

**emergency contact**

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# emergency contact

by [shaneverse](#)

## Summary

Vancouver General Hospital has very strict rules about workplace relationships, and Dr. Shane Hollander and Dr. Ilya Rozanov follow every single one.

The only problem is that they're married.

And no one knows.

## Notes

i have a very specific weakness for the secretly-married-but-pretending-they're-not trope.

[twitter](#)

# Chapter 1

Shane Hollander had worked at Vancouver General Hospital for three years, long enough for people to have formed very definite opinions about him.

And most of them agreed on three things: he was an excellent pediatrician, he drank coffee in quantities that probably should have been regulated and, for some reason no one could quite explain, he seemed incapable of going more than two days without arguing with the orthopedic surgeon Ilya Rozanov.

The origin of the rivalry depended on who you asked.

Some said it had started during a particularly tense case meeting, when the two of them had spent fifteen minutes debating the treatment of a pediatric fracture while half the room pretended to take notes and the other half pretended not to be enjoying it.

Others swore it had happened in the middle of a hallway, when Dr. Hollander supposedly insulted the entire orthopedic department.

Dr. Scott Hunter, from trauma surgery, insisted it all came down to professional ego.

*“Pediatricians and orthopedists always fight over territory,”* he once explained during a night shift, leaning against the nurses’ station. *“One wants to protect the child, and the other just wants to fix the bone. Eventually someone raises their voice.”*

That theory would have been more convincing if Hollander and Rozanov hadn’t raised their voices far more often than any medical disagreement actually required.

Over time, the occasional spectacle between the two of them became part of the hospital’s scenery. It wasn’t exactly common, but it didn’t surprise anyone either.

So when it happened for the first time that week, nobody found it particularly strange.

And it was, technically, Shane’s fault.

Shane Hollander was very good at many things. He calmed frightened children with impressive ease and explained complicated procedures to anxious parents with almost supernatural patience.

What he couldn’t do was walk while reading a chart.

He turned the corner of the hallway too quickly, his eyes fixed on the notes of an eight-year-old patient who had arrived in the emergency room after falling out of a tree, and only realized his mistake when it was already too late.

The impact was immediate and completely immovable, as if he had just walked straight into a very tall wall that, for some reason, smelled faintly of antiseptic and expensive cologne.

Shane looked up, ready to apologize.

Ilya Rozanov was staring at him.

Shane was the first to move. He took a step back and reorganized the papers in his hands as if the collision had been nothing more than a minor logistical inconvenience.

“Can’t you look where you’re going?”

Ilya slowly crossed his arms, studying Shane with an expression that didn’t quite reach surprise.

“I can,” Ilya replied with the same calm. “But apparently *you* can’t.”

Across the hallway, Dr. Kip Grady from cardiology slowed his pace slightly when he recognized the beginning of what promised to be an interesting argument.

Shane sighed loudly and rolled his eyes.

“I was on my way to call orthopedics for a fractured arm,” he said, adjusting the chart against his chest. “But apparently I’ve already found the department’s official representative.”

Ilya raised an eyebrow slowly. “Then you should pay more attention to where you’re going.”

Shane held his gaze for a full second, his expression completely neutral.

“If I needed a useless comment,” he replied calmly, “I would have asked for one.”

Dr. Kip wasn’t even pretending not to listen anymore.

Ilya tilted his head slightly, evaluating Shane with the same expression he usually used when examining a particularly irritating X-ray.

“Pediatric patient?”

“*Obviously.*”

“X-ray?”

“Already ordered.”

Ilya extended his hand. “Let me see the chart.”

Shane handed over the papers without arguing.

For a brief second, their fingers brushed. It was a small gesture, almost accidental.

Ilya was already scanning the notes, his attention returning completely to the case.

“Probably a simple fracture,” he concluded after a few seconds.

“I know.”

Ilya looked up from the paper. “Then why did you call orthopedics?”

Shane crossed his arms.

“Because I’m a responsible pediatrician.”

Ilya handed the chart back. “*Miracle.*”

Shane narrowed his eyes.

“Are you going to treat the patient or keep being insufferable?”

Ilya had already started walking down the hallway toward pediatrics.

“I can always do both,” he said over his shoulder.

Shane let out an annoyed *huff* and headed after him, one step behind.

Behind them, a nurse who had been organizing a clipboard watched the two disappear down the corridor and shook her head.

“They really can’t stand each other,” she commented.

Dr. Kip watched the same hallway for another second before continuing on his way.

“Definitely not.”



The second time happened two days later.

Shane didn’t usually close his office door in the middle of a shift, but that afternoon he was seriously considering hiding there until the end of it.

The day had started at six in the morning with a feverish baby in the emergency room, continued with two consultations that turned into full parental crises and, at some point between one chart and another, someone apparently decided pediatricians should also handle administrative problems.

Now he was sitting in the chair in his office, his elbows resting on the desk and his eyes closed for a second that had probably lasted about five minutes.

The door opened without a knock.

Shane didn’t even need to look up to know who it was.

“You look tired,” Ilya said, walking in and closing the door behind him.

“I know,” Shane replied, his voice muffled against his folded arms.

Ilya stopped beside the desk for a moment, simply watching Shane there, completely exhausted, his hair messy and his coat crooked on one shoulder.

He reached out and brushed a strand of hair away from Shane's forehead, and Shane let out a long sigh, followed by a tired little groan.

"Bad shift?" Ilya asked.

"Pediatric shift," Shane corrected without lifting his head.

Ilya made a small sound of understanding.

"*Bednyy moy*," he murmured, lightly scratching his nails against the back of Shane's neck.

Shane opened one eye to look at him.

"You know I understand you when you do that."

Ilya didn't look impressed. "I know."

His fingers continued moving absently through Shane's hair, tracing a slow path. Shane closed his eyes again almost immediately, the tension in his face easing by a few degrees.

"I'll make dinner tonight," Ilya said after a moment. "You come home, take a shower, and you don't have to think about anything."

Shane opened one eye again, suspicious.

"You've said that before."

"And I've done it too."

"You burned dinner."

"Once."

"*Twice*."

Ilya sighed as if he had been deeply wronged. "It was completely intentional."

Shane let out a small tired laugh, still not opening his eyes.

For a moment, the office was quiet.

That was exactly when the door swung open.

"Shane, are you-"

Dr. Hayden Pike stopped in the middle of the sentence.

The silence that followed lasted exactly long enough for Hayden to register the scene: Shane leaning forward in his chair behind the desk, Ilya standing beside him, much closer than two doctors arguing at work would normally stand.

Shane straightened so quickly he nearly knocked over a stack of charts.

“Hayden,” he said with suspiciously controlled calm.

Hayden blinked.

“I-” he gestured vaguely toward the hallway. “I just came to ask if you wanted to get lunch.”

“No,” Shane answered far too quickly.

Ilya took a step back, his expression returning to its usual professional neutrality.

“Dr. Pike,” he said with a brief nod.

Hayden looked from one to the other, then raised his hands.

“Alright,” he said quickly. “I’ll come back later.”

He closed the door and stood in the hallway for two seconds, trying to process what he had just seen.

When Hayden reached the nurses’ station a few minutes later, the floor’s informal center of medical gossip was already functioning as usual.

Dr. Scott Hunter was leaning against the counter reviewing a chart. Next to him, Dr. Svetlana Vetrova from general surgery was absentmindedly stirring a cup of coffee, and a little farther away Dr. Rose Landry from neurosurgery was flipping through MRI images on her tablet.

Hayden leaned his elbows on the counter.

“I just interrupted the most intense argument in the history of modern medicine,” he announced.

Scott didn’t even look up from the chart.

“Rozanov and Hollander?”

Hayden gasped. “You already knew?”

Scott calmly turned a page. “They argue three times a week.”

Svetlana made a small sound of agreement, still stirring her coffee.

“Last week it was about a cast.”

Rose looked up from her tablet.

“It wasn’t about the cast,” she corrected. “It was about the *type* of cast.”

Hayden shook his head.

“No, no. This was different.”

Now Scott finally looked up.

“Different how?”

Hayden thought for a second, trying to organize what he had seen.

“Like...” he gestured vaguely. “*Heated rivalry.*”

Svetlana raised an eyebrow, and Scott considered the theory for exactly half a second before returning to his chart.

“Pediatrics and orthopedics,” he said. “*Classic.*”

Rose shrugged and went back to her tablet.

Hayden, however, kept staring down the hallway that led to Shane’s office.

“Still,” he murmured, more to himself than to anyone else, “that was intense.”

## Chapter 2

The arguments between Shane and Ilya had been briefly forgotten in favor of the far more urgent chaos of new residents trying not to make catastrophic mistakes in their first month.

Dr. Scott Hunter, *unfortunately*, had been assigned as the group's general preceptor.

Being head of the emergency department and trauma surgery was already more than enough work. Being responsible for supervising a dozen newly arrived residents had turned that week into something he described only as "an extremely questionable administrative decision."

"I already have enough patients to deal with," he had grumbled on the first day. "I don't need twelve more."

Now, a few days later, Dr. Jean-Jacques Boiziau and Dr. Troy Barrett - the two new general surgery residents - were standing in front of him with extremely attentive expressions, waiting for instructions for the next surgical rounds.

Scott looked back at them with the same expression he usually reserved for particularly irritating medical situations.

"First rule," he said finally, crossing his arms. "If you're not sure what you're doing, stop."

Both of them nodded immediately.

"Second rule," Scott continued, already starting to walk down the emergency department hallway. "If you think you know exactly what you're doing..."

He paused.

"...you should probably *stop* anyway."

The two residents exchanged a quick glance before following him down the hallway.

That was when the voices started taking over the corridor.

Scott sighed immediately, and beside him JJ turned his head toward the sound, frowning as he tried to identify who was arguing.

"Is that--"

"Yes," Scott replied, not even slowing his pace or bothering to check.

At the end of the hallway, Shane and Ilya were arguing again.

"Clinical observation," Scott said to the two residents as he kept walking, his voice low but perfectly audible. "This happens frequently."

Troy tilted his head, watching the scene ahead with genuine curiosity.

“Do they always argue like that?”

Scott thought for a second as the three of them continued down the hallway.

“Yes,” he finally answered. “But today you’re going to learn something interesting.”

Both residents immediately turned their attention back to him.

Scott gestured subtly with his head toward the argument at the end of the corridor.

“You can watch,” he explained, slowing his pace slightly as they approached. “But don’t get involved.”

The voices became clearer as they got closer.

“You can’t just ignore the report,” Shane was saying, gesturing with the hand that wasn’t holding the tablet.

Ilya answered with the same irritating calm as always. “I’m not ignoring the report. I’m ignoring *your* interpretation of the report.”

JJ slowed his steps, clearly interested, but Scott kept walking as if this were just another irrelevant detail of the shift.

“Keep walking,” he muttered without even looking back.

They were almost past the two of them when Shane shifted slightly, blocking Ilya’s path in the hallway.

“You can’t decide that on your own,” he said, crossing his arms.

Ilya looked him up and down. “I’m the orthopedist.”

Shane raised his eyebrows. “Congratulations, I had *no* idea.”

Scott, beside them, let out another sigh.

“This,” he explained quietly to the two residents, “is what happens when two specialists believe they’re the smartest person in the world.”

Shane was still glaring at Ilya with the same irritation.

“You’re being impossible.”

Ilya didn’t seem particularly impressed. “I’m being correct.”

Shane narrowed his eyes. “You’re being irritating.”

Ilya gave a small nod, as if conceding the point.

“That too.”

Then, with a completely automatic gesture, Ilya reached out and adjusted the crooked collar of Shane’s coat, smoothing the fabric as if it were a perfectly normal reflex.

The gesture lasted less than two seconds.

Long enough for Scott’s eyes to widen.

Shane clearly hadn’t realized he had an audience until that moment. When he finally turned his head, he found three pairs of eyes staring directly at the two of them.

He cleared his throat and took a small step to the side.

“Medical discussion.”

Troy was the first one to speak. He was looking at the open chart in Shane’s hands, his attention fixed on the X-ray image.

“Sorry,” he said, pointing hesitantly at the image. “But... what if you don’t fix the bone right now?”

All four doctors looked at him at the same time.

Troy seemed to reconsider for a second, but continued anyway.

“I mean... the fracture is stable,” he explained, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. “Maybe it would be better to immobilize it first and wait for the swelling to go down before any intervention.”

Shane looked back at the X-ray. Then he lifted his gaze to Troy.

And suddenly the exhausted expression on his face disappeared completely.

“That,” Shane said, the excitement appearing so quickly it made Scott close his eyes for a second. “*Exactly* that.”

He turned fully toward the resident, now clearly interested.

“You thought of that just now?”

Troy nodded, still a little unsure.

The smile that appeared on Shane’s face was immediate.

“You’re going to be my *protégé*.”

Scott let out a tired sigh. “Please don’t do this in the hallway.”

But Shane was already fully invested in the idea. He leaned slightly forward, clearly excited by the discovery, and pointed at the resident as if he had just found something extremely

promising.

“What was your name again?”

“Troy Barrett, General Surgery,” the resident replied.

“*Barrett*,” Shane repeated immediately, approval clear in his voice. “Excellent clinical reasoning. You could go into Pediatrics.”

Troy took a small step forward, still looking at the X-ray in the chart Shane was holding, as if he wanted to explain his reasoning more clearly.

“*Not so close*,” Ilya said.

The words came out low and sharp, edged with irritation.

Troy stopped mid-step, clearly surprised.

Ilya was already looking back at the X-ray, his expression closing again as if his attention were focused entirely on the clinical case.

Behind them, JJ tilted his head slightly.

“He seems... *angry*,” he murmured.

Scott shrugged.

“Orthopedists don’t like being wrong.”

Shane still seemed completely oblivious to the tension. He was too busy studying the image again while speaking with enthusiasm.

“You’re coming with me on the next round,” he told Troy, still excited. “I like people who think.”

Beside him, Ilya remained silent, his posture perfectly neutral.

Even so, the way he crossed his arms again was slightly more rigid than before.

Scott watched that for a second.

“Don’t listen to them. Let’s go,” he told the residents.

The two obeyed, but JJ still looked back over his shoulder as they walked down the hallway.

“They argue a lot.”

Scott didn’t bother looking back.

“You haven’t seen anything yet.”



If anyone asked later, Svetlana would say that had also been an accident.

At that moment, however, Dr. Svetlana Vetrova was simply at the end of a particularly brutal night shift and had finally secured her one hour of rest after several emergency surgeries that had stretched far beyond what had originally been planned.

All she wanted were fifteen minutes of silence, decent coffee, and a comfortable bed.

The hospital, naturally, seemed uninterested in providing any of those things.

The doctors' lounge was empty when she walked in, which by itself already felt like a small miracle.

Svetlana let herself fall onto one of the beds, resting her head on the pillow and closing her eyes for a few seconds, enjoying the rare silence on the floor.

She had just picked up her phone to order coffee when the door opened again.

Svetlana didn't move.

Technically she was off duty at that moment. Officially, any conversation happening in that room was not her problem.

Then two voices entered along with the door.

She recognized both immediately.

"You should stop taking three shifts in a row," said Ilya Rozanov, closing the door behind him.

"You should stop commenting on my schedule," Shane Hollander replied.

Svetlana opened one eye.

The two of them were standing far too close together for a casual hallway argument.

Shane was leaning against the table in the break room, arms crossed, looking exhausted. His coat sat crooked on one shoulder, as if he had forgotten to fix it at some point during the last several hours.

Ilya stood directly in front of him, watching him.

"You look like you're dead," Ilya said after a moment, tilting his head slightly as he examined Shane's face.

Shane let out a short sigh.

"Thank you for the diagnosis, Dr. Rozanov," he said, rubbing his tired face.

Ilya simply sighed.

Across the room, Svetlana had already begun mentally preparing to get up and separate yet another argument between the two of them when something completely different happened.

Ilya reached out.

The gesture was so natural it took a second for her brain to register what she was seeing.

He placed a hand against Shane's cheek, brushing his thumb lightly over the skin as if checking something.

Shane didn't seem surprised at all.

In fact, he leaned slightly forward, accepting the touch as if it were the most normal thing in the world.

Svetlana opened both eyes now.

That definitely did not look like a medical argument.

"Did you eat today?" Ilya asked, his hand still resting against Shane's face.

"Maybe."

Ilya rolled his eyes impatiently. "That's not an answer."

Shane cleared his throat before replying, almost muttering, low enough that it could hardly be considered a real response.

From the bed, Svetlana only caught half the sentence.

"...*half a protein bar.*"

Ilya looked at him for a full second. "Pathetic."

Shane huffed and crossed his arms. "Did you follow me to the break room just to judge me?"

"I came because you forgot this," Ilya replied, placing a small container of food on the table beside him.

Shane looked at the container and then back at him. "You brought lunch?"

"Technically dinner."

Shane narrowed his eyes at the container.

"I hate when you do this."

"No you don't," Ilya replied with the same calm as always.

Even so, Shane picked up the container.

That was exactly when Svetlana decided she had seen enough.

She stood up from the bed, and the movement made both of them immediately turn toward her.

Color rose across Shane's face almost instantly, and he rubbed the back of his neck as if that could somehow explain the situation.

"It's really hot in here," he said far too quickly, glancing around as if the air conditioning had suddenly become the most urgent problem in the room. "Seriously. This hospital never gets the temperature right."

Svetlana didn't respond.

Shane let out an awkward little laugh and lifted the food container slightly.

"And he needs to stop trying to *poison* me with food."

Beside him, Ilya remained completely silent, standing next to the table with an expression far too neutral to be convincing.

Svetlana watched the two of them for a moment and then raised one eyebrow.

"Carry on."

Without waiting for a response, she walked out of the room.

In the hallway she found Dr. Rose Landry leaning against the wall while waiting for the elevator, a cup of coffee in her hand. Rose looked up when she approached.

"You look tired," she commented.

Svetlana took the coffee from her hand without asking and took a sip before answering.

"I just saw something interesting."

Rose waited silently while she handed the cup back.

"Rozanov brought *food* for Hollander."

Rose blinked several times. "Is that strange?"

Svetlana thought for a second.

"Depends."

"On what?"

"Context."

Rose considered that for about two seconds before shrugging.

“Poison attempt,” she murmured. “*Classic*. Kip tried that with Scott after a clinical disagreement once.”

Svetlana was too tired to argue with the logic of that conclusion.

But as she walked back toward the operating rooms, she couldn’t help thinking that what she had just seen had looked far less like a professional argument...

...and much more like something entirely *different*.

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dr. Shane Hollander was moving through the hallway of Vancouver General Hospital far too quickly for someone wearing a lab coat and a badge full of medical credentials.

One of his pediatric patients needed a test that had apparently disappeared from the hospital's system, and Shane was trying to solve the problem before the child's mother decided the entire place was incompetent.

The emergency department was as loud as ever. A monitor beeped somewhere behind him, a medication cart rolled quickly down the adjacent corridor, and two nurses were talking quietly near the station.

Shane passed straight through all of it.

He turned the corner in a hurry, already looking toward the next hallway and trying to remember exactly who in radiology he needed to find.

His shoe hit something wet on the floor.

For one very brief moment, his brain registered two things at the same time.

The dark shine on the tile.

And the fact that the ground had just *disappeared* from under his foot.

His balance went with it. His arm instinctively tried to catch himself, and the impact came a second later.

The fall was quick, loud, and absolutely impossible to ignore.

Across the corridor, the elevator doors opened.

Dr. Kip Grady stepped out just in time to see Dr. Shane hit the floor sideways with a thud that echoed down the hallway.

Kip stopped mid-step. His eyes immediately dropped to the floor around Shane. There was blood spread across the tiles.

Kip's eyes widened.

Shane followed his gaze and let out an irritated sigh. "It's not mine."

Kip looked at him. "Is that supposed to be reassuring?"

Shane opened his eyes from the floor and turned his head slightly to look at him.

“*Kip.*”

“Shane.”

“Could you pretend you didn’t see this?” He asked, already feeling his cheeks heat.

Kip rubbed a hand over his face. “Unfortunately, no.”

He was already crouching down to help him.

Shane tried to push himself up with his right arm. He immediately regretted it.

Pain shot up his entire arm so sharply that he stopped halfway through the movement, the air leaving his lungs in a short sound.

Kip noticed instantly.

“Don’t move,” he said, already kneeling beside him.

Shane froze exactly where he was. His arm had tried to brace the fall, but now any attempt to move it felt like an extremely bad idea.

For a few seconds he just stared up at the white hospital ceiling, trying to process what had just happened.

“...is that bad?” he asked, without much conviction.

Kip didn’t answer right away. His attention was fixed on Shane’s arm, studying the angle with careful concentration.

“That,” he said finally, “looks a lot like a fracture. And I’m not even an orthopedist.”

Shane closed his eyes for a moment.

“I don’t have time for this. I have patients waiting,” he muttered.

Kip looked up at him. “Now you’re a patient.”

Before Shane could respond, fast footsteps echoed down the hallway.

Dr. Hayden Pike came around the corner and slowed when he registered two things at once: Shane on the floor and Kip kneeling beside him.

He stopped a few steps away. His gaze dropped first to Shane’s arm. Then to the dark pool on the floor.

“What happened here?”

“He slipped,” Kip replied, still watching Shane’s arm carefully.

Shane sighed from the floor.

“That’s not mine,” he added, pointing with his chin toward the blood.

Hayden looked at the stain again, then back at Shane.

“Is that information supposed to make this better somehow?”

Kip ignored the exchange and placed a steady hand on Shane’s shoulder.

“Let’s sit up first.”

Carefully, he helped Shane shift position. The movement sent another wave of pain through his arm, and Shane stopped halfway, holding his breath.

Kip immediately adjusted his grip.

“*Slowly.*”

Shane finally managed to sit up against the wall.

He ran his good hand over his face.

“I really don’t have time for this.”

Hayden exhaled quietly, still staring at his arm. Kip didn’t look particularly convinced by Shane’s argument.

“Looks like you just *made* time,” Hayden commented, crossing his arms.

Kip was already standing again. He carefully took Shane by the shoulder and helped him up, making sure his right arm didn’t move.

“We need to get him to the ER,” he said, already guiding him down the corridor.

Shane looked up at him with deep offense.

“I work there. Everyone’s going to talk.”

Kip glanced briefly at his arm, then kept walking.

“Shane, you just slipped in the middle of a hospital corridor and probably fractured your arm. I promise the gossip already started.”

Hayden walked beside them as they crossed the hallway. A few staff members slowed down when they realized exactly who was being escorted into his own department.

As soon as they entered the emergency department, a nurse looked up from the nursing station.

Jackie had the impressive ability to assess an entire situation in less than two seconds.

She looked at Shane, at the arm he was clearly refusing to move, and then at Kip.

“Take him to a bay,” she said immediately.

Shane tried to protest. “I really don’t-”

No one seemed particularly interested in hearing the rest.

Five minutes later he was sitting on a stretcher, his arm supported in a carefully improvised position with pillows and a temporary splint. His expression was a very obvious mix of pain and irritation.

Jackie returned to the bay carrying a metal tray. She set a syringe beside him.

“This will help with the pain. Dr. Grady prescribed it,” she explained.

Shane opened his mouth to say he didn’t need it. The morphine solved that problem before he finished the sentence.

A few seconds later he was blinking slowly at the ceiling, clearly reevaluating the situation.

Leaning against the wall of the bay, Kip watched everything while trying not to laugh.

Shane turned his head toward him.

“Are you *smiling*?” he asked suspiciously.

Kip didn’t make any real effort to deny it. “A little.”

Shane pointed vaguely at him with his good hand. “I’m going to remember that.”

“Doubt it.”

On the other side of the curtain, Hayden appeared again - officially to check on the patient, but in practice also because Jackie was still there updating the chart on her tablet.

He tried to maintain a professional expression while casually leaning against the IV stand.

It didn’t help that Jackie had the well-established reputation of being one of the most efficient- and *dangerously* charming- nurses in the entire emergency department.

Jackie didn’t look up from the screen.

“Dr. Pike,” she said while typing.

Hayden straightened slightly.

“Jackie.”

Kip gave him a sideways look and Hayden ignored him completely.

Jackie kept working for a few seconds before speaking again.

“We need to update some information.”

Shane made a vague gesture with his good hand.

“It’s already in the system.”

“Emergency contact?” Jackie asked, scrolling.

Shane opened his mouth.

“Oh, it’s already listed here,” Jackie said, looking at the screen.

Shane blinked slowly, trying to focus. “No need to call.”

Jackie was already pressing the call button. “Protocol.”

The phone began ringing.

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

No answer.

Jackie frowned slightly and tried again.

*Nothing.*

She tilted her head, studying the number on the screen.

“Weird,” she murmured.

Hayden held out a hand.

“Want me to try from mine?”

Jackie handed him the tablet without argument.

Hayden pulled out his phone and dialed the number Jackie had just shown him. Almost automatically, he put the call on speaker.

On the second ring, someone answered.

*“Dr. Pike.”*

Hayden froze.

In the background there was muffled noise- metal instruments touching metal, the rhythmic beep of a cardiac monitor, someone speaking somewhere in the distance.

Then the same voice continued, with a very familiar trace of dry irony.

*“What an honor to receive a call from you while I’m in surgery.”*

The entire bay went silent.

Hayden slowly looked down at the phone in his hand.

Then up again.

Kip was leaning against the wall, Jackie had stopped typing and Shane was sitting on the stretcher, blinking slowly.

Hayden looked back at the phone.

*“...Ilya?”*

There was a brief pause on the other end, as if someone had stepped slightly away from another conversation. In the background, a distant voice asked something that sounded vaguely like “suction?”

*“If you could speak quickly, Dr. Pike,” Ilya said, “I’m a little busy.”*

Hayden cleared his throat.

“Sorry, Dr. Rozanov,” Hayden began carefully, glancing around the bay as if hoping someone else might magically take over the call. “I think I may have dialed the wrong number. I was trying to reach Shane’s emergency contact and—”

*“What happened to him?”*

The question cut through the sentence so quickly that Hayden stopped speaking.

Across the bay, Kip lifted his head and Jackie slowly lowered the tablet.

“He... slipped in the hallway,” Hayden explained. “Looks like he fractured his arm. We’ve ordered an X-ray, but radiology’s backed up.”

For a moment there was only the faint background noise coming through the phone - the steady monitor beep of an operating room, a voice asking for suction, the quiet clink of metal instruments shifting on a tray.

Then Ilya spoke again.

*“Don’t let anyone touch him.”* The words were calm, but there was an edge under them that made Hayden instinctively straighten. *“I’m coming.”*

Hayden hesitated, glancing down at the chart again.

“Ilya, we’ll probably need orthopedics,” he said, trying to keep the conversation anchored in protocol. “But we can’t actually do anything until we speak with his emergency contact—”

*“I know.”*

There was a brief metallic sound on the other end of the line, like an instrument being set back on a tray.

Then Ilya’s voice came again, quieter now, as if he had stepped slightly away from the surgical table.

*“Dr. Pike.”*

Hayden tightened his grip on the phone. “Yes?”

*“You’re already speaking to his emergency contact.”*

Hayden frowned. “What do you-”

*“He’s my husband.”*

The emergency department went silent.

Shane slowly closed his eyes. Kip tipped his head back and stared at the ceiling like a man whose long-standing theory had just been spectacularly confirmed.

Jackie’s eyebrows rose slowly.

*“...oh.”*



Two days later, the story still hadn’t died.

At Vancouver General Hospital, things like that rarely did. They simply circulated through the corridors, passed by the nursing stations, and resurfaced in coffee conversations with new details added every shift.

That was exactly how Shane and Ilya ended up sitting side by side in a small office in the hospital’s *Human Resources* department.

Cliff Marlow sat across the table from them, alternating his attention between the two doctors and the screen of his laptop as he typed.

“So,” he said finally, adjusting his glasses with a distracted gesture, “Dr. Ilya Hollander Rozanov and Dr. Shane Hollander Rozanov.”

He made a small face.

“That’s extremely strange to say out loud.”

Beside him, Shane shifted slightly in his chair, adjusting the cast resting on the table before answering.

“It’s also strange hearing you say it,” he muttered, running a hand over the plaster with quiet resignation.

The fracture had been confirmed that same afternoon in the emergency department. A distal radius fracture- clean, but displaced enough to require reduction and fixation.

Result: surgery.

Result two: six weeks in a cast.

Cliff kept typing.

“So let’s just... review the facts,” he said as his fingers moved across the keyboard. “Two days ago, Dr. Shane Hollander suffered a workplace accident inside the hospital.”

He glanced up.

“Pediatrics corridor.”

Shane raised his good hand. “There was blood on the floor.”

Cliff typed something.

“Noted.” He continued. “Shortly afterward, during medical evaluation, the staff attempted to contact the emergency contact listed in Dr. Hollander’s file.”

Shane looked up at the ceiling.

Cliff went on.

“At which point the hospital discovered that the listed emergency contact was Dr. Ilya Rozanov.” He looked up again. “Who also informed the staff that he was the patient’s husband.”

Cliff returned his attention to the screen.

“And shortly after that,” he continued, “Dr. Rozanov performed the orthopedic surgery on his own husband.”

He stopped typing and looked directly at the two of them.

“Despite hospital policy explicitly prohibiting medical procedures on immediate family members due to conflict of interest.”

Ilya exhaled slowly for what was probably the third time since the meeting had started.

“More or less,” he replied.

His tone was perfectly calm, but the fatigue in his voice made it clear what he thought about the entire situation.

He had already explained it twice.

To administration.

To the head of surgery.

And now to Human Resources.

“Technically,” Ilya added, resting his hands on the table, “when I arrived in the operating room he was already prepped for surgery.”

Shane slowly turned his head to look at him.

“You literally walked into the OR and told everyone not to touch me.”

Ilya didn’t look particularly impressed by the memory.

“Because I wasn’t going to let anyone put a *finger* on you,” he replied calmly.

His fingers tapped once against the table before he added, almost absentmindedly,

“Especially not when *I* was there.”

Cliff raised a hand. “Let’s... try to keep the discussion on the administrative side of things.”

Shane sighed and leaned back in his chair.

“So the hospital now also needs to document that two members of the medical staff were legally married and failed to inform administration beforehand.”

He looked up at them.

“How long have you been married?”

“Four years,” Shane answered.

Cliff stopped typing.

“*Four*.” He repeated the word slowly, as if confirming he’d heard correctly. “You’ve worked in the same hospital for three.”

Shane nodded.

Cliff leaned back slightly.

“So you were already legally married when you were both hired here.”

No one answered.

Cliff rubbed a hand over his forehead. “And you decided... not to mention that.”

Shane adjusted his cast on the table. “It seemed less complicated at the time.”

Cliff let out a quiet breath. “You’re aware the hospital has very clear policies regarding relationships between staff members.”

Ilya answered before Shane could.

“We are.”

“And yet you worked in the same department, attended the same clinical meetings, and discussed cases together...” He paused briefly. “...without informing administration that you were legally married.”

Shane shrugged. “Technically it worked for three years.”

“There’s even a formal record of an argument about...” Cliff leaned closer to read. “...types of casts.”

Shane looked up at the ceiling.

“That was a legitimate medical discussion.”

Ilya tilted his head slightly. “He was *wrong*.”

For a few seconds Cliff simply looked at the two of them. Then he slowly closed the laptop.

“I’m going to need coffee.”

He stood up and took two steps toward the door.

“One last question.”

Shane and Ilya looked at him.

Cliff tapped the folder on the table.

“In the last three years,” he said carefully, “how many of those arguments were *actually* medical?”

Shane glanced sideways at Ilya. Ilya didn’t look back.

“...*most* of them,” Shane said finally.

Cliff stared at them for a long moment. Then he opened the door.

Outside in the hallway, half the nursing staff suddenly pretended to be very interested in their clipboards.

Cliff looked at them, back at Shane and Ilya.

Then sighed.

“This hospital is never going to shut up about this.”

## Chapter End Notes

maybe an extra?

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