

Geiger Counter

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Geiger Counter

by [littlesystems](#)

Summary

Kip Grady meets Ilya Rozanov at a gay bar while watching the Admirals game. Somehow, that's not even the strangest part of his evening.

Notes

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

Kip settles in at the bar, beer in hand, Admirals vs. Metros game pre-game talking heads on the TV. Kip always prefers when Scott plays a home game. He doesn't often go to see the games live, because of the whole making out with a hockey player on live TV thing from a few months ago, and most of the time Kip doesn't want the media attention that happens whenever he's in the stands, these days.

But then, once the game is over, Kip can go home to Scott's place and wait for him to come home, rather than waiting for a post-game phone call. Sometimes, after a game, Scott is worn-out and exhausted, and Kip can lavish him with careful attention. Other times, Scott is revved up and buzzing with an abundance of energy that he didn't manage to work out during the game. Either is good, for Kip. Actually, either is *great* for Kip.

Much better than Scott's away games.

No, Kip's preference is to hang out with a beer at the bar with Kyle and whoever else cycles into the Kingfisher, and then go have incredible athletic sex with his extremely fucking hot boyfriend. So, here at the bar he sits, watching the opening of the game, trying not to look *too* smug about his evening plans.

Some time later, Elena shows up, and a single glance at her body language tells Kip that she's trying to pull. A few steps behind her is an absolute bombshell of a woman: curly hair, slinky dress, sultry smile.

Kip smiles at them both as Elena leads them over to the bar.

"Svetlana, this is my friend Kip. Kip, this is Svetlana. I met her earlier today," Elena says.

"Hello, nice to meet you!" Kip offers his hand for Svetlana to shake.

"Hello, it is nice to meet you as well," Svetlana says, a noticeable Russian accent curling around her words. Even with the name, it's surprising, somehow.

Svetlana sits down at the bar next to Elena — Elena, who shoots a shit-eating grin at Kip, one that says *can you believe I met this hottie?* Kip has known Elena for long enough to know her different shit-eating grins, and this one is self explanatory, given how undeniably hot Svetlana is.

On TV, the Admirals vs Metros game is starting up properly.

Kip keeps half an eye on the TV, half an ear on the conversation between Elena and Svetlana which, at least ostensibly, Kip is included in. He gets it. Elena and Svetlana aren't on a *date*, they're having a chill night at the bar with friends, friends who include Kip because he's literally there, sitting at the bar.

(Kip doesn't need to be included in this. Kip is happy to watch his hockey game and chat with Kyle, the bartender, when he makes his way down to this end of the bar, but he'll allow himself to be roped in, if needed.)

That is, until Svetlana suddenly gasps and says, “Oh! I was supposed to meet friend tonight!” genuinely distressed. “Ack, I have many missed calls from him, he will kill me. You distracted me all day, I have barely looked at phone.” With a little pout on her face, she looks first at Elena, then Kip. “Would you mind if I invite him here? He came from out of town to see me.”

“Of course not!” Elena says, turning to stare daggers at Kip.

“Of course, invite him,” Kip says, with a long suffering look at Elena that says *I will entertain your girl’s friend so that you can get laid tonight because I am a magnanimous, gracious human being, and I owe you for all the moping I did with the whole Scott thing.*

Damn straight, Elena’s eyes say.

“Where is here?” Svetlana asks, pulling out her phone.

“The Kingfisher,” Kip replies.

Svetlana nods, sends her text, then turns a huge grin at Elena.

Kip contains his eyeroll. Barely.

After about fifteen minutes, the door opens, and Svetlana turns with a smile towards the newcomer approaching the bar. She stands to pull the guy into a hug, greeting him in rapid-fire Russian, and gets an equally quick response, also in Russian.

“This is Ilya,” Svetlana says, tilting her head towards the guy, “Ilya, this is Elena and Kip.”

“Hello,” the guy says, raising a hand in a somewhat awkward wave.

The guy is... hot. Hot, and vaguely familiar. Curly blondish hair, pouty lips, and a sort of fuck-off-don’t-talk-to-me vibe that Kip would find threatening if they weren’t currently in a gay bar, something that this guy hopefully noticed before arriving.

“Hi,” Kip and Elena say in near-perfect unison.

The group shuffles around, so that Kip is seated next to Ilya, who is next to Svetlana, who is next to Elena. It ostensibly gives Ilya the chance to talk to his friend, who is at least pretending like she intends to talk to him, even though Kip knows that she’s been giggling with Elena and touching her arm in increasing intervals over the last 45 minutes.

The man — Ilya — orders a vodka, and spends some time catching up with Svetlana, who makes her obligatory attempt to pretend she’s not ditching him for a girl. They waver between accented English and fast-paced Russian. From what little Kip can follow, he seems to be ragging on her for something (presumably the missed calls), while she makes fun of him for being too easy to lure down to New York by the promise of sex.

Kip watches the game, half his attention waiting to catch this poor guy. Finally, Ilya gives up on Svetlana, and turns to Kip.

“I think I have been replaced,” Ilya says to Kip, tilting his head towards Elena.

“I think you have,” Kip admits with a wry grin.

Ilya shakes his head, exasperated, but Kip is pretty sure that’s put-upon.

“You look super familiar,” Kip says, because he’s one beer in and because he can’t quite place where he knows Ilya from, and he’s pretty sure it’s not that Ilya is an underwear model. Probably. Ilya is certainly tall enough, and pretty enough, but Kip is pretty sure he would remember if he had seen this man shirtless before.

Ilya smirks, cocky. “Probably from there,” he says, gesturing towards the TV.

“...TV?”

“Hockey,” Ilya elaborates. “If you watch hockey.”

“Sometimes.” Kip stops to think about the hockey players he knows by name and realizes very quickly that he *does* actually know who this man is, now that he has the extra context.

“Ilya... Rozanov. From... Boston?”

“Yes.”

“Ah.”

“You also are familiar.”

“Also from there,” Kip says, nodding towards the TV.

Ilya frowns, eyes flicking over Kip’s face before looking up and down his body. “You are not hockey player,” he says, not a question, which, ouch. “You are...” Ilya cocks his head.

“...Scott Hunter’s boyfriend.”

Kip blinks in surprise. He was *not* expecting Ilya to be able to guess correctly. The Kiss™ had obviously been big news, but most of the focus had been on Scott, not on Kip.

“Got it in one.” Kip offers his hand to shake. “Kip Grady.”

“Ilya Rozanov,” Ilya says, accepting the handshake.

Ilya looks assessingly at Kip, like he’s more interested in talking to him now that he knows Kip is at least tangentially related to hockey.

“So, what brings you to New York?” Kip asks, because Boston isn’t playing tonight, and he is duty-bound as a wingman to make conversation with this guy until either Ilya gives up or Svetlana decides to leave with Elena.

Ilya rolls his eyes theatrically.

“Svetlana is unbelievable. She comes to New York for work and says — *oh you have to come down from Boston, we have to have drink together, we will be so close* — even though Boston is not that close to New York.”

“It’s not,” Kip agrees easily.

“So I drive down from Boston, and immediately she ditch me to try and get laid. Unbelievable.”

Ilya seems mildly annoyed at being ditched, but if he was expecting to get with Svetlana tonight, he certainly doesn’t show it, and certainly doesn’t seem to care that Svetlana is about to hook up with another woman.

Kip looks askance at where Elena and Svetlana are sitting next to each other, heads tilted towards one another.

“That sucks man,” Kip says, because he’s certainly inadvertently shown up as a third wheel before, and it’s no one’s idea of a good time. “Sorry if my friend Elena cockblocked you.”

Ilya frowns, lips pursed, head tilted to the side in a way that Kip can’t help but find charming. He’s taken, not *blind*.

“Cock... blocked?” Ilya says slowly, and for a horrifying second, Kip thinks he might need to define that word for a man who does not speak English as his first language. But then Ilya lights up in understanding and says, definitively: “No. Sveta and I are not like that. Not anymore, anyway.”

“Ah,” Kip says with a nod, and takes a sip of his drink. “I just thought I heard her say something about *luring you to New York for sex*, so I assumed.”

Ilya grins. “Yes, but not with her. There is someone else in New York that she used to convince me.”

Kip snorts. “That’s hilarious. She’s not your girl anymore, but she still has you on a short leash.”

Yes, Kip is fishing for details. He owes Elena a *lot* for the whole Scott thing, and she might want to see Svetlana again, so Kip would love to have details waiting for her.

Ilya shakes his head immediately. “No, Svetlana is very good friend. We used to sleep together sometimes, but it was never...” Ilya makes a vague hand gesture. “She is... I don’t know if there is word for it. She is bisexual, but only dates women.”

“Oh! There is, actually,” Kip says, easily slipping into academic mode before he can stop himself. “It’s called the split attraction model. So she’s bi-sexual and homo-romantic.” Kip makes sure to enunciate between the prefixes and suffixes so that it’s easier to understand.

“Okay. Hm. Bisexual... and homoromantic...” Ilya says, considering, with a serious little frown of concentration on his face. “Bisexual because she has sex with both, but

homoromantic like homosexual. Homosexual... but for romance. And... someone who is gay would be homosexual, homoromantic?"

"Well, typically if you say someone is gay or bi it covers both dating and sex, but the split attraction model is for those cases when there is a difference."

"Hmm... okay," Ilya nods, looking thoughtful. "Interesting. You are teaching me new words today, Kip!"

Kip laughs, because Ilya looks so earnest — genuinely excited to learn about *cockblocked* and *homoromantic*. He's not exactly what Kip would have expected from a random hockey player, especially one as famous as Ilya Rozanov, let alone one who is *Russian*.

Ilya looked more thoughtful than Kip's short description warranted, which also sends a little *!!!* of intrigue zipping around in Kip's brain like a pinball set loose in a machine. Kip shouldn't speculate on other professional hockey player's sexualities, but... the careful way Ilya's mouth formed around *homoromantic* and the lack of detail included in Ilya's description of *someone in New York* has Kip's gaydar crackling like a geiger counter.

"You—" Ilya starts to say, but then his attention catches on the TV where one of the Metros players is racing across the ice, Scott in hot pursuit. The other player scores, bringing the game to 1-1.

Ilya turns back to Kip with a huge grin on his face.

"Your ancient boyfriend is too old to catch up with slow Hollander. He is like fossil."

Kip snorts. "He was fast enough to beat you last season."

"Yes, but only won because Hollander was injured," Ilya says with a dismissive wave, as though the Metros clearly should have won the cup last year. "He will not win again before he retires."

"You seem pretty sure of yourself."

"Pretty sure of Hollander, yes."

"Aren't you guys supposed to be rivals or something?"

"Eh," Ilya says with a shrug, followed by a wiggly hand gesture. "Or something. Much of that is made up for TV."

"Huh." Kip doesn't know much about hockey outside of the Admirals, but the huge life-defining rivalry between Rozanov and Hollander is impossible to miss.

And, apparently, mostly fake.

"Are you hockey fan?" Ilya asks, clearly bored now of whatever is now happening on the TV.

“Eh,” Kip says, mimicking Ilya from a moment ago. “I didn’t watch it before I met Scott, and I still mostly just watch the Admirals games, but I enjoy watching him play.”

“Ah,” Ilya says sagely, “so you don’t watch *good* hockey.”

“Fuck off!” Kip says, but he’s laughing as he says it. “I like watching, but it’s honestly a little too violent for me. I don’t like the fighting.”

Ilya’s eyes light up. “You don’t like hockey fights? But they are so sexy! Your boring boyfriend dropping gloves with Hollander is most interesting thing he has done in years.”

Ilya Rozanov thinks hockey fights are sexy!! Kip’s internal geiger counter screams.

“Do you know what that was about?” Kip says, dropping register so that his voice doesn’t carry. “Scott wouldn’t tell me, when I asked.”

Kip had asked, and the squirrely way that Scott gave a non-answer had caught Kip’s attention as something worth noting.

“Yes,” Ilya says, taking a sip of his vodka and *not* elaborating, like a bitch.

“Okay, so... What?” Kip says, leaning forward. Scott was cagey about the whole thing, and apparently Hollander is known for being a clean player who rarely gets into fights, so there was a lot of speculation in the media about what happened between them, though their conversation wasn’t picked up on the mics.

“Hunter said something that Hollander did not like,” Ilya says with a smirk.

“Yeah I got that, asshole.” Kip laughs, but resigns to drop it. Clearly, whatever it was, was personal enough that Ilya won’t repeat it, even though neither Scott nor Hollander were known for below-the-belt shit talking. “Fine, fine, keep your secrets.”

Ilya takes another sip of his drink and eyes Kip, then appears to come to a decision.

“Do not repeat this,” Ilya says. “Neither would like it.”

Kip mimes zipping his lips, eyes wide.

“I will not say what he said,” Ilya continues, leaning in, “but Hunter is observant guy, when he wishes to be. Hollander does not like to be observed.”

Kip chews on his lip, thoughts racing a mile a minute. Scott said something personal to Hollander, something that he *observed* about Hollander that Hollander didn’t want people noticing about himself. Enough so that he punched Scott in the face about it. Something deeply personal, and yet he — apparently — told Ilya Rozanov about it. Ilya Rozanov, who is in New York to get laid. Ilya Rozanov, who says their rivalry is made up for TV.

“Hmm,” Kip says with a slow nod, because he has to say *something*. “Okay.”

Ilya raises an eyebrow at him, then turns back to the game.

For a few minutes, they both watch the TV in companionable silence, until Ilya finishes his drink and clinks the glass down on the bar. He looks over at Kip, assessing, then seems to make up his mind about something, once again.

"I give Hunter a hard time, because he is old and boring and should have retired already,"

"Off to a bad start."

"*But*," Ilya says, "the end of last season... was not boring. I was not expecting that from a guy like Hunter. It was..." Ilya trails off, seemingly lost in thought. "...very brave. He is... cool. For that."

There's something about the way Ilya enunciates *cool* that makes clear that it's the highest compliment Ilya could think of, in the moment.

"...Thanks. I'll tell Scott you said that."

Ilya nods. "I have told him that myself. But tell him that I told you in gay bar, he will be very surprised."

"I'm sure he will be."

On the TV, the game is winding down, the Metros having scored another goal at some point. Kip had ostensibly been watching, but in actuality had been debating whether or not he could strong-arm a queer hockey friendship between Scott and Ilya... and maybe Shane Hollander. It would be good for Scott to have some friends in the league. If Kip's instincts are right. And they usually are.

Ilya sets down his drink on the bar, decisive.

"Well, I am going to leave Svetlana to her woman," Ilya says just loud enough for Svetlana to hear him, and gets up from his bar stool.

Svetlana turns around, then, and pretends like she hasn't been ignoring him for far too long, saying something in Russian that has Ilya laughing with a big boyish grin. He says something to her in Russian, too, and she grins back with a mischievous look in her eye, something that probably bodes well for Elena tonight. They say their goodbyes, Svetlana and Elena, and then finally, Ilya turns back to Kip.

"Was nice meeting you tonight, Kip," Ilya says.

"You too!" Kip says, and means it.

"The game is over, so now I go," Ilya says, as though it's a given that he's beholden to the clock of hockey even though he's not even playing tonight. "But we should exchange numbers. Is good to stick together, yes?"

Ilya offers his phone to Kip, open to a new contact page. Kip takes the phone, carefully, and looks up at Ilya.

“I have a boyfriend,” Kip says. He doesn’t *think* Ilya is hitting on him, but Ilya’s reaction to him saying so is another good litmus test.

Ilya rolls his eyes. “Yes, obviously. I am not hitting on you, Grady.”

Ilya’s phone buzzes in Kip’s hand. Reflexively, Kip glances down at the display.

Jane:

What’s your room number?

Jane:

Just have to get through interviews. I’ll be at the hotel in an hour.

“Cool!” Kip says. He quickly enters his name and phone number, then considers. “Not to imply anything, I just, you know,” he shrugs. He should cover himself, just in case he’s read this entire interaction wrong.

“I am not afraid of Scott Hunter,” Ilya says, accepting his phone back from Kip. “But Hunter *would* probably kill me. Easier to do than you might think, on the ice. Also, you are not my type.”

Ilya looks down at his own phone screen for a few seconds, then his eyes flick back over to the TV, where Shane Hollander is giving a post-game interview.

Kip makes sure to keep his face completely neutral, the neutral way he would look if he hadn’t just read that text from Jane. *Jane*.

If Ilya suspects anything, he doesn’t show it. Instead, he pockets his phone, says his final goodbyes, and leaves. Shortly thereafter Elena and Svetlana also take their leave, holding hands on their way out the door.

“You good?” Kyle asks, and Kip realizes that he’s been staring into space for several minutes.

“Yeah.” Kip pauses. “Weird night. Good night.”

And then he, too, heads home.

End Notes

Thanks to @brawlite for beta-ing!

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