

## Giving the people what they want

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# **Giving the people what they want**

by [wolfbird72](#)

## Summary

Coffee shop AU apart from it's not an AU - Shane and Ilya literally go to a coffee shop to discuss a new brand collab deal they've been offered. It's their first time out in public together in a setting like this. Ilya is distracted, and Shane is deranged. Set roughly midway through the TV show.

# Chapter 1: A normal legitimate coffee where everything is normal

The first thing Rozanov does when they reach the coffee shop is charge through the door and then drop it so it swings back and almost hits Shane in the face.

“Wow, Rozanov,” Shane says, catching it. “A real gentleman.”

Rozanov, who’s several steps ahead, turns back to stare at him. “What?”

“Nothing,” Shane mutters, stepping through the door and closing it gently behind him. Rozanov has already strode off towards the counter. He's on edge today. Maybe it's lack of caffeine, or the fact that it's 8am and he's been up for hours, or the fact that Shane won't let him smoke anywhere near his apartment. His hand keeps drifting towards his pack of cigarettes, but he hasn't tried to light it this morning, a fact that is annoyingly heart-warming to Shane, who is an idiot.

The cafe is cozy: busy but not packed. It's one of Shane's favourites, just a short walk from his place — he's spent hours here in the last couple of years, working on statements and careful social media posts and interviews. The walls are white apart from one of exposed brick; potted plants are dotted around, hanging from the ceiling or perched on shelves so the leaves trail gently down towards the floor.

Shane spots his favourite table in the corner. A couple with a baby are just leaving.

He's always kind of wondered what it would be like to bring Rozanov here, to pretend for an hour that they're a normal couple. Or not even that — that they're a normal pair of people who can hang out in public without a full-blown public and private freak out from themselves, their fans, their families.

Rozanov is just here for a couple of days. They've had one night together, and he'll have to fly home in a few hours. But they both got emails last week from a company suggesting yet another ad campaign. Unlike the usual brand pitch emails, this one sent a flicker of something deep into Shane's stomach. It's for a major sports drink company - and they've requested a Rozanov/Hollander collab.

Shane could hardly keep his expression straight as he speed read the email. Another ad with *Rozanov*. Another company jumping on their rivalry. Another chance for sweet, delicious deniability.

That's why they're here today. They have the perfect cover story. If anyone asks, Rozanov was in Montreal for a game - true - and stayed over to have a business meeting today over coffee, to discuss the terms of the brand deal - also true. They don't need to know that his booked hotel room was empty last night because he was at Shane's apartment, using his beautiful, snarky mouth and perfect body to methodically test just how many times he could make Shane come in one night. More than Shane would've guessed, it turns out. He could barely speak for hours afterwards. He still feels floppy-boned and emotionally fragile this morning.

Shane shakes his head to clear this image. He can't do this right now.

He hurries up behind Rozanov who's joined the queue and nudges him with an elbow, in a friendly, guys-being-dudes way. This might be their first time in a public place together just the two of them, but it's all very normal and chill. Just two guys going for a business coffee.

Rozanov jumps like he's been electric shocked, spins round and knocks over a cutlery holder on the stand at his elbow.

Shane eyes him, controlling the urge to laugh. "Only me," he says quietly, righting the cutlery. "Let's try and get that corner table. What do you want?"

"What do I want?" Ilya repeats. His gaze flickers to Shane's mouth. Shane is blisteringly certain they're remembering the same image: Shane on his knees in the shower this morning, doing his best to pay Rozanov back for the night before.

Shane swallows hard. "To drink," he clarifies. "Like a coffee."

"Oh." Rozanov looks him up and down, then nods. "OK. I will have..." He turns to the handwritten specials menu and squints. "A spiced hazelnut brown sugar latte."

"A what?" Shane says, by accident. They've obviously never gone out a coffee together — never actually drunk anything together other than a beer or a ginger beer or, that one memorable time, neat vodka — but Shane would've put good money on Rozanov ordering something adult like black coffee. Or at least a latte or a flat white — grown up, caffeinated but still a little bit of flavour. That's what Shane gets, when he's treating himself.

"You don't like spiced sugar lattes?" Rozanov asks, raising an eyebrow. "You have problem with them? They are too fun for Mr Boring here?"

"No I just— it's fine," Shane says. It's not worth it sometimes. Usually, in fact. "You go and get the table. I'll get these."

Rozanov doesn't move, just turns back to the counter. "I will get them."

"You're my guest, Rozanov," Shane says, trying to shove past him. They're next in the queue. "It's on me."

But Rozanov just shakes his head, holding out a strong arm. The muscles in his forearm, revealed by Rozanov's tight t-shirt with its stupid Raiders logo, flex and ripple. Shane pushes against it but it's like trying to break through an iron gate. It's all highly obnoxious. His heart is thumping slightly, which is unrelated.

"What do you want?" Rozanov asks, unmovingly, as the barista calls them forward.

Shane tries one more time to pull him back but is rewarded by a piercing stare that stops him in his tracks, bringing a sudden jolt of heat to his cheeks. Not for the first time, he reflects that being caught in Ilya's gaze is like being pinned under a spotlight, or caught in a trap. Shane opens his mouth, then closes it again.

Rozanov's jaw flexes and he smirks, just slightly. "You can thank me later, Hollander." He turns to the barista. "Hello, yes. I'd like this special hazelnut coffee please." He points at the handwritten sign. "And my friend here will have the gingerbread coffee special."

"What? No, I—" Shane starts to say.

Rozanov frowns at him. "You like ginger, yes?"

"Yes, but—" But not in the form of a ridiculous, sweet, delicious drink that Shane would never allow himself to order.

"Go find us your table." Rozanov turns back to the barista and gives her a flirtatious smile as he gestures at the array of pastries. "You make these yourself here? They look great. Which would you recommend?"

Fuming, Shane marches over to the corner table.

A few minutes later, Rozanov saunters over with their drinks and a muffin on a tray that he clanks down as he slides carelessly into the seat opposite.

"She gave me this for free," he notes, pointing at the muffin. "Also this." He holds up a napkin with a number scribbled on it.

Shane rolls his eyes so hard he's in danger of injuring himself. "Great. Nice." He doesn't get why Rozanov always has to be like this. He's doesn't trust himself to speak, and his chest seems to be hurting. He tries to take his coffee but misjudges it and knocks it, spilling some onto the table.

Rozanov looks at him a moment. "You OK?" Then he adds, "I asked for the blueberry one. Healthier. For you."

He takes the napkin with the number and uses it to wipe up the coffee. Then he scrunches it up and tucks it under the tray. "She's not my type anyway."

"No?" Shane asks, hating the stupid, ridiculous, needy hope that warms his chest.

Rozanov shrugs. "Too chatty. Not boring enough."

"Fuck you, Rozanov," Shane says, snorting a laugh. He takes a sip of coffee. It's delicious.

Rozanov sits back in his chair, both hands deep in his pockets. Shane can see he's turning his phone over and over in his jacket, a nervous tic. He had several missed calls from Russia this morning, Shane guesses from his dad or brother. Rozanov called them back, snapped something brusque, hung up. Then he called back again, to no answer. Seeing his face, Shane almost reconsidered the no smoking rule, but he couldn't bring himself to. The idea of Ilya's poor suffering lungs was too much for him. He just kissed him instead. That worked at the time. But it won't right now.

"So this deal," Shane says, hesitantly, just for something to do.

Rozanov nods briskly. “OK, let’s talk business. You want to do it?”

“Sure,” Shane says, taken aback. “I mean, if you do.” He doesn’t say he’d do anything to spend more time with Rozanov legitimately, in public, around other people. Sure, the entire time his heart thrums like a hummingbird’s and he’s in danger of passing out from the stress. It probably acts like a cardio workout, trying to pretend not to be staring at that column of throat, the curls of hair he wants to dig his fingers into and tug, the smooth muscles that make him feel genuinely faint sometimes. But he’d do it every day if he could. The other month, after a game where they scored three goals each, Rozanov winked at him as they clasped hands among their team mates after the match and Shane choked on his own saliva and had a coughing fit. From a *wink*.

No, if there was ever any question of it — he is not OK at all. Probably hasn’t been for years. He idly wonders how long this state of mind can last; how long it will take to literally kill him.

Rozanov looks around the coffee shop, totally unaware of any of Shane’s deranged inner monologue, and says vaguely, as though he can’t not flirt even though his heart’s not really in it, “Do you think they want us to be topless?”

“Is that a dealbreaker for you?” Shane asks.

The other guy shrugs. “Maybe.”

“As in, you won’t do it unless we’re topless,” Shane says, deadpan, hoping he’s not giving away how desperately he wants Rozanov to come back to him, stop being distracted.

At first he thinks it hasn’t worked. The conversation of the coffee shop thrums around them, and Rozanov is still staring around.

Until — there. Easy to miss, unless you’re watching as closely as Shane always does. A tiny tug of a smile at the corner of Ilya’s mouth. In his pocket, his hand stills and he turns and pins Shane with his gaze again.

Back in the room. Back with him.

“Exactly,” Rozanov says. “We must give the people what they want.”

Shane finds himself smiling back. Oh God, he’s so fucked.

## Chapter 2: Shane cannot be-leaf what's happening

### Chapter Summary

They meet to film the ad, which goes even more stupidly than Shane could ever have imagined. Rozanov won't stop flirting with him and wow, agreeing to do this was a huge mistake.

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"Something's just not working," the assistant is saying, shaking her head. "Is it the costume?"

"Should we offer to strip?" Rozanov mutters, out of earshot of anyone else but loud enough that Shane hears, coughs, then clears his throat.

"I don't see how that would help their creative vision," he murmurs back.

"It probably wouldn't, but at least I'd enjoy it." Rozanov's eyes flash as they glance up and down Shane's body.

"Stop it." Shane crosses his arms and turns his back on him.

### Chapter Notes

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

"So the premise for the ad, guys," the increasingly frazzled director reminds them, "is that you're rivals, yeah?"

It's been several weeks since they agreed to do the energy drink ad during their date in the coffee shop. That's how Shane's been referring to it in his head, anyway. He's not dared use the word to Rozanov, just in case he freaks out or worse, makes a joke out of it. But Shane knows. That was their first date.

Now, the two of them and assorted marketing professionals are gathered in a studio. They're by a small platform set up in front of a bank of cameras where, shortly, the two hockey players will be lined up in positions to demonstrate *rivalry*, as they've been informed. They'll be manoeuvred around by the ad people and made to recreate the same moves again and again. And again. And again. Hopefully they'll be able to get through enough takes without laughing this time.

Shane runs a hand through his hair and sighs. He's grateful for the chance, obviously, but he almost never enjoys this part of the job. He's in it for the hockey, above all; the thrill of competition, of pushing his body to its absolute limits. On the ice, he's graceful, flying. He's always been awkward in front of a camera.

“OK, rivals. We get that,” Rozanov replies with the bare minimum of politeness and the maximum of snark. Shane, who’s slightly in front of him, makes a *calm down* motion behind his back. The director has already snapped at two people and it’s barely 10am. If Rozanov doesn’t play nice, it’ll tip him right over the edge.

“And you’re fighting over the last energy drink,” the director continues. He holds up the bottle of bright blue liquid. Shane can’t figure out if it’s a prop, or if they’re actually going to drink it. It seems a lot more blue than usual – suspiciously so. “And Shane gets it at first, but then you, Ilya, manage to wrestle it off him. Yes?”

“Wait, wrestle it off me?” Shane repeats. He doesn’t see this going well. And why can’t they each have a bottle? The ad seems to be creating an odd scarcity mindset with its current format. Does the company want people *not* to be able to buy the drink?

But it’s not the time, and Shane knows nothing about marketing, and also he’s fully just stalling. The company want to use their hockey rivalry and what people have been constantly referring to as their *chemistry* on the ice to sell this product, and it’s too late for Shane to back out now. All he knows is this is both heaven and hell: so close to Rozanov, being given a legitimate excuse — better, an actual order from a director — to touch him, tussle with him.

They take their places on the small stage, already uncomfortably close. They’re both wearing an odd, watered down version of their hockey kits – Shane’s blue, Rozanov’s red, but without logos. An assistant hands him a bottle of the blue stuff.

“Action,” calls the director. Shane holds the bottle loosely, standing awkwardly in place. Rozanov leans over and grabs it. Shane lets him. Then they both look over at the director as if to say, now what?

“OK, not quite,” says the director, in a voice clearly learnt in a manual on ‘how not to scream at your subordinates or the talent’. “Let’s try that again. Remember you’re going to wrestle for it, yeah?”

This time, Shane refuses to let go and Rozanov squeezes his hand too hard and the bottle collapses in on itself, so they have to wait until a new one can be found.

Then they try starting with both of them holding the bottle. Rozanov’s long, clever fingers wrap around Shane’s and his heart flutters. He can’t look away. “Let’s have focus, Shane,” calls the director. “Look at his hand like that, yes, then up to his face.”

Shane’s eyes move up obediently to find Rozanov inches away, cheekbones about to cut him, eyes dark with intent. He raises an eyebrow. Shane shakes his head and yanks the bottle out of his grip.

“They need to start further apart,” the assistant suggests.

They try that. Then they try choreographing the tussle a bit more, which doesn’t work because neither of them seem to be able to remember more than one move at a time. They just naturally start moving together, until Shane jerks back every time, horrified. They’re being so *obvious*.

“I don’t think the tussle is working,” he blurts.

Rozanov makes a sad face, but doesn’t argue. Maybe he’s also worried about what people might start to notice. “Perhaps I start with the bottle and then Hollander pushes me and I push him back?” he suggests.

The director shrugs and agrees, throwing up his hands. The air of desperation is thick in the air and they’ve only been at it for ten minutes.

Later, they’re filming from another angle. Their shirts, despite Shane’s best efforts, are barely held together. Every time they cut, Rozanov suggests moving the zipper down another notch or two. Shane doesn’t know where he gets off, and it’s especially hard to complain when each time reveals another sliver of smooth, golden skin right in his eyeline, hinting at the curve of Rozanov’s pecs beneath that Shane knows only too well, are perfectly designed to sink the teeth into. Shane must have been this flustered at some point in his life before, but he can’t remember it.

The director and his assistant are watching. Both are scratching their chins thoughtfully. Both seem, to Shane’s disbelief, entirely unmoved by the sweat is starting to glisten on Rozanov’s chest under the hot lights of the studio. No one’s even given it a second glance.

“Something’s just not working,” the assistant is saying, shaking her head. “Is it the costume?”

“Should we offer to strip?” Rozanov mutters, out of earshot of anyone else but loud enough that Shane hears, coughs, then clears his throat.

“I don’t see how that would help their creative vision,” he murmurs back.

“It probably wouldn’t, but at least I’d enjoy it.” Rozanov’s eyes flash as they glance up and down Shane’s body.

“Stop it.” Shane crosses his arms and turns his back on him.

“OK guys, we have a new concept. We’re throwing the whole thing away and starting from scratch. Meet back here in half an hour.”

Without looking back, Shane whips the zipper of his shirt back up to the top and bolts from the studio. He needs to splash his face with cold water and be somewhere far from here, for as long as he can. He can’t believe what a mistake this was.

\* \* \*

“Welcome back, boys. Thanks for waiting. We’re really excited about this new idea. So.” The director, whose hair is now so tousled after repeatedly running his hands through it that it’s three times the size it was this morning, spreads his hands in a *picture the scene* kind of movement. “Here it is: you’re in a jungle. You’re wearing leaves. You’re prowling towards each other like jungle cats.”

Shane and Rozanov are standing beside each other, back in the studio. Shane is feeling better after some cold water and a stern talking to in the mirror. He’s doing fine and he doesn’t need

to panic.

The director makes a few clawlike motions in their direction to demonstrate the prowling, and Shane tries not to laugh at the baffled expression on Rozanov's face, which is the only thing making this situation even a tiny bit bearable.

"Then we, the viewer, realise *this*," the director triumphantly holds up the bottle of blue drink, "is the prey you're prowling towards. You face off, get a couple of swipes in, then you pounce."

"Pounce on what?" Shane can't stop himself checking.

"The bottle, Hollander," Rozanov says helpfully, pointing.

"Right." The director nods seriously. "He gets it. Then one of you wrestles it off the other, open it, takes a drink. We're home and dry. Any questions?" He pauses for a microsecond. "Awesome. Who'd like to be the one to win the drink?"

"I will," says Shane on pure instinct, at the same time as Rozanov says, "Me, obviously."

"Perfect, that's the spirit," the director beams. "We'll just see how it goes in the take, shall we? Let's get you set up."

That can't be it, can it? Shane wonders. But the director is beckoning them towards the wardrobe area, where a table covered in leaves awaits them.

Shane can't see any single outcome in any universe where this ends well. But they're here now, and the wheels are already set in motion.

In another scenario, without Rozanov, he might be worried about how he was coming across, whether he needs to stand up for himself or take a stand. The jungle theme is stupid and he's going to embarrass himself and potentially ruin his career because no one will ever take him seriously again once they've seen his impersonation of a jungle cat.

But it's hard to take anything too seriously while Rozanov is standing there, widening his eyes at Shane and mouthing, "Hollander, what the fuck?"

It seems easiest just to submit to whatever is about to happen next. In a way, he's kind of curious how this shitshow is going to turn out.

So Shane just follows the director over to the leaf table and, in a move that's very unusual for him, decides to stop worrying and just let whatever's going to happen, happen.

That's how a mere half hour later, Shane finds himself opposite Rozanov, facing off in front of a bluescreen, surrounded by fake trees, vines and leaves. They're wearing the kind of outfits that Shane, who likes to think he has a fairly vivid imagination, hasn't even begun to address in all his numerous fantasies involving his hockey archrival. Rozanov is wearing the kind of little... what Shane can only describe as a leaf skirt, or perhaps a leaf loincloth, leather sandals, and leaves in his hair. Shane is wearing a matching set, only his leaves are green and yellow, rather than red and orange.

He vaguely hopes he's giving off the same masculine energy that Rozanov is somehow managing, tousled hair and bare oiled legs and all, but he seriously doubts it.

“That’s the stuff.” The director peers at them, framing them with his hands. “OK, and *action*.”

Neither of them moves for a second. A soundtrack of birds and humming insects starts up, presumably to set the mood. Shane is sure they’re both thinking the same thing, i.e. we’re not seriously doing this, right?

Then Rozanov loosens his knees and drops a little lower and– there’s no other way to describe it. He *becomes* a jungle cat. He prowls towards Shane, one slow step at a time. His movements are elegant, decisive. He starts to circle him.

Shane stands there like a fucking idiot.

“That’s great, Ilya,” the director screeches, clasping his hands. “Shane, just do exactly what he’s doing.”

Shane shakes his head to clear it, trying to understand what the fuck is happening. Rozanov has a dangerous little smile on his face. He holds out his hands towards Shane, loping ever closer. “Come to daddy,” he whispers.

“Fuck *off*,” Shane says automatically, but he laughs, muscles loosening just enough to slide into action. He drops to the same half-crouch and starts to circle too. The blue drink, on the leafy pedestal between them, flashes as it’s lit by a spotlight.

Shane tries not to go straight for it but he can’t handle much more of this, not while Rozanov is getting closer and closer, breathing heavily, sweat glistening on his neck. His eyes are dark with purpose and Shane is– Shane is *not* getting hard. In a panic he darts to the pedestal and grabs the bottle. As instructed, he holds it up to the camera and prepares to take a sip.

Rozanov tackles him like a rugby player and they both crash to the floor. Their limbs tangle together in a mess of heat and hard muscle and fucking *leaves* and the director calls, “Cut” just as Shane scrambles away. He can’t do this. It’s too much. And everyone is watching.

“Sorry.” Rozanov holds out a hand and pulls Shane to his feet. “A bit rough for you, hey?” Shane rubs his face, biting his own tongue. He doesn’t dare reply, not like this.

“Well done boys,” the director calls, already gesturing to the team to fix the mess and bring on more vines and dry ice. “That was great but a bit less forceful next time, OK Ilya?”

The second time, Shane manages to prowl for another few seconds before making it to the pedestal. Rozanov tussles with him for the bottle, tugging at his hand and somehow finding a way to briefly but purposefully pinch his ass out of sight of the camera. Shane drops the bottle and leaps away from him on reflex.

“Again,” calls the director.

The third time, Rozanov appears at his shoulder as Shane reaches the bottle and exhales one long, hot breath directly onto Shane's neck, and Shane trips over his own feet and knocks over the pedestal.

The fourth time, Shane only does about three seconds of prowling before losing his nerve, because Rozanov, who announced before the take that he "has an idea", is already cackling evilly as he takes a flying leap in Shane's direction, arms wide. His leaves are flying off every time he moves, and soon he's going to be naked if he's not careful and oh my *god*—

"Love the energy but a bit premature," the director yells. Shane can't meet Rozanov's eye. "Again."

The fifth time, Rozanov grabs him just as he twists the lid off and Shane, jolting in shock at the sudden contact, squeezes the bottle, causing an eruption over both of them of the blue liquid. It's sticky and tepid and goes some (but unfortunately not enough) of the way towards cooling off the situation for Shane, who can feel the blood pumping around his entire body.

"Sorry," Shane blurts, backing away, trying to brush himself down. Rozanov just laughs.

"Reset!" the director calls. "I think it's time for a break anyway. Let's take 15."

His assistant hurries up to see if they want anything. Shane requests a cup of cold water. "And is there a shower nearby?" he asks hopefully, when someone else comes running over, already carrying two paper cups.

The assistant shrugs, looking doubtful. "I can ask. You'll have to be quick though, we don't do long breaks here."

"Oh, he's very quick," Rozanov says, teeth gleaming as he smiles. The assistant clears her throat and stammers something incomprehensible as she stumbles away.

## Chapter End Notes

Shower scene coming next! Please forgive all typos and inaccuracies, I wrote this in a fever dream

## Chapter 3: Showering alone? Sounds boring

### Chapter Summary

Rozanov follows Shane to the shower. Shane accidentally uses his first name for the first time. Basically just some yearning.

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Then there's a knock on the shower door.

Soap suds drip into Shane's eyes and he splutters and dashes them away. "Get out!" he says again. "Get out, get out, what the fuck, get out. Someone's gonna come in any second!!"

"Calm down, Hollander," Rozanov says, as though Shane is being totally insane. He knocks again. "They sent me to come get you."

Shane rubs his face hard, then tilts his head under the shower to rinse the stinging soap out of his eyes. He takes a deep breath, inhales some water, and chokes, briefly. Then he unlocks the door, just so he can tell Rozanov again, to his face this time, to fuck off.

Before he can get the words out, Rozanov is pushing inside the cubicle with him.

"Can you quit fucking around?" Shane hisses, checking no one's listening and then shoving Rozanov in the chest. "Someone is going to notice."

Rozanov frowns, barely stumbling. "Who? Everyone is busy," he says. "Running around after your little requests."

"It's not weird to ask for a glass of water, asshole. Or a shower." Shane frowns down at his paper cup. They're standing in the corner of the studio, just out of earshot of everyone else - or so Shane prays. "This energy drink is gross. And sticky."

"Don't let them hear you say that," Rozanov picks pensively at the rim of his own cup, but stays a merciful distance away - just enough so that Shane can't push him again, or drag him closer, either. "They will fire you and leave me here alone, and I will have to be the star."

"You're already the star," Shane says absently. It's only when Rozanov snorts that he realises he's said it.

"What?" Shane shrugs, embarrassed. This doesn't seem like a snort-worthy statement. It's just true, isn't it? Everyone knows it.

It's normal for Shane to be staring at Rozanov whenever they're in the same room, to be unable to look at anyone else, to have his eyes drawn right back to Rozanov again and again and again. To be exquisitely, horribly aware of his every movement and gesture as though they're being drawn onto Shane's own skin. But everyone feels like that about Boston's star player, right? "You're... magnetic. Or whatever."

Rozanov's expression softens as he looks at Shane, just for a moment - his eyes crinkling, jaw moving as he swallows.

"To see myself through your eyes," he muses, so quietly Shane thinks he's misheard.

Then he shakes it off, back to his usual smirking self, and leans in close to whisper in Shane's ear, "It's just because you can't get enough of this body."

"It's not ju-," Shane starts to protest. But he stops himself. He has to, because pulling on that thread is far too dangerous.

Where could it lead? They're strictly fuck buddies, strictly no feelings. That was always the agreement. Whether or not he's kept himself awake the last several weeks thinking of the night they got to spend in Shane's flat, their first time indulging in the pure luxury of a full night, the soft, delicious joy of waking up together and curling himself into their shared warmth in Shane's bed which even now smells faintly of Rozanov's signature scent of clean sweat and smoke and the cold of the ice that somehow seems trapped in his hair; whether or not the thought of Ilya in bed with someone else makes Shane nauseous; whether or not he's starting to question if the way he practices calling him *Ilya* in his head is strictly normal fuck-buddy behaviour - he knows that's what Rozanov wants. No feelings. Nothing to make it more complicated than it already is. Shane gets it.

And Rozanov is standing in front of him, brow mildly furrowed, waiting for a response. A normal, chill, non-insane response, one that gives away no more than what they've already agreed.

Shane can give it. "Stop flirting with me while we're working," he mutters.

Rozanov just sighs. "That is 90% of the time we spend together. If you can call wiping the ice with your ass *working*."

"I'm going to shower," Shane declares, spotting the assistant beckoning him over. "You're not invited," he adds in a hissed whisper.

Rozanov pouts and makes to follow as Shane spins around to walk away, but Shane gives him a look and he holds up both hands in surrender.

\* \* \*

Five minutes later, Shane is under the deliciously hot jet of the shower, trying to wash the stickiness of the day off his skin.

The room is small, just two small cubicles and a row of sinks, and steamed up instantly when he switched the shower on. It's pleasantly cocoon-like, or it would be if he could get his breathing under control.

He doesn't know why he thought he'd be able to make this work. He won't make that mistake again. It's hard enough having to see Rozanov on the ice. Hard enough spotting the number 81 at every turn when they play the Raiders, blocking him or skating around him or... or *winking* at him. Hard enough having Rozanov brought up in every media interview and having to remember how he's *supposed* to feel about him, and moderate his reaction to not be suspicious.

But having to do all that in a stupid setting with advertising professionals telling them how to act as well? Fuck it. It's not possible - it's a ridiculous ask. Well, Shane's learnt his lesson now. He won't make that mistake again. Fool him once, shame on him; fool him every single time with Rozanov and-

Outside his cubicle, he hears what sounds like the washroom door banging shut. He squints, trying to see, although it's pointless. He's locked in a cubicle; he won't be able to see the door.

It's probably just one of the team coming to see how long he'll be, to hurry him into another stupid costume. But... there's something charged in the atmosphere. The feel of the room has changed. He knows that's insane, of course he does, and yet- he could pick Rozanov out of a line up of hockey players in full kit including helmets at a hundred paces. He *knows* when he's in the room, and somehow-

That's when a garland of red and orange leaves is slung over the top of the cubicle wall.

"Rozanov," Shane exclaims. "Get out. What the fuck."

There's no answer, just an electric silence.

Is he stripping? He's surely not stripping.

A second later, the leaves are followed by a pair of red underpants, strung merrily across the top of the cubicle like a decoration. Then there's a knock on the shower door.

Soap suds drip into Shane's eyes and he splutters and dashes them away. "Get out!" he says again. "Get out, get out, what the fuck, get out. Someone's gonna come in any second!!"

"Calm down, Hollander," Rozanov says, as though Shane is being totally insane. He knocks again. "They sent me to come get you."

Shane rubs his face hard, then tilts his head under the shower to rinse the stinging soap out of his eyes. He takes a deep breath, inhales some water, and chokes, briefly. Then he unlocks the door, just so he can tell Rozanov again, to his face this time, to fuck off.

Before he can get the words out, Rozanov is pushing inside the cubicle with him, crowding Shane with his bare chest, his curls, the hot wetness of the shower and the billowing steam all around them. He's fully, vividly naked.

"They didn't tell you to get in the shower with me," Shane almost screams. Rozanov locks the door behind them, as Shane's mind wipes completely blank. He'll never get used to the planes of Rozanov's chest, the freckles scattered across his torso, the restrained strength of his limbs. He would be a monster to even wish for it.

"They said you were going to take too long and I said," Rozanov's eyes glint as he steps closer and runs a hand up Shane's chest, cups the side of his neck, "I could help with that."

He presses his body to Shane's, their skin sliding together. He's hard, but so is Shane - just like he has been for what feels like hours.

"And it is boring to shower alone, yes?" Rozanov's voice is a murmur, right into Shane's ear.

Shane doesn't know if he's going to shout or shove Rozanov away or cry wild, frustrated tears of joy. His skin is fizzing with sensation, with the hot water and Rozanov shoving against him, pushing him back against the cold wall, and he's going to-

Rozanov kisses him, deep and strong and forceful. And Shane does what he always does - he kisses him back. It's not because he wants to, even. It's more than that. It's like holding onto a life raft when you're drowning; like gulping water when you haven't drunk for days. It's beyond his control. He *needs* this.

Rozanov kisses him, and Shane drinks him in, shoving back against him, hands buried deep in his hair and one leg hooking up around Ilya's hip, pulling him closer and closer and closer and - "Ilya," Shane finds himself murmuring as hands roam over his body and further down, towards where he needs them. He wants to say no, say they should stop, it's too risky. But instead, all that comes out is, "Ilya."

There's a sudden, shocked moment.

Rozanov, holding Shane's hips in both hands, presses his forehead to Shane's. He's a muscled statue, a Greek god carved from marble. The water is still running, heat coursing over them both, but everything else has frozen still.

Shane fights the urge to bite back the words, to yelp something else, to apologise. He shouldn't have said that.

A tiny part of him is glowing warm though, at the sight of Ilya frozen so still - all because Shane used his first name. It doesn't mean *nothing* to him after all. It can't. Or he wouldn't have done that, would he?

The hope is almost worse than anything.

Then Ilya drops slowly to his knees, hands still framing Shane's hips. The water runs down his shoulders. It's the most beautiful tableau, somehow, made beautiful just by Ilya's presence: the horrible beige shower tiles, and the droplets cascading, and the curls of darkened hair twining across his neck.

Shane hardly dares breathe.

At last, Ilya presses his cheek against Shane's lower stomach and looks up at him. His eyelashes are wet and his eyes - his eyes have an expression Shane's never seen before.

"Say it again." His voice is so quiet Shane is sure he's misheard. The water is loud, and the steam makes him want to cough, and- "Say it again," Rozanov says, one more time. "Please."

"Ilya." It's too easy; it's like unblocking a dam. "Ilya," Shane pulls him to his feet and kisses his neck. "Ilya, Ilya."

He feels himself being lifted up, pressed against the wall, Ilya's hands roaming all over him. His cock is hard against his stomach, Ilya's against his thigh, and the sensations are overwhelming.

Then he's standing again on both feet, and a hot mouth is wrapped around his cock and he's throwing his head back, groaning, biting his palm to stop himself making any noise. Rozanov was always good at this but he's only got better, become perfectly skilled in the art of *making Shane come*, studying it with his full attention every time until now, somehow, they're at the point where just the thought of it makes him blush and the reality still results in embarrassing cut-short encounters because nothing should feel this good.

He's drifting up out of his body and seeing stars and really, this must be heaven. When the peak hits, he blacks out for a second.

He comes back to himself with Ilya's mouth still dropping kisses on his lower stomach, tracing patterns on his skin. It's too much. It's not enough. He wants more of him, wants him everywhere.

Apart from there are people waiting for them.

"Fuck," Shane blurts, dropping back to earth. People could be searching for them right now, and they know exactly where they are. "They'll be coming to get us! Oh shit, they're gonna think-"

"I locked the outer door." Ilya wipes a hand across his mouth as he looks up at Shane - not briskly. Lovingly. "Surprised you didn't already do that."

"I- I didn't know you could." Shane rubs both hands over his face. He generally would like to pretend he's not crashing out after he comes like that, so as not to give Rozanov the satisfaction. But he's obviously not fooling anyone. There's a very real chance he's going to pass out for real, or collapse onto the shower floor and slide under the cubicle wall and get stuck.

"I was just joking, before." Rozanov presses his mouth to Shane's neck, getting back to his feet easily, like the athlete he is. "They don't need us back. It's a wrap for today." He stays there, warm breath against his skin. Then he adds, quietly as if trying it out for the first time aloud, "Shane."

Shane's heart splits into a thousand pieces. He actually looks down at his chest to see if it's noticeable.

"We can't do jobs together like this anymore," Shane says, in a panic, just for something to say. "It's not working."

Ilya looks down at Shane's crotch, pointedly. "Seems to be working well enough," he says.

Shane shakes his head. He drops back against the shower wall, his limbs loose. He wishes he could remember how to be annoyed with Rozanov. But right now, after he's just called him *Shane* for the first time... no. He just can't do it.

Later, when they eventually turn off the shower and dry off, Shane finds himself staring at Ilya again as he pulls on the spare clothes he brought for them both. Ilya brought Shane's own shoes and socks and everything, and a spare towel for him. It shouldn't be this sweet.

Montreal aren't scheduled to play Boston for weeks. They won't see each other until then.

Shane is fine. He can do this. Seeing those freckles disappearing under a t-shirt shouldn't hurt as much as it does.

*Ilya*, he says again, in his head. Just because he can.

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