

Outside of Ottawa

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Outside of Ottawa

by [BetterLateThanNever](#)

Summary

A snow storm forces the Cens' team bus to seek shelter on the way back from a game. Luckily for them they are close to the cottage. Unluckily for Shane and Ilya, Shane is also at the cottage.

Set before Shane and Ilya are outed.

Notes

This fic mostly fits with the timeline of the long game except in this world Shane told Montreal about Ilya at the same time he told them about being gay so they got the chance to be shit about even earlier :) any other inconsistencies are because i have read too much fic and it has drowned out my recollection of canon events.

The bus slowed to a crawl, the visibility reduced to almost nothing as snow fell thick and fast across the road. Ilya watched as Coach Wiebe leaned forward and spoke with the driver in hushed tones looking increasingly concerned. Eventually he shook his head and stood up, turning back to face the rest of the bus.

“Listen up, everybody!” Coach Wiebe said, clapping his hands together to draw the attention of the team. “We are still a couple of hours out of Ottawa and this storm got bad a lot faster than we expected. It’s looking like we may have to try to find shelter somewhere in the area.”

A series of groans sounded along the bus. They were on their way back from a pretty brutal road trip and everyone was desperate to get back and see their families. Ilya in particular was itching to get home because Shane and Ilya’s schedules had miraculously lined up and they had a four day stretch of free time which they had planned to spend together. This was almost unheard of during the season, and now Ilya wasn’t even going to be able to get back to the city let alone see Shane. He was particularly broken up because there was a big conversation he had been trying to start for weeks and this weekend was supposed to be his perfect opportunity to start it.

“We’re kind of in the middle of nowhere so we’re unlikely to find a hotel but the assistant coach and I are going to start calling around.” Coach Wiebe continued from the front of the bus. “You guys sit tight while we try to find somewhere to sleep for the night. Maybe call your wives and girlfriends and let them know we won’t be making it home tonight.”

More groans went up around the bus and players started dutifully pulling out their phones. Ilya heard the sound of muttered apologies and assurances throughout the bus as the guys spoke to their wives. He wanted to call Shane desperately, to hear his voice and to give his own apologies, to tell him just how much Ilya wanted to be there with him, but as far as the Team knew Shane was just his friend and partner in the charity. Maybe on another night Ilya could have come up with an excuse to call Shane anyway. Maybe he could have controlled his tone of voice and spoke carefully chosen phrases to make his side of the conversation seem platonic and friendly. But right now with exhaustion and regret eating at him he decided it would be safer to just text.

He pulled out his phone and saw that he had a string of unread messages waiting from Shane, sent a couple of hours before while Ilya had been trying to nap.

Shane: Ilya I am so sorry.

Shane: I know we were meant to spend the weekend together but the storm was much worse than the news said it would be.

Shane: I’m safe. Don’t worry. I was near the cottage when the snow started coming down so I went there.

Shane: But I’m not going to make it to Ottawa tonight. Maybe not for the next few days if the weather keeps up like this.

Shane: I’m so sorry. I wanted to see you so bad. I miss you.

Shane: And don’t even think about driving out here. I don’t want you getting in an accident.

Ilya ran through the gamut of emotions as he scanned the texts. He felt amusement at Shane's constant Canadian apologies for something out of his control. He felt overwhelming relief that Shane was safe, even if he couldn't be with Ilya. He felt seen and loved by Shane's (frankly accurate) assessment that Ilya would probably try to reach him anyway and his warning to stay safe. But most of all he felt sad. Regretful for the lost time. They got so little of it and now Ilya was stuck on a bus in the middle of... actually Ilya had no idea where they were.

He thumbed across to Maps trying to work out where exactly they had stopped. The map snapped to a blank stretch of road which truly did seem to have nothing around it. Ilya pinched to zoom out and as the map started to show more of the surrounding area Ilya's breath caught in his throat. He recognised this stretch of highway, that body of water, and if he followed the road along this way then... right there. A star on the map. A favored place. Ilya's favorite place in the world. The Cottage.

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Ilya felt slightly paralysed. He couldn't believe that out of all the places for the bus to be stopped by the snow they had ended up just a few miles from the Cottage. At any other time this would have been serendipitous. The team would have somewhere to stay, the freezer at the cottage was stocked with plenty of food, and Ilya would get to sleep in his own bed. Ilya would have offered up the Cottage in a heartbeat on any other day.

But Shane was at the Cottage. As was a veritable treasure trove of evidence of their summers there together. There was no way in hell that his teammates would see them together in their home and not put two and two together. Even Dykstra who had had one too many concussions would probably be able to draw the logical conclusion, start to work out where Ilya went when he disappeared after games, who he spoke to in hushed tones in the stairwell before practice.

Ilya shook his head. There was no point in even offering the Cottage as a solution if coach Wiebe had managed to find a hotel. Ilya got up out of his seat and moved towards the front of the bus.

"Have you found place to stay?" Ilya asked, clinging onto the hope that there was a motel he didn't know about that had rooms.

"Nothing." Coach Wiebe sounded harried. "There's nothing in the area except cottages and farms. To be honest we were just starting to discuss the logistics of staying on the bus for the night. It wouldn't be comfortable but we should have enough fuel to keep it heated for the night. The only problem would be getting anywhere tomorrow."

Ilya looked at the Coach's furrowed brow, stress radiating from his expression. "Give me a minute I might know a place a few miles away where we could stay for night. I just need to make phone call first."

Ilya moved to get as much privacy as he could, which was not much considering he was trapped in a tin can with most of his colleagues. He stood in the well where the stairs went down to the bus door. He was just below where the coaches were sitting and definitely within

earshot of the bus driver, but he figured having them overhear something he didn't want them to might be slightly better than having his gossipy teammates overhear.

Ilya was slightly hoping that Shane wouldn't answer but the phone barely rang once before Shane answered with a breathless greeting like he had been waiting for Ilya to call.

"Are you back in Ottawa? Are you safe? I'm not sure I've ever seen the weather turn so quickly." Shane said, rapid fire.

"I am fine. Do not panic, but team bus got stuck in snow. We are too far out to make it back to city." Ilya kept his tone as reassuring and calm as he could.

"Oh my God, Ilya!" So much for reassuring. "Are you OK? Have you found somewhere to stay? Where are you? Do you need me to call my parents?"

"What would Yu-" Ilya cut himself off before he said Yuna's name. The coaches would certainly know if he was talking to Shane if she came up. Her work with the charity meant that most of the Centaurs had at least a passing familiarity with Yuna Hollander. "What would your parents do in this situation exactly?"

He barrelled on before Shane had a chance to give what Ilya was sure would be a very thorough response to Ilya's entirely rhetorical question. "That is actually why I am calling. We are only a few miles from Cottage."

"Can you make it here?" Shane asked immediately.

Ilya closed his eyes. Of course Shane wanted him there and safe. Of course Shane wouldn't hesitate before asking him to come to The Cottage. He just had to make sure that Shane understood the full implications.

"I am on team bus. Whole team needs somewhere to stay." Ilya finally risked a glance up at where Coach Wiebe was sitting. The man was staring at him with naked interest, not even trying to pretend he wasn't listening in. "They would see..." Ilya trailed off, unsure how to finish that sentence.

"They would see us." Shane whispered on the other end of the line. Ilya thought that he could hear a faint tremor in the breath Shane released.

"We have enough fuel to stay on bus overnight. Call for rescue in the morning. If you are not ready-"

"Ilya, no." Shane cut him off, sounding wounded. "Do you really think I would leave your team stranded in the snow just because I was..." Shane didn't seem to know how to finish the sentence.

Ilya paused before he answered. He didn't want to hurt Shane's feelings but honestly? Yes. He did sort of wonder whether Shane's fear of being outed would override everything else. Sometimes it seemed like the thing that dictated every move that they made.

“No, of course not. I just want you to have choice.” Ilya knew he was being unfair. The choices they made were for their future. They were ones he had agreed to making.

“You trust them, right? The team?” Shane asked quietly.

“They are good men. They will be respectful.” Ilya wholeheartedly believed this to be true but just in case. “And if anyone decides not to be, I will make their life hell.”

Shane huffed a quiet laugh. Ilya could tell he wasn’t entirely comfortable but “Bring them here. I want you here. With me.”

A grin broke out across Ilya’s face. His Shane was so beautiful and caring. Even when he was scared. Especially when he was scared.

“Ok, моя любовь. We are only a few miles away. Provided we aren’t completely snowed in, we should be there soon” Ilya was suddenly filled with excitement. He would finally get to introduce his team to his love. He couldn’t wait to see the shocked looks on their faces...

“And Ilya. Make sure you talk to the team before you get there. I know you. You’ll want to go for maximum shock value. Please give them some forewarning about what they are walking into.”

Ilya pouted even though Shane couldn’t see him. “I will speak to them.”

“I love you and I will see you soon.” Shane sounded like he was smiling.

“I love you.” Ilya hung up the call. When he raised his eyes they immediately met those of Coach Wiebe.

“Well?” Wiebe asked. “Do we have a place to stay tonight?”

“Yes.” Ilya leaned over to the driver and showed him the location of the cottage on his phone. “Can you drive us here?”

“It’s not too far. If we take it slow we should be alright. Visibility is shit but the roads are still passable.” The driver punched the address into the bus’ GPS and started to crawl slowly toward the cottage.

“Can I ask where we’re going?” Coach Wiebe’s eyes glittered mischievously. Ilya didn’t bother to answer him and instead stood up at the front of the bus and cupped his hands around his mouth.

“Important announcement! Everybody listen to your captain!” Ilya shouted. The team’s heads immediately snapped towards him, a hush falling over the bus.

“I have place for us to stay tonight. It is warm, comfortable, and there is food.” A cheer rippled around the bus and Ilya held up his hand, silencing his teammates.

“I have a series of announcements. You will let me get through them. You will not make any comments. All questions will be saved until we have reached destination. Understood?”

There was a general murmur of agreement and Ilya could see naked curiosity on the faces of his teammates.

“First announcement: I am bisexual.” He heard a few shocked inhales from the bus but no one spoke. Ilya was honestly pretty proud of his team for following their captain’s orders.

“Second, I have partner. He is male. We are in long term committed relationship.” That one seemed to garner slightly less shock. Ilya supposed some of them had already guessed about him having a partner and the bit about him being bisexual probably filled in the blank on his partner’s gender.

“Third, my partner and I have cottage a few miles from here. This is where we will be staying and this is why I tell you first and second thing. My partner is also currently at cottage. He is kind enough to allow you into our home so you will be polite and courteous. Otherwise you sleep on bus.”

Ilya looked around the bus to see if there was any disagreement, a sea of slightly slack jawed faces staring back at him. “Good. I will not answer any questions until my partner is there to speak for himself. We will be there in...” He leaned back to look at the driver’s GPS. “10 minutes.”

With that he walked back to his seat further down the bus and sat down, leaning back and closing his eyes. He was hoping his speech would be enough to deter anyone from trying to engage with him but the second he sat down he felt Troy’s eyes trying to bore a hole through the side of his head from across the aisle.

“What, Barret?” Ilya sighed, tiredly.

“Is it...” Troy trailed off. Harris was sitting next to him, his hand still gripped around Troy’s on the arm rest where he had clearly grabbed it in shock during the announcement. “Is it who I think it is?”

Ilya sighed again. “That sounds like a question, Barrett. And how the fuck am I supposed to know what goes on inside your brain?”

Harris started furiously whispering into his ear, too low for Ilya to hear but he would bet the Stanley Cup that he was asking Troy what he thought he knew. Ilya shot Troy a warning glare across the aisle and Troy slumped back into his seat, mouth clamped shut.

“No more talking until we get there.”

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Ilya wasn’t prepared for the surge of pride he felt as they pulled up to The Cottage and the excited whispers turned into awed murmurs as they took in the grandeur of The Cottage. It was Shane’s vision after all, and had been built before Ilya had ever come here but it still felt like it was theirs.

The team started to dismount the bus, grabbing their bags from the compartment underneath. Ilya waited until they were all ready and then led them towards the house. “Take shoes off and leave by door. Do not make mess. Do not touch anything in house which is not yours.”

“Jesus, Roz.” A voice piped up from the back of the group. “Your boy’s got you on a short leash.” The guys had all been to Ilya’s house in Ottawa before so they knew that these rules weren’t for his benefit.

Ilya whipped around to face his team. “Yes. He does. And you will follow his rules too if you don’t want to sleep on the bus.” Ilya turned back and pushed his way through the door.

Shane was not anywhere in sight when they came through the threshold. It was quite late so Ilya wondered if he hadn’t already gone to bed. Maybe they could defer any conversation until the morning. “моя любовь, we are here!” Ilya called into the silence. The guys were still kicking off their shoes in the entryway.

“I’ll be out in a minute. Please can you offer everyone drinks.” Shane called from the bedroom. Ilya made eye contact with Troy who had a thousand yard stare. A quick glance told him that nobody else seemed to have recognised Shane’s voice but Troy already suspected and so was primed to recognise Shane’s slight monotone.

Ilya showed the team through to the living room and fired up the fancy coffee machine that Yuna and David bought for them.

The team crammed themselves into the living room as best they could and remained eerily quiet. Ilya wondered which of them was going to be brave enough to break the silence. As it turned out, Zane Boodram reaffirmed his place as the team's co-captain by taking the lead and being the first to speak.

“Roz, I just want you to know that this team supports you. We are behind you 100%.” There were general noises of agreement from the rest of the guys but none of them had quite found their voices yet. Troy had his head in his hands clearly grappling with his new understanding of the universe and Harris sat pressed up against him with his hands hovering over Troy’s back, clearly concerned.

Ilya was just beginning to hand out coffees when Shane finally emerged from the bedroom. His hair was wet from a shower. He was dressed in Ilya’s soft, grey joggers which hung loose around his hips and a tight black tank top which had ridden up slightly on his hips leaving a tantalising strip of his abs visible.

Even after all these years, Ilya was still in awe that Shane is his. And that he got to share that with his team. He placed down the drinks in his hand and walked forward wrapping his arms around Shane who immediately reciprocated the embrace. Ilya tilted his head down to give Shane a soft peck on the lips and once again Shane met him halfway. He was about to see if he could press his luck and coax Shane into deepening the kiss when he heard a voice behind him reminding him that they are not alone.

“Holy fuck! Is that Shane Hollander?”

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After that it was pandemonium for a few minutes. The team were all shouting over each other, clamoring to greet Shane, or to ask questions or just yelling general exclamations of surprise.

Shane watched them flushed and overwhelmed by the wall of sound and then suddenly turned back to Ilya with narrowed eyes.

“Ilya,” He started, with a dangerous edge to his voice. “I thought I told you to tell them about me before they came here. So they wouldn’t be surprised.”

The room grew quiet, seemingly as caught up in the subtle anger in Shane’s voice as Ilya was.

“I did tell them, моя любовь. I tell them I am bi and have partner and that they would meet partner at the cottage. I did not want to speak for you or reveal anything that you did not want to.” Ilya knew he sounded desperate (and maybe a little bit whiny although he wouldn’t admit it).

“That’s not why you did it and you know it.” Shane said through gritted teeth. “You wanted to shock them, or you would have at least given them a hint that I was also a hockey player.”

“Forgive me, Shane.” He sounded pathetic, even to his own ears. There was a quiet snort from one of the rookies and Shane’s glance snapped over to the crowd of spectators. While Shane’s attention was off of him Ilya took a second to enjoy how erotic it was watching the fear in his team’s eyes as Shane cowed the entire room with a single look.

“I’m sorry that Ilya sprung this on you. I appreciate that you might have some questions so please feel free to ask.” Shane said, softening his wrathful glare into something that Ilya guessed was supposed to look approachable but instead just looked mildly annoyed.

“One question each.” Ilya cut in. “Otherwise we will be here all night and I want to go cuddle my boyfriend.” Shane stepped deliberately on his foot. “Ouch. Ref!” Ilya joked.

“How long have you been together?” Harris asked the obvious first question. One that should have had a straightforward answer.

“Officially or unofficially?”

“Um.. I guess officially.”

“Since 2017. I saw gay dinosaur walk the earth and thought anything is possible so I finally let Shane make an honest man of me.” There were a few bemused looks at that statement but Ilya saw the corner of Shane’s lips twitch into a smile so he felt like he had done his job.

“Really? That long? Wait, if that’s officially then what about unofficially?”

“You have asked one question, Harris. Next.” Harris pouted and dug a sharp elbow into Troy’s thing.

“Fuck! Uh... how long have you been together unofficially I guess?” Harris nodded at Troy approvingly and Troy flushed all the way to the tips of his ears.

Shane took this one. He didn’t need Ilya sprinkling in any additional details. “Since the summer before rookie season. We were non-monogamous. Obviously.”

Troy looked like he had a follow up to that, but one look at Ilya and he sensibly held his tongue. Ilya could see a lot of people processing and starting to mentally recontextualise their careers. It was one thing to know that Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander, who were friends and who ran a charity together, were dating. It was a completely different thing to come to terms with the fact that Ilya Rozanov, NHL stars and career rivals, had always been together in some form.

“Where is the bathroom?” Asked Luca.

“Down the hall and that counts as your one question rookie.” The team booed as Luca made his way to the bathroom.

“I want to know why Hollander couldn’t cut us a break. He’s a fucking demon every time we play. You couldn’t ease up on your boyfriend's team one time?” Wyatt shouted from the back. It was meant to be a lighthearted joke to ease some of the tension but he was shocked when tears welled up in Hollander’s eyes, suspended on the edge of his lashes.

“Fuck I’m sorry. I know that shit isn’t personal. I was just joking. You’re only doing your job and shit. You’re just like, scarily good at your job. And you make mine very, very hard. In a good way! I like a challenge.” Wyatt backpedalled frantically trying to smooth over whatever upset he had caused.

Shane turned away from the group into Ilya’s arms and pressed his face into his chest. Young and Holmberg who were sitting either side of Wyatt on the floor both subtly leaned away from him as Ilya looked up from Shane, as if worried they would get caught in the blast radius of their Captain's wrath for upsetting his boyfriend. Luca who had just come back from the bathroom stood stock still in the corner as if Ilya’s vision was based on movement.

Instead of looking angry though, Ilya also looked slightly misty eyed. “You have not said anything wrong, Hazy.” Ilya said, pausing to press his lips to Shane’s head. “Shane recently came out to his team. Was meant to be first step in coming out all the way and we were going to tell you guys shortly after but his team did not... take it well.”

“What does that mean exactly?” Bood asked, flintily.

“They suggested that maybe he might have... thrown game. Maybe he played less hard against me than he should have and this is why Ottawa win against Montreal.”

“What the fuck?”

“Is insane obviously,” Ilya continued. Shane is most competitive person I know. Except for maybe his mother. And he would never deliberately play bad hockey. But this is why your

comment... how to put this? Touched a nerve, Hazy. Is nice that you recognise that Shane is incredible threat and goalies' second worst nightmare. After me of course."

Shane laughed where he was still pressed up against Ilya's chest and finally turned to face the room again. Ilya kept his arm draped loosely across Shane's shoulders.

"I am all goalies' worst nightmare thank you very much." It came out a little watery, but the team tactfully chose to ignore that.

"I can't actually believe they would say that." LaPointe said.

"Yeah what the fuck. Have they been in the same NHL we have for the past decade? Because I distinctly remember you winning two Stanley cups while Ilya was playing for Boston. And let's not even mention how frequently you pretty much singlehandedly humiliated Ottawa."

"Yeah, I mean, if kicking our asses wasn't bad enough, you also took half of our fanbase with you to Montreal because they actually got to see a "hometown hero" win for once. I've seen more Shane Hollander jerseys at our games than I've seen our names combined."

"If that was you "letting Ilya win" I'd sure hate to see what you trying looks like".

"I think I'd quit the NHL. God forbid you two ever actually get on the same team. Unless that team is Ottawa. In which case tell Lord Stanley I'm coming for his ass."

"If we do get Hollander can we get rid of Holmberg?"

"Hey what the hell man I'm just trying to be supportive."

The team dissolved into bickering behind them as Ilya pulled Shane back into his side and gazed down at him. "You see, my love. They are not so bad, my team."

"No. They're pretty great actually."

"Let's go grab them some blankets and pillows and then go to bed. I have missed you."

"Good idea. I'm exhausted."

"Not too tired, I hope." Ilya waggled his eyebrows at Shane. As they walked down the corridor to the linen closet. The sound of the team arguing fading behind them.

"I suppose I could be persuaded to stay up for a bit longer. If I get the right offer."

"I know just what you need. Speaking of getting the right offer, I had something I was going to discuss with you this weekend. I thought maybe I had lost my chance but now after you have met team it maybe seems like this was fate."

"What did you want to talk about?"

"How would you feel about making my team our team?"

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