

penalty in the neutral zone

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by [coldriddendevastation](#)

Summary

“You’re sick,” says Shane, albeit shakily because he isn’t sure about *this*. He isn’t sure about them, or what they are. He doesn’t know if he’s allowed to care or worry because he doesn’t know what to call them. There is no routine or rules. All he knows is he probably shouldn’t be calling the captain of another team, especially not in the locker room. He shuts his locker and grabs his bag.

“You are obvious. Did you call me to say obvious things, like sky is blue? Or Montreal sucks. Or that you cry when you come?” It sounds like he’s smiling. Shane’s stomach swoops, tripping over itself in a swell of affection. He rubs his hand over his face, feeling disoriented by the flood of conflicting emotions.

“Fuck you,” Shane snaps, habitually.

or: ilya always texts shane before they play against each other, but today he doesn’t. shane, and all spectating eyes, can tell someone is off with boston’s captain.

Notes

hi hi! first fic im writing for this fandom. as always, im always writing some niche kinky shit so read the tags!!! sorry i dont know anything about hockey i am a theater kid lmao. as always, leave a comment & enjoy!!! xxx

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

OCTOBER 18TH, 2016 — MONTREAL

Chanting shakes the boards, rattling the entire arena from the battle cry of eager fans. The sound is like a shaken soda can, waiting to burst. It's invigorating.

COMMENTATOR ONE: *Tonight, I expect the Metros to make smart decisions in the defensive zone and be above the puck for the back check.*

COMMENTATOR TWO: *Opening face off tonight, sponsored by the Spinelli Toyota Pointe-Claire dealership, we have Ilya Rozanov with his game face on, and Shane Hollander in his home arena. And we're off, boys!*

Routine is important to Shane. He *always* eats the same steamed rice and a bowl of vegetables before each game to maximize his performance. He *always* takes the time to peel the old tape off of his hockey stick and re-wrap it in a way that will improve his game day. He *always* texts Ilya before the game. It's a habit, now embedded into his pre-game ritual.

Routine is important. It is crucial for reducing stress, boosting productivity and creating a sense of structure.

Tonight, Ilya does not text him. Shane waits and waits to receive a hotel number, or a taunt, or a picture of Ilya in nothing but his breezers (though the last time Ilya sent a photo like that, Shane played terribly) but he receives nothing.

It's abnormal. In the last five months, they've played seven games against one another. Ilya *always* texts first. Shane sets his phone in his locker and shuts the door. The entire team is gathered around, watching him expectantly for his pre-game speech. He really doesn't have anything to say.

He opens his locker.

JANE (6:53): Good luck out there tonight. You'll need it.

It's read immediately.

He gets no response.

COMMENTATOR ONE: *How about the last two games for the Raiders? They have been nuts! Ilya Rozanov has been cleaning house against the last two teams, scoring a total of 9 goals alone on average. I have never seen a streak of hat tricks like this before.*

COMMENTATOR TWO: *He has been on fire lately, even more than usual! But it doesn't seem sustainable. I think he would benefit from leaning on his team a little. He apparently does not play well with others. He will run himself and his team into the ground, if he isn't careful.*

COMMENTATOR ONE: *Especially against Shane Hollander. Rozanov's going to get a run for his money tonight, folks. Maybe he'll learn to share the puck with the rest of his team.*

Shane skates to meet Ilya at the center line. Ilya skates slowly—stiff and carefully like he hasn't warmed up. Ilya knows better than that though, he always prepares himself for a game.

They stop in front of one another, crouched over their stick while the referee joins them. Shane waits for Ilya to meet his eyes. He never looks up.

Shane knocks their sticks together.

Ilya sets his jaw, glaring at the ice and knocks their sticks together, harder.

“Did I do something wrong?” Shane whispers. It seems to catch Ilya off guard, making his head snap to meet Shane with a bewildered look.

Oh. *His eyes...*

They are glassy and dark, a stormy blue. His vision remains unfocused and hazy even as he tries to get them to steady on Shane. There is faint purple bruising underneath, indicative of little sleep.

He looks terrible.

“Focus on the game, Holladnder.”

Ilya is all sharp teeth and cold evasion most days, but especially today.

Ilya typically basks in the warmth of the camera flashes. He preens in his pre-game interview where he can gloat, and threaten the opposing team until they're too intimidated to play anymore. Ilya is good at mind games.

It's a particular poison that Shane has been spared for the last few months. Ilya isn't cruel to him anymore. He's callous, sure, and naturally aloof but he hasn't been cruel for weeks now.

Ilya skipped his pre-game interview today. Shane can imagine why. His voice is a mess. Garbled with congestion which shifts his consonants from one sound into another and thickens his accent in an endearing way. He sounds like someone is plugging his nose shut. He must feel awful.

Ilya glares at Shane and crouches in a readied position.

He is being cruel now.

The ref squats, holds up two fingers and then slips the whistle into his mouth.

Shane smacks his stick on the floor, shedding his worry for Ilya in favor of the game.

Ilya straightens suddenly, which causes the ref to step back a bit and Shane to straighten too. Ilya twists his upper body, gripping his stick for balance. “*hH'yIZSSSHht!*”

He folds over himself, a fine sheen of spray dusting the ice. Ilya presses the back of his hand to his nose, and curses in Russian, sniffing twice (thick and clogged) and rights himself with a great deal of strength.

COMMENTATOR TWO: *Gesundheit!*

COMMENTATOR ONE: *Looks like Rozanov's intimidation tactic today is...sneezing...at the opposing team?*

COMMENTATOR TWO: *He is not looking good tonight. Think the coach will bench him?*

COMMENTATOR ONE: *Not against Hollander, if they know what's good for them. Definitely not if they want a chance at the Stanley Cup.*

The ref drops the puck and on the ice. The game starts fast and ends just as quickly. Ilya scores the first shot, and it's the last shot the Raiders make all night.

It is a total massacre.

COMMENTATOR ONE: *The Metros absolutely destroyed the Raiders, for everyone watching at home, and honestly I feel bad for the Raiders. That was a swift and brutal defeat.*

COMMENTATOR TWO: *Ilya Rozanov was too preoccupied sneezing to actually play the game. The real fight here is clearly between him and his immune system, man. And the rest of the team seems lost without him. Is that a sign of a good leader or a lazy team?*

COMMENTATOR ONE: *I don't know but Rozanov is definitely going to need some NyQuil and an ice pack for his bruised ego.*

COMMENTATOR TWO: *I second that. Well, that's all from us tonight folks. Get home safely, get your flu shot, and have a good night.*

Shane misses Ilya on his way out of the building, but luckily the rest of the team clears out quickly too.

“We’re headed to the pub down the street,” Hayden shoves his balled-up pair of socks into his locker and slams the door before the landslide of dirty laundry comes falling down. It smells like cheese-whiz and dreams gone to die. Shane tries and fails to hide his grimace. “You should come celebrate our victory, Captain!”

Shane folds his undershirt, and tucks it into his gym bag so he can take it home and wash it. “I’m actually going to turn in early tonight.”

Hayden groans. “C’mon Shane, you never come and get drinks with us.”

“That’s why we keep winning,” Shane says and tucks his sweaty socks into his bag because *he* is not a heathen. “Look, next time, okay?”

“You always say that!”

“Seriously! Seriously, next game—regardless of if we win or lose—I’ll come out and have a drink with you. Okay?”

Hayden holds out a hand and Shane claps him on it, giving it a firm shake. “Next time.”

Once Hayden leaves the locker room, Shane opens his locker and grabs his phone.

Shane dials Lily’s number and holds the phone to his ear while checking over his shoulder to make sure he is truly alone.

It rings once, before it is sent to voicemail.

Shane frowns, and ends the call.

JANE (9:55 pm): Answer the phone.

LILY (9:55 pm): no.

LILY (9:56 pm): do not call me.

Shane rolls his eyes. He presses Lily’s number and tucks the phone to his ear again.

“*You are usually good at following orders,*” Ilya snuffles around an occlusion of muck in his head. His breath crackles, whistling in and out of his swollen sinuses. His head must feel like it’s drowning, because he sounds like he’s congested up to his eyes. He takes a labored breath, noisy and through his mouth.

Shane ignores the way it makes his face heat, both the comment and his voice. It’s huskier than usual, the way Shane imagines his morning voice—not that he’s imagining his morning voice...

“You’re sick,” says Shane, albeit shakily because he isn’t sure about *this*. He isn’t sure about them, or what they are. He doesn’t know if he’s allowed to care or worry because he doesn’t know what to call them. There is no routine or rules. All he knows is he probably shouldn’t

be calling the captain of another team, especially not in the locker room. He shuts his locker and grabs his bag.

“You are obvious. Did you call me to say obvious things, like sky is blue? Or Montreal sucks. Or that you cry when you come?” It sounds like he’s smiling. Shane’s stomach swoops, tripping over itself in a swell of affection. He rubs his hand over his face, feeling disoriented by the flood of conflicting emotions.

“Fuck you,” Shane snaps, habitually.

Ilya chuckles, which quickly breaks into a crackling cough. There is a rustling on the other end and the coughing grows further away like he’s setting the phone down. A paper tears and Shane can make out the faint sound of Ilya blowing his nose.

Ilya snuffles a few times as he puts the phone to his ear again.

“Why are you calling me, Hollander? A practice in humiliation?”

“A humiliation ritual.”

“However you call it. Is that what this is?”

“No! No, I was just...” Shane can’t bring himself to say worried, so he lets the unspoken settle over them like a blanket. He clears his throat and tries again, reverting to their most comfortable dynamic. “Come over. To my high rise. Downtown.”

Ilya is quiet for a second, then hums low in the back of his throat. It rumbles like a purr of a very big, very pleased cat. “I am surprised by this, Hollander. You are never so forward.”

“I am forward—!”

“Eh, you mostly blush and tremble in the corner like school girl.”

Shane’s entire face warms and he is dizzy with charm.

“Fuck off,” he giggles. “I do not tremble.”

His hands shake terribly. To steady them, Shane closes his locker, and slings his gym bag over his shoulder. He checks around the locker room again and everything is still so he figures it is clear to exit the building without interruption. He flips the lights off on his way out, walking briskly to his Jeep.

“You tremble.” Ilya argues, then pulls the phone away to cough. “You want me to fuck you like this? I have tissue shoved up my nose and I feel like my lungs are made of—uh, *блядь*,” Ilya curses. “—garbage, and you want me to come over?”

Shane throws his bag into the back of his car. He grips the door for strength because his legs feel like they might give out from beneath him.

“Just—come over, okay?”

Ilya sighs, which crackles into a cough. “Yeah, okay, Hollander.”

COMMENTATOR ONE: *I think it is officially cold and flu season this week, folks. A nasty cold seems to be making its way through the NHL because Scott Hunter looks like he does not feel well tonight.*

The bedroom is steam-hazy post shower. Shane wipes his hoodie sleeve along the cloudy screen of the television. The camera zooms in on Scott on the bench, flushed and panting. Yikes. He really does look like he feels bad. Shane mentally adds vitamin C tablets to his grocery list.

He turns the volume low, but leaves the Admirals game for light ambiance.

Shane shuffles to the kitchen. The bags of his impromptu grocery haul wait for him on the counter. He begins to unpack, setting a three pack of artificially “blue” flavored Gatorade in his fridge along with a carton of orange juice. It’s not Shane’s favorite flavor but he’s noticed Ilya drinking it on the bench across from him and sometimes it leaves his lips tinted blue during a game.

He pays far too much attention to Ilya and his mouth. Even thinking about it is embarrassing.

COMMENTATOR ONE: *—this guy is good with his stick. This is some of the most fantastic stick work I’ve seen in years.*

Agh.

He fishes a pot from the cabinet above the stove and sets it on the burner. He opens the container of tomato and basil soup and dumps it into the pot. It’s his personal favorite meal when he’s sick, so he hopes it soothes Ilya in a similar way.

A knock at the door draws his attention immediately and makes his heartbeat rocket up anxiously.

He’s actually a little surprised that Ilya shows up after all. He partially expected Ilya to bail, and Shane would have to nurse a cold that he didn’t have with tomato soup and Gatorade that he didn’t buy for himself.

He turns down the stove to simmer and shuffles to the door.

He peeks out of the peephole, just out of curiosity. Ilya’s face is covered by his ducked head and hood, but the tips of his golden curls stick out in a telltale way. He wears a pair of black

joggers with a white stripe down the hip and plasticity slides like he couldn't even be bothered to put a real pair of shoes on.

He's *so* cute...

Shane opens the door and steps aside so Ilya can step in. "Hey..."

Ilya nods at him and treads into the apartment, hugging his arms around himself protectively. His posture is slouched, heavy with congestion and the chill that the cold brings. He seems softer like this, less angry at the world, less larger than life.

Shane shuts the door softly with a decisive click.

Instantly, Ilya grips the bottom of his hoodie and starts to pull it over the top of his head. Shane makes a small, punched out noise as the air rushes out of him.

Ilya stops, frowning. He tilts his head slightly, in a curious but nonjudgmental manner. "An orgasm is good for congestion. You read the same article as me, yeah? That's why you called me here?"

Shane sputters, floundering speechlessly for a few agonizing seconds. He's never heard the claim that an orgasm has any correlation to congestion but it *feels* far fetched. Ilya somehow assuming that Shane's idea of nursing a cold is a blowjob is even more mortifying.

Shane hides behind his hands. "God! Ilya, no. I just...want to take care of you!"

He realizes belatedly that maybe offering to suck his dick might've been less mortifying than that.

Ilya stops, his smile fading gradually. He pulls his hoodie back on and smoothes it down. He suddenly looks uncomfortable and far too large in the room, despite how he's hunched over.

COMMENTATOR TWO: *Tensions are rising on the ice. Penalty in the neutral zone! The refs are taking a moment to debrief.*

"Why?"

"I don't know," says Shane. *Because I care. Because I'm worried about you. Because I think I'm starting to love you. Because it's kind.* "Because you deserve it."

Ilya is quiet for a long time. He regards Shane with this cold analysis, eyebrows puckered like he is waiting for Shane to deliver the punchline to a joke. Like Shane said something unorthodox. Very quickly, his eyes shine and it looks like he might cry but it's gone before Shane can parse the facial expression.

“I really want to kiss you right now.” Ilya finally decides, and he pouts dramatically. “But I do not want you to have this.”

Ilya guides them safely out of the danger zone, back to a neutral territory. Maybe one day they will be candid with one another, but clearly it is not tonight. Shane laughs breathlessly.

COMMENTATOR TWO: *He's coming in hard and fast—from behind in the defense zone—and Hunter shoots...AND HE SCORES!*

Shane feels his breath return as the tension gives way to something lighter. He crosses to Ilya and cups his neck, feeling a penetrating heat radiating from Ilya. Shane hums thoughtfully and pulls Ilya's head to him and presses a kiss to his forehead. Ilya melts like butter in his hands, wrapping his arms around Shane's waist and resting his forehead against his collarbone.

Shane kisses across his hairline to his temple. Ilya flinches with an unhappy noise when Shane kisses his earlobe.

“Ack,” Ilya complains. Shane laughs and kisses below his ear.

Ilya lifts his head from Shane's shoulder, squinting at him oddly. His lips fall open, like he is going to speak but he doesn't. Shane cups his face, but before he can ask if he's alright, Ilya ducks towards his chest, sneezing in the space between them.

“*idjZSSSHht!*”

Ilya pries Shane's hands off of his cheeks and holds them tightly, turning over his shoulder to direct the next sneeze into the air. “*hH'yISSShh-yhh!* Fucking hell.”

It really is a spectacle to watch. Ilya is a carefully crafted character that feels untouchable most days. Shane forgets that he falls victim to illness or fatigue because he is an infallible, paramount of hockey. It's almost nice to see a ruffled version of him. Even during sex, Ilya owns his control. He knows how to caress Shane, how to hold him and push or pull him. He can elicit thoughts and feelings and—fuck, *sounds*—from Shane that he couldn't even get from himself.

But in the privacy of Shane's kitchen, Ilya is coming undone and it is arousing.

“Bless you, bless you,” he laughs.

Ilya, presently riled, takes a huge stuttering gasp as he turns entirely away from Shane. His hands fly up to his face, cupping over his mouth and nose. “*yHhZSCHHT!—Hhh...*”

Shane fumbles the comfort, awkwardly rubbing small circles on Ilya's shoulder. He breathes, “Jesus.”

Ilya wipes his nose on the back of his wrist, catching the lingering dampness on the cuff of his hoodie. He snuffles, rubs at the side of his nose ferociously enough that Shane worries he's going to relocate it, and then snuffles again. Shane bought two boxes of tissues during his store trip, but he's concerned that he should've bought another.

"Let's get you to bed."

Shane gives Ilya an encouraging nudge in the direction of the bedroom. Ilya's lip curls up in distaste, and he grunts. Shane's pace wanes and he lingers in the doorway of his bedroom.

Ilya frowns. "This is boring. You have made me...*iHjz'SCHHh!*...boring. It is contagious, like flu—*DZSSH'yhh!*"

Shane watches in a nauseating mix of affection and horror as Ilya pulls the neck of his hoodie wider and sneezes twice vaguely into the collar, misting his chest generously. It makes him all the more fond of him.

"We can do something fun when you're feeling better." There's a small, traitorous part of Shane that daydreams that one day they will do something fun together without it being in secret. One day they could visit the museum together, or take a jog in the park. One day, it'll be more than a late night rendezvous. One day, it'll be a drink on the rooftop of an exclusive bar and Shane can ask Ilya about Russia. He daydreams of routine with Ilya, about habits and chaos and making it work for them both. He rubs the back of his warm neck. "Do—uh, oh God—do orgasms actually help with congestion?"

Ilya's smile is devilish. He pinches the wetness around his nostrils between his thumb and forefinger. "Let's test it."

"Maybe after you eat," Shane inclines his head towards the bedroom. Ilya follows him, pausing briefly to frown at the Admirals game on the TV. "I picked up some tomato soup. I hope you like it."

Ilya crawls up the bed, stretching himself wide in the center. He turns his head to face Shane. "I get dinner and a blowjob? I will become sick more often, Hollander."

The mattress dips as Shane presses a knee beside Ilya's head. He kisses his cheek through a chuckle, then twists to meet his lips. Ilya kisses him twice before he pulls away, tucking a cough into the elbow of his hoodie.

COMMENTATOR ONE: *That was a solid game out there tonight. Defenses were at an all time high and it had a rocky start but an overall victory in my book. Thank you, and goodnight!*

End Notes

ok now that you've made it to the end lmao feel free to rip this apart in the comments, i haven't read the books and i really wanna but lmao welcome to my kink hell hole and if ur hudson williams literally look away bro like why tf did you read this. i just really dont trust that hes not lurking on ao3. ok byeeee

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