**After Hours (My Moon, My Man)**

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# After Hours (My Moon, My Man)

by Keullala

Summary


Shane Hollander knew three things for certain: He looked great in tailored suits, deadlines were negotiable if you were charming enough and Ilya Rozanov had never looked at him the way Shane wanted. But that was about to change.

or, the office siren Shane x hot boss Ilya fic, in which Shane makes it his mission to get under his hot boss' skin by obnoxiously flirting with him and maybe -just maybe- it's working


Notes

*taps mic* Is this thing on?
Hey everyone!! Welcome!! I hope I can interest some of y'all in office siren Shane Hollander x hot boss Ilya Rozanov because I personally love them dearly!! This is not only my first hollanov fic but also the first fic I've written in SEVEN years, so please bear with me 😭
Also, English isn't my first language and I have no beta, so keep that in mind please when you see any errors...

Based on skumijumi's big brain prompt on X, I just had to make it a reality 🤭

I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

# Chapter 1

Shane Hollander knew three things for certain: He looked great in tailored suits, deadlines were negotiable if you were charming enough and Ilya Rozanov had never looked at him the way Shane wanted.

He had also learned very early on that if people were going to stare at him anyway, he might as well give them something worth looking at. That's why you could currently also find him perfectly perched on Rose Landry's desk, invading her space with the kind of confidence that only a few people allowed themselves.

Rose was his favourite coworker at work, and they met up like this every morning to get their early dose of gossip before starting another busy day at *House of Rozanov*, one of the most popular men's clothing empires of its time.

The morning light was flooding the office at this early hour. Shane's suit jacket was off, already discarded somewhere on his own chair, his sleeves were rolled up, showing off his strong, toned arms and his tie was loosened like it never even stood a chance to begin with.

Hayden Pike, one of Shane's oldest and best friends, joined them, rolling his eyes at Shane's attire and arched-back pose. "You're unbearable before 9 am."

Shane grinned and winked at him. "You say that like it's new."

Rose looked at them over the edge of her coffee cup. "You're flirting in front of me again."

"I'm literally just breathing. Why do people always confuse the two?" Shane countered, throwing his head back dramatically. "Besides, Hayden is like a thousand years old and head over heels in love with his wife."

"I'm 31…," Hayden murmured defensively.

"I said what I said."

Rose snorted softly. "Oh, Shane, by the way! Troy from merchandising asked if you were 'available to help' his team with something again." She playfully wiggled her eyebrows at that, drawing accentuated quotation marks in the air with her fingers.

Hayden groaned. "You weaponize your charisma. It's unethical."

Shane placed a hand over his chest, deeply offended. "I don't weaponize it," he said. "I curate it."

"You flirt your way into other people's departments," Hayden muttered.

"Cross-department collaboration," Shane corrected sweetly. "But in my defence, I never gave that guy any signs or hope whatsoever—"

Suddenly, Rose's gaze flicked past them — toward the elevator whose heavy metal doors were slowly opening. Shane followed it instinctively. And there he was. To Shane's —very pleasant— surprise, it was none other than Ilya Rozanov who walked in.

Ilya Rozanov had been assigned the new CEO of his late father's company after the latter's sudden passing approximately one and a half months ago. The youngest son of the Rozanov family had managed the Russian branch of the firm prior to this but had since relocated to the headquarters in Toronto to take over his father's work. He had also recently stepped up to oversee next year's collection launch that Shane's project team had been working on. And let's just say, Shane could not have been happier about that development.

"Speaking of flirting…" Shane whispered, leaning closer to his friends while his eyes carefully watched the CEO's every move. "One day I'm going to make this fine ass man crack."

"You're going to get yourself fired," Hayden groaned.

Shane's smile just grew wider. "Worth it."

You see, Ilya Rozanov couldn't be more different from Shane Hollander.

Ilya Rozanov never rushed. He moved like time bent around him with his sleek fitted suit and buttoned jacket, while his expression remained unreadable at all times. His presence alone could quiet down a room. Conversations lowered, turning into gushed whispers. People sat up straight in their seats and lowered their eyes. Ilya Rozanov's whole body screamed composure and professionalism. No loosened tie. No wasted motion. His hands were always steady, controlled and purposeful.

*Challenge accepted*, Shane thought.

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Given the way Shane acted so self-assured and nonchalant all the time, people always underestimated him and his passion for the job. But truth was Shane loved his job. And he wasn't just good; he *excelled* at what he was doing. That's where his confidence had always stemmed from.

And yet, this morning he found himself rushing in through the front entrance. A fleeting look at his watch confirmed his dawning suspicion: He was late.

He quickly scanned his company badge and hurried toward the elevator with long strides. The doors were about to close in front of his face, but he quickly extended an arm, slipping in at the very last minute. Relieved, he let out an exhausted breath and pressed the button to the sixth floor, realising too late that he wasn't the only one in the elevator.

Of course, Ilya Rozanov stood alone inside it.

The doors slid shut with a soft, final sound that felt far too loud in the small, enclosed space. For a brief moment, Shane considered pretending he hadn't noticed the other man at all. But that wasn't his style.

Instead, he straightened ever so slightly, smoothed an imaginary crease from his jacket and turned around with an easy smile on the lips.

"Good morning," he said, extending his hand without hesitation. "Shane Hollander, sir. I don't think we've been properly introduced yet."

Ilya's eyes shifted to him. His gaze was measured and cool, taking him in with quiet assessment. After a beat, he accepted the handshake. His grip was firm and precise.

"Ilya Rozanov," he said matter-of-factly. "You are marketing lead. I am aware of who you are."

Shane's smile sharpened at that. "I'd be offended if you weren't."

The elevator finally began its ascent with a low hum. Shane leaned back against the mirrored wall, shoulders relaxed, hands casually slipping into his pockets. Ilya remained exactly where he was, upright and still, hands clasped neatly in front of him, holding onto his leather briefcase.

The contrast amused Shane.

"So," he started lightly, eyes flicking to the immaculate line of Ilya's suit, "do you ever relax, or is that suit holding you hostage?"

Ilya did not look at him. "I relax plenty."

"Huh. Could've fooled me."

A pause. The elevator quietly hummed on.

"You are very interested in my comfort, yes?" Ilya said at last.

"What can I say? I'm a people person," Shane replied.

That earned him a short, calculating glance. It was over in the blink of an eye.

"I notice," Ilya said.

Shane's grin deepened. Ilya Rozanov was maybe not playing his game, but he was also not telling him to stop either.

The floors ticked by far too slow.

"Are you always this serious in the morning," Shane asked, "or am I special?"

“I am serious most of time.”

“Sounds exhausting.”

Ilya turned his head this time, regarding him properly. Up close, Shane could see the faint tension in his jaw, the way his control and distance were less like a choice but more like a state of being.

“Discipline is not exhausting,” he said. “Is… how do you say? Focus.”

“Sure,” Shane agreed easily. “But you ever try breathing?”

Another pause.

“You talk a lot,” Ilya observed.

*And yet*, Shane thought with a smile, *you haven’t told me to stop*.

The elevator dinged, signalling that they had reached their destination. The door slid open on the sixth floor. Shane stepped out first – deliberately close, brushing past Ilya’s shoulder. It was subtle. Entirely deniable, but definitely not accidental.

He didn’t look back as he made his way to the open office space.

Behind him, the doors remained open just a fraction too long.

Ilya stayed inside for half a second after Shane had gone. Long enough to register the lingering warmth, the faint trace of citrusy cologne, his irritation with it all… He finally stepped out of the elevator as well and walked over to his office to go about his day.

———

The glass meeting room overlooked half the city. Now, it gleamed under the soft afternoon daylight streaming through the big floor-to-ceiling windows, the city sprawling beyond like a silent audience. Shane arrived early and took a seat near the middle of the long, polished table. The entire project team was going to be present today –designers, marketing, production, finance– all gathered for the first time under Ilya Rozanov’s leadership since he had stepped into his role as CEO.

Shane scanned the room as more and more people hurried in: Familiar faces all around, waiting to see what the new head of the company would do. There was a subtle tension in the air, a quiet anticipation that had nothing to do with the meeting’s agenda. Everyone here knew Ilya’s reputation: precise, controlled and unyieldingly direct. The latter might have been a side effect of his culture and English being his second language, but some people still took his straight-to-the-point sentences to heart. Now, the question that everyone in this room was asking themselves was how he would handle this situation.

As a matter of fact, Ilya Rozanov's father had rarely ever attended meetings like this, let alone led any of them. He had rather been disinterested in contributing to the creative process as a CEO, letting people do their thing and only stepping in to make final decisions – or to occasionally disregard their hard work and opinions entirely. Thus, no one knew what to expect of his youngest son in this moment.

So, when Ilya Rozanov entered, the entire meeting room went silent as everyone redirected all their attention and eyes to him.

He didn't waste time with pleasantries. He simply took his place at the head of the table, set his folder down and began.

Ilya ran the meeting with effortless precision. Each point he made was formulated in a clear and structured way. He went through the whole process of next year's collection launch, taking into account the timelines, budgets, design philosophy. Everything was presented as though he could see the finished product in his mind already. He spoke without notes, never rushing or sounding condescending toward his employees. And as a result: The whole room was listening in awe.

Shane watched him carefully as he was taking notes, registering the way Ilya commanded attention without raising his voice, how he spoke with authority whilst every hand gesture punctuated his phrases rather than distracting from them. This right here was a man with a vision who loved doing what he was doing. Shane couldn't help but smile slightly. Ilya Rozanov was a damn sight to see when he was passionate and in his element.

This was a new ground for everyone in the room and Shane intended to navigate it. Because this right here was what he was good at.

He started contributing to the discussion that arose after Ilya finished his presentation. Not to show off –well, not entirely at least– but to make sure they got to the best possible plan and result. Besides, it was his mission to always prove to everyone that he was more than just charm and a nice piece of ass; he also had the intelligence, the insights and the confidence to voice them.

He held Ilya's gaze slightly longer than necessary when presenting an idea or highlighting a point he found important to consider. Ilya, on the other hand, never looked away first. He never flinched or reacted either, yet he never missed a word Shane said.

That pause before responding, the slight tightening of his jaw when Shane smirked at a well-placed observation – Shane noticed it all.

At one point, he leaned back in his chair, ankle crossed over knee, eyes fixed on Ilya as he explained projections and numbers. The young CEO rarely looked at him for more than a second at a time but still, Shane was perceptive to every flicker of attention, every pause or subtle nod of acknowledgement.

"New collection should feel timeless," Ilya said at one point. "Is not loud. Not –as you say– running after trends, yes?"

A few people at the table nodded.

“Understated,” Shane offered smoothly, “but confident. Like it knows it’s expensive without needing to say so.”

Ilya turned slightly toward him. It was merely a fraction of a movement, nothing too overt.

“Yes,” he agreed. “Exactly this.”

Shane leaned back, satisfied, the small victory registering quietly in the back of his head.

Later, as the meeting wound down and people began gathering their things to clear the room, Shane handed over a set of annotated documents. He stood just slightly closer than necessary but close enough to feel the tension tighten in the small space. Ilya didn’t move to step back.

“You understand the brand,” he said, tone even.

There was no distinguishable cadence in that sentence but still, pride bloomed in Shane’s chest and he allowed himself a small grin. “I understand the kind of confidence that doesn’t need to announce itself.” And after a pause, he added, “People want to feel powerful without looking like they’re trying.”

“Is… very accurate,” Ilya said.

And Shane recognised it for what it was. *Respect.*

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Ilya noticed everything.

He noticed how Shane never sat properly, always leaning or lazily crossing his legs. He noticed how he stretched across his chair, invaded people’s space. He noticed the way Shane’s voice dropped ever so slightly whenever he addressed Ilya directly in a meeting. It was so subtle that other people might’ve missed it but not Ilya. He noticed how Shane commanded attention without asking for it, as if it were his goddamn birthright.

And it irritated Ilya more than he cared to admit.

He was at his desk in his secluded office at a late hour. The office had gone quiet not too long ago, the only sounds coming in from the city below as quiet background noise. A single lamp cast a pool of light over the sketches and fabric swatches he had been reviewing for the past three hours.

His fingers drummed lightly against the edge of his table as he scrolled through some first design mock-ups. He tried to keep his eyes and mind sharp and yet, with every line he tried to examine, he found his thoughts drifting away to that one black haired marketing manager.

Shane Hollander.

The tilt of his head, his posture, the smirk he gave him in the elevator, the way he leaned back and crossed his legs during the team meeting.

Ilya told himself that all of this meant nothing. He tried to tell himself that Shane was unprofessional and distracting. Inappropriate and way out of line.

Ilya set down his pencil, leaned back in his chair and let his eyes drift to the city lights outside his windows. He replayed the elevator ride again: How Shane had stepped in at the last second, how he had extended his hand to greet him so casually as if he wasn't the CEO.

Rationally, all of this meant nothing.

*Professionally*, all of this was irrelevant.

But still, here he was thinking about it.

*He should not look at me like that*, Ilya thought. *And I should not want him to.*

Ilya closed the folder in front of him and pinched his nose, trying to summon focus. He reminded himself that he was raised to be a man of discipline. He told himself to shut it down. He should *really* shut it down. Or at least pretend Shane didn't exist.

But he couldn't.

Every logical argument he constructed against it failed to dislodge the awareness of Shane in his mind.

You see, Ilya Rozanov had always prided himself on being in control in every situation – be it emotionally, physically, at work… Shane Hollander, however, was like a wild card – impossible to be tamed or controlled in any way or form, especially not by Ilya.

But at the same time, he knew that Shane was smart. Very smart even. Of course, every posture, every glance, everything Shane did was intentional and calculated.

And that also translated to his work. Thinking back to their team meeting, Ilya could immediately recognise talent when it was in front of him. And Shane Hollander might as well have been the best marketing leader this company had ever had. He consistently produced results, he instinctively understood the market in a way that couldn't be taught, and he had the ability to put Ilya's abstract visions into something tangible.

In short, Shane was valuable to *House of Rozanov*.

Yes, he was playful and probably overstepped sometimes. And frankly, Ilya would have corrected or thrown out anyone else by now for the kind of behaviour Shane was allowing himself with him but… From a leadership standpoint, Ilya told himself, Shane's results justified for him to earn maybe a little bit of a latitude compared to others.

And even though he would never admit it to himself, maybe –just maybe– he also liked the way Shane's eyes always found him, even in a room full of people.

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The next few days had flown by in a haze. The energy in the office buzzed like a well-oiled machine – phones ringing, printers whirring, emails pinging in steady rhythms. Teams were throwing themselves into the launch work after the kick-off meeting with the boss, everyone moving with a clear focus and purpose. Shane thrived in that chaos, navigating through it like it was right where he belonged, always in motion.

By the end of the day, Shane found himself in the small copy room, waiting for a set of documents to finish printing. The low grumble of the machine and the dim overhead light created a small pocket of quiet that contrasted starkly with the rest of the office. He leaned casually against the counter, arms crossed, peacefully watching the papers as they printed.

However, that brief moment of peace and quiet was interrupted when the door opened and Ilya Rozanov stepped in.

He was fully absorbed in the stack of papers in his hands, completely unaware that there was already someone in the room as he thoroughly studied them. Shane couldn't help but use this chance to admire the intensity in his concentrated face: The slight furrow of his eyebrows, the subtle bite of his lip. When Ilya finally looked up, a flicker of surprise crossed his features and his mouth opened ever so faintly.

The door clicked close behind him which seemingly ripped him out of his own thoughts and brought him back to reality.

He cleared his throat and nodded toward Shane as a short greeting before situating himself in front of the second printer to start with his paper stack.

For a few seconds they just stood there in comfortable silence, the only noise coming from the two copying machines quietly rumbling on. The room was so small that it forced them into a close proximity, shoulders nearly brushing.

Shane was the first to break the silence.

"Has anyone ever told you that you dress like you *are* the brand?" He let the question hang lightly in the air.

Ilya's gaze met his. "I take this as compliment."

"It was intended as one," Shane said. "It's… quite aspirational, honestly."

Ilya's eyes scanned him shortly, barely noticeable in the dim lighting.

"And you," he said quietly, taking note of the absence of Shane's suit jacket and his rolled-up sleeves. "You dress like… you know what you are doing."

"Always," Shane replied, letting the word linger.

For the first time, Shane saw Ilya's lip twitch. It wasn't quite a smile just yet, but definitely a trace of one.

Shane grinned to himself, aware and pleased that he was actually slowly getting under the other man's skin.

The printer in front of him finished its job with a quiet sound, the machine coming to a halt. Shane picked up the stack with one hand, casually placing it under his arm, and stepped toward the door.

A part of him wanted to act nonchalant and just leave, but curiosity got the better of him. So, as he turned the doorknob to exit the room, he cast one last glance at Ilya. And found the other's eyes already fixed on him. *Got you*. Shane's grin widened ever so slightly as he finally left the copy room behind.

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"No, guys, I swear there was something," Shane exclaimed, leaning back in his chair and gesturing wildly with his fork.

Rose rolled her eyes over the rim of her glass of water. "You're playing with *fire*, Shane. You know he would never be the type to flirt."

"I am well aware," Shane said with a devilish grin, "which is exactly why it's fun!"

Hayden snorted and shook his head in disbelief. "Fun is one word for it. Reckless is another. You do realise that this man is the CEO, right? He doesn't exactly do small talk and smiles, Shane."

Shane shrugged as if that wasn't a concern for him. "Maybe not small talk… But he didn't shut me down, Hayden! Did you see it?"

Rose laughed, tilting her head. "Let me guess… You are talking about the elevator again?"

"Elevator, team meeting, printer room, canteen– Well, no, actually not *here* but–" Shane waved his arms vaguely, letting the suggestion hang in the air. He put another fork with food in his mouth. "The point is," he said mid-bite, "He didn't shut me down."

Hayden just rolled his eyes. "You're impossible."

Shane put down his fork and leaned with his elbows on the table. “I mean, come on. He let me get under his skin, guys. You have to agree that that’s rare. Very, very rare!”

Amused by his antics, Rose shook her head. “You’re enjoying this way too much.”

“I prefer the term ‘strategic enjoyment’, thank you very much,” Shane said. He picked at his salad some more as his mind drifted back to Ilya’s composed face from the day before. The way the corners of his mouth had twitched upward into almost a smile.

“This,” Shane continued, his voice dropping conspiratorially, “is why I never give up. Some people just require… persistence.”

Hayden groaned, but Rose laughed. “You’re ridiculous.”

A satisfied grin snuck on Shane’s face as his eyes gleamed with mischief. “Ridiculous? Okay, maybe. But also, effective. And trust me, my friends… I will stay effective.”

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The weeks that followed grew increasingly demanding for everyone and were anything but calm. As the new collection launch snuck closer and closer, the workload intensified. There were constant revisions, tight agendas, and long days that bled into even longer evenings. The pressure wasn’t chaotic, but it was relentless, leaving very little room to breathe. Every detail was scrutinised; every decision suddenly carried a weight. Slowly but surely, the collection and its accompanying campaign began to come together. Of course, it took a toll on everyone but with a certain sense of cohesion, all the efforts seemed worthwhile.

Today’s meeting was smaller than most. No big team, no casual observers. Just a select group of key investors were seated around a sleek conference table, their attention quietly fixed on the screen at the front of the room. The purpose of this meeting was specific: A preview of the campaign’s final messaging and positioning ahead of the official release.

Shane had earned his place here without question. As marketing lead, he had overseen the entire campaign from its earliest concepts, translating creative direction into strategy, tone and narrative. This meeting wasn’t the place for charm or flirting. Shane knew what was at stake today and how important it was to have these last few investors on board. He just had to hope that they saw their vision and agreed with his team’s execution. For this, Shane had no trouble setting his usual playfulness aside and switch to serious mode.

Ilya stood next to him at the head of the table, remote in hand. His posture was impeccable. They had gone over the presentation briefly beforehand, agreeing on where Ilya should lead as the CEO and where Shane would support with his tailored insights. It had been nothing more than a quick alignment of roles.

Now, Ilya moved through the presentation with measured precision. His voice was calm and even, his English flawless more often than not. Shane stood on the other side of the screen, listening with his hands loosely clasped behind his back.

“This campaign,” Ilya continued, gesturing to the slide behind him, “is all about strength. We are looking at a man who does not need… uh…”

He paused.

It was brief. Barely a fraction of a second. Easy to miss if you weren’t looking for it or if you didn’t know Ilya Rozanov. But Shane felt it immediately. The other man usually never hesitated like this during a speech.

Ilya’s gaze flicked sideways, his wide eyes landing on Shane with a sort of urgency and… trust.

“…to prove himself,” Shane smoothly finished the sentence, understanding that Ilya’s brain had shortly missed the correct word.

“Our customer is the kind of man who already knows who he is.” Shane spoke with a calm and steady voice that didn’t draw unnecessary attention to the moment. It flowed like a mere continuation of the thought, seamless and unassuming.

Ilya raised his chin almost imperceptibly. “Yes. This. Exactly.”

The investors just nodded absentmindedly while continuing to write down their notes. The presentation moved on after, with no one commenting on or even noticing the little assist.

But Ilya did.

After a successful meeting, once the room had cleared and the last polite goodbyes had been exchanged with a firm handshake, Ilya lingered by the table, straightening a couple of papers that didn’t need straightening.

“You helped me,” Ilya said at last.

Shane just shrugged it off. “You had it. I just filled in the blank.”

Ilya looked at him then, something thoughtful settling into his expression that Shane couldn’t quite put his finger on. “Still,” he said quietly. “Thank you.”

Shane’s usual teasing grin softened, losing its edge and revealing an honest and open small smile. “Anytime.”

The word just hung there, heavier than it should have been.

Shane was the first to step back, clearing his throat as if the moment needed permission to end. For once, he didn’t reach for a joke or quip sharp enough to deflect it. Instead, he mumbled something about sending the updated notes to his team and moved toward the door.

Ilya nodded once, a reflex more than a response, and turned back to gather his things from the table. When Shane reached the hallway, Ilya realised his pulse hadn't quite settled yet. It wasn't from irritation or unease, but from something unspoken. Something that Ilya did not want to name just yet.

Shane Hollander had always made Ilya Rozanov feel on edge, a constant push and pull. Today was the first time he had done the opposite entirely. He had kept Ilya steady.

That was new.

And that, more than the successful meeting, stayed with him for the rest of the day.

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The meeting invite went out late in the afternoon a few days later, flagged as *mandatory*. The presence of the entire project team was required so this had to be important. By the time the people had filtered into the main conference room the next morning, the atmosphere already felt a bit different. Everyone looked around, talking to each other with confused or nervous eyes, as if they instinctively knew this wasn't a routine update meeting.

Ilya stood by the head of the table where he usually took his place. His suit jacket was perfectly straight and buttoned while his posture was upright with squared shoulders, his expression neutral.

Shane sat down in his usual seat near the middle and crossed his ankle over his knee, joining the other team members in waiting expectantly for the boss to tell them why they were called here.

"Thank you all for coming short notice," Ilya began after clearing his throat and the room stilled immediately. His accent was faint but slightly more noticeable than usual, which led Shane to believe the other man was nervous about what he was about to announce.

"I will not take much of your time," he said calmly, but still, some people sat up straighter in their seats.

"As you know, we are moving into final stretch before launch." He clicked the remote and a revised timeline appeared on the screen behind him, showing dates that were significantly pushed closer together, which prompted a low murmur to ripple through the room.

"Yesterday, it was confirmed that the final deadline has been moved forward," Ilya said, resting his hands on the table in front of him. You could tell that he also wasn't happy about this. "Our investors want final version of campaign sooner than… expected. Ten days before."

The reaction to that was immediate: Some people inhaled sharply and exchanged shocked looks, some frantically started typing on their laptops to see if such a request was even

realistically possible and to already calculate the damage if not.

“I know,” Ilya said, lifting one hand defeatedly, “Is not… ideal. But is final.” Shane could see from afar just how much pressure was currently pressing down on the young CEO’s shoulders.

“This means longer hours,” Ilya continued. “Maybe some weekends too. I know, is asking for a lot but we do not have time to go back and forth on decisions, there are no extensions.”

His gaze moved over the room as he let his words sink in.

“There is one part of the campaign that still needs more attention now,” he added. The slide behind him changed to one that looked like he had just thrown it together quickly before the meeting – full of headlines, a bunch of text, mood pictures and fragments of ideas. “We must refine overall story. Make everything fit together.”

He paused for another moment, his fingers tightening slightly around the remote in his hand.

“Is extensive task that will require… focus.” That was one way to put it. “And I know workload is big for everyone, so I will be close collaboration partner for this.”

The silence that followed after hung heavy in the air, as people glanced down at their notes or each other, suddenly very occupied with something super important that ‘needed their attention’. Of course, no one rushed to volunteer. Everyone in that meeting room understood how big that task was and how much they already had on their own plates… and now with even less time.

Shane watched Ilya as the seconds stretched. He saw the way his jaw was tightened, and his fingers adjusted their grip on the remote once again, his eyes scanning through the room almost pleadingly. You could tell that he felt bad for having to ask such a big thing from his people.

“I can take that,” Shane spoke up before he could even properly think about it or stop himself, prompting all the heads at the table to turn to him. Even Rose shot him a look from across the table, while Hayden raised his eyebrows.

Shane leaned forward, resting his forearms on the table in front of him. “I’m already familiar with the narrative side of it,” he added, trying to make it sound like it was no big deal. “I can help keeping the story consistent, making sure everything speaks the same language…”

Ilya turned toward him and simply looked at Shane for a second. The latter met his gaze without flinching, trying to communicate with his eyes that he was sure about this, he was confident.

“This would be… big workload,” Ilya repeated carefully. “Would mean working closely together with daily check-ins, late revisions…”

Shane didn’t hesitate. “That’s fine.”

“You are confident you can manage this next to other responsibilities, yes?”

Shane tilted his head, just slightly. “I wouldn’t offer if I wasn’t.”

A few people exchanged impressed looks. Meanwhile, Ilya observed the other man just a second longer before turning back to the table.

“Okay,” he said at last. “Shane Hollander will work on this directly with me then.”

The words were professional and entirely justified and yet, there was an unmistakable shift.

As the meeting continued and the questions began, more often than not, Ilya’s considerations redirected to Shane.

*“Hollander, does this still fit what we discussed?”*

*“Hollander, what do you say, would you adjust this?”*

*“Shane Hollander, you agree?”*

Each time, Shane answered easily without missing a beat. He was still charming in that effortless way of his but never unserious. He stood when he needed to or clarified his points before questions could even arise.

Shane noticed it too: The way Ilya’s attention kept circling back to him, the way decisions seemed to anchor around their exchanges. At one point he even heard someone whisper that Shane had ‘vice president energy’, whatever that meant.

Finally, after a few hours, the meeting wrapped with a sense of urgency hanging in the air. People gathered their things more quickly than usual, murmuring about timelines and schedules. As the room cleared, Shane also closed his laptop and stood up to follow the flow out of the conference room. From the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of Ilya rubbing briefly at his temple before snapping his composure back into place. Shane’s expression softened at that.

He had almost reached the door when-

“Shane,” Ilya called out.

Surprised by just hearing his first name, Shane stopped and turned around. “Yes?”

Ilya looked momentarily taken aback by himself, as if the name had slipped out before he’d had the chance to think better of it, most likely due to tiredness.

“We start today,” he just said, blatantly ignoring the elephant in the room. “I need your first thoughts by afternoon, okay?”

“Already on it,” Shane replied with an easy smile. “I’ll bring something by your office.”

He headed out, laptop and notebook in hand, already thinking through the changes he would suggest. Ilya’s eyes followed him for a moment and sighed, a quiet acknowledgement that today had only just begun… and the evenings ahead would be long.

# Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> Driven by an unforgiving deadline, Ilya and Shane find themselves spending even more days working side by side - days that blur into a string of late evenings, the solemn office left to just the two of them. They make an effective team, their collaboration seamless… perhaps not only in a business context alone.
>
> And in the unspoken pauses between tasks, they begin to learn more about each other, in ways that linger long after the work is done.

Chapter Notes

> Guys, please be advised that this turned HORNY as fuck 🫣 I couldn't help myself and got carried away a little (whoopsie) Please regard the updated tags if smut isn't something you're comfortable with!
>
> For my fellow perverts out here: Enjoy the ride <3 I tried to include some lines from the show as little easter eggs, so keep an eye out 👀
>
> I hope you like it as much as I did writing this 🥹

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By the time evening settled over the office, it already felt like they had lived several workdays in one. The day up until now had been filled with short but efficient exchanges: Quick emails fired back and forth, low-voiced discussions in front of the white board, Ilya sketching out a new structure while Shane adjusted language and tone beside him. At one point, they had stood shoulder to shoulder at the pin board in Ilya's office, rearranging references and visual cues without needing to talk much at all.

The open office looked different after hours. It was mostly dark as majority of the overhead lights had been switched off, the harsh fluorescent lights being replaced by only a few pools of the warm illuminations from some desk lamps. At first, a few computer screens still glowed softly, its reflections stretching along the windows and glass walls like muted stars. But one by one, chairs had been scraped back, desks had been abandoned while voices had faded, and laughter had disappeared down the corridor. Even the quiet rummaging of the cleaning crew was long gone.

Outside, the skyscraper lights glimmered through the glass, painting the carpeted floor in faint amber patches. The city pressed against the windows as if it were begging for Shane to go home already.

He hadn't said anything when the last person had finally packed up and left. No, he had simply stayed. Ilya noticed it subconsciously before his brain officially registered it. He had acknowledged the absence of footsteps, but he could feel the way the room didn't empty completely.

Shane sat at his usual workstation, jacket carelessly slung over the back of his chair, his sleeves rolled all the way up to his forearms, his posture loose but focused. Across the room, Ilya was still inside his glass office, visible through the half-lit panels, seated upright at his desk. He had left the door open, making him feel close enough to be part of the same space, but separate enough to feel somehow distant.

They worked like that for a while, connected by nothing but the quiet of the building and the shared understanding of the work that still needed to be done.

Ilya's footsteps were quiet when he entered with a new stack of papers and swatches in his arm that he had to have gotten from the appliances room. He paused just enough to note Shane's presence without commenting anything aloud, giving only a small nod of his head. Then, they settled back into their strange, quiet parallel. Two separate desks, two separate tasks, the same low gravity pulling them into a shared silence. Occasionally, one of them stood up, crossing the space to pin something on the board or to adjust something.

Another hour ticked by, when Ilya eventually got up and returned a few minutes later with two coffees in his hands from the machine down the hall. Instead of going straight to his office room, he walked to an empty desk a few steps away from Shane's where he simply sat down. He didn't comment on it when he placed one of the two coffee cups in front of Shane and then reopened his laptop to continue his work from there. Shane muttered a soft thank you under his breath.

Whatever distance had existed earlier in the day had now quietly narrowed.

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The nights began to blur together. This week had been absolutely relentless. Stacks of papers with potential, improved storylines and lookbooks littered their desks, while empty coffee cups continued to pile up like they were evidence of their endurance.

Ilya had found his way back again to the desk next to Shane's, seemingly unbothered to leave his personal office behind where he had much more space. So, they worked side by side, their chairs close enough to constantly feel the warmth of the other's presence and close enough so that Ilya could smell the light scent of fresh citrus from Shane's cologne.

Ilya leaned back in his chair, fingers steepled under his chin as he stared at the screen.

“You stay late often,” he said eventually without looking over to Shane, his voice low in the quiet of the room.

Shane didn’t answer right away, glancing at the clock on the wall as if to confirm that it was, in fact, the late evening.

“Only when the work matters,” he replied at last.

“And this does, yes?” Ilya asked, now lifting his eyes toward him.

Shane’s gaze flicked to the other man, then back to his computer. “Yeah. It does.”

Ilya just nodded once and tore his eyes off the man beside him to look at his screen again. A few minutes passed in comfortable silence.

Then, without looking up, Ilya spoke up once more, vaguely gesturing to the folders next to them. “You are very good at this.”

Shane smiled, slower and softer than usual. He liked how it was Ilya who was initiating a conversation for once. “You think?” he asked genuinely, turning around in his chair to face the curly haired man.

Ilya spun around too, and his response came immediately, a little too fast and eager. “Of course.”

Shane leaned back lazily in his chair crossing his arms, a mischievous gleam returning to his eyes as an idea popped up in his mind.

“You know,” he started. His voice was back to his playful tone that he hadn’t used with his boss in a long time, but this time it felt appropriate, more intimate even. “You are *sooo* obsessed with me,” he half-joked.

Ilya froze for a heartbeat and then –to Shane’s surprise– he started laughing. A genuine, heartfelt laugh echoed through the room, so free and unrestricted that it made Shane’s chest tighten. Subconsciously, he made it his mission that from now on, he always wanted to be the reason for the other to laugh like that.

“Obsessed?” Ilya’s lips twitched with amusement. “Hardly.”

Shane’s grin grew bigger, knowing he had earned that reaction. “Sure, sure. Keep telling yourself that, but I can see you blushing from here, Rozanov.”

Ilya’s expression tightened for a second, playfully offended. “No. You are liar. Never in my life have I blushed,” he said deadpan. “Russians do not do this.”

Shane chuckled at his dramatic reaction, leaning forward ever so slightly, allowing Ilya to study his face from closer than he ever could before. For the first time, he saw freckles

dusting Shane's nose and cheeks, standing out clearly in the dim light like stars across the night sky. Something warm and unfamiliar flickered inside him.

*Pretty*, he thought.

The realisation that followed was quiet and unwelcome: He wanted to see those freckles again. Up close like this. And so, for reasons that had nothing to do with work, Ilya found himself hoping Shane would stay late again tomorrow.

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The kitchenette's light flicked on with a soft buzz. It was late enough again that even the building seemed tired today, all grey and quiet. Shane leaned against the counter with his sleeves messily pushed up his arms and his tie so loose he had unbuttoned the first upper two buttons of his light blue dress shirt. He wore a casual smile on his lips as he waited for Ilya to finish up two new cups of coffee for the both of them.

The other man stood opposite of him, hands braced on the counter, waiting patiently for the machine to fill up their mugs. As if hypnotised by the brown liquid slowly dripping down, Ilya absentmindedly reached up to his own tie, loosening it for the first time Shane had ever seen. The gesture was small and casual, nothing out of the ordinary to the untrained eye, but Shane noticed it immediately as a first visual crack in Ilya's armour of controlled professionalism that he liked so much to upkeep at all times… Until now.

Before Shane could comment on it though with his usual playfulness, Ilya spoke up instead. "You did not have to stay late again," he said softly, almost reluctant to break the silence.

"I wanted to," Shane admitted, his voice equally as low. His answer came out too easily, too honestly.

"Why?" Ilya asked after a pause.

Shane tilted his head slightly, studying Ilya's face as if his answer should be obvious by now. Instead, he said: "I like finishing things properly."

The other man watched him for a long moment, his gaze lingering on Shane's mouth, then down to his relaxed shoulders and arms, his hands.

"You are very focused when you care about something, Shane," Ilya said slowly, the other's first name slipping out again like he had gotten used to calling him that.

Shane's breath hitched, just barely. He looked up. "So are you, Ily– Uh… Mr. Rozanov, sir."

"Ilya," the other man corrected him, his eyes honest.

"First name basis, huh?" Shane teased in a light manner but there was no real bite to it.

“I mean, yes. I think so, probably,” Ilya stumbled over his words. “I call you Shane before, so should be equal, yes?”

Something in Shane’s chest jumped but he forced himself to ignore it. “Okay then, Ilya,” he smiled. “It’s just inspiring to see how focused you are when you talk about the brand. It’s like you disappear into it.”

Ilya exhaled as if he had been holding his breath, fingers tightening briefly around his mug. After a moment of hesitation, he said, almost as a whisper: “Is because… My father believed brand should feel… how do you say? Disciplined.”

“And you?” Shane asked softly, almost scared to speak too loudly and scare off the other man that was seemingly opening up to him.

Ilya’s response was immediate, he didn’t even have to think about it.

“I want it to feel alive.”

Shane’s eyes softened at that, a genuine smile playing around his lips. “You are already doing that. With everything. Trust me.”

Ilya just smiled back appreciatively. And somewhere, distantly, in the back of Shane’s mind he thought that he had never looked more beautiful. This version of Ilya standing in front of him now, with all his guards down, wasn’t something he just want to provoke anymore.

He wanted to know him *for real*.

Whatever this was between them, it wasn’t part of their little game anymore. But for the first time, Shane didn’t want it to be.

_____

The bar where Shane, Rose and Hayden met was old in the way only places with history could afford to be. Low ceilings, dark wooden beams and scuffed floors that creaked when you moved. The walls were lined with yellowed photographs and mismatched frames, some of them probably older than Shane himself. It smelled like beer, dust and something faintly sweet. Probably from old traces of spilled whiskey that soaked deep into the wood over decades.

It was *their* bar.

It was the kind of place you ended up in after long weeks and longer nights, and the three friends regularly came here for after work drinks.

Today was Saturday night. It wasn’t too loud or too crowded, but just full enough to feel alive. Shane sat in his usual spot at the corner of the bar, Rose to his left, Hayden across from

him at the small, scratched table that was covered in stickers. Two candles flickered lazily between empty coasters and half-folded napkins.

Shane looked tired in a way that went beyond the lack of sleep. His jacket was draped over the back of the bench, his hair was slightly messy, and dark circles were faintly visible under his eyes, contrasting with his pale skin that had lost a bit of its glow. But he had insisted they still came today, probably needing a change from the grey office walls for once.

As the waiter came to bring their orders, he placed a beer in front of Shane and Rose noticed immediately.

She raised an eyebrow. “Wow. Beer.”

Shane looked down at it, then shrugged. “Don’t make it a thing.”

“But it *is* a thing,” Hayden affirmed, already grinning. “You drink ginger ale like *religiously*, dude.”

“Well, not tonight,” Shane replied, taking a slow sip. “After these past few weeks… I need this.”

That, more than the beer itself, made Rose frown in concern, reaching out her hand to caress Shane’s arm sympathetically with her thumb.

So, they talked about work at first, going over the looming deadlines, last-minute chaos and their collective trauma of the past weeks. For the first time in a long time, Shane felt like he could fully let himself fall and relax for a bit. They talked in a comfortable lull for hours, their low murmurs of conversation and clinking glasses filling their secluded booth.

“Guys, I have to tell you something,” Shane said suddenly, interrupting a passionate discussion Rose and Hayden were having. “I am in serious trouble.”

Both Rose and Hayden fell silent, straightening instantly.

“What kind of trouble?” Rose asked slowly, already suspicious.

Hayden blinked. “This is not about like a legal thing, right? Because I *told* you about copyright–”

“No, no,” Shane interrupted quickly, throwing both hands in the air. “God. No. Nothing like that.”

They waited, looking at him expectantly. Shane stared at the condensation on his bottle for a moment longer than necessary, then looked up.

“This thing with me and… Ilya Rozanov… It’s not just fun anymore,” he admitted quietly. Rose and Hayden exchanged a look but didn’t interrupt.

“I mean… it started that way,” Shane continued, rubbing a hand over the back of his neck. “You know, the banter, the tension, seeing how far I could push him.” A pained, self-aware

smile tugged at his lips. “You know me.”

“Yes, unfortunately,” Hayden muttered, gaining himself a light punch of Rose’s elbow in his ribs.

“But now,” Shane went on, unwavering and more serious, “I think… I actually like him?”

The table went silent.

After a second that felt like ages to Shane, Rose’s expression softened first. “Like him how?”

Shane didn’t dodge the question. “Like actually *like him*,” he said simply, eyes earnest. “As a person. Not as a game or challenge.”

Hayden let out a long and slow breath. “Oh, you’re screwed.”

“I *know*,” Shane whined. “That’s the problem, asshole.”

He took another sip of his beer, then added almost to himself. “I keep wondering what would happen if he stopped holding back. Just once… Because I’m pretty sure he feels it too.”

Rose studied him carefully. “But if that were to happen,” she said slowly, “you’re aware of what that could cost you.”

Shane met her intense gaze without flinching. “Yes.”

“Fuck, man. That’s new,” Hayden said quietly.

Shane just nodded. “Yeah… It is.”

There was a moment of silence and then Rose groaned loudly, dropping her head back against the booth dramatically.

“Oh my god,” she exclaimed. “We told you so!”

“We literally told you,” Hayden added unnecessarily, putting even more salt in the wound.

“Multiple times!” Rose continued, turning back to Shane, who looked at them a bit sheepishly.

The black-haired man laughed despite himself, genuine and a little helpless. “Okay, okay, fine. You win. I’m an idiot.”

“*Our* idiot,” Rose joked, voice dripping in fake sweetness, but her eyes were honest. She reached over and squeezed his wrist briefly. “Hey, just… be careful, okay? This isn’t just some guy from merchandising.”

“I know,” Shane replied softly. “That’s kind of the point.”

Looking at the scene unfolding in front of him, Hayden raised his glass. “To being in way too deep,” he said, hoping it would cheer Shane up.

Shane clinked his bottle against it. “To bad decisions.”

They didn’t stay much longer after that. One more drink, a few more laughs. By the time Shane stepped back out in the cool night air, the city felt quieter than usual. It was like something heavy had been lifted from his chest and he didn’t feel like running from what waited on Monday anymore.

If anything, he was already counting down to it.

_____

Monday came and of course Shane found himself in the office, working late again. The deadline was on Wednesday morning, so these last two days would feel like a last marathon sprint. All the other employees had already left, leaving only him and Ilya in their usual spots. Only a handful of lights were still on in the open-plan space, their glow bleeding faintly through the glass walls.

Right now, Shane stood at Ilya’s side, one hip resting against the edge of the desk, close enough that his thigh brushed the arm of Ilya’s chair whenever he shifted his weight.

He leaned in to point at something on the screen. “Here,” Shane said quietly.

His hand accidentally brushed Ilya’s when he put it back down next to the other man’s mouse. The scent of Shane’s fresh cologne mixed with the smell of coffee and something warm and human. Ilya swallowed, eyes slowly moving away from Shane’s face, tracking the line the other man had indicated on the screen, though his focus had already begun to fracture.

“You are right,” Ilya said, fixing the text that had a minor mistake. When he finished adjusting, he leaned back in his chair, finding that Shane hadn’t moved away.

“Good catch,” Ilya added after a beat. “Thanks.”

They stayed like this for a moment, Shane still hovering, Ilya still seated. Shane’s gaze flicked down to Ilya’s mouth for a millisecond before he could stop himself. They were so close that Ilya became acutely aware of the lack of space between them. Close enough that he could feel Shane’s breath lightly fanning over his face when the latter spoke up again.

“You’re tired,” he murmured.

Ilya glanced up at him. “And you stay long again.”

Their eyes locked. “Then maybe we should call it a day for today, hm?” Shane suggested, not expecting the other to actually listen and follow through with it.

But to his surprise, Ilya just nodded, turned off his computer and started to gather his things to put them in his brown leather briefcase. Shane followed suit, putting on his coat in one swift motion and taking his own bag.

Together, they turned off the last remaining lights and stepped into the elevator. The doors slid shut with a muted sound, enclosing them in a narrow space that felt suddenly too small for breathing properly. Shane leaned back against the wall again, arms loose at his sides, exhaustion finally catching up to him. Ilya stood opposite him in his perfectly fitted suit and immaculate posture, except for the tension hanging thick in the air that he no longer bothered to hide.

The ride down was painfully slow.

“This launch means a lot to you, doesn’t it?” Shane asked into the deafening silence.

“Is first one that is truly mine.”

“It shows,” Shane said honestly.

The elevator hummed as it continued descending slowly. The seconds stretched, the silence dangerous.

“You’re different at night, you know?” Shane said, his voice dropping ever so slightly.

Ilya had a hard time concentrating as he lifted his gaze to meet the other’s eyes. “How?”

Shane didn’t answer right away. Instead, he slowly pushed himself off the wall and took one step closer. His eyes flicked to Ilya’s mouth again like they had at the table earlier, but just like then, it only lasted a second before they returned to Ilya’s eyes.

“Quieter,” Shane said, his voice barely above a whisper. He paused for a while. “Softer,” he added even quieter, as if he was merely breathing out the word.

Ilya inhaled heavily – a sharp, involuntary sound that betrayed him completely. His control wavered for a second as his grip around his briefcase became tighter.

“I trust night more,” he said lowly. “Fewer eyes that watch me.”

Shane’s eyes darkened at that. *You can trust me too*, he thought but didn’t dare to say it out loud. Instead, he took one more step forward.

They stood inches apart, their faces now close enough that Ilya could feel Shane’s breath ghosting over his cheek, over the corner of his mouth. He forced himself to hold eye contact and not look down to Shane’s perfectly curved cupid’s bow because God only knew what he would do if he allowed himself one glimpse. Shane, on the other hand, was blatantly staring at Ilya’s mouth through fluttered eyelashes but forced his eyes back up, as if daring himself to stay right there.

“I like that version of you,” Shane whispered with hooded eyes. His long black eyelashes brushed over his cheeks as he blinked, prompting Ilya’s gaze to drift down to Shane’s

beautiful freckles and– *Fuck*.

Ilya's pulse thudded hard in his ears. He couldn't move back; he couldn't look away. For a moment the world narrowed to heat and short, hot breaths and the unbearable awareness of how badly they wanted this. How badly they wanted *each other*.

They just stood there, almost gasping for air as their eyes fixated one another, their bodies aching, painfully aware of themselves. The air surrounding them felt electric, Shane's skin burning like it was on fire.

Ilya's composure was about to crumble, his control about to break down like a dam shattered by a tsunami wave. He was about to reach out his hand when–

The elevator chimed.

Both of them startled, almost jumping apart and Ilya abruptly retracting his hand. The heavy metal doors slowly opened.

"Well–" Shane breathed out, the sound half a laugh, half a curse as reality snapped right back into place with brutal force. He stepped back suddenly, running a hand through his hair as if embarrassed. "Right…"

They stood there for a second longer than necessary, catching their breath as the tension still buzzed thick in the air, unresolved and unmistakable. Ilya cleared his throat.

"I see you tomorrow, Shane Hollander," he said, his voice barely steady again. He didn't look back as he hurried out of the elevator, leaving Shane stand there with his thoughts running wild and scattered all over the place.

They hadn't touched.

And somehow, that made it worse.

———

The next day the office felt too quiet and still, almost oppressively so, like the air itself had learned how to hold its breath. The atmosphere was weirdly charged and suffocating, the awareness of what almost happened yesterday seemingly present in every room. Late evening light bled through the windows in orange and gold, casting long rectangles on the floor. The low whirring of the lights seemed louder than usual in this silence, as if it was trying to fill the quiet neither Shane nor Ilya dared to break.

Yesterday lingered in the air between them, unresolved. The memory of a few inches separating them, of hot rapid breaths and of hands that nearly crossed the line was still fresh. They both felt it, taut in their muscles, this electricity still buzzing between them. It manifested as a tightness in their chests, a heat under their skins… But the deadline still

loomed over them like a silent third presence, watching and demanding obedience. Today was the last day before the deadline. Tomorrow was Wednesday and that was what mattered right now. Shane and Ilya were the same in that regard: Obsessed enough with their work to set desire aside for just one more night. So, whatever this was, it would have to wait.

Ilya had decided to sit in his own office again today, as if he was physically trying to put distance between Shane and himself in order to block out everything that reminded him of yesterday's elevator ride and to force his thoughts onto what was important.

Shane walked in, moving slower than usual, the final deck tucked under his arm. He was acutely aware of every step he took and every sound he made. He set the deck down on Ilya's desk carefully, aligning it with the edge of the desk, trying to force precision into his movements.

Before he could retract his hands fully, Ilya reached out to the stack. Their fingers brushed accidentally, and it felt like a jolt of lightning zapped up Shane's arm in a way that made his breath catch before he could stop it. Ilya also went still momentarily, shoulders stiff and jaw locking as if the contact had burned him.

Their gazes collided briefly, uncovering the quiet hunger neither of them had allowed themselves to name just yet.

"You are not teasing me tonight," Ilya said frankly, the sentence coming out as more of a statement than a question.

"No," Shane replied simply, without trying to sound too breathless.

Also Ilya tried to contain himself, forcing a totally normal conversation between them. "Why?" he asked, his brows lifted, the smallest crease forming between his eyes.

Shane leaned slightly forward over the desk, resting his palms on it. They weren't close enough to touch again, but close enough that the space between them felt intentional, their faces now at the same height so Ilya could meet his eyes.

"Because I don't want you distracted," he murmured, letting each word drag out. "And because this is important."

His eyes lingered on Ilya. *To you*, he didn't say. *And to me too*.

Ilya swallowed thickly, the muscle in his jaw jumping once before he looked back down at the papers, as if grounding himself in them. A warm pulse puckered at his temple when he looked back up at Shane, his eyes dark with something that was no longer professional. It made Shane giddy and his skin prickle.

He let his eyes wander, not without intent, down Ilya's body, noticing his hands firmly braced around the edge of the desk, knuckles white. He took in the other's long fingers, faint veins standing out as his grip tightened. Shane's thoughts betrayed him, briefly and dangerously, wondering how these hands would feel like if they were buried in his hair or around his neck…

Ilya could feel Shane's eyes heavy on him. He tried to force his own gaze to stay on the pages but without success. When the black-haired man shifted his weight, he instead found himself noticing Shane's flexed arms, the sleeves rolled up to his elbows, making the fabric stretch tightly around solid muscle and highlighting his deliciously tanned skin. It was maddening how effortless it looked. How close to ripping his sleeves were, trying to contain all that bicep.

He dared to let his eyes drift further down to where Shane's dress pants hugged his thighs in all the right ways in all the right places– *Bad idea*. He looked away sharply, trying to regain focus but the image was burned into the back of his mind.

Ilya tried to conjure the conversation they were having. *What was it that Shane had said?*

After a stare-down that went on for way too long, Ilya finally replied. "You are dangerous when you are kind, Shane Hollander."

The other's lips curved into a slow, confident smile. "Good thing you seem to have excellent self-control then," Shane said, voice dropping just enough to carry the weight of intention.

Shane's breath brushed lightly over Ilya's face as he leaned closer to adjust the corner of a page. Ilya's throat went dry, a small, involuntary sound escaping him. He wanted to reach out, to close the space, but something inside him warned him otherwise. *Just one more day*, he told himself.

They stayed that way for a beat longer than they should have, unspoken desire boiling just beneath the surface. Ilya watched Shane's freckles catch the last light, the curve of his mouth, the tension in his stance. Every small movement, every accidental touch was a strike of electricity.

Shane finally pulled back slightly, letting the air settle. Ilya's pulse still raced, and Shane's breathing was erratic.

They had finished all tasks on time, and they would perfectly meet the deadline tomorrow morning.

Both knew, with equally annoyed clarity, that the moment of giving in would have to wait until then. So they held their breath together, knowing full well that this last night of waiting was the only thing standing between them and what they were failing not to want.

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Everything went through in time.

The final approvals landed in the morning, locking in the campaign and sealing the launch. Relief rippled through the team in a way that felt almost unreal after weeks of pressure. People were congratulating each other, shaking hands and patting each other's backs.

Someone from the design team even popped open a bottle of cheap champagne that had been hiding in a drawer since the last quarter. Laughter could be heard, echoing through the rooms where tensions had lived for the past few months.

Shane accepted praise from multiple team members, smiling, nodding and letting it wash over him. But inevitably, his attention kept drifting back to Ilya's glass office.

By late afternoon, people started filtering out early, someone in the crowd joking that they were reclaiming their lives as they were walking out. Person after person grabbed their jacket and pushed their chairs in as the lights dimmed down section by section.

Shane waited patiently, gesturing to his friends that they should already leave without him. Until, eventually, it was just him and Ilya once again.

Shane casually strolled over to the CEO's office with his hands in his pockets; the same way he had done a dozen times before. Except now, every step felt like he was crossing a line that he had been staring at for weeks.

Ilya wasn't behind his desk. He was leaning against the ceiling-to-floor windows, arms comfortably folded in front of himself. For once he had taken off his suit jacket and loosened his tie, a satisfied, almost lazy smile playing around his lips. It was the expression of a man who had won something hard-earned.

"So," Shane said, stalling as he wandered slowly toward Ilya. "Congrats on the successful first launch."

Shane didn't bother to come to a halt at a professional distance, instead, fully invading the other man's space.

He could see Ilya's thoughts running wild in his head but neither of them moved away. Shane didn't reach out his hands, he rather threw Ilya a challenging, devilish look. If this was happening, it had to come from him. Shane spent months getting under the other's skin, he just wanted to see him snap already. Have Ilya be the one to make the first move and finally claim what was obviously his.

Ilya's breathing was erratic when he slowly shook his head, a last poor attempt at self-control. "I am gentleman," he said. "I will not touch you."

It might've sounded convincing if it weren't for the way his chest rose and fell rapidly, or how his jaw flexed like he was biting back something feral. As if to prove his point, he laced his hands behind his back, fingers clenched together like restraints. His knuckles already turned pale with tension.

Shane let out a soft laugh, not impressed in the slightest.

"Oh, come on. Cut it out," he said lightly, stepping even closer if that was even possible. Their breaths tangled. "I know you feel it too. There's no denying it."

He tilted his head, eyes flicking down –not subtly– taking in the rigid line of Ilya's arms shining through his white button-down. Tension was visually trembling through his body, his hands almost shaking from the effort of keeping them to himself. Shane didn't say it out loud, but he could clearly see the barely leashed desire clawing its way up Ilya's spine. He was so close to breaking, maybe one last little push…

"I know you want to do bad things to me, Ilya," Shane whispered, purposefully putting emphasis on the name.

He leaned in closely, lips brushing the shell of Ilya's ear as he continued. "And I'm giving you permission."

The other man exhaled shakily. "Don't try me," he growled, the warning falling short of the want in his eyes.

"Oh," Shane breathed out, an evil grin tugging at the corner of his lips, "but I am."

A curse erupted out of Ilya in Russian.

One second there was space between them, the next Shane was slammed back against the glass window, the raw impact knocking the breath out of his lungs as Ilya crowded into him.

Their mouths crashed together with brutal force, making their teeth clash accidentally. It wasn't gentle or careful at all. The kiss was messy with a sense of urgency, like they had been denied oxygen and had finally found air in each other. It was a wild mix of tongues tangling together and teeth biting whatever skin they could find, lips already starting to bruise while their hands fisted into fabric, holding onto anything they could grab. Ilya kissed Shane like he meant to devour him, hungry after a painfully long period of starvation. Shane met him just as fiercely, mouth hot and demanding, his fingers digging in and dragging him closer as though refusing to yield an inch.

They kissed like it meant survival.

Their hands roamed over each other's bodies restlessly, desperate to learn and to claim. Every sound that escaped past their lips felt forbidden and too loud in the quiet office: Shane's sharp inhale of a breath, the low groan torn from Ilya's chest, the wet, frantic slide of mouths colliding again and again.

When they eventually broke apart, it was only because they had to breathe. They pressed their foreheads together, damp from sweat and shaking, their breaths mingling as they panted into each other's mouths. Shane swallowed hard, pulse racing, laughing out a disbelieving '*Fuck*' under his breath.

But Ilya wasn't done with him, and he wasn't going to ease him into it. After months of constant teasing and banter, of crossing professional boundaries and slowly crippling self-control, he was going to give Shane exactly what he asked for.

With one swift motion he turned them around, pushing Shane back against the desk until the edge dug into the other's thighs, trapping him in place there. One of his hands came up to

Shane's jaw, thumb brushing against the corner of his red, swollen mouth as if testing the shape before taking it.

Their lips collided once more, even rougher than before. It wasn't a kiss to savour but a feverish and uncoordinated attempt to get closer than skin allowed. They pressed against each other, lips slipping and chasing one another like weeks of restraint had burnt something animalistic into them. Shane's hands slid up Ilya's broad back, fingers digging in hard enough to leave marks through the fabric of his shirt.

Ilya moaned into his mouth, the sound coming out low and wrecked, which only made Shane pull him closer. He dragged his palms down his body, nails catching just enough to make Ilya shudder against him. In response, Ilya's hands roamed everywhere on Shane's body at once, greedy and clumsy.

Ilya broke the kiss abruptly, only to drop his mouth down to Shane's neck. It was desperate and messy, his lips tracing along Shane's throat with no patience at all. He pressed open-mouthed kisses into the warm skin, grazing his teeth just enough to make Shane suck in a sharp breath.

"*Oh*–" Shane gasped, head tipping back without permission as Ilya's mouth worked lower and then back up again determinedly. He clawed at the other man's shoulders in despair as if trying to ground himself while his legs turned weak. Ilya's mouth was working on the sensitive skin behind Shane's ear like he needed him to *feel* how badly he had been holding back until now.

Shane's brain was clouded with lust as he dragged Ilya back up to pull him into another heated kiss. His hands tightened in Ilya's shirt, fingers crumpling the fabric as frustration surged inside of him. There were too many layers, too many barriers that kept him from so much skin he couldn't touch yet. His nails scraped down from the collar to Ilya's chest, earning himself another rough sound from the back of Ilya's throat. *Enough*.

With a sudden, impatient motion, Shane grabbed the front of Ilya's neatly buttoned shirt and *yanked*. Buttons scattered, clattering uselessly against the floor as the fabric finally gave way, pulled open in one violent, desperate movement.

"There," Shane breathed out. "Better."

Ilya's chest and stomach were finally exposed, and Shane did not hesitate one second to get his hands all over him. He traced his fingers along the prominent lines of Ilya's hard muscles, scraping his fingertips down his sides to then hold onto the other man's waist.

Now it was Shane who flipped them around, making Ilya half-sit half-lean against the table. He pushed Ilya's legs apart and positioned himself right in between them when he started kissing him again. Ilya's hands naturally found their way down Shane's back until they finally reached his ass, where he gave it a firm squeeze. Shane whined into the kiss and that sound alone made Ilya lose his mind, gripping his cheeks even harder and doing it again. Shane squirmed in his hold, clenching his muscles and grinding his body against Ilya's. He could feel their hard but still fully clothed dicks rub desperately against each other through their dress pants and the sensation drove him fucking nuts.

Ilya must've felt it too because his pupils gleamed almost completely black with lust, something wild flickering in his expression. The next moment he lifted his hand, tracing Shane's puffy lips and pressing down his thumb to make him open them. Shane didn't hesitate and parted his lips obediently. With no pretence left in him, he took Ilya's fingers in, horny and incredibly needy, hollowing his cheeks slightly as he sucked them deep into his mouth. His spit-covered lips moved up and down on them sloppily, his tongue gliding and swirling around Ilya's knuckles messy and wet.

Ilya watched him with an intensity that bordered on reverent, dark eyes tracking every movement of Shane's mouth like he wanted to burn it into his memory.

"Yes," he moaned. "Just like that."

The praise hit Shane harder than any touch could ever have. He looked wrecked already: Lips swollen, pupils blown, posture loose and pliant in a way that made something predatory stir behind Ilya's ribs.

"*Good boy*," Ilya added, almost under his breath. Shane's interest perked at that, looking up at the other man through his thick, black lashes.

It was simply too much. The way Shane looked up at him, freckles on full display on his deep pink flushed cheeks, made something in Ilya's brain snap clean in half.

"Get on your knees," he growled lowly and commanding.

Shane complied immediately. He lowered himself and leaned forward, his mouth trailing slow, hungry kisses down Ilya's chest as if he was worshipping every area of skin he could reach. His lips brushed Ilya's warm body, lingered and then pressed down again, tentatively licking every ripple of Ilya's abs like he was tasting something sacred.

Ilya sucked in a sharp breath, head falling back just slightly as Shane descended. His hands found their way into Shane's hair, grabbing roughly at the man's strands, which earned him a low moan. Shane pressed his face against Ilya's noticeable bulge, breathing hotly against the fabric still separating them and looked up at Ilya with big eyes. The other cursed under his breath, almost ripping open his pants and sliding them down to grant Shane full access.

Shane impatiently wrapped his fingers around the base of Ilya's cock and tentatively liked a long stripe up the underside, making sure to keep eye contact the entire time.

"Oh my god, Shane. Fuck," Ilya cursed out, his toes curling at the warm and wet feeling. "Take me."

Shane licked softly over the slit before taking the whole head in his mouth, lips stretching beautifully around it. He then started slowly gliding down, taking in more and more of the other man's dick. Ilyas mind blanked, involuntarily jerking his hips forward to gain more friction, immediately regretting it as he heard the choked sound coming from Shane below him.

“Fuck- Sorry… I did not mean to–” he blurted out apologetically. Shane removed his mouth with a wet *plop*. He looked wrecked and fucking gorgeous, a string of spit still connecting his lips to Ilya’s cock.

“Fuck my face,” he said breathlessly, voice coming out rough and strained. “Please.”

Ilya’s vision became blurry with the amount of lust crushing down of him. When Shane took him in his mouth again, he started thrusting into it, hitting the back of Shane’s throat repeatedly. Tears formed in the corner of Shane’s eyes, but he eagerly took it with every thrust, holding onto Ilya’s hips to support himself. Ilya chased his orgasm, movements becoming uncontrolled and ragged as he finally came with full force down Shane’s throat. Shane took it heroically and swallowed it all in big gulps.

Ilya’s head fell back, chest rising and falling rapidly as he slowly came down from his high. Shane looked at the sight displayed in front of him, still horny and painfully hard in his pants. He slowly stroked his own cock for some sort of release, but Ilya caught him in the act, holding onto Shane’s arm to stop him.

“No,” he said, voice still shaky. “Let me show you how to do this, kid.”

He then turned to the table and took one big sweep at it, papers and pens clattering loudly to the ground as he cleared the space. He picked Shane up with so much ease, it sent another surge of heat right down to Shane's throbbing dick. Ilya manhandled him, placing him to sit on the table.

He started opening Shane’s shirt buttons one by one, taking his sweet time while Shane whined irritably, his patience hanging by a thread. “So eager and impatient,” Ilya teased but started getting to work.

His tongue slithered down Shane’s chest, grabbing his right nipple into his mouth and sucking on it deliberately, while his hand came up to grab Shane’s left peck and firmly kneaded it. Shane squirmed in his hold, hands finding their way into Ilya’s gold locks, as the other trailed down slowly, leaving kisses down Shane’s torso, whose whines became needier by the second.

He made Shane stand up briefly, admiring his legs and ass in his way too tight dress pants which fit snugly around his meaty thighs. Ilya wanted to rip them off with his teeth, but he went for the more civilised approach of hastily pulling them down in one swift motion, letting Shane’s hard cock finally spring free.

Ilya couldn’t help himself, so he squeezed Shane’s ass cheeks once again, loving the sounds that elicited out of the other man. Ilya also noticed the stretch marks on Shane’s butt, his mind immediately forming a number of ideas. He wanted to trace each and every single one of them with his tongue to worship them, show Shane how incredibly hot he was. Every goddamn part of Shane Hollander was seducingly beautiful. *Another time*, he reminded himself mentally. Right now, it was his goal to free Shane of his very painful suffering.

Ilya spat into his hand and grabbed Shane’s length between his long fingers, giving it a few lazy strokes. He licked off the drop of precum teasingly before taking Shane’s solid cock in

his mouth, not wasting any time anymore. Shane whimpered at the contact, his dick painfully hard and his eyes glazing waiting for release. Ilya's lips were wet with spit, sloppily moving up and down Shane's erection with a steady rhythm. His hands roamed around his body for anything to hold, squeezing the flesh of his thick thighs, then moving up to his ass and digging his fingers in. A loud moan escaped Shane's throat as he let himself lean back onto the desk, elbows and forearms resting on it as his head lolled back.

"Fuck, Ilya," he groaned. "I'm going to–"

Ilya picked up the pace, hollowing his cheeks and sucking Shane's cock with hungry precision. Finally, a loud grunt erupted out of Shane's throat as he finished, his muscles spasming and his eyes rolling back. Ilya's lips continued blowing him through his high until letting him go with a satisfied expression on his face.

Both of them looked absolutely ruined: Their hair messy and all over the place, shirts ripped open, their faces covered in spit, flushed red and panting.

The rush ebbed down slowly, like a tide pulling back after breaking too hard against the shore. Their breathing evened out in ragged bursts, the adrenaline still present and trembling in their bodies. Ilya stood up from his knees and leaned his forehead against Shane's sweaty temple, his hands lingering at his sides possessively and grounding, as if he had to make sure Shane was still there and very much real.

Shane breathed out a disbelieving laugh, the sound almost fragile. He shook his head once, like he was trying to recalibrate his entire understanding of the world. "Fuck… Why was that so hot?"

Ilya huffed out something that might have been a laugh, but his voice still came out strained. "Because you like to be bad," he said, almost fondly. "You are trouble."

Shane turned to face him then, really looked at him intently. He didn't look at Ilya's stern façade; he looked at the man that hid underneath. "Yes," he said, his expression softening in a way that surprised them both. "But that's not what this is… You and me."

Ilya nodded once, like he'd been bracing himself for that answer all along. His voice was steady when he replied, his hand gliding down to interlace his fingers with Shane's. It was like he was consciously choosing gentleness over his usual mask of control.

"Good," he simply said and kissed Shane's lips in a way that felt sweet and chaste, almost delicate.

Shane swallowed in relief. The space between them felt charged still, but it was steadier now – less like a wildfire and more like a warm, glimmering afterburn. He reached up his free hand without thinking, thumb brushing lightly along Ilya's cheek.

"I don't want this to be a mistake," he confessed quietly. Something like fear shortly crossing his face. But Ilya leaned into the touch, eyes closing for half a second like he was allowing himself something rare. When he opened them again, his gaze was determined and unwavering.

“Then it will not be,” he said. “Not for me.”

The words settled between them, heavier than anything that had come before. Outside, the city kept moving, indifferent and unaware of what had shifted in between these four walls. Inside the office, it felt like time had stopped – no deadlines, no titles, they had left everything behind.

Shane rested his forehead against Ilya’s shoulder.

“We will figure it out,” Ilya murmured reassuringly. “Together.”

Shane smiled against the other’s body and nodded. “Yeah,” he said. “I think I’d like that.”

They stayed like this for a moment longer, breath syncing, hands still warm where they touched. They no longer pretended like this between them was solely heat and desire. Instead, something else entirely had started to take root. Something that might eventually even turn into love.

_____

By the time morning came, the office felt different and so did Shane and Ilya. Shane moved with the same confidence he had always had, but there was an ease to him now, a calm he hadn’t carried before. Ilya, jacket off and sleeves rolled slightly, let the world see him without his usual armour of restraint. They exchanged small, knowing smiles throughout the day, threw each other quiet glances across the room, and brushed hands when walking past each other. They stole kisses behind closed doors whenever they could, feeling giddy and warm when they parted. Their relationship was theirs, unspoken but understood, not scandalous, just… right. No one needed to know what they did after hours. Most people might never even notice, and those who did already liked Shane enough to forgive anything that didn’t hurt anyone.

Shane Hollander had always loved testing limits.

Ilya Rozanov had always prided himself on self-control.

Neither of them had expected the other to be the one to teach them how to pause… and when it was time to surrender.

Chapter End Notes

I know I kinda joked about this being super sexy, slutty, horny, but I’m also genuinely so soft for them!! ☹️ If you know me, you know how dear hollanov are to my heart, of

course I had to make them have FEELINGS 😫
No but honestly, I loved writing every single bit of this and I really hope you guys enjoyed reading it just as much. I put my entire soul into this, I quite literally spent hours and days writing this fic, sometimes even during my working hours (no one tell my boss please!!)

This genuinely might be the best thing I have ever written and I am so, so proud of this monstrosity, so please be kind 🥹

Kudos and comments are as always super appreciated; I'd love to hear your thoughts!

And lastly, follow me on X (wooziunivrse) if you want to connect or maybe to see what I'm cooking up next! Love y'all!! 🫶

End Notes

okayyy so this fic was originally supposed to be a one shot but as I'm writing I reached about 11k words already (it's sooo long, I got carried away a little whoops), so I decided to split it into two chapters. I hope you're as excited as me!! Chapter 2 is definitely where the horny kicks in, so stay tuned! 😫 I'm talking forced proximity, yearning, all that good stuff!

Feel free to follow me on X (wooziunivrse) for sneak peeks or if you just want to chat about hollanov or hudcon because I desperately need more heated rivalry moots!

Comments on here are also deeply appreciated, I'd love to read your thoughts <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!