ilya loves Shane and he is loved back and they accept each other with their all. Come what may, they have family, friends, and each other. They will get through this.

“Hey,” Shane says after a minute. “I love you,”

“I love you too.”

He nods, kissing Ilya and then patting his cheek. He recites the plan they have yet to formally discuss with Farah and their parents, but still, it sounds good. “You will get better, and we will go home. We will get married in the summer, and we let everyone know slowly. We continue our hockey school, we live our life, we continue to make each other happy.”

“We get you pregnant with twins,” Ilya adds, a grin on his lips. “We have eleven kids so we can play against Pike’s built-in hockey team.”

“Hey!” Shane laughs. With the way his eyes crinkle, he looks happy. Ilya can imagine him when the lines around his eyes are much deeper. “We can start with a dog.”

“A dog,” Ilya can’t help the smile he has on his face. The room feels lighter, like it is built on sunshine. “A life with you.”

Shane kisses him once more, just because he can. "A life together."

NHL News ✓ @PuckReportNHL

#Centaur Ilya Rozanov back with a blast after being out for two months. Scores his first two goals after traumatic head injury back in January, bringing Ottawa up to speed. What else can we expect from him this season?

3:19 PM · 14/03/21

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

hey guys what the fuck

7:02 PM · 16/03/21

alex @chironcentaurs

replying to @RozanovUpdated

what's going on? you rarely break character on main

Ilya Rozanov Updates @RozanovUpdates

Ilya Rozanov spotted showing off with supposed engagement ring in newest Ottawa Centaurs photo

[Images attached: the Centaurs celebrating a win, everyone huddled together. In the next photo, you can see Hayes and Boodram laughing while tending to the grill, and in the background you can see Ilya visibly showing a ring in his hand to Harris.]

7:25 PM · 16/03/21

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @RozanovUpdates

haha guys it's bc we are getting married. ahaha guys.

Voyageur Updates @VoyageurUpdates

Rumours say tensions are running high in Montreal's locker room this season! Is Shane Hollander back?

3:24 PM · 17/03/21

j @HOLLANDERS24

replying to @VoyageurUpdates

you sound weirdly brave for someone flaming the captain who has got them the stanley cup THREE times mind you

Voyageur Updates @VoyageurUpdates

replying to @HOLLANDERS24

Well, have you not heard the rumours about Hollander? Dude doesn't just use sticks to play hockey, if you get what I mean.

hayden pike's wife @pikepilled

replying to @VoyageurUpdates

is there truly not a single way for you to be normal

alex @chironcentaurs

i don't think we're talking enough about The Ring and i have various theories

2:09 PM · 17/03/21

Ottawa Centaurs ✔ @Centaurs

Ready for playoffs! Let's go, Centaurs!!

12:27 AM · 18/03/21

deuxmoi @deuxmoiworld

[Image attached: Blurry picture of two people leaving a hockey arena together. The people are not really recognizable, but one of them is obviously Ilya Rozanov. The other is more hidden. There is a cropped Instagram DM at the bottom that says: "Russian hockey player for Canada seen with a man amidst engagement rumours"]

12:27 AM · 20/03/21

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @deuxmoiworld

you're literally never commented on a hockey player before go home

rose landry's left ear @R0SEL4NDRY

replying to @rozanovism

not a hockey fan here but when the hollander guy was dating rose they def did TT

ilya rozanov apologist @rozanovism

replying to @R0SEL4NDRY

ugh obviously i just hate these type of ppl

r/hockey

WHAT THE FUCK????

Brad the Brave: 1 hour ago

Guys my mom asked Hayden Pike for a fanmail video for my birthday or whatever and ???
Explain to me why Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov are kissing in the background. That's disgusting, even for a prank. Ew!

[Attached video]

Replies:

HockeyFan_1997: 45 minutes ago

Ever since Faggot Hunter came out every hockey player has been turning gay. This takes the cake. Bring family values back into hockey!

rozanovism: 7 minutes ago

you can go fuck yourself you homophobic piece of shit

THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE JESUS EITHER @hollanovtruther

I TOLD YOU. I TOLD EVERYONE. I AM ALWAYS RIGHT

9:23 PM · 23/03/21

End Notes

hope you liked <3 not to sound like the d*ffer br*thers but ilya was definitely cursed by a russian witch off-camera sorry my bro

this is my [twitter](#) account. i've been hr pilled over there

i've also been listening to [this](#) while writing if anyone wants to join

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