

7 Times A Stranger Clocked Hollanov

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7 Times A Stranger Clocked Hollanov

by [FestiveFerret](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya were together (in one way or another) for eleven years, and no one knew.

Or did they?

Notes

Spoilers for at least HR and TLG ahead!!

Thanks to ashy for beta!

March 2021

Kathie tapped her pen against the textbook in front of her and sighed. When she'd applied for a job at the most prestigious doggy hotel in Ontario, she'd been hoping to spend time with dogs. But instead they'd put her on the front desk, so she was mostly spending time alone, or even worse, with people.

At least she could study while she sat around doing nothing. Alex had said working as a "room attendant" mostly involved cleaning up poop and getting jumped on. That probably made the time pass faster, though.

The door chimed softly, and Kathie straightened up, pasting on her customer-service-smile. The Ritz Barkleton prided itself on treating all its esteemed clients like regular people, so when none other than Shane Hollander walked through the door, Kathie had to bite her tongue to stop herself from gasping.

She'd seen her fair share of movie stars and famous politicians, football players' wives, and elite socialites, but she'd grown up in Montreal with the Voyageurs on the TV every time they played, and a signed poster of Shane Hollander hanging across from her bed. This was the first time she'd been starstruck at this job.

"Bonjour," she started with, then remembered she wasn't supposed to know Hollander spoke French, and switched back. "Good morning."

"Um. Hi. Thanks." Hollander shook his head slightly as if wondering why he'd said that. "This is Anya Ro - er. Anya. She has a reservation."

"Of course." Kathie smiled down at the adorable mutt. "Welcome, Anya. Let me just get her checked in."

"Thanks."

While the computer loaded the reservation confirmation page, Kathie slid a look at Hollander out of the corner of her eye. He was wearing a toque pulled low over his hair and sunglasses, despite it being a rather dreary late-winter day. He also had black peacoat that he didn't unbutton. He had a furtive sort of look about him, like he was anxious and hoping no one was going to talk to him more than what was necessary.

Kathie looked back to her screen, drawing her eyes down the list of reservations. Anya was there, as was Anya's owner's name: Ilya Rozanov.

For a moment, Kathie wondered if she should call the police and report Hollander for kidnapping Rozanov's dog. It had to be a prank, right? But why now? They were deep in the midseason. This felt more like summer hijinks. And besides, Kathie paid attention, Rozanov and Hollander were friends now, they ran that camp together. Kathie had donated half her birthday money to it, the summer they'd announced it.

"It'll just be a moment," she said, and Hollander gave her an awkward nod. She clicked her way through the check-in form, still wondering what she should do. Should she just outright ask him? The policy was never to acknowledge knowing who a client was, but this was more like knowing who a client *wasn't*.

Then Hollander's phone rang. The loud buzz drew Kathie's attention and she saw the contact name was just a heart emoji before Hollander swiped it open and turned his back to Kathie. He spoke lowly into the phone.

"Yes. Yeah, she's here. She's fine I -. Yeah. She's fine. This place seems great. She didn't seem to mind it was me. No. No, I'm not doing that." His voice dropped even lower. "You had your chance when we left. Okay, fine. I will give her one kiss. Yes. Yes. And yes, you do still owe me one. It - no! Just...hold that thought. Okay. Ya tebya lyublyu."

Kathie's heart jumped up her throat, and she quickly swiped her Russian Lit textbook off the counter and kicked it on the floor under her desk as Hollander turned back around, his cheeks pink.

"Sorry," he mumbled.

"No worries!" She smiled as encouragingly as she could. That explained a lot. It explained why Hollander was here alone, why he had Rozanov's dog, and why he looked like he'd have a heart attack if anyone recognized him.

Well, Kathie hadn't been a Voyageurs fan since the day she was born to be the one to ruin Hollander's day.

"Anya's all checked in, Mr...." She glanced at the screen like there was no way his name would stick in her head. "Mr. Rozarov."

Hollander let out a soft, relieved breath.

"Any special requests or instructions?"

"Uh, no. That's fine. She's...a good dog."

"Great!" Kathie opened the leather bound check-in book and slid it across the desk. "I just need a signature here."

Hollander visibly panicked for a moment, then scribbled something on the page that looked absolutely nothing like the signature Kathie had been staring at on her wall since she was twelve.

"Perfect." She snapped the book closed. "Anya will have a lovely stay with us and should we need anything, we'll call the number on file." Kathie took the leash and led Anya through the little gate into the reception area. She pushed a button on the desk that rang for a room attendant to come collect her.

Hollander picked up his phone and tugged his toque down further over his ears.

"Oh, uh - " Kathie said, as he turned to leave, and he paused, looking back at her. "Just so you know, we require ID at pick up. To make sure our friends are going home with the right person. We highly value security here. It's how we can guarantee Anya is safe."

"Oh." Hollander looked at her for a moment, like he was trying to judge if that was a normal thing for her to warn someone about or not. She gave him her most clueless smile in return.

"Okay. That's...good. I appreciate that. I want her to be safe. That won't - that won't be an issue."

"Okay, great! Thank you so much, Mr - uh Rozarov. Have a fantastic day!"

A smile teased the corners of Hollander's lips as he pushed the door open. "Thanks. You too."

Kathie let out a breath as he disappeared down the street. She looked down at Anya. "You've not been kidnapped, right? You just have two daddies?"

Anya, predictably, didn't answer her question, but her tongue lolled out of her mouth, and she wagged her tail. She didn't look like she'd been kidnapped. She looked very happy and well cared for. Alex stuck his head through the back door long enough to grab the leash, leaving Kathie alone again.

So Rozanov and Hollander were a thing. That actually explained a lot. Kathie wasn't going to tell anyone, but if it did come out, her mom was going to flip. She'd always loved both players, as someone who'd lived in and loved both Montreal and Ottawa.

Well, if they did come out, Kathie would be first in line to tweet her support.

February 2020

"Are you looking at that stupid spreadsheet again?"

Brennan snapped his drink cheat sheet down over the now well worn page of tracking notes and rolled his eyes at Diya. "It's not a spreadsheet."

"It's weird." Diya turned back to her phone.

Brennan huffed, but lifted the cheat sheet again to look at the page. He'd been working on matching the appearances in the cafe with the Voyageurs game schedule and if he was right, Ilya Rozanov was going to step into the cafe in about five minutes.

Seven minutes later, the door chimed, and the hockey star sauntered in. "Good morning," he said, his accent thicker when it was this cold out and his cheeks were pink and stiff.

"Good morning," Brennan said, switching to English. Rozanov had struggled through ordering in French a few times, but Brennan figured learning English was hard enough and took pity on him.

One medium coffee with extra hot oat milk, and one vanilla latte with three pumps of hazelnut, Brennan said to himself, the order immediately repeated by Rozanov himself.

Diya shot Brennan a look as he handed her the labeled cups. When Rozanov left with his drinks, Diya raised her eyebrows at him.

"What! They're so predictable."

"I don't get it."

"Look. Every time the Voyageurs play the Cens, either Shane Hollander or Ilya Rozanov comes into the cafe at 8:45, the morning after. If the Cens won, it's Hollander, and if the Voyageurs won, it's Rozanov."

"Okay, so?"

"So, they always *both order the same thing*. Two coffees. One oat milk, one with hazelnut."

"Alright."

"And when Rozanov gets the coffee, he drinks from the hazelnut and if Hollander gets it, he drinks from the oat milk."

Diya shrugged. "So they have a bet and whoever loses the game gets the other one coffee."

"At 8:45 in the morning?"

"They're athletes. I'm sure they're up at six."

"The hotel the Cens stay at when they play here is all the way across the river, by Centre Bell. Why would Rozanov be getting coffee here of all places?"

"You are obsessed. With hockey, and with those guys and their weird coffee orders. And as your therapist, I think you should stop thinking about it at all."

"If you were my therapist, I'd fire you," Brennan said, tossing a balled up napkin at Diya. "You're terrible."

"And you're one sheet of graph paper away from making a conspiracy tumblr. I'm your friend and I'm just trying to help you."

"Some day, you'll see I'm right. Whenever the Cens play in Montreal, Ilya Rozanov stays at Shane Hollander's house. Trust me."

"Even if I did trust you, I have no idea what I'd do with that information."

Brennan thought that over for a while. "Start a conspiracy tumblr?"

"You see my point?"

"I might see your point."

"Okay. You deserve a caramel macchiato. And I love you, so I'll make it for you with extra whip."

"Thanks, Di." Brennan looked down at his graph again. It lined up perfectly. The only outlier was when Hollander had missed a game for the flu and Rozanov had gotten the coffee even though the Cens had won. Six days later, it had been Rozanov missing a game. Brennan wasn't going to make a conspiracy tumblr, but he was going to fantasize about the *I told you so's* he'd get if his theory was ever officially confirmed.

August 2019

Charlotte had seen a lot of weird shit in her thirty-five years as a plumber. She'd seen homes with 6 bathrooms and two bedrooms. She'd seen a tiny galley kitchen with no fridge, only to discover a restaurant-sized mega fridge stuffed in the hall. She'd seen sex toys, sex dungeons, and a few semi-traumatizing times, actual people having sex.

She also worked in some of the nicest parts of Ottawa, so she'd seen some famous people in her time. She'd actually worked on Mr. Rozanov's house several times before, but he'd never been home, arranging it through a service he used to manage that kind of thing.

But when she'd rolled up to the house today, instead of being texted a code for the door lock, she'd been asked to knock and the door had been answered by the hockey player himself. He'd shown her to the leaky dishwasher, and she'd laid out her tools and gotten to work.

She hated dishwashers, just by virtue of how many annoying things could go wrong with them, and it took her almost half an hour just to get the thing unscrewed and pulled out from under the very high end granite countertops. The leak had actually been at the back, but being a multi-million dollar hockey pro's house, the designer had installed a water sensor under the sink cabinet and it had gone off, leading to Mr. Rozanov's swift call.

His call to her. But now he was on another call, and Charlotte was trying very, very hard not to listen, but there was no other sound in the otherwise empty house, and Charlotte had forgotten her headphones.

"Is fine," Mr. Rozanov said, loud enough that Charlotte assumed he'd forgotten she was there. "I will be back on the ice in a few days. I will still go to Montreal in two weeks. Do not worry."

There was a pause.

"See you are worrying. Is nothing. I am not even in pain. Yes, I took it. Yes, I know. Yes, I called your mom. She was *there*. She saw it. I know." Mr. Rozanov sighed audibly, and Charlotte heard his footsteps track a lap around his office on the other side of the kitchen wall. She couldn't help wondering who he was talking to. She'd looked at Mr. Rozanov's Wikipedia page when she'd first been hired - just in case he was a weirdo. Sometimes they were weirdos. But he seemed as normal as hockey players ever were. He was also very publicly single, and something about this phone call felt...intimate.

"Terry says is fine. Yeah, I know." There was a long pause this time. "I miss you too. I will not miss my chance to go to Montreal. I do not care if it's broken. I am coming." There was another pause, then Mr. Rozanov barked out a laugh.

Charlotte pulled off a valve and saw the shredded gasket that was supposed to keep the water in the dishwasher instead of on the floor. Well, that would do it. She dug around in her bag for a replacement.

"Yes, I think you would like that," Mr. Rozanov purred - there was really no other word to describe it. "Oh, I will. Mhm. Tell me more."

Charlotte grimaced and worked faster. It seemed like Ilya Rozanov wasn't as single as Wikipedia thought he was, and his partner apparently lived in Montreal. For some reason, that made Charlotte sad. She assumed someone rich and famous like that wouldn't have to deal with a long distance thing, only getting to see each other once in a while. If she was dating a hockey player - which she would never in a million years do, but if she was - she'd want to move to be wherever they were most of the time. Every city needed plumbers.

Though, maybe they weren't *anywhere* most of the time. Mr. Rozanov had never been home before when she'd come to change a faucet or fix the washing machine. They probably played on the road a lot. That made sense. Maybe it wasn't worth moving from Montreal to Ottawa to be rattling around in this big house by yourself.

"Okay, yes. You should go practice."

Hmm, practice, maybe the mystery partner was a musician, Charlotte thought idly. That'd be nice. Charlotte could see herself dating a musician. Maybe an oboe player. Oboe players seemed soulful.

"I love you too. I will miss you. Call me later."

Aww, it was love. Charlotte smiled as she screwed the last piece together.

Then Mr. Rozanov groaned in frustration. "Hollander! I will be fine in two days. Stop having panic attack about me. Is a tiny bruise."

Oh. Well, that explained everything. Shane Hollander lived in Montreal and definitely couldn't move to Ottawa. Charlotte didn't know a lot about hockey, but she did know Hollander was the Voyageurs' big name. She turned on the tap then started the dishwasher filling up so she could watch the seal hold. Yup, all good.

"Okay. I love you. Goodbye." There was the soft thud of a phone being set down and then the creak of a chair leaning back.

Charlotte slid the dishwasher under the counter and screwed it back into place. It was a shame, to buy a dishwasher as nice as this and have a plumber use a cheap, useless gasket to install it. She gave it a pat. It'd easily give Mr. Rozanov another ten years before needing service now.

She packed up her bag and let herself out. Clients like this usually preferred you didn't bother them to say goodbye. As she was packing up her truck she glanced over at the shiny, bright yellow Porsche sitting in the driveway.

Maybe she could date a hockey player. There might be some perks. If she weren't a lesbian, of course. Then again, there were some women's leagues, weren't there? She made a note to check Wikipedia when she got back to the office. Just to see.

September 2018

Léo had a finely tuned gaydar and it had been pinging like a submarine ever since he'd met Shane Hollander at the tidy, four-bedroom, five-bathroom new build in Brossard he'd asked to view. Léo watched hockey - who didn't - but he'd never met Shane Hollander in person before. Quite frankly, he'd been kind of surprised when he got the call. He was still pretty small scale; he wasn't with one of the big name realtors. But somehow Shane had gotten his number, and that wasn't a commission prospect he was about to give up.

"How many cars fit in the garage?" Shane asked in perfect French, stepping away from where Léo was unlocking the lockbox.

Léo looked at the spec sheet on his phone. "Two car garage. We can have a look from the inside. How many do you have?"

"Huh?"

"How many cars do you need space for?"

"Oh. Uh. Two is probably fine, yeah. I just have the one. But, you know...guests. Or whatever."

"Well, you could fit at least four more in the driveway," Léo offered, but Shane frowned.

"Maybe in the summer..."

"Well, let's have a look inside. But I'll make a note to keep an eye out for listings with bigger garages if this isn't enough for you."

Shane shrugged. "I'm sure it's enough. Let's see."

Léo opened the door and stepped into a spacious foyer. Shane followed him down the hall and into the kitchen. Léo looked at the spec sheet again. "Everything is new, obviously. Granite counter tops, a restaurant grade stove top, two ovens, and a double fridge."

Shane ran his hand along the counter.

"Do you cook much?" Léo asked.

"Not much. We mostly get our food delivered pre-made. It's easier."

"We? Will someone be moving in with you?" Shane had said the house was just for him on the phone, but maybe he had future plans for a partner. Or some hockey players lived with roommates, didn't they?

"Oh, uh." The tips of Shane's ears turned hot pink. "No. Just me. I just meant, like...hockey players. In general. Do that. And so do I."

"Oh, right, of course." Léo smiled encouragingly. "It makes sense. You must be so busy."

"Yeah," Shane sighed. He turned the faucet on then off again. "Maybe I should learn to cook more."

"Well, at the price point you're looking in, you're going to be getting a beautifully appointed kitchen no matter what."

"True."

"So if that's not a big selling point for you, what is?"

"Uh." Shane looked around, like he was looking for inspiration. "The cozy parts?" he offered, like it was a question. "Like the living room and the bedrooms and stuff. And maybe room for a firepit out back. I honestly won't spend that much time here, but when I am, I want it to be comfortable."

"Absolutely. Let's have a look." They wandered through the rest of the main floor, admiring a very cozy living room, a den that closed off with french doors, and an office. Upstairs, the bedrooms weren't so big as to be cavernous, but were beautifully laid out, each with an en suite and a fireplace.

Shane stood in the master bedroom and tipped his head to the side. "You could fit a king sized bed in here, right?"

"Oh, absolutely."

The ensuite had a long marble counter.

"Two sinks," Shane said, opening the drawers in the large vanity.

"Ah, yes. They're so couples can get ready at the same time."

Shane smiled. "That's nice."

Léo worked very hard to keep his eyebrow from rising. Odd comment from a decidedly single guy...

Shane added, "Good storage in here. And the closet is nice and big."

"Mhm. You mentioned guests. Do you want to look at the other bedrooms?"

"Oh. Uh, yeah. Sure."

But Shane only gave the other bedrooms a cursory glance. "Nice." He peeked out a window. "How close are the neighbours? Do these builds have good sound proofing?" He paused, then looked back at Léo with a slightly desperate look in his eye. "I have a lot of...workout equipment. And some of it is very loud."

"Right. Of course." Léo cleared his throat. "There's a good-sized lane between each home on this street, and the exterior walls are R-24 insulated so great for your heating bill and great for sound reduction. You should be able to... workout in peace."

"Perfect," Shane husked out, turning to trot back down the stairs. They looked at the backyard - there was enough room for a firepit - and the basement - beautifully finished and perfect for a home gym - and the garage, which was indeed just a two-car.

"So what do you think?" Léo asked. "It's fine if you hate it. That'll help me figure out what to look for in the next showing."

"No, no. I like it. I like it a lot." Shane tipped his head, considering the front facade. "I'll be honest, I'm not really looking for a forever house. I just feel like I've...outgrown my apartment. I want something private, with a bit more space. More..."

"Grownup?" Léo suggested. "You don't want to live in a bachelor pad anymore."

Shane sighed softly. "Yeah. I guess you could put it like that."

"You want a place that works for this phase of your life," Léo gently prodded.

"Exactly."

"Maybe even some extra room for the next phase of your life."

Shane swallowed hard but didn't say anything.

"Well, we'll keep looking. This one's been on the market for a few weeks now and I don't hear tell of any offers, so if you're interested, obviously I can't guarantee anything, but I don't think you need to feel like you need to move on it right away."

"Okay. Okay good. I'll sleep on it. And I'll talk to - I'll uh. Get some advice. From my friends and family."

"Good." Léo fiddled with the lockbox, trying to stuff the key back inside.

Shane's phone started ringing and he glanced down at it then frowned. "Uh, I have to take this. But thanks for showing me around. I'll call you if I decide to move on this one and otherwise I'll see you at the place on Thursday?"

"Sounds great. Goodnight, Shane."

"Night." Shane trotted off down the front steps towards where he'd parked his Range Rover on the street. He tugged his keys out of his pocket while he tucked his phone under his ear, and Léo saw a white paper fly out and flutter to the ground. Shane didn't notice.

"Oh!" Léo called, but it was too late, Shane's door slammed shut and the car rumbled to a start. Léo jogged down the steps and swooped up the paper before it could blow away. He looked down at it.

It was a speeding ticket, which made Léo wonder if he should interrupt Shane's call with one of his own to let him know to come back for it, but then he realized it wasn't actually the ticket itself, it was a receipt for having paid the ticket.

It also wasn't Shane's ticket. It was Ilya Rozanov's.

Léo stared at the ticket for a long time, fitting the puzzle pieces together. Yeah...he could see it, actually. It would explain the desire for a house for two while never explicitly saying so. The wish for privacy. The not coming out, not even to Léo who was quite obviously gayer than a picnic basket. Maybe it even explained why he'd gotten the call from Shane in the first place.

Well. Léo was going to find Shane Hollander the best secret gay love nest for him and his illicit rival turned lover if it fucking killed him.

December 2017

Nik yawned, sleep pulling heavily at his eyes, but he couldn't go to sleep yet. He needed to finish this post and get it up before midnight, or he'd be behind on his New Year's post and then where would he be?

But wow, there was a lot of content to sift through. The ShaneHollanderFashionIcon blog had been the best thing to ever happen to Nik. He'd spent the whole year making friends and even making some money off the content he produced, just noting all the outfits worn by Shane Hollander. He used to run a Rose Landry fan blog, but when she'd briefly dated Shane Hollander, Nik had been sucked in.

Hollander was hot, well-dressed (as long as you didn't go back further than January of this year), and everyone loved him. So Nik had found a niche and it had taken off far better than any of his other generic fan blogs. Now he was reposting to four other social medias and had even been contacted about a sponsorship.

So it was worth staying up late for.

But...Nik was running into a bit of an issue, and he wasn't sure what to do about it. He'd started chronologically, and from January to June, everything had been fine, but suddenly, starting in July, something weird had happened. Hollander was still rocking his fits, but...a lot of the clothes he wore weren't exclusive to him, anymore. Ilya Rozanov had been photographed in the same stuff.

The simple explanation was that they'd both hired the same stylist, and that stylist was lazy. But something about it had Nik thinking that wasn't it at all.

The clock ticked on, later and later, and Nik completely lost track of making his post, obsessed now with a new pattern that was emerging, the more he amassed receipts.

Yup. There it was. September 13th, Ilya Rozanov gets photographed wearing an Adidas sweater with a pulled loop sticking out of the hem near his right side. September 19th, Shane Hollander gets photographed wearing *exactly the same sweater*. And not just the same type of sweater, his sweater had a pulled loop in the same spot, and it fit him just a little too big.

It happened again. And again. And again.

Sometimes Hollander wore it first, sometimes Rozanov did. But whenever Nik could find something distinct about a piece of clothing, the other person's was the same. It was like they suddenly started pulling clothes out of the same closet. It was like -

Holy shit.

It was like they were literally in the same closet together.

Nik sat there staring at his computer screen for a long time, wondering what to do. If he posted about this, it would blow up. But it would also blow up Hollander and Rozanov's lives. Even if he was wrong, they'd get asked about it, and they'd be forced to answer questions no one should have to answer. But if he didn't, would someone else?

Nik shook his head. It didn't matter. He couldn't be that guy. He saved all the matching photos to a secret folder on his computer, just in case he needed them some day, then finished up the rest of his celebratory post. It was well after midnight by the time he got it posted, but that was okay. Did he really need to do a Happy New Year's post at all? Probably not.

He'd just post the best of 2017 compilation and then finally get some sleep.

October 2016

The only reason to volunteer for the annual fiscal year-end inventory count at Le Comptoir Domestique was that it paid double time, and that was enough for Marcus. He was saving up for the Rivendell Lego set and this hefty paycheque, combined with his Christmas bonus, would put him in a good place to pay all his bills and still have enough for the set.

Also, his boss wasn't there, so he could take a smoke break and no one would mind.

Marcus leaned against the back of the building and took a drag of his cigarette. It was cold tonight, snow winking its way down to settle on the roads and cars. Fuck, the drive home was going to be awful. Marcus glanced through the darkened window at the bare outline of the huge piles of unpacked boxes he had left to go through. Perhaps he wouldn't be driving home tonight at all. He needed to finish by nine, when the store opened, and the truth was, it might take him that long to get through it all.

He was just finishing up his cigarette, and about to head inside, when none other than Shane Hollander walked past him, face tucked down against the wind, a Voyageurs hoodie visible

under his coat. It was dark, but the streetlights caught his profile. Marcus was good with faces, and a fan of all sports, so he was confident.

Hollander took out a set of keys as he slipped in through the back door of the building. The *thud* of his footsteps was audible as he jogged all the way up to the top floor. A moment later, a door swung shut and then all was quiet.

Huh, Marcus thought. He realized a moment too late that he should have asked him for his autograph. He wasn't a huge Voyageurs fan, but a Hollander autograph had to be worth something, right?

Marcus dropped his cigarette butt and headed back into the shop to start tallying up citrus zesters again. Almost an hour later, he was surprised to hear the bang of the back door and the thump of footsteps again. It had to be Hollander leaving, except it really sounded like someone going up. When only about ten minutes later, there was another, different bang, followed by a thud and a moan, Marcus finally put it together.

Hollander had a girl over and was giving it to her in the apartment over the store. Good for him. If Marcus was a talented, good looking, rich, famous hockey player, he'd get laid after every game too.

When the banging and muffled moans got to be too much, Marcus put on his headphones and focused on the task at hand for a few more hours. But halfway through counting the creme brulee torches, his back started barking and he opted to take another break. He was making good time, really. Maybe he would sleep in his own bed tonight, after all.

Marcus took his cigarettes and his lighter and went back to his little nook by the back of the building. He lit up, and was just about to start scrolling his phone when the thud of a door above him drew his attention back up to the apartment. Hollander and his girl leaving, perhaps? But why not stay the night? Maybe Hollander was an asshole, kicking his hookup out as soon as he'd gotten off. Poor girl.

Then the door opened and none other than Ilya Rozanov stepped out into the dull glow of the streetlight. Ilya Rozanov. The Boston Bruins star centre and Shane Hollander's bitter rival. Leaving an apartment that Hollander had just gone into, after making a bunch of banging noises.

And he had wet hair.

What. The. Fuck.

Well, shit. Looked like Hollander *was* getting laid after every game, but it wasn't a girl. Marcus pulled the last deep drag from his cigarette and snubbed out the butt under his shoe. Good for him, he thought. It was certainly more sex than Marcus was having these days, so all he could do was applaud both Hollander's good fortune and his good stamina because shit, now that he looked at the time, he'd been hearing noises for nearly two hours.

Good for him, indeed.

Marcus kicked the snow off his boots and slipped back into the store. Time to tote up over two hundred salt and pepper shaker sets.

July 2010

Lena stood with her back against the row of lockers and her hand pressed over her mouth to stop her from making a sound. When she'd found out she was going to be assisting with this shoot, she'd been so excited. She loved both Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, and even if all she was doing was fetching coffee and handing the right papers to the right people at the right time, it was another baby step towards her goal of becoming a professional photographer.

But this was not how she'd seen this gig going.

"Not here. Someone could come in," had been the words that had brought Lena to a stop, heart pounding. She'd been sent to the locker rooms to give the hockey players a packet about what their obligations were post-shoot. Stuff like which hashtags to use and stuff, she assumed. They didn't really tell her those kinds of details, just where to go and when.

And she'd been distinctly aware that she was being sent into the men's locker room, so she'd gone slowly, listening for the sound of water running, really to yell out, "Knock knock!" or "Everybody decent?" or something like that, but instead she'd heard Hollander hush Rozanov because someone might come in.

That was when Lena had slapped her hand over her mouth and glued her feet to the floor. She should have left, should have just turned on her heel and walked right back out and counted to a hundred before she tried going in again, but surprise and awkwardness had her unable to move, and then the showers clicked off, removing any chance of her footsteps being muffled. She was stuck.

"Look," came Hollander's voice, a little shaky. "We can just pretend that never happened, okay?"

"Is that what you want?" Rozanov replied.

Lena's eyes went wide. What were they talking about?

"Yeah. I mean...yeah. Of course." Hollander didn't sound convinced.

And neither did Rozanov, when he said, "You are a bad liar."

There was a tight pause.

"What is your room number?" Rozanov pressed.

Lena was vibrating in place. Was this really happening? The two hottest players in hockey right now, who definitely, absolutely hated each other, were about to make plans to meet up? There was no way she was mis-reading this, was there?

"Fourteen ten," stumbled hastily out of Hollander's mouth.

"If I knock on door of room 1410 tonight...maybe around nine?"

"I might open the door," Hollander breathed.

There was delight in Rozanov's voice when he replied with, "I might knock."

Wow. Lena had to squeeze her hands into fists to stop herself from squealing. She couldn't believe it! She'd been duped along with the entire rest of the world into believing that Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov absolutely despised each other. But here they were, making plans! For tonight!

She tip-toed back towards the door and prepared to make her second entrance, louder this time. Absolutely crazy that the NHL's hottest rivals were secretly friends. She wondered what they got up to when they met up. Probably played video games. Or watched movies. Or - oh! Nine o'clock! That was when the new episode of *Glass Houses* aired! They were probably fans, just like she was, and they were going to watch it together. It was adorable, really. How lovely to have a bestie who understood the unique life they both led.

She would keep her secret to the grave, but this was turning out to be the best gig ever, after all.

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