

Is it Casual Now?

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Is it Casual Now?

by [DeletiaClementine](#)

Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Notes

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

Chapter 1

As soon as Shane Hollander was alone with Ilya Rozanov for the first time in over a year he knew that he'd been lying to himself.

It started with how hurt Shane had been after Ilya blew him off after the Sochi Olympics. Shane knew while they were in Russia that Ilya had a lot going on with family, with his cratering team, the embarrassment of failing his country in front of his countrymen. Shane didn't begrudge him that. But after they returned home Ilya remained absent from Shane's texts. His boring texts, the meanest part of his mind liked to remind him, usually when he was spiraling about something else which Shane was unfortunately as skilled at as he was on the ice. Maybe even better.

Shane tried to reach out once, before Montreal was due to play in Boston, and had been left on read before the game started. Shane was confused but he had a team to lead. A fucking game to play. There were too many people depending on Shane to let sex problems distract him even if it did feel like his chest had hollowed out as he laced up his skates.

Ilya resolutely didn't look his way from the team's bench. Their face offs were deadly silent, a marked change from how Ilya used to enthusiastically chirp at him. The irony was that his stone faced silence got under Shane's skin more than if Ilya had cheerfully threatened a hat trick. There was a different energy when Ilya slammed Shane into the boards on the ice. Impersonal. Just business. Ilya was halfway across the rink before Shane could chase after him, filled with the familiar burn of frustration.

Shane locked in to hockey mode. He'd have time to figure out what this all meant later when tens of thousands of people weren't watching his every move. He knew how to be a hockey player so he just had to do it. He wasn't getting paid to be a spurned lover.

When the team returned to the visitor locker room after losing the game, Shane resolutely refused to look at his phone. He hurled his sweat soaked jersey into his cubby and ignored Hayden Pike's look of surprise out of the corner of his eye.

"Uh, you okay, Cap?" Hayden's voice was wary. This was out of character for Shane, who normally took losses on the chin and reminded the team that tomorrow was a new day. He didn't throw things. He stayed even, at least in front of everyone.

"All good," Shane muttered, and stomped to the showers to wash at least some of this awful fucking day off. When he finally allowed himself to check for notifications, after he was dressed in his suit and had packed to head to the hotel, there were none. He ignored the drop in his stomach. That was that. Ilya was definitely done with him.

By the time Shane was home in Montreal, after the bus ride to the private plane to his SUV, he had talked himself into this whole situation being his fault. He was too inexperienced. Too eager. Too willing to obey whatever command that Ilya gave him without flinching. Too boring, not a challenge anymore. Too much.

So what if he'd been ghosted? That was normal, he knew. His teammates talked about it all the time. Sure, it hurt, but that was just modern dating life.

Not that he and Ilya had ever dated. Shane couldn't stretch the definition of what he and Ilya did that far. They fucked. Fuckbuddies. Not even friends with benefits. Just rivals who saw each other a few times a year. It was embarrassing that he felt connected to Ilya in a way he didn't even know was possible before the first time Ilya kissed him so tenderly he forgot every girl he had ever made out with. Shane was starting to think Ilya had the kind of charisma that some people had, a sexual aura that he displayed for everyone who was lucky enough to share his bed. Shane was foolish enough to think he was different. That what they had was special. That the heat built up between them was anything more than the fact that they were the last people who should be touching each other. He felt stupid and so, so young.

That was the first in the string of resentments Shane began to build.

He found himself scrolling hockey gossip social media, needles in the tenderest parts of himself every time he saw tabloid photos of Ilya out at clubs with a woman, with multiple women, his wolfish grin one Shane was familiar with kissing away. The coverage was at a frenzy. Ilya Rozanov was on a legendary run of wins on the ice and women off it and the fans ate it up.

Shane assumed there were men in there too. Ilya was discreet but he wasn't going to deny himself the pleasure of a guy who knew what he was doing, on his knees for Ilya. Shane resented how hard those imagined encounters made him, how disgusted he felt after he stroked himself off in the shower to the idea of Ilya bent over someone with a bigger cock than Shane's, a prettier ass, his chain scraping against a back that arched better than Shane's. At least when he felt disgusted he could ignore how much it hurt.

His anger at himself that he even cared became a banked fire made of self sustaining embers. They were casual. It was over. Shane could handle this like an adult. This wasn't heartbreak. He reminded himself of that again and again. He didn't know what to call what he was feeling but no hearts had been involved.

As the season careened toward the playoffs Shane kept his focus on the game. He didn't have time to think about how touch starved he was, how much he missed sex. Or did he miss Ilya? He didn't have enough experience to even know what this ache was. He channeled all his energy into trying to lead his team through the first round of playoffs but they didn't get there. Too many injured players. The ineffable roll of the dice of professional sports where all the teams had their own strengths and were about as good as each other. Shane was only a little bit sorry that he was relieved the season was done.

Boston was on a roll, of course. Of course. Shane watched the final game alone, heart in his throat. He knew that if Boston won he would be slammed with such an intense mix of emotions that he wouldn't be able to keep them quiet if anyone else could see him. So he sat by himself in his cold living room in front of a giant tv with a can of ginger ale sweating on the side table as he watched Ilya Rozanov hoist the cup over his head. Shane felt proud and envious and frustrated and so so sad that it didn't feel okay to send a congratulations text.

He turned the tv off and sat alone in the dark. He said out loud, "I can't do this anymore." This couldn't be the rest of his life.

Shane knew he wanted to feel like he was better at sex. He wanted to sleep with people just to do it, because there were two people curious about one another, not because there was an overwhelming sense of connection between two people who couldn't be connected even if they wanted to. Even if Shane wanted to, especially when it was clear Ilya didn't.

It would probably be easy, to find someone to sleep with. To find a man to sleep with. Shane didn't want to look in Montreal, where he was too famous and couldn't trust that he wouldn't be outed. Hell, he didn't want to look in Canada at all. He decided that he would download an app when he was in LA the next week for a commercial shoot for Rolex. He liked feeling anonymous in LA, where they didn't care about hockey the way they did in Canada and where Shane was likely to be the least famous person in any given room. He could find someone there who had no idea who Shane Hollander, hockey star, was beyond just a guy who wanted to get off.

That way Shane could go to the MHL awards with a new confidence when he saw Ilya. He could blow Ilya off if they happened to cross paths. He could take some of his power back. He could prove to them both that this thing that they did a few times a year wasn't special, not at all.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Chapter Notes

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

Shane's itchy anxiety was a constant companion over the next few days as he prepared for spending a couple weeks in the states. He was flying to LA for multiple commercial shoots and then would stay there until it was time to go to Las Vegas for the annual MLH awards. It didn't make sense to return to Montreal and then go right back. He refused to think about his other plans for LA. He just needed a little vacation, that's all.

That was how he had spun the plan to his mother, who was also his manager, a role she had taken on as soon as he was drafted. Shane had needed her to inform Tim Hortons that his next shoot with them would need to be rescheduled.

She wasn't thrilled. "Part of this job is being dependable, Shane. We don't want anyone to get the impression that you're being difficult."

Shane practiced the deep breathing he had learned in yoga before responding. Willed the tightness in his chest to recede. "I've been working with them for years now. They'll understand. It's been a..." He paused, deciding, as he always had to, how much he would share with her. "It's been a hard year."

His mom's face softened then and Shane felt the familiar scrape of guilt. In some ways he felt so close to his parents. They'd been a unit of 3 Shane's whole life. But after he met Ilya and they started whatever fucked up thing they'd been doing for years now, he felt like he had to build walls between them. Not only to keep Shane safe, but to keep his parents safe too. How could he let them in when he didn't know the dimensions of the space he was protecting?

Shane didn't know who he was, truly, outside of hockey. He thought he liked women. Sex with them was fun enough. If he wasn't salivating for it like his buddies it was just because he was focused on being a professional athlete. Shane was aware that this all could go away with one bad collision on the ice. Being with Ilya was so different and overwhelming and good but Shane couldn't honestly say that wasn't just Ilya and whatever sex magic charisma he possessed. That's why he needed this trip to LA, to test the waters. And that's why he couldn't even begin to tell his mom, his lovely and intense mom, why his year had been so hard. Let her think it was because the Metros burned out at the end of the season.

“I just need some time in the sun,” he finally said.

She hugged him then, for a little longer than normal. “I’ll talk to Timmy’s. Go get some sunshine. And don’t forget to use the good sunscreen. The sun is brighter there than it is here.”

A week later, Shane was done with shoots for Rolex, Speedo, Calvin Klein. He’d spent several days as a disinterested observer of his body, dressed and posed like a doll for the best angles on camera. His fake smile was good enough now that no one noticed it never reached his eyes. He had perfected a pout that apparently read as sexy. He never bothered to look at the results of all these ad campaigns because he didn’t recognize himself in them. Most of the time the camera was focused on his body which would be photoshopped later into near perfection. The person in the ads wasn’t Shane, not really.

And that was fine. Shane liked the checks. He was going to use the proceeds of this trip to start investing in real estate. He wanted to build a foundation that could sustain him and his family beyond hockey and its inevitable expiration date. Shane hoped the end of his career was as far as possible in the future but anything could change that.

An injury.

A scandal.

All the more reason Shane should use this time to find someone new. Ilya had done them both a favor, really. They were both excellent hockey players but neither of them was indispensable enough to survive the whole world finding out just how much they didn’t hate each other.

Shane sat on a sleek mid century style couch in a luxury suite with a view of the Pacific Ocean just a block away. Too much room for one person but that was a perk his mother had negotiated into his contracts. Only the best. The rooms felt lonely and Shane had drifted between them, in the hermetically sealed air set at the perfect temperature, after a workout in the hotel gym and a punishingly cold shower afterwards until finally he couldn’t ignore it anymore.

He downloaded an app he had heard of, where men could find other men to hook up. His hands shook as he signed up for an account, fingers gone cold enough that it made it hard to type in a password. But he did it.

The app prompted him to add to his profile before he could see who was... available. Willing. Out there. Even though he had anticipated this, remembering how his teammates treated each others dating profiles like a group project on long plane rides between games, he still felt his throat get tight. There had to be a way to do this anonymously as possible. For his name he simply put S. He scrolled through his photo roll until he found a picture of himself shirtless at his cabin and cropped it to just his torso. He knew that he had a good body, at least by societal standards. He had abs and pecs and the bulge of his biceps looked huge from this angle. He was able to dispassionately see this photo and know that he would get takers without the risk of showing his face, but it felt like that experience would belong to someone else. He clicked the option for “hook ups only” and saved the profile.

Then he dropped the phone face down on the couch and walked away, to the balcony and the warm breeze, even as he heard notifications start to vibrate the phone from outside. He ordered room service and was thankful that Californian hotels always had the kind of food he liked to eat, aligned with his macrobiotic diet. He ate a salmon bowl with extra kale and light dressing by the light of the tv with the volume low, showing a hockey game from the 80s.

Eventually, though, Shane's curiosity took over. The phone had not stopped buzzing and he found himself half hard, wondering what exactly was on there. When he picked up the phone it was warm in his hand and the battery life was dangerously low. He would have to adjust the settings on the app because otherwise he wouldn't be able to use the phone at all. He tried to scroll through what turned out to be hundreds of notifications but felt overwhelmed immediately. His ears rang as he swiped away dick pics and propositions and offers to meet him where he was, where they were, in an alley somewhere, in a car. He frantically clicked through the app until he turned off notifications completely.

"Fuck," he muttered, breathing gone ragged. It was too much.

But also hot?

Shane's cock had fully thickened as he became aware of how it could feel, knowing he was wanted. Knowing that hundreds of guys had seen his body and said yes, more, now now now. He had spent so much of his life head down focused on being the best hockey player he could, ignoring sex until Ilya wouldn't let him anymore. This was new.

Shane returned to the bedroom, to the giant bed where he threw the phone before stripping off his clothes with brutal efficiency, folding them into the dirty side of his suitcase. He slid into the sheets and palmed his dick.

Then he went on YouTube and searched "Ilya Rozanov rude interview" until he found a long compilation that he had watched many times before, a string of clips of Ilya anywhere from fully dressed at press conferences to half naked outside locker rooms, sweaty and cocky, putting reporters through their paces with the crooked half smile that Shane could not forget no matter how much he wanted to. He jerked his cock roughly, welcoming the dryness of his hands, watching Ilya's talented mouth as he smirked, wishing he could kiss it away. Knowing how Ilya looked when he gasped in pleasure when Shane swallowed his dick despite Shane's inexperience.

Shane reminded himself cruelly that lots of people had seen that face and then sat in the shame of that being what pushed him over the edge into coming so hard his gasp echoed throughout the empty suite.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all the feedback! Hopefully I have fixed the chapter number/incomplete issue for now. Kudos and comments are very welcome!

Chapter 3: Guy in LA

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Shane pretended all day that his phone, and the hookup app, didn't feel like a sexual grenade. He worked out hard in the morning, pushing the limits of the hotel gym treadmill for over an hour until his muscles were screaming but his mind emptied out. He considered using his free time to explore LA. With his punishing hockey schedule he never really got to spend time in the cities he visited. He went from plane to hotel to arena and back again to move on to the next city. Time to be a tourist wasn't accounted for. Hockey players, even those like Shane who were well established, had curfews on the road. Some teams were lax about enforcement. Like Boston, as far as Shane could tell, considering Ilya's willingness to stay with him late when he met Shane after their games. Montreal was strict, probably the strictest in the league. Normally Shane was happy enough to be back in his room long before curfew anyway.

He decided to take a rare nap after a probiotic smoothie from the cafe in the hotel lobby. He slept fitfully and woke in sweaty sheets, half hard as images of Ilya on his knees for Shane dissipated before he could focus on them. His phone buzzed with a text from his mother reminding him he had emails to review. Shane Hollander the brand spun on no matter how much Shane as a person wanted a break. He took his laptop onto the balcony and spent the rest of the afternoon and evening texting back and forth with his mother with clarifying questions as he whittled his to do list down.

Finally, the day inched into night, the work was done, and Shane could no longer ignore the thing he orchestrated this whole trip around. He stood and stretched, hoping to loosen the residue of anxiety that had taken root in his limbs as he sat so still.

Shane wanted to do this. He did. He talked himself through his options like he was evaluating video footage of himself on the ice. He could look at the app again, see if there was anyone who piqued his interest. His stomach clenched at the mere thought of it. If he was going to try to be with someone else he didn't want to feel like he was choosing off a menu. Not the first time, at least.

He could put this all off until tomorrow, his last night in LA. That didn't seem like the best idea. He would be in Vegas the night after that. He would like the distance of some time between whatever might happen and what he would do when he ran into Ilya. He wanted to let any newfound confidence integrate into his body so he could withstand whatever emotions he might have when he saw Ilya.

Shane's last option would be to find a gay bar and see what happened. Meeting someone at a bar made sense. People did that every day. And if he got there and didn't connect with anyone, he could at least say he tried. He opened his laptop again and googled Los Angeles gay district, feeling foolish as he did it, like this was knowledge he should have already absorbed the first time he had a dick in his mouth. West Hollywood was obviously the iconic gay neighborhood with lots of clubs. As tightly as he was wound even doing this at all, Shane wasn't sure a packed club with loud music was within his capacity. He kept searching until he found what looked like a dive bar in Silver Lake, one that had served the gay community for more than a decade. He could probably have a conversation with someone there. He could try. It was a start.

He changed into jeans that hugged his thighs and ass and a lightweight grey Henley, tight enough to display his muscles. The short sleeves hit at just the right point to make his arms look huge. Shane didn't know if his outfit was giving off signals that he was gay, exactly, but it was as close as he was going to get. Hopefully his presence in a literal gay bar would make the rest clear.

The cab dropped him off twenty minutes later in front of a bar with a big neon sign. Shane ducked inside, flashing his passport at a bored security guard as quickly as he could, and took a seat at the bar.

His first beer went down quickly, bitter and cold on his tongue, as he took in the dimly lit space. The walls were covered in framed photos of gay icons throughout the last hundred years. Shane couldn't identify most of them but he did recognize Cher, Judy Garland, Lady Gaga. There were no tvs on the wall, no risk that his face would show up on some sports channel for everyone to connect the dots. He breathed a little easier at that.

A dj took his time setting up on a stage in the corner and Shane hoped he would be done here by the time the music started. The crowd was light but there was an undeniable energy of sex that was palpable. Even Shane, who was generally pretty oblivious, noticed men checking him out as they passed him by, but no one did a double take of recognition. He drank the beer faster than normal, hoping to take the edge off his anxiety.

He was halfway through beer two and starting to regret every choice in his life that had led him to be where he was in this exact moment when someone slid onto the stool next to him and ordered a shot of tequila. He leaned toward Shane and murmured, "Hey, handsome."

Shane shifted in his seat to face him, momentarily at a loss for words. This man was much shorter than Shane, with a head shaved bald and lush eyelashes. A sparse mustache framed plush lips with a smile that dimpled when he noticed his mouth had snagged Shane's attention. He was attractive. No, he was sexy, with a confident aura that promised something that Shane didn't know how to name.

He took the shot without breaking eye contact and then leaned over to put his hand high up on Shane's thigh, stilling his anxious leg shaking. "I'm Diego."

"Sam," Shane lied.

They spoke a little as Shane finished his beer and one more. It was clear that Diego was less concerned with the lies coming out of Shane's mouth, like his name, reason for being in town (finance conference), where he was staying, than the promise of what his mouth could do for Diego.

Diego leaned in as he slid his hand further up Shane's thigh to where he was hard behind the zipper of his jeans. "Are you nervous?"

"A little," Shane admitted. The alcohol, more than he was used to drinking, loosened his tongue. "I don't normally..."

Diego smiled. He looked hungry for Shane who felt his nipples pebble underneath the material of his shirt. "You're my favorite kind. You're here, away from your normal life. You want to know what it's like. Does an anonymous blowjob live up to your fantasies?"

Shane closed his eyes with a shudder of recognition. This was signal enough for Diego to take Shane's hand and lead him into the back of the bar, winding through tables having quiet conversations. The dj started his set with some slow jazzy music as Diego pulled him into a single stall bathroom and locked the door. He crowded Shane against the door. Here, standing, Diego only came up to Shane's shoulder, but he was undeniably in charge.

He kissed Shane's neck and unbuttoned his jeans, then reached in to pull out Shane's hard dick. "Is this for me?" Shane nodded, breathless, and Diego knelt down to take Shane into his mouth. Shane let his head fall back against the door as he took in the experience of someone new sucking him off. Diego was efficient, practiced. His mouth was warm and wet and his lips felt so good. He swirled his tongue around the head of Shane's aching dick before taking him down all the way. Shane hissed as he felt himself hit Diego's throat and covered his mouth to muffle the moan that threatened to escape when Diego swallowed around him. Diego swallowed once more and Shane was done for, shooting his load down Diego's throat so fast he was embarrassed.

Diego stood and wiped his grinning mouth with the back of his hand. Shane tucked himself away as the reality of the scene came back to him. The music from the bar. The risk of someone coming to knock on the door. His mouth was dry as he palmed Diego's dick and sank to his knees, trying to ignore the fact that he was on a bathroom floor. He thought about instead that he was one of maybe thousands of men who had done the same thing in the same spot and that gave him the courage to unzip Diego's pants. It's the polite thing to do, he thought, suppressing a gasp of manic laughter.

He paused, just briefly, and Diego put his palm on the back of Shane's head in encouragement. "Go ahead," he said, only a little impatiently. Diego was shaved completely bare. He smelled good, like musk. Shane leaned forward and drew him between his lips and all he could think was, this is so different than Ilya. Diego's dick wasn't as long but it was girthy and it filled Shane's mouth enough that he didn't think of Ilya again. Diego continued to give the back of Shane's head gentle pressure until Shane had taken him in fully and felt spit begin to leak out onto his chin. He fucked Shane's face in earnest then, gently, but Diego remained in control. Shane couldn't look up to meet his eyes. Diego's thrusts became more frantic until he pulled out and hinged Shane's mouth open. "Tongue out," he whispered, and Shane obeyed because if nothing else he knew how to do that, and Diego gave himself one,

two quick strokes and emptied himself into Shane's open mouth. "Show me," he said, and Shane did even though his whole body was buzzing with embarrassment, the taste of salt overwhelming him. Once he was satisfied with looking, Diego said, "Now swallow," which Shane did without hesitating.

"Lovely." Diego pulled Shane to his feet and zipped himself away. "Hope it lived up to your fantasies, Sam. Enjoy LA." He squeezed Shane's forearm and slipped out of the bathroom, leaving Shane alone in his relief that Ilya didn't have the only magical dick in the world that Shane liked to suck.

Chapter 4: Big, Strong Top

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Vegas was a waste of time. As Shane was dressing in his tuxedo for the awards ceremony, he got a text from the league handler he'd been assigned since he and Ilya were scheduled to present the award for most sportsman like player. "Your presentation spot has been scratched." No further explanation provided.

Shane blew out a frustrated breath. He should feel relieved. This happened sometimes. The awards ceremony shifted and changed up until showtime. The thought of being in front of a crowd of all his peers, hockey executives, and various sponsors pretending to play nice with the man who apparently thought Shane didn't exist unless he was slamming him into the glass was excruciating.

And he still hadn't texted.

Shane had been dreading having to stand next to him, he reminded himself. He didn't want to smell Ilya's amber and musk cologne that he could only pick up if they were standing close enough to share breath. He didn't want to watch Ilya almost certainly win VIP the way he won the cup. He did want to suck Ilya's dick but what else was new?

Shane didn't feel relieved, though. He realized uncomfortably that he felt disappointed. And that wasn't acceptable. He snapped the clasp closed on the new Rolex he had gotten from the campaign in LA and headed down to the ballroom to mingle before the show.

Shane made his way through the ballroom lobby, stopping to say hello and shake hands with teammates, guys he used to play with, the executives from Montreal. He fake smiled long enough that his face started to ache. And he didn't spot the tall Russian once. He didn't hear a boom of mischievous laughter or see a knot of people vying for Ilya's attention. No head of curls that had slid impossibly soft between Shane's fingers. He was probably still upstairs, balls deep in the nearest person, not bothering to show up until it was time to collect his MVP. Asshole.

By the time Shane made it to his table, any confidence he had from his encounter with Diego in LA had drained out of him. If he were honest with himself, he'd left it somewhere over the Nevada desert before he even arrived. Shane was happy to see he and Hayden were assigned to the same table.

“Where’s Jackie?”

“Too pregnant to fly! But I’m headed back home on a red eye after this.”

“Oh, right,” Shane said, instead of what he was thinking, which was that he had no idea that there was a level of too pregnant to fly. The lights dimmed and the show started, leaving Shane to sulk over the fact that his best friend was married and starting a family while Shane couldn’t even figure out if he was into women enough to do the same. The ballroom was cold and everyone but Shane was at least half drunk. The food was awful. Misery settled over him like a blanket.

Finally, the presenter announced the nominees for MVP: Shane, Ilya, and Scott Hunter. As Shane expected, Ilya won the whole thing. Shane braced himself to see Ilya at last, glancing around the ballroom to lay eyes on him before he took the stage with his bright smile, but instead he saw Cliff Marleau striding toward the stage. Weird.

Marleau held the award over his head to the polite applause of the crowd. “Rozanov couldn’t be here tonight but he wanted to thank the voters. He also wanted me to tell everyone here, and I quote, of course I won, because I’m captain of the best team in the MHL. Thank you for making the obvious choice.” Laughter rippled through the crowd. “Again, that was all Rozy. Don’t blame me.”

Hayden scoffed. “Cocky asshole.”

Shane grunted in agreement. The asshole couldn’t even be bothered to show up to win the fucking MVP. And of course everyone ate it up. If Shane ever tried to say anything like that he would be mercilessly reminded by everyone, most importantly his teammates, why Shane Hollander shouldn’t stick his neck out.

The show moved on and Shane couldn’t stay a minute longer. He gave Hayden a hug and a reminder to keep him updated on baby news and then escaped, changing his flight while on the elevator to one in the early morning. He’d be home in Montreal by noon. Ilya wasn’t in the fucking state. There was nothing left in Vegas for Shane to hope for. There was no way Shane was going to show his face at the after party.

In early August, Shane went to Cancun with his teammates JJ and Miitka. When they’d originally made the plan to go to Mexico, Hayden was going to join, but then Jackie found out she was pregnant. By the time the trip rolled around, Hayden was a first time dad.

Shane sat with his friends at an outdoor bar in the humid evening. “Twins, man. Twins!” JJ was incredulous. “I can’t imagine having a girlfriend, much less multiple babies.” He drained his beer and laughed. JJ could have had a girlfriend if he wanted. He certainly slept with enough women, but as he had explained to Shane once, he liked to keep his options open. Seemed exhausting, but JJ didn’t give Shane a hard time for not having a roster, so he kept his opinions to himself.

Miitka, the Metros goalie, was clearly bored with the conversation. “So are we scuba diving tomorrow afternoon?” JJ was in, but Shane demurred, making up a story about a business meeting he had to take at the same time. It was another lie in the mountain of them Shane

was accumulating. His friends teased him about being the league MVP of brand deals but didn't push any further.

He thought he might use that time to pick someone up with no chance of his friends catching him. Ever since he hooked up with the guy in LA, Shane had unlocked a new awareness if a guy was interested in him. He discovered a set of subtle cues that he would have never noticed before. A quick scan of his body, up and down. A flick of the eyebrows. It was like an exhilarating secret language.

When Shane was confident JJ and Miitka were on a boat and away from the resort, he sat at a bar and drank a ginger ale. He did his best to scan the crowd subtly. He made eye contact once, twice with a tall, broad man who was built like the men in those Scottish game competitions that Shane pretended he didn't enjoy watching. Thick, with dark hair. He looked like a big, strong top. Exactly what Shane needed. The third time he caught the man's eye, they held eye contact for a moment past comfortable.

Shane screwed up his courage and wandered up to stand next to the man. They both faced out the bar window toward the ocean.

"How's it going?" Shane asked.

"About to be better," the man said with a smile. "I think. My room's nearby if...?"

He let the question hang in the air. Shane's cock thickened and excitement spiked in his body. He had read the signals correctly.

"Let's go."

The guy had some sort of accent from the American south. Shane didn't ask. They walked about five minutes until the man keyed them into a nondescript room. Shane's eyes didn't have time to adjust to the dim space before the guy indicated they should go in the bathroom.

"Good to fuck?"

Shane didn't reply, instead leaning over the bathroom counter, face tipped down far enough so he wouldn't catch sight of himself in the mirror. He could feel the cold of the marble through his t shirt. The guy grunted his approval and yanked Shane's track pants down to his knees.

"You've got a nice fat ass," he said, squeezing it in approval. Shane took a shuddering breath. The guy slicked his fingers with a bottle of lube from the countertop. Shane's dick was so hard it throbbed.

The guy rubbed a finger on Shane's hole and he moaned. "Oh you need this, huh? You look so pretty like this, all bent over."

"Yes," Shane gasped, mortified to be so obvious.

"I'll take care of you," he said. The guy efficiently loosened Shane's hole, slicked up fingers nudging him open for just a minute. Shane heard the crinkle of a condom wrapper and then

the guy pushed into him. If Shane felt less prepared than he did with Ilya he would just have to live with it. “Mmm, you’re tight.” His dick wasn’t as big as Ilya’s so Shane took it easily but it still did the job. Shane’s moans got louder as the guy established a steady rhythm.

“Jerk yourself,” the guy commanded, and Shane obeyed without thinking. The guy watched him in the mirror. Shane felt like all of his skin was electrified. His pleasure mounted and mounted until Shane gasped and shot cum directly into the sink. The guy liked this and fucked him harder, faster, until he grabbed Shane’s hips and shuddered into him.

He pulled out immediately to deal with the condom. Shane yanked up his pants and washed his hands. “Uh, thanks.”

The guy snorted in laughter. “Yeah, you too.”

Shane stepped back out into the bright light of Cancun’s with a smile on his face. He’d proven to himself that he could fuck someone else if he wanted. If Ilya had put some sort of erotic spell on him it was surely broken now.

Chapter 5: Falling Back Into the Hedge Maze

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Once he got home from Mexico, Shane threw himself into his efforts to prepare for the upcoming season. He spent hours every day in the weight room, ran for miles with Hayden, and measured out his food precisely with a scale every meal. He might not be fucking Ilya anymore but Ilya wasn't going to fucking beat him in the rink either. Shane wanted the cup this year. This was a familiar end of summer routine for Shane, one that left little energy to even jerk off, let alone find someone to fuck. But his confidence in his ability to fuck someone new if he felt like it remained high even if his dick remained mostly untouched even by his own hand.

The season launched and by the time the Metros were on their first west coast road trip Shane decided he was ready to try again. In Seattle he connected with a guy named Tim who wanted to meet in public first. Shane pulled a toque down low over his forehead and had the cab drop him at the bottom of a hill below the wine bar in the drizzle that the Pacific Northwest was famous for. Seattle was beautiful in the autumn. The twinkling lights of the neighborhood were reflected in the rainfall on the street, interrupted by fallen leaves. The air was crisp from the nearby bay. Shane ducked into the wine bar and spotted Tim who was brave enough to post his face on the app.

Shane ordered a glass of Chablis, because that's what his parents ordered, feeling slightly stupid while he did it. He'd never liked wine but when Tim had suggested the location he didn't want to make a fuss. He let each sip roll around his mouth even if it tasted like a wet rock while he listened to Tim, whose skin glowed underneath the lamps that lit the small space, talk. He was recently out of a long term relationship, he wasn't ready to date again, but well, skin to skin contact was still important, right? Tim nodded seriously, and Shane was reminded of every stereotype about people from the west coast he'd ever heard. Shane didn't have much to add. His last (*only*) relationship had been with a girl in high school which he didn't want to mention. Since then it had been whatever fucked up thing he had with Ilya and Shane really didn't want to talk about that. Didn't want to think about that. Didn't want the spectre of that situationship to be in the room while he was trying to move on.

So within an hour of ordering his wine Shane found himself sprawled out naked on Tim's high thread count sheets with his head hanging off the bed. Tim enthusiastically but quietly fucked Shane's face. Shane liked the feeling of overwhelm, the way he was lightheaded as Tim's cock nudged the back of his throat. Shane reached for his own cock but Tim grabbed his arm and moved it away. He pulled out of Shane's mouth, slicked his palm across his cock

to gather Shane's spit, then shoved his cock back into Shane's mouth while he leaned over and jerked Shane's cock. If it was a little painful Shane didn't mind, spilling himself over Tim's rough hand before Tim emptied himself into Shane's throat with a quiet moan.

Tim considerately helped Shane up onto the bed. "I'm going to step out but take your time." By the time Shane dressed, he wasn't lightheaded anymore. He left the room to find Tim by his front door in a pair of track pants.

"Thanks, man," Tim said with a smile. "I really needed that. I wanted to give you this." He handed Shane a business card. "In case you ever want to hook up when you're back here, I'd definitely be down."

Shane pocketed the card. He debated throwing it out once he was back on the street. The rain had stopped and the air felt heavier. He thought about how some of his teammates liked having someone consistent in different cities. He thought about what else Tim's rough hands might be able to do. Back in the hotel room, while Hayden was asleep in the next bed, Shane dug into his suitcase for the t shirt and shorts he slept in and slipped the card into the zippered pocket at the bottom.

Shane still didn't feel safe enough to look for men in Canada but now every time the team went to America he took any bit of privacy he had to swipe through the app. In Charlotte he met a guy he didn't even trade names with in a car that smelled like stale weed in a dark corner of a parking garage. The guy had a soft belly and soft hands and they jerked each other sitting side by side. Shane stared out the windshield the whole time, the terror of getting caught making him even hotter, somehow. "Pull up your shirt and play with your nipples for me," the guy said, and Shane did, pinching hard at the moment he came which pushed the guy over the edge. Shane wiped his hand with a fast food napkin he found on the floor. Out of the corner of his eye he watched the man lick Shane's cum off his fingers like he was savoring it.

In Dallas he met Adam, a tall man with a sharp jaw and a cowboy hat, who had Shane bent over a console table in his foyer before the door was even shut behind them. Adam grunted approvingly once he was fully inside Shane and muttered "tight." As Adam pounded him without any finesse, his cock slid just right against Shane's prostate, and Shane wondered distantly if this would be enough to get him off. Shane scrabbled for purchase on the table and accidentally hooked his finger in the drawer handle, pulling it out to reveal a wedding photo of Adam and a pretty blonde woman. Adam thrust one last time and moaned into Shane's ear while reaching over him to slam the drawer shut. Shane barely had his pants zipped before he was out the door, barely able to breathe from the shame. If he had known Adam was married he would have never even talked to the man. He felt a surge of anger that he had been lied to and then felt stupid. Of course he knew that lots of men lied and cheated on their wives with other guys, he just figured he would have been smart enough to figure it out. But he didn't even bother to try to get to know Adam, did he? He wanted to top Shane. Shane wanted to be topped. That was the extent of their communication.

Shane felt he paid his penance when he met Jesse in Atlanta, who reluctantly agreed to meet at his apartment. He had a low couch with a flatscreen and a PlayStation set up in front of it but led Shane to his mattress on the floor in the corner. Jesse stripped Shane efficiently and

settled him in a reverse cowgirl position. “You look so pretty, baby,” Jesse murmured, running his hands appreciatively down Shane’s back. “Show me what this juicy ass can do. But don’t look back at me.” Shane sank down on his wide cock and paused when his ass hit Jesse’s crotch, breathing through the burn before he started a bouncing rhythm that Jesse appreciated. “That’s it, Tony. You know how I love it. I knew you’d come back for more of this dick.” Shane was confused and slicked his hand over his own cock, not wanting to stop but wanting it to be over. Jesse kept up a stream of praise for what Shane was doing but kept calling him Tony until Shane gasped and came all over the edge of the mattress. Jesse moaned, long and low. Shane got dressed while Jesse languidly stretched on the mattress. He smiled ruefully. “I miss my ex.”

Shane was glad he was going back to Canada for a while where he wouldn’t be tempted to try any of this again for a long time.

The new year rolled around. Shane celebrated at a party at Hayden and Jackie’s house, low key in honor of the twins who were already sitting up and rolling over, and tried not to think about the upcoming All Star game where he would definitely, definitely see Ilya.

He did a good job not thinking about it until a week before the game when he got an email from the league that Ilya was included on. The email infuriated Shane, reminding them how the fans loved their rivalry and in hopes of increasing viewership expected Shane and Ilya to participate in two of the same skills competitions and asked what they’d like to choose. Impulsively, so he couldn’t overthink it, Shane responded, “speed skate and hardest shot.” An hour later, Shane’s stomach dropped when he saw a notification that Ilya’s response email was in his inbox. Shane expected an argument or a list of every other event just to be a dickhead, but all Ilya replied was, “What Shane said.”

Chapter 6: With Arms Outstretched

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Chapter Notes

Ilya POV of this scene next 😈

The night before the All Star game, Shane stood in a hotel bar with all the other players and their families or whoever else they'd brought along and nurtured his fury. Ilya had ignored him all day at the skills competition and Shane had followed suit, even when they were participating in the same events. It almost felt like Ilya was avoiding him on the ice. Whenever Shane allowed himself a glance around the rink where he could pretend he was just looking around Ilya had never turned his way to the point where it stopped feeling like a coincidence.

And he was doing it again now. Shane joined a conversation with some of the players he had met at the Olympics. Not because he could, if he turned his head a little, see Ilya. Ilya, who looked fucking beautiful, in his element, clearly having lively conversation with everyone who crossed his path. Ilya's curls were longer than the last time Shane had seen him, full around his face, looking like one of the cherub sculptures Shane had seen as a teenager in Italy when his family visited Rome. Ilya didn't have the face of a cherub, though. His jaw cut sharp above his jacket, lined with stubble so thick Shane had a flashback of the time he had left beard burn on Shane's inner thighs. A wave of the heartsickness he was fighting for his life to keep at bay swept over him as Ilya put his hand on the forearm of New York's goalie to emphasize a point. Maybe that's who he fucked now, Shane thought darkly. He was done with Shane and moved on to a new player. One who wasn't boring. Five minutes later, Shane spotted him leaning down to whisper in a woman's ear. She blushed and giggled and the cruelest part of Shane decided that Ilya was going to bed with both the goalie and this woman and all of a sudden he couldn't take it anymore.

Shane made his excuses to the group he had been pretending to listen to and stalked toward the elevator. He was going to go back to his room. He was going to order a salad with extra chicken from room service. He was going to go to bed early and wake up and play the stupid fucking All Star game and then he was going to go back to Montreal and dedicate himself to pretending Russia never existed.

Shane was alone in the elevator, thankfully, so he let the pleasant expression on his face he held in crowds fall. His phone buzzed in his pocket and Shane wrenched it out, almost dropping it.

When he saw the notification his ears began to ring and his breath stuttered.

Lily: room 908.

Shane watched the dots appear on the screen as Ilya continued to type.

Lily: 30 minutes.

Shane practiced breathing until he got behind the door of his room. He was enraged and joyful and annoyed and probably ten other emotions he couldn't decipher. He slammed himself onto the bed and settled on fury.

He typed a reply.

Fuck you.

He deleted it.

I'm not a dog who comes when you call.

Deleted.

Sorry, who's this?

Deleted too.

There was no way Shane was going to room 908. He scrolled up to remind himself that the last text from Ilya was thirteen months ago. You can't do this again, he reminded himself. It was too fucking risky at a hotel surrounded by every colleague they had, management, reporters, fans. For what, a mediocre fuck and then to get ignored again?

Okay, it was never mediocre. And Shane had learned a few things in the last thirteen months. Maybe he could show Ilya something that would make him shut the fuck up for once. Leave him feeling like Shane felt right now, sweaty and half hard and so full of adrenaline he was just on the edge of nauseated. Show him that he didn't know Shane at all.

Shane waited 45 minutes to knock.

Ilya cracked the door and Shane slipped inside, flicking the deadbolt. He could tell when Ilya clocked the anger on his face because he laughed ruefully.

"Didn't know if you'd come," he murmured.

"I'm not a dog," Shane tried, but he didn't sound as strident as he wanted to. It would have sounded better as a text. He crossed his arms and leaned back against the door to try to regain some of his power in the conversation.

“No,” Ilya agreed. “A very pretty man.” He advanced two steps and Shane launched himself at Ilya’s mouth. Ilya grabbed Shane’s ass with one hand and cradled his face with the other. Shane’s hands were in Ilya’s hair as he tried to kiss Ilya with all the rage that had built up into this moment.

Ilya wouldn’t let him, though. He kissed Shane tenderly, taking sips of him, gently teasing him with his tongue. Shane felt tears building. No one had kissed him like this since the last time Ilya had kissed him like this. After they had sex for the first time and then Ilya pretended like he never existed. Shane forced the tears back by focusing on the softness of Ilya’s lips, the scrape of the beard burn on his neck as Ilya shifted to soft kisses under Shane’s ear. Shane grabbed Ilya’s ass which caused Ilya to push Shane back against the door. “You always smell so good here.”

There couldn’t be an always, not for them. Shane couldn’t take any more of Ilya being sweet. It was too fucking confusing. So Shane dropped to his knees without even being told to. He unzipped Ilya’s jeans and wrestled them with his boxer briefs down Ilya’s thick muscular thighs. Then he swallowed down Ilya’s hard cock until his nose hit his neatly trimmed thatch of pubic hair. If Shane was going to cry, better to let Ilya think it was because of his enthusiasm for his cock and how it hit the back of Shane’s throat and not because all of this was so fucking confusing.

“Da, like that Hollander,” Ilya whispered. Shane let himself look up to see the awed look on Ilya’s face. Ilya used one forearm to brace himself against the door and laced the fingers of his other hand into Shane’s hair. “Always so good to me.”

Shane pulled back until only the head of Ilya’s cock remained in his mouth. He used the tip of his tongue to worry at the sensitive spot below the head. Above him, Ilya stilled, and reached to tip Shane’s chin up to look him directly in the eye. Shane let his mouth fall open so that Ilya could watch, feeling obscene. He moaned, hoping his show for Ilya would communicate what he wanted him to know. I’m good at this. Other people want this from me. I’m unforgettable, even if you think you can forget about me. His own cock was painfully hard behind his zipper and he did his best to ignore the ache.

Ilya stepped back and Shane made a noise of surprise, tipping forward to chase his cock with his lips.

“A new trick,” Ilya observed with that infuriating teasing lilt that made Shane grind his molars now. “Where did you learn it? You watch porn?”

Shane stood, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. “Fuck you, asshole.” And then quieter, a confession. “Not porn.”

Shane saw the shock hit Ilya’s face, lightning fast, before it was replaced by that sardonic smile that was so familiar to everyone who didn’t really know Ilya. But Shane knew the difference between this smile and his real one.

“Ah. Hollander finally got some, huh?”

“Am I supposed to wait for you to fuck your way through everyone you look at before you get back around to me, Rozanov?” Shane regretted saying it as soon as it left his mouth.

“Ah,” Ilya said. “You are jealous.”

“I’m fucking not!”

“No, no, I understand. Am very popular.” Ilya put his hand in the small of Shane’s back and guided him to the middle of the room. “Let’s see if we can’t make you feel a little better. Take off your clothes.”

Shane wasn’t fucking jealous. He wasn’t allowed to be jealous. This thing they did, this dark secret that belonged to the two of them, didn’t allow for any claim on one another. There was no pathway in the world that would allow them to do anything more than what they were doing right now: passing the time by fucking each other once in a while. He ignored the familiar stab in his stomach at that thought.

“Off, Hollander,” Ilya said impatiently. “I’ve waited too long for you tonight already.”

Right, Shane thought. Ilya could have had someone else willing on their back by now. He pulled his shirt over his head, removed his pants and boxer briefs, and folded them over the chair in the corner and waited for further instruction.

“Good,” Ilya murmured. “Get on your hands and knees on the bed.” He leaned back against the wall and watched Shane clamber onto the bed, feeling stupid. Shane got situated and stared forward toward the wall, refusing to turn his head as he heard Ilya approach. Ilya’s hand crossed his peripheral vision. He grabbed a pillow and arranged it below Shane’s face, then gently pressed between his shoulder blades so that his whole upper body pressed into the mattress. His ass was in the air and he felt so exposed.

Ilya gently stroked down Shane’s back to his ass. “So pretty like this.” Shane felt Ilya’s hands wrap around his thighs to pull them apart. “I want view all these other guys got.”

Shane hated that he whimpered. His cock was so hard it ached and dripped onto the sheets below. He had never felt so on display before.

Ilya continued his careful exploration of Shane’s body, his fingers lightly caressing his calves, his thighs, his hips. “How many?”

“I’m not telling you,” Shane gritted out.

“Ahh, that’s no fun. Maybe I guess?”

“Fuck you.”

“If I do, you have to tell me.” Ilya gently pinched a spot between ass and thigh and Shane yelped from surprise, not pain. Ilya soothed the spot with his tongue.

Then he stood back. Shane felt cold which made no sense.

“Gorgeous. I wish you could see what I see. Maybe I’ll take a picture. Where’s my phone?”

Panic flooded Shane like ice. “You better fucking not.”

“Don’t worry, Hollander. I can make anonymous. Won’t show any identifying marks. Only people who have seen this view would know. Not many, right?”

Shane turned to look at him over his shoulder. “No fucking pictures.”

“Okay. No problem,” Ilya agreed, snaring Shane with eye contact. While Shane watched, Ilya pulled apart Shane’s ass cheeks and dripped spit right onto his hole. “Face forward, Hollander.”

Shane felt his face heat as he complied. Ilya was filthy. Shane’s cock liked it, so hard it felt like his pounding heart.

Ilya smeared his spit on Shane’s hole. “I need to check, see if this feels different. Community hole now, da? Hollander likes to be passed around.” He lightly pressed a fingertip into Shane, so slowly, while his humiliating words banked a fire in his body that left Shane speechless.

Ilya continued, gently stretching Shane. “So hot. Of course you want to be slut. A body like this, a shame it’s not shared more. Everyone wants to fuck you, Hollander.” He added a second finger. “Only sheer luck that I got there first. If I am not best please don’t tell me. I don’t think I could take it.”

“Shut up,” Shane gasped. If he kept talking like this Shane was going to scream or sob or pass out. Or worse. He might be stupid enough to confess to Ilya that of course he was the best. His whole body felt like it was floating, only tethered to earth by the gravity of Ilya’s gentle fingers. No one else had ever made him feel this way. Shane was terrified no one ever would. That he would be exiled after Ilya was done with him to walk the earth alone knowing how good it could be.

Ilya must have decided Shane was prepared enough because the crinkle of the condom wrapper opening filled the whole room. “Ready?”

“Yes, you asshole,” Shane cried, and then Ilya slid into him. They both paused when Ilya was fully seated. Shane put his face into the pillow and sobbed. Ilya fit like Shane’s body was made for him and maybe it was.

He expected Ilya to start a vigorous rhythm but instead he carefully gripped Shane’s hips and slowly levered in and out of him. “So perfect. No change at all. Hole is made for me, Hollander.” Shane gripped the sheets in his fists and clamped his mouth shut so he wouldn’t do something stupid like agree. “I hope they treated you right. You okay?”

“Yes,” Shane said from the pillow, refusing to let Ilya see him cry.

Ilya continued his languid pace, sliding past Shane’s prostate, spiraling him higher and higher. “Going to keep on like this until you cum on my cock, Hollander. Keep your hands up there. I know you can cum hands free. This will last as long as you can.”

Shane felt like his whole body was going to fly apart. He dropped his hips low so the head of his cock dragged against the wet spot he had made in the sheets. The fabric was just rough enough to provide the friction he needed to fall apart. “Jesus Christ, Rozanov.” He felt his ass squeeze Ilya’s cock and milked him dry as they gasped together.

Ilya gently ran the palms of his hands down Shane’s back as he returned to his body. “Skin feels like satin, Hollander.” He slowly pulled out and went to dispose of the condom. Shane sat up and rested his head on his bent knees.

“Was fun,” Ilya said cheerfully, but his smile fell when he saw Shane’s tear stained face.

“Hollander, are you okay? Did I hurt you?”

“You didn’t,” Shane assured him. Ilya hadn’t hurt him physically. Shane knew he wouldn’t. The only power he had to hurt Shane was in a way they could never talk about. “Just intense.”

“Ah, yes. I have that effect.”

In that moment he doused any warm feelings Shane had, as confusing as they were. Of course he did. Shane wasn’t special.

“I’m going to take off,” Shane said, dressing quickly.

“You don’t want to shower?” Ilya raised an eyebrow, lounging naked leaned against a table.

“My room has a shower,” Shane said.

“Yes, Hollander. Is hotel. But I understand, you must hurry before someone catches you.”

“Exactly!” Neither of them wanted that. Shane checked his pocket for his key card, then paused to look at Ilya.

After a moment, Ilya elegantly walked toward him. He held Shane by the chin and kissed him slowly until Shane felt like his brain was completely scrambled. “Always good to see you, Hollander.”

Shane opened the door, scanned both ways to make sure no one was in the hallway, and walked away without looking back. If he felt emptier than he did after fucking a stranger, well, what did he expect?

Chapter 7: 399 Days

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

It had been 399 days since Ilya Rozanov had touched Shane Hollander and, god forgive him, he wasn't going to make it to 400.

Ilya had spent at least some time during every single one of those 399 days thinking about Shane. His big doe eyes. The gift of his true laugh, which Shane usually kept locked away. The way he drifted toward Ilya like they were magnetized, slow at first but then slamming into each other so hard almost no force in the universe could pull them apart.

Ilya had gotten adept at containing the sharp outline of guilt he felt for avoiding Shane. The last time they were together, Ilya hadn't really considered the emotional risk of what they had done until it was over. He knew that Shane hadn't slept with a man before. Ilya gave it his best shot for Shane to have a positive experience. To have sweetness. Like first times should be. Not rushed in a bathroom stall, focusing more on listening for someone to come in than what he was actually doing.

But then afterward Shane had returned his tenderness with a forehead kiss that made Ilya's chest ache. And that couldn't be. So what if Ilya wanted to explore that tenderness, this thing that was growing between them? They couldn't have it. No one could find out. It would be a scandal. They could lose their spots in the league, the thing that they had both been working toward since before they could even understand that this life was more than getting famous by playing a game. The thing they didn't really even understand when they met, still just kids with big dreams standing out in the cold. People depended on them now.

Ilya could be sent back to Russia with the whole country knowing what he was. The hollow fear that lived in his stomach every day could prove true. There were wide swaths of the world that weren't safe for people like them.

And Ilya didn't think Shane had the ability to keep this banked fire from exploding out of control. Ilya could. He had a practiced hand at separating what he felt from the rest of his life. So he stepped away from Shane, ghosted him, no matter how sick it made him. He wished he could prove to Shane that this wasn't who he was, that he wasn't some fuckboy who used people and abandoned them, but he didn't think Shane would believe him now.

The container in his mind where he kept Shane was fortified tight and stronger all the time (*except late at night, when he was tired, and let himself remember*) until he opened his email

in late December and saw Shane Hollander's name at the top of his inbox. His whole body lit up and for a brief moment he thought maybe Shane was breaking through the ice that had grown between them. But it was just All Star scheduling shit. The league wanted them to be public rivals again. Would help gain viewers. Of course Shane and Ilya would comply.

Hollander, Hollander, Hollander. Ilya spent the next weeks reminding himself to call Shane by his last name if they happened to speak. Reminding himself that the best path forward was to just be rivals. If Ilya pretended hard enough then it would be true.

Ilya stayed away from Shane (Hollander, damn it) during the skills competition. He knew with pinpoint precision where Shane was on the ice at all times. Had caught his breath when Shane skated in, a murderous expression on his sweet face, way too intense for this afternoon of playing around. Maybe it was just Shane being competitive like he enjoyed. But every time Ilya let his glance slide across him, he could tell Shane was more pissed off that Ilya wouldn't make eye contact. It was so hot. Ilya could not have him and he had never wanted him more.

Ilya felt his resolve wavering at the after party in the bar after three shots of vodka and the exhaustion of all this avoidance caught up with him. 399 days. Ilya had been very strong. But now Shane was pouting around the room, wandering closer. Ilya turned on all his charm in his conversations with everyone except Shane, playing the character everyone expected from him. Flirted with men and women alike when he knew Shane could see. He felt like a cobra, hissing to keep Shane at bay. I don't want to hurt you. This is to keep you safe.

Ilya should have felt relieved when he saw Shane stomp away towards the elevators but his heart fell instead. He had been enjoying this game and now it was over.

But it didn't have to be. And Ilya couldn't hold the wall any longer. Maybe he could have Hollander one more time and get all of this out of his system.

He grabbed his phone and pulled up his texts with Jane. Ignored the brush of guilt that the last text was Shane giving Ilya his address 399 days ago. Room 908, he typed. Then, after a moment's consideration, 30 minutes.

And if Ilya held his phone casually to see if he would get a response that was just so he could plan how the rest of his night would go.

His heart jumped when he saw three dots appear and disappear. Again. Again. Then nothing.

But nothing wasn't no.

Twenty minutes later, Ilya made his excuses. Enough time to get into his room and make himself breathe like a normal person. To drink a bottle of water and remind himself why this had to be the last time. That Ilya was fundamentally selfish, wanting this stolen time for himself, but that tomorrow he could try to be a good person again.

Shane waited 45 minutes to knock, long enough for Ilya to feel his heart slide to his feet.

When Ilya opened the door, Shane slipped inside with a look over his shoulder before cracking the deadbolt closed. If Ilya had thought Shane was pissed off before, it was nothing compared to now. His ears were red and his freckles practically glowed. Ilya laughed before he could catch himself. He deserved this anger, wanted more of it.

“Didn’t know if you’d come,” he murmured, rubbing his earlobe.

“I’m not a dog,” Shane snapped, then shook his head at himself.

“No,” Ilya agreed. “A very pretty man.” Shane (Hollander, damn it) looked mutinous when Ilya said this but he wasn’t going to lie. Ilya wanted to devour him but he held himself taut, waiting to see what Shane would do, until the air in the room got so heavy that Ilya stepped forward once, twice. Drawn toward Shane and those fucking freckles like a compass to the North Star.

Shane jumped forward and landed in Ilya’s arms and oh, Ilya knew what to do now. Shane’s hands were in Ilya’s hair. Ilya grabbed a handful of his generous ass and held on to the comforting weight of him as Shane tried to take his anger out on Ilya’s lips.

But Ilya didn’t let him. He kissed Shane softly, like he was trying to apologize. He felt a wave of triumph when Shane relaxed. Ilya moved on to his neck, kissing that spot beneath his ear where he remembered Shane was sensitive. He leaned them both against the door to steady them when Shane reached around to grab Ilya’s ass and Ilya’s knees threatened to weaken. “You always smell so good here,” Ilya confessed. He wanted Shane to overwhelm him.

As if he could read Ilya’s mind, Shane dropped to his knees and yanked down Ilya’s pants until his cock sprang free and bobbed in front of Shane’s lips. Ilya felt like he was standing on the precipice of something he couldn’t understand. His cock disappeared into Shane’s pretty mouth and then Ilya couldn’t form any thoughts at all besides, it’s been too long. Why did I deny myself this?

“Da, like that Hollander,” Ilya whispered. Shane looked up at him, pupils blown, tongue busy. Ilya couldn’t believe that he got to see Shane Hollander like this. “Always so good to me.” And I don’t deserve it.

Shane sucked the head of Ilya’s cock and then did something he’d never done before with the tip of his tongue that felt amazing, sending bolts of lightning up Ilya’s spine. Some distant part of his brain rang an alarm bell. Where had that little move come from?

Ilya lifted Shane’s chin so he could get a better look at him. In response, Shane dropped his mouth open like a porn star, so Ilya could watch exactly what he was doing to him. It felt like Shane was performing for him which wasn’t something Ilya wanted. It didn’t feel like Shane anymore.

Shane made a surprised little gasp when Ilya stepped away, leaning in to recapture Ilya, but that was the last thing Ilya wanted. Where was all this coming from? He didn’t want a show from Shane. Not tonight. Not after so long. Nausea threatened in Ilya’s stomach.

“A new trick,” Ilya aimed for a lighthearted tone, knew that it had landed when Shane clenched his jaw and looked away. “Where did you learn it? You watch porn?” Please tell me you watched porn to learn this, Ilya begged silently.

Shane rolled his eyes and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “Fuck you, asshole.” He paused. “Not porn.”

Even though Ilya knew the answer before he asked the question, Shane telling him there had been someone else hit Ilya like a shockwave. It felt like every inch of his skin had been burnt with the flash of possessive jealousy that rolled through him. Jealousy he was not allowed to feel. Ilya wasn’t fucking stupid. Of course Hollander had other men in his bed. But he had thought maybe...

Well, enough foolishness. He felt the mask he wore with almost everyone settle back down over his face. Part of him was proud of Hollander, for going out there and trying. Of course he was successful. Men weren’t going to pass up his pretty face and hot body. Or maybe, Ilya thought, he had a boyfriend. Even if imagining it lit up Ilya’s spine with a spike of jealousy for a life that Ilya would never get to live. He couldn’t expect Hollander to give up forever for someone like Ilya who couldn’t even offer tomorrow.

He had to say something. “Ah. Hollander finally got some, huh?” he scraped out. His throat had gone dry.

Shane ran an impatient hand through his mussed hair. “Am I supposed to wait for you to fuck your way through everyone you look at before you get back around to me, Rozanov?”

This made Ilya feel like he was back on steadier ground. More in control. He knew what to say now. “Ah.” Ilya paused. “You are jealous.”

“I’m fucking not!”

“No, no, I understand. Am very popular.” Ilya led Shane to the middle of the room, pathetically grateful to have a hand on him even if Shane was furious with him. “Let’s see if we can’t make you feel a little better. Take off your clothes.”

Ilya crossed his arms impatiently, to goad Shane a little more. Maybe if he pushed him far enough Shane would go back to being his normal self, not whatever little persona he thought he would bring to Ilya tonight. Ilya didn’t fucking want it. He wanted Shane.

Shane was taking too long. “Off, Hollander. I’ve waited too long for you tonight already.” Their time was always so limited. Tomorrow they’d have to go back to pretending they hardly knew each other. Shane would go back to whoever had been warming his bed. Here, in these stolen moments, he was Ilya’s and Ilya didn’t want to fucking rush the experience wringing pleasure out of each other. Shane eventually fucking listened and stripped out of his clothes. Ilya felt a wave of pleasure when Shane stood naked in front of him and waited for Ilya’s command. Finally this felt familiar.

“Good,” Ilya murmured. “Get on your hands and knees on the bed.” Shane hurried to obey, climbing onto the bed with a haste that made Ilya’s cock throb. Shane resolutely stared

forward. Ilya smiled to himself. What a brat.

Ilya forced himself to walk slowly to the bed. He wanted to rush, to get his hands on Shane and his fingers inside him to ready his body for Ilya, but if this was the last time they did this Ilya wanted as many memories as he could hold. He placed one of the soft pillows beneath Shane's face and lightly pushed between his shoulders until he let his elbows buckle and held his pretty ass perched high in the air.

Ilya let his fingertips trail down Shane's strong smooth back. "So pretty like this." Ilya felt the weight of a thousand more compliments fill his mouth but swallowed them down. He was wildly curious how many people had seen Shane just like this, even if his envy that he was no longer the only person special enough to see it was a banked coal in Ilya's gut. "I want view all these other guys got."

Shane, that little show off, mewled at the observation. At least Shane wasn't lonely, Ilya told himself. Maybe Ilya was easier to replace than he hoped. At least Shane got to be happy out of it. He was spending too much time in America with their wretched monogamy rules if he thought he got to have any claim on Shane. He didn't own Shane. Even Ilya wasn't arrogant enough to expect someone like Shane Hollander to choose him.

He petted Shane, felt the silken glide of his skin, the tensing power of his body, until he couldn't keep the question inside anymore. "How many?"

"I'm not telling you," Shane spat.

"Ahh, that's no fun. Maybe I guess?" Why did he want to know?

"Fuck you."

"If I do, you have to tell me." Ilya couldn't resist pinching a spot between Shane's ass and his strong thigh. He wasn't trying to mark Shane but he wouldn't have been sorry if he did. He licked Shane there, satisfied when Shane shivered.

"Gorgeous. I wish you could see what I see." Shane's arched back plumped his ass to the perfect height. His cock hung angry and ready between his muscular thighs. Ilya wanted to remember it forever. "Maybe I'll take a picture. Where's my phone?" He only asked it to annoy Shane, who was starting to look too comfortable.

"You better fucking not."

Ahh, there he was. Ilya pushed a little harder. "Don't worry, Hollander. I can make anonymous. Won't show any identifying marks. Only people who have seen this view would know. Not many, right?" How many? Was knowing the real number worse or would the ludicrous number Ilya was sure to invent if left to his own devices later hurt more?

Shane glared at him over his shoulder from his spot on the pillow. "No fucking pictures."

"Okay. No problem." Ilya wouldn't have really taken a photo. He knew it was too far for Shane. Even if Ilya would have loved some evidence that they were ever alone like this. As

the evening proceeded Ilya became ever more sure that this would be the last time. He didn't think he could survive another and then pretend Shane wasn't anything to him again. This had to be enough.

Keeping his eyes locked to Shane's, he spread Shane's cheeks and spit right on his pretty hole. He wanted something of himself inside of Shane besides his fingers or his cock covered with a condom. Ilya felt feverish, driven by some animal instinct to mark his territory. "Face forward, Hollander."

Shane huffed but complied, thankfully, which left room for Ilya to finally take a heaving breath. He traced his finger around Shane's tight rim, rubbing in his spit. *Mine*. "I need to check, see if this feels different. Community hole now, da? Hollander likes to be passed around." Maybe that was too far, but he thought Shane might like it. Why else would he want Ilya to know? They never talked about who Ilya slept with. He had assumed Shane didn't want to know and didn't really want to bring the idea of anyone else into Shane's mind. Maybe he wanted this all along.

Ilya kept his voice quiet so Shane would have to strain to listen. He enjoyed the tight embrace of Shane's body around his finger and set to working him open. "So hot. Of course you want to be slut. A body like this, a shame it's not shared more. Everyone wants to fuck you, Hollander. Only sheer luck that I got there first. If I am not best please don't tell me. I don't think I could take it." Please don't tell me, he thought desperately. I have to leave tonight believing that you'll at least remember me. That I won't be just someone you used to fuck.

"Shut up," Shane whispered, his hands fisting the sheets.

Ilya opened the condom he'd stashed at the end of the bed with trembling hands. "Ready?"

"Yes, you asshole," Shane hissed.

Ilya slid into Shane, into his beautiful body, and he never wanted to be anywhere else ever again. Ilya wanted to take his time. He wanted to be able to remember. He wrapped his fingers around Shane's hips and loved him with his body, hoping his tenderness would tell Shane all the things Ilya couldn't say. How he wished everything could be different. That sometimes, when his loneliness got big enough, he dreamed about giving up everything if it would mean that he could have Shane every night. How he knew that could never be.

"So perfect. No change at all. Hole is made for me, Hollander." Shane stiffened and Ilya was struck by a sudden fear. Had any of these men hurt him? "I hope they treated you right. You okay?"

"Yes," Shane said from the pillow, refusing to look at Ilya. Which was probably for the best. If they made eye contact now Ilya might do something stupid like confess even a little bit of the truth that was crawling into his mouth, demanding freedom.

He had to remind them both who was in charge here. "Going to keep on like this until you cum on my cock, Hollander. Keep your hands up there. I know you can cum hands free. This will last as long as you can."

Shane shifted his hips low so the head of his cock dragged against the wet spot he had made in the sheets which was cheating a little but Ilya would allow it. "Jesus Christ, Rozanov."

Ilya watched the orgasm ripple down Shane's whole body and let the squeeze of Shane's body coax Ilya's own over the edge. They both paused there, at the top of the cliff, before they had to jump back into reality.

Ilya couldn't resist one last brush against Shane. "Skin feels like satin, Hollander." He took the opportunity to slide back into his fuckboy persona while he disposed of the condom. "Was fun," Ilya said brightly.

Then he turned and saw that Shane was sat up, curled into himself. He had been crying. Had he been crying the whole time? Ilya felt like he had been knocked into the boards by three defensemen at once. Had he misjudged? Did Shane not want what they done? "Hollander, are you okay? Did I hurt you?" Frantic. He thought they were playing the same game.

"You didn't. Just intense." Shane attempted a smile.

"Ah, yes. I have that effect." Jesus Christ, Rozanov. He knew that was the wrong thing to say before he saw the way Shane's face fell.

Shane stood and reached for his clothes. "I'm going to take off."

"You don't want to shower?" Ilya asked, trying not to sound desperate. He wanted Shane to stay, for at least a little longer. They both knew once he left that would be the end of all of this.

"My room has a shower," Shane said. He sounded defeated.

"Yes, Hollander. Is hotel. But I understand, you must hurry before someone catches you." Ilya was irritated now even if he shouldn't be. If nothing else, Shane was good at reminding him that they had done something fucking stupid. Again.

Shane paused by the door and Ilya took the chance he was being given. He kissed Shane slowly, gently. He tried to tell Shane everything in the kiss he couldn't say. You're special to me. I hope you're careful. I know we can't have this but I would give anything if we could. Shane kissed him back but if he was trying to tell Ilya anything, Ilya couldn't hear it. He leaned back. "Always good to see you, Hollander."

Shane opened the door, scanned both ways to make sure no one was in the hallway, and walked away without looking back.

Ilya took a long shower in the dark but he couldn't wash away the melancholy he had been left with.

Chapter 8: Go On and Fool Me

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Shane just wanted to keep updated on hockey news. Because the internet was a mistake he was constantly fed hockey gossip too, slid in like little poison darts between the things Shane was actually looking for. He liked to keep on top of stats, on trades and injuries, to prepare for his upcoming games. Shane wasn't just a good player because of his stick handling or his speed but because of his constant hard work to think six steps ahead. He learned his opponents so he could destroy them. Everyone who paid even a little attention to the MHL knew this.

He should have taken up fucking chess. It would have been easier to be great at that, probably, than predicting the physics of 3 inches of rubber and 11 men, but Shane was in too deep now.

And he wouldn't be sitting on his couch on a sunny Saturday afternoon, hating himself for clicking on headlines like "Ilya Rozanov's Mystery Woman: What We Know So Far."

Even though it felt like a huge fist was squeezing his heart, Shane smiled to see a photo of Ilya in a club somewhere in Boston. He looked carefree in a way that Shane had never gotten to see. Shane studied Ilya's hockey faces. He knew mischievous, when he was trying to throw Shane off with a particularly cutting chirp during a face off. Grim determination, when he and Shane got tangled slamming each other into the boards. Fury, when Shane bested him, and glee when he didn't.

And he knew what a more private Ilya looked like. Had seen his face taut with desire. Blown out eyes as he looked at Shane, like he was trying to catalog every detail in case it was the last time, because they both knew every time could be the last time. The sweet relief when he came, as close to peaceful as Shane got access to. Shane never stopped feeling shocked when he got to see it, that he had anything to do with it at all.

But he never got to see Ilya like this. Relaxed, casual, his loose curls surrounding his face. Longer than when Shane last had his fingers laced through them. If slight dark circles limned his undereyes, well, he was out late partying near the end of the season. And Shane wasn't allowed to worry.

In the photo, Ilya had his arm slung around a beautiful woman with a halo of corkscrew curls who leaned into him with easy familiarity, her arm wrapped loosely around his waist. Shane

had never felt jealous of someone else's limbs before. He felt a phantom warmth in his own arm, a memory of the last time Shane got to hold him in that way. Before Shane walked away swearing it was the last time because it had to be.

Svetlana Vetrova. One of Ilya's childhood friends. They grew up together in Russia and reconnected when they both landed in Boston, Ilya for hockey, Svetlana for college. They realized that sometimes you don't see who's in front of you until the right moment, an unnamed source said. Svetlana is a hockey genius, knows more than Ilya maybe. But she keeps him grounded. Has a normal job, selling high end luxury cars, one of Ilya's hobbies. It was like she was made in a lab to fit into his life. Ilya has never seemed so happy.

The article ended with a photo of Ilya helping a giggling Svetlana into a sleek black sports car at the end of the night. They looked like they fit together perfectly.

Shane stared at the ceiling until the tears that threatened went wherever secret pain goes to hide. He was happy for Ilya, finding someone who seemed perfect for him. Who could make his life easier, not more complicated. Not impossible to imagine. And if Shane felt like his heart had tipped into a bottomless chasm, well, he had always known he couldn't have it all. He was a hockey superstar, at least for now. His family was healthy. He had good friends. He shouldn't have been arrogant enough to think he could get through life without the pain of this kind of rejection. He had tried to give Ilya what he could spare of his heart. Ilya did the right thing for them both by politely refusing. Shane hoped Svetlana was kind.

Maybe Shane needed a girlfriend.

Shane had had girlfriends before. Just not for a long time. Not since... before. Before he was drafted. (*Not before he met Ilya. That didn't have anything to do with it.*) In high school, and just after. And then Shane had decided to focus on hockey. There would be time to figure out a girlfriend later. And now all his buddies had girlfriends or at least a roster. More and more of them had wives. And children. If Shane was going to get himself from under Ilya's spell, well, fucking men hadn't done it. Dating women probably wouldn't end up as weird as some of the nights he'd had in the last year, at least.

Before he could talk himself out of it, he texted Hayden. **Hey, does Jackie have any friends you think I'd be a good match with?**

Hayden responded immediately. **Been waiting for you to ask, buddy.**

Jackie planned a double date with Jackie's friend Courtney at a Michelin star seafood restaurant in Old Montreal. Something about tasting plates and sharing food. Jackie was excited, Hayden said at practice the next day. "I think she's auditioning Courtney to be a WAG so she might want to have a vote."

Shane wasn't sure if Hayden was kidding. Talking about WAG status seemed a little premature, Shane thought, but he was going to give it an honest try. He even felt a little nervous as he joined them at the table the next night. Courtney was pretty, with a round face and brown hair that swept down to her elbows in a complicated style.

Shane could tell she was nervous too, which let him relax. Courtney worked in communications. She was from Ottawa, too, so they spent a little time talking about places they knew in common. Shane found that he was able to talk easily with her. She made him laugh with a joke about a famous Ottawa intersection.

“I don’t really follow hockey,” Courtney confessed after two glasses of wine, looking a little embarrassed. “I’m the worst Canadian, I know.”

“I’m not going to take your Canadian card for telling us that,” Shane said. That was as close as he could get to flirting but he guessed it worked because she rewarded him with a small smile. Maybe it would be nice, to spend time with someone who wasn’t looking at Shane like he was a national hero just because he was good at Canada’s favorite game.

Soon enough, though, the conversation died down. Hayden fidgeted, uncomfortable in the silence, then blurted, “Have you been watching Boston’s losing streak?”

Jackie rolled her eyes. “Let’s go to the washroom, Courtney.” As they left the table, Hayden picked up steam on the hockey talk, and by the time the women returned Shane and Hayden were deep into strategizing their next match with the Raiders, supposing the team hadn’t gotten it together. In the back of his mind, Shane tried to ignore the worry he felt as he realized scanned the stats he’d been avoiding looking at that a big part of the Raiders slump was that Ilya wasn’t performing as well as he usually did. Maybe he was distracted by his new girlfriend, Shane thought, ignoring the icy slide of jealousy he felt. Ilya never seemed to be preoccupied by women before but maybe this time was different. Maybe this is how Ilya performed when he was actually in love.

At the end of the evening, the four stood outside the restaurant saying their goodbyes. Shane decided he would like to see Courtney again, if she wanted to see him.

“We’re going on a road trip in a couple of days, but would you like to go out when I get back?”

Courtney blushed and nodded. “Jackie can give you my number.”

Shane bent down to kiss her on the cheek. “I’m looking forward to it.”

He hugged Jackie goodbye and thumped Hayden on the back. “See you at practice tomorrow.”

Shane was greeted with applause and teasing cheers when he walked into the locker room the next morning. “Uh, what the fuck, guys?”

Miitka clapped him on the shoulder on his way out the door to do whatever weird goalie rituals he insisted on before practice started. “Everyone’s just stoked you’re finally getting laid, Cap.”

Shane did not feel any more illuminated with that cryptic response. Hayden rolled his eyes from his stall next to Shane’s as Shane pulled his pads from their designated spot.

“Been online today?” Hayden asked, half laughing.

“No, why?”

Hayden handed over his phone, open to a hockey gossip website Shane pretended to hate until he searched it for new photos of Ilya when he couldn’t sleep. At the top of the page was a photo, taken the night before, of Shane and Courtney outside the restaurant. It had clearly been taken from a distance and at an angle that looked like Shane was kissing her deeply.

Shane shoved the phone back to Hayden. “What the fuck is this? I didn’t kiss her! Especially in public. I just met her!”

“Dude, I know. I was right there. Did you forget that I introduced you, idiot? I guess some fans spotted us and took that and now it’s all over the internet.”

Shane groaned. “Is Courtney upset? She didn’t sign up for this.”

“Jackie reached out to her. But you can’t really see her face so it’s probably fine.”

JJ leaned into the conversation. “Should I give you the name of my florist? Now that you’ve got a girl you definitely need instructions on how to keep her happy. They need more than sex, Hollander, in case you didn’t know.”

“Fuck you,” Shane said without heat, and JJ laughed. The rest of practice the whole team chirped Shane about finally getting his dick wet. Shane ground his teeth and let them have their fun. If they only knew what Shane and his dick had been up to... well, it was easier to let them think Shane had a girlfriend than ever explaining that.

The Metros were on the road for the next ten days and Shane kind of forgot about Courtney and their plans for when he returned. The season was getting tighter, and if the Metros wanted to see the first round of the playoffs they needed to buckle in. Shane ignored the hockey gossip sites the whole trip, assuming that the photo would get less coverage as the days passed since there was only the one.

Hayden texted the morning after they got back. **Hey, bad news, buddy. I guess someone was able to identify Courtney and it kind of freaked her out. People started calling her job. So it’s going to be a no. But don’t worry, Jackie has lots of friends and next time we’ll pick somewhere we won’t get caught by psycho fans.**

Shane thought distantly that he should feel worse. He *did* feel bad that Courtney had been affected by the weird fans that had no boundaries, and he called JJ’s florist to send her an apology bouquet after getting her work address from Hayden. Sorry for all the trouble, he had them write on the card. It was nice to get to meet you.

But Shane had to admit to himself that he wasn’t upset at all that he wouldn’t be going out with her. After ten days of not even thinking about her, he knew it wouldn’t have been fair to drag her into the orbits of professional hockey. Courtney had been sweet and deserved to have a boyfriend who was excited about being with her, not someone who was so distracted he couldn’t conjure a memory of her face.

Damn Ilya for showing Shane what it felt like to have sparks. Before him, Shane could lie to himself about whether he felt them or not. But Shane couldn't go back now. There had to be a woman who made him feel the same way. It was just a matter of finding her.

Chapter 9: Love to Think You'll Never Forget

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Sveta seemed nervous as Ilya spread out the Thai food she'd brought over the table he'd had her on many times. It occurred to Ilya, distantly, that it had been a while since they'd been together. Maybe they were changing from friends who fucked sometimes to friends who used to fuck. Ah, well, that was the way of the world. He found he wasn't too inclined to go back to what they'd been. He loved Sveta with the sweet gravity of many years of knowing each other. Almost a lifetime. He wasn't in love with her. Not like with...

Well. Ilya knew what his love for Sveta didn't feel like.

"Ilyushka, I need to talk to you about something important," she said tentatively in Russian. So unlike her usual cheerful brashness.

Ilya looked up from his plate of noodles, fingers gone suddenly numb. His mind cycled through what she might say. Something wrong with her family. Something wrong with Ilya's. His father...

"What's wrong?"

Sveta paused. Took a breath. "I hate to ask."

"Just do it," Ilya said, trying to keep the impatience from his voice. He tapped his fingers on the cool wood of the table.

Her words came in a rush. "You know my new job? I'm having some trouble."

Ilya was confused. Of course he knew her new job selling luxury cars. He had bought one from her, an obnoxious Jaguar F-Type R with iridescent paint that reminded him of butterfly wings. "What kind of trouble?"

"So much of the job is marketing yourself, as a kind of go-to person. And that's where I'm having problems."

"Do you need me to buy another car from you?" He could. He'd be happy to, in fact. He had planned to wait a year or two before another one but he could move that timeline up if it would help his oldest friend.

“No, no, nothing like that. I was thinking...” she trailed off, looking uncomfortable.

“I can refer people to you, if it helps. Plenty of my teammates want big dumb cars, especially since I’m buying them now.”

She smiled at his characterization. “That would help but...” she took a fortifying breath. “Just hear me out. What if we pretended to be dating? I would get known around town as your girlfriend. Men would want to buy cars from the girl who had snagged the great Ilya Rozanov. It would only be for a little while and then we can pretend to break up. We could go to clubs together, get our pictures on the internet. But privately everything could be the same.”

Ilya laughed so hard he had to put his face down on the table. “Your diabolical mind! You want to be in a PR relationship with me?”

Sveta finally relaxed, laughing too. “I guess so.”

Ilya sat back, sobering. “What happens if they find out at home?” He didn’t want this hare brained plan to affect her in Moscow. It was one thing to play this silly game in America but he didn’t want anyone’s hopes to get involved. His father had been more forgetful lately, but he wouldn’t forget this. His brother would probably be jealous but that was something Ilya knew how to handle.

She waved away his concerns. “They won’t find out. And if they do we can tell them we decided it was a bad idea.” She pulled up a note on her phone where she’d sketched a timeline of the next six weeks, going out three times a week, scheduled around Ilya’s home games and road trips. “Once you hit the playoffs we can decide if this has run its course or if we need to work around it.”

Sveta was a hockey genius. She definitely knew more than Ilya. She knew more than Shane, probably, so if she was predicting Boston in the playoffs Ilya expected to be there.

Ilya loved the hockey gossip websites and tweets, even when he wasn’t the subject of the posts. He liked to mine them for creative chirps and was shocked no one else seemed to be doing the same. He had been featured frequently, though, for the last few weeks. Part of Sveta’s plan had been to tell her most untrustworthy friend that she and Ilya had fallen in love, spinning up a story of fate, and the friend tipped off the gossip hounds immediately. Now every time they went out someone, usually lots of someones, jockeyed to take their photos to post online.

Sveta’s six week timeline had worked. Her numbers at work were up and her bosses were happy. She really was a genius. They decided their faux romance was over.

“We can always come back to it, if you need,” Ilya promised.

Sveta gave him a tender hug. “I think this was a one time thing. Maybe you’ll be in love by then.” She was trying to acknowledge how Ilya hadn’t laid a finger on her when they weren’t in public this whole time, he knew, but the words cut deeper than she had intended.

Now he idly scrolled through the gossip until his fingers were stopped short by his worst nightmare. A photo of Shane kissing a brunette. She'd been identified as a friend of Jackie Pike, Hayden's wife, leading Ilya to uncharitable thoughts on Pike's entire bloodline.

Ilya couldn't breathe. He'd never expected Shane to go back to *women*. This looked like someone he could have a normal life with. This looked like Ilya would never have a chance to fix what lay broken between them. This did not look like, Ilya thought meanly, someone Shane's new trick he had demonstrated on Ilya would be that useful for. He had taken himself in hand more than once, remembering Shane dropping his mouth open, showing Ilya how he lay across Shane's talented tongue. How obscenely he fit into Shane's sweet, precious mouth. If he was disgusted with himself afterward, well. He was probably going to feel that way anyway.

Ilya felt unfamiliar claws in his throat. Finally identified them as fear. He had to figure out how to try one more time. He needed to talk to Shane, face to face. He had just started dating this girl. If Shane could look him in the eye and tell him she was the one for him, Ilya would believe him. He might spend the rest of his life feeling like he was a cosmonaut floating in space, barely tethered to earth, but he would do that for Shane if it meant Shane could be happy. If he could let Ilya go then Ilya would let him.

Sveta had been right. Boston did make it to the first round of the playoffs but were eliminated in five games by Chicago. This left Ilya with a lot of time on his hands. He hewed together a plan to invite Shane to Las Vegas early, before the annual awards. Ilya had skipped them last year, missed accepting his MVP. The story he had told everyone was that he was needed in Russia and that was technically true. His father's failing health meant an endless schedule of doctor visits. His brother had been handling them but Ilya hadn't known how well. Ilya could have delayed the trip but he was too scared to see Shane. He knew he was weak, that he would have ended up all but begging Shane for a little of his time. It was better that he never had the opportunity.

And now look where that got him. Ilya was prepared to beg or even more if he could just get in the same room as Shane to have a private conversation.

Two weeks before the awards, he texted Shane. **I would like to see you. I'm going to Vegas three days early if you could be there too.** His stomach was afloat somewhere in his body as he hit send.

Shane didn't respond that day and Ilya wondered seriously if Shane had blocked his number. Maybe he could email... no. He didn't want to talk to Shane about this on anything related to the league and Shane would seriously teleport from Montreal to kill him if he did.

Ilya had given up when he finally got a response. **Which hotel?**

Ilya gave him the name of a place he had found off the strip, where they would be less likely to run into anyone they knew. **Will you come?**

But Shane left him on read.

Chapter 10: I've No More Tricks Up My Sleeve

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Chapter Notes

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

Ilya was absolutely miserable. He laid on top of the bed linens in his stupid fucking hotel room in his underwear with the air conditioning on full blast because he was fucking stupid enough to spend more time in stupid fucking Vegas in stupid fucking June than he had to. All because Ilya's stupid fucking hopeful heart thought that Shane would come. Because Ilya had asked.

But Shane wasn't coming. It was after 10pm on the day Ilya had asked him to meet and he wasn't there. He never responded to Ilya's text. Ilya thought of the gamblers in the casino floors below him, putting all their chips on one hand of cards. At least they were having fun potentially ruining their lives. Ilya went all in on his heart and all he got was never touching Hollander again.

Was this despair? Ilya was never going to fall in love again. He knew now that he was in love with Shane because he could feel his heart crumbling. He felt like a chewed up joint of pork, not even fit to be put into a soup.

He picked his phone up resentfully when it buzzed. And promptly dropped it on his face when he saw the text was from Shane.

Room number?

Oh.

Fuck.

Okay.

Fuck.

1217, he typed. Shane was here.

Ilya was suddenly chilled and realized all at once he was practically naked. There was a time he would have happily opened the door to Shane wearing maybe even less than this simply to

annoy and scandalize him but he wanted to do things right this time. He yanked on the track pants he'd left on the floor, dashed into the bathroom and ran his fingers through his unruly hair. He was almost to his open suitcase to dig for a shirt when the knock came.

Ilya felt like he floated to the door, like his head was a balloon that propelled him there. And then Shane was in his room and he wanted, he wanted, he *wanted*. He had never wanted anyone like this and he knew, distantly, that this was a problem that didn't have a solution but it didn't matter because Shane was here and all Ilya had to do was reach for him.

Ilya didn't. Because Shane looked at him, wary in a way that Ilya had never seen. He'd seen Shane annoyed, angry, horny, incandescent with happiness when he bested Ilya on the ice, but never wary. Never afraid.

"Hollander," Ilya said, low. "I want to kiss you."

Shane closed his eyes. Ilya watched his throat as he swallowed. Traced the blush moving across his neck and up his face until his freckles disappeared.

Ilya hoped.

Shane took a deep breath like he'd come to a decision. Ilya's heart was being held somewhere outside his body on the tip of a knife.

"I want to kiss you too, Rozanov." He held up a hand when Ilya took a tentative step forward. "I do want to kiss you but then we have to talk. We never talk about any of this. And I have to be able to understand before...." His voice broke and he looked away, blinking back tears.

"Yes," Ilya said. "Of course." He didn't follow his first instinct, which was to make a joke about how he was always so good at keeping Shane's mouth too busy to talk. And he didn't name the fear in his heart, that they couldn't talk because if they did they would have to admit that this was hopeless. Reckless. If they didn't talk then this fragile bubble they were in right now might never pop. But Ilya learned in that moment that he would never be able to deny a crying Shane of anything he asked. So they would talk. But Ilya could kiss him first.

Ilya stepped forward until they were almost touching. He felt like all of his skin was electrified, the way he did when he was caught outside once during a storm and lightning hit a nearby tree. Shane's hands came to his waist, unbidden, almost chaste. Ilya palmed his face, anchored his other hand in Shane's hair. Waited until Shane cast his eyes up to meet Ilya's to lower his mouth to Shane's and then he closed his eyes and couldn't do anything but feel.

Ilya tried for tender as he kissed Shane. He was gentle. Used the kiss to say the things that he didn't know how to actually say yet. *I'm sorry. I was scared. I'm still scared. I don't know how I could have you in any universe but I know I would want you in all of them.*

He didn't think Shane could hear this because Shane's hands tightened on him before flipping Ilya against the door. Shane used one hand to pin him in place by the shoulder while the other roamed Ilya's body. Shane kissed him aggressively, slicking his tongue into Ilya's mouth until Ilya groaned, biting Ilya's bottom lip and pulling while finally finally palming Ilya's dick.

Ilya did the last thing he wanted to do and pushed him away gently. Shane made a sound of protest that buzzed down Ilya's spine.

"We have to stop."

"Fuck you. I know."

"Was your idea, Hollander."

"I know. Sorry if I lose my mind around you." Ilya knew Shane's nasty tone was really aimed at himself. When did he start understanding that about Shane?

Ilya smiled at him sadly. "Can we start over? I'm glad you're here. I didn't know if you were coming."

Shane sighed. "I wasn't sure if I was either, until this morning. I flew out this afternoon." He sat in the recliner by the window and crossed his legs.

A clear signal for Ilya to step away, not be in his space. Ilya settled himself on the bed facing Shane and leaned back on his elbows.

Shane propped his chin on his hand and stared out the window. Ilya waited, so nervous he could taste it, iron in his mouth, for Shane to say what he needed to say.

"Would your girlfriend be mad you kissed me like that?" Shane asked casually.

So they both followed hockey gossip. "Would yours?" Ilya shot back.

He looked at Ilya finally, brow furrowed. "I don't have a girlfriend. I wouldn't be here if I did."

"So that photo was..."

Shane shook his head. "I went on one date. I kissed her on the cheek and some weirdo fan took a picture at a bad angle and posted it online. Her identity was leaked and she bailed."

"That's too bad." Ilya landed on sarcastic but part of him actually meant it. If Shane had liked this girl that was an awful way for it to not work out.

Shane shrugged. "It wasn't really a match anyway. I kept forgetting about her when I was on a road trip right after."

Shane bristled when Ilya laughed, a little meanly. "Not all of us pick up easy. And you can't say shit, you've been with your girlfriend for months. Do you get a hall pass for men or just former fuckbuddies?"

Fuckbuddies hit Ilya in the gut harder than former. Was that all that Shane thought they were? Ilya suddenly felt very young and stupid. "That was a PR relationship. Old friend, just trying to help her out. I wouldn't have invited you here if I was with someone, Hollander."

Ilya flopped down onto the bed and stared at the ceiling. He suddenly felt very sad, that Shane would think that he was a cheater. Obviously they had both been with other people between their hookups, but for Ilya that was all they'd ever been. Relationships were different. He assumed. The closest thing he'd ever had to one was sitting four feet from him and it seemed like Shane thought it was over before it could really get started.

Shane crawled into the bed next to him and rested his head on Ilya's chest. Ilya wrapped his arm around him and allowed himself a moment to enjoy how Shane fit perfectly in the space there. Shane hooked a leg over Ilya's and rubbed his fingers idly over Ilya's hip. Ilya's own fingers traced up and down Shane's back. They lay like that for a long time.

"I don't think I can do casual," Shane finally said faintly. "I've spent the last year doing casual and I hated it. And I know I can't ask you for any more than what we had. So I don't know what to do from here."

You could ask, Ilya thought, but he couldn't bring himself to say it. His mouth sealed itself shut before he even thought to try. Because if Shane asked, Ilya might do something stupid like agree.

"So are you here for me to fuck you one last time?"

When Shane finally spoke, it was apologetic. "I don't know if I can fuck you. I am... too attached. To you." He paused and let the most beautiful, heartbreaking thing he had ever said hang in the air between them.

It would be cruel for Ilya to be honest, to say that he was already attached too. That Shane had snared him probably the first day they met in the Saskatchewan cold, Shane's shy smile thawing some ice in Ilya he didn't know was there. There was no way they could be together for real.

If this was all Ilya could have, he wanted one last night. Shane, sleeping next to him, sharing Ilya's lonely bed. So what if they didn't fuck? Tomorrow Ilya could start to figure out what the rest of his life would look like.

"Will you stay? No fucking. I just want to sleep next to you, for once."

Shane squeezed him. "Yeah. Yeah, Rozanov, I can do that." He stood and went into the bathroom. Ilya could hear the water running and laughed to himself. Shane must have a pocket toothbrush just in case he found himself in an emergency.

Ilya turned off all the lights except for one lamp by the bed. He shucked all his clothes off and slid into the cool sheets. No fucking, but Ilya slept naked anyway and he wanted as much of his skin as possible to touch Shane's. He'd put something on if Shane complained.

Shane came out of the bathroom in his underwear. He looked so beautiful in the dim light. Ilya did his best to commit the image to memory because he didn't think he would ever see it again.

He climbed into the bed and cuddled up again to Ilya. "Are you naked?"

“Yes,” Ilya said primly. “Will not be fucking you, Hollander, but this is how I dress for bed.” He clicked off the lamp and listened as Shane drifted into sleep, wishing that the both of them were just two normal guys. He stared into the dark for a long time.

Chapter End Notes

Please picture the spidermen pointing meme for the girlfriend conversation.

Chapter 11: Til the Magnolias Bloom

Chapter Summary

What happens if Ilya Rozanov doesn't talk to Shane Hollander for more than a year?

Or, Shane Hollander has a hoe phase

Shane woke up as the little spoon for the first time in his life. He allowed himself the pleasure of feeling surrounded by Ilya, pressed against Shane's back with an arm wrapped around his abdomen. The sun had already brightened the room, even if the bedside clock said it wasn't yet 6am, and Shane could feel the brush of Ilya's hard cock as he breathed in his sleep.

Shane let himself pretend that he could keep this kind of peace. He knew that at some point today that whatever fragile foundation that they had built between them would be fractured beyond repair. He knew that it was his fault. That his inability to be cool, to relax, to hold precious things loosely meant that he could not hold them at all. But for a little while longer he could simply be a man in love. He could take this feeling with him, when he went.

He felt when Ilya woke up, a stutter in the breath that whispered across his neck and an infinitesimal tightening in the arm banded around him. Shane pressed back against Ilya, a fraction of an inch maybe. Enough to say, I'm here too.

Ilya dropped a kiss on the back of Shane's neck. A question. Shane traced his fingertips on the back of Ilya's hand where it gripped his stomach, the only force in the universe that felt like it was keeping Shane from flying apart.

Then he dragged Ilya's hand up to his chest. Watched himself rest Ilya's thumb on Shane's pebbled nipple. An invitation.

Ilya nipped Shane's earlobe. "This is very confusing, Hollander," he whispered. He gently pinched Shane's nipple. His cock was an iron against Shane's back. Shane wanted to let Ilya overwhelm him. To take him somewhere where he didn't have to think about anything beyond this very moment and the sharp anticipation of the next.

But that wasn't fair to Ilya, and would probably kill Shane. "No fucking. But we could touch." He paused, gathered his courage. "Ilya." He savored how Ilya's name felt in his mouth, the name he had thought probably ten thousand times but so rarely got to say. He was always Rozanov, when Shane talked about him to his teammates and the media and his parents. Rozanov in only a tone they knew in the brief hours they stole to be together. But in Shane's mind and his heart he was Ilya. He didn't want this stolen hour to go by without saying it. He needed him to know.

Ilya sighed against him and tightened his hold. Shane felt like he had passed a test he didn't know he was taking.

"What about watching, Shane? Can I watch you?" He hooked his chin over Shane's shoulder, slid his fingers to the waistband of the boxers Shane had slept in. "Will you touch yourself for me?"

Shane pulled the underwear down and kicked it off somewhere into the room. His cock bobbed free, a pearl of precum glistening in the sunlight. He reached back with his free hand and laced his fingers into Ilya's soft curls. Ilya's fingers played in Shane's hair, soothing any nerves Shane felt. He had never jerked off like this for Ilya, beyond a few desperate strokes when they fucked or when Ilya was blowing him and wanted Shane to cum on his face. Ilya trailed his other hand slowly up Shane's thigh until his long fingers cupped Shane's balls. Not playing with or teasing them, just holding. "Show me."

Shane wrapped his fingers around his cock, throbbing now, and slicked his thumb across his slit, rubbing until the head was glossy.

He nudged his thumb against Ilya's lips, an offering he eagerly accepted. "Delicious."

Shane moaned then, and took himself in hand. He started slow.

Words spilled from Ilya's talented mouth as he watched. "Look at you. I've imagined this so many times but this is better than I could have dreamed. Do you ever think of me when you do this?"

Shane moaned, shameless for once. "Every time. You're the only one who..."

"Who what?" Ilya's voice was a desperate thread.

Shane closed his eyes. "Who gets me there."

"*Blyad*," Ilya choked out. He reached over Shane, frantic, to dig in the beside table. He brought out a bottle of lube, flipped it open and drizzled it over Shane's cock before splashing some into his own hand. Shane expected him to start jacking himself but Ilya, like always, managed to surprise him.

Ilya slid his hard cock between Shane's ass cheeks. Not at an angle to enter him but to enjoy the hold of his body. He rocked his hips roughly against Shane and let his cock slide up and down. "I have always wanted to do this, since the first time I saw this beautiful ass in those showers all those years ago. It has tortured me." He put his hand over Shane's and encouraged him to keep jerking as he used Shane's body. Shane felt like a cherished object.

"Who else has seen you this way? Who has watched you do this? How many men?"

"No one," Shane gasped. "Not like this."

Ilya stilled and bit out, "Fuck, Shane." The hot splash of his orgasm sent Shane over the edge. He threw his head back and groaned when Ilya sank his teeth into the spot where his neck met his shoulder and rode out the pleasure as long as he could.

Shane tried to float in the aftermath but before long he landed back in his body. Remembered he had a bruised heart and the rest of his life to figure out.

He turned in Ilya's arms and rested his head on his chest. It would be easier to say what he needed to say without looking at Ilya.

"I think," he started.

"Don't do this," Ilya whispered. "Give me a minute before you say goodbye."

Shane's stomach felt like it was falling down an elevator shaft.

"Please don't think it's what I want. But I have to."

"Why?" Ilya was angry now. He shifted away and sat up and after a moment Shane followed suit. He felt cold all over now that they were no longer touching. "Why do you have to?"

"I told you," Shane tried reasonably. "I can't do casual. It's fucking killing me. And I can't ask you to..."

"Yes, you fucking can! You make this big decision for both of us and don't even want to know how I feel. Before you leave me behind, just fucking ask, Shane."

Shane felt like the first time he got slammed against the boards, in pee wee, and all the wind got knocked out of him. Like his whole universe was being rearranged.

"Would you..."

Ilya watched him without a word, eyebrows raised, but he laced his fingers with Shane's and that lit Shane up with dangerous hope.

"Want to try to be together?" Shane's head was suddenly filled with all the reasons this couldn't work, a long list that he had been keeping as padding around his heart: they got to spend so little time together. They couldn't be out. This might go on forever, at least until they retired. Ilya might get tired of him. Every day gave him an opportunity for a new might.

For the first time he wondered, what if? What if none of that mattered? What if loving each other was enough and they could figure out the rest along the way?

Ilya smiled. "Yes. Yes, I want to try."

And then they were kissing like they had all the time in the world.

End Notes

Edited to add on May 17, 2026: thank you for all the new love for this one, it means so much to me. If you like this one please take a look at my WIP Absence Makes which is also angst with a happy ending and will be much longer than this. Happy reading!

This is my first fanfic so please tell me if I'm using tags wrong or there are things I could do differently. I will be adding more chapters. Thanks for reading!

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