

Weak Excuses

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Weak Excuses

by [theuniversedoesnotscream](#)

Summary

5 times people believed Shane is trapped in an abusive marriage and the 1 time Shane sets the record straight ft. misunderstandings, good intentions and a bisexual Russian menace who loves his boring Canadian husband

Notes

Hi! I got this idea in my head and just had to write it. I love a good 5+1 fic!

Enjoy! :)

* trigger warning: deals with mentions of implied domestic abuse (i.e. bruises/marks) so read with caution 

*self-edited so all mistakes are mine

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

Chapter 1: Hayden Finds Out

Hayden Pike likes to believe he knows Shane Hollander better than most people. Being his best friend, Hayden is privileged to the inside view of Shane's life. Knows that Shane always takes losing particularly hard to the point of becoming non-verbal. Knows that drinking is out of the question for Shane during the season and despite being friends for nearly a decade, Hayden hasn't seen the man eat anything that wasn't pre-planned and calculated to his exact macros. Hayden knows physical touch can be nearly unbearable for Shane, especially with strangers.

In the beginning stages of their friendship, getting Shane to talk about anything non-hockey related felt like pulling teeth. Hayden has never met someone more focused and dedicated to the sport than Shane. The man lives, sleeps, eats, and breathes hockey. The media likes to portray Shane as 'not the most sociable' or 'boring' which Hayden disagrees with. Sure, it may take Shane a little longer than others to get a joke. It took Hayden a while to figure out just how funny Shane can be, often caught off guard by his blunt humor.

Every home game Montreal plays, Shane has his routine. Every away game Montreal plays, Shane performs a different but equally precise routine. Hayden knows a lot of hockey players can be superstitious but it's more than that to Shane. Hayden also knows that Shane plays a lot better when they're in Boston and Hayden can thank Boston Lily for that. Each time Shane comes back to the hotel room, his posture is looser, a softer smile on his face. While Hayden doesn't want the dirty details, he's thrilled his best friend finally found someone.

Hayden tries not to pry too much into whatever Shane has going on with Lily. Shane is like a skittish feral cat. Come on too strong and you risk scaring it off. So, Hayden treads lightly. Maybe that's how he missed the warning signs. Looking back, Hayden wonders if maybe he pushed more that this wouldn't be happening. That if he tried harder Hayden would be able to unsee the deep, red lacerations across Shane's back. That if Hayden had been more serious instead of teasing his best friend about Lily being just a buddy, he could erase the sight of faded yellow and purple bruises along Shane's torso from his brain. Maybe, just maybe, if Hayden was better at getting Shane to open up, Hayden wouldn't have nightmares about the bite marks pierced into his best friend's skin.

Hayden thought he knew his best friend better than most.

Now, it feels like Hayden doesn't really know him at all.

Tonight, the Montreal Metros played against the Boston Raiders and as usual, Shane made his usual excuses before leaving the locker room at lightning speed once the game was finished. Despite winning the game 4-3, Hayden can't enjoy the celebration with his teammates because his mind is filled with scenarios of what Shane could be enduring tonight. Unsurprisingly, when Hayden returns to the room, Shane is nowhere to be seen. Hayden's

phone pings with a notification and he nearly rips the charger out of the wall in his haste to see if Shane needed him.

Jackie <3

Congratulations on the win baby!

You guys played one hell of a game

Hayden Pike is the luckiest guy on earth. Marrying Jackie was the smartest thing he ever did, besides signing with the Montreal Metros. Hayden feels his stress lower as he reads his wife's texts. While Hayden normally tells his wife everything, he hasn't told her about his suspicions about Shane and Boston Lily. The last thing he wants is to betray Shane's trust but he's been dying to talk to someone about this. If Hayden's being honest, he's surprised J.J. hasn't mentioned anything. Hayden knows for a fact that he isn't the only one who has noticed the bruises.

Hayden knows it's late but damn if he doesn't miss his wife. At least that's the reason he gives himself as he presses 'call' on his phone. "*Hayd? What's up?*" Jackie's voice rings through the speaker. "What? Can't a man call his wife because he misses her?" Hayden responds with a chuckle. "*I miss you too but we both know that's not the reason you called me,*" Jackie replies. "How are the kids?" Hayden questions and breathes a sigh of relief when Jackie lets him change the subject. "*Jade and Ruby have decided that they are going to become professional figure skaters and Arthur has decided that he only likes bananas and corn chips.*" Hayden laughs sympathetically. He knows the twins don't make it easy on his wife, especially now that they are expecting their fourth. Another reason as to why Hayden hasn't mentioned anything about Shane. The less stress he can give his wife the better. "*So, what are you doing back at the hotel? I assumed you guys would be out later than this,*" Jackie teases. Hayden is about to respond when he hears the sound of the hotel key at the door.

The hotel room door starts to creak open and Hayden hastily apologizes before hanging up. "Oh hey man. Thought you'd be back later." Hayden internally winces at the loud upbeat in his tone. Shane comes into the room quiet, too quiet in Hayden's opinion, and startles at Hayden's voice. "Oh uh yeah...I guess," Shane mutters. Hayden narrows his eyes as he catalogues his best friend. Shane's shoulders are nearly by his ears with how tense he is. His voice is raw. Hayden's hands clench the bedsheets as he notices tearstains on Shane's cheeks. The look on Shane's face has Hayden stopping in his tracks. It's more than just sadness. It's pure devastation.

It's when Shane goes into the bathroom that Hayden realizes his shirt is on inside out, a size too large, and a handprint lies around Shane's wrist.

"Did something happen with Lily?" Hayden asks hesitantly as Shane slides into his bed. Shane whips his head around to look at his best friend. Shane scoffs and tries to play it off,

“Nothing happened. We’re fine. She just uh...uhm she has an early morning so...” Hayden doesn’t believe that for a second. “Look buddy, if there’s ever anything you want to tell me, I’m here for you. You know that right?” Hayden nearly begs. A wry smile graces Shane’s face for an instant before sliding off, “Yeah, I know. Thanks Hayd.” Hayden leaves it at that, knowing it’ll backfire if he presses more tonight.

Hayden finds out a week later that Shane and Lily split up.

At first, Hayden is overjoyed. Shane is free from the abuse and could be free. So why is his best friend more miserable now than he was when he was with Lily? Selfishly, Hayden is glad to see no more fresh marks or bruises mar his best friend’s body.

When Hayden learns that Boston Lily is really Ilya Rozanov, Hayden is so blindsided by the news, the reality doesn’t register right away. “Look Hayd, I wanted to tell. I was going to tell you, I just...” Shane trails off as he glances at Rozanov, “And I know this is probably shocking and confusing but I promise I really did um...I really did try but I just can’t help it.” It takes Hayden a minute to realize what Shane is implying.

Hayden reaches over to grip Shane’s hands, ignoring the glare from the Russian blonde. “Shane, listen to me. I don’t care that you’re gay. Hell, you could be in some kind of polygamous relationship and I’d still support you. But *him*? Seriously?” Hayden can’t keep the disgust out of his voice. Rozanov looks at Hayden with similar displeasure on his face. “25th best hockey player should not have opinion,” Rozanov says and Shane elbows him, “Ilya be nice.” And that’s a first. Hayden has never known Shane to call Rozanov anything other than well Rozanov. But it’s the way he says Rozanov’s first name. The exasperated but fond expression in his voice. The barely hidden amused look on his face.

It’s at this point that reality sets in. The reality in which ‘Lily’ was never the one to lay hands on Shane. It was Rozanov.

“Rozanov you motherfucker!” Hayden spits as he launches himself over Shane’s kitchen table. Hayden manages to get a punch in before Shane separates the two of them. “Hayden! What the fuck?!” Shane demands. “You think it’s fucking funny to lay your hands on someone?” Hayden snarls over Shane’s shoulder. Rozanov glares back, “You put your hands on me Pike.” Hayden rolls his eyes, “Oh don’t act like you don’t know! I saw them. I saw fucking everything and I won’t let you get away this.”

“Okay! That’s enough. Ilya go put some ice on your eye and Hayden I’ll walk you out,” Shane says firmly. When Shane leads Hayden to the door, Hayden knows Shane is less than pleased by how this went. “Shane I-” Shane holds his hand up and shakes his head. “Look, I know you two haven’t always been the friendliest but it would mean the world to me if you tried and I’ll be having the same talk with Ilya too.” Hayden nods mutely before hugging Shane tightly, missing the way Shane winces at the pressure. “I love you buddy. Nothing is going to change that. Even if you have terrible taste in men,” Hayden says with a wink so that

Shane knows he's teasing. Shane rolls his eyes and lightly punches Hayden's shoulder, "I love you too."

"Does anyone else know?" Hayden asks curiously as he pulls his shoes on. Shane shoves his hands into his pants pockets and nods, "My uh my parents know and um Rose knows." Shane's face is turning a soft pink at the admission. "But that's it."

"So do not tell secret or I will kill you slowly," Rozanov calls from the kitchen. Shane rolls his eyes, "He's kidding...I think." Hayden has a feeling that if Rozanov found out that Hayden was the one who spilled their secret, Hayden's body would never be found. "Shane I would never out you," Hayden says earnestly. "I know. Look it's late and I'm sure Jackie is missing your help with the kids." Ever since Amber came into the world several months ago, Hayden and Jackie's life have been a whirlwind of diapers, sleepless nights and cranky mornings. His wife is a champ. Hayden makes a mental note to order Jackie's favourite chocolates.

"How long has this been going on?" Hayden asks as he goes to open the front door. Funnily, Shane's blush deepens. "Since our uh...since our rookie season." Hayden's mouth drops open. Rozanov has been abusing Shane for 9 years? Hayden needs to leave before he kills the man Shane is now calling his boyfriend. Hastily waving goodbye, Hayden practically throws himself down the stairs and to his car.

After their breakup, Rozanov manipulated Shane back to him somehow, Hayden thinks darkly as he makes the drive home. Shane takes the world as is, always seeing the best in people, trying his hardest to please everyone. While Hayden feels slightly guilty for admitting it, Shane is the perfect manipulation target. But...Hayden hasn't noticed any new visible signs of abuse. Maybe Rozanov smartened up after their breakup. Maybe Shane put Rozanov in his place, Hayden imagines gleefully. Shane and Ilya are a similar weight, height and build. Shane can handle himself. That thought is what allows Hayden to make the drive home without turning around and going back.

Hayden is going to die at the hands of Ilya Rozanov and Hayden can't blame him. When Hayden had filmed that FanMail video for Brad, he never noticed Shane and Rozanov kissing in the window. Hayden doesn't deserve Shane as his best friend. Shane who told him that it was an accident. Reassured him that of course he knows Hayden wouldn't have intentionally outed them. Made sure that *Hayden* was okay after the video was leaked. Jesus, he's a shitty friend.

And yet somehow, they make their way past that moment. After the abysmal reaction from the Metros to Shane tripping on the ice, Shane signed with the Ottawa Centaurs once his contract is finished. As much as Hayden misses his best friend, he can't deny how much happier Shane seems. Now that Shane and Rozanov are on the same team, the Centaurs are unbeatable. They are currently going for their 9th straight win this season. The season that started nine games ago. Hayden has no doubt they're going for the Cup this year.

By some miracle, he and Rozanov have even began to semi-tolerate each other, in small doses. Most of that being Shane's doing. And once Hayden found out the two were getting married, Hayden knew Rozanov was going to be in the picture whether he likes it or not. Hayden hasn't forgotten what transpired all those years ago. You know what they say, keep your friends close and your best friend's husband even closer.

For Shane's birthday, Rozanov pointedly sends a text to Jackie instead of Hayden inviting them to a surprise party at Shane's cottage that says lovely Jackie and her lovely children are invited and the husband who Ilya isn't sure what she sees in him can also come. God, Rozanov is such an asshole.

Hayden and Jackie decide to leave the kids with her parents for a rare-child free weekend. The drive up to Shane's cottage is nice and several of the Ottawa Centaurs and their spouses are there when Jackie and Hayden arrive. "Ah my favourite Pike!" Ilya exclaims as he sweeps Jackie into a hug. Jackie laughs, "Hi Ilya. Thanks again for the invite." Ilya waves her off, "Where are the little Pikes?" Hayden must admit that Ilya is surprisingly good with their children, though Hayden has never left Ilya unattended with any of them. "It's a child-free and parent-free weekend," Jackie explains happily. "Ah so sad. Pike will not have anyone to beat at Shane's birthday game," Ilya says with a smirk. "Fuck you Rozanov," Hayden snaps. "Boys behave. We are here for Shane, understood?" The glare Jackie fixes them both with have both men looking guilty.

"Where is Shane anyways?" Hayden questions. "His parents. Yuna make excuse to get Shane away so I can decorate for party," Ilya explains as he guides them out further into the cottage. "They should be here soon. I told Shane he has birthday surprise waiting for him," Ilya says with a wink and Hayden suppresses a shudder. Hayden ends up talking to Luca Haas and Zane Boodram when Ilya yells at everyone to hide. Everyone scatters inside and outside of the cottage. Hayden and Jackie end up hiding behind the living room wall by the stairs.

Hayden can hear the front door open and Ilya greeting Shane and his parents. "Do I get my surprise now?" Shane asks and Hayden stifles a laugh. Patience has never been Shane's strong suit. "Later sweetheart. The team wanted to sing you happy birthday," Ilya says. "Oh," Hayden can hear the pleased tone in Shane's voice, "Can we even do a group call that big?" Ilya shakes his head, "No need." That's their cue.

"Surprise!" The startled look on Shane's face is absolutely priceless. Shane turns around and glares at Ilya, "What did you do?" Ilya shrugs innocently, "What? Team wish to sing happy birthday and they will." Shane shakes his head, but a smile threatens to spill over his lips. "What happened to not making a big deal?" Ilya frowns, "I make no such promises. You are most important person in my life. You deserve to be with the people that love you on your special day. You deserve to be celebrated *Moy Lyubov*." Hayden can hear the sincere affection in Rozanov's tone.

Once Shane makes his rounds through the Centaurs, Hayden and Jackie make themselves known. Hayden will never forget the incredulous smile on his face when Hayden taps him on the shoulder. "I'm so glad you're here," Shane says happily. Someone turned on a playlist of music and David, Shane's dad, lights up the barbecue.

The summer day is hot and humid and Hayden finds himself not the only guy slipping his shirt off. “Hey, who wants to go for a swim?” Dykstra calls from the lawn where he, Young, Holmberg, Barrett, Hayes and Boyle are playing soccer. Everyone readily agrees and makes the trip down to the dock and into the water. “Hollander! Come on in!” LaPointe yells as he jumps off the dock.

“Hollander is boring and does not like the water,” Rozanov says with a gleeful cackle as Shane pushes him off the end of the dock. When Rozanov comes up from under the water, he grins up at Shane, “If you wanted to get me wet, you could’ve just said so.” Shane snorts and complaints from their teammates fill the air. “Asshole,” Shane says fondly.

Hayden gets caught up in a game of water volleyball he doesn’t notice Shane leaving the dock. It isn’t until he’s getting cold that he notices the dock is empty. Hayden swims over to Jackie who’s lounging in a pool floaty with Cassie, Boodram’s wife, Caitlin, Dykstra’s wife, and Lisa, Hayes’s wife to tell her he’s getting out before climbing up with the dock steps.

Walking back up to the cottage, Hayden hears Shane’s voice and pauses. It sounds higher than normal. Hayden frowns as he walks closer to the voice and freezes when he hears the unmistakable Russian accent. When did Rozanov get out of the water? Hayden finds Rozanov crowding Shane up against the bottom of the deck, his hands roaming everywhere over Shane’s body. “Ilya,” Shane says breathlessly, “Everyone’s here.” Ilya doesn’t stop and mutters something in Shane’s ear that has Shane’s reddening quickly.

“Oh Hayden! Can you help me bring out the food?” Yuna calls from the back deck door. Hayden glances up and nods quickly, “Of course! I’m coming.” Another look at Shane and Rozanov as he makes his way to the bottom steps has Hayden freezing again. Hayden blinks. And blinks again but it doesn’t erase the large bruise on Shane’s left side.

No. Not again.

Chapter 2: Rose's War

Chapter Notes

I don't think I've ever written a fic this fast in my life! Thank you for all your support so far on this fic <3

Enjoy <3

*as always, self-edited you know the drill

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

Before her career as a Hollywood's sweetheart, Rose Landry grew up in Michigan with three older brothers. Like most of the state, Rose's family is no stranger to hockey, often cheering on the Detroit Red Wings at every opportunity. While Rose wouldn't consider herself a super die-hard hockey fan, she would have to be living under a rock not to know who Shane Hollander is.

Rose has watched Shane's career on and off since the 2009 MLH draft when he signed with the Montreal Metros. Seeing his progression from Rookie of the Year to becoming Captain of the Metros has made Rose feel a burgeoning sense of pride for the hockey player. If anyone deserves it, it's Shane. Rose has seen the innate focus and effort Shane puts on and off the ice. She feels akin to Shane in his dedication to his craft like she is with her acting.

It never occurred to Rose that out of all the places she would meet Shane Hollander it would be at Mile End while filming X Squad. From what she understands, Hollander is not one to frequent bars so imagine her surprise to find Shane sliding down into the opposite side of her booth.

"Are you here to help me finish these fries?" Rose asks as she pops a salty fry into her mouth. Shane slowly turns to face her, a mixed expression of confusion and realization at who is sitting across from him. "The chef gave them to me and they are quite delicious but I won't be able to fit into my costume if I eat them all so..." Rose trails off. Shane continues to stare at Rose until she introduces herself.

Even in the dim light of the restaurant, Rose can see the blush appear on Shane's cheeks. "I'm Shane. I'm uh a huge fan," Shane admits with a small, incredulous laugh. A feeling of warmth spreads through Rose at the knowledge Shane not only knows who she is, but that he's a fan! "Would it surprise you to know that I am actually a big fan of yours?" Rose replies, plucking another fry from the basket. Shane's eyebrows raise considerably, "Are you serious?" Rose nods as she pushes the basket of fries toward him, "I'm a Michigan girl with

three brothers. Hockey is practically in my blood. Maybe in another life I would've been a hockey player."

Shane smiles, "I'm sure you would be a great hockey player." Rose likes the freckles that scatter across Shane's face. "Have a fry Shane Hollander." Rose doesn't think much of the hesitation Shane has before taking the smallest fry in the basket and chewing carefully. Looking back now Rose wonders just how long Shane has struggled to eat normally. The rest of the night is spent getting to know each other and playing several rounds of Poker.

The two keep in touch after leaving the restaurant, often texting back and forth. When Rose is back in Montreal, she asks Shane to grab dinner with her. She's pleasantly surprised to get his enthusiastic response. They go out the following night to an Italian restaurant that in Shane's words 'has the best chicken parm', even if he doesn't have any.

It's not long before Rose becomes enamoured with Shane. While they are currently undefined, Rose can see herself in a relationship with Shane. He's so different from the hockey players she's known. Soft-spoken instead of brash. Has an insane hockey IQ. Doesn't get caught up in gossip. Never one to make headlines for the wrong reasons. No wonder he's known as Canada's Golden Boy.

When Shane flies out to L.A. to visit her on set, Rose has a plan. Rose has never hesitated to go after what she wants and she doesn't plan on letting Shane get away. Rose chalks it up to Shane's innate shyness as to why he hasn't asked her to be exclusive. Oddly charmed that Shane is not one of those guys who demands to be in a relationship with her like some guys she knows.

They're cuddling on the couch of the hotel suite the director is putting Rose up in for the duration of the movie's filming timeline when Rose finally brings up the conversation. "Would you want to be in a relationship?" Rose asks as casually as possible as the T.V. plays in the background. Rose has her head on Shane's chest and Shane looks down at her, "Are we not?" Rose laughs before realizing Shane genuinely means that. "Well, usually one person asks the other to be together," Rose explains with only a hint of teasing in her tone.

"God, I really suck at this," Shane mutters. "You're better at it than you think you are," Rose says kindly and Shane gives her a rueful smile. "I would like to be in a relationship with you," and it's the earnest need that captures Rose's heart. "I'd like that too," Rose says quietly before connecting their lips together.

Predictably, news of their romance sparks like wildfire. Dozens of headlines and thousands of comments flood Rose's social media platforms. Shane has been getting asked about his love life during after-game interviews. Being with Shane is like a breath of fresh air. Rose has gone to multiple games wearing a Montreal Metros jersey much to the chagrin of some diehard fans. Rose tries not to read too many comments, happy to live in their little bubble of bliss a while longer.

The first time Rose and Shane take it further than fevered kisses and clumsy hand jobs, Rose is surprised to notice how long it takes for Shane to perform. They find their rhythm eventually but it's far from the best sex Rose has ever had. Rose is not one to toot her own

horn very often but she knows her worth. She puts a lot of care into her body. But Rose passes it off as first time nerves.

It's almost comical the relief of Shane's face when Rose decides to take more of a dominant role in the bedroom the second time around. Shane is obedient to a fault and eager to please. It's trial and error but Shane slowly learns what Rose likes with the same dedication he has on the ice. Rose doesn't focus on the fact the only way Shane could get himself off was when she was on her hands and knees, facing away from him. In retrospect, it makes Rose laugh and then feel instantly sad for her best friend. To be so afraid of who he is that Shane sawed himself down into an acceptable version of what he believes people expect to see.

Their breakup is one of the healthiest Rose has ever had. The reminiscent look of love on Shane's face when Rose asks if he's been with another guy confirms her suspicions. Rose's heart aches for her new best friend. The MHL is hardly welcoming nor accepting, often sliding their racist and homophobic rhetoric in subtle ways. Even from the first moment they met, Rose has felt this protective urge toward Shane. Rose would go to war for her best friend. She just never thought she'd actually be drafted.

When Shane and Ilya are outed in the FanMail video, Rose is one of the first people to text Shane to make sure he's okay. Finding out that the man Shane has been with is Ilya Rozanov of all people has Rose doing a double take. Ilya Rozanov is a well-known ladies man, more often than not pictured leaving with different women from various clubs. His reputation precedes him. Rose knows very little of the womanizer Rozanov is painted as besides the fact that he quite the chirper on and off the ice. Rose hates to admit that while Ilya Rozanov is a complete tool off the ice, he's a damn good hockey player. One of the best she's ever seen.

Things make more sense the first time Shane, Ilya and Rose all hang out together. Shane invited Rose to the cottage for a week to getaway from the movie set. Rose happily agreed as it also gave her the opportunity to really see Ilya in action. Who is he away from all the cameras and the spotlight? Who is he when he's not being a menace on the ice?

Turns out, Ilya Rozanov is one gigantic softie but a menace all the same. The entire week Rose is there, Ilya is constantly making sure Shane has enough to eat, keeping him hydrated and entertained. Rose can confirm that their rivalry is alive and well. The constant bickering. Turning everything into a 'spirited' competition. Rose doesn't know how they don't find it exhausting. But even for the 9 months they dated, Rose has never seen anyone more competitive than Shane. Until Ilya. Before Rose leaves at the end of her weeklong stay, she tells Shane she approves. The smile on Shane's face makes Rose believe she would date him all over again if it got Shane to where he is now. Out. Happy. Free.

Several months fly by and Rose is finally back in Montreal after finishing the latest X Squad movie. In hindsight, she really should've let Shane know she was coming but she hadn't seen her best friend in months and she wanted to surprise him. The Uber drops her off in front of Shane's house and she grabs her bag before walking up the front steps.

Shane had given Rose the lock code, so she types it in before slipping into the house. The lights are dimmed and the house is oddly quiet. Rose knows he's here because Shane's car is parked in the driveway. Rose sets her bag down as she moves further into the house. The lights underneath the kitchen cabinets glow a soft yellow. Rose peeks into the backyard but

doesn't see Shane. She's about to give up and text him when she hears a loud thud coming from upstairs.

Frowning, Rose ascends the stairs slowly. As she reaches the top, she can hear voices but they're too low to make out what's being said. Rose moves quietly towards Shane's bedroom. The door is ajar and she peeks her head in and nearly drops her phone.

Shane is naked on his knees on the bedroom floor with his hands tied behind his back. His head is bowed forward and his heels are digging into his ass. Ilya circles around Shane like a predator, holding something in his hand that Rose cannot see from this angle. "You think I would not find out?" Ilya asks lowly. Find out what? Rose thinks quietly. "You think you can get away with it?" Ilya's voice darkens. Shane shakes his head frantically, "No! I'm sorry! I-ahh!" A broken cry is pulled from Shane's throat as Ilya strikes him across the back with a whip. Rose gasps quietly, her hand quickly covering her mouth.

Ilya leans down by Shane's ear, "I did not tell you that you could speak." Rose wrinkles her nose. When Shane looks up at Ilya, Rose can see the tearstains on Shane's cheeks. "Such a pretty mouth. Too bad is useless," Ilya says as he backhands Shane hard across the face. Rose flinches at the loud crack of skin. Shane looks up at Ilya, his eyes glazed over. From this angle, Rose can't see the dopey grin on Shane's face but she hears the whimper that he lets out.

"I think I can find a suitable replacement," Ilya muses and Shane squirms as he shakes his head in disagreement. Ilya stares down at Shane silently before moving to stand behind him. Pressing his foot against Shane's spine, Ilya pushes Shane onto the floor. Shane's face is resting against a fluffy carpet on the floor, ass in the air. Ilya removes his foot from Shane's spine and steps on the back of Shane's neck. Rose bites the inside of her cheek so hard she tastes blood.

"No. My toy would not like that *da*? But what use do I have for broken toys?" Ilya asks as he steps off Shane's neck. Rose can hear the strangled gulp of air Shane's lungs try to take in. "I'll be good I swear," Shane rasps. Ilya aims the whip directly over Shane's hole before landing another smack. Shane nearly collapses into a heap on the floor. Rose mistakes his whine for pain and not pleasure.

Ilya pays no attention to the noises Shane is making. Instead, Ilya proceeds to strike to whip across Shane's spine and against his ribs. "What was that? Could not hear you," Ilya taunts. "I'm sorry! I'll be a good boy for you I promise!" Even from far away, Rose can see the blooming welts on Shane's skin. Ilya tuts, "You say this every time and yet here we are." Shane lets out a sob, "I-I'll be better I swear! I'll listen to you. Whatever you say. Just please!"

Rose watches in horror as Ilya undoes his jeans and underwear, turning Shane onto his back before pressing himself into Shane with no prep. "So greedy," Ilya grunts as he thrusts into Shane, "Slutty fucking hole swallowing me whole." Shane claws at the carpet underneath him as he arches into Ilya. "This is all your good for. To make me feel good. Your sole purpose in life. Can't do anything else worthwhile. Will keep you as trophy I think," Ilya pants as he drills into Shane relentlessly. Rose clenches her jaw tightly. How fucking dare Ilya speak to Shane like that?

“I fucking own you.” Several slaps across Shane’s face have his cheek turning bright red. Shane drops his head back as he comes all over his and Ilya’s chests. “Fucking worthless. Cannot even wait for me to finish,” Ilya says in disdain before spitting on Shane’s face. Ilya pulls out harshly and stands up. “Clean yourself up. You look like shit.” Rose takes that as her cue to leave and practically flies down the stairs and out the front door.

Rose’s hands shake as her mind replays what she just saw. The look on Shane’s face when Ilya told him he looks like shit is burned into her brain. Wounded. Rose has half a mind to march back in there and confront Ilya but she knows she needs to be smart about this. The last thing Rose wants is for Shane to get hurt more because she was too impulsive. How did she miss this? Rose thought that she knew Shane would come to her if he had any issues and he never has so stupidly Rose thought he was okay. How could she have been so blind?

Suddenly, Rose’s mind flashes back to the first time they slept together. The faded teeth marks indented in Shane’s skin. The bruises she had believed to be from playing hockey. The unsureness and frankly frightened way Shane approached sex. From what Shane has told her, Shane has only been with her and one guy. If this is what Shane has been conditioned to believe is healthy sex, Rose shudders to think of how much worse it could be.

While Rose makes it to a hotel, she sends a quick text letting Shane know she’s in Montreal and wants to see him. Rose doesn’t get a response until the next day but she’s relieved to have Shane invite her over. Selfishly, Rose hopes Ilya isn’t there because she needs to figure out what’s going on with Shane.

Rose makes it back to Shane’s house a little after 1pm. Shane opens the door and gives her a big hug. “Hey Rose,” Shane says happily. “Hi Shane,” Rose says as brightly as she can. As she looks over Shane’s shoulder she sees Ilya staring at them from the living room. “Hi Ilya,” Rose calls out and hopes her voice doesn’t sound fake. “Hi Rose,” Ilya replies but his eyes never leave Shane. The rest of the day follows a similar pattern. If Shane moves, so does Ilya. Ilya stares at Shane like he’s worried he’ll disappear if Ilya takes his eyes off him for a second. Rose doesn’t like how closely Ilya is watching her best friend.

“What about some wine?” Rose asks as the food they order arrives. “Uh check the wine fridge in the kitchen island,” Shane calls as he goes to get the food. Rose finds a nice bottle of white wine and proceeds to pull out three wine glasses. “No, none for Shane. He will not drink wine.” Rose nearly drops the bottle of wine at the sound of Ilya’s voice. “What? Why not?” Rose asks, genuinely confused. They’ve shared wine together before on multiple occasions. “Because I say so.”

“I can have a little bit,” Shane counters as walks the food into the kitchen. The look Ilya sends Shane’s way is glacial, “No. You have water so drink that.” Shane flashes Rose an apologetic smile and shrug, “You guys enjoy.” Shane grabs a glass and fills it with water from the fridge. Rose’s hands shake as she pours the two glasses of wine. “Cheers,” Rose says with a forced smile as she hands Ilya his glass instead of throwing it in his face like she wants to.

Rose doesn’t miss the way Ilya keeps touching Shane while they eat. Calculating every bite that Shane takes. Rose wonders if Shane’s eating issues started with Ilya and another wave of disgust runs through her. “Eat more,” Ilya says lowly as Shane picks at his chicken salad. A

complicated look passes over Shane's face but he takes another bite. Rose wants to stab Ilya with her fork.

Thankfully, Rose catches a break when Ilya announces he is going to pick up Anya from Yuna and David's. "I will tell Yuna second favourite son says hello," Ilya says as he leans down to kiss Shane on the cheek. Shane rolls his eyes, "Yeah okay asshole." After Ilya leaves, Shane begins to tidy up the takeout boxes from dinner. Rose works alongside Shane silently as she wracks her brain trying to come up with a non-suspicious way to ask Shane if Ilya is a controlling piece of shit.

"So...how have things been with you two lately?" Rose asks as they settle back on the couch. Shane smiles, "Good. Really good actually. Ilya is going to sign with Ottawa. He'll be closer to me now and with the charity it makes a lot of sense." The last thing Rose wants is Ilya more accessible to Shane. "We've been through so much together," Shane says quietly, "It's strange having something change, even if it's for the better." Rose would argue it's for the worst but she nods along anyways. "Well, he certainly has good taste," Rose says and Shane blushes and waves the compliment off.

"I should probably head out. It's getting late but we should see each other before I fly back home next week," Rose says as she stands up. Shane walks her to the door and helps with her coat. Before she leaves, Rose turns and looks at Shane. "You know I love you right?" Shane nods, "Of course. We're best friends." Rose smiles warmly, "Which means that whenever you need me, I'm here okay? I don't care if I'm in fucking Switzerland and you need like a kidney. I am here for you." Shane tilts his head and he looks like an adorably confused puppy. "Thanks Rose. You know I'd do the same for you." Which she does.

Rose just hopes when Shane needs her, she isn't too late.

Chapter End Notes

Comments kudos are greatly loved and appreciated! ❤️

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See you on the next one ❤️

Chapter 3: Yuna and David learn a little too much about their son

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! The support on this fic has been so incredible and I am so grateful to all of you. This chapter took a little longer because I was struggling in portraying Yuna and David as authentically as possible and I hope I did.

This chapter deals with themes of infertility, racism, misunderstandings of BDSM dynamics, implied domestic abuse, and potentially unethical therapist use. Again, please read the tags and heed the warnings and take care of yourselves while reading!

Enjoy!

*self-edited so you know the deal

Yuna and David Hollander have always wanted children. The more the merrier in their eyes. David grew up with two brothers and Yuna knew what it was like to be an only child, and she didn't want her children to have the same experience. However, infertility struggle after infertility struggle weighed heavy on the Hollanders. Yuna and David talked at lengths about their options. Yuna felt she would not be able to handle a surrogate carrying their child, the emotional toll too great. Adoption was their next option. They even got as far as filling out paperwork and being in the delivery room when the baby was born, only for the mother to change her mind at the 4last second. While Yuna and David understood, of course they did, the ache and emptiness they felt after turned them off to adoption altogether.

Maybe having children just wasn't in the cards for them. Coming to terms with being childless was one of the most difficult experiences the couple has ever been through. It really tested their relationship but David and Yuna came out stronger because of it.

The two take trips all over the world, visiting Yuna's home country of Japan, eating their weight in pasta in Italy and taking photographs of Tanzanian wildlife among others. When they arrive back home from their latest trip to Indonesia, Yuna believes the sickness she feels is a result of travelling. But when the symptoms persist, she knows what it is.

It's like they say, a mother always knows.

Yuna doesn't remember the drive to or back from the pharmacy, but she remembers her hands shaking so bad she dropped the pregnancy box twice as she tried to open it. Those 10-minutes of waiting were some of the longest of Yuna's life. When the timer beeps, Yuna hesitates to look at it. After seeing so many negative tests, Yuna is expecting the worst result. She has to do a double take as she holds the test between her fingers.

Positive.

Yuna gasps as she puts a hand over her mouth as she stares at the test in disbelief. Two bright pink lines stare back at her.

That night when David comes home, Yuna hands him a small gift bag. David looks at her in confusion. He knew it was neither his birthday nor an anniversary. Yuna stares intently as David pulls out the Ottawa Centaurs onesie. The expression of pure awe on David's face is one Yuna will always remember.

"Are you serious?" David asks, his eyes never straying from the onesie in front of him. "Yes. I need to make a doctor's appointment to confirm but it's happening," Yuna says, rare, unbridled joy in her voice. "We're going to be parents," David yells in astonishment and he rushes to pick Yuna up into a tight hug. "I love you so much," David's voice is muffled into Yuna's shoulder. "I love you too."

From the moment Shane comes into the world, Yuna and David Hollander swear the rest of their lives to protecting their son from the world's cruelties. Unfortunately, Shane is two days old the first time it happens.

David's parents come to visit Shane, Yuna and David in the hospital the day after Shane's birth. David watches on proudly as Yuna introduces Shane to his grandparents. "My my, isn't he just..." David's mother, Beth, trails off. "Yes, he is quite ah unique looking," David's father, Greg, fills in. Out of the corner of his eye, David sees Yuna stiffen.

"You should be prepared for lots of questions," Beth says as she adjusts Shane in her arms. "What for?" David asks tightly, despite the sinking feeling in his chest. David knows that his parents weren't exactly thrilled to find out David began dating Yuna nor when they got married.

"Well...where he's from you know? What he is." The sinking feeling solidifies into rage. "*What* is he?" Yuna asks, glaring at her in-laws. "No not like that," Beth rushes to defend herself, "Just we weren't expecting how different he would look from us." David's hands shake as he swallows his rage. "Mom," David says lowly, "Give Yuna our son back." Despite the tight grip Yuna has on Shane as he's deposited back into her arms, David can see the tremors in Yuna's hands.

"You need to leave," David says bluntly. "Son, we're just worried-" Greg starts and David cuts him off. "No. You're not worried about him. You're worried about *you* and how our son looks affects to you," David's voice is tight. "Honey, we don't mean any harm by it but-" and again David cuts his mother off. "If you were actually worried, you would be asking about how the birth went and how my wife is, which neither of you have even acknowledged. If you were actually worried, you would worry whether he's cold enough or if he's a healthy weight. If you were actually worried, you wouldn't look at my son like there is something inherently wrong with him! So you need to leave. Now." David's parents try to argue but eventually leave the hospital. David doesn't realize then that's the last time he'll ever see his parents.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Yuna says quietly. David looks at her incredulously, “Of course I did. I wasn’t going to let them talk to Shane or you like that. It’s my job as a parent to protect my kid and sometimes that means making the tough choices. That’s what good parents do...” David trails off as he stares into his son’s warm brown eyes. How could his parents not see the beauty in their grandson? David sits beside Yuna on the hospital bed and wraps his arms around his family. As long as David lives, no one is messing with his family, and he knows nothing will stop Yuna from protecting Shane.

Even from a young age, Yuna and David knew their son was different than most kids. Sudden changes in routine often resulted in full-blown meltdowns. Shane struggled to relate to kids his own age. It hurt to see Shane trying to play with the other kids who had no interest in him. Shane was 3 years-old when the Hollanders noticed how he often tried to anticipate a person’s wants or needs. Social settings have been a point of struggle and contention for Shane over the years. Yuna has worked with Shane to maintain eye contact when conversing with people. Yuna would correct Shane often, explaining that he cannot just say whatever he wants. Physical touch seemed to overwhelm their son in a way David and Yuna could never quite understand. The literal nature in which Shane would take things concerned his parents.

However, when Shane skated onto the ice for the first time at 5 years old, those fears, those invisible chains Yuna and David couldn’t unsee, melted away. Up until that point, Shane had never shown much interest in well...anything. Shane has always been amicable for his age. Polite. Carefully detached. Wonderfully, and frighteningly, behaved for a 4-year-old boy. But nothing could have prepared his parents for the pure, unadulterated joy on their son’s face as he skated around the hockey rink David used to spend hours upon hours in as a child himself.

Hockey became the way that Yuna and David kept themselves connected to Shane. Before the time he was 9, Shane could tell you who won between two teams from another country before he was even born. He could rattle off player statistics like the back of his hand. Shane’s room was filled with hockey memorabilia. On Shane’s 10th birthday, he proudly proclaimed that he would be the Captain of the Montreal Metros. David and Yuna would do anything it took to help their son achieve his dreams.

So, when it became clear that Shane was on his way to becoming one of the greatest up and coming players in the CHL, Yuna took a step back from her job at TD Bank to support him, before eventually quitting to become his full-time manager. When Shane became the youngest Captain of the Montreal Metros, it made the perpetual ache in the Hollanders’ chests ease. Now, everyone else can see the amazing, brilliantly, talented boy she and David have always seen.

Learning that your son is not only dating but in love with his archrival is a reality Yuna and David never saw coming. Ilya Rozanov. Captain of the Boston Raiders and a cocky son of a bitch if Yuna has ever seen one. But neither she nor David can deny the adoration Ilya has for their son. It’s written as clear as day as they watch Ilya stop Shane’s panic attack in its tracks. Yuna is surprised to see Shane allowing Ilya to touch him. Usually when Shane is overwhelmed, touch often makes things worse. Yuna watches her son, a person who has always been so carefully guarded for so long let someone in, with tears in her eyes.

“Since rookie season,” Yuna says tearfully.

“The summer before,” David murmurs back with a similar soft smile on his face. e

Finding out that Shane and Ilya had been publicly outed in Hayden’s FanMail video was, in short, devastating to the Hollander’s. Shane has always been an extremely private person. Always keeping what’s most precious close to his chest. David watches Yuna whirl around their house as she tries to get a hold of their son. “Get your coat,” David says abruptly. Yuna pauses her frantic texting to look at her husband. “We’re going to see our son.”

As they’re about to pull out of the driveway, Yuna’s phone rings. “Shane?” Yuna asks anxiously. “Hi Yuna, second favourite child is unavailable,” Ilya jokes weakly. In any other circumstance, Yuna would laugh. “What do you mean unavailable? Is he okay?” Yuna questions harshly. “Shane is...He is how you say awake but not answering,” Ilya replies and David can hear the concern in his voice. “Disassociating,” David supplies to which Ilya agrees. “Yes. That. When we woke up this morning, the video was everywhere. Shane has not...taken it well.”

Growing up, Shane had episodes of disassociation when he became overstimulated. They ranged from a minute to 10 to sometimes over an hour. Yuna and David never quite learned what would set him off. “He likes the quiet and complete darkness,” Yuna says to Ilya through the phone. Ilya makes another noise of confirmation, “He is in our room with headphones and light away curtains.” David huffs out a small laugh, “Blackout curtains yes. They have come in quite handy when he was a kid.”

“I will have Shane call you when he is feeling better,” Ilya promises. “Do you need anything Ilya? How are you holding up with all of this? I have already contacted Farah about all of this and she’s working on it,” Yuna shares. “I am...okay. I think. Is scary but we have each other.” David hums in agreement, “You also have us.” The Hollanders can hear a faint sniffle on the other end of the line, “Thank you Yuna and David...for everything.” Since that fateful day at the cottage, Ilya has never had to thank them for anything, and they remind him as much before hanging up.

The seventh playoff game between Montreal and Ottawa is completely packed with Centaurians and Metros fans alike. David watches his wife murmur to herself as she watches Shane fly across the ice, calculating the players’ movements like she’s on the ice too. It’s a tough game and Ottawa has the lead 2-1. Shane has his eyes glued firmly on the puck as he ducks around Troy Barrett and shoots the puck over to Hayden where Ilya intercepts him. Shane chases after him easily. Just as Shane is about to steal the puck back, his skate gets caught in a divot in the ice and he goes down hard against the ice. Yuna doesn’t need to be close to the ice to see the frustration and disbelief on her son’s face as Ilya scores the winning goal. Ottawa wins the game 3-1.

David and Yuna wait for Shane after the game outside of the locker room. They don’t have to wait long as Shane comes nearly sprinting out. “Let’s go,” Shane says tersely as he starts moving down the hallway. Yuna and David share a concerned glance before following their son to the car. The drive back home is tensely quiet. David and Yuna have always struggled

to know when to push or give Shane space, worried they'll set off another disassociation episode.

"They think I tripped," Shane whispers so quietly Yuna and David almost miss it. "*What?* Who said that?" Yuna demands. Shane shakes his head miserably. "The team they think I... they think I tripped on purpose," Shane chokes out. "I gave *everything* to this team. I saw them as my brothers and they just..." Shane trails off in disbelief. At this current moment, Yuna is very upset about the fact that murder is illegal. "That's bullshit!" David says, gritting his teeth. "I thought I would retire with them." Yuna knows Shane had envisioned his jersey hanging amongst his teams in the Montreal Canadiens Hall of Fame in the Bell Centre. "And now?" Yuna asks. She knows she and David will support Shane's choice no matter what. "I don't know." Yuna hates the lost look on their son's face.

When news broke of Shane joining Ottawa, social media went crazy. Having Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander on the same team was a dream come true and a Cup win felt like a real possibility. Yuna and David would be lying if they weren't absolutely thrilled when Shane decided to sign with the Ottawa Centaurs. Having Shane closer to home is nice. Yuna and David get to spend a lot of time with their favourite boys and little princess Anya.

In fact, Yuna and David are on their way to Shane and Ilya's home right now. Yuna had ensured to call Shane when they were leaving their house. Just to be safe, once they parked in the driveway, Yuna sent another text to their family group chat announcing their arrival. Shane opens the door as Yuna and David walk up the steps, "Hey mom, dad. Come on in. Dinner is almost ready."

The lights are dimmed and the smell of garlic greets the Hollanders as they step inside and take their shoes off. Anya barks excitedly as she realizes who showed up. David greets her happily as Yuna moves to bring the dessert they brought into the kitchen. Ilya is by the stove, stirring something in a pot while Shane is setting the kitchen table.

"Yuna! David!" Ilya says happily as he looks up from the stove, "I am glad to see you. Shane refuses to try my pasta and I need responses." Shane rolls his eyes, "Yeah because you put enough cheese and cream in it to sink a ship." Yuna laughs quietly, "I'm sure one bowl of pasta won't kill you honey." Shane sighs loudly, "No. Not while we're in the middle of the season." Ilya and Yuna share a worried glance.

"Yes, yes. You eat your rabbit food and we will enjoy nice pasta you can smell," Ilya teases as he sneaks a kiss onto Shane's cheek. "You're impossible," Shane says with a shake of his head. Ilya smirks, "Yes but you love me." Shane smiles ruefully but his tone is soft, "Yeah I do." David comes up behind Yuna and wraps his arms around her.

"So, how is the team looking Ilya?" David asks as he scoops some pasta onto his plate. "Team is good. Better now that I joined," Ilya says with a grin, "We are family. Now I get to have hockey family and favourite family." Ilya's eyes drift to Shane as he talks. A flush appears on Shane's cheeks as he ducks his head down to spear a piece of lettuce to his fork. "The team really is great. Until I joined, I never knew what I was missing and...yeah it's just been a nice change," Shane adds.

Yuna can detect the sadness in his tone. Evidently Ilya does as well because he reaches over and squeezes Shane's hand tightly. "They are idiots. And stupid. Letting you go like that," Ilya grumbles. Montreal never appreciated Shane. "Well, you've always been better than the Metros Shane. Anyone can see it," Yuna says fiercely. "Mom," Shane groans in embarrassment. "Listen to your mother Shane she is very smart," Ilya says with a grin and David laughs. "Smartest woman I've ever met," he agrees.

Once dinner is finished and cleaned up, everyone moves to the living room. "So have you two any more thoughts about the guest list for the charity auction?" Yuna asks, "We also need a few more donations for the auction itself." Shane nods, "How many are we looking for? I can talk to Rolex and see if they are willing." Ilya wraps his arm around Shane, "Must we invite old man Hunter? Should just be Kip." Shane smacks his arm lightly, "Be nice. You promised." Ilya rolls his eyes, "Hunter is like 200, 000 years old. He cannot hear me. Practically deaf." Shane's lip quirk up, "That's not the point."

"Reebok and Adidas are on board to sponsor the auction," Yuna says, grabbing their attention. "Invitations can be sent out once we finalize the guest list. Currently waiting for approval from the Fairmont Château Laurier for the venue and I have Riviera lined up to cater the event." Ilya lights up at the mention of the restaurant. It was one of the first places he and Shane went to after getting married and Ilya fell in love with it. "Let me grab my laptop and we can have it all in once place," Shane says as he stands up.

Shane comes back into the living room with his laptop that already has a blank Excel spreadsheet pulled up. "Before we start, we will get dessert yes?" Ilya says, rising from the couch as he looks at Shane. Shane nods quickly, "Here. Fill in what's confirmed and what we still need to workout and-" Yuna waves him off, "I know. I know how you like everything laid out." Shane nods again before following his husband into the kitchen.

"Anything I can do to help?" David asks as Yuna starts to work on the spreadsheet. Yuna shakes her head, "I've got this." David chuckles, "Of course you do. I will let Anya out." Despite Shane and Ilya being the most accomplished hockey players of their generation and fully-grown adults, Yuna decides to put the date of the charity auction into the shared family calendar. Minimizing the tab on the Excel spreadsheet, Yuna is about to find the calendar app when she freezes.

There's a Microsoft Word document displayed across the screen that reads '*Rules for Shane*' Yuna doesn't understand why Shane has a list of rules for himself typed out on his laptop. Yuna also doesn't like the sinking feeling in her stomach.

Rule #1: Shane will not lie ever, especially if something is bothering him

Rule #2: When we are apart, Shane must text where he is at all times and when he goes somewhere

Rule #3: Shane must communicate when he is struggling

Rule #4: Shane will address me as Sir in private and Ilya in public

Rule #5: Shane will obey willingly and will not talk back

Rule #6: Weekly chores will be inspected when completed and redone if not up to standard

Rule #7: Shane will wear his collar at home

Rule #8: Shane will make himself available for use when it suits Ilya

Yuna hears footsteps getting closer, snaps a picture with her phone before switching back to the Excel spreadsheet. “Here we go,” Ilya says brightly as he brings in a tray of coffee and the cookies Yuna brought for dessert. Shane trails behind him with mugs and David follows with Anya. “Oh, I’m sorry honey. I think your dad and I are going to head out. You boys have a game tomorrow afternoon,” Yuna says quickly as she stands up. “You feeling okay Mom?” Shane asks with a furrowed brow. “Yes, I’m fine. I think I just need some rest,” and to get to the bottom of this, Yuna thinks silently. Shane looks unsure but nods.

Once they get on the road, David glances at his wife. “Are you going to tell me what that was about?” Yuna doesn’t even know how to begin to explain what she found, “I’ll show you when we get home.” David nods. When they make it inside the house, Yuna had almost convinced herself what she was wasn’t bad. That the rules are a way to show Ilya’s care and concern for their son. Yuna is trying really hard not to think of rule #8.

“So?” David questions as they make their way onto the couch. Yuna passes her phone to him silently. Yuna watches as David’s face darkens as he reads what’s in front of him. “What is this?” Yuna shrugs helplessly, “I had thought it was just a reminder list. But this...” David looks at her with a grim look on his face. To think that David told Ilya before their wedding that he always felt so lucky being blessed with Shane as his son, but he never imagined being so lucky to get another. Both he and Yuna welcomed Ilya in with open arms. “What do we do?”

Yuna sighs, “If we confront him, he’ll deny everything.” David agrees silently. The last thing they want to do is push Shane further into the arms of his...abuser? The word sits wrong on David’s tongue. He never imagined Ilya Rozanov was capable of this. Sure, he’s brash and cocky and thinks more with his fists than his head but since getting together with Shane Ilya has mellowed out quite a lot. Ilya is no longer the first one to throw punches on the ice. Ilya handles after game interviews with Shane level deflection and precision. Ilya spends time with David working on 2000+ jigsaw puzzles. Ilya spends time asking questions about their family and learning about the Japanese side of Shane’s culture. David doesn’t want to believe this is what’s happening, but the evidence is staring him right in the face.

“I’ll invite Janey over for lunch and Shane will be conveniently there and maybe she can talk some sense into him,” Yuna says as a plan starts to form. David knows Janey is a good friend of Yuna’s since college. She’s also a licensed therapist. “Isn’t that unethical?” David questions. While he’s all for helping his son, the last thing he wants is to put Janey in a position to lose her job or worsen things for Shane. “Do you have a better idea?” Yuna challenges.

Two days later, Shane is walking into his family home with Anya at his heels and no Ilya in sight. Yuna purposefully made sure that Ilya’s ad photoshoot with Adidas coincided with Shane coming over. The less interaction she had with Ilya right now the better. Janey and David were chatting away at the kitchen table.

“Anya!” Yuna coos at her favourite grand-dog. “Hi mom,” Shane says as he takes Anya’s leash off. “Hi honey. Come on in! We’re just sitting down to eat.” Shane frowns slightly, “I thought we were going to go over the charity auction details?” Yuna nods smoothly, “We are but Janey dropped by for a lunch visit. We’ll go over everything after she leaves.” Shane hesitates before nodding. Yuna starts heading to the kitchen when she realizes Shane isn’t following her. “Shane?” Shane looks up from his phone, “Yeah. Coming. Just texting Ilya.” Ah yes, rule #2.

“Janey, you remember Shane, don’t you?” Yuna asks as she brings in the lasagna. Janey looks up at Shane with a smile, “Of course I do. Although the last time I saw you, you were still playing in the minor hockey league. You’ve come quite a long way, congratulations.” Shane smiles politely as he sits in the chair across from Janey. “Thank you. That means a lot. It’s been a long road but I wouldn’t change it for anything.”

“I don’t doubt it!” Janey says warmly, “Three-time Stanley Cup champion. Olympic medalist. Con Smythe. You have a lot to be proud of.” Shane’s voice takes on the tone he has when he answers questions from reports, “I mean yeah of course but it’s really a team effort.” Yuna dishes everyone a portion of lasagna, “Don’t be modest, Shane. You poured your heart and soul into the Metros.” Shane’s face flickers for a moment before evening back out. “Oh, that’s right. You’re with the Ottawa Centaurs now, correct?” Janey intervenes quickly.

A small, real smile crosses Shane’s face. “I was nervous when I first joined the team. They had really found their stride with Ilya and I didn’t want to mess anything up. But turns out I had nothing to worry about.” Janey nods encouragingly, “Why’s that?” Shane shrugs. “Ilya was right. The team already love me. They were mostly just relieved they no longer have to play against me,” Shane says with a disbelieving shake of his head. “I’m sure I’d feel the same way in their position. You’re an amazing player to watch.” The polite, media trained smile falls back into place.

“I never congratulated you on your engagement nor wedding either,” Janey says after eating a bite of lasagna, “So, congratulations. How is married life?” Shane’s cheeks heat slightly at the mention of his husband, “It’s amazing. I, well we, never believed we could ever have this and now that we’re here it’s just...sometimes I still don’t believe it.” Yuna glances at David, who’s already looking back at her with a slight frown tugging at the corners of his lips.

“I don’t know much about Ilya I must admit,” Janey confesses, “What’s he like? Is he really that intense all the time?” Shane laughs and shakes his head, “No, he’s all bark and no bite. He plays a part for the reporters and whatnot but for those who know him, he’s a sweetheart.” More like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, Yuna thinks to herself. “How long have you two been together?” Janey asks curiously. “Oh well uh it’s a bit complicated but officially we’ve been together since 2017,” Shane replies after taking a sip of water. “I saw the news when the two of you were outed. I am so sorry that happened,” Janey said empathetically, “How did you two handle the news?” Shane sighs as he fiddles with his fork, “It wasn’t a...great time. I kind of just retreated. I don’t think I’ve ever seen Ilya that upset. We were so close to coming out on our own terms and then this shit happens.”

Jane nods sympathetically, “I can’t even imagine. When you say you’ve never seen Ilya this upset, what do you mean?” Shane pauses, “Uh well, I mean neither of us were mad at

Hayden for the video leaking. We know he didn't mean it. They even hugged but I could tell Ilya was pissed. He moves differently when he's angry. More rigid. His speech tends to become more broken when he's emotional. English was too hard for him." Janey nods again, glancing at Yuna who nods encouragingly back.

"Were you scared of Ilya when he was that mad?" Jane asks cautiously. Shane looks confused before a frown settles on his face. "No," Shane says flatly. Janey stays silent as she watches Shane. "Do you remember Sarah?" Yuna questions Janey suddenly. "Oh yeah. I received an email from her the other day. Her and Daniel are traveling to Italy with the kids!" Yuna had gotten a similar email. "I am so happy she found Daniel. After everything that happened with Richard, I was worried," Yuna says. David raises an eyebrow, which Yuna ignores.

"It's not easy admitting that you're in an abusive relationship. A lot of people also don't realize that they're in one." Everyone looks at Shane, who is looking down at his phone. Yuna tries again, "I just keep replaying everything in my head. How did we miss it?" Janey shakes her head, "It's tricky. Abusers work very hard to blend in and pretend to be normal. They insert themselves into their victim's lives at every opportunity and ingratiate themselves to friends and family." Shane looks up after slipping his phone back into his pocket.

"Sorry, who's Sarah?" Shane asks. "She's a friend of ours," Yuna replies, "We all became friends during college, and she was dating this horrible man named Richard. Made her life miserable. Kept her away from her friends. Constantly belittling her accomplishments. Lying." Shane frowns, "That sounds awful." Janey nods, "Yeah, it felt like he controlled her. Always keeping tabs on her and constant check-ins when they were apart."

"Well, it's good that she and Daniel are together. She deserves to be happy," Shane says. Yuna is both unsurprised and impressed that Shane has not picked up on what's been happening. "She does and she is now that she got the help she needed. It's okay to ask for help. It's not a sign of weakness." Shane stiffens slightly before nodding, "This was uh great but Anya and I should really get back home."

"Going so soon?" Yuna asks quickly. "I promised Ilya we would make dinner tonight and I need to stop by a couple of stores," Shane says as he stands up. Janey smiles warmly at him, "It was great to see you again Shane. Let's not wait too long next time." Shane nods as he waves goodbye, "Mom, Ilya and I can come over tomorrow and hash out the details okay?" Yuna forces a smile, "Of course honey. Better that he's here." Shane hugs his parents quickly before leaving with Anya.

Well...that went well.

Ilya is home when Shane gets back. "Hi sweetheart. How are David and Yuna?" Ilya asks as he lays on the couch. Shane leans over the back of the couch and kisses him, "Mm weird but good." Ilya looks up from his phone, "What is weird?" Shane shrugs as he comes around the couch and Ilya makes room for him.

Shane snuggles against his husband's side eagerly. "Missed you," he mumbles. Shane can feel Ilya's chest rumble as he laughs, "I missed you too *moya lyubov*." The two cuddle on the couch for a few minutes. "So what happened?" Ilya murmurs. "Well, one of mom's old college friends, Janey, was there. She says congratulations by the way on our wedding. But

most of the time she and mom talked about their friend Sarah,” Shane replies. “Who is Sarah?” Ilya asks as he runs his hand through Shane’s hair.

“They all met during college and I guess Sarah had this bad boyfriend. Seemed super controlling from what mom had to say,” Shane continues. “Oh?” Ilya’s hand pauses in Shane’s hair. “Yeah, he acted like owned her is what Janey said.” Shane doesn’t pick up in the tightness in Ilya’s voice when he says, “That...is not good. Maybe people notice.” Shane nods, “Seems like they did. But good news is Sarah is with Daniel now, so I guess it worked out.”

“Janey was also asking questions about you,” Shane adds. Ilya frowns, “Questions about what?” Shane shrugs, “Getting to know you. If you’re really that intense off the ice as on. How we handled being outed in the FanMail video. Oh, she also asked me if I trust you.” Ilya looks down at Shane warily, “Why?” Shane shrugs, “Maybe making sure we’re a good fit?” Ilya assumes that makes sense, “And you said?” Shane looks up at Ilya, “Obviously I trust you.” Which Ilya knows. Shane trusts him with a blind faith that Ilya is determined to never break. “I love you,” Ilya murmurs as he presses their foreheads together. “*Ya tebya lyublyu.*” Despite improving greatly in his Russian, Shane’s muddled pronunciation endears Ilya to no end.

Chapter 4: The Ottawa Centaurs vs Ilya Rozanov

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, I am blown away by the love and support on this fic so far! I am so sorry this took so long. I kept going back and forth about how I wanted the rest of the story to play out. Originally I was planning on doing a full 5+1 as I wanted to include Scott and Kip but I didn't feel like I was doing the characters justice as I was writing. So, this is now a 4+1 ft. bonus content I hope you don't mind :)

*Trigger warning: controlling behaviour (consensual but not evidently clear), mention of bruises

Enjoy <3

*as always, self-edited so you know the drill

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

When the Captain of the Boston Raiders joined the Ottawa Centaurs, no one was more surprised than the Centaurs themselves. Ilya Rozanov. The man who has won multiple MVP awards wanting to join the Ottawa Centaurs seemed too good to be true. The man who brought the Boston Raiders to two Stanley Cup wins moving to the lowest ranked team in the league made next to no sense. The Centaurs had a group chat solely dedicated to figuring out why *the* Ilya Rozanov willingly came to Ottawa of all places. Haas refused to comment. Everyone told Barrett he was crazy when he said Ilya and Shane were probably fucking. Harris said that if Ilya wasn't fucking Hollander, it could be another man. LaPointe, Holmberg, and Young thought Ilya could be involved in the Russian mob. Boyle and Dillon thought Ilya lost a bet and this was the outcome. Dykstra thought it was because of a scandal cover up. Bood thought it was because of a woman. Chouinard brought up the point of the relationship being serious enough for Ilya to leave Boston. The girl must be really special whoever she was. Hayes chimed in and said he overheard Cliff Marleau mentioning someone named Jane to Ilya on more than one occasion. The theories ranged from mildly possible to downright outrageous, especially when Ilya officially joined the team but disappeared every chance he got. Their captain was never around unless it was for practice or a game. More often than not, their team hangouts were missing their Captain.

Despite the legendary gain of Ilya Rozanov, the Ottawa Centaurs continue an unprecedented losing streak. Until the emergency plane landing in 2021. It didn't go unnoticed by any of the team how furiously Ilya was typing on his phone. To Jane presumably. Something shifted after the near sudden plane crash. It happened before a home game against the New York Admirals. Ilya had stood up and gave an impassioned speech about how the Admirals are not a better team than them. Troy still remembers the pulsing, ecstatic feeling in the locker room before that game. Bood still remembers the pride he felt about their Captain that night. Yes,

they all went through something scary together, but they are alive. Together. And together they were going to win their way all the way to a Stanley Cup, or three.

That dream of multiple Stanley Cup wins feels close enough to touch when Shane Hollander signs with the Ottawa Centaurs in July 2021. The team has had the pleasure of playing against Hollander before and they are thrilled to never have to play against the man again. Instead, they get to play *with* him. Hayes almost feels bad for the other teams in the league now that Ottawa has the two star players in the league. Except for Montreal. The Metros are a shit team made up of even shittier people. Minus Hayden Pike.

It took time for Shane to come around and become comfortable with the Centaurs. The Centaurs knew roughly of the toxic environment Hollander was a part of in Montreal and as a result made him wary and anxious. A team Shane considered like brothers had the audacity to accuse him of tripping. The police were almost called to Bood's house when Shane finally told them, the shock and outrage palpable across the team. How could anyone look at Hollander and believe it was on purpose? The man lives and breathes hockey. Hayes is convinced that if Ilya actually let Shane win anything it would result in divorce. If you look up competitive in the dictionary, it would show a picture of Shane Hollander.

Dedication had nothing on Shane Hollander. Dykstra remembers the first time he had joined Shane on the ice after practice. Everyone had cleared off the ice except for Shane. The man working on his puck control even after a grueling two-hour practice inspired Dykstra to join. The two of them practicing their stickhandling and passing. Soon everyone was joining in on after practice practice, spending another hour on the ice. It quickly became the new norm. Shane is always the first to show up to practice and the last one to leave. After only two weeks of being on the team, Shane had come into practice an hour early as per usual only to find the rest of the team there. It had caused Shane to panic, thinking he had gotten the practice time wrong until Bood explained that the team admired his work ethic and aimed to show the same dedication. The rookies were like eager puppies, soaking up the drills and skill sets Shane gave out. While it felt a little silly to run lines and work on puck control, everyone could admit at seeing the improvement. The Centaurs hadn't lost a game all season.

At first, the idea of Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander together seemed far-fetched. Where Ilya was loud and brash, Shane was quiet and reserved. Where Ilya was often getting into fights and chirping out of his ass, it was rare for Shane to engage in any chirping let alone fights. Where Ilya didn't hesitate to spend his money and preferred the finer things life had to offer, Shane was dutiful about only using his money for necessities. Where Ilya loved spontaneous plans, Shane needed his routine.

Now, Ilya and Shane are still all of those things. Except, now, since joining the team, Shane's come out of his shell more. Often cracking jokes and even chirping back occasionally. While Shane's routines are sacred to him, he's loosened up slightly if plans change at the last minute. Although that could be due to the help of his husband. The team quickly took notice in how Ilya soothed his husband when plans change. Sometimes it was a few words. Sometimes it was just a silent hand squeeze. Everyone on the team is convinced the two are telepathic, often having full conversations without a word.

The two bring out the best, and worst, in each other. For the longest time, the Centaurs group chat was filled with concerned texts about how mom and dad were getting a divorce. Dykstra couldn't imagine fighting with Caitlin all of the time. Chouinard doesn't understand how they aren't exhausted. Why marry someone you don't like? Discussions of an intervention were had. Something had to change or those two would kill each other. The team decide to have it before practice.

Everyone got there an hour early to beat Shane and Ilya to the rink. As the team approached the locker room, loud voices could be heard from inside. "Okay we all know the plan?" Bood had asked and the team nodded. "Yeah, it sounds like they want to kill each other," Haas had said nervously. While Bood felt bad about butting into his friends' marriage, it would be better in the long wrong. "Okay guys, we need to...Oh fuck!" Bood yells as he covers his eyes with arm. Two things were learned that day.

1. The door to the locker room doesn't actually lock
2. The Centaurs could confirm with full confidence that the rivalry between them hasn't gone anywhere. But it certainly got heated.

It's been just over a year since Hollander joined the Centaurs and what a year it's been. While the Centaurs made it to the playoffs, the Admirals won the Stanley Cup. Much to Ilya's chagrin. Ilya still remembers how Scott Hunter had smirked at him and chirped, "Not so bad for an old man huh? Guess you kids still have a thing or two to learn." This year though. This year is their fucking year. It is their fucking Cup.

The entire team is hungry for the win. Extended practices. Early starts. Shane hits them with every skill possible of possessing. Ilya is on a tear, determined to not let the ancient dinosaur that is Scott Hunter add another Cup to his trophy room. Arenas are packed for every away game and overflowing for each home game. All Ottawa fans more than eager to see the Centaurs bring the Cup back home.

The hard work pays off and the Ottawa Centaurs are piling on top of each other as the final buzzer sounds off. The Ottawa Centaurs wins the Stanley Cup with a score of 14-1. What makes the victory even sweeter is their opposing playoff team. The Montreal Metros. The Metros didn't stand a chance. Before the game, Ilya had stood up on a chair in the middle of the locker room and stared at all of them as he spoke, "Alright, listen the fuck up! Look, I don't care how many goals I've scored. I don't care about how I am exhausted because we played last night. That does not help me. That is in the past. We are here. Together. At home. This is our fucking Cup. This is our fucking night do you hear me?!" The roar of the locker room is deafening.

Shane stands up and the noise dials down. "Anything to add sweetheart?" Ilya asks as he looks down at his husband. Shane looks around the locker room. To the team that has become his family. "I want to wipe the floor with Montreal tonight." Ilya looks beyond proud. The hoots, hollers and whistles of the team are in agreement. "Fuck Montreal!" Ilya screams and the locker room echo the sentiment loudly. There is no doubt in any of their minds as they skate onto the ice that the Cup belongs to them.

The team is buzzing and talking over one another as they head back to the locker room. "Did you see the look on Comeau's face as Shane scored that hat trick?" Hayes laughs loudly. "We

kicked their fucking asses!” Young punches the air in excitement. “Man, I thought Drapeau was going to murder Ilya,” Chouinard says with a snort. During the game, Ilya made it no secret just how much he despised the Metros. Ilya wound up in the penalty box more often than not but he wasn’t worried. They had something the Metros don’t. Shane Hollander.

“Shane fucking destroyed them!” Bood crows as he holds his hand up for Shane to high-five. Shane laughs and high-fives him back. “It was a team effort guys,” Shane says helplessly but it falls on deaf ears. “Uh how many goals did you score tonight?” LaPointe asks with a raised eyebrow. “Uh...” Shane blushes. “9 goals dude! Nine fucking goals!” Haas says in awe. “Well, Ilya scored 3 and Haas scored two,” Shane mutters but there’s a smile on his face. “Oh stop being so modest Hollzy,” Barrett says with a roll of his eyes. “They’re right Shane,” Wiebe adds with a smile of his own. “You were on fire tonight,” Wiebe says and looks around the room, “I am so damn proud of you boys! You worked your asses off and it showed. One Stanley Cup down and-” Ilya interrupts him, “And 100 more to go!” and the locker room devolves into pandemonium.

Once everyone has calmed down and started getting ready to leave, Ilya is called for post-game interviews. “Hollzy you joining us tonight? We’re all going to the Kingfisher to celebrate!” Bood says. While the team knows Shane isn’t much of a partier, this was a special occasion. “Yeah it sounds like fun,” Shane says with a small smile. At that moment, Ilya walks back into the locker room and everyone ceases to exist to Shane except Ilya. Ilya’s curls are damp and sticking to his forehead, his shirt is wrinkled and Shane can tell just how exhausted Ilya is and yet he’s never looked more beautiful.

“You are up Hollander,” Ilya says with a grin. Shane nods, “How was it?” Ilya shrugs, “Was good. Got to brag about my amazing team and even more amazing husband.” Shane rolls his eyes but they lack any heat, “Of course you did.” As Shane goes to leave, he turns to Ilya, “Bood said everyone is going to the Kingfisher to celebrate. I told him we’d go.” Barrett watches as the inherent joy radiating through Ilya is replaced with something more muted. A calculating look in his eye as he steps closer to Shane, “You? You are going to party?” Shane shuffles in his spot as he stuffs his hands into his pockets, “I mean yeah, I thought it would be a good idea. You know, team morale and such.” Hayes stiffens at Ilya’s response when he says, “And you did not ask me?” Dykstra and Chouinard share a concerned look.

“Come on, don’t you want to celebrate?” Shane asks. “Who says I won’t?” Ilya challenges with a raised eyebrow. Harris pokes his head in, “Sorry Shane, we really need you out there.” Shane stares at Ilya for another second before turning to Harris, “Of course.” Once Shane leaves, Bood looks at Ilya with a small frown, “Roz what the hell?” Ilya looks at Bood in confusion, “What?” Dillon pulls on his suit jacket as he says, “Not cool dude.” Ilya frowns as he looks at his teammates. “I am the coolest!” Ilya protests. And normally, everyone would agree. Not tonight though. “You can’t tell your husband what he can and cannot do, Ilya,” Boyle says tightly. “Yes, I can.” The confidence in how Ilya says it sends shockwaves through the room.

“Shane hates parties. Too loud. Not good music. Does not drink. Would like to read about hockey and re-watch tonight’s game. Must do laundry. Very boring Shane things,” Ilya states it matter-of-factly. “Well, Shane sounded excited about coming tonight,” Dykstra counters. “Yeah, come on Rozanov, we just won the fucking Stanley Cup baby!” Holmberg yells

enthusiastically. “Trust me, Shane will have more fun at home,” Ilya replies. Haas sends an uncomfortable glance at Bood. “Maybe you should let him decide then,” Hayes says with a tick in his jaw. None of the Centaurs can believe the words coming out of their Captain’s mouth.

Before any more interrogating could happen, Shane walks back in. “Get your stuff. We are leaving,” Ilya says shortly. Shane bites his lip before nodding. Shane grabs his bag and then Ilya’s before waving goodbye to everyone. “Have fun tonight guys!” Shane calls out happily as he follows Ilya out the locker room door. The guys watch them leave silently. “So...that was weird right?” Haas asks quietly. Everyone nods in agreement. “Yeah, I know they usually go at each other hard,” Bood says and Young snorts, “But nothing like this. Shane wasn’t even giving it back.” Dykstra crosses his arms over his chest, “Think we need to be worried?” Bood really hopes not. “Let’s just...keep this between us for now. If this continues, we’ll deal with it then.”

Because of the playoffs, Shane’s birthday celebration happens on Canada Day weekend. The entire team and their WAGs, are invited along with Wiebe and his wife, Hayden and Jackie Pike, and Shane’s parents to Shane’s cottage. Rose Landry couldn’t make it due to scheduling conflicts. Ilya’s friend, Svetlana Vetrova, is back in Russia to visit her father. The surprise party goes off without a hitch. Bood wishes he captured the look of pure shock on Shane’s face, but he doubts Harris would let that opportunity slip by him.

The day is filled with good food, great music and a lake to cool off in. Hayes notices their Captain and Shane had disappeared from the dock. Hayes pulled himself out of the lake to get a drink when he overhears a conversation that makes his blood run cold. “Jackie!” Is that Pike? Hayes slows his steps down, “I think Ilya is abusing Shane.” Hayes freezes. Ilya? Abusing Shane? Wyatt has been friends with Ilya for years and couldn’t imagine Ilya ever laying hands on Shane in a violent, non-hockey game, way.

Jackie seems to have the same idea because she says, “Hayden, Ilya practically worships the ground Shane walks on. Did you not notice how Shane mentioned he was feeling a little thirsty so Ilya brought him a ginger ale, a water and a Gatorade?” Hayden huffs, “Okay, how do you explain the giant bruise on his side when it’s the off season?” Wyatt doesn’t stick around to hear Jackie’s answer and hastily makes his way back down to the dock. “Guys!” Hayes waves his arms to get everyone’s attention. “What’s up Hazy?” Dykstra calls out. “I just overheard Hayden talking to his wife about Shane and Ilya,” Hayes says as he sits on the dock. He hesitates before continuing, “Hayden seems to think Ilya is abusing Shane.” A chorus of disagreements echo around the group.

“Do you think he could?” Dillon asks, wincing, “Come on we all remember what happened two weeks ago.” The reminder of Ilya basically banning Shane from celebrating their Stanley Cup win settles like a dark cloud over the team. “I called Shane the other day and it sounded like he was in pain,” Barrett admits. “What? Why didn’t you say anything?” Bood frowns. Barrett sighs, “Because...I guess I just wanted to be wrong.” A guilty look flashes across Troy’s face. “I dropped by their house the other day and Shane was in a hoodie and sweatpants,” Haas adds. “Shane likes comfy clothes,” Young replies. “In 35-degree heat?” Luca responds incredulously, “I was sweating and I was wearing a t-shirt and shorts.” Silence

falls over the group. It seemed like common sense to hide the abuse and because Shane basically lives in athletic wear, no one ?

“God, we fucked up,” Holmberg mutters. “What do we do now?” Hayes questions. “We need to get them apart,” Bood says and he knows it’s easier said than done. Those two are attached at the hip. Dykstra snorts, “Good luck with that.” Cassie comes down the dock to tell them dinner is ready. “We’ll figure it out later. Maybe for now we just make sure they aren’t alone together,” Bood suggests as they make their way up to the cottage.

Shane, Ilya, the Pikes and the Hollander’s are sitting at the table that is full of BBQ David cooked, and mouth-watering sides Yuna prepared. Shane is thankfully unaware of the underlying tension at the table as dishes are passed around. Unfortunately for the team, Ilya is not. Ilya keeps casting them concerned looks. None of which the team can answer. Thankfully, the atmosphere mellows out as food is served and drinks are flowing. Bood looks over at Shane and Ilya and narrows his eyes. Shane’s face is blank as he stares, unseeing, across the table.

“Shane,” Ilya says loudly and Shane turns to him, “Go get me a drink. Do not use the shitty American vodka this time, *da?*” Shane blinks at him slowly. “Hurry up. Drink will not refill itself huh?” Ilya says with a snap of his fingers. Seemingly becoming more conscious, Shane nods quickly as he grabs Ilya’s glass and makes his way into the kitchen.

“What the fuck was that?” Hayes asks, rage glinting in his eyes. Ilya looks at Hayes with a raised eyebrow, “He was not busy. So, I asked.” Young shakes his head quickly, “You demanded. You didn’t ask for shit.” With a quick glance around the table, Bood can tell everyone is uncomfortable. “I do not have to. He is my husband. Listens to me,” Ilya shrugs as he takes a bite of his burger. Shane walks back out onto the patio and slides into his chair. “I couldn’t find the Beluga vodka, so I used the last of the Crystal Head,” Shane explains as he hands Ilya his drink. Dykstra watched Shane’s hand shake slightly as the glass traded hands. “Is fine. Will have to drink subpar vodka until you get more.”

Until you get more. Until you. You. Not us. Not we. *You*. Like it’s Shane’s fault that he couldn’t find the premium Russian vodka Ilya loves. A grim look settles on Hayes’s face. “Why don’t you buy more Roz or did you spend all your money on cars?” Everyone knows Ilya’s sports car collection. While still small after he sold them before moving to Ottawa, it’s impressive. Ilya doesn’t seem bothered by the question, “Shane does grocery shopping. Has list and order of grocery store in his head. Does not like when I add unnecessary items to cart,” Ilya says as he puts quotations around “unnecessary items.”

Shane rolls his eyes, “Because you keep putting sugary cereals and cookies and other nonsense into the cart.” Ilya glances at his husband, “Is not nonsense! Is necessary! Keeps my energy up. Not everyone lives on rabbit food sweetheart.” Shane’s diet is often a topic Ilya likes to poke fun of. An unforbidden thought crosses Bood’s mind. Is Ilya the reason for Shane’s strict diet? Bood really hopes it isn’t that bad.

Later that night, Yuna and David had gone back to their cottage, and everyone is spread across the lawn and patio while a fire blazes brightly in the firepit. A distant loon call can be heard and Ilya looks up, “Do not fear! Is just a dumb bird.” Shane snorts loudly before

blushing. "For the last time Ilya, it's a loon not a wolf." Ilya rolls his eyes before mumbling something about, "Stupid Canadian wolf birds."

"I have ingredients to make smores if anyone is interested," Shane says quickly. "I could go for a smore," Young calls out from the lawn. "Yeah, me too!" Holmberg echoes. "Me three," Harris chimes in eagerly. "I'll be right back." It takes Wyatt a few minutes to notice as he is talking to Dykstra that Ilya has disappeared. "Uh where is Ilya?" Hayes asks, looking around. "I think he said something about helping Shane bring out the stuff for smores," Selena, Nick's wife, replies as she takes a sip of her wine. Hayes looks at Bood who is already moving towards the back door and Wyatt is quick to follow.

As the two enter the kitchen, it's clear no one is there. Considering how open concept the whole cottage is, it would be hard to miss two giant hockey players. "Where'd they go?" Bood mutters. A yelp can be heard coming from the bathroom. Wyatt quickly walks over to the bathroom door and presses his ear up against it. "Keep quiet. You do not want people to hear you now do you? Or maybe you do? You want everyone to see how desperate you are to please me?" Hayes can make out the lilt of Ilya's accent before his ears register a muffled sob. Hayes sends a panicked look to Bood who is standing behind Hayes.

"I think Shane is crying," Hayes hisses. Bood's eyes widen, "What the fuck is going on?" Hayes shrugs helplessly. He has half a mind to throw open the bathroom door and punch Ilya in the face. "No. No tears. You do not cry," and Hayes nearly makes his lip bleed with how hard he's biting it. A whimper can be heard then. Hayes moves away from the door. "I'm going in." Bood nods. As Wyatt lifts his foot to kick the door in, the handle of the doorknob shifts. Bood and Wyatt share a look and scramble away and into the kitchen.

Shane and Ilya walk into the kitchen. Ilya's arm is wrapped tightly around Shane's shoulders. "You guys, okay?" Bood asks casually. "Been wondering where you guys went," Hayes adds. Shane's face turns a bright pink. Neither miss the red rim around Shane's eyes. "Sorry. I was uh having some stomach trouble and Ilya was helping me." Hayes is having some stomach trouble of his own. "Feeling okay now Hollzy?" Bood questions. Shane nods quickly, "Much yes. Thanks. If you guys want to bring out the chocolate, cookies and marshmallows, I'll grab the skewers." Shane moves away to get the skewers but Ilya won't let go of his hold. "I'll be right out. Sure you can last that long Rozanov." Ilya nuzzles the side of Shane's neck, "Mmm or I could not find out." Bood barely manages to keep his dinner from coming back up. How have they never noticed how possessive Ilya is? Sure, Ilya and Shane hate being apart. Sure, the two text each other constantly when they aren't with each other. Sure, Ilya had a near fit a few months ago when the two were assigned separate rooms.

But that's just normal relationship stuff right?

Wyatt and Bood quickly make their way out of the cottage and back onto the patio. "Fuck," Hayes breathes out. Bood nods. "There you guys are!" Chouinard calls, "We thought you ate all the cookies." Everyone quiets down as they take in their teammates' sober faces. "What happened?" Dillon asks tensely. Wyatt quickly rehashes what he and Bood just witnessed. Varying degrees of shock and disgust run across everyone's faces. "What do we do now?" Haas wonders.

Shane and Ilya walk out together, nearly fused together. “Smores time!” Ilya says excitedly. Everyone glances around before coming to a silent conclusion. It’s Shane’s birthday. They aren’t going to ruin his special day. Not now.

But one thing is for certain; they needed to do something. And it needs to happen soon.

Chapter End Notes

If the Metros have no haters, I don't exist. They could NEVER make me like you. I really hope we see the Centaurs winning a Stanley Cup (or two) in Unrivaled!

Reveal time soon perhaps? What did you guys think?! Any ideas on how the reveal will happen? What do you think Ilya will say about it all?

Comments kudos are greatly loved and appreciated! ❤️

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See you on the next one ❤️

Chapter 5: Panic (at the Pikes)

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! Thank you all so much for being so wonderfully patient while this chapter took longer than anticipated. Had a severe case of writer's block and was unhappy with how it was turning out. I really hope this was worth the wait! I have big plans for Hollanov so stay tuned for the next chapter ❤️

Enjoy xo

*self-edited so you know the drill

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

The day after his birthday, Shane wakes up warm and deliciously sore. Ilya's arm is wrapped tightly around Shane's waist and his face buried in the crook of his neck. Yesterday was the happiest Shane has felt in a long time. Not a day goes by where Shane isn't grateful for the life he has now. Surrounded by the people he loves and who love him. If you had told a 17-year-old Shane he would end up playing on the gayest hockey team in the league with his husband, it would've led to a severe panic attack. Being one of the only Asian players in the league was hard enough but if anyone found out he... But squashed underneath that panic sat a fragment of something Shane refused to acknowledge. A future he dared not to dream too hard about. And yet, that fragment chipping away at him softened the moment a blue-eyed Russian told him he wouldn't be so nice when they beat him. Now, as he lays entangled under the sheets with the man he loves, Shane wonders if that 17-year-old would be proud of him. Shane hopes he is. Shane owes everything to him.

After the birthday surprise Ilya pulled off and the celebrating that went late into the night, Shane wants nothing more than to stay in bed. But the cottage won't clean itself. So, with a heavy sigh, Shane starts to shimmy his way out of his husband's grasp. "Mmm Shane, it is time for sleep," Ilya groans quietly behind him. "Ilya, we need to clean up the mess from yesterday," Shane replies with a light chuckle. Mornings have never been Ilya's favourite. "No," Ilya grumbles as he pulls Shane impossibly closer. "Come on, the last thing we need is wild animals coming onto the property." Ilya presses his lips against Shane's shoulder, "Is all cleaned up."

Shane turns over, a look of surprise on his face. "What? You mean..." Ilya yawns, "Yes. After you fell asleep." That had to have been after 3am. "Know you hate mess. Did not want to move today so I clean up." If Shane could marry Ilya again, now would be the perfect time. "I love you," Shane says fervently as he kisses his husband, morning breath be damned. "I love you too sweetheart. So, we sleep more *da*?" Well, a few more minutes couldn't hurt, could it?

The sun is well past the Western side of the cottage when Shane wakes again. A tangle of limbs around him and warm breath in his ear. “Ah, you are awake now. I forgot you are old man now. Need lots of beauty sleep,” Ilya’s teasing lilt fills Shane’s ear. “Fuck off,” Shane grumbles lightly, “I am only a month older than you.” Ilya grins with a mischievous glint in his eye, “Yes, you are like wild cat.” Shane shoves Ilya’s shoulder, “I am not a cougar, asshole!”

Ilya laughs as he rolls on top of Shane, “Could have fooled me, Hollander. I was helpless in your clutches.” Shane snorts as he stares up at his husband, coming eye level with Ilya’s chin. “My clutches?” Shane asks with a raised eyebrow. Ilya nods, “Your freckles. Was helpless against them.” Ilya nuzzles his nose against Shane’s cheek as if to prove his point. “Could use them to get anything you want.” Shane raises an eyebrow. “Anything I want huh?” Shane questions as he slides his hands up Ilya’s arms. “Insatiable. I thought old people slow down in old age,” Ilya jokes. “Shut up and fuck me already,” Shane pants before smashing their lips together. Ilya groans into Shane’s mouth, pressing his body up against his husband’s.

After all these years, Ilya knows Shane’s body as well as his own. Ilya knows exactly what spots make his husband tick. How Shane’s back arches when Ilya kisses his pulse point. The little mewls that escape his red-bitten lips when Ilya first presses into him. How beautiful Shane looks underneath him. Sometimes, Ilya likes to flip through the private album on his phone filled with pictures of Shane in various positions. On his knees with his hands cuffed behind him. On his hands and knees with a plug in his ass. Colourful ropes keeping him spread across the bed. Laying on their bed covered in Ilya’s cum and a blissed-out smile on his face. Ilya’s hand wrapped tightly against Shane’s throat as his husband’s eyes glaze over.

“Please,” Shane lets out a helpless whine. Ilya leans down as he whispers in Shane’s ear, “Please what?” It’s quiet for a moment while Shane gathers his thoughts. Ilya has been working with Shane about being more vocal about what he wants, both in the bedroom and out. Ilya knows how hard it is for Shane to ask for what he wants. To take what he needs without feeling guilty. To take up space. Ilya would give Shane the moon if he asked for it and it kills him to watch his husband dim himself just so he can be seen as acceptable. Maybe that’s why Ilya works so hard to ensure Shane takes up space in their home. To make sure that Shane is confident in asking for what he needs. Ilya is used to the monotone presence Shane puts on for the public. The polite but distant smile. The ready-to-go media trained answers. But when they’re together, Shane never has to pretend around Ilya.

At times, Ilya wishes the world could see beyond Shane as the token gay, Asian hockey player. Sometimes, Ilya wishes the world could see just how hard Shane tries. More often than not, Ilya wishes the world could see Shane how Ilya sees him. And yet, even if the world somehow did, they would never deserve him. Ilya certainly knows he doesn’t deserve Shane Hollander but he’d be damned if he didn’t do everything in his power to come close.

Ilya almost misses Shane’s response. “Make me forget my own name.” Now that Ilya can do. Ilya trails a line of kisses from the corner of Shane’s mouth down to navel, his hands digging into Shane’s hips. “How do you want it? Give me a pain level.” Ilya murmurs against Shane’s warm skin. “5,” Shane groans. When they first discovered how into pain Shane is, they developed a scale to determine how intense their play will be and what each number meant. 1

is no pain and 10 being extreme. Shane hisses as Ilya presses his fingers into the bruise on Shane's right side. "Such pretty sounds you make for me," Ilya praises.

Shane's eyes flutter shut at the praise, letting the words wash over him. "Turn over, I want to see you." Shane scrambles to get onto his stomach, his ass up in the air. Ilya makes an appreciative noise as he gazes at his husband. Shane's ass is still red from last night. His pink hole still loose and fluttering at the emptiness it feels. Ilya massages his pointer finger around the ringed muscle and feels Shane tremble underneath him. "You are sure?" Ilya pauses his ministrations. "Yes, just do it," Shane whimpers and presses his ass back into Ilya's hand.

Ilya doesn't hesitate to press his pointer and middle finger dry into Shane's hole. Shane grunts at the burning sensation and Ilya rubs his lower back comfortingly. "Breathe for me sweetheart," Ilya says quietly. Shane draws in a shuddering breath as he adjusts to the intrusion. Soon pain gives way to pleasure and Shane is getting desperate. "Ilya please... don't tease," Shane moans. Ilya starts moving his fingers slowly, careful to only graze the sensitive spot that will have Shane seeing stars. "I don't remember when we decided you were giving the orders," Ilya muses out loud and slows his thrusts. Shane lets out a high-pitched whine at the sudden change, "Need more." Well...who is Ilya to deny his husband? Ilya slams his fingers directly against Shane's prostate. "Oh fuck!" Shane cries out as Ilya drills his fingers in and out of him mercilessly. Ilya smacks his free hand across Shane's right ass cheek. Directly over the bruise that had started blooming last night.

"Hmm what was that?" Ilya teases as a string of curses fall from Shane's lips. "Such a mouth on you Hollander. What would people say if they could hear you now?" A wrecked noise makes its way out of Shane. "Not such a polite, boring Canadian now," Ilya chuckles as he withdraws his fingers. Shane turns his head to look at Ilya with a look of discontent on his face, "Fuck you." Ilya shakes his head, "You know how to ask properly." Shane's eyes are filled with unshed tears, "Please Sir, fuck me." Ilya helps Shane flip over back onto his back.

Ilya leans down and presses their lips together as he guides his cock into Shane's warm, wet hole. Ilya takes advantage of Shane's open mouth and eagerly licks into his mouth. Shane is quick to wrap his legs around Ilya's waist, effectively pulling him in closer. It doesn't take long for them to settle out into a rhythm. "Choke me," Shane gasps as Ilya hits his prostate dead on. Ilya doesn't hesitate to wrap his right hand around Shane's throat. His eyes search Shane's to confirm his husband is okay. Shane nods once and Ilya leaves his hand wrapped tightly, fingers digging into the sides of Shane's neck.

Little gasps for air and moans fill the room as they bring each other closer to the edge. Ilya drags his fingers down Shane's chest so that red marks appear across his skin. "Love seeing my marks on you. Remind you that you are mine," Ilya groans as he thrusts into Shane. "Yours. Only yours," Shane moans loudly as he tilts his head back. Nothing makes Ilya feel more like a king than being here, connected with his husband. Winning the Cup comes a close second though.

"Come for me," Ilya commands and Shane's cock spurts all over his stomach and Ilya's as his eyes roll back into his head. Ilya digs his fingernails into the meat of Shane's ass as he pounds into him before spilling deep inside. Ilya goes to pull out but Shane wraps his legs tighter around him. "Stay," Shane mumbles. Ilya is more than happy to oblige.

Once the two of them finally manage to stumble their way out of the bedroom and into the kitchen, dusk has settled over the cottage. While he didn't necessarily doubt his husband, Shane is pleased to see the cottage clear from leftover food, empty alcohol bottles and dishes. "Told you I cleaned," Ilya says with a smirk and Shane rolls his eyes. "Do you want a reward?" Ilya looks at Shane appraisingly, "I could always use another reward." Shane snorts with a shake of his head, "And you say I am the insatiable one." Ilya shrugs with a lazy grin, "Cannot blame me. Blame my husband for being so irresistible."

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Yuna and David were gracious enough to let the Centaurs, their wives as well as Hayden and Jackie stay at their cottage after Shane's birthday party. The weather nice enough for everyone to be able to sleep in tents outside. Bood is sharing a tent with Cassie, Wyatt, Lisa, Nick and Selena. Dykstra, Caitlin, Haas, Harris and Barrett are in another. Hayden, Jackie, Boyle and his wife, and Dillon take up the third tent. Holmberg, Young and LaPointe choose to sleep under the stars with sleeping bags. Wiebe and his wife are staying in the Hollander's guest room.

When Bood makes his way out of the tent in the early morning light, he's surprised to find Hayden awake and sitting in one of the Muskoka chairs. "Little early, isn't it?" Bood calls out and Hayden looks up. "Couldn't sleep," Hayden admits as he takes a sip of coffee. The two are awake early enough to watch the sunrise. "Do you think it's possible?" Bood asks in the still of the morning. Hayden glances at Bood before looking back over the lake. "I don't know. I don't want to believe it but...I mean come on, you spend more time with him than I do. He isn't the easiest person to get along with." Bood snorts in agreement. There's a reason why Ilya spends a lot of time in the penalty box instead of the ice. Unlike Shane, Ilya has never been known for controlling his temper nor his mouth.

"How did I miss this?" Bood can hear the disbelieving hurt plainly in Hayden's voice. "We all did," Bood answers solemnly. Bood barely slept last night with how consumed by guilt he felt over the whole thing. All the what ifs. Maybe if he had stepped in sooner...Spoke up sooner...Maybe things would be different. Maybe Bood wouldn't be planning his own Captain's funeral in his head. "Shane deserves so much better than that asshole," Hayden grumbles before taking another sip of coffee.

"Do you think Shane will leave Roz?" Bood asks. Hayden looks determined as he answers, "I won't let him make any other choice." Despite Bood's inclination to side with Hayden, he worries. From what the two have shared, they have been involved since before their rookie season. When they were just 17, young and impressionable. Besides his brief stint with Rose Landry, Roz is all Shane knows. It isn't a stretch to believe Shane has become dependent on their relationship. Bood knows how much Shane thrives on his routine, and how Rozanov fit discreetly into it. That is clear from the on and off again situationship they hid themselves in for nearly a decade.

"Hey guys, why are you up so early?" Hayes joins them with a yawn as he plops himself into another chair. "Couldn't sleep," Hayden replies and Bood nods. Hayes nods in silent understanding, "How are we going to deal with this? Should we go to the police?" Hayden shakes his head, "Shane will never forgive any of us if we're the reason Rozanov gets

arrested.” All three men knew Ilya was unlikely to stay in jail with Shane willing to post bail. “Well, we can’t keep letting Roz hurt Hollzy,” Hayes says through clenched teeth.

“We need to get them apart,” Bood says with a grimace. Separating those two would be like separating conjoined twins. Deadly and nearly impossible. Bood can tell Hayes is thinking the same as he shares a look with Wyatt. “And how are we going to do that?” Hayden questions. “One word, Chiron,” Harris answers as he and Troy appear from their tent. “I can tell Ilya that Troy and I will be out all day and that we need someone to watch Chiron.” Bood nods. It’s a good idea. Ilya has practically worshipped Chiron since he was a puppy and is constantly begging those two to bring Chiron to practice. “But how does that get Shane away from Ilya?” Hayden questions.

“What about a new advertising deal?” Hayes suggests but Hayden shakes his head. “Shane would just have his mom deal with it.” Everyone falls silent as they think of potential options. “So this is where you guys are hiding out,” Cassie calls from the porch. “Come on in, Yuna and David are making breakfast.”

Breakfast is a quiet affair with everyone lost in their thoughts. “Do you think we should’ve stayed last night?” Haas asks quietly as he picks at his eggs. “And listen to them go at it nonstop?” Holmberg shudders. “We get enough of that during away games,” Young adds with a wrinkle of his nose. “Yeah, the last time we played against New York, I’m pretty sure they broke the bed,” Chouinard chimes in while spearing a piece of fruit onto his fork. “Maybe we should talk about something else,” Selena says quickly as she notices the looks on the Hollanders’ faces.

“Okay, well why don’t we figure out how to get Shane away from Roz long enough to talk some sense into him,” Hayes says before taking a sip of his water. “We need to figure out something neither of them will be suspicious about,” Cassie says seriously. “I could always call him in to go over tapes or talk to him about an upcoming game,” Wiebe suggests. Bood shakes his head, “He would wonder why Ilya isn’t there since he’s Captain.”

“The kids keep asking when they are going to see their uncles again,” Jackie pipes up, “I can always see if Shane can babysit and when he shows up, we can all talk to him.” Despite the unease on Hayden’s face, he nods in agreement. “Okay so Shane goes to your house, and we’ll have Ilya looking after Chiron,” Barrett says. Bood looks to Yuna and David. “It could work,” David says thoughtfully. “And if it doesn’t?” Yuna asks, skeptically. The table grows quiet again. This could go very badly if they don’t do this right.

“What do we do if Shane goes back to Roz?” Dillon asks, “He’ll definitely know what’s going on then. “Rozanov will never let us see Shane again,” Hayden says darkly. “We need to do this sooner rather than later,” Hayes says with a grim look on his face, “And if Shane decides to go back then we will make sure he knows we all have his back no matter what. We do what we need to do to keep him safe.” Everyone at the table nods in agreement. “I’ll text Shane later tonight when we get home to see if he can babysit this coming weekend,” Jackie says. “Great, I’ll text Ilya and ask him to watch Chiron,” Harris agrees. The group feels slightly better at having a plan decided but no one knows how Shane will react nor will they know what to do if Ilya ever finds out they tried to help Shane leave the relationship.

Saturday arrives quicker than any of them expected. In order not to draw unwanted attention, the team carpooled together in three separate cars and parked on various streets near the Pike's house. Walking into the house, Hayes can hear the murmured voices of his teammates. "Are you ready for this?" Lisa asks quietly as she takes off her shoes. "I know how close you and Ilya are." Part of Hayes aches for the loss of a man he considers one of his best friends. The larger part wants to kill him for what he's done to Shane. "Not anymore," Hayes replies tersely. Lisa squeezes his hand in support, "You're doing the right thing." Hayes really hopes that's the case.

Wyatt and Lisa head down into the hallway and into the living room where everyone else is waiting. The mood in the room is somber. "Before Shane shows up, does anyone not want to be here? It's okay if you need to leave now or at any point," Bood says as Wyatt and Lisa sit down on the floor by the couch. Everyone shakes their head no. A knock on the door has everyone stiffening. Jackie quickly makes her way through the house and to the front door.

The group loosens up when Jackie walks back into the living room with Rose and the Hollanders behind her. "Hey guys, come on in," Hayden says as he stands up to give them all a hug. "Why don't we move to the backyard?" Jackie suggests as she gazes at the stuffed couch full of oversized hockey players, "Shane is going to be here any minute." Everyone makes their way out onto the patio and onto the lawn. Just like when the puck drops in a game, when the Pike's doorbell rings, everyone is determined to bring home a win. A win where their beloved son, teammate, and friend is safe.

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From the moment Shane opened his eyes Saturday morning, a sense of something akin to foreboding lays heavy in his stomach. Quietly turning off his alarm, Shane takes a scan of his body. The bruise on Shane's left ribcage is still tender from being knocked into the boards by Tampa's defenseman, Lilleberg, from yesterday's game. The bath Ilya had drawn him last night had helped immensely.

Memories of last night causes a small blush to appear on Shane's cheeks. His husband's attentiveness had continued long past the soak in the tub to remapping Shane's body with his own. Teeth marks soothed over by a wet tongue. Kisses trailed around the most sensitive pieces of skin. Bruising fingerprints claiming the space across Shane's hips and inner thighs. The familiar ache nestled between Shane's legs causes a slight tremor down his spine.

Shane shakes his head to clear the tantalizing memories for now. Finishing the scan of his body, Shane cannot figure out where the feeling is coming from, and yet it remains. "You are thinking too loud Hollander. Can hear you from here," Ilya says groggily with his eyes closed. Shane chuckles lightly as he presses a kiss to Ilya's forehead. "Go back to sleep. I'm going for a run," Shane murmurs. Ilya cracks an eye open, "Gimme kiss before you go."

"I already did," Shane says innocently as he slips out of bed. "Shaneeeee," Ilya whines as he rolls over to face his husband's side of the bed. Shane rolls his eyes but dutifully climbs back into the bed. Shane yelps as Ilya pulls him on top of him. "That was not real kiss," Ilya says as his gaze travels up Shane's bare chest to meet his eyes. Shane's eyes glint mischievously in the early morning light peeking through the curtains. "You didn't specify," Shane shrugs. In one fluid motion, Ilya has Shane trapped underneath him with Shane's arms above his

head. "Then let me remind you," Ilya purrs before slotting their lips together. Instinctively, Shane's legs wrap around Ilya's waist with ease.

"Ilya," Shane whimpers as Ilya's grip tightens around Shane's wrists. "Patience *solnyshko*," Ilya murmurs against his mouth before moving down the side of Shane's neck. A petulant whine falls from Shane's lips. "Hurry up. Need to start my run," Shane taunts as his back arches up. "If you think I am letting you out of this bed being able to walk like normal person you are wrong," Ilya says in a tone that sends shivers down Shane's spine. Somewhere in the back of his mind, Shane tells himself he'll get back to his routine tomorrow, but it's forgotten when Ilya's hand wraps around Shane's cock.

Running is overrated anyways.

Shane is scrambling eggs in a pan when Ilya comes up behind him and wraps his arms around Shane's waist, "Smells good sweetheart." Ilya rests his chin on Shane's shoulder while the eggs cook. There was once a time in Shane's life where the mere idea of constantly being touched would send panic straight through his core. But now, wrapped in Ilya's embrace, there is no place Shane would rather be. No place Shane feels more confident, secure or safe than right here. Together.

"I told Jackie I'd be there around 4pm," Shane says as they sit down to eat. Bacon, eggs, and toast cover Ilya's plate. Shane takes it as a small win that there is strawberry jam on Ilya's toast. Shane's plate has eggs, two pieces of turkey bacon and several different fruits. Strawberries, bananas, blueberries and his own clementine. "Okay. I must be at Harris's around 4pm," Ilya replies as he takes a bite of his eggs. "I don't think I should be out too late. You'll have Anya with you so that's fine. I'm sure Chiron will be happy to see her," Shane continues.

While Ilya has been broaching the idea of getting another dog, Shane is hesitant. He loves Anya. But with their schedules, Anya spends most of her time with his parents and it wouldn't be fair to add another. So, Ilya's playdates with Anya and Chiron are enough. For now. Both Shane and Ilya know Shane is going to cave. It's just a matter of when. "Yes, Chiron loves us," Ilya states matter-of-factly. "Not as much as I do," Shane says as he takes a bite of his turkey bacon. Ilya's face softens and he reaches across the table and squeezes his hand before stealing Shane's clementine, or "little orange" as Ilya likes to call them.

"You could just have your own," Shane points out. Ilya shakes his head, "What do we have to do tomorrow?" During Shane running through their plans for tomorrow, including grocery shopping, laundry and meal prepping for the following week, Ilya carefully peels the clementine and removes any of the white strands he knows Shane hates. After all these years, Ilya knows how particular Shane is about certain food textures. Silently, Ilya places the peeled fruit back on his husband's plate before going back to his own. Shane stops mid-sentence and looks down in surprise, "You peeled it?" Ilya nods, "You hate how your fingers smell like little orange for hours after you peel them and how annoying the whites are to take off so I do it for you." Not for the first time does Shane wonder what he did to deserve someone so wonderful.

When Shane walks into the Pike's backyard, he's immediately surrounded by not four small Pike children and Hayden but the entire team, his parents and ... Rose? "Hey Hollzy, why don't you come have a seat?" Bood says, gesturing to the empty chair. That sense of foreboding Shane felt this morning turns into cold stone dread. Shane moves from the backdoor to the seat between Hayden and Rose. "What's going on? Is there a team meeting I forgot about?" Shane wracks his brain as he thinks back over the last week but a meeting wasn't scheduled. Nor would it make sense since Ilya isn't here.

"Look buddy," Hayden starts as he turns to his best friend, "We want you to know that we're love you and we're here for you. No matter what." Shane frowns as he furrows his eyebrows. If Shane was feeling unsure before, he's feeling downright uneasy now. "Did something happen with Jade? Ruby? What about Arthur and Amber?" Shane asks in confusion, a note of concern in his voice. Jackie shakes her head, "They're all fine Shane. They're at my parents." If the kids are at Jackie's parents, why did Jackie ask him to babysit?

"I'm sure you have a lot of questions right now," Hayes says compassionately, "And we will answer them but first we need to ask you something." Suddenly, Shane's chest feels restricted in his hoodie and he struggles to find his breath. "Um yeah?" Shane asks uncertainly. Shane misses the shared glances across the group. "You know you can be honest with us, about anything, right?" Barrett says quietly. While it's taken Shane a long time to become comfortable and find his space within the Centaurs, they have quickly become a second family to him. "Yeah, we love you Hollzy," Chouinard adds in quickly. "And we'll kick Roz's ass!" Young chirps. Shane looks at Young in bewilderment. "Why would you kick Ilya's ass?" Before Young can respond, Holmberg smacks his arm and glares at him. The pressure in Shane's chest grows as he watches the exchange. Holmberg, Young and LaPointe have idolized Ilya well before they joined the Centaurs.

Shane grips his knees tightly, his knuckles turning white. Despite being outside, Shane is beginning to feel out of breath. A sheen of sweat coats the back of his neck. It takes a moment for Shane to register his mother is talking to him, "Huh?" Shane asks as he looks at Yuna. "Is Ilya abusing you?" Shane's jaw drops and he looks around in undisguised shock. "You can't be serious?" Shane asks incredulously. His parents love Ilya. Where is all of this coming from? Shane looks around the group for some support but he's met with solemn faces and a heavy silence.

"It's okay Shane. We're here for you. We can get you the help you need. Whatever that looks like," Hayden says, missing how shallow Shane's breath has become. "What the fuck are you guys talking about?" Shane rasps out. "You know him! Ilya would never." Shane looks desperately at everyone.

"We've seen the bruises," Chouinard says quietly. "And the way he talks to you isn't okay Shane," Hayes adds, "No one deserves to be talked to like that." Shane swallows harshly as he tries to sort out what's going on. Rose pipes up, "You don't know this but when I was in town a few months ago, I came by your house to surprise you. I let myself in and found you two..." Shane whips his head around to face Rose. "You saw us?" Blood drains from Shane's face in mortification.

“We saw the rules he has for you honey. The things he makes you do,” Yuna says with barely concealed disgust. His parents saw the rules he and Ilya made together. Shane is pretty sure he’s going to pass out. Now would be a great time actually. “Ilya doesn’t make me do anything,” Shane snaps as he takes his phone out of his pocket. “Honey please, we love you and want what’s best for you. I think it would be good for you to talk to Janey again. This is what she specializes in,” Yuna says. ‘This is what she specializes in’ Shane thinks faintly. “Wait...is that why she was over for lunch a few weeks ago?” Shane questions and his mother has the decency to look sheepish.

“Shane this isn’t your fault. You did nothing wrong,” Hayden tries to soothe the situation over. “Of course I haven’t!” Shane cries as he stands up, “And neither has Ilya! The only people wrong here are you guys.” Shane fires off a quick text message before heading toward the backdoor. He needs to get out of here. “Shane, where are you going?” Jackie calls worriedly.

“I can’t stay here,” Shane says manages to get out as he opens the door. “How could you all think...” Shane couldn’t even bring himself to even finish the sentence. Everyone here is someone Ilya considers his family. And to have them prove that they do not consider his husband in the same way hurts Shane deeply. Shane trips as he makes his way inside and everyone is on their feet trying to help him within seconds.

Shane is too claustrophobic. Too hot and uncomfortable with people touching him. Their voices overlapping one another. Shane pushes his fists into his eyes to try and block out some sort of stimulation. A knock at the door has everyone quieting down.

It isn’t until Shane hears, “Where the fuck is he?” does Shane manage to take in a ragged breath. Before he knows it, Ilya is kneeling in front of him. When did he get on the floor? “Hey Shane, I need you to breathe with me okay? Like we practice. In and hold two, three. Out two, three.” Shane tries to follow his husband’s breathing but his panic has settled deep into his bones. “C-Can’t...Ilya...” Shane gasps. Shane’s eyes are wild and unfocused as they dart around the room. “Okay sweetheart. Tell me three things you feel.” Shane blinks quickly as he tries to answer Ilya, “M-My sweater...a-and your ring...the floor...” Ilya nods encouragingly, “Alright, what are two things you can smell?” Shane takes in another stunted breath, “Your cologne...and the grass outside.”

While Ilya works Shane through the grounding technique, everyone moves into the kitchen to give them space but still be able to keep an eye on what’s happening. “Shane doesn’t seem to be afraid of him,” Luca whispers quietly. “Yeah, wouldn’t he be afraid if Roz is abusing him?” Dillon asks lowly. “Unless he’s so brain washed, he can’t tell,” Hayden says tightly. As Shane’s best friend, the guilt Hayden has felt is close to consuming him. While Shane is the most brilliant hockey player the MHL, and the world, have seen, he has his challenges. That’s where Hayden comes in. It’s his duty as a best friend to protect and support Shane and he’s failed abysmally.

“Anyone want to fill me in on what is going on with my husband?” Ilya asks stiffly. “How did you get here so fast? You are supposed to be watching Chiron,” Troy demands. “For your information, I was dropping Shane off before going to your house Barrett,” Ilya says icily, “You’re lucky I was so close.” Shane had been pulled between Ilya’s legs, his back resting on

Ilya's chest. "Now, will someone explain what the fuck caused my husband to have bad panic attack?"

Ilya's question is met with silence and uneasy glances. "They think you're abusing me," Shane murmurs as he moves to rest his head on Ilya's shoulder. Ilya does a double take between the group and Shane. "What?" Ilya's voice is hollow. The last thing Ilya ever wants to do is cause Shane undo harm. "We've seen the bruises and the rules you have for him and how you talk to him," Bood says as he crosses his arms. Ilya frowns, "How I talk to him?"

"Yeah, like when you asked him to get you a drink at his birthday party. That wasn't cool," Harris joins the conversation. "Plus, we heard you two in the bathroom later that night. Shane was crying and you were telling him not to," Hayes adds with a glare. Shane hides his face in his hands in mortification. "What we do in the privacy of our own home is none of your business," Ilya snaps. "It is when it concerns my son," Yuna states. "Clearly the two of you have a large disparity in your marriage," David adds. Ilya does not know what disparity means but he knows enough to understand it doesn't mean something good. "He is my husband. We are equals," Ilya responds. "Oh please, I saw you stepping on him!" Rose bursts out. "Okay, we are leaving," Ilya says decisively and helps Shane off the floor. "I will not tolerate subjecting my husband to these lies."

"Shane, you don't have to go. You can stay with us," Hayden says, walking toward the couple. Ilya moves Shane behind him before turning to face Hayden, "I would hate for 15th best player in the league to sit out of the next few games." Hayden narrows his eyes, "Are you fucking threatening me Rozanov? You're a piece of shit and I am done letting you hurt my best friend." Hayden tries to reach around Ilya to pull Shane to his side but before he can, Ilya is twisting his right arm behind his back and slamming him against the wall. "Try and take him from me again and you'll have bigger problems than a bruised wrist," Ilya snarls softly in Hayden's ear before letting him go.

"Shane, let's go." Ilya doesn't wait for Shane to follow as he makes his way to the front door. Shane looks at everyone with a mixture of confusion, hurt and exhaustion. He opens his mouth to speak and then closes it before silently following his husband out the door. "Well... that didn't work," Hayes sighs.

"Is it possible we got it wrong?" Luca asks the question everyone is thinking. "I don't know," Bood admits. "What other way is there to look at this though?" Hayden argues. "Yeah, no offence but you guys didn't see them together," Rose adds. "Don't forget the list of rules," Chouinard inserts. The Hollanders look notably uncomfortable at the mention of the list. "Ilya is controlling nearly every aspect of Shane's life and getting off on it," Hayden snaps. "I'm going over there."

"Are you sure that's the best idea?" Jackie asks uncertainly. After watching the display between Shane and Ilya, she's inclined to agree with Luca. Maybe they got this wrong. "I'm not giving him more opportunities to hurt him," Hayden responds as he grabs his keys. "I'll go with you," Hayes agrees. Jackie sighs, knowing how hard it is to stop her husband when it comes to Shane. "Be safe. Keep us in the loop." Hayden kisses her on the cheek before he and Hayes make their way out to Hayden's car. Hayden is determined to save Shane one way or another.

Chapter End Notes

May everyone have a man who takes the time to peel fruit you hate to touch. Ilya, if you have no lovers I'm dead.

What did y'all think of the chapter? Can't wait to read all of your thoughts xo

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See you on the next one 

End Notes

Comments kudos are greatly loved and appreciated! ❤️

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