

can't cool me down

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by [king_of_the_slutty_rats](#)

Summary

Shane tries his best to focus on the game, but Ilya Rozanov is making it increasingly hard to pay attention to anything but him.

or

Five times Ilya Rozanov tries to get Shane's attention while on the ice, and the one time Shane gives it to him.

Notes

I wanted to get rid of my heated rivalry brain rot by writing this down, so here you go, though I'm not sure if I got rid of it or just made it worse

I think I kind of love writing in Shane's pov bc I'm also autistic so I can just freely use my own autistic experiences in writing his yk?

Also I realized while writing this that I have no idea how hockey works so :D

Also also while doing research for this, I found out about the "rat trick". Kind of iconic but also what the actual fuck is hockey even about? I'll give you this as homework: go search the rat trick on wikipedia

Anyways enjoy!

The title comes from the song Can't cool me down by Car Seat Headrest <3

1. Fifth base

The game between Montreal and Boston has had Shane on his toes for a week now. At least Shane reconciles with himself that he has only been thinking about this match for the past week, and definitely not any longer, and that he's only nervous about the possibility of losing against the Boston team, and definitely not because of the team's captain promising to fuck him after the game. Definitely not that.

Even so, it didn't help that said captain of the Bears had been sexting Shane before the game. And it most definitely didn't help that Shane had been quite turned on by the other captain's messages. But Shane had a game to play and a team to help, so he quietly got on the ice as their home crowd in Montreal loudly cheered them on.

As the game started, Shane put all of his focus into what he knew the best: hockey. He knew hockey, he understood it. He knew how to read his opponents on the ice as if he could tell their intent before they knew it themselves. He understood the way the puck moved predictably while being guided by his teammates or by himself. He knew just the right angle he would have to kick with his blades to make himself go from point A to point B in the most efficient way, and he knew just when to shoot the puck right over the goalie's left shoulder so he wouldn't be able to catch it. What he didn't understand was the way one Ilya Rozanov was seemingly trying to get his attention during the game.

It started with a burning sensation on the back of his head, as if someone was looking at him, which he supposed they were, seeing as how they were in a hockey arena filled with spectators. But Shane knew the way an adoring fan's, the most vicious hater's or even the paparazzi's gazes felt, and this was none of them. As Shane turned around he saw the man in the #81 jersey staring daggers at him. Shane turned back around and focused on the game.

The staring didn't seem to stop. If it was even possible, it felt like it just got more excessive. Every chance Rozanov seemed to get while not engrossed in the game, he seemed to spend staring at Shane. Shane tried to ignore it, he really did, but there was only so much he could withstand of the burning sensation of someone drilling holes to the back of his head. This needed to stop, if not for his own sanity but for Rozanov's poor eyes.

It turned out Shane didn't even need to initiate contact between them to tell the other to piss off and mind his own business. It was at the end of the second period that Shane heard his

last name called with a thick russian accent.

“Hollander.”

The voice came from a few meters to his left. He could tell who it was even before looking in the voice’s direction. So he didn’t look. Maybe if he ignored him now, the other would get the message and lose interest?

The voice came again.

“Hollander,” the voice drawled out. Shane didn’t react and skated towards his teammates.

“Aww, are you ignoring me, Hollander?” the voice followed him.

Shane could tell nothing good would come of this. Rozanov never had good intentions when talking to opposing players during a game, especially given Shane’s experience with the man.

“Are you mad? Because of text? Was it part about your mother or the hard on you got from other part?”

Shane turned around in an instant.

“Holy shit, you can’t say that!” he stage whispered so no one else could hear them.

“About how you are hard? Oh relax Hollander, no one can hear,” Rozanov responded at a normal volume.

“I just want to... what is it, confirm? Make sure about plans for tonight. You see, I would like that address you promised me.”

Shane internally corrected the other man's vocabulary but didn't say anything out loud.

"I didn't promise you anything," he said matter of factly. He also saw how his teammates had now started noticing him lingering on the ice, followed by his archnemesis. They quickly started shooting him with worried looks. Rozanov sure had a reputation.

The other captain skated closer to Shane as he continued. "No, I remember better. You were very excited to give me your address so I can take care of your obvious boner, yes?"

Something must have happened on Shane's face, because next thing he knew, Hayden was skating toward them with a worried look on his face. Behind him were J.J. and Comeau who seemed to be more offended at Rozanov than concerned for Shane's safety.

"Ah, is Pike and friends! You know, I just learned that Pike is actually a fish. ИЦыка, a very tasty fish, yes. Have you tasted it Mr Pike?"

Shane could see Hayden's eyebrow twitch, but didn't otherwise comment on Rozanov's taunts. Instead he skated to Shane's other side.

"Hey man, you alright? Rozanov giving you trouble?" Hayden asked while tapping Shane on the shoulder. J.J. and Comeau seemed to only be here for defence if things escalated seeing as how they flanked Rozanov on both sides. What could they have thought Rozanov was saying to him to make them this concerned?

"Aww, very cute. You came to defend your Mr captain from big scary man? Yes he was very... He needed saving by knight in shiny armor, yes? Very nice of you Mr fish."

Shane couldn't think of a single thing to say to save himself or this situation without making it weirder than it already was. Luckily, Hayden had apparently had enough of his short interaction with Rozanov already, as he skated his way to where he was facing the offender.

“Look here, buddy-”

“Oh, very scary Mr fish,” Rozanov sarcastically commented.

“Okay, that’s it,” was the last thing Shane heard from Hayden before he tried to launch himself at the taller man.

Shane decided he should not be seen talking to Ilya Rozanov even when others thought they were arguing. Maybe, especially when others thought they were arguing.

2. Hat Trick

Shane has been called up to start the game’s first face off with Ilya Rozanov. Shane glides to his starting position at center ice where Rozanov is already waiting for him with a smirk on his face. Shane already knew he would end up in this man’s bed by the end of the night. Their little arrangement has been going on for enough time that Shane understood how it worked. They were in the same city, evident by the way they were now standing face to face on the ice, meaning they would sneak at the dead of night for an hour of uninterrupted time together.

“Hollander.”

“Rozanov.”

Neither one of them said anything else for a moment as they waited for their sign to get into position. Rozanov was the one to break the silence.

“Are you not going to tell me how you think you will win? You can already tell will be pointless?” Shane could only focus on the obvious mistakes in his grammar again.

“Wow, what a fancy word you’ve learned. ‘Pointless’. Where did you learn it? Did someone finally tell you all your chirping is ‘pointless’?”

“Ah, no. I learnt because your team will be pointless after this game. Meaning, you will have zero point.”

“Oh, you wanna bet? See who can score more goals during this game? Maybe I’ll go for a hat trick,” Shane was getting fired up now.

“No. I think it will be me getting hat trick tonight. In game and after.”

The hell? “What’s your idea of a hat trick outside of a game? Getting three green lights in a row?” Shane chuckled at the idea of Rozanov sitting in one of his sports cars at red lights.

“Oh, very innocent Hollander. I will need your room number to teach you how I will score hat trick.”

Shane immediately looked to his right to look at the referee, who... wasn’t there? No wonder Rozanov had asked about his room number, even if...

“Oh relax Hollander. No one is here.”

Okay new question, why was there no one here? The referee should be here with the puck to start the game. Except that he wasn’t?

Shane looked around trying to see the reason behind the delay and saw at least three referees trying to break up a fight over on one side of the rink. Now that he saw it he could also recognize the loud voices coming from their direction. Jesus, the game hadn’t even started and gloves were already flying off.

Shane felt himself moving in the direction of the now broken up fight and the referees. It was his duty as captain to make sure everyone was alright and to probably apologize to the other player if need be.

Shane had only properly turned around when he felt something tug at his stick. His gaze followed the line of his hockey stick as his eyes landed on the other captain, who was now holding onto Shane's stick.

"No need for you," Rozanov mumbled. "They are okay now, so we will start soon, yes?"

Rozanov was still holding onto Shane's stick as if it was a leash holding him still. Shane met his eye to challenge him.

Rozanov didn't let go.

"What do you want, Rozanov?" Shane let out through his gritted teeth.

"Ah, I already told you. I want your room number. For fun hat trick."

"Not here," Shane bit out.

"You are no fun."

"Let go of my stick."

"Why?"

"It's weird. People are probably looking at us."

“Probably? People are very much looking at us. But don’t worry, they are just thinking I’m a bully. You are still very nice and polite Canadian boy.”

“Oh fuck you.”

“No, I fuck you.”

Shane was really getting pissed off. He could see the scene had been properly dissolved and the players benched. The referees were now also starting to go back to their original positions. Shane briefly made eye contact with their coach who simply nodded at him. The game would start soon.

The referee who had been at center ice earlier also came back with the puck now in his hand, and Shane got into position.

He and Rozanov didn’t say anything else to each other after that.

Rozanov won the faceoff.

Sometime after the game Shane thought about the moment he saw the fight happening off to the side. How had he not heard it before the other man had pointed it out to him? Had he really not been listening to his surroundings before? He must have at least subconsciously heard the fighting, right? There was no reason for him to not hear or notice it, right? There was simply no way he was so focused on Rozanov and his shit talking, that he couldn’t hear an actual fight breaking out next to him.

Right?

3. Switch Hitter

“Your ice sucks.”

Shane didn't need to look up from his deep hamstring stretch to recognize the voice of the opposing team's captain.

“Gee, thanks. I am deeply attached to this ice, so it breaks my heart to hear anyone say that,” he replied sarcastically while pointedly staring at his knee.

Shane looked up and saw Ilya Rozanov standing a few meters away from him. There weren't many other people on the ice yet, but Shane liked to get an early start to his pre game warm up. It was surprising to see Rozanov on the ice as well though.

Shane was almost ritualistic about his pre game warm up. He didn't really need to think about it anymore, seeing as how his body seemed to just do the warm up by itself nowadays. His body knew how long he was supposed to be in each position and knew how to transition into the next pose.

“Should take better care of the ice. It's very... lumpy.”

“I'll let the management know.” Shane was not going to tell anyone anything bad about the ice. It was perfectly respectable ice.

Shane shifted into a pigeon pose as he figured Rozanov had had enough.

“Very nice stretch. Very flexible,” Rozanov commented. Shane felt his face warm up, so he adamantly looked down. He sure as hell didn't appreciate being ogled at while doing his warm up. Especially by Ilya Rozanov. Definitely not.

“You sure you shouldn’t be warming up yourself buddy?” Shane asked. “Or are you just going to stand there and run your mouth?”

Rozanov didn’t seem to reply. He only muttered to himself in Russian while copying Shane’s position on the ice in front of him. Shane switched his legs around to stretch the other side.

Rozanov was the first to open his mouth again after a minute of silence. “I was serious when I said you are flexible.”

Shane didn’t look up but changed positions again. He leaned forward while in a frog stretch to lean his forearms on the ice.

Rozanov continued again. “Maybe more than some of the girls I have been with. You should use your flexibility more in bedroom. Is very sexy.”

Shane quickly looked around, but didn’t see anyone in a hearing distance. He decided to fire back.

Shane hummed as if thinking to himself. “I don’t think I’ve needed any flexibility before. Maybe I should blame my unimaginative partners then,” he looked off into the distance as if was recounting his previous encounters with his very real sexual partners.

Shane looked back at Rozanov and saw something in his eyes. Was it lust? Pride? Ideas of positions to fold Shane into later that evening?

Rozanov has mentioned his rendezvous with women in the past, so he must have experience in flexible women who could be folded in any way he pleased. Shane tried not to get excited at the idea of being manhandled by the man in front of him.

“You blame your partners for it? Does that mean you like being pillow princess?”

Where the hell had Rozanov learned the word for a pillow princess and why the hell was Shane's stomach doing a flip at the thought of Rozanov now planning accordingly. Not that Shane was a pillow princess. He just... Enjoyed being more... Okay so maybe he was a pillow princess, sue him.

Shane looked at Rozanov who was already staring at him. The other man was smirking as if he was reading Shane's mind.

Shane stood up from his position on the ice and picked up his hockey stick, which had been laying on the ice next to him. Rozanov copied his movements.

Shane had a spare puck next to him which he started guiding in a slow but well practiced pattern in front of him. He paid no mind to the look on the other captain's face, who didn't seem to have a puck of his own.

"I don't have a puck," he complained.

After a few seconds of silence, Shane responded questioningly. "Okay? I kind of don't care."

It didn't seem to be the correct answer, because before Shane had even thought to protect his own puck, it was gone. Ilya Rozanov on the other hand was now the proud owner of the puck Shane had just been passing to himself.

"What the hell?"

"Now we share."

"No! Get your own puck," Shane grumbled more loudly than he meant to as he now tried to get the puck back from Rozanov, but the other captain seemed to have predicted this turn of events and turned away from Shane with the puck.

“Do not stop me, I am practicing your thing. You should not *bother* other players doing warm up.” Rozanov seemed to emphasize the word ‘bother’ as if he was proud of using a new word he had recently learned.

“You’re the one who bothered me first!” Shane started trying to go around Rozanov in the hopes of getting his puck back, but Rozanov was already a few meters ahead with the puck. Shane started following him.

“Ah, so now I was bothering? I thought I was just saying hello to friend, yes?” Rozanov was gaining speed while going around the rink with the puck. Shane was on his tail.

“Since when have we been friends?” The two of them were now going almost as fast as they could while trying to battle for the puck. Shane had gotten it back a few times, but Rozanov had been quick to get his redemption. Shane felt hands push his side in an attempt to disrupt his trajectory, which was followed by Rozanov poking the puck away from either of them.

Shane saw the way the puck made its way to the other side of the rink from the surprisingly strong hit from Rozanov. The two of them made eye contact for a second, pivoted so that they were facing the puck which was now quite far away, and started racing towards it.

There were more people on the ice now, who had noticed the two hot headed players, who almost looked like two kids running on a playground together.

4. Ball Handler

The Montreal team has been on a winning streak for a few weeks now. That streak had now been ended by the Boston Bears. Shane was understandably pissed.

Shane had scored a goal in the first period, which had gotten them off to a good start. Ilya Rozanov on the other hand had somehow single handedly scored three goals throughout the game. The game had ended 4-1 for the Bears, which had humbled the Voyagers quite a bit.

Shane felt like he was responsible for their loss as the captain. Had he gotten cocky after their winning streak? Had he just had a bad day? Was he nervous about his night with Ilya after the game? Whatever the case, he felt like he was to blame for the crushing loss.

Shane and Ilya had gotten closer during the last few months. It had started with Shane coming out to him after his break up with Rose. They had been texting more and it was starting to feel like they were actually friends of sorts, rather than just occasional fuck buddies. And the sex was still great. Maybe even better than great. Except that Shane was terrified. Terrified of himself and of his feelings. Because there was no denying it now, he liked Ilya Rozanov. He liked his stupid face and his stupid attitude, and his very very stupid consideration. Because contrary to popular belief, Ilya Rozanov, one of the most hated guys in hockey, was actually a really nice guy.

“Sucks to suck, Hollander. I would say good game, but it wasn’t. It was a very bad game. You kind of sucked.” Ilya Rozanov was now standing behind Shane, who was catching his breath on the side of the rink. Shane didn’t look up.

A tug at the hem of Shane’s jersey got his attention as he turned to look at the hockey stick pulling at his back.

“I’m talking to you, Hollander,” Ilya said with a smirk. Fucking shit, Shane was royally fucked.

Shane was pissed off. He was pissed off at himself, at his team, at the game and at Ilya fucking Rozanov who couldn’t leave Shane alone to wallow in his misery.

“Fuck off Rozanov.”

The hockey stick was now poking at his back repeatedly.

“Why would I ‘fuck off’? We are having a captain meeting. That is a thing, yes? I am telling you that you sucked. You should be better.”

“Fuck off, I’m not in the mood.”

“Ah, I think you are always in the mood. When was the last time you jer-”

“What the fuck Rozanov!” Shane interrupted him.

“Ah, you are very... wound up, yes?” Ilya started. Then in a quieter tone he continued, “I could help you, you know? Later?”

“We are not having this conversation on the ice in front of all these people,” Shane argued.

“Hasn’t stopped you before.”

“Stop talking to me.” Shane wasn’t sure if he meant it. He definitely didn’t want to be talking about this topic on the ice, but he couldn’t deny he did enjoy talking to Ilya. It calmed him down in a weird twisted way.

“Do you really want me to stop talking?” he asked as if he had read Shane’s mind. Hell, maybe he had.

“I’m mad because we lost, and you’re not helping.”

“I could help,” Ilya got closer now, and Shane felt his face flushing. “I could help you... Take your mind off it?”

Shane had to applaud Ilya’s vocabulary which was seemingly getting better with every day. Maybe Shane could try learning Russian one day. Maybe then he could...

That was a dangerous train of thought. There was no good reason for Shane to start learning a new language that didn't include fantasies about a future with someone he could never have. Not that he even wanted to have a future with Ilya. He just liked his company. Maybe also as more than a friend, but that was it. He definitely hadn't looked up Russian tutors in Montreal and he definitely hadn't thought of a romantic date where he could surprise his boyfriend Ilya Rozanov with his Russian skills. And he definitely wasn't fantasizing about calling Ilya his boyfriend. Definitely not. Because they were simply fucking, while possibly being friends.

"Not now," Shane gritted through his teeth.

"Your loss. You usually really like it when I play with your balls to cheer you up"

Before Shane could say anything, Ilya had already skated away to join his teammates who were getting ready for the handshake line. Shane knew he was supposed to join his team as well, but he couldn't face them. He took a deep breath and resigned to his fate.

He tried not to make eye contact with anyone as he got closer to his team. Hayden was the first to approach him.

"Good goal there cap," he complimented in a faux positive tone, which even Shane could tell wasn't genuine. Maybe Shane's face wasn't as neutral as he had hoped it to be for Hayden to try and cheer him up.

"Well one good goal doesn't do much."

Hayden patted Shane on the shoulder. "Whatever Rozanov said to you," Shane's head turned to face him quickly, "he was wrong. He's just like that, you know? You did good, we all did. So don't beat yourself up, okay?"

Obviously the others had noticed his short interaction with Ilya. Shane shouldn't have been surprised.

“Yeah, I know.”

“Rozanov has always been so cocky. I mean sure he’s good, but he acts like he’s the second coming of Christ.”

The two teams formed lines and started thanking each other for a good game. Shane got to Ilya who just winked at him and continued.

Shane really hated losing.

5. Glove save

Shane couldn’t remember a time where he had been excited to play against his hometown team, the Ottawa Centaurs, mostly because their team was bad. There was no other way to put it. Everyone knew how the game would end before it even started.

Except that now, something had changed. The Centaurs had a new player in the form of Ilya Rozanov, his loving boyfriend.

So yes, Shane was actually excited to play against the Ottawa team, because it meant that he could play against Ilya again. The Voyagers were still going to obviously win, but playing against Ilya had always been fun.

The two of them had even spent the previous night at Shane’s place in Montreal, just because they could. Even so, Shane felt giddy about seeing Ilya on the ice, because playing with Ilya was a feeling he could never get over. He felt giddy just looking at the other man, and he could tell Ilya was no different. Except that he had a different way of showing his excitement. Shane was the type to let the feeling fester, so he could use the built up energy during the game or after it, when he could spend another evening with his boyfriend. Ilya on the other hand showed his feelings by trying to get Shane’s attention on the ice. It almost felt like Ilya was a seven-year-old child who tries to get his crush's attention by bullying them.

It had started small. First Shane noticed Ilya making kissy faces at him from under his helmet. It was discreet enough and something Ilya could probably be seen doing to any other player as well. Shane pointedly ignored him, except for the one time Shane stuck out his tongue in response.

“Hey, Hollander!” Shane heard his name called out and tried to find the source of the voice. He quickly found Ilya looking at him from a few meters away. “Are you hurt?”

Was he supposed to be? Shane gave him a weird look. “No?”

“Oh, it looked quite bad when you fell for me.”

What?

“What?”

Ilya got closer to him now and started circling him like a shark eyeing its prey.

“Are you a thief? Because you have stolen my heart.” Ilya delivered the line with only a small smirk on his face.

Apparently the next thing Ilya tried seemed to be pick up lines. And he seemed to have quite a lot of them.

“Ah, Hollander. You are so hot even my zipper is falling for you,” he said with that cocky grin. Shane did not blush. Definitely not.

“Are you a bank loan? Because you have my interest.” Ilya winked.

Shane tried to escape him, to no success.

“If you were a chicken, you’d be im-”

“A chicken?”

“Don’t interrupt me. As I was saying, you’d be im-peck-able.”

Shane heard multiple variations of weird pick up lines throughout the game. And Shane was definitely not smitten with the man delivering them to him.

“Oh my dear, let us only let latex stand between our love!”

Shane punched Ilya’s arm.

Shane figured his team must have gotten used to seeing Ilya chase after him, because none of them seemed to really pay any attention to them. It was apparently natural for Ilya Rozanov to be seen trying to bother Shane Hollander.

It was after the second intermission when Shane made his way to the bench to sit down and catch his breath, when he noticed his water bottle was gone. It was not where he had left it the last time he took a drink, and now that he looked around, it wasn’t anywhere. It took embarrassingly long for him to realize what must have happened. Ilya had stolen his water bottle. He wasn’t even sure how he had done it without being noticed, but it sure as hell had happened.

Now that Shane knew the perpetrator in this crime, his eyes locked on the new water bottle that seemed to have taken the place of his own one: Ilya’s water bottle. Shane recognized the bottle as the one he always saw Ilya carry with him whenever they practiced or worked out together. The bottle that had the name ‘Ilya Rozanov’ scrawled on the bottom of it. Well shit.

Shane wasn't as sneaky as Ilya could apparently be, so he couldn't switch them back, so he figured he had to deal with the swapped bottle for now.

"Shane, d'you get a new water bottle?" Hayden asked from his left. "What happened to your old one? I thought you really liked it, since I distinctly remember you going on about how good it was. I mean I don't think water bottles differ that much from each other, but hey, I'm no expert."

Shane made an excuse about how he had lost the bottle last night and tried to cover the name on the bottle with his hand.

The final period started and ended without much issue. The Voyagers had won 2-0, but Ilya didn't seem to mind. In fact he seemed just fine with the fact that his team had lost against Shane's.

Shane made his way towards his boyfriend who was already smiling at him.

Shane patted him on the shoulder. "Good game. You did good."

"I am always good," Ilya drawled. "Thank you for noticing."

"Okay, big guy, we get it," Shane smiled at him.

"Did you like my gift?" Shane tried to figure out what he meant by that, until he remembered the case of his missing water bottle.

"How did you even manage that?"

Ilya hummed. "A magician never reveals his tricks." He seemed awfully proud of himself.

“God, you suck.”

“Oh, you want me to suck you? At least wait until we are off the ice,” Ilya muttered into his ear. Shane was not turned on in the slightest. Definitely not.

“I can’t believe you,” Shane muttered mostly to himself.

“I think you like it.”

“No comment.”

“Very professional answer. I think publicist will like that.”

“Fuck off.”

Ilya didn’t take his leave until he gave Shane’s ass a firm slap, and then went off.

God, Shane wanted to kiss him. He might have been way too in love with this man.

+1 Score

Ilya Rozanov scored a goal, and the crowd’s cheers were deafening. The game was now 2-2, a tie between the Ottawa Centaurs and the Brooklyn Scouts. The last period was coming to a close. The game would be going into overtime.

The Ottawa Centaurs had made it to the Stanley Cup finals. It was a miracle and a half. Most of the guys on the team had never played at this level before, but something seemed to have

clicked with them. They were good. Like, really good. Shane had joined the team after him and Ilya had been outed, and the Montreal Voyagers had all but thrown him out. But Shane was happy. He wouldn't have minded losing every single game, even if it would have sucked, but he could have dealt with it, because he was now on the same team as his husband.

Shane smiled at his teammates who had now gathered to hug Ilya. He couldn't be more proud.

The team had somehow made it to the playoffs. Shane wasn't sure how, but they had then actually survived in the playoffs. They were a good team, which Shane had realized a while ago, but something had clicked recently. Maybe it was something each of the players had individually done, or maybe it was the whole team as a group who had finally understood each other. They were so good that they had made it to the Stanley Cup finals.

Shane had been here before with the Voyagers. He had won the Cup, felt the weight of it in his hands, heard the cheers that threatened to burst his eardrums, tasted the adrenaline in his mouth from the final game. But this felt different.

He was now joined by a team he could call family. He had loved the Voyagers, but he had never really gotten to know all of his teammates outside of the game. Here, he felt like he had been welcomed with open arms. They all already knew who he was and who he was with. They already knew of the big skeleton hiding in his closet, and there was no reason to hide.

Shane has always been a private person, but he knew Ilya, and Ilya trusted these people. So Shane had allowed the team to see him for who he was.

He was now standing in the rink, watching Ilya, his husband, who had just scored a goal and given them another chance. They had a chance at winning. They had to win.

The final period ended after a few minutes. The game was still 2-2, which meant overtime. They had to give it their all.

Shane made his way over to the benches and sat down. He breathed deeply. Coach Wiebe was writing something down, while waiting for everyone to gather around.

“All right everyone, good job! If you need to take a pee break, do it now.”

Wiebe gave them a run down on the plan for the overtime. Shane could barely register any of it. He was sick to his stomach. Had he ever been this nervous at a hockey game? At the Stanley Cup finals?

Shane jolted from his thoughts when he heard, “Hollander, you good to go on the ice?” Wiebe had asked him. He had been lost in his thoughts.

“Yeah, sorry. Just thinking. But don’t worry, I was listening.” Shane was at least fairly certain he had been listening.

“Good. Now Barrett-”

“How are you?” came a voice on his right. Ilya had now wrapped his arm around his shoulder and was leaning into his ear to speak to him in a surprisingly soft voice.

“Good. Just maybe a bit nervous. I don’t think I’ve ever been this nervous during hockey. But nothing to worry about, just need a minute. I mean I don’t know what’s different, but-” Shane was babbling now, but he couldn’t stop, “okay maybe I do know, but it’s weird, isn’t it? I mean I should be perfectly comfortable and trust the team and trust myself and trust you and-”

“Okay Hollander, you are now talking too much.” Shane shut up immediately.

He felt his cheeks flush while looking at Ilya. Ilya, his loving husband who he was going to win this Cup with. And yes they were going to win it, Shane was sure.

“Sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry. You are worried, that is okay,” Ilya looked him deep in the eyes as he spoke. “You can also sit here, and we can let one of the rookies play. That is also okay. You are okay.”

Shane felt his heart and his nerves melt away. He took another deep breath.

“I can play. I will play.” Shane wasn’t one for public displays of affection, but he knew Ilya loved it, so he patted the back of Ilya’s head in response. “Thank you, Ilya.”

The game started again. The overtime would last either 20 minutes or it would end as soon as one of the teams scored a goal. Shane got into position. Ilya was facing the other team’s captain at the face-off circle. He won the face-off.

Shane was sweating buckets after the first eleven minutes of the game. Most of their team was tired. They had already played for most of the three periods, but they were still their strongest players even while tired. They could do this.

The puck had gotten close to their goal, and the Scouts had made a shot at their net, but Wyatt Hayes, their goalie, had stopped it at the last second. The puck was back in the game.

The puck stayed on their side of the rink for what felt like an eternity, and Shane could tell they were starting to lose hope. Their team didn’t have the experience the Scouts had, they hadn’t made it this far in the playoffs before.

Shane had a chance at the puck. He went for it.

Shane stole the puck from the other team’s star forward who was now left without a purpose after his shot had been taken from him.

He saw a few opportunities here. He could try and take the puck with him to the other side of the rink, even though there were players blocking his way or he could try and pass it along to Evan Dykstra, who was in the middle of the rink near another player from the opposing team,

who seemed ready to take the puck if Shane passed it to Dykstra. Neither seemed like good options.

Shane heard someone tap the ice with their stick. It came from behind him. Shane realized who it was. As he had thought of his options with the puck, he had seen all of the faces and jerseys in front of him. He had also seen the one jersey which had been missing. The owner of which was now behind him and ready to take the puck further away from their own goal.

He shot the puck behind him. No one else was in the way, because there was no way Shane would do something as risky as passing the puck behind him without even looking.

As soon as he had passed the puck, he started skating as fast as he could towards the opponent's side of the rink. He saw Ilya to his left with the puck and skating in the same direction. The two of them raced to the other side, which seemed to be empty. Only Dykstra and the other guy had been defending the middle line, but everyone else had moved to the Centaurs side of the rink, because the action had been centered there for a while now.

Shane felt himself smile.

He couldn't hear anything except his own labored breath.

He saw someone approaching Ilya and got ready for the puck.

Ilya passed it to him so fast Shane could barely register the puck hitting his stick. He was close. He was close enough to see the face of the goalie. He saw the goalie's eyes and the way they were still trained on Ilya.

Shane took the shot.

First there was nothing.

Then Shane became overwhelmed with the noise, the people around him, his teammates, who had wrapped him up in a hug. The crowd roared and Shane looked up from the pile of his teammates that had formed around him.

3-2.

They had done it. They won. The Ottawa Centaurs won the Stanley Cup.

The next moment was a blur. Shane could only think of one thing at the moment.

He freed himself from the now less tight pile of his friends, and found Ilya.

He was standing where he had been just a moment ago where he had passed the puck to Shane. He also seemed dazed. Maybe he also felt that this was different. This wasn't like the other times they had won the cup. This time they had done it together with their family.

Shane made his way over to Ilya, who now noticed Shane approaching him.

Ilya had opened his mouth to say something but Shane stopped him with a kiss.

There the two of them stood. Shane didn't care about anything else at this moment, except for the man in his arms. The love of his life, who he could spend the rest of his life with. They could do this. Together.

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