

The bitter cold

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The bitter cold

by [TheQueenoftheAbyss](#)

Summary

Shane Hollander is young, fit and healthy, he works out, he plays hockey, he eats a ridiculously healthy diet.

Shane Hollander dies on the ice at age 30.

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Shane's body is cold. Ilya's heart is cold.

Notes

MAJOR TW for graphic descriptions of CPR, Suicide and death. Also descriptions of vomiting. This is not a happy fic.

This is set somewhere after their proposal, but before they are outed.

This can be read as a stand-alone but the Next chapters are written so please subscribe.

Enjoy.

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

Chapter 1: On the ice

Shane Hollander races down the left side of the ice, towards the goal. He passes left, to Hayden, and carries on. He is slower than normal, his body feels tired, he can't quite catch his breath. The third is nearly over.

Hayden passes back. Shane's stick doesn't catch it, it flies past and smacks into the boards. Play carries on, Shane doesn't.

Number 24 slows to a stop. He isn't skating anymore, just standing, momentum carrying him forward. It stops and he stumbles, catching himself against the glass.

Hayden is already by his side. Shane could have caught that with his eyes closed. Shane's eyes are open, but Hayden cannot see his friend behind them. Other people have started to notice.

Ilya notices, through the bright LEDs of his TV screen.

Hayden's eyes are searching Shane's alarmingly pale face. He looks dazed, out of it. "Shane? You alright?"

Shane doesn't hear him the first time, more people are gathering now. Hayden asks again. Shane suddenly slides forward. Hayden catches him, lowering him to the ice.

Ilya Rozanov watches from hundreds of miles away as his Fiancé is lowered slowly onto the cold surface.

Hayden is shouting for a medic, the rest of the team joins in. Shane's head is in his lap where he's kneeling on the ice. His mouth is opening and closing like he's trying to speak, no sound comes out.

“You’re okay Shane. It’s okay.”

Shane lets out a pained whine. He still doesn’t speak. His glove has come off in his fall to the ice, Hayden shakes off his own and grips Shane’s hand. It almost feels cold.

The medics are there. Hayden doesn’t move. They’re poking, prodding, asking questions. Shane’s eyes slip closed.

Hayden is shoved back then, a medic catches Shane’s head and lowers it to the ice. Hayden doesn’t move from his silent vigil behind him.

Ilya cannot see Shane anymore. The cameras cut away, and when they come back there is a circle of blue jerseys around where his fiancée’s body lies.

Hayden wishes he could not see him. Someone is shining a light in Shane’s eyes, Hayden can see the way they have rolled back into his head.

Someone is cutting off his clothes. A chain sits around his neck, a bright golden ring lays on his chest.

Someone is leaning over him, face close to Shane’s. Then they are shouting. Hayden isn’t sure what they say, everything around him feels foggy and far away, all he can see is Shane’s face.

A sickening crack pulls Hayden back to reality, ringing in his ears.

It is the crack of strong bone beneath fragile flesh, as a medic begins to compress Shane’s chest. Hayden cannot look away, he sees the way Shane’s body caves beneath strong hands.

A hand closes around Hayden’s shoulder. He is pulled away, up and out of the circle. He doesn’t see who it is, he cannot hear what they say.

He will never hear anything other than that sickening crack again, never see anything other than the flex of cold flesh.

Ilya cannot see Shane anymore, but he cannot look away. Because Shane is there, behind a circle of bodies. Ilya knows in his heart what they are guarding. He can feel himself slipping away with Shane's soul.

Hayden Pike is pulled from the hoard. His face is pale, eyes glazed over. Ilya knows what is behind that wall of bodies.

Ilya's phone rings on the table in front of him. He cannot take his eyes off of the screen. It rings out.

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NHL Legend Shane Hollander dies age 30

Hollander collapsed on the ice yesterday evening, and was pronounced dead in hospital later that night.

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Ilya visits him in the hospital. The room is cold. Ilya knows there is no life here, you can feel it in the air.

Shane is here. But Shane is not full of life anymore.

Yuna stands from where she is sitting by Shane's body, David at her side. She leans down to press a kiss to Shane's forehead, and turns her back on her son for the final time.

David squeezes his shoulder as he follows his wife out the door. They do not speak.

Shane is cold. That is Ilya's first thought. He does not remember approaching the little metal chair. He does not remember taking his boyfriend's hand. He will not remember the last words he muttered to his husband. He only remembers the cold of his skin.

Ilya feels cold too. He does not remember what it was like to feel warm.

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Hollander's cause of death confirmed

A sudden heart attack caused by an undiagnosed heart condition has been confirmed as the cause of death for Montreal Captain Shane Hollander.

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Ilya does not want to go home. Yuna will not let him go, even if he wants to, but he does not. He does not think he can ever go back to his house in Ottawa.

He and Shane had chosen that house together. He will not go back to the bed where he and Shane slept together for the last time, where he last felt the warmth of Shane's bare skin against his own. Last listened to the thump of Shane's heart as he fell asleep.

That sound haunts him now. He dreams of it each night. The steady thump, thump, thump, of Shane's pulse in the darkness, the haunting silence as it stops. The silence screams in Ilya's ears until he wakes.

He will not go back to the kitchen where they cooked together, where he teased Shane about his stupid diet. The diet that was meant to keep him healthy, keep him strong, keep him skating.

What good had that done.

David and Yuna are planning a funeral, a public memorial, sorting out Shane's estate. Ilya does not help.

Ilya sits on the sofa. He lies in a cold bed. He sits under the spray of a warm shower. The heat does not reach him. He will always be cold.

Yuna and David move around him, they tell him they love him, they feed him and send him up to sleep. Ilya is not a person anymore.

It takes him three days to collect his car from the hospital car park. It has been spotted. A dark red Bugatti, one of Ilya's favourite cars, it was fast. It hadn't been fast enough. Nothing would have been. Shane died on the ice at the Bell Center.

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Ilya Rozanov photographed collecting flashy car from hospital where NHL rival Shane Hollander passed away

The superstar's dark red Bugatti was spotted in the car park of the Montreal General hospital, following rumours that he visited his formal rival on his deathbed-

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Ilya doesn't really speak. He comforts Yuna, tries to comfort David. He says his thank you's when he should, he says sorry a lot too. He does not say much else.

He does not pick up the phone. He tries, once, with Svetlana. She cries, and talks, and cries more. Ilya barely speaks. He feels bad, distantly, but he does not pick up the phone again.

The Centaurs have sent their love, his coach, his old team at Boston, everyone knew he was *friends* with Shane. The word makes him feel sick.

The Irina foundation has seen record donations in the few days since Shane's death, as fans, friends, and other players share their support and their condolences.

It makes Ilya angry, in the muted way all his emotions feel now, because none of them knew Shane, really. They will mourn, they will move on.

Ilya will never move again.

He drinks, a lot. Vodka mostly, but he stops caring what it is after a short while. He cannot bear to feel right now, when he let's himself feel it is as though the chasm is so deep in his chest that it will tear him apart. So he sleeps, and when he cannot sleep, he drinks.

He smokes too. He is outside smoking in the middle of the night when he hears it. The shrill howl of a loon in the distance.

And then Ilya is crying. Great howling and choking sobs that echo out into the darkness. Ilya breaks.

He cries and cries and then suddenly he is choking, his stomach rolling beneath the pit of sorrow in his chest.

That is how Yuna and David find him. Wailing unidentifiable sounds of pain into the night, suffocating in his own sorrow.

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NHL Confirms shutdown is to continue.

NHL confirms that the shutdown in remembrance of young star Shane Hollander will continue until after his memorial in two days time.

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Three days before Shane's public memorial Yuna breaks down crying, kneeling before Ilya on the sofa. Ilya has not spoken since he hung up with Svetlana. He does not remember how to try.

Distantly he realises Yuna isn't crying for Shane, not in that moment.

"Please Ilya. I have lost one son, I cannot lose another."

Ilya bursts into tears.

He knows he will betray her. He has known since he felt Shane's hand in that hospital bed. Ilya is already cold.

Chapter 2: In the water

Chapter Summary

Major TW for descriptions of a suicide attempt, including vomiting and alcohol intoxication.

This is not a happy chapter either.

Chapter Notes

Please take care of yourselves and mind the tags. I wasn't quite bold enough to tag it Dead Dove But, like Shane, the Dove is dead.

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

Ilya doesn't remember what it's like to feel warm. Just like he doesn't remember what he said to Shane's cold body in the hospital room. Doesn't remember the last words he said to Shane alive.

He doesn't remember Shane's smell, his laugh, his smile. No matter how hard he tries his failing mind cannot find those memories and latch on. He doesn't know if this is a blessing or a curse.

He feels guilty. He knows that feeling. He feels it as he slips his shoes on at the front door of the Hollanders home, lifting his keys silently from the table beside the door.

He feels it as he presses a kiss to the warm fur of Anya's head, fingers curling desperately in her collar. Some part of him doesn't want to let go, but he does.

Guilt is overtaken by sorrow, as he pulls into the driveway of his home in Ottawa. He breaks down in the car. He doesn't know how long he cries for, and it doesn't matter. It is still dark when he pulls himself from the car.

The house is dark and cold. It feels how Ilya feels.

He walks a lap. He doesn't know why. He isn't looking, or taking things in. He cannot bear to look and think about the sofa where he and Shane would lie after long training days or tough games, wrapped in each other's arms. So he simply lets his glazed eyes slide over it.

He has only come for one thing. He lifts the silver key out of the drawer in his kitchen, stupid silver keychain hanging off of it. A little loon, cast in metal. A stupid gift from a tourist gift shop that Shane had bought him when he moved to Canada.

He curled his hand around it and squeezed. The little silver wings dug into his palm. It hurt. Shane would be so disappointed. So upset. He squeezed harder.

Other than the key, he took a bottle of top shelf vodka from their liquor cabinet. He didn't open it. Not yet.

He climbed into the car and drove.

He doesn't remember that either.

The cottage was dark, but not quite as cold as the house had been. Ilya was crying now. Tears pouring down his face in silence. He didn't do a walk through this time, his heart could not take it.

He could not walk the cold floors of the house where he and Shane had finally, truly, come to be in love. They were supposed to have so much time. They had almost none.

He placed the single key on the kitchen counter, the bottle beside it. He took a singular crystal glass from the cupboard and filled it.

He brought it to his lips and drank. It burned on the way down, not even the nicest vodka would be any different when it's slightly warm and taken by the cupfull.

Ilya felt the warmth as it burned its way down his throat and settled in his stomach. It was the warmest he had felt in days.

He kept drinking.

Ilya didn't have a coherent thought left in his body. Distantly he knows maybe there should be a voice, telling him to stop. He thinks it would sound like Shane, or maybe Yuna, if there was one. There is not.

He pulls open another kitchen drawer to see Shane's collection of medications, used for when he was still nursing injuries in the off season. Ilya removed packets carefully and shoved them in his pockets.

He would not make a mess. Not here. This place was sacred.

As he slid open the door to the deck and closed it gently behind him he wondered if this is how his mother had felt about the church. The deep and spiritual connection Ilya felt to this cottage.

The burning desire, now, to preserve it. Keep it as he and Shane had left it. Ilya would not taint its image, its sanctity, with what was to come.

Ilya sat himself on the edge of the dock. He had wanted to propose to Shane on this dock, one day. Shane had beaten him to it. Because of course he did. Losing to Shane was never something that had hurt Ilya, not really, because Shane had always been the better of the pair of them.

He would be so angry at Ilya now, so sad. But Shane was not here, and all Ilya could feel was the cold of that hand against his.

Ilya knows that there are other people that will be angry at him now, will be sad. Yuna and David, Sevta, Wyatt and Bood and Marleau and the rest of them, probably. The pit in his chest sinks deeper.

“I am sorry.” He whispered into the darkness, words slurring. He knows no one will hear. It does not matter.

His mother could not be angry. Ilya wanted to see his mother. He wanted to see Shane.

Ilya lifts small collections of pills to his mouth, again and again. He washes them down with vodka. His feet are burning from the cold where they are submerged below the water of the dock.

He knows he is running out of time before his body starts to reject what he is putting in. He needs it to work before then. He cannot bear what will happen if it does not.

He lifts the bottle of vodka to his lips and drains the last bit. He feels warm now. He slides forward off of the dock into the icy water. It does not make him jump.

He wades out and around to the gentle shore that slopes up to the house. He leans back and lays down in the water, let's it half submerge him, lapping up around his ears.

His body takes a halting breath in, an involuntary response to the freezing water. Ilya chokes.

His stomach lurches and alcohol and drugs force their way up his throat, threatening to suffocate him. He rolls, pushing himself up weakly to cough and retch into the water. His throat burns.

He drops back down after a moment, submerging himself in the water below him that is now streaked with his own filth. He is tired. He is cold.

He brings a hand up to rest on the gold chain around his chest. Three things hang from it.

On the left is Shane's ring, above Ilya's heart.

In the middle, his mother's crucifix, where it had always hung.

And there on the right, was Ilya's own ring.

The metal was freezing against his fingers as Ilya gripped the little cluster. He was where he belonged there, beside his mother and the love of his life. Ilya never wanted to be alone. He was now.

He thought of his mother as the haze crept in. Had she felt this cold? This empty? Had she felt how Ilya did now? Ilya had been so angry for so long. But he understood now.

The cold filled his bones, fed the ache that sunk deep in his chest. It was like a chasm that Ilya could not cross, and it threatened every day to pull him in. Ilya could not bear it.

His body heaved again and he retched on nothing, choking slightly on the liquid that invaded his throat. It burned.

It burned so bad, his stomach was cramping and his whole body hurt through the haze of intoxication. It hurt so much and he was so alone.

He realised, as he looked up at the stars, that he didn't know if he believed in a world beyond them. He was alone in this water, and he did not know if anyone was watching over him. If mama was there. If Shane was.

He wondered for a second if he should pray. He did not. Ilya was so hauntingly alone.

The bite of the cold water had sunk in. It did not shift the freezing cold of his heart. It multiplied it. It was a burning searing cold that stole Ilya's entire being.

Ilya Rozanov was cold. He had been cold since he felt the freezing flesh of Shane's cold hand in the hospital room. Now his body was cold too.

Ilya Rozanov died in that water. Cold, in pain, and so hauntingly alone. His fingers still curled around the gold chain around his neck.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. There may be one more chapter to come if you would like to subscribe, but the story can also end here.

Please leave kudos and a comment where you can, it means a lot.

Chapter 3: Together, on the frosty ground.

Chapter Summary

The public memorial of Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov.

I don't like this chapter as much as the other two, but it ties up the story and I had always intended to add it, so here you go.

Once again, please heed the tags, and take care of yourselves. I love you all, thank you for reading.

Chapter Notes

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

That was how Ilya Rozanov was found. Cold and alone in the shallow water of Shane's cottage. His body was rigid, eyes glassy and fingers stiff where they curled around that gold chain at his neck.

That was how David found him. Spotted him through the pristine glass lying face up in the cold water.

That was the image that burned itself into Yuna's memory, of her second son. Affixing itself to her mind as she fell to her knees on the dewy morning grass, great heaving sobs wracking her slender body as she cried.

That was how the police had pulled his cold, dead body from the water.

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NHL Superstar Ilya Rozanov confirmed dead

Rozanov, 30, is confirmed to have died sometime early this morning, his cause of death is as of yet unconfirmed-

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Shane Hollander's public memorial was cancelled with less than twenty four hours notice.

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Ilya Rozanov Suicide confirmed

Many questions are being raised in the wake of Ilya Rozanov's death in the early hours of-

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Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov's public memorial is held just three days after Rozanov's death.

Before meeting Ilya Rozanov, Yuna Hollander would never have dreamt she would gain a second son.

In all the time before and after she had never imagined she would be burying one.

To bury them together was a nightmare she could not have conjured herself in a million years of dreams.

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Ilya Rozanov dies at home of late friend Shane Hollander

Leaked information from the Ottawa police department confirms that the hockey star was found dead at the residence of late former rival Shane Hollander, his cause of death has been

confirmed to be suicide.

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The public memorial is a solemn affair. Half the NHL is there, players, coaches, partners, journalists, hundreds of people turned out to remember the stars of their generation.

The numbers twenty-four and eighty-one are being permanently retired.

Their funeral is scheduled for the day after. That will be small, intimate, family and closest friends only. That is for Ilya and Shane, not two hockey legends, not twenty four and eighty one, for Yuna's sons.

She hopes everyone will still come, after today. It will break her heart if they do not. There isn't much left to break.

Only four people speak at the public memorial. Yuna goes last.

For Shane, Hayden Pike stands and gives a speech. Jackie stands with him. Shane was his captain. He was also his best friend for more than ten years. His brother. Hayden can still see his eyes slip closed in his mind's eye.

For Ilya Svetlana stands first. She does not say much, a few words in Russian that she then echoes in English. She cries the entire time, she came alone. It was important, they all knew, that someone from Ilya's home was there to speak in his native language. She mentions his mother.

Zane Boodram speaks next. Wyatt Hayes stands with him, eyes red rimmed and glassy. It is short, and to the point. The Cens had not had Ilya for very long, but he was part of their family, he had given them so much. He will always be a Centaur.

They will all speak again, at the private funeral. Proper speeches, meaningful words that would fall on deaf ears in the crowd of people that did not really *know* Shane or Ilya.

Because of the hundreds of people here. Only a handful truly knew them.

It is that part that makes Yuna hesitate as she stands, David at her side. These people did not really know Shane and Ilya, when they were alive. Did they deserve to know them now?

David squeezed her shoulder, this wasn't about them. It was about Shane and Ilya. The secret they had hidden, the one that still had its claws buried deep in Ilya as he sunk into his grave.

Yuna wonders if he might have been able to survive, if the world had known how much he had lost.

They had talked about this at length, in the dim light of the kitchen on that first sleepless night after they lost Ilya too. There had been nothing else to talk about. Nothing more to say.

They had not wanted to take this to the grave. So David and Yuna would not let them.

She cleared her throat and stood in front of the microphone.

Early this week I lost my son. Many of you know him as the incredible Hockey player he was, quick, clever, impossibly driven right up until his last moments on the ice.

I knew him differently, as someone who worked so incredibly hard every day, a boy who chased his dreams for years, and someone full of gentle humor and quiet laughter, someone so full of love. I want people to remember Shane for all these things.

She paused for a moment, tears falling quietly from her face. David had his hand across her shoulders, grounding her.

Three days ago I lost another son. That's what Ilya was, to me and to David. A son.

Many of you know Ilya again for his hockey, fast, efficient, aggressive. Many of you knew Ilya for his snarky humor and his loud laughter.

Again I knew someone different. Ilya faced so much adversity in his life, to get to where he was, and yet he met so much of it with a smile. His bright laughter, his endless ability to stick up for other people, to motivate them even when he could not do the same for himself. This is what I remember him for.

Another deep breath.

But there is also something else, something that is so meaningful in knowing, in remembering, my boys.

I know there have been many questions since Shane passed. And even more since Ilya- her breath caught, since Ilya did too.

We debated for a long time, David and I, about whether or not this was the right thing to do. To reveal something without their permission that they spent so many years trying to hide. I know in my heart that it is the right thing.

They weren't planning on keeping this secret much longer, they didn't want to spend their whole life hiding.

Shane and Ilya were engaged to be married.

She lifted a hand to touch the chain that hung around her neck. Two rings and a crucifix, all glinting in gold. The crowd was stunned into silence.

Shane and Ilya loved each other for years. They gave everything for each other, living in silence through the ups and downs of their careers and their lives, in hope of a future where they could be together in front of the world.

They were in love, and they were tired of hiding it from other people, from basing their entire lives on the bigotry of others.

This was their curse, as athletes, to suffer for the sake of their sport. I will not let them take that to the grave.

They were so full of love for each other. So full of love for their friends and the family that they wanted to build. They were each others joy, their rock, their lives off of the ice. They meant more to each other than I think even I could ever understand.

And they wanted to badly to be able to share that with the world. I wish so badly that you could have seen them as I saw them, together.

I know there are some of you that did know about their secret, or had suspected. Sometimes it was hard to miss, because when they were together their love shone so brightly for each other. They had so much hope.

Yuna's voice broke slightly.

So much hope for their future together, and so much love.

That has been torn away from them both by this tragedy. I cannot bring them back, but I too can hope for a better future for people like them in the sport they loved so much, that brought them together.

I am so thankful to all of you that kept their secret, or did your best to carve out space for people like them in the NHL. It meant so much to them.

I know many of you will have questions, and for those close to the boys we are happy to answer them as best we can, but for now I am asking for privacy as we grieve for our sons.

If any of you wish to show your support, we are still asking that donations be made to the Irina foundation in lieu of flowers. So that we can continue the work that the boys began together.

Shane and Ilya were both incredible people, with so much good left to give the world, and so much love to share. I love them both, with all my heart.

Thank you.

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An abridged version of Yuna's speech written in pale white writing over a plain black page was posted just as the memorial ended.

Attached to the end were three photos. Painstakingly chosen by Yuna in the dark of the night. It had seemed so unfair to her, that no one could see even a small part of the love they had shared, and she knew that for many the words on a page would not convince them of the depth of what Shane and Ilya had shared.

The first image was of Shane and Ilya hand in hand, walking through the woods near Shane's cottage. Anya was between them, her leash was in Ilya's hand, and he was looking at Shane with so much love in his eyes. Yuna had taken that photo ages ago, and could never bring herself to delete it.

The second was taken after a family dinner, Shane and Ilya on the sofa, Shane curled up into Ilya's side. Both were smiling softly, their fingers laced together in Ilya's lap. They were together in the soft glow of the fire, so relaxed in each other's arms.

The last was of their engagement. Ilya is grinning ear to ear, hand in front of the camera showing off his gold ring, glinting on his finger. Shane's arms are wrapped around him as he stands sideways, kissing Ilya on the cheek.

The two boys in that photo would never get their wedding. They would both be gone before they had the chance.

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It was more than a year before either Yuna or David could bear the thought of going back to the cottage. It was where Ilya had wanted to scatter Shane's ashes, and they knew it was what both boys would have wanted.

But it was too raw, the images of Ilya's body in the water. Neither David or Yuna had ever gotten the sight out of their minds.

One son sprawled out on the cold hard ice of the bell center, cradled in his best friend's lap.

The other lying cold and alone in the shallow water, clutching his golden chain.

But eventually there came a day when they drove down. In shaky and tearful silence.

They stood on the grass, Anya leashed at David's side, and finally scattered the ashes of their two sons in the place that had meant the most to them in the entire world.

The cottage had been a monument to their love. It was now a memorial for their lives.

Well there you go. I may add a little something extra at the end eventually, but for now this is finished here.

Thank you for reading, look after yourselves and please leave Kudos and a Comment, they are my motivation to keep writing.

End Notes

I'm not especially proud of this fic, but it is what it is. Here you go.

Please take care of yourselves everyone.

Edit: I had this fic pop up on my TikTok fyp as a recommendation and to whoever runs that account you made my year honestly. Lots of love.

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