

liquid gold

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/81102281) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/81102281>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Social Media , Instagram , Meet-Cute , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Fluff , POV Shane Hollander , they're disgustingly in love
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-03-12 Words: 2,401 Chapters: 1/1

liquid gold

by [realmsoffreedom](#)

Summary

mary @hollandaze

ARE SHANE AND ILYA ON THE NEW MEETCUTESNYC???

shreya @snoopyilya

WAIT THEY'VE BEEN HOOKING UP SINCE 2009. WHAT THE FUCK.

isabella @ilyalosophy

HOW DID WE JUST FIND THIS OUT AT 3PM ON A RANDOM TUESDAY

Notes

if you've never seen the meetcutesnyc videos, this is the [instagram](#)

thank you to [sanju](#) for the beta <3

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

Shane's always had mixed feelings about New York City.

On one hand, there's some magic in it. It reminds him of the movies. A place where people make their dreams come true, brimming with inspiration and enthusiasm. Being in New York City makes it clear why so many characters dream of living here. He's never been anywhere like it. It's vibrant and optimistic, the type of optimism that makes you feel like you can accomplish anything.

But it's also loud. Busy, always. Overwhelming even on his best days. He's learned to accept that he'll never truly love the chaos. He's grown more and more used to it, each time they've played here feeling easier than the last, but he doesn't think he'll ever completely love the experience. It's too much for his brain and his body locks up to try and handle it. When he was younger, he always used to shut himself in his hotel room after the game. He didn't feel like he'd missed out on anything when the rest of the team talked about the bars they'd gone to afterward, the clubs. He would've hated every minute.

Little could younger him have known, the key to finally enjoying the city was to marry a big-hearted Russian man whose mere presence is enough to steady Shane's nervous system. Ilya is warm and solid and completely captivating. His voice, and his touch, and the feel of him, the way he's seeped into every part of Shane's life like liquid gold. Shane can't get lost in his head. Not like this.

Ilya had gotten them both out of the team hang at a nearby bar after they'd flown in yesterday. Shane hadn't even said anything about not wanting to go (he didn't, but he figured Ilya wanted to). He hadn't known Ilya had said anything to anyone until Bood had come up behind him as they were leaving the airport and wished him a good night in.

They'd watched a movie. Shane had laid in his husband's arms, Ilya's fingers tracing absentminded patterns on his bare chest, and then he'd fucked Shane until he didn't have a single coherent thought left. Only that he was in love. With Ilya, with hockey, with the life they'd built together. He never thought he'd be here. Shane's gaze catches the ring on Ilya's finger, shiny gold that the sun is making extra bright today, as Ilya is saying something about the restaurant they're meeting some of the other guys at for lunch, and can't help but smile.

The past few years were hell. He was the most anxious he's ever been, the most overwhelmed, the most terrified. Each day felt like a battle and on some of them, he wasn't convinced they would win the war.

He still wouldn't wish those days on anyone, but at this moment, it all kind of feels worth it. If everything was leading to them walking down 86th street, hand in hand, pressed so close together that their bodies are still somehow practically touching, Shane would go through it again. He would go through anything to make sure this is never taken from him.

His phone buzzes against his thigh, and he reaches across his body to grab it so he doesn't have to let go of Ilya's hand.

"Oh, Scott asked if we want to meet up at Kingfisher after the game."

“He will want to show his face after we destroy them?” Ilya asks. “I’m surprised.”

“He and Kip want to catch up.”

Ilya nods. “Yes, lots to catch up on when you’ve been alive for so long.”

Just as Shane’s about to respond, the beginnings of a smile stretching across his face, he hears a new voice.

“Excuse me, are you two a couple?”

Shane stiffens. Instinctively, he tightens his grip on Ilya’s hand as he turns toward the sound.

There’s one guy with a microphone and two others with a camera. They’re looking right at his and Ilya’s joined hands. Shane’s heart starts to race.

He feels Ilya drop his hand and slide his arm around Shane’s waist, pulling him in close, before he responds with a short, “yes.”

“Would you mind telling me the story of how you first met?”

Shane watches Ilya’s expression relax at the same time he feels his grip loosen, his face breaking into a grin. “I know you! On Instagram!”

The guy holding the camera nods, confirming it. Shane sucks in a shaky breath and tries to get his heart rate back to normal without drawing too much attention to himself. Ilya hasn’t let go of him, and he anchors himself to that, to the warmth of his husband’s shoulder against his own. Ilya’s fingers curl around Shane’s waist and Shane exhales.

“At a tournament,” Shane starts to explain, because Ilya clearly trusts these people, and he trusts Ilya. “We’re hockey players. I was playing for Canada and he was playing for Russia.”

“Who won the tournament?”

“Russia,” Ilya says, without missing a beat. He sends a smirk in Shane’s direction.

“Hey, we got silver,” Shane retorts, but he can’t help but smile. He’d vowed redemption the next time they played, and he’d gotten it. It was so satisfying, a warm joy that felt almost giddy. Hockey hadn’t been fun like that in so long.

“What were your first impressions of each other?” The guy asks, and Ilya laughs.

“He found me, before the tournament started. I was smoking behind the building and he came and introduced himself,” Ilya says. “He was so cute.”

“Cute?” Shane stares at him. He never would’ve guessed Ilya thought that. It felt mostly awkward to him.

“He was so nervous,” Ilya says. “But he wanted to wish me good luck.”

“I’d been following his games for a while,” Shane says. For a couple years before, his name kept being mentioned alongside Ilya Rozanov’s. Both of them were the most talked about prospects for the upcoming draft. He’d wanted to learn as much as he could about how Ilya played. He was so determined to be the first draft pick. “I knew I had to talk to him before we got on the ice.”

“Was he what you expected?” One of the cameramen asks.

Shane shakes his head. “Better.”

Ilya’s arm tightens around his waist, and Shane feels his lips press against the side of his head.

“How long have you guys been together?”

Shane exchanges a glance with Ilya. He never knows how to answer this question. He’s not sure they’ve ever told the whole story to anyone.

“As a couple, five years. We got married last July,” Ilya says. There’s a mischievous glint in his eyes that Shane notices, but before he has a chance to get a word in, Ilya continues, “but we were hooking up for eight years before we got together. Non-exclusive.”

“Oh wow, so that’s, what, thirteen years, that you’ve known each other?”

Ilya nods. Shane smiles at him. He can’t bring himself to think about the onslaught Ilya’s probably just unleashed. They’re out. Ilya is a Canadian citizen. They’re married. They play for the same team. Nothing can touch them anymore.

“What have you learned, knowing him for all of those years?”

“He is my favorite person,” Ilya says simply, and Shane’s breath catches in his throat. He sags into Ilya’s hold slightly, and blinks as his vision starts to blur.

“And he’s mine,” Shane manages to echo, and hopes his tears aren’t evident. He watches the smile form on Ilya’s face. It’s one of his soft smiles, the involuntary ones. The kind Shane only sees when he’s so purely, overwhelmingly content. On a lazy morning when Shane’s brought them coffee in bed and they’re curled up together. He’ll watch Ilya scroll through his phone and laugh at funny TikToks with him, nodding along as Ilya points out different references, or launch into his own description of the book he’s currently reading. Ilya watches him with that same content smile on his face, love pouring out of him.

“I don’t want to take up too much of your guys’ time, but just one more question?” The guy with the microphone asks.

Shane nods at the same time Ilya does.

“Five years together, what are your favorite things about each other?”

“He is safe,” Ilya responds. “Boring, I sometimes call it. Predictable. No surprises. No chaos. And I... I didn’t realize how much I needed that, until I met him. He made me see that I

deserved a life like this.”

Shane does not turn to look at him, because he knows he’ll start crying.

“His warmth,” Shane says. “He’s survived a lot, and he’s never let it turn him cold. He still sees the world with so much love, and so much kindness. He makes me feel so cared for, all the time. I’m inspired by him every day.”

The guys thank them and bid their goodbyes. Ilya barely waits the couple seconds for them to walk away before he’s dragging Shane into a kiss. His cheeks are wet, Shane notices, when he brings his hands up to the sides of Ilya’s face.

“Ya tebya lyublyu,” Ilya whispers, when they pull apart. Shane echoes it, in Russian, and watches his husband’s smile grow impossibly wider.

This is his favorite person. He feels it in every look, every touch, every moment that he gets to spend by Ilya’s side. His brain quiets. His body relaxes. The world, as overwhelming as it may be some days, is a bit more tolerable. Because Ilya is warm, and safe, and looks at him like everything’s going to be okay. And no matter what’s happening, Shane knows he has that to anchor himself to.

“What if we skipped lunch?” Ilya asks, pressing a kiss to Shane’s jaw.

“We promised the guys—”

“Can break the promise,” Ilya says. He pecks Shane’s lips once, and then again. “I want you.”

Shane inhales, closing his eyes. He wants him too, more than anything. But they have lunch, and soon it’ll be time to start getting ready for tonight, and they’re already almost to the restaurant.

“We eat quick,” he negotiates, smiling as Ilya groans. “Make an excuse. Go back to the hotel.”

“They will know.”

“I know,” Shane says, his eyes shining.

Ilya’s eyes go wide. “You want them to.”

He just told those guys with cameras something far more revealing, far more precious. Sharing their love with the world has never felt totally comfortable for Shane. It’s too special, too important. Has been in too many of the wrong hands already. Some nights he thinks about what Crowell said, what his old teammates did, and wishes there was a way to go back in time so they would never find out. What’s done is done but he doesn’t know if he’ll ever be able to make peace with the fact that it happened.

Compared to that, this? Making it not so subtle to their teammates – their friends – that his husband is hot and their sex life is the best it’s ever been? He’ll reveal that. He’ll bask in the

feeling of being known like that, of the journey it's taken to get there. He thinks he deserves that.

"I don't care if they do," Shane corrects in a whisper. Ilya tries to stifle his moan into another kiss, his tongue gaining easy entry into Shane's mouth.

"You're perfect," Ilya growls, in between kisses.

Shane exhales. Ilya slips his arm back around his waist and he tucks himself against Ilya's side, head flopping onto his shoulder. He can feel Ilya's pulse. Hear his heartbeat. Ilya's not alone; Shane *wants* him, in every sense of the word.

Getting through this lunch may be one of the hardest things he's ever done.

—

mary @hollandaze

ARE SHANE AND ILYA ON THE NEW MEETCUTESNYC???

alison @hollandersthigs

ilya's death grip on shane when they asked if they were a couple and shane's face 😭 my babies 😭😭

mary @hollandaze

Replying to @hollandersthigs

ugh i know :(shane looked so tense

alison @hollandersthigs

Replying to @hollandaze

yeah :(i wish these guys would approach queer couples differently, they're always so on-edge when they get stopped on the street

shreya @snoopyilya

WAIT THEY'VE BEEN HOOKING UP SINCE 2009. WHAT THE FUCK.

isabella @ilyalosophy

HOW DID WE JUST FIND THIS OUT AT 3PM ON A RANDOM TUESDAY

adrian @shanestits

"he made me see that i deserved a life like this" oh im gonna be sick. they invented love

adrian @shanestits

Replying to @shanestits

SHANE'S FAVORITE THING ABOUT ILYA IS HIS WARMTH???

sierra @rozanovscurls

they're each other's favourite people 🥺

alison @hollandersthigs

the way they're looking at each other as they're answering is so beautiful

ayesha @24loves81

we moved on from hooking up from 8 years way too quick. since their rookie season???

samir @lovehollanov

Replying to @24loves81

i think even before that if they meant the IPC? that was before they got drafted

ayesha @24loves81

Replying to @lovehollanov

wait holy fuck you're right. holy FUCK.

shreya @snoopyilya

wait but can we talk about shane going up to ilya to introduce himself before the IPC?? thats so adorable 🥺😭

cody @rozanovlore

is it wrong that i'm surprised they lasted? 8 years is a long ass situationship

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @IlyaRozanov81

Replying to @rozanovlore

no, i am too. surprised and grateful every single day.

cody @rozanovlore

Replying to @IlyaRozanov81

WHAT THE FUCK

Shane Hollander ✓ @ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer

Replying to @IlyaRozanov81

Me too. ❤️

Hayden Pike ✓ @HaydenPike

Warmth, love, and kindness? ...Rozanov?

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @IlyaRozanov81

Replying to @HaydenPike

is not for you, pike. don't worry

Hayden Pike ✓ @HaydenPike

Replying to @IlyaRozanov81



Zane Boodram ✓ @ZaneBoodram

Wait, this is why y'all left lunch early that day?

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @IlyaRozanov81

Replying to @ZaneBoodram



my husband wanted to

Troy Barrett ✓ @TroyBarrett

Replying to @IlyaRozanov81

Oh I'm sure he did. 😬

Evan Dykstra ✓ @EvanDykstra

Replying to @TroyBarrett

On second thought.... kinda glad we didn't know.

Troy Barrett ✓ @TroyBarrett

Replying to @EvanDykstra

Did you really not know?

Evan Dykstra ✓ @EvanDykstra

Replying to @TroyBarrett

Good point.

shreya @snoopyilya

does this mean we all just have to be on high alert now? in case they randomly decide to drop more lore?

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @IlyaRozanov81

Replying to @snoopyilya

yes

Shane Hollander ✓ @ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer

@IlyaRozanov81 I love you. ❤️

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @IlyaRozanov81

Replying to @ShaneHollanderHockeyPlayer

You are everything, моя любовь

End Notes

i had a lot of fun with this haha

thank you so much for reading! i'd love to know what you thought. my tumblr is [thehostofashton](#) if you'd like to chat :)

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