

Paul Baker Thinks Shane Hollander is ‘Nasty’ at Hockey

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Paul Baker Thinks Shane Hollander is ‘Nasty’ at Hockey

by [isto4u](#)

Summary

When Shane Hollander returns to his tiny hometown for a quiet visit, he runs into Paul Baker (his high school crush) who has zero idea Shane is now an NHL superstar.

Or: Shane’s first crush meets his boyfriend

ZERO angst just fluff. Shane and Ilya are together and their families know but aren’t out yet as a couple.

Notes

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

Paul Baker still lives in Cochrane, same yellow house on 8th Avenue, same everything that hasn't changed since they were kids.

The snowblower sits in the driveway, and Paul has kept his old goalie pads from when he was backup goalie for the Cochrane Huskies and mostly just sat on the bench cheering the boys on. Man, he loved to cheer. He's recently been practicing his goalie moves again, probably a good idea to stay in shape, he thinks.

He works Canadian Tire shifts, tires mostly but automotive when they're short. He likes the steady routine and the discount on winter gear and windshield wiper fluid for his friends. His flip phone is silver and ancient, snaps shut loud enough to make people jump when he pulls it out to check the time. Paul Baker isn't online, and never will be. If anyone wants to reach him, they can call him or text him. That's plenty!

Shane's back in town because his grandma's guilt text landed hard: "you're always so busy now, we barely see you." He couldn't say no.

So now, he's crashing in his old bedroom, mattress sagging worse than he remembers. Ilya is technically here (he's been in Europe shooting some commercials for perfume or maybe a fashion brand, Shane doesn't remember and doesn't care either way) but right now he's dead to the world from jet lag in the guest room, sprawled across the bed with curtains drawn tight. Grandma and Grandpa know Ilya is Shane's 'special friend' and leave it at that. Ilya has been keeping a low profile so no one has even clicked that he's in Cochrane, which is for the best. But it's important to Shane that Ilya meets his grandparents, so Ilya had flown in, done the dutiful meet and greet, and then passed out.

Shane stood in the doorway that morning, watched him for a second, decided waking him would be cruel, and slipped out alone. Good to get some air.

He hits the supermarket first, picks up groceries for his grandparents, drops the food home, then finds a spot to ~~disassociate~~, wait no, read a hockey biography book. The town is small enough that his legs can carry his tired brain from place to place without much thought. It's also quiet enough that no one is around to recognise him (much).

He gets a little hungry, so he decides it's time to risk being recognised (again, goddamn) and get something to eat. Tim Hortons is quiet mid-afternoon. Shane walks in with his toque pulled low, head down out of habit. Then the yell comes and Shane holds his breath.

"Hollander!"

Shane's anxious stomach drops. He braces for the usual, eyes widening, phone out, "You're that guy, right? The captain? The one who just won the Cup again? Selfie?" But it doesn't come. Thank fuck!

Instead. Holy motherfucking hell.

It's Paul Baker. Paul Motherfucking Baker. Now with a moustache!!! And a baby mullet?
And sparkly green fingernails?

Paul crosses the store in three long strides, pulls him into a hug that lifts Shane off the ground for a second, same crushing grip from when they were sixteen. "Buddy. You're actually here. It's been like forever, I missed you."

Shane laughs, startled and not sure what to make of it. "Hey. Yeah. Hey, me too."

Paul takes over, same as always, and Shane is already blushing. "Double-double extra hot, right? I got yours too." He orders without waiting, pays with change from every pocket, carries the tray to an old booth by the window, and plonks the coffees and Timbits down in front of both of them.

Shane sits across from him and stares at the cup Paul just set down. "You just bought my coffee. Without asking."

Paul blinks over his lid. "Yeah? Why would I ask? You always got the same thing back then. Can't hardly make you pay for your own coffee when you're home, bud."

Shane opens his mouth, closes it, starts laughing quietly because the whole thing is absurd. Shane is, for lack of a better word, a bazillionaire. In the last year alone he's been on the cover of The Hockey News twice, led the league in points, captained Montreal through a brutal season and still came out on top, had analysts calling him generational, the most complete player alive, face on billboards for CCM and Rogers.

And yet Paul Baker is treating him like the kid who used to sit behind him and struggle through math class, the one he used to stare at during practice when he thought nobody noticed. Paul Baker noticed. But he never said anything.

For context, and importantly, back then Paul Baker was Shane's first real crush. Well, his first real crush even though he didn't realise he was crushing so hard until he was an adult looking back. He'd told Ilya about Paul Baker and Ilya had just sighed and said, "Hollander, you were in love with him, yes?" "I didn't realise I was gay! I just thought he was pretty and funny and I wanted to be him and oh my god you're right...."

The crush on Paul was simpler, stupider, classic high-school-level stuff. Paul was tall even then, broad shoulders from summer farm work, always laughing too loud, always the guy high-fiving everyone after a goal, who once carried Shane's bag to the bus when Shane twisted his ankle in practice. Shane would watch him from the bench, heart doing flips every time Paul Baker grinned at him across the ice, every time he said "nice shot, Hollander."

Meanwhile, back in reality, Paul starts talking about the town, because does Shane know the pothole finally got fixed, what about the new Tim's drive-thru, it's a mess, then pivots to the goalie gear he just snagged on Kijiji.

"Fifty bucks, full nineties set, barely used. Been practising butterfly in the garage. Mom hates the noise because it sounds like a walrus having a heart attack but I'm telling you, it's coming

together. Turns out I'm like, *really, really* good now, I just needed new gear. You gotta come out to the lake. You still like hockey right? Ice is perfect. Shoot on me like old times."

Shane doesn't hesitate. Holy fucking shit. Paul Baker has *no idea* who Shane is now. "Yeah. Let's do it. I actually have a couple pairs of old skates at my grandparents'. We could swing by mine?"

They load into Paul's F-150, swing past the Hollander seniors', grab the skates and chuck them in the back. The skates are clanking in the bed, bag of birthday cake Timbits on the dash "for later on," and when they hit Frederick House Lake it's silent, snow heavy, ice like glass under weak January sun. The air is so fucking cold it hurts any exposed skin, but Shane feels like maybe this is the most relaxed he's been in months.

Paul gears up methodically, straps on the ancient pads, pulls the mask down. "Been working on flexibility. Watch this." He drops into a split attempt, hips click loudly, and he grunts and laughs when it only goes halfway. "Close enough. Your turn. Let's see what you got, Hollander. Hope you're not too rusty because I'm about to kill it out here."

Shane steps onto the ice in jeans and puffer, grabs the old wooden stick (probably older than both of them) and starts casual. First shot: quick snap from the hash marks, top shelf. Paul flails, glove nowhere close. Puck clangs iron. "These wooden sticks are weird!" Shane laughs. "Not used to the handling." He shoots again, puck whooshes past Paul's head straight into the net.

"Damn!" Paul yells, laughing. "Either you're still nasty or I'm trash!"

Shane smirks and lines up again. Backhand deke, forehand pull, five-hole. Paul sprawls, misses by miles. Another. Snipe from a distance, bar down. They're all the kind of goals that get slow-mo replays on Sportsnet, analysts losing their minds over edge work and release. Paul Baker makes one save (it's pure dumb luck, blocker in the right spot) and celebrates like he won the Cup. "I'M HIM RIGHT NOW!! I'M A WALL!"

Shane's laughing so hard his abs hurt. Out here it's just shots, flops and loud yelling. There isn't any tape, no analytics on his game play, no pressure to be the guy who's carried the franchise, no awkward interviews, not the captain who's untouchable this season. To Paul he's just Hollander, the kid who could always pick corners but was never braggy about it.

Shane's phone buzzes. "Hold up, Paul Baker. Got a text."

"Oh for sure, for sure bud," Paul says, panting. Fucking hell he is unfit. Or maybe Shane is just that good. Probably the first one.

Ilya: where are you чайник

Shane: I know 'kettle' haha at the lake w paul

Ilya: which

Shane: the one. PB

Ilya: ...

Ilya: I'm awake

Shane: go back to sleep

Ilya: no

Shane: my location is on. Come by?

Twenty minutes later Ilya's SUV crunches up. He steps out, arms folded, staring like he's deciding who to fight first.

Paul waves huge. "Yo! Come play!"

Ilya stays put. His eyes narrow at Paul Baker: tall Canadian, who's just pulled off his helmet to say hi, curly floppy semi-mullet and giant smile with a filthy moustache.

Shane skates over, face flushed, hair wild, still grinning. "Hey."

Ilya scans Shane, red cheeks, bright eyes, loose happy posture, then glances at Paul Baker, again, juggling the puck and failing.

"He's tall," Ilya says.

"Yeah he's probably six-two."

"He is... loud."

"Yep."

"He looks at you like happy little puppy."

Shane shrugs. "Always did, even back in high school." He turns and smacks the puck at Paul Baker.

Ilya watches Paul whiff a save and swear loud.

"And... He doesn't know," Ilya says.

"Nope. He only has a flip phone. No clue. Thinks I'm just decent at shooting."

Ilya exhales slowly.

Paul skates up, picks up the frozen-solid bag of Timbits. "Hey buddy, I'm Paul Baker. You want a snack? Soar-y they're frozen. The birthday cake ones slap though. Your friend Hollander here is really good! Do I know you?"

Ilya takes one. "My name is Ilya Rozanov. I am a good friend of Shane's." He bites, nods. "I like this food. We do not have in America."

"For sure buddy, come on, you skate? We've got an extra shitty pair. Join us for a bit eh?" Paul Baker's prairie fucking accent is so grating that Ilya finds himself listening a little closer to make sure he's understood what's being said.

Ilya can't resist a chance to show off. "Okay."

They hit the ice. Paul yells unnecessary commentary. Shane keeps sniping (he can't help it that is all like, clean, filthy, elite-level shit, even though he's now trying to take it easy) Paul keeps flopping, celebrating rare saves. Ilya circles tight, silent, intense, eyes flicking between them.

He and Shane pass back and forth, take turns shooting at Paul. Paul's save percentage drops from 1% to 0.1%.

"Damn! You're really good too!"

Shane catches Ilya staring.

"What?"

"Nothing."

"...Fine."

They stay till their fingers go numb. Then Paul Baker piles all their shit into the truck. Ilya's brain hurts trying to understand Paul Baker talking a million miles an hour about Something? An invite to eat poutine at Paul Baker's cottage maybe? But Shane is laughing. So whatever. Shane speaks this stupid language.

Later, back at grandma's, Ilya thawing by the stove, Paul gone with promises of next time (he's gonna practice, apparently, and save more next time).

"I like your friend Paul Baker, he is funny," Ilya finally admits.

"You're not jealous?" Shane teases.

"I am not jealous of your handsome, funny, tall, Canadian friend. He is terrible at hockey." Ilya snorts. "But I think perhaps you have good taste in men, yes?"

"Fuck you," Shane giggles. "You're hot when you're jealous."

"Then I am jealous, Hollander," Ilya sighs. "What if you had someone like him as your boyfriend? Hmm?"

"Then who would mock me about my weak backhand?" Shane pokes Ilya in the ribs.

"It is true. Your backhand is very weak. Best to stay with me so I can fix it for you."

Shane kisses Ilya's lips gently, "I love you."

"I love you too."

Meanwhile, in New York, Issa gets the most confusing call of her entire life.

Her phone rings while she's halfway through microwaving leftover spaghetti, and she answers on speaker. "Hey Paul Baker, what's up, sweetie?"

Paul's voice comes through loud and proud, like he's calling from the moon. "I just wanted to hear your voice, I've had the best day! Listen, you'll never guess who I ran into today. I played pond hockey with my old buddy Hollander. The cute guy I had a crush on a million years ago. Haven't seen him in forever, eh? We went out to Frederick House Lake, practiced with the full goalie gear I recently scored secondhand. He's still got the sauce, man. Absolute sniper."

Issa freezes, spoon halfway to her mouth. "...Shane?"

"Yeah! Shane! You know Shane too? Isn't he amazing. He's still so handsome too. Those freckles. Anyway, we had Timbits, birthday cake ones, the good shit. Then this tall Russian guy shows up—"

Issa drops the spoon. It clatters into the sink. "Wait. Paul. Slow down. Shane Hollander?"

There's a beat of silence on Paul's end, like he's processing why she's using full names. "Yeah? Shane Hollander. So you do know him? He's still the same chill dude from my old school. Wait. Why're you freaking out?"

The other end of the line erupts into what can only be described as a full-volume kettle whistle mixed with muffled screaming. Issa yanks the phone closer.

"PAUL BAKER. Shane Hollander is literally the captain of the Montreal Metros. He won the Art Ross last year. He's on billboards. He's famous, you absolute himbo, how do you have no idea who anyone is?"

Paul pauses. You can practically hear the gears turning. "...Oh! Oh my god, that's so cool he made it! So hockey is his job now? Like, for real? That's wild! I just thought he was still really good at shooting. Nice for him!"

Issa is laughing so hard she's wheezing. "Paul. You played pond hockey with the best player in the league and you didn't notice?"

"He said he still liked hockey! I didn't wanna make him feel weird! Anyway, then this Russian guy rolls up, and he's like super intense, arms crossed like 'look at me, I'm big scary Russian'. I think his name was like Ian? Or maybe Ivan? Tall, hot, scary vibe. Insane Slavic big dick energy. I offered him Timbits. He liked them! And I think he liked me!"

More screaming from Issa's end. "IAN? PAUL. That was Ilya fucking Rozanov. He's one of the best players in the NHL too. They're basically THE heated rivalry duo of hockey right now, there's so much fan fiction about this, I wish you were online. You fed Ilya Rozanov a birthday cake Timbit... please tell me, did you call him buddy?"

Paul sounds genuinely delighted. "Yeah! For sure buddy, I call everyone buddy. We don't have that in America, he said. Then we all skated, I let them both shoot on me, they both

sniped me like crazy, it was awesome. They left together, something about Shane's grandma. I told them next time we're doing poutine at the cottage."

Issa is on the floor now, tears streaming, phone clutched like a lifeline. "Paul Baker, you absolute legend. You just had an NHL All-Star meet-cute with your high-school crush and his rival, and you didn't know."

Paul laughs, big and bright. "Eh, it was fun. Shane's still a great guy. Tell everyone Paul Baker says hi!"

He hangs up.

Issa stares at her cold spaghetti, then texts the group chat:
y'all will not believe the call I just got from Paul Baker
he played pond hockey with Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov today
he called Ilya "buddy"
he fed him Timbits
he has no idea who either of them are
send help I'm crying

The replies come in so fast her phone vibrates off the counter.

End Notes

PLEASE leave me a nice comment if you liked this.

RIP Jack as Wyatt. you would have been perfect. goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, you were bigger than the whole sky.

If you like funny stories, check out [Slavic Dad Ilya Rozanov](#)!

Edit as at 10 April: wow! hello new friends! I originally wrote this bc as a kid I was obsessed with those Disney Crossover episodes (IYKYK), bc in my mind this would be the ideal version of this. If they can get Julia Fox, they can get Shane Hollander / Ilya Rozanov.

Anyways thanks for being so kind to me in the comments! I wrote this fic in January when life was Hard as Fuck™ but things are better now. If you haven't watched Adults after falling into a strange Heated Rivalry K-hole, you might want to give it a go.

Fun fact: Adults is filmed in Toronto! Even though they pretend it's New York! Also Ksenia is in it too?? (That's the actor who plays Svetlana)

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