

ready, set, go!

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77244931) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77244931>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Troy Barrett/Harris Drover , David Hollander/Yuna Hollander
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Troy Barrett , Harris Drover , Ruby Pike , Jade Pike , Original Female Character(s) , Original Children of Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov , Anya Ilya Rozanov's Dog
Additional Tags:	5 + 1 , Timeline What Timeline , Loosely Canon Compliant , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Autistic Shane Hollander , it's not outright mentioned but its alluded to , Board Games , Hockey , Game: Wii Sports , yahtzee , The Hollanders are weirdly competitive about Yahtzee , Strip Poker , Candyland (Board Game) , Shane Hollander is competitive af , Fluff and Humor , Slice of Life
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-07 Words: 6,854 Chapters: 1/1

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by [pysanky](#)

Summary

It was a well-known fact in the hockey world that Shane Hollander was competitive. After all, you didn't win Rookie of the Year and be hailed as the player of a generation without some amount of ambition, drive, and competitive edge. However, Ilya Rozanov wasn't sure if the world understood just how competitive Shane Hollander could really be.

(or: five times where Shane would rather die than let someone else win, and one time that it's different)

Notes

hello! this is my first time posting for this fandom so bear with me haha as i get a feel for the characters and their dynamics (hopefully they don't seem too ooc in this!) I chose to blend the books and show and drew on characterization from both

this was lowkey inspired by the episode 6 exchange between yuna and shane and the line "do you let dad win at cards?"

all mistakes are my own, i apologize in advance

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

1. Puck this

It was a well-known fact in the hockey world that Shane Hollander was competitive. After all, you didn't win Rookie of the Year and be hailed as the player of a generation without some amount of ambition, drive, and competitive edge. However, Ilya Rozanov wasn't sure if the world understood *just how* competitive Shane Hollander could really be.

It never interfered with his playing, of course. He was still perfect on the ice and off of it too, always making the right pass and saying the right thing (in fucking French of course) on camera. He always smiled just perfectly and signed with the right brands and appeared in campaigns around the world, looking so goddamned perfect. Maybe it was because of this seeming perfection, this single-focused drive to be the absolute best, that Ilya realized just how deep Shane's competitive streak went. Because why would the other man be good, when he could be the *best*?

Ilya had his own competitive streak too of course; he wouldn't have made it as far as he had if he didn't. But there were some things in his life off the ice where he just didn't...care. It was okay if he didn't make the best egg sandwich or if he didn't get every single brand deal that he spoke with his agent about. On the ice was an entirely different story. He would out-chirp any and every single player he encountered. He would play like a menace and grin with blood in his teeth the entire time because being competitive made him feel alive. And the only person who seemed to ever even come close to matching this drive on the ice to be the absolute *best* was Shane Hollander.

Sometimes though, Ilya wished he wasn't such a fucking competitive perfectionist.

"Hollander," he rolled the name around in his mouth, bending over at the center line and smirking across the way at where Shane Hollander was doing the same. The other man had just scored a goal on them, but the only tell of how proud he was was the twitch of his lips as he looked back at Ilya. His gaze was defiant. "Good goal. Shame it is only one you will score tonight."

Hollander huffed out a "Fuck off, Rozanov. You wish," and then shoved his mouthguard in.

The puck dropped and Hollander won the face-off, skating away with a defiant glint in his eyes and a slightly smug expression. Of fucking course.

There was a crash as Ilya sent Shane Hollander into the boards, stealing the puck and laughing as he skated off. The game had been tense, the two of them circling each other and Ilya chirping him at every available chance. Hollander had so far taken it in stride, but Ilya

recognized the glint in his dark eyes. The other man was about to hand him his ass and secretly enjoy every second of it.

A few minutes later, Hollander checked Ilya into the boards even harder and skated off with barely a glance in his direction. Ilya watched him go, his ribs aching, and he smiled a moment later as he took off after him.

In the third period, they found themselves once again bent over center ice. Ilya met Hollander's dark gaze and he grinned. So far they were tied. Anytime Hollander scored, Ilya would win the next face-off and score to make it even.

"Enough time for a hat trick, I think," he said, just to watch Hollander's nostrils flare slightly as he glared at him. Then his nose scrunched and he adopted an expression which Ilya had (fondly and against his will) dubbed the "angry kitten" look. "Good game though."

Hollander barely won the face-off and Ilya went skating after him, heart racing as he bit back a smile at how easy it was to spark Hollander's competitive streak. It was delightful really.

The game ended 3-2 in the Voyageurs' favor. Hollander's grip was firm as they shook hands and there was a smile hiding in the corners of his lips. Ilya nodded back and decided to goad Hollander later; the sex would be amazing, he was sure.

2. Full House

There was a *clatter* as Shane aggressively shook the red cup in his hands, his palm uncovering the opening as he dumped the contents onto the table. Five dice came tumbling out, rolling across the wooden tabletop and coming to a stop under his critical gaze.

"*Blyat!*" Ilya groaned out beside him at the same time that David and Yuna Hollander shook their heads in fond exasperation.

There was a small grin on Shane's face as he looked down at the five identical sixes on the table. "Yahtzee."

"It should have been me," Ilya groaned dramatically as Shane wrote the score down on the sheet of paper and passed the cup over to his boyfriend. "I think I prefer to play this game when it is just your parents."

Shane gave him a look and said, "That's because you like the attention," at the same time that Yuna cooed over the six-foot-three Russian hockey player and patted his hand consolingly.

He didn't care that his parents doted on Ilya; in fact, he was grateful for it. Ilya deserved more softness in his life and adults that genuinely cared about him. It was just that, well, sometimes, Shane found himself feeling jealous. Because he wanted to be the favorite son, the best son, the perfect one. And that was unrealistic, he knew that, but he couldn't help it, there was always this competitive drive in him that made him want to be the *best*. Maybe that was why he was a little too invested in this Yahtzee game.

Something in his expression must have given him away because Yuna reached across the table a moment later and squeezed his hand, smiling at him and then reaching up to gently tuck a strand of hair behind his ear. He blushed, because he was a few years shy of thirty and it shouldn't have mattered, but his mom would always make him feel like he was a little kid again.

Beside him, Ilya rolled the dice onto the table and let out a loud *whoop*, his blue eyes crinkling in the corners as he grinned down at the large straight that had just rolled out onto the table.

Well. Fuck.

David only got three sixes; Yuna got her small straight. And then it was Shane's turn again.

Glancing at the score sheet, Shane saw that he was in the lead but only barely. Ilya was close behind, having gotten his large straight, four of a kind, and most of the upper section. He needed to widen the gap to win and secure his place as champion; the itch under his skin was the same one he got on the ice.

A knee knocked against his and he glanced up to find Ilya smiling teasingly over at him. "You have run through all possible plays, yes, *Captain?*"

His parents laughed a little at that and Shane rolled his eyes, taking a deep breath and shaking the cup. By the end of his turn he had managed to secure his large straight. He was maybe, perhaps, possibly grinning a little as he filled out the score sheet.

His boyfriend made a big production out of his next turn, shaking the cup in multiple positions and making Shane and his parents laugh as he told them quite seriously that it was "Russian tradition to blow on dice for good luck" before rolling them. Maybe Shane shouldn't have laughed so much though because by the end of his turn Ilya had five ones staring back up at them all.

Whatever, he had gotten all sixes before him.

Ilya caught his gaze, lips stretched into a wide smile that made Shane's heart melt all over again. This warm affection dimmed a little when his boyfriend chirped him a moment later, saying, "Is too bad you will lose this game too, *moy zloy kotenok.*"

Oh it was so fucking on. Fuck Ilya Rozanov and his goddamn mouth. (Shane had said the same thing earlier that morning in their bed, but for vastly different reasons.)

He muttered as much under his breath in French and although his boyfriend didn't understand the language, he clearly understood the tone if his delighted laughter was any indication. Across the table, Yuna shook her head at him with a small smile, obviously having caught a little of what Shane had said.

The next time he rolled he got all sixes. Again. And Ilya groaned dramatically even as he closed the distance between them and kissed him, smiling widely and laughing as he teased about Shane's mile-wide competitive streak. He smiled back, confident in the knowledge that he would get the upper section bonus, have the highest score, and beat all of them soundly.

And he did, after he rolled his full house in one roll on the next turn.

3. Grand Slam

"Come on, Uncle Ilya! Just one game, please!"

Jade and Ruby Pike were hard to deny, but this wasn't exactly news to Ilya Rozanov.

Sighing, he looked down at the twins and pretended to think for a moment, biting back his smile as they fidgeted impatiently. Eventually, he decided to be benevolent and put them out of their misery. "I guess I could play."

The Pike twins cheered and each grabbed his hand, dragging him into the living-room-turned-war-zone. There were toys scattered across the rug like debris, TV remotes tucked into random places, Legos placed like land mines, and uncapped markers just waiting to fall and stain something. Ilya reveled in the chaos of it all.

Today was Jackie's birthday and the Pikes had decided to invite what seemed like half of Canada to their house. Most of the crowd had moved outside by this point, but Ilya had chosen to take a break inside, playing with the kids and keeping an eye on Shane. His boyfriend tended to get stressed out in larger crowds.

"What game are we playing?" Ilya asked the girls, his accent making them pause for a moment as they thought through what he had said before Ruby replied, enthusiastically pulling him over to where a game console was situated near the television.

"Wii Sports!" the small Pike said, grabbing a handful of controllers and handing a bright pink one off to Ilya.

"We will probably need four players, *da?* To make it even?" he asked, eyeing the game as it booted up on the screen. "But we only have three."

The twins shared a look of horror at this realization.

"Well," Jade said slowly, "I guess Ruby and I could...take turns?" She said this the same way one might suggest giving up sweets for an entire year. Ilya hid his smile.

“I have solution. Maybe.” He pulled his phone out and texted *Jane*.

Ilya: come play wii sports with small pikes

Jane: Are you with them right now?

Ilya: yes

Ilya: small children are pleading

They weren't. They were actually muttering between themselves as they tried to determine a fourth player so they wouldn't have to share. It sounded as though Arthur was *not* an option.

Ilya: they are crying hollander

Jane: I really doubt that, but ok.

Jane: What if people see us together?

Ilya: we are just two friends playing game with children

Ilya: is totally innocent

Shane found them a few minutes later, a ginger ale sweating in his hand and a nervous expression on his face. It eased slightly when he spotted Ruby and Jade though, a small smile making its way onto his face as the girls carefully hugged him.

“Uncle Shane, Uncle Shane,” they chorused, voices rising loud enough to make Shane wince. Ilya watched him carefully, suspecting that he was probably overstimulated between the large crowd, loud noises and constant fear of them being found out somehow. “Will you be the fourth player?”

Shane nodded, looking simultaneously relieved to have found an excuse and also nervous to be around small children for a prolonged period. Ilya didn't understand why his boyfriend got so anxious around kids; he was honestly great with them. Sure, he didn't yell and roughhouse with them or tease them the way that Ilya did, but he had a calming effect on them, his usual intensity giving way for a softer, gentler sort of acceptance that made children feel safe around him. The small Pikes adored him, just as they adored Ilya.

“What are we playing?” he asked as he found a coaster to set his ginger ale down and accepted a white controller from Jade.

“Tennis!” Ruby yelled. Quite the lung capacity on that one.

They split into teams after that, Jade and Shane taking one side while Ilya and Ruby took the other. Ilya looked over at his teammate, expression serious.

“We will beat them.” It wasn't a question. Ruby grinned back at him; one of her front teeth was missing.

Across the way, Shane was crouched down in front of Jade and gesturing toward the TV. He looked endearingly awkward and Ilya wished that he could take a photo. He couldn't though, not with so many people around. Hayden and Jackie might know, but they were the only ones at this party. Plus, "bros" who ran a charity together didn't normally take cute photos of each other interacting with their friends' children.

They started the game, Ruby serving with a wild swing of her controller that nearly hit Ilya in the gut like a slapshot. Jade returned it with a wild swing of her own, her controller flying from her grasp but fortunately kept attached to her by the wrist band. This time, Ilya returned the hit, barely swinging the controller and grinning over at his boyfriend; the look that met him was *intense*. Gone were Shane's anxious glances around the room and his closed off expressions, his facade against a world that judged him at every turn and always asked too much from him. Instead, Ilya was met with intensity, the kind he normally saw on the ice. Competitive Shane had clearly joined them then.

His boyfriend returned the hit with perfect form, treating the Nintendo controller like it was an actual racquet rather than a small, plastic rectangle.

Ruby missed the return and Ilya did too, distracted by the long stretch of Shane's arm and the way his dark eyes had narrowed as he looked at the screen. The small Pike looked back at him, admonishing slightly and he accepted it with grace. Across the living room, there was a slight smugness to Shane's gaze.

This time, it was Ilya's turn to serve and he put a little more effort behind the hit. Shane returned it, once again following through with perfect form as though he were on an actual court rather than standing in the Pike's disaster zone of a living room. There was a fire in his eyes as he glanced over at Ilya, and Ilya nearly started laughing.

Fucking hell. This was turning his boyfriend on.

Ruby returned the pass and Jade swung wildly, missing the ball on-screen by a mile and leaving Shane to deftly pick up the hit. Ilya swung hard, putting all of his years of experience on various courts and in countless gyms to slam it back to the other side of the court on the screen. Nearby, Shane grunted softly as he swung back with the same ferocity, his competitiveness not allowing him to be outdone if he could help it.

Ilya couldn't help it; he started laughing. Ruby looked at him like he was insane, but eventually she was laughing too, shrieking with delight as they continued to trade the ball back and forth. They ended up playing four more games until the girls started complaining and had lost interest. Shane and Jade had won three out of four.

The twins eventually ran out of the living room, saying something about cake and ice cream, and Ilya watched them go for a long moment before looking back over at his boyfriend. Shane was already watching him, a competitive glint in his eyes.

He held up his bright pink controller, smirking. "Another round?"

Shane grinned and set the game up. "Hope you're ready to lose, Rozanov."

4. Do Not Pass Go

If there was one game that Shane hated playing with Ilya Rozanov more than anything else it was fucking Monopoly. Seriously. Fuck that shit.

“You are just mad because you cannot beat me,” his fiancé said smugly, moving his token around the board and somehow managing to avoid landing on literally all of Shane’s properties.

“No, it’s because you literally monopolize the game,” Shane muttered, staring down at the board and trying to visualize his next step. It wasn’t his turn yet though; it was Troy’s.

“Is that not the point of game, *da?*” Ilya asked, spreading his hands wide and looking back at Shane with faux innocence. Shane didn’t believe it for one fucking second.

“You are kind of a menace, Cap,” Troy said, rolling the dice and groaning as he landed on one of Ilya’s *many* properties and had to pay rent. Ilya smugly counted out the fake money, his blue eyes catching Shane’s dark, narrowed gaze. The fucker had the audacity to *wink* at him a moment later.

“*You look like an angry kitten, my love,*” Ilya teased in Russian as Shane rolled the dice. He gave him a flat look and moved his token. He had chosen the thimble because he liked the texture of it and it was the same piece he had been playing with since childhood. Ilya, of course, had chosen the dog.

(“It is like Anya!” he had exclaimed at the start of the game, holding up the piece and grinning when Anya had come racing over at the sound of her name. Her wagging tail had nearly cleared the board before they could even start.)

Fortunately, he landed on one of the few remaining properties that had not yet been snatched up by his real estate tycoon of a fiancé. He looked at the other defiantly as he bought it, his competitive streak flaring.

Harris went after him and the other man simply smiled and laughed his way through his turn, grinning even as he handed over money to Ilya after he landed on one of his seemingly endless number of properties. Shane had to clamp down on the judgement that he was sure was trying to force its way onto his face. Across the coffee table, Ilya winked at him. Again.

Shane forced himself to analyze the board after that, approaching it the same way he would a hockey game. He looked for the openings, he thought over the plays. He passed *Go*, he collected his money, he made smart choices. While the others laughed and joked—and in Ilya’s case made teasing comments in Russian that had him furiously blushing and giving him looks—he quietly orchestrated the fall of his fiancé’s Monopoly empire.

By the end of the game, he had bought out most of Ilya's properties and owned three-quarters of the board. Harris had long since declared bankruptcy and Troy was groaning in exasperation as he paid Shane for the third roll in a row. Shane knew his expression was likely flat, but inside he felt the same adrenaline rush that he got after scoring a hat trick or skating faster than anyone else on the ice. Across the coffee table, he caught Ilya's piercing gaze and the other smiled at him. It wasn't cocky or leering; it was a gentle, soft thing that hid in the corners of his lips and in the way his eyes crinkled slightly. Shane felt his own small smile bloom too.

He kept that small smile in mind when they started yelling at each other a few moments later as he tried to buy the other's last property and Ilya accused him of fraud. Harris and Troy just watched on with fond, exasperated looks.

5. Strip It Down

Ilya sighed for what felt like the tenth time in five minutes and lolled his head back over the arm of the sofa, groaning.

Across from him, Shane glanced up from his book, expression unimpressed. "What's wrong?"

It was one of those rare summer evenings that made Ilya's brain go quiet and made him feel like maybe, just maybe he was going to be okay. The feeling of Shane's feet tapping lightly against his own as he read also helped with that.

It had been a perfect day though, truly. One that made all the other days and years of heartbreak and pain worth it. They had gone for a run with Anya that morning, her gleeful barks echoing as she chased after them along the water's edge. Ilya hadn't been able to contain his own laughter after a while, collapsing onto the soft grass of the lawn behind the cottage when they returned and Anya had crawled over him, tail wagging and tongue licking every inch of him that she could reach. Shane had stretched beside him, a small smile on his face as he watched the two of them.

He had gotten him off in the shower after that, pressing his husband—and god, he still couldn't believe he got to say that even now after a year—against the tiles and sliding to his knees. Shane had tangled his fingers in Ilya's curls and shouted his name as he came and Ilya may have been more than a little smug when he leaned back against the shower wall.

Breakfast had been the usual routine too—healthy for Shane, sugar for Ilya—and the day had passed in a blur of sun-kissed peace. And now here they were, the fire crackling in the fireplace, Shane's toes flexing against his in that way they always did whenever the other man was reading, and Anya curled up in her dog bed nearby. There was a half-shredded Centaurs toy tucked under her paws. It was perfect—except Ilya was *bored*.

And that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. Much of his life had been a series of unfortunate, chaotic events, and he would rather have boring peace than ever return to that. And he wasn't upset that he was bored, he was just restless.

Which brought them to this moment, Shane's dark eyes watching him as Ilya sighed yet again and looked back at his husband.

"I am bored," he groaned, putting his phone down.

Shane arched a perfect dark eyebrow at him and went back to reading. It was some newly released work on the early history of Canadian hockey techniques. It sounded like just the thing the beautiful, neurotic person across from him would enjoy reading.

"Read a book," his husband said drily.

Ilya groaned. "I do not want to read some boring dumb book."

Shane *humphed* and kept reading. The firelight flickered off his glasses.

Suddenly, an idea popped into Ilya's head and he grinned, shimmying further down the sofa so that he could use his own bare foot to caress Shane's leg above the edge of his sock. Dark eyes flicked back up to him once again.

Ilya grinned. "We should play a game."

The eyebrow arched again. "I'm reading."

"*Ugh*, Hollander, you are so boring."

He groaned the words out, but there was no mistaking the affection hidden behind them.

This time, it was Shane that sighed as he fully looked up from the book. "What game?"

His expression may have been one of feigned unimpression, but Ilya could see the interest in his eyes and the slight smile hiding in the quirk of his lips. If there was one thing that hooked Shane Hollander faster than anything, it was the idea of a competition, a game, something that he could *win*.

Ilya pushed himself up from the sofa and crawled over to his husband, trailing his fingers up the other's thigh. "Strip. Poker."

Below him, Shane blushed, red blossoming underneath his freckles. Ilya wanted to coo over the sight.

"You have never played?" He asked, the answer obvious.

Shane gave him a look. "You have?"

Ilya nodded and reached up a hand to delicately trace a finger over the other's freckles. He had played it a few times with Svetlana back in the day, and it had always been fun. The

thought of playing with Shane was even more enticing though.

“Is okay,” he promised, his shit-eating grin sliding into place as he leaned forward until there were only a few centimeters left between them. “Is fun game to win *and* lose.”

Shane looked like he was auditioning for a role as a boiled lobster with how red he had turned. He cleared his throat though and looked back at Ilya with a defiant gaze; it was the same one he wore on the ice too.

“What do I get when I win?” He asked, because *of course* there had to be a prize if Hollander was involved.

“*When?*” Ilya asked, unable to contain his smile. “Bold word, Hollander.”

“Fuck off.”

Ilya’s smile only grew though and he leaned in, catching the shell of Shane’s ear between his teeth and tugging gently. “You get to see me. Is that not prize enough?”

The other’s breath hitched slightly and he let out a light laugh. “I already see that every day, Ilya.”

He hummed and bit gently at the soft skin behind Shane’s ear. “Mmm, yes, but is sexy.”

Shane’s breath hitched again and Ilya was certain that he’d finally won him over. But, then —“I feel like there should be something more motivating than just seeing someone strip.”

Ilya resisted the urge to drop his head onto the other’s chest and groan. Instead, he kissed him on the jaw and said the one thing that he knew would work no matter what, no matter where, every single time. “I think you are afraid to play because you know you will lose and will be bad at stripping.”

One, two, three... “Oh, fuck off!”

Shane pushed him off and shot up from the sofa to grab a deck of cards from a drawer across the room. Anya’s head popped up from where she had been curled up, and she watched them curiously for a moment before snorting softly and placing her head back on her paws. Ilya gazed at her fondly for a moment before turning to watch with smug satisfaction as the dark-haired man began to shuffle the cards. A few minutes later, after the low coffee table had been cleared off and Shane had dragged over a low ottoman so that he could sit across from Ilya, the cards were dealt.

“You know how to play?” Ilya asked, smirking as Shane glared at him with his scrunched-up angry kitten expression. They had played poker with David and Yuna after family dinner last week.

“You’re such an asshole.”

Ilya winked and the game started.

Credit had to be given where credit was due—and Ilya was more than happy to pat himself on the back for this. It was a fantastic idea.

“Why are you so smug?” Shane asked, squinting at him. “You know you’re losing, right?”

Ilya smirked as he slowly stripped his shirt off, shrugging out of the soft material and throwing it off to somewhere on his left. A moment later, a slightly dazed expression came over Shane’s face as his eyes tracked over the newly exposed skin of Ilya’s chest and then a flush spread over his freckled cheeks as his eyes snapped back up to meet Ilya’s gaze. That right there was why he was smug despite currently losing. Truly, it was a win-win no matter how you looked at it.

Shane rolled his eyes and pushed his glasses back up on his nose. Earlier, when he had lost a hand, he had started to take them off only for Ilya to practically throw himself on him before he could get that far. His socks had come off instead; Ilya fully intended for the glasses to be the last thing to come off—if they came off at all.

Another round was dealt and this time Ilya won.

Smirking, he leaned back into the sofa, spreading his arms along the top of the cushions. “Shirt off now.”

Shane had no right to look as sexy as he did as he angrily shrugged the shirt off and then neatly folded it up. His scrunched-up angry kitten expression had finally made an appearance. Ilya let his gaze roam over the newly exposed skin, noticing the faint blush that had made its way down to the top of his chest. He wanted to run his hands over him and his mouth too; he wanted to suck the delicate skin stretched over his ribs and press light kisses to the scar on his shoulder and press his fingers into the sharp jut of his hips until his mark had been left.

“*You’re so beautiful,*” Ilya murmured in Russian, delighted when the other’s blush spread further. It was sweet that the other man could still blush when they had already done so much else.

“*You are too,*” his husband mumbled back in accented Russian, the words slightly awkward in his mouth but endearing nonetheless. Ilya somehow, impossibly, fell even more in love with him each time he heard the other speak in his native tongue.

Shane won the next hand and the smugness radiating off him made Ilya want to roll his eyes and kiss him senseless at the same time. Shane Hollander and his *goddamn competitive streak*.

He wasn’t too upset by it though, seeing as how he was already half-hard. Shane knew this too, since the only thing Ilya was still wearing were his black briefs, which hid very little. The glint in his husband’s eyes probably should have scared him, but he only found himself more turned on.

The cards were dealt once more and once again, Shane won. Ilya almost wanted to accuse him of cheating to ensure that he won, just to rile him up further for the fun of it; however, no sooner had he stripped his briefs off than Shane was already on him, pushing him back onto the sofa and tangling his fingers in Ilya's golden curls.

"Not fair," he mumbled, his hands landing on Shane's waist and snapping the waistband of his sweats and briefs against his tan skin. The dark-haired man swatted his hands away and then took his face in his own hands, kissing him hard enough to bruise.

"I won," he breathed out, straddling Ilya's waist and grinning smugly, "so what's my prize?"

A surprised shout escaped him a moment later as Ilya switched their positions, picking him up off his lap and throwing him onto the sofa before climbing over him. The rest of Shane's clothes soon followed Ilya's where they were strewn around the living room, but the glasses stayed on.

Truly, it was a win-win for everyone involved.

+1 Nothing Sweeter Than This

"Daddy!" a clear, high voice hollered from across the house.

It was amazing, the lung capacity that four-year-olds could possess.

"Yes, sweetheart?" Shane called back, drying off the last dish from dinner and stretching to put it up in one of the kitchen cabinets. There was a faint twinge in his lower back as he did so and he grimaced, placing a hand against the spot. He had taken a hard hit in the game the night before, and he was quickly beginning to realize that his body did not bounce back as easily as it once had when he was younger. The sound of small feet slapping against hardwood announced his daughter's arrival before she came running into the kitchen of their home in Ottawa.

Hana Ilyinichna Hollander-Rozanov was a whirlwind contained in a small body. With wild dark hair, tan skin, and freckles that spread out like constellations across rosy cheeks, she looked like Shane when he was that age. Her boisterous laughter, sass, and gap-toothed grin were all Ilya though.

"The game is ready, Daddy, come on," she said, grabbing his hand to try and pull him in the direction of their family room. At the table, Ilya had a board game laid out and he was setting up the last few pieces.

"What are we playing tonight, sweetheart?" Shane asked as he sat down next to Hana, running a gentle hand over her soft dark hair.

She grinned over at him widely. “Candyland!”

He met Ilya’s gaze over the table and gave his husband a small, tired smile. They had played Candyland most nights this week; it seemed to be Hana’s new obsession.

“I hope you are ready to lose, zaichik,” Ilya said drily in Russian, raising his brows at Hana when she pulled a face at him and swung her legs under the table.

“Papa, you’re so mean,” she complained, but her grin and the mischief in her eyes belied this.

Ilya grinned back at her and reached out a large hand to ruffle her hair where she sat between them at the table. *“Only for you, malyshka.”*

Hana, of course, went first, drawing a card with a serious face that reminded Shane of Yuna and then moving several spots forward. Ilya went next, groaning with faux annoyance as he only got to move one space, making Hana giggle. Shane went next, considering the card and then moving slowly as their daughter fidgeted next to him.

“Ahh no,” Ilya groaned a while later, running a hand down his face dramatically as he landed on a licorice spot. “How can this be?”

Hana grinned widely and got up on her knees in the chair, resting her elbows on the edge of the table so she could lean over the board. Carefully, Shane watched her, hand hovering close in case she slipped.

“Papa!” She said, voice full of delight even as she tried to frown. “You lose a turn!”

“Try not to be too excited, *zaichik*,” Ilya said drily with a soft smile, making Shane laugh along with their daughter.

When Shane went next, he moved ahead of Hana, who suddenly snapped to attention now that she was no longer in the lead. Unsurprisingly, along with many other things, she had inherited Shane’s mile-wide competitive streak—as well as Yuna and Ilya’s own competitive energies. It made for some interesting nights when it came to games.

As the parent now, Shane felt the need to apologize to his own parents to an extent. It was exhausting sometimes, but it was also invigorating. They were trying hard to teach her to be graceful when she lost though, the same way that his own parents had tried. (He liked to believe it had worked for the most part; Ilya sometimes disagreed.)

When Hana drew her next card, there was a grin on her face as she moved ahead of him.

“Your turn, Daddy,” she said, sending a grin over toward Ilya.

The blonde man raised an eyebrow at this sass and said teasingly, “You will be next to fall into licorice trap, *malyshka*, just watch.”

Shane gave his husband a look and then drew his next card. He moved ahead of his daughter, again, and bit back a smile as her dark eyes narrowed over at him.

They continued on with this for some time, until eventually the two of them were close to reaching the candy castle. Ilya had given up some time ago after basically being sent back to the start by a special card and he was now pretending to be the characters on the board, reaching over to tickle Hana and making her giggle as Shane drew his card.

He realized as he moved forward a space that, surprisingly, he didn't care whether or not he won. That competitive drive that usually pushed him to be the *best* in all games and on the ice was there, but it was more of a warmth than a fire for once. He found that he didn't mind if Hana won; in fact, he cherished it when she crossed the finish line first and cheered, hugging him and Ilya both with a wide smile, before her Papa hauled her up over his shoulder and carted her around the room. Her delighted shrieks and Ilya's loud laughter, joined a moment later by Anya's barks, made Shane smile and pull his phone out to take a picture.

“— and wherever they go, they bless the land with the bright beauty of winter,” Ilya said quietly in Russian, softly closing the book and pressing a kiss to the top of Hana's head where she was draped over him. She was fast asleep in his lap, her small face buried in the crook of his neck.

They were seated on the sofa in their family room, the fire crackling across from them. Shane was curled up beside him and he reached out to gently run a hand along Hana's back, fixing her hair. Then, he leaned over to give his husband a kiss.

“I love it when you read to her,” he said softly, afraid to speak too loudly for fear of waking her up when she had finally fallen asleep.

Ilya smiled back over at him and looked down fondly at the little girl in his lap and then the book. Shane had given it to him when they found out that they really were going to have a child. It was an old book, one that had been difficult to source, but it had been worth it. It was the same collection that Irina had read to Ilya as a child.

They liked to take turns reading to her, with Shane reading a mix of Japanese fairy tales and smaller children's books in French while Ilya read to her in Russian. He always enjoyed it more when Ilya read though; he did the voices and would tickle her, making her giggle and laugh until she had tired herself out.

In Ilya's lap, Hana mumbled something and shifted, her open mouth drooling on Ilya's neck. His husband smiled down at her fondly, his dark golden curls falling across his forehead. “This little one needs to go to bed.”

Shane hummed in agreement and pushed himself up from the sofa, collecting the book and Hanna's stuffed animal loon, Volk, where it had ended up on the sofa sometime earlier in the day. Meanwhile, Ilya carefully navigated the stairs with an armful of sleepy four-year-old.

Hana woke up as he entered her room, yawning widely and asking if he would read her one more story.

“Nyet, malyshka,” he said softly, pressing a kiss to the top of her head.

Across the room, Shane placed Volk the Loon on the bed and then the two of them helped her into her pajamas. While Shane helped her brush her teeth and get ready for bed, Ilya went to check on Anya.

“We need to brush your hair, *mon amour*,” Shane said softly. Hana nodded sleepily, lazily brushing her teeth and leaning into him as he carefully brushed her soft dark hair.

By the time Ilya made it back upstairs, Anya following close behind, Shane had tucked Hana into bed and was murmuring to her in French.

“*Sweet dreams, my darling*,” he said, pressing a kiss to her forehead. She mumbled back, the words unintelligible, but the soft pat of her hand against his cheek said everything.

“*I love you, zaichik*,” Ilya said, leaning over the bed and pressing a kiss to her forehead too. His golden Orthodox cross slipped out from his collar and dangled in the space between them.

“G’night, Daddy, Papa,” their daughter mumbled, words slurring adorably with sleep.

She was already fast asleep, curled up under the covers of her bed and clutching Volk, by the time they closed the door to her room.

“You let her win,” Ilya said as they stood side-by-side at their bathroom vanity, brushing their teeth and getting ready for bed themselves.

Shane looked over at his husband. “Of course not.”

Blue eyes met his, a knowing look in them. “No, you did. Shane Hollander does not lose.”

He considered this for a moment and strong arms wrapped around his waist. A kiss was pressed to the old scar on his shoulder.

“She’s different,” he finally said after a long time. “It’s just...different when it comes to her.”

In the mirror, Ilya’s gaze met his own. The look in his eyes was soft and understanding.

“Yes,” he murmured, “it is.”

They crawled into bed after that, Anya curling up between their legs and Shane falling asleep with his head on Ilya’s chest.

He may not have won the game tonight, but he didn’t care. They had fought so hard to win moments like this, and he was going to cherish them.

End Notes

thank you so much for reading! :)

these silly little boys are living absolutely rent free in my head right now, so there will probably be more fics to follow. if you have any suggestions or things you would like to see, feel free to comment below!

until next time!

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