Promise

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/79985826.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV), Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Hurt/Comfort, Minor Injuries, Hockey Injuries, Medical Inaccuracies, Shane Hollander Whump, Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Protective Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, Episode 5 Accident, Blood and Injury, Soft Ilya Rozanov, Ilya Rozanov is Whipped, Hurt Shane Hollander, Developing Relationship, Ilya Rozanov Has Feelings, these boys love each other so much, Episode: s01e05 I'll Believe in Anything (Heated Rivalry), Soft Hockey Boys, Hockey Fights, Ilya Rozanov is Trying His Best, Ilya Rozanov is going through it, Angst and Hurt/Comfort, Shane Hollander's yearning bottom eyes live in my head rent free, Social Media, Fluff and Humor, POV Outsider
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-02-21 Completed: 2026-03-09 Words: 10,655 Chapters: 2/2

Promise

by LunarMoonstone

Summary

Slowly, the realization of what he is asking him to do sets in.

“Shane,” he croaks, his voice breaking. I can’t hurt you.

“Please,”

Always so pretty when he begs. Even like this, all messed up and bloody. Ilya loves him more than life.

“I don’t want anyone but you touching me."

That finally did it.

During the Boston vs. Montreal game, Marleau doesn't knock Shane out completely but still injures him. While a fight breaks out, Shane begs Ilya to help him, right there on the ice in front of the whole arena. Unfortunately, Ilya could never say no to him.

[SECOND CHAPTER WITH REACTIONS NOW ADDED]

Notes

i thought this was hopelessly romantic while writing it but i was just listening to a banging playlist w a bunch of laufey in it which put me in a /mood/ so idk if it'll read like that without the music but yeah, enjoy...and maybe put on a sweet playlist idk

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

From the moment Shane couldn't contain his private smile during the face-off, Ilya had felt like he was soaring rather than skating across the ice.

Shane Hollander liked him. *Maybe a little too much*.

Those were the words the man of Ilya's dreams had spoken after weeks of convincing himself Shane could never want him. Not like that anyway.

And yet there he had been, soothing and beautiful and finally back where he belonged, in Ilya's arms, comforting him like he hadn't been since he was a child.

Reign yourself in, he tries to tell himself. Surely the broadcast cameras will pick up him grinning like an idiot eventually. Maybe he'd have to check Hollan- *Shane* into the boards again to make his glee believable. He certainly wouldn't mind being pressed up against him.

However, Shane was on fire tonight, making Ilya chase him around with an equally face-splitting, idiotic smile. He was the most beautiful person Ilya had ever seen.

He stole the puck from him, and Ilya should probably be concerned about how happy it made him that it made Shane happy. The back of his mind kept telling him he ought to try and win for his team and not just because he wanted to keep playing cat and mouse with Shane forever. If it were up to Ilya, the other players, the audience, or the coaches - all of them might as well not even have been there.

The only thing that mattered to his selfish little heart was the man he could finally admit to himself he was in love with.

The realization had been scary. Terrifying.

But what chance did Ilya have when Shane had firmly planted himself on his lap and kissed him so tenderly?

Truly, by the time Ilya had come down from crying and Shane had lain in his arms, face tucked into the crook of his neck and breathing him in deeply, whispering, "I *missed you. So much,*" straight to Ilya's heart, he knew he was a lost cause.

He wouldn't tell him. He couldn't. Russia was still there. Even if his father wasn't.

But after experiencing what it was like to be nothing to Shane Hollander, he preferred the… *something* that they were. In a way, it was as comforting and exciting as it always had been. Something private and intimate. Secret. Just between them.

The one light in Ilya's life he could always come back to when he was cast into the deepest shadows.

The light of his life was currently shining brighter than he ever had as the little shit turned around to brightly smile at him after successfully stealing the puck. He truly hoped the broadcast didn't pick up his besotted smile. It would be hard to explain why he was so delighted at just having the puck dropped from him, but he was simply too ecstatic about getting to play like this again. Just him and his Shane. Practically the only players on the ice, according to Ilya's mind.

Until it wasn't just them anymore.

It happened so fast. Too fast. One moment, Shane was sending a beautiful smile over his shoulder, taunting and mesmerizing Ilya in equal measures. The next, someone wearing the same jersey as Ilya slammed into him. There was a flash of something dark, a sickening crunch that Ilya would follow in his nightmares, and finally Shane falling to his knees with a groan.

The game stopped. So did time. And Ilya's heartbeat.

He could feel his blood rushing in his veins and he felt like he was ducked underwater. From the corner of his eyes, he saw something blue crash into something white, hearing Marleau's name being growled like a war cry and at least getting somewhat of an answer to the question ringing around in his skull, shouting over and over again, "*What just happened?*"

As if pulled by magnets, he was at once only a short distance away from Shane, who was on all fours on the ice, a position Ilya usually associated with happier memories.

He realized he had never broken his skate, just slowed down and let himself be pulled towards Shane like he was the gravitational center of his being. It might as well be that way.

Ilya's hearing finally filtered back in. Yet all the yelling and scuffling on the ice, the spurring on from the audience, and the shouting of the refs trying to pull the players apart came secondary to the groaning noises of pain that came from his heart currently splayed out on the ice.

"*Hollander*," Ilya croaked when he was finally close enough to him. Shane's groan became longer, and Ilya realized he was holding himself up on one arm, elbow to the ice, while the other was clutching onto his face, his helmet and glove lying abandoned a few inches from his head.

Ilya craned his neck, desperately calling out for him again, his hand uselessly reaching out but hovering midair. Horrified, he finally noticed the pool of blood right underneath Hollander's face, and the panic grew within him.

"*Shane*," he breathed, frozen where he was half cowering over him.

Shane groaned again, much longer and even more pained this time, using the hand he had been clutching his face with to form a fist and hit the ice once, twice, before slowly lifting

himself up.

Ilya could only stand there uselessly, mouth hanging open as he watched Shane lift himself up with a moan of pain, his head thrown into his neck. He blindly reached out for Ilya with his blood-streaked hand and grasped onto the other's leg, slowly sliding his knees toward him, finally facing Ilya.

The sight that greeted him was…wrong.

That's all he could think. *It was wrong*.

Hollander's beautiful, beautiful face was covered in blood from his crooked nose, his cheeks coated with tears that eventually led to white streaks over the blood on the lower half of his face.

He was breathing heavily, blinking at Ilya as his mouth opened, showing his bloodstained teeth.

Oh, sweetheart.

Ilya couldn't tell if he had said it out loud or not. There might be consequences if he did; there were always cameras, and lip-reading what hockey players chirped on the ice was some fans' favorite pastime, yet Ilya couldn't bring himself to care.

He had sunk to his knees before he even realized he had done it, thinking absentmindedly that his gravitational center must have really become Shane in that moment.

Shane's eyes had followed him on the way down, and he let out a ragged breath. Ilya watched in terror as the corners of his mouth lifted at the gesture in a smile, his perfect, pearly teeth getting stained with even more blood.

"*Shane, Shane, moya lyubov', you…*" Ilya stuttered, failing to suppress his rising panic.

Shane groaned, closing his eyes and tilting his head.

"I'm fine, I'm fine," he quickly reassured Ilya, though it seemed to cost him a great effort to do so.

Finally snapping back to himself, Ilya turned his head around to shout for the medic. However, when he looked out at the ice, he found practically every player of Montreal and Boston kicking each other's asses, the refs shouting tirelessly to tear them apart, and even the coaches on the ice.

If he had witnessed this at home on broadcast during any other game against Montreal in the previous years, he would have scoffed at his TV and muttered something sarcastic under his breath like, "*Of course, only the prince of hockey, Shane Hollander, getting hurt would inspire such outrage.*" Maybe he would have texted Hollander, telling him next time they see each other he'll kiss it better, and then, to mask any concern he might have conveyed with that message, doubled down with something like "*too bad you won't be able to suck my cock.*"

Now, however, he and Shane were *something,* and Ilya felt as scared as he was when 12 years old, and he knew something was wrong with Mama, but he didn't know how to help her.

"You're useless," the voice of his brother rings through his head, and he bites down so hard on his jaw he feels his teeth clench as he yells for the medics again in outrage.

"*Ilya.*"

The panic doesn't evaporate, but it subsides as Ilya whips his head around to look back at Shane, who has just called him by his name on the ice. His heart began thumping hard for a different reason as his eyes met Shane's, which were still brimming with tears but also had something else in them. Something Ilya had been privileged enough to see so many times; that intoxicating mix of vulnerability, trust, and what he could only describe as devotion, even if his brain could never perceive such feelings in Hollander's eyes being directed towards him.

"*Shane*," he breathes, reaching out for him. It's awkward to find a grip on his jersey with his gloved hand, and he looks down in surprise to find that Shane had already had his hand twisted in Ilya's jersey this entire time.

He lightly turns his head with a groan, wincing at the action, and Ilya's hand reaches from fumbling with Shane's jersey to close around his wrist.

"Looks like the medic can't get through," Shane says, his voice sounding nasally and off.

Shane turns his head back to Ilya, and he tries to smile again.

"Fuck. This really fucking hurts," he laughs pitifully, groaning afterward as more blood rushes out his nose. His hand leaves Ilya's shirt and comes up to his face again. Ilya uses the grip he has on Shane's wrist to stop him, his heart breaking at the action.

"No, no. Be careful," he urges. His voice sounds…*frail,* and he is holding himself rigid, terrified any wrong move might cause Shane even more agony.

God, Shane was in pain and bleeding in front of him.

Was this punishment for Ilya allowing himself even a glimpse of happiness? Had he dragged Shane, his sweet Shane, down into what was the downward spiral of his life and-

"Ilya, I-"

Later, Ilya told his treacherous thoughts. In the back of his mind, he chastised himself not for thinking badly of himself, but for what Shane would think of him for doing so.

"*I'm not sure I am…worth this, Hollander,"* Ilya had whispered to him when they lay together in that hotel room, his face tucked into Shane's hair and breathing him in. The admission had been hard, but he felt he owed it to Shane to be honest. After all, his sweetheart had been so brave and so understanding before.

And now he was pissed.

At Ilya's words, he had leaned back from him, Ilya missing him instantly and afraid his words would send the other away after all. Shane wasn't having it.

"I don't know who told you this, Rozanov, but it's bullshit. I wouldn't be here if I didn't want to," he had spat with utter conviction, his arms around Ilya, grasping him tighter.

Ilya had sighed, closing his eyes so he didn't have to face Hollander's utter sincerity, his conviction that Ilya was worthy of anything, let alone of him.

"*Hey*," Shane had then said gently, cupping Ilya's cheek so tenderly. The Russian was helpless to open his eyes and look into those of his love. Shane sighed and reached up to place a tender kiss on his lips. And then another. And another. Until Ilya felt like crying again.

"*I thought it was a burden for a long time. That I could never stop thinking about you. But it's not. It's just what I want. I can't help it,"* Shane finally breathed against his lips, swallowing Ilya's sob tenderly as they pulled themselves even closer to each other, getting lost in their arms.

"*Shane*," Ilya breathed again, back in the moment.

Shane closed his eyes again, groaning once before leaning forward slightly, Ilya alert and reaching his arms out to catch him if he had to. But Shane held himself up, steadying himself against Ilya with both hands pressed to his chest before looking up again, his glassy, pleading eyes and the proximity knocking the breath out of Ilya.

Distantly, he was aware that an entire stadium might be watching them. The chaos around them was still going on, but for all he knew, he and Shane were being projected on the Jumbotron to the entire arena. Known rivals, Hollander and Rozanov, cling to each other while Rozanov looks at his rival as if he wishes he could physically take the pain from him.

"*Ilya, I need you.*"

It didn't matter. None of it did in that moment. His career, his brother, his country, his teammates.

No, what mattered was Shane needing him.

Ilya was nodding frantically, feeling the wetness around the corners of his eyes threatening to spill.

"*Anything*," he whispered helplessly.

Shane sighed in relief, and with great effort, he moved his hands from Ilya's chest to his shoulder, lifting himself up. Ilya's hands came up underneath his to hold him in place, his brows furrowing.

"My nose…it needs to…" Shane mutters helplessly, a single tear escaping from his eyes. If it weren't for his gloved hands or that he felt the need to hold Shane up, Ilya would have reached out to brush it gently away with his thumb.

Slowly, the realization of what Shane is asking him to do sets in, and Ilya feels the panic inside of him surge up again.

"*Shane*," he says, his voice breaking.

I can't hurt you.

"Please," Shane begs him. Always so pretty when he begs, even like this, nose all messed up and bloody. God, Ilya loves him more than life.

"You know how," Shane breathes, not a question but a statement. A plea.

Ilya does know how to set a broken nose. He's Russian. Soon after their mother died, Alexi had started getting into fights, coming up at the crack of dawn and roughly shaking Ilya from his sleep. Ilya, 12 years old, soft and in mourning, had been scared shitless. Alexi had quickly yelled that out of him. Instructing Ilya to stop acting like a pussy and set his nose for him before their father found them.

Later on, they were fellow hockey teammates. He even had to do it to himself once after someone punched him for sleeping with his girlfriend, like he was supposed to know she had been taken with the way she had come onto Ilya.

"Shane, I can'-"

"Please, Ilya." Shane begs him.

Ilya swallows bitterly, feeling like acid is going down his throat.

Now would be a horrible time for Shane to figure out that Ilya cannot refuse him, never could. Hollander had just always been too shy and too into his head to realize and demand anything from Ilya. The universe and its timing really liked to fuck with Ilya, he thought bitterly.

"I don't want anyone but you touching me, Ilya," Shane murmured, his hands around Ilya's shoulders, holding onto him tighter.

That did it.

Ilya closed his eyes briefly, inhaling deeply to brace himself before nodding.

"Alright, sweetheart," he says under his breath, only for Shane to hear, who whimpers at the term of endearment, his grip around Ilya's shoulder becoming almost painful.

Ilya squares himself up, letting go of Shane's arms to take his gloves off.

"ROZANOV, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?" he hears one of the refs shouting over the chaos, but he doesn't pay them any mind.

He is focused on Shane, using his free hand to cradle his jaw, his fingers tangling into his sweaty hair, his thumb digging into the place behind Shane's earlobe, one of Ilya's favorite

places to kiss him.

Shane's shoulders sag slightly at the contact, and his eyes look dangerously close to fluttering shut like they do every time Ilya holds him like this before pulling him in for a kiss

The noise around them grows louder and Ilya is partially snapped out of whatever daze they're finding themselves in.

"You're sure about this, *Hollander*?" he asks meaningfully as his other hand comes up to now fully cradle Shane's face in his hands.

Shane just stares directly ahead into his eyes. Ilya almost huffs a laugh. His sweetheart, so stubborn.

He nods ever so slightly, and Ilya thinks distantly that he must really be in a lot of pain for him not to care about anything going on around them. People will have questions, they both know, but for once, they don't let it matter.

Ilya realizes in that moment how little it had always mattered. He's just not sure if he's ready to accept it quite yet.

Clenching his jaw, Ilya inhales again, his eyes darting over Shane's injury, cataloging where he needs to touch him to set it right, before his eyes find Shane's again. He raises his eyebrows, and Shae understands the question in his eyes.

Are you ready?

Shane nods, and Ilya carefully moves his right hand from Shane's jaw to hover over his nose. Shane keeps looking at Ilya, so open and trusting, his hands digging into Ilya's shoulders so hard that it would be a surprise if there weren't any nail marks, despite his shoulder pads.

"OY, WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YO-" someone in the background shouts, just as Ilya grabs onto the broken bone and skillfully pushes it back.

The sickening crunching sound from earlier echoes around in Ilya's skull again, only overshadowed by the yell of pain Shane lets out at the action.

"WHAT THE FUCK ROZA-"

"DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH HIM."

Ilya notes the voices of Marleau and who he assumes is Pike, Shane's annoying best friend, whom Ilya always secretly hated just for being able to spend time with him which Ilya was never granted. Perhaps he should be grateful Shane has such a loyal friend looking out for him on the ice, but in that moment, Pike's yell of indignation might as well be background noise, Ilya's entire being is attuned to the writhing hockey player with beautiful freckles in front of him.

Shane had thrown himself to the side once his nose was pushed back in, his hands sliding from Ilya's shoulder down his chest again, grabbing onto his jersey firmly.

Ilya thought he was speaking, or maybe shushing him gently, a string of "*I know, I know*" in either Russian or English escaping him. He really couldn't tell.

A loud, buzzing sound filled the arena, and for the first time, Ilya looked away, only to realize how startlingly alone he and Shane now were on the ice. The refs had apparently managed to break the fight up, and most players were heading back to their benches. His eyes found Pike, who was struggling against a ref and three of his teammates, yelling something in that thick Canadian accent while waving at Ilya, glaring at the Russian over the ref's shoulder.

"*Fuck*," Shane groaned underneath him, and Ilya's attention immediately snapped towards him.

He heard multiple gasps and confused murmuring from the audience, and he didn't need to lift his head to know that if they hadn't been the center of attention before, they certainly were now.

Still, Ilya couldn't help himself.

"Are you okay?" he croaks desperately, burying his hand into Shane's hair in an action all too familiar for two players who supposedly hate each other. In the back of his mind he can hear Shane's "*Ugh, gross*" at having Ilya's hand, sticky with his own blood, in his hair, or maybe Shane actually said it out loud.

Shane's hand slides up from his shoulder over his neck and jaw before resting against Ilya's cheek. Then, so uncharacteristically, it shocks a laugh out of Ilya, he lightly slaps his cheek twice in confirmation.

Finally, he lifts himself up again, his hand falling from Ilya's cheek to his shoulder, the other still twisted in his jersey. Ilya's right hand had never left the underside of Shane's jaw, while his left hand reaches out to hold onto Shane's arm, stopping him from swaying forward.

Shane was a mess. His hair was damp and matted, sticking up in all directions. He looked like he had been attacked by a gang in a dark alley instead of just getting a hockey stick to his face, and yet his eyes were brimming with unbridled love, so earnest Ilya felt pushed back from the sheer intensity of his gaze.

"Thank you, that's better," Shane breathes, the corners of his mouth lifting up.

Ilya can't help but laugh incredulously, the adrenaline of what was probably just a few minutes but felt like a lifetime to Ilya crashing down on him and leaving him lightheaded. Shane didn't do any better, Ilya's amusement causing him to laugh as well, slightly swaying forward into the others' space before wincing.

"Ouch, it still hurts," he whines, laughing miserably afterwards.

Ilya gently pats at his hair affectionately, hoping that the broadcast doesn't catch it. Even if he did, Ilya's not sure he'd truly care. Just a few weeks ago, he had kissed Shane on the cheeks during the All Stars and gotten away with it, he tells himself.

Plus, no one would be immune to the prince of hockey looking at them like that, he thinks.

“Rozanov!” someone barks, breaking the moment.

Ilya blinks up at the ref, who had skated up to them. He recalls that he once accidentally elbowed that guy in the chin when he broke Ilya up from a fight. Serves him right, he now thinks darkly.

“Ugh,” Shane mutters, losing his battle against gravity and falling forward until his forehead rests against Ilya’s chest. The audience certainly has mixed reactions to what Ilya chooses to ignore, though his anxiety keeps rising at suddenly feeling so exposed.

“What?” he asks the ref, feigning nonchalance.

The ref's face twists from anger to confusion as he looks at Shane slumped against Ilya, his mouth closing and opening once.

Ilya cockily raises an eyebrow, and it spurs him on again.

“What the hell are you doing?” He hisses before calling out “MEDIC!” over his shoulder.

“What, you wanted me to let him bleed out on ice?” Ilya asks. Against him, Shane laughs, followed by a wince, Ilya having to tug at his hair once as a silent command to *shut up*.

Luckily, the ref had not yet quite grasped that Shane had simply broken his nose and was in no danger of bleeding out. So instead of protesting more against Ilya, he quickly skated forward to wave the medics over. Once the refs' back was turned to them, Ilya released a puff of relief.

He was still wound up tight, feeling not only the audience and the opposing bench staring holes into him, as well as the confused stares from his teammates and coaches on his back.

“We have to move, Hollander,” he decided in that moment, though everything in him told him to just stay put and keep holding onto Shane, protecting him.

We have to play it off.

Ilya doesn’t know if Shane understood his hidden meaning or if he is simply used to following Ilya’s every command, the thought sending butterflies through the Russian player's stomach as the hockey player underneath him just grunts as confirmation.

“*Come on, baby*,” he whispers down at Shane, the pet name slipping involuntarily. God, he hopes his mouth guard obscures the freaky lip reader's sight.

And if Shane heard it…well, Ilya can only hope they’ll pump him up with drugs any minute now and he’ll forget about it. They’re not quite there *yet*, he thinks.

As usual, Shane lets himself be manhandled beautifully, allowing Ilya to pull his arm over his shoulder and listen to his instructions to slowly lift himself up from his knees. They must be facing the camera head-on now, Ilya thinks, as a collective gasp goes throughout the stadium.

Ilya glances at Shane from the corner of his eye and finds him with his head thrown into his neck again, eyes barely open. He might look attractive, rough, so unlike the typical prince charming image Shane usually carried on the ice, he thinks, if he wasn't still so fucking terrified at seeing him like this.

Ilya ignores these thoughts and the audience as he focuses on heaving them both up, one arm on Shane's over his shoulder and the other around his broad waist, Shane following like a ragdoll.

"God, this sucks," Shane groans next to him, and Ilya sympathetically rubs his hand over his ribs.

He only has to skate forward a little bit, not struggling, even though Shane is a complete deadweight. The medics quickly meet them, and the refs thankfully shuts up at Hollander's frightening appearance.

Suddenly, Ilya is overcome with an incredible sense of dread. They're going to take Shane from him, and he will be left behind. He won't get any updates and can't follow him to the ambulance like he so desperately wants to. Will he be able to visit him? Would it be strange, too much, and too obvious after the show they had just delivered out there? Will Shane, always so terrified at even the prospect of someone catching even the slightest hint of them, be furious with him once the pain wears off? Will he take back everything he said in that hotel room? All those wonderful things that left Ilya's beaten heart soaring? Will he-

"We got him, Rozanov."

The medic snaps him out of it. From his tone and furrowed brows, it's not the first time he's said it to Ilya.

"Tell him I'm fine. It's alright," he hears Shane grumble next to him, and the knot in his chest loosens at least a little bit.

The medics take him from Ilya, one on either side of him, and they manage to catch each other's eyes for a moment.

Ilya once again feels the air get knocked out of him. He imagines this exact moment plastered across sports magazines across America tomorrow. Hell, Shane Hollander getting hurt will probably make the evening news in Canada.

Shane looks in pain, less so from the physical injury but more so from what Ilya is also feeling at the moment. The crushing urge to reach out, soothe, hug, and kiss it all better. To be together. Like a metaphysical bond between them, being tugged from either end.

But Ilya is not the one who was hurt, so he has to be the strong one.

"Get well soon, Hollander," he says, his voice as flat as he can manage.

Shane closes his eyes, wincing in pain as he just nods at Ilya's statement. Ilya doesn't linger, turning around at the same time as the medics pull Shane forward. He idly skates across the

ice, ignoring Hayden Pike looking at his bloody uniform like he wants to throw up. Ignoring the curious eyes of thousands in the stands as he skates back over to the large puddle of blood across the ice, his stomach lurches.

He halts right next to the puddle, clenching his jaw to ignore it as he bends down to pick up his gloves. He stops briefly and sighs in resignation before picking Shane's glove up as well.

Then, without a glance back, he skates forward towards his own players' box, stepping inside it while lifting his helmet.

He ignores his teammates and coaches staring at him as if he had grown a second head as he throws the bloody gloves into his helmet.

"Gonna change," he says lazily, not meeting anyone's eyes.

No one stops him as he makes his way down the players' tunnel, the announcer's voice picking back up again in the distance.

When he makes it to the blissfully empty locker room, he barely manages to get to the sinks of the adjoining shower room in time before violently throwing up, the helmet with his and Shane's gloves clattering to the ground.

They had just finished- well, Ilya supposed he couldn't just say *"fucking"* anymore. Now, they had just finished *making love*. Somehow, it was way less boring than he had always thought.

They were in love. Officially. Openly. Perhaps still confined to the walls of the cottage and Shane's parents' house, but in love nonetheless.

Ilya wasn't sure a person was supposed to feel this much in such a short time. Months of agony over thinking he lost the love of his life, then the pain of losing his father, and really the rest of his family, no matter how shitty they had been. Followed by the crushing anxiety of seeing Shane hurt. He had wanted to run. Break it all off. He had exposed himself in the most public way possible and risked everything.

But not really. His everything was lying right next to him, naked and content and more relaxed than Ilya had ever had the blessing of seeing him.

And really, with how earnestly Shane had asked him in the hospital to come here, how could he refuse? He had tried, he really did, even if all he could see when he closed his eyes was those lovely freckles standing out over a hue of blue and red, still as lovely as the first time he saw them.

Ilya had barely pulled out when he began grazing them reverently with the tips of his fingers. His entire front was flush with Shane's back as they lay on their sides, the latter humming in content, his own fingers carding through Ilya's locks.

Eventually, Ilya rests his chin on Shane's shoulder. As he thought of him, ever so lovely in the hospital, he was transported back to that awful moment on the ice months ago, and he exhaled a breath through his nose heavily.

He looked at the side profile that had driven him mad when he first spotted it. The sharp jaw, the freckled cheek, and the air of elegance that emitted from him, like a true prince. And his straight, perfect nose.

Throughout the years, whenever they had sex, Ilya would let his eyes drink their fill of Shane's glorious profile, taking advantage of the moment when the other was coming down from the high *Ilya* had brought him to. With his lips parted and chest heaving, Ilya rarely managed to contain himself from stealing an obscene kiss from him in those moments, and Shane would always, with promise, relax into it with a pleased sigh that Ilya felt vibrate through his body right down to his toes.

"*So beautiful*," he murmurs in Russian, using the hand he had been tracing his freckles with to run his finger down the slope of Shane's perfect nose.

Shane allowed it for a while, coming back to himself and fully content at soaking up any touch Ilya offered him. As if Ilya could ever keep his hands off him.

After a while of Ilya repeating the motion and remaining uncharacteristically quiet, Shane's lovely brows furrowed and he turned slightly, Ilya mourning the loss of his side profile only shortly, as the only thing more perfect than a partial view of Shane was the full picture.

"It's not different, is it?" he asks.

Ilya blinks at him in confusion, retreating his hand from Shane's face and resting it over his ribs, using his thumb to gently rub along the skin.

"What is, sweetheart?" he sighs.

Shane continues to frown at him before turning around so their fronts are pressed up together, the sheets around their hips getting tangled.

"My nose. From, you know, the accident," Shane says carefully. Ilya does his best not to wince, but his face does *something* as Shane looks at him in concern, reaching his hand out to rub over Ilya's bicep.

Ilya just shakes his head, leaning forward to press his lips underneath Shane's eye to those maddening freckles, their noses brushing lightly at the contact.

"My mom said you can tell after someone breaks their nose. I was always terrified of it happening," Shane huffs, giggling sweetly as Ilya continues to press soft kisses to his face.

"Hm, no more brand deals," he murmurs against Shane's lips, pecking them once before moving on to his jaw.

"Shut up," Shane laughs.

Ilya leans back with a contented sigh, letting his eyes drink in the sight in front of him, a small smile of his own tugging on his lip.

“Is still perfect,” he promises him.

Shane blushes, which makes Ilya feel irritably fond. He had been inside of him just moments ago, yet he still blushed at a simple compliment from Ilya.

“I love you. I can’t believe I get to say it,” Shane breathes, the astonishment clear in his voice. He sounded almost reverent, and Ilya felt as emotional as when they had been making love all over again. Was this what he was going to have to look forward to dating Shane Hollander? Constantly feeling flayed open and handled with the utmost care?

“I will be with you forever,” Ilya promises him, meaning every word.

Shane’s breath hitches, and Ilya momentarily panics. In a way, that sentiment felt even more vulnerable than when he had admitted he loved him under tears.

“If you want me to," he quickly adds.

Please let me.

Tears form in Shane’s eyes as he nods feverishly, pulling Ilya as close to him as possible.

“Forever,” he whispers. Ilya smiles.

Forever then.

Chapter End Notes

literally finished my mockumentary series just last night and then wrote this story this morning on my way to work even though I absolutely suck at writing anything angsty or hurt/comfort lmao...the hollanov brainrot has truly taken over my mind and i hope anyone can enjoy this

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

i listened to the comments and added a reaction chapter, hope u enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Twitter

5,23k new tweets in #3 Ilya Rozanov

@**puckbunny4:** well...that just happened

@Hollanovwarrior#1: 👀

@hockeyhusbands4eva: chat…we're so close

@IR8124SH: shhh…if youre really quiet, you can hear the furious typing of a 13 year old girl abt to write the greatest ff of her life in her second language abt this exact moment set in an office au or smth

@Hollanovwarrior#1 reply to **@IR8124SH**: LMAO send me the link once its up

@NHL_Official: Great display of honorable conduct on the ice from Ilya Rozanov tonight! ...We never thought we'd type that out!

@**stickupuraz:** LMAO This is frying meee

@bilbobagthesehoez: it would actually be so legendary for Roz and Hollander to come out and say SIKE they've been besties all along like can u imagine

@stanleytripledcups: rozanov literally skated past his teammate that was laid out flat on to score last season but dropped everything to help hollander…and if i call him the princess diana of canada then what? not even roz stands a chance we're all cooked against those freckles

@vancouvercansuckmytoes: and in other news, the nhl and hockey fans alike are… midly confused at rozanov being a kinda soft good guy, apparently??

@holzyrozy_2017: hoping Hollander is ok!!! sending prayers 🙏

@**ROZ81:** im so confused. i literally burnt a fucking hollander jersey infornt of the stadium before that game only for rozanov to ??hug the guy???

> **@shanehollanderglazeddonut:** its called good sportsmanships u loser
>
> **@wasiansunite reply to @shanehollanderglazeddonut:** oh honey its def smth but not sportsmanship
>
> **@blueberrysmoothierealness reply to @wasiansunite:** historians will call then “great sportsmen”

Hayden

It wasn’t until the phone call with Jackie that he started to wonder.

“*Since when have Shane and Rozanov been so chummy?*” she had casually asked, Hayden almost not registering the question as he was still coming down from his - god bless Jackie - nearly 45-minute rant about the game.

He frowned as he processed her question and asked what she meant by that.

“*Well, while you were fighting like a lunatic, he…helped him. Quite, I don’t know, gently as well*,” she explained.

Hayden had immediately snorted. That asshole didn’t belong with the words “help” or “gentle” in the same sentence.

“*Maybe you should see the footage, a lot of people are talking about it*.” Jackie continued.

Hayden grumbled in return, letting himself fall back onto the stiff hotel mattress. He looked over to the other side of the room, Shane’s bed unmade since he had spent the night *at Lily’s,* yet he still felt awfully empty at the sight.

“I don’t want to see the footage of my best friend bleeding,” he muttered into the speaker, closing his eyes and forcing his head away from the direction of Shane’s bed.

God, there had been so much blood. Hayden had seen his fair share of broken noses throughout his life, but like everything, Shane had to take the win in the contest of goriest accidents as well.

He clenched his hand, wishing he had hit Marleu even harder, even though his knuckles were still throbbing with pain and the bandage constricted around him painfully.

“*I get that, honey, but I still think you should see it. I can send you a clipped version, they’re all over the internet. Rozanov did a nice thing for Shane and maybe…”*

Hayden mentally groaned. That was Jackie’s tone when she was *hinting* at something. And by "hinting," it meant something she wanted to get done and was of course right about it, as always.

“Maybe *what*?” he asked, trying to keep the irritation out of his voice. He really didn’t want to talk about any more fucking raiders tonight, especially since he had spent the last hour cursing them out over the phone to her.

“*Well, maybe he’d want to visit him in the hospital. I think you should tell him Shane’s room number. I doubt anyone will tell him since they’re such ‘supposed’ big rivals and all,*”

Indignation stirred up in Hayden's gut at the thought of letting Rozanov, of all people, into Shane’s room. It felt like leading the wolf directly into the sheep’s den.

Trying to hide how he absolutely did *not* want to follow that suggestion, he tried to divert her direction elsewhere, asking why she’d say the word ‘*supposed*’ like that.

“*Well, if you watch the thing, it certainly doesn’t look like they hate each other. They’re even laughing at the end, and Shane seems really comfortable with touching him. I’ve never seen him rest his head against any of you guys,*” she elaborates.

Hayden huffs but finds he can’t disagree with her statement. Once he had been back in the box, he himself had been surprised to see Shane kneeling on the ground with Rozanov holding himself up, the two of them talking, and Shane fucking *chuckling* at him with those blood-stained teeth like he was straight out of a fucking horror show.

“The pain was making him delusional,” Hayden offers, receiving a stretched-out silence on the other line that made it known that Jackie was *unimpressed.*

“*If you don’t want to listen to me, that’s fine,”* she finally said conversationally, and Hayden sighed, knowing it was *not* fine.

“Look, they’ve played each other for a long time and are both at the top of their game. Of course there’s…respect, there. Sportsmanship. Plus, you know Shane, no one could *truly* hate that guy,” he begins to ramble.

“But Rozanov is still a fucking asshole! One good deed doesn’t make him a nice guy and certainly doesn’t diminish Shane hating *his* guts,” he concludes.

“*But does he?*” Jackie asks, and Hayden has to pull away from the receiver to look at the phone in question before putting it back.

What was Jackie on about? Everyone knew in the world of hockey, of which she was the self-proclaimed queen because she was the *coolest fucking woman* alive, that Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov were the pinnacles of rivalry.

Boston was a shit city, Canada ruled, the sky was blue, and Shane and Rozanov hated each other.

Well, like Hayden said, no one could truly *hate* Shane, and after what he had seen on the ice he also didn’t believe Rozanov fully loathed him. But Shane still did! Hayden let her know as much, reciting how his captain called the other an asshole all the time.

“I never heard him say that. He only ever agrees with you when you bash him. I think he even called him the best player out there when he watched Boston take the Cup now that I think about him. That’s high praise from the statistically actual best player."

Hayden opened his mouth to protest the statement, but his breath caught, and his brain kind of did a scratch record, going over the past 7 years of mentioning Rozanov to Shane and his reaction to it.

…

Holy shit. Jackie’s right.

…As always.

And so, after defiantly admitting to his wife that she might have a point, he finally hung up and braced himself before calling management and asking for Rozanov's contact information. He knew that even without Jackie’s interference, Shane certainly would have wanted to check up on an opposing player if he had been hospitalized by one of them “*because that was the polite thing to do."* At least, that was what he was trying to tell himself to justify his actions.

Hayden Pike

Hello Rozanov, this is Nr. 45 from the Metros, Pike.

I thought you might want to visit Shane as a captain's honor kind of thing or whatever.

He’s in St. Martin, 3rd Floor, R312.

Hayden looked at the typed-out message and sighed to himself before hitting send. He waited a few seconds before adding another message.

Hayden Pike

It’s fine if you don’t want to.

He really wishes he wouldn't.

He recalled the drugged-up state they had Shane in and thought about sending another text to him, warning Rozanov about it, only to realize he didn’t want to feed it to *the enemy* how Shane was vulnerable right now because of his concussion from hitting the ice after getting his nose crushed.

Shit, was it too late to block the contact and hope he'd never get the messages?

Just as he wanted to click on the contact name to do so, he saw the read receipts turn blue and felt his stomach clench. It was too late.

A text bubble popped up and then disappeared again.

Hayden was bracing himself for the unavoidable insult that would come, figuring Rozanov was checking his English to know it made sense. He was always oddly articulate when it came to chirping shit on the ice at their heads compared to his post-game interviews.

Huh, now that he thought about it, had Rozanov ever chirped something truly bad at Shane? Sure, he'd check him into the board here and then - though never too hard to even leave a bruise, *strange* - and tease him about his next goal. But in contrast, just during their last match, he had called one of their defensemen "a walking yeast infection," while all he had said to Shane was something along the lines of, "Don't be sad about your bad play today, Hollander. Your pretty face looks nicer when it's not sad."

In fact, calling Shane pretty seemed to be his favorite chirp at the other, making Hayden even more confused. Rozanov, of course, wasn't the only one to call Shane something along the lines of "pretty boy,", of course, and he knew that it bothered his captain, but it was still one of the milder chirps thrown at him. Hayden had made sure in Shane's first season to check anyone who even dared to utter any racial remark, and by the following season, Shane had already broken enough records to stop anyone from chirping at him too hard and embarrassing themselves, the unspoken rule on the ice being that stats earned you respect.

'Maybe Rozanov secretly admires Shane?' Hayden thought. That would explain all this. And after all, it wasn't hard to.

Shane was quite literally the best player in the league before he even turned 25. Even if Rozanov got his Stanley Cup win first, Shane had more records under his belt and now *two* cups. In a row. And he was extremely good-looking, humble, and actually quite funny if you got to know him. Hell, all of Canada loved Shane Hollander.

Even an asshole like Rozanov probably wasn't immune.

Just as he concluded that thought, his phone dinged with a notification, and he quickly unlocked it again, figuring Rozanov had finally come up with a retort. Instead, when he clicked on the notification bubble, it led him to his chat with Jackie, who had sent him a link to a video that was already popping up on a small screen.

Hayden sighed, really not wanting to see this but clicked on the video to turn it into full screen anyway.

Over the black screen, a content warning appeared, warning the viewers about the following video containing blood and injury, which made Hayden's stomach curl and he immediately wanted to throw the phone away.

Finally, the video started, and it seemed like the creator had cut together the same scene from several different angles, using zoomed-in shots of the broadcast and fan recordings. It started off just as the players' fight was broken off, Hayden seeing his legs dragging away

accompanied by those of his teammates pulling him back. The shot was cropped to focus on the slightly blurry image of Shane and Ilya kneeling on the ice behind them.

It cut to a different angle just as Shane let his head fall to rest against Rozanov's chest, his other bloodied hand running through Shane's hair gently, murmuring into his ear and rubbing down his arm with the other hand.

Hayden frowned at the screen. He remembered it quite differently, still trashing and shouting at Rozanov to get the fuck away from him after catching a glance at him between the fights, putting his hand to Shane's nose. He had genuinely thought in that moment Rozanov had meant to fuck Shane up more, his brain not computing the image he had seen as adrenaline ran high. While he was being dragged away, he felt outraged that no one had apparently wanted to stop Rozanov from kicking his fucking rival even more while he was down. Only when he was pushed back into the box and saw the same scene that was playing on his phone screen did he realize what was happening, confusion and anger running through him.

The following played out the same way he remembered it, though without the deafening noise of the arena and his own shouting, it seemed like a quite different scene. Jackie was right; Rozanov was being…*gentle*, if not actually fucking *tender* with Shane. Holding him like something precious and providing comfort.

And Shane looked just so…at ease with him, under the circumstances, that is, chuckling through his pain and fully trusting Rozanov to handle him. It was as if watching two athletes who had played on the same team together for years and trusted each other blindly instead of the two greatest rivals hockey had ever seen.

No wonder everyone had a lot of say about it. That scene made it look like they were two best friends, and Hayden almost felt a pang of jealousy and betrayal.

How on earth could Shane be *friends* with such a-

Just as Hayden wanted to mentally curse him out, another notification popped up on his screen.

Unknown Number

Thank you.

And Hayden blinked in surprise. No chirp, no insult, no '*why would I care*' like he had expected.

It somehow seemed genuine, and Hayden instantly knew for some reason that Rozanov would take the offer up to visit Shane. He might have even *be* genuinely grateful for the information, and despite his personal feelings about him or his irritation at a possible friendship between that guy and his best friend, he was now glad he had reached out.

Taking a deep breath and pushing his feelings aside, he quickly typed out another message, knowing being the bigger person would make Jacke proud of him. Maybe Shane would even be grateful and appreciate him.

Hayden Pike

No worries! :)

And thank you for helping Shane on the ice. Tell Marleau I'm sorry for going off so strong.

He quickly trumped back, hoping to convey his own ‘gratitude’ after all.

Jesus, he was thanking *Ilya Rozanov* for something, and Shane was in the hospital, doped up and whining like an adorable toddler about texting Lily and something about his cottage through his nasally voice. Hell really must have frozen over.

Unknown Number

I will delete ur number now. Pls do same w mine.

🖕

Yup. Never mind. Still an asshole.

Cliff

He had been benched for the rest of the game. And even though that always sucked, he could admit it was for the bet. That Canadian sucker that had jumped on him and several of his teammates had gotten a few good hits in, even if Cliff was two heads bigger than him and got about 20 stone more on him. He really wasn’t looking forward to the rematch that would undoubtedly happen the second he got back on the ice, the Montreal players shooting dirty looks and chirps at him whenever they passed the bench.

He also felt awful. Hollander was usually *so fast*, the talented fucker, you rarely got the drop on him. It had all happened so quickly, Cliff feeling his stick connect with something hard and then that god-awful *crunching* sound. He had barely managed to utter an “Oh shit,” before he got jumped, and then chaos broke loose.

It wasn’t until he was on the bench, pressing a cooling aid to his throbbing eye, that the noise of everything eventually quieted down. As he got his breathing under control, he frowned at the murmurs going around everywhere and finally looked up to see what caused such a reaction from the audience, only to see *Rozanov* of all people, lifting Hollander up while muttering to him.

That sight sure was confusing for a moment, but not entirely irritating. Cliff knew Roz was a good kid at heart. And he had stopped Pike from coming after his captain during their fight, knowing that Roz' was probably helping him with something. He could be an ass and brutal on the ice, but he wasn't cruel. Especially to Hollander, who Cliff had thought for a long time that Rozanov kind of had a soft spot for, forbidding any of the usual locker room shit talking the Raiders typically enjoyed about their rivals and he'd usually participate in.

Well, maybe 'soft spot' was a bit far. Mutual respect, at least, even if Rozanov would never admit to it.

Hollander was definitely the person that crazy kid loved winning most against, and until Cliff had gotten wind of his Montreal girl, he genuinely thought that the prospect of wiping the ice with Hollander is what got him so riled up says before they were to play the other team.

He frowned in confusion at the sight projected on the jumbotron, where Roz was dragging a limp Hollander up to be standing while a Ref called over the medics. Sure, Cliff had seen him helping him, he just hadn't realized his captain had *lingered*.

But then they finally stood up fully and Hollander threw his head back, the sight making the entire stadium collectively gasp and Cliff's stomach turn.

Holy shit he had fucked that kid up. There was blood all over him, streaming out from his nose and over his perfect pearly white teeth, all still real, as several news columns liked to report, indeed a rare feat for hockey players.

Fuck, Cliff had defiled that million-dollar brand deal face that was plastered all over fucking Canada so you couldn't escape him. Literally, since there was an ad for Hollander in the airport.

A face like that surely had insurance, right? Would Cliff have to pay for damages for vandalizing a Canadian artifact?

Thank *god* they weren't playing on Montreal's home ice today. They might have actually get broken into at their hotel or mobbed at the airport.

He felt awful as he watched drag Hollander, who seemed to be fighting a battle with consciousness. Despite the kid being a Canadian treasure, he genuinely felt bad for hitting him, the dude being way too nice for a hockey player. He had even given Cliff his condolences two seasons ago after he had missed some games because of a close relative's death. Though Cliff hadn't known how he had gotten to that information, he kind of had liked the guy ever since. Well, as much as you can like the enemy of your biggest rival team.

He looked down in shame, a teammate clapping his shoulder sympathetically and telling him some face about how it's "just part of the game."

Only when the clapping started did he look up again. He figured they were applauding Hollander off the ice and he considered joining briefly, ultimately deciding against it. Yet when his eyes went over the ice again, he was surprised to find Hollander already gone, only Rozanov remained on the ice, casually skating over.

The claps got louder as he passed center ice, and some even started cheering. The Raiders as well as the Montreal players all blinked and turned their heads in confusion at the audience reaction.

“Damn, I’ve never seen Roz get cheered on for *not* fucking up an opponent," their goalie laughed next to him.

Cliff's eyes found Rozanov back on the ice just as he was leaning down next to a puddle of blood on the ice that had Cliff cringing.

He couldn’t see his expression well due to the helmet, but he could tell Rozanov’s body language better than most, even under the bulky uniform. After all, it was a requirement as a linemate.

It was barely longer than a second, but he could see him tense before his shoulder lowered slightly, probably from a deep sigh, before Rozanov reached out and picked Hollander’s glove up as well.

That action seemed…well. Maybe a bit irrational. His own gloves, sure. He’d need them, after all. But for Hollander’s glove, there was no use in picking them up. In fact, it would have been better to just leave them; that way, the cleanup crew could hand them back over to Montreal.

Instead of saying anything, a silence fell over their bench as Rozanov approached, skating over gracefully and avoiding everyone's eye contact; the sickening amount of blood, fucking Hollander’s blood, god, all over his jersey was now visible.

They let him leave and no one questioned when he didn’t come back for the rest of the game. They were pretty much cooked from the second they had laid Hollander out anyway, the fury in the Montreal players visible in the bruises they had given them as well as in the way they played against them for the rest of the game.

At last, when they entered the locker room, they found Rozanov again, freshly showered from the looks of it, sitting shirtless on the bench with his phone in his hand.

Cliff immediately walked up to him, stopping in front of him but Rozanov didn’t spare him a single look.

“I feel awful, man. I-” he began, stopping when the other just lifted a hand to stop him. He didn’t say anything else, just stepped to the side of his own locker.

Coach immediately started ripping into Roz for not coming back and costing them the game, but everyone knew there was no real heat behind it. After all, no one had bothered to get Roz back, and from the way the stadium had fucking clapped him out of there, it probably would have made management look bad to pull him back onto the ice.

After Coach was done and Cliff came back from his shower, he tried to scour out Rozanov, who had remained eerily silent ever since they had stepped into the locker room.

He knew he didn't need to ask how the other felt, though everything in him wanted to throw a casual, "You good, brother?" just for confirmation. The last time Cliff had seen that look on the kid's face, he had just gotten the news that his father had died, not over two weeks ago. Poor fella was definitely working through something.

"They really loved what you did for Hollander out there," he began instead, hoping the typical route of flattery would lighten the other up.

Rozanov didn't respond; instead, he began to immediately bounce his leg up and down while staring at his phone.

"Bro?" Cliff asked carefully.

Rozanov grunted in frustration, locking his phone and throwing it off to the side before twisting around to grab a shirt out of his bag and haphazardly throwing it over. Eventually, he stood up, grabbed his jacket and got ready to head out. Cliff suddenly got the feeling he was getting the cold shoulder on purpose, something that felt strange from Rozanov, of all people, who had no issue making his feelings known at any point.

Slightly panicked, Cliff reached out his arm to stop Rozanov from leaving.

"Dude, hey, I really didn't mean to. I feel horrible about the kid. Tell Hollander I'm sorry, I-"

But Rozanov just pulled back, muttering something Russian under his breath before exiting, leaving Cliff to feel even more like shit and just stare after him.

Maybe that soft spot was bigger after all.

Years later, Cliff would watch a video on Twitter by some dude named Brad and feel his heart drop to his ass, sending a quick prayer to his Nana in heaven to thank her for protecting him from Rozanov ending his bloodline after Cliff had apparently laid out his fucking boyfriend.

Shane

They were in a strange sort of Schrödinger's cat kind of situation where Shane had asked Ilya to come to the cottage while high off his ass, and the other hadn't agreed but also hadn't *disagreed*. And while Shane had been released and they kept up some lighthearted texting, things felt as confusing to him as they did before their heart-to-heart in Tampa, which he thought had finally cleared up things for them after all.

But no. The only thing he knew for certain was that he liked Rozanov and Rozanov also liked him.

Which was just…great. Almost 4 months of self-discovery, and he was no further with the man he adored than a high school boy sending a note to his crush saying, "Do you like me? Yes, No, Maybe:"

He sighed to himself, checking his phone, where he had just sent his condolences to Ilya for being kicked out of the playoffs, the replay of the game's winning goal still playing on his parents' TV.

No new message from Ilya yet. Well, he'd text him after the post-game interview that was about to start any minute. Shane definitely wasn't counting down to it, no. He just simply wasn't that hungry for pasta yet, *okay, Mom?*

Ilya finally came on screen, Shane's heart seizing at the sight. He missed him.

God, he hoped he wouldn't go to Russia.

The reporters asked the typical questions, and Ilya answered as nonchalantly as he could after losing the game that cost him the cup. Shane could sympathize; nothing was worse than those interviews after a loss, where they all asked the same questions that were running on loop in his own head anyway. *What could have gone better? Are you dissatisfied with yourself?*

Somehow, his heart ached for Ilya on screen, and he felt a million times worse about his loss than he recalled ever feeling about any of his own losses.

God, he was in so deep.

"And just before you go, do you have any update on the state of fellow captain and opponent Shane Hollander? Fans were quiete in awe of your display of sportsmanship. You were even trending on Twitter that day!" a reporter asked.

Shane's eyes widened, and he immediately sat up straighter. He was happy that his parents were already preparing dinner in the kitchen after the game had ended and he didn't need to mask his anticipation at Ilya's answer.

On the screen, Ilya clenched his jaw and looked off to the side, shrugging noncommittally.

"I heard Hollander has made good recovery. It's too bad he is out for the playoffs because of a concussion, I would have loved a rematch to beat him properly," Ilya joked, making the reporters chuckle.

Shane frowned, not at the chirp but at what he saw in Ilya's eyes. The usual spark he got from shit-talking anyone, especially Shane, was gone, instead replaced by a sort of detached coldness that Shane was all too familiar with.

"Reports say that you visited Hollander in the hospital. That was quite nice of you," the reporter continued.

Again, a shrug. A look that did not meet the camera's eye.

"People have been wondering if you and Hollander are possibly…"

Shane's heart stopped at the meaningful pause in the reporter's question, Ilya didn't seem to be doing much better, a confused frown coming over his previously indifferent expression.

"More friendly than we thought, seeing that honorable conduct!" she finished cheerfully.

Shane relaxed back into the cushions, several years of his life probably fading away from the stress of the last 8 seconds.

Ilya blinked, looking down at his shoes in thought. Shane began to worry his bottom lip between his teeth, his foot tapping anxiously against the floor.

Ever since the accident, he was afraid Ilya would take it all back. That new, fragile bond between them of their shared feelings.

He had not seen the replays yet, but from the way multiple people had questioned him about the status of his and Rozanov's "relationship," it sent him into a short spiral of panic every fucking time until they clarified that they mean the current state of their "rivalry."

Ilya looked back up with a specific smirk on his face that sent a different kind of chill down Shane's spine. He had seen that smirk, many, *many* times before, usually before Ilya did something to him that was completely unexpected, like sticking his tongue or a finger in a a place that he hadn't been prepared for like-

Nope. Not on his parent's couch.

He squirmed, knowing whatever came out of Ilya's mouth next meant trouble.

"*Da*. People have been wondering. Let me make a statement now," Ilya began before conspiratorially leaning forward to the mic, his eyes remaining on the camera, Shane feeling as if he were staring directly at him.

"Hollander has been trying to be my friend for many, many years now. I finally agreed to during the all-stars. Figured the kid wasn't too bad," he continued with a wink.

What an *asshole*.

Why did Shane have to be in lov-

Ah, fuck.

"And we're a good match, no?" Ilya continued, his eyes steady on the camera and softening just the smallest bit, making Shane's heart flutter.

The interview ended, and Shane was still sitting on his couch, blinking at the screen and desperately wishing the heat from his cheeks to go away.

He searched for his phone, finding it in the couch crease before he unlocked it and typed out a message to Lily.

Jane

Please come to the cottage.

He looked at it, then back to the screen andventually fell back into the cushions with a groan. With a pout on his face that he'd deny it if anyone saw him, he deleted the message letter by letter. Finally, he threw the phone into the cushions with a huff and finally got up, deciding to join his parents for dinner.

A while later, he walked back into the living room and picked it up again, his heart stopping at seeing the notification for a new message, and he went to open the text thread.

Jane

Too bad.

Sorry for the loss.

Next time you'll kick their ass.
If Montreal doesn't do it first, that is.

Lily

😘

Chapter End Notes

hayden being shane-curios rlly get sme

in fact, everyone in hockey being kinda shane-curios is hirlious and if im gonna do one thing its write him as the it boy of hockey cause ikr thats right

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