Grin and Bear It

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Grin and Bear It

by Giveemhale

Summary

Ilya tries to get Shane to be friends with Troy. It goes horribly.

AKA Shane crashes out at Troy

Chap 2: Shane and Rose talk about fame and rage

Notes

There were some great posts on Tumblr today about Shane having issues with Troy. I made my own post but I was so consumed by this concept that I ended up cranking out this fic in a couple of hours. This also is inspired a tiny bit by my other post about Shane's unique challenges with coming out compared to Ilya. There are too many great Tumblr posts that helped inspire this so I am just linking my own lol. But check out my reblogs for some other great posts!

This is not supposed to be bashing on Troy or Ilya or Harris!! I specifically made this from Ilya's POV so we are not only seeing Shane's perspective. I just think Shane deserves to crash out more and one of the people most deserving of his ire is Troy. And I think Ilya probably would not understand that until he sees Shane crash out.

Also this is not meant to be canon accurate. As far as I know, it is never confirmed that Troy uses these slurs on the ice or that Shane resents him for it. But this is my sandbox and I think these characters should be angstier!

Homophobic slurs are used in this so please be prepared for that!

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Ilya had been trying to figure out a way to get Shane and Troy to be friends ever since Shane had joined the Centaurs.

Shane had been understandably stand-offish when he first joined the team, still nursing the wounds from his painful expulsion from Montreal. Everyone on the team had accepted him with open arms, but it took time for the easy camaraderie to form that Ilya had spent the last year building between the team and himself. The rookies had been nervous around Shane, awed to be in the presence of The Shane Hollander (which shouldn't be such a big deal if they could handle Ilya who was just as good as a player, but whatever). Some of the vets had been more coolly detached, only ever having been exposed to Shane as a hockey machine and needing to get to know the man underneath before any friendship formed. There were also a couple players who clearly needed time to adjust to knowledge that Ilya Rozanov's husband was joining the team and was also his greatest rival and one of the greatest players of all time. It was never rooted in malice or homophobia, just the awkward adjustment stage of trying to get used to something you had never even imagined to be a possibility.

Eventually everyone warmed up to Shane (because how could you not love Shane?) and Shane warmed up in return, until the team felt like a big happy family. Shane was practically as close as Ilya was with everyone on the team.

With the exception of Troy Barrett.

Shane was outwardly polite, of course, but there was a noticeable iciness any time he had to interact with Troy. Ilya had tried to broach the subject with Shane, but Shane would just wave him off, insisting he had no issue with Troy and everything was fine.

Ilya had a feeling he knew what the issue was. Troy had been there for Ilya in Ottawa when Shane couldn't be. Troy had been one of the first people Ilya had come out to, and Ilya had been able to tell that made Shane uneasy from the moment he first told him. The fact Troy was also attracted to men probably made Shane even more uncomfortable. Ilya could understand where Shane was coming from; Ilya still felt jealous around Rose to this day, even knowing Shane was fully gay and fully committed to him.

But it was still frustrating that Shane's jealousy was driving a wedge in Ilya's friendship with Troy. As much as Ilya adored having Shane around all the time (and he would never trade it for anything), it had greatly decreased the amount of time he saw Troy outside of practice and team events, and he missed their friendship. He had hoped to be able to go on double dates with Troy and Harris now that he was out with Shane, but Shane would come up with any excuse possible to avoid spending more time with Troy than was strictly necessary. It was getting to be frustrating. Troy had been there for Ilya when Ilya had felt so alone, and he didn't want Troy to feel like he was abandoning their friendship just because his husband was around now.

Still, Ilya had planned to just let the issue resolve itself until Troy had reluctantly approached him to see if he had any advice on how to get on better terms with Shane.

Ilya had confessed that he assumed it was jealousy, and Shane just needed some extra time to thaw. But Troy hadn't been convinced. He had feared that Shane still resented him for his past bigoted self, even after Troy had personally apologized to him and reinvented himself.

Ilya had been insistent that wasn't the case. Shane knew that Troy had changed, had seen that he was not that person anymore and that he had only behaved that way after being violently shoved in the closet, just like Shane and Ilya were. Shane had been able to forgive J.J, who had accused him of tripping, and Hayden, who had outed him to the entire world. And Ilya had forgiven them too, for Shane's sake. So it simply didn't make sense Shane would hold a grudge against Troy, especially knowing how close he was to Ilya.

No, Ilya was convinced this would be similar to how things went with Shane and Svetlana; Shane understandably wary at first, before a friendship blossomed to the point they now regularly teamed up against Ilya. It was just taking a bit longer with Troy, because of how fresh everything was.

That brought them to tonight. Ilya and Shane had hosted the Centaurs for a get together, as they did once every month. Everyone had already headed out for the night, but Ilya had asked Troy in advance to stay late so he and Shane could finally talk. Ilya had been cleaning up throughout the night and had everyone leave early so that the house was clean and empty—sans Ilya, Shane, Troy, and Harris—by 8pm so Shane would have no excuse not to hang out with a group. Hopefully it would be the first of many hangouts between the four of them.

Ilya spent a few minutes lounging with Troy and Harris in the living room, before getting up to check why Shane was still in the kitchen. Shane was always particular about cleanliness, but Ilya had wiped down the counters, thrown out the trash, and loaded up the dishwasher. There was no reason for Shane to still be there.

When Ilya entered the kitchen, Shane glanced up from where he was wiping at a spotless counter, and lit up. "Oh, I'm getting close to finished. Are Troy and Harris leaving? I can say bye real quick."

"No, they are staying," Ilya frowned at the way Shane instantly deflated.

"Oh. But the party is over…"

"Yes, but I asked them to stay."

Shane's eyebrows shot up his forehead. "Why? You told everyone they needed to leave because we have an early morning."

"Yes, but is only 8pm. I asked Troy and Harris to stay so we can chat for a bit. It will be a practice run for double dates. We need more options than just the Pikes," Ilya smiled wide, but his smile dimmed when Shane stayed silent. "You don't want them here?"

Shane simply shrugged and looked down.

"Shane… do you have a problem with Troy?"

Shane flinched like the question was a physical blow. "No! Nothing like that. I just had some better ideas of what we could do tonight." Shane sauntered over to Ilya and ran his fingers up Ilya's chest, looking up through his eyelashes in a way he knew drove Ilya wild.

Ilya felt the familiar burn of desire growing, but did his best to push it down as he gently pushed Shane's arm away. "And there will be plenty of time for that later, дорогой. Right now, we have guests to entertain."

Shane's seductive look instantly dropped and was replaced with a look of cool indifference. "Okay, well, you have fun with that. Today was a long day and I'm tired so I am heading to bed."

Ilya rolled his eyes. "любовь моя, it is only 8pm, you never get ready before 9pm. I know your schedule. Is husband duties." The term didn't bring a smile to Shane's face the way it usually did.

"Ilya, I'm not in the mood. You have fun with Troy and Harris. I am going to bed." His flat affect made Ilya frown. Shane started to walk away, but Ilya grabbed his wrist and pulled him back.

Ilya waited until Shane finally made eye contact with him before he started talking. "Shane, please. I know you don't like Troy and I want us to fix this. I don't know if it is jealousy-"

Shane scoffed, turning his head away. "Jealousy? I have no reason to be jealous of that man."

Ilya nodded, "Of course, you don't. You are mine and I am yours. But I have noticed how you treat Troy and Troy also has-"

Shane's head snapped back to look at Ilya and, oh wow, he looked mad. Like, really mad. Much angrier than Ilya had been prepared for. "Troy? Did he say something to you?"

"Uh," Ilya felt a bit like he was trying to navigate a minefield, "Nothing bad. He just also noticed you… are maybe not always nicest to him."

Shane let out a mean and ugly laugh and Ilya immediately knew that had been the wrong thing to say.

"Oh, I'm not nice enough to Troy? His feelings are hurt?" Shane tugged his arm away from Ilya and started marching to the living room. "Barrett!" He shouted, "If you have a problem with me, why don't you be a man and say it to my face instead of crying to my husband like a little bitch."

Ilya's eyes widen and he scurried after Shane as soon as he shook off his shock. He had never heard Shane talk like this, and he had no idea what was happening.

When Ilya entered the living room, Shane was looming above Harris and Troy, who both looked shocked.

"Shane, stop! What has gotten into you?" Ilya shouted.

There was a fire raging behind Shane's eyes, and Ilya was quickly regretting every choice that led to this moment. "Stay out of this, Ilya. You're the one who wants me to talk to Troy. So let's talk. Come on, Troy, tell me about how mean and terrible I am to you."

Troy's mouth was open, but it looked like he couldn't find any words to say, incapable of anything but staring at Shane in shock.

Harris rushed to intervene, always the helper. "Shane, I'm sorry, I think there was maybe some sort of miscommunication-"

"You stay out of this, too," Shane snapped at Harris, and Ilya had never been so shocked. Nobody was ever mean to Harris, he was too friendly to be mean to. So to see Shane, who was always kind and polite, even to people he didn't like, talk like this... Ilya didn't know how to react.

He had seen Shane angry—Shane was angry all the time around Ilya, he loved to piss him off. But that was always fun. Shane was rarely truly furious, like he was right now. And even then, like the time he went off at Crowell, he was still mostly composed. Ilya had never seen Shane like this and he wasn't sure what to do.

Shane turned back to Troy, "Come on, Barrett, stop being a fucking pussy." Everyone gasped like they were a group of elderly women rather than men who heard this everyday through hockey. But coming from Shane Hollander, it frankly was shocking.

Shane looked around the group, a wild look in his eyes. "Oh, I'm sorry, is that rude of me to say? I'm just repeating what Barrett always said to me on the ice. Would you rather I call you a homo or a cocksucker? I remember those being favorites of yours."

Ilya had known Troy used to be, to put it mildly, a piece of shit. He was friends with Dallas Kent, afterall. But he hadn't ever really thought about just how bad he was. None of that language had ever been directed at him, but Ilya often forgot he had a reputation that shielded him. A reputation that Shane didn't have.

Harris looked shocked, although Ilya assumed that had more to do with how aggressive Shane was being than hearing the language Troy had used in the past.

Troy, meanwhile, looked wounded. His eyes welled up with tears and Ilya knew how intensely Troy hated himself in that moment, because Ilya had experienced the exact same feeling. "Shane, I'm so sorry, man. I know no matter how much I apologize, that will never make up for it, but I really am so sorry. I was just afraid and I didn't want anyone to see who I really was, so I hid behind the hatred, to try to keep myself safe. I'm so sorry."

Shane scoffed, "No need to explain. I already know. You did it because you're a fucking coward."

"Shane, that's not fair," Ilya intervened, before he could think better of it. He remembered the cocky bravado he used to hide behind. There was a unique pressure Troy had living under a

homophobic and abusive father, one which Ilya knew too well and which Shane had never had to experience.

It only made Shane angrier. He whirled on Ilya, "No, it's not fair. It's not fair that he got to hide behind that asshole persona and make everyone else deal with his own issues. He didn't want to be a target, so he targeted anyone who seemed weaker. He got to be selfish and take the easy way out. And once that got to be too much, he got to come out and suddenly he was absolved of all his sins. He's king of pride night and it doesn't even matter he used to call me a faggot and followed a rapist around like a puppy dog. Nope, everyone is just so happy for him and his happily ever after!" Ilya realizes with a jolt that Shane has started crying, but Shane steps back when Ilya instinctually lifts his hand to wipe away his tears.

Ilya's arm dropped and Shane continued his tirade. "I never got that choice. I didn't get to be angry or hide behind slurs on the ice because I had to be bigger than that. I just grinned and beared it no matter what shit players threw at me. Because think of all the kids out there who look like me that I have to be a role model for. Because think of how much time and resources my parents put in for me to get here. Because think of the sponsors and the team and the league and the media. Because just one step out of line and it all comes crumbling down. Shane Hollander doesn't get to make mistakes. So I did everything right. I never fought on the ice. I dedicated my life to being the best. I fucking hid the love of my life because assholes like you made it impossible for me to come out!" He finally turned back to Troy, pointing angrily at him.

Troy put up his hands and opened his mouth like he wanted to respond, but Shane powered on. "And what do I have to show for it? I was outed against my will to the entire world. I was kicked off the team I won three Stanley cups for. I was accused of throwing games for Ilya, as if I didn't give my all in everything I did. I was personally threatened by the commissioner. I was stripped of my captain position and shuffled to a second rate team with a fraction of the pay I deserve. You spent your whole career being a homophobic asshole, but as soon as you come out, suddenly you're a hero. I spent my whole career doing everything right, but as soon as I come out, all of my accomplishments are dismissed and I'm the villain. And I *still* just have to grin and bear it, the way I always have." Shane laughs, but it's cruel and bitter. "And now you're whining to my husband that I'm not nice enough to you. Even in my own home, I can't be mad."

Troy was now also crying at this point, and Ilya has no idea how everything went so wrong, so quickly. How did he miss how much his husband was hurting? How had he let Shane believe that Ilya was someone he had to hide behind a smile for?

"I'm so sorry, Shane. I'm so sorry for everything I said in the past and I am sorry for making you uncomfortable on the team and I am sorry for how terrible the league is and I am so, so sorry for tonight. I just wanted us to get along," Troy said, and Ilya can tell how sincere he is, but wonders for the first time if that is enough.

"Yeah, well, I just wanted to be a good hockey player. And that's what I'll keep doing. So no need to worry," he gave a smile that was all teeth, and Ilya had never realized he could dislike a look on Shane's face until that moment, "We'll get along fine. I'll make sure to always have a grin saved just for you."

Shane walked away, grabbing his keys and slipping on his shoes. He shook Ilya off when Ilya tried to grab him and, fuck, now Ilya was crying too. Troy and Harris were insisting that Shane should stay and they would go, but it was like he couldn't even hear them.

The door slammed behind Shane, leaving devastation in his wake.

And Ilya had no idea what to do.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Shane needs someone to talk to after his fight with Ilya and Troy

Chapter Notes

Ahhh I'm so nervous posting this. This fic got way more popular than expected (I guess someone posted a screenshot from the fic on twt and it went a lil bit viral which is wild bc I haven't even been on twt in years (briefly logged on to see what people were saying and so much of it was so kind and lovely although I also saw hate comments and was reminded why I stick to Tumblr lol)). But thank you to everyone who shared it! I definitely was not expecting over 500 comments??? Everyone's comments were so kind and insightful. And the constant influx of comments also meant I couldn't stop thinking about this fic so here we are. Also this fic (which was marked as completed btw) has over 1500 subscribers and I am struggling to wrap my head around that but hopefully each of you is excited by this update.

Everyone really wanted to see the fall out between Shane and Ilya. So I wrote this instead. Whoops. Hope you still enjoy.

Also shout out to maggy for betaing this, you rock!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Shane stormed off and began driving away from Ilya and Troy and their awful fight, his first instinct had been to go to his parents. He had started unconsciously driving that way.

But when he actually thought about talking to his parents, he felt a tendril of dread curl in his gut. He knew how that conversation would go. His parents would let him rant, his dad nodding along sympathetically and his mom pursing her lips. They would let him get it all off his chest and reassure him he wasn't wrong to feel the way he did. They would agree Ilya should have respected his boundaries and Troy never should have said those things on the ice.

And then as soon as his tears dried, his mom would go right to trying to fix the problem, because that's what she did best. She would hit him with harsh truths, because she never saw a point to being anything but straightforward, would point out that this all could have been avoided if he had just talked to Ilya. She would suggest what points he could raise when he got back to Ilya, as if relationship talks were a negotiation. She would remind him not to let any issues with Troy get in the way of the team's dynamic, as if he hadn't spent the past

months biting his lip so hard it bled every time he had to look at Troy; as if he hadn't always put hockey before his personal feelings. As if that wasn't the fucking story of his life. And then they would send him home with a game plan and a message of love for Ilya and maybe some leftover pasta.

It would all be so practical, and Shane hated the idea of it.

He loved how much his parents loved Ilya. He loved that Ilya was finally getting to experience family the way he deserved; he could think of nobody who deserved it more. He loved that he was able to give that to Ilya and experience it with him.

But on his darkest days, he could admit that sometimes he wanted his parents firmly on his side. Sometimes the jokes that Ilya was their "favorite son" hit a little too close for comfort, even when he was the one saying it. Struck with the knowledge they probably had spent much of his life wishing they had a son like Ilya, still a hockey star but more charming and less socially inept. *Normal*.

Sometimes Shane didn't want to be seen as the hockey prodigy, or the Asian role model, or even Ilya's husband. He just wanted to be their son. But he had never felt like that was enough.

So when he began approaching his parents' house, he kept driving. He didn't know where he was going, just away.

He wiped furiously at the tears clouding his vision and knew he needed to talk to somebody. He had been bottling up these feelings for so long and now that he had started, it felt like there was a rush of emotions begging to burst free. He had so much more to get off his chest and he wanted it out before he went back home and said something to Ilya he couldn't take back. He had already fucked up letting his emotions get the better of him, something he was usually so good about, and he didn't want to risk making things worse.

He was already regretting leaving the way he did. Leaving Ilya with Troy and Harris. Realistically he knew that Troy didn't hate him and had never meant the things he said on the ice. He knew Ilya would at least try to understand Shane's perspective and would probably stop trying to force this stupid dream that Shane and Troy would one day be besties.

But there was still the small, niggling fear at the back of his mind. What if they were back at home, talking about him right now? What if Ilya was realizing at this very moment that Shane was too much, the way people in his life seemed to inevitably realize? What if he had permanently fucked up the one good thing he had going on in his life now, the thing he had thrown everything else away for? He had just proven Troy right by being cruel, after all. Were Troy and Harris sitting with Ilya, comforting him and telling him he deserved better? That he deserved someone who wouldn't lash out and knew to be grateful for what they had, for what Ilya had sacrificed, and wouldn't get so bogged down caring what others thought?

Shane had already taken Russia and Boston from Ilya—would he feel like Shane was trying to take one more thing from him? Would he be able to forgive him, if he did?

This is exactly what Shane had been trying to avoid. But Ilya just had to push and push until Shane finally snapped. Now, Shane didn't know what came next. And it made him so *angry*. At Ilya and Troy and himself and the whole world. He wanted to rage and scream and cry and he hated feeling so out of control of his emotions. He was supposed to be better than this.

He was spiraling hard, and he felt unmoored not being able to talk to Ilya or his parents about it. He was so used to having them as a support system. But the thought of speaking to any of them made him nauseated. Because he knew they wouldn't understand, not really, and he didn't want to have to justify his emotions right now. He didn't want to have to add the caveat after every sentence that he knew he was being ungrateful or overdramatic. He didn't want to have to regulate himself to avoid accidentally hurting their feelings, because it felt like that was all he ever did. Not just for them. For everybody. And he was sick of it.

Shane thought about calling Hayden or J.J. He knew for a fact they would be firmly on his side.

But he also feared the conversation would likely be a little less pro-Shane and a little more anti-Ilya. They both tried to be supportive, but he knew any complaints he raised to them would just be used as ammo in their well meaning but hurtful suggestions that he deserved better than Ilya. Their comments had shifted to playful teasing ever since Shane and Ilya got married, but he still could sometimes see the doubt in their eyes. The feeling they carried that they knew what was best for Shane, and he didn't (the way everyone seemed to feel).

But Shane knew what he wanted. He wanted Ilya and hockey. It was the rest of the world that kept getting in the way.

He could only think of one remaining option, and he dialed before he could think better of it. The one person who had ever seemed to care just about him being happy, and not about him being happy in a way that was most acceptable to them.

He almost hoped she wouldn't pick up, just so he could say he tried but wouldn't actually have to burden her.

But she picked up on the third ring, the call connecting to his car's Bluetooth.

"Shaaannnnne!" Rose answered, and Shane could immediately tell she was at the very least tipsy.

"Hi Rose," Shane responded, a small smile already forming on his face.

"I can't believe you called! We were literally just talking about you! How did you know? It's like we're psychically connected!"

"Really? Who were you talking to about me?" Shane felt a ball of anxiety in the pit of his stomach at the thought of being the center of conversation, even if he was used to it by now. He hated the idea of anyone talking about him, especially Hollywood actors he didn't know. He didn't want to be celebrity gossip.

"My brothers! I'm visiting, remember?"

"Oh yeah," Shane hadn't remembered, actually, and he immediately felt bad for interrupting her family time. "Why are you talking about me?"

"They're still mad I fumbled you," Rose groaned.

"Uh, they do know I'm gay, right?"

"No, yeah," Rose giggled, "They're mad I didn't try to set you up with them. They say they also should have had the chance to woo you."

"I- what? Aren't your brothers straight?" Shane was pretty sure it would have come up by now if any of Rose's brothers were gay.

"Yeah, but they say it doesn't count as gay if it's you."

"That doesn't even make sense. And aren't two of them married?"

"Yeah, their wives said it would be an honor to have their husbands leave them for Shane Hollander."

It was the most absurd thing Shane had ever heard, and suddenly he was laughing so hard he could barely breathe, having to pull over to the side of the road so he didn't risk an accident.

Rose was laughing too, and it was exactly what Shane needed. He felt his tension from the fight starting to drain away.

Rose only started talking again once their laughter had petered off. "So if you aren't calling because you could telepathically sense that I was discussing you, then why are you calling? You know I'm always thrilled to hear from you, but usually there's a reason."

The tension that had melted away snapped back into place at the reminder of his reason for calling.

"Uh, yeah. I-" he humiliatingly broke off with a sniffle.

"Shane? What's wrong? Are you okay?" Rose was instantly serious, the remaining traces of humor gone.

"Yeah. I just," Shane swallowed, "I had a fight with Ilya."

"Oh no! What happened? Do I need to come kick his ass?"

The mental image of Rose beating up a man with a full foot and 100 pounds on her brought a smile to Shane's face. He could perfectly picture Ilya trying to cover his head while Rose repeatedly whacked him. But the smile just as quickly slid away at the thought of Ilya.

"No. Or I don't know. I kind of already yelled at him. It was basically a one-sided fight and I stormed out after. He didn't even really do anything wrong."

Rose snorted, but it wasn't mean. "I have a hard time believing you would yell at him without him doing something to provoke it. So tell me what happened."

"Well, we had the team over. And it was good. Everyone on the team is friendly and I'm starting to get to a point where I do feel like I get along with everybody. But there's this one guy. Barrett."

"Troy Barrett? From Toronto?"

Shane always forgot how big of a hockey fan Rose was. "Yeah. He- he used to be friends with Dallas Kent."

"Gross."

Shane laughed. "Yeah, gross. And he's different now. He's come out and he's in a relationship with our social media manager. And he's apologized to me, for things he used to say on the ice. He's explained that he was scared of anyone finding out that he was gay. And I get it. But…"

"But every time you see him, you're reminded of every terrible thing he said to you?"

Shane sighed, once again relieved and astounded that Rose could know him so well. "Yeah. And it wouldn't be that big of a deal. I'm fine having teammates I don't like. I played with Comeau for years and that guy never knows when to shut the fuck up. But it's not just on the ice. I have to see him at every team event. And he's basically Ilya's best friend on the team."

"Yikes."

"He used to call me homophobic slurs and that's who Ilya chose to be the first person he revealed our relationship to. Which is... fine. I'm glad Ilya had that. He was there for Ilya while I was still in Montreal and Ilya was still struggling with his adjustment to Ottawa." And wasn't that an understatement. Ilya had been drowning in depression while Shane was in Montreal, unaware, and instead of coming to Shane, he had leaned on fucking Troy Barrett. He felt more comfortable with one of Shane's former tormentors than Shane himself. The familiar feeling of shame and resentment curdled in his gut at the memory. He hated the knowledge that Ilya hadn't been entirely wrong in his assessment that Shane was jealous of Troy.

"So, what, now you feel like you need to be friends with him?"

"Well, no," because he didn't. Shane would be polite, but the issue was never that *he* felt like he needed to be friends with Troy. "The problem is *Ilya* wants me to be friends with Barrett. And he's tried to be slick about it. And I just ignored it, because I didn't want to make Ilya feel like he couldn't be friends with him. Ilya deserves a support system. So I just did my best to avoid Barrett. But Ilya actually confronted me tonight. While Barrett and his boyfriend were there."

"The audacity of men will never cease to amaze me." And Shane could practically hear her eyes rolling. He laughed instead of reminding her he was also a man.

"And I just snapped. I can't even remember everything I said. But I said awful things. I was just so, so mad. That Ilya would team up with Barrett and confront me in our home. He couldn't even wait for Barrett to leave to have the conversation! Because apparently he was supposed to be part of the conversation. He actually told Ilya I wasn't nice to him. Fucking Troy Barrett. As if he was so nice when he and Kent would call me a cocksucker or a diversity hire or whatever other bullshit they thought might get under my skin. So when Ilya told me that Troy Barrett thought I wasn't nice enough to him… I just snapped. I started screaming at Barrett, all the things I've felt since joining the Centaurs. How I still remember all the slurs he used to call me. And how unfair it is that I was supposed to pretend like everything was fine just because he came out. And how unfair it is that it seems like the whole world loved him when he came out but it feels like everyone hated me. Like everyone still hates me! When I tried so hard to do everything right! And I know that's not even his fault. And I was being immature and selfish, and I had no right to say all of those things, but I-"

"Shane, stop."

Shane snapped his mouth shut, embarrassed that he had somehow said the wrong thing, like he always did. "Sorry," he instinctually apologized, even though he wasn't sure what for.

"Shane, stop apologizing. And stop trying to dismiss or explain away your feelings. You deserve to be angry! More than maybe anyone I've ever met."

Shane had never had anyone say that to him before, and he was left floundering. "But I-"

"Nope. No more downplaying or shame spiraling. Or Shane spiraling, if you will. Ilya shouldn't have cornered you like that. And Troy apologizing doesn't erase the awful things he's done or said to you. And you're right that it's not fair. Nothing about your outing or the way people reacted was fair. You didn't deserve any of it. And it wasn't your fault. You know that, right? That you don't deserve how you've been treated?"

"I-" he couldn't get anymore words out. Did he know that?

Rose takes his silence for the confession it is. "Listen, you might not believe me, but I do know a bit about what it's like. What you're going through."

Shane scoffed, "How could you possibly know?" He regretted it as soon as the words came out. Here Rose was, trying to comfort him, and he responded by being bitter. What was wrong with him today?

But instead of deserved anger, Rose responded with compassion, the way she always did. "I mean, that's fair. I don't think anyone can really know what you're going through except you. Your experience is pretty unique." Shane snorted at that. He was a generational talent, a gay, Asian hockey player who married his former rival turned captain after their almost decade-long, closeted situationship and subsequent forced outing. Unique was an understatement.

"But I know a thing or two about double standards and unfair expectations. I am a female action star. Every time I step outside, the world treats it as consent to having my appearance

and every decision I make picked apart. It's exhausting always being on display. I feel like I have been put on a pedestal that nobody realizes is actually a cage."

Shane swallowed, not sure what to say. He had never thought about Rose having to experience all of that, but hearing it all laid out, he realized just how much he could relate. His whole life, everything he had done had been criticized, and it had become so much worse since the world discovered he was gay and in love with Ilya Rozanov. He was always too passive or too aggressive, too stoic or too sensitive, too quiet or too arrogant. Nothing he ever did was right. Everyone was always waiting for him to make a mistake, so they could prove players "like him" didn't belong in hockey. And since his relationship was revealed, hockey fell to the background and his personal life was put under a microscope. He had thought the scrutiny on ice was bad, but at least it motivated him, at least he felt like he could train enough to beat people's expectations. But now it was like every choice he made was criticized, everything he said was ripe for exploitation, and nothing he did ever made it better. And Shane was so, so tired.

Rose powered on when Shane stayed silent, her voice now shaking. "I'm sure you know that when I was 19, my nudes were leaked. I mean, everyone knows."

Shane wasn’t sure where this was going. "Um. Yes? But I never looked!"

Rose laughed. "No, I suppose you wouldn't have. I know I don't really do it for you," Shane was grateful she didn't sound bitter. "My ex-boyfriend leaked them. He was mad I broke up with him. And then the whole world was mad at me. I was called every name in the book and told I was setting a bad example for young girls everywhere."

She took a deep breath, collecting herself. "The worst part was that I had done a movie with my ex—that’s how we met—and we were supposed to do a press run together. I was so furious at him, I didn't want to be in the same room as him. But my agent told me the press run was my chance to rehabilitate my image. He drafted a public apology for me to release. He said if I got mad, it would just make me look worse. That I had already let down parents across the world and I needed to be the bigger person and show that I was mature and learned from my mistakes."

Shane sighed. He should have known this was coming. This was advice he had been hearing his whole life, and especially since his outing. He always had to be the bigger person. He was just tired of feeling like being who he was was a fundamental flaw. "Yeah, I know that's what I should-"

"No, Shane! That was terrible advice. I fired his ass. Eventually. It took longer than it should have, but I realized I needed to stand up for myself. I shouldn't have been expected to apologize because someone bulldozed over my consent and violated my privacy. I didn't deserve to be punished for other people's actions. And I shouldn't have been expected to be a role model just because I'm a woman. And you don't deserve any of that either!"

It was so different from any advice Shane had ever received and it left him feeling wobbly, like he was standing on the edge of a precipice. Accepting what Rose said meant rejecting what he knew, the cold but familiar rules that had guided him his whole life. He had always been told to think about his image and his career before anything else, for the sake of not just

him, but everyone who looked like him. Being with Ilya was the one time he ever ignored that advice, and the whole world was still trying to punish him for it.

"I'm sorry you went through that," Shane finally responded, unable to find any other words to say.

Rose sighed, "Shane, I'm not telling you this to make the moment about me. I'm saying this so you know that I have some credibility when I give you this advice. You deserve to be mad. No, you *need* to be mad. At Troy and Ilya and the media and the league and fucking Brad and everyone who has trampled all over your boundaries. When my nudes were leaked, I was so upset with myself. I started believing everyone telling me I deserved this for being so reckless. I felt like I wasn't allowed to hate anyone else so I hated myself instead. And it was slowly killing me."

"Do you still feel that way?" Shane asked. He told himself it was because he was concerned for his friend, and not for the voice in his head that whispered that this feeling was forever.

"No," Rose responded, "Not usually. Sometimes there are bad days. But I've learned to stop blaming myself for the way other people treat me. And I learned to let myself be mad at the people who hurt me."

"But what's the point? What difference does it make if you let yourself be mad?"

"It helps because the anger was always there, I just wasn't letting it go. I couldn't be happy until I let myself actually feel it. Outwardly. Until I actually directed it at the people who deserved it instead of at myself."

Shane understood where Rose was coming from, he really did. He knew the anger she described; he felt it like shards of glass he buried deep in his gut, ripping him to shreds from the inside. But letting it out meant cutting someone else and he couldn't see how that would be better. "So what? You're saying I should just yell at anyone who upsets me? Start fights on the ice?"

"I mean, I think you would be justified, but that's not what I'm saying. Although it would be so hot if you punched a homophobe-"

"Oh my god, Rose."

"I'm just saying let yourself be angry at other people. You should tell people you care about when they're hurting you so they can make it better. But you can tell everyone else to fuck off instead of worrying about what they think, because you will never be able to please them. And what's the point of caring about the opinion of people who want to see you fail? Fuck them! Fuck everyone who has hurt you! And if you can't say that to their faces, you can still get it off your chest. You have to have someone you can complain to about the bullshit that is going on in your life instead of letting it silently poison you from the inside."

"I do have someone," Shane interjected. Because he had Ilya. He had fought so hard to have Ilya and he couldn't let himself or anyone else forget that. Ilya was always there for him. Behind closed doors, Ilya let Shane be himself; he let Shane complain about his parents, let

him be an arrogant asshole about underdeveloped rookies, let him whine about restaurants that didn't have food fitting his diet, let him rant when Hayden called to talk about his baby troubles for the third time in one week. And Ilya always knew how to react, knew when to comfort him or make him laugh or get him out of his head. Ilya always knew what Shane needed.

And maybe that's what made it so painful when Ilya didn't know tonight.

Rose sighed, and it sounded bittersweet. "And what if that someone is the person who upset you?"

And that was the crux of it. He had fought so hard to earn Ilya and get to keep him that he was in constant terror of saying the wrong thing to him. Of upsetting him. Because he didn't want to hurt him, of course; knowledge of Ilya's depression and his mother's suicide was a constant pressure in Shane's chest, weighing into every decision he made. But admittedly also because he didn't want Ilya to leave him. He had spent his whole life being taught that anything but perfect meant losing everything. Hockey had proven it; he stepped too far out of line and he lost his team, his captaincy, his reputation, his legacy. How could he be sure the same wouldn't happen with Ilya?

Logically, he knew Ilya loved him just as much as he loved Ilya. And Shane would never leave Ilya just because he said something upsetting. He should have that same trust in Ilya, and he knew it. But Ilya was Ilya and Shane was Shane.

People loved Ilya. He was charming and funny and thrived on attention. In Boston and Ottawa, his teammates worshiped him as a captain. Every kid who met him adored him. He was the life of every party. Even the people who hated him loved to hate him. He just had a way of evoking passion.

Shane never had that. Nothing about socializing had ever come easy to him, from peewees to professionals, he had to prove himself with skill, because there was nothing else about him worth liking. His team had respected him when he was the best and tolerated him when he was anything less. And they hated him as soon as he no longer fit the mold they had crafted for him. Once he was no longer the golden boy of hockey, his team, the fans, the league, the media, everybody turned on him. It wasn't the same with Ilya—sure he had experienced backlash as well, but he was never so thoroughly iced out as Shane. Nobody else in the league had experienced so much vitriol for coming out—not even the reformed homophobe. So then the issue was Shane. There was just something fundamentally wrong with him that made him difficult to love.

And there was always a small part of him, snarling in a dark corner of his mind that he liked to ignore, that feared one day Ilya would realize it.

So, yeah, he didn't tell Ilya the things he knew would upset him. He didn't tell Ilya that sometimes he felt like screaming when he saw Troy kissing Harris without fear, or that sometimes he felt like crying when he put on his jersey and it wasn't red and blue, or that sometimes he felt like he was going to crawl out of his skin when Ilya made a joke in public about their sex life. He had already caused so much pain in Ilya's life, and he feared one

ungrateful or angry comment would tip Ilya over the edge, make him finally realize none of this was worth it. That Shane wasn't worth it.

His coming out had taught him that if he rocked the boat too much, the world would clamor to watch him drown. So he did everything in his power to keep his relationship with Ilya steady, so terrified of either of them falling into the depths.

But, somewhere along the way, that meant Ilya—the one person who had ever made Shane feel like himself—had turned into yet another person Shane had to perform for.

Still, that wasn't Ilya's fault.

"He's not- I don't- Ilya didn't do anything wrong," Shane defended Ilya like it was second nature, even after yelling at Ilya just an hour before. He was so used to people telling him he deserved better when Ilya was more than he thought he would ever deserve. He hated the thought of yet another one of his friends hating Ilya, and wondered why he made this call in the first place. Why couldn't he just leave well enough alone?

"Yes, he did, Shane. And that's okay! He's your person and I am so happy you have him. I am not saying you should hate him. I know he makes you happy. But he can also make you sad. Or angry. And you are allowed to feel that way. And you should have other people to talk to about it."

"Like who?"

"Oh my god, Shane, like me!" Rose shouted, but it sounded more fond than upset. "What do you think we are doing right now? I am your friend. I am always here for you to get shit off your chest."

"But you're so busy," Shane responded, so scared to take more than he had earned. More than he deserved.

"I answered the phone, didn't I?"

Shane stayed silent.

"Listen, I won't always pick up. I can't guarantee that. But I'll always call back. I want to hear you complain. I want you to bitch at me about all the assholes who can't just leave you alone. I want to be able to be there for you because you are my friend."

Shane let out a light laugh, something tender and relieved unfurling in his chest. He was so grateful for Rose. "Really? You want me to bitch at you?"

"Yes! Shane Hollander, I am begging you to be bitchy! Please!"

So Shane complied.

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It was hours later that Shane got off the phone. He felt lighter than he had in months. Maybe years. Drained, too, exhausted like he'd just played a game, but so free. Never before had he allowed himself to be so upset, to complain so much just for the sake of complaining. Once he had started, it was like a pressure valve had released, and everything came out.

He complained about that night. About how tired their team events left him, how every social interaction felt like navigating a minefield, and that made it so much worse when Ilya confronted him when he was already exhausted and vulnerable. About Ilya ambushing him, deciding for Shane that he didn't get to be upset anymore, and how he felt like everybody was always telling Shane how he was supposed to feel. About how Ilya was his person, his home, the one place he was supposed to be able to feel any way he wanted, and tonight that was stolen from him. About Troy's wounded looks and his tears. About how unfair it was that Troy could spend years going after Shane, and Shane never got to cry, never got to fight back, and the one time he does stand up for himself, suddenly Troy is the victim.

He told Rose about the unfairness of… everything. How he felt like his entire life he was the only person playing by the rules and that was supposed to be enough, but instead he just kept losing. How he felt like every fear he had about coming out had come true and he couldn't even appear upset about that without seeming ungrateful for his life with Ilya; to Ilya and the rest of the world. How he didn't want to care about what the rest of the world thought, but the world just wouldn't stop caring about him and he felt like there was no escape. How Ilya had been his one escape for years, but now even that was on display and it felt like there was nothing remaining that was just his.

So many things he hadn't even realized had been tearing him apart for years until it was already bursting out. How much he loved his parents but that their lifetime of expectations had left him hollowed out and stiff, feeling more like a mannequin than a man. How he had spent his entire career trying to escape the label of "Asian hockey player," and after finally proving himself, he was now back to square one, and he didn't think any amount of goals or trophies could make him more than the "gay hockey player." How the identities had intersected into something that was too much, something that didn't belong, and the world was hellbent on reminding him at every opportunity. How much it bothered him that Ilya seemed so oblivious to this struggle, but never surprised him, because Ilya had always epitomized everything the hockey world idolized, and Shane was everything it despised.

He explained that Ilya understood him better than anyone ever had, but there were some things he wasn't sure Ilya could ever really understand. Because Ilya had a reputation he wore like armor, and Shane had a reputation he bore like a badge of shame.

He ranted about things he had had never allowed himself to be mad about. About Hayden outing him so recklessly because Hayden got to be reckless, because he'd never been made to hide anything about himself. About J.J. doubting him when that was the one person who knew how hard he'd had to fight just to be taken seriously, who knew that words and accusations like that melted off other players' backs but branded players like them because of the color of their skin. About all the time and energy and effort he expended on his team to make them the best—not just the drills but the late night conversations and groomsmen duties and team outings in dank clubs that he fucking hated—only for that team to turn their back on him as soon as they found out his sexuality. About his new team that was better, that was

kinder, but that he could still tell viewed him as the Captain's husband and not Shane fucking Hollander. About his fear that maybe he never would be Shane fucking Hollander again. About his mother's constant reminders and expectations and brand deals, putting his life on display when all he wanted was privacy. About Ilya blindsiding him with issues, forcing him to lash out like a cornered animal. About Troy Barrett taking the easy way out by hiding behind bigotry—something Ilya and Scott Hunter and Ryan Price never did, something Shane was never *allowed* to do—only to get the happy ending Shane still felt like he was fighting tooth and nail for.

He explained how angry he was that Troy wasn't even doing anything wrong but he was still affecting Shane. He admitted that he was pretty sure he hated Troy even more since he came out and got everything Shane wanted; that before he was just one of many close-minded assholes on the ice who tried to get under his skin because they would never beat him on talent alone, but now those barbed words felt like a betrayal. And every time he saw Troy living openly and proudly queer, it should have been a salve, but instead it reopened wounds he had thought were closed.

He recounted some of the comments players like Troy Barrett used to say to him on the ice—that some players still said to him on the ice—the slurs and the innuendos and the reminders he didn't belong. The shouts he should go back to where he came from, as if Canada wasn't the only home he had ever known. Comments he'd been hearing since he was a child about every facet of his life. The comments about his ethnicity and his mother. Comments accusing him of the crime of being queer long before he was out. Terrible things that he had never voiced aloud and never fought back against because that meant admitting he had let someone get under his skin and that meant proving them right; proving he was too sensitive for the world of hockey. He couldn't get upset without admitting to the unforgivable sin of being human when that was a privilege he had never been afforded.

He confessed that he never said anything, never spoke up against their hate, and he wasn't always sure if it was self-preservation or self-flagellation.

He sobbed and he shouted until his voice was hoarse. And he did it without justification. He made no effort to downplay his feelings or defend the people who hurt him or blame himself before someone else could. He just let it all out. And there was no judgment, no solutions, no arguments. Rose simply listened, and it was exactly what he needed.

Shane still felt so angry by the end of the call, maybe even angrier than before. The anger still sizzled and crackled inside him, hot enough to burn. But it was releasing, steam coming off his skin. It no longer suffocated him. It felt like relief.

And, for the first time he could remember, he wasn't angry at himself for being angry.

He hung up with a promise to Rose that he would be better about talking about his feelings, if not to her, then to somebody, before finally checking his phone. Two missed calls from his Mom. One from his Dad. Several texts from Troy and Harris.

Four missed calls, three voicemails, and twenty-one texts from Ilya.

He didn't read any of the texts or listen to the voicemails or call anyone back.

But he turned the car around and headed home.

There were tears drying on his cheeks and a headache growing behind his eyes. But he found himself grinning.

And for once, it felt real.

Chapter End Notes

Rose means so much to me and she is one of the only people we get to ever see Shane be his authentic self with so I felt she was the perfect person to bring in. Especially because there are so many intersections between misogyny and homophobia and racism that it would give them shared experiences which is fun to explore!!

So many people told me how cathartic and meaningful this fic was to them, so I am really hoping that this chapter brings more of that.

Truly, thank you so much to everyone who has commented on this fic or recommended it. And people who directly messaged me or made meta posts about this fic: I'm so obsessed with you. Fr the response to this fic has meant so much to me. This has been very cathartic for me to write and I am so happy so many people have felt the same reading it. I have also been so thrilled to see more Shane crashing out fics popping up since I posted this (if you ever post one, please send it my way and I will devour it). Definitely check out the fic "the world is scared of hesitating things" by anonymous (in the works inspired by section below) which is basically an unofficial sequel to this (still losing my mind that someone was inspired enough by my fic to write their own omg srsly I am so honored). I also recommend "biting my tongue swallowing it down" by yellobaby if you want more Shane confronting Troy bc that fic slapped! If this fic inspires you to write at all, feel free to mark this fic as inspo so yours can be linked below :)

The conversation with Rose about her brothers is directly inspired by this post by chachi-baby which I simply had to incorporate into this fic bc it is such a fun concept. There have been so many great Tumblr posts that helped inspire this fic, way too many to share them all, but check out the reblogs on my tumblr to see some great discussions about HR. Also feel free to follow and message me on Tumblr, come be by my friend, I promise I am nice!!! Tumblr is my only social media (twitter and tiktok are scary, terrible places...) so if you ever post about my fic on any other platform or see a post about my fic, please let me know, it makes me so happy to hear :) Also comments telling me this made you cry, or that this was cathartic, or that you reread this multiple times, or highlighting your favorite part, or analyzing the characters, or informing me how you found out about this fic, or letting me know you talked about this with your friends, or sharing a funny thought you had, or just generally screaming all mean so much to me.

Like truly I am so grateful for each and every comment and I apologize for only replying to about 2% of them but I promise I have read and cherished every one.

Will I ever come back and write the Shane and Ilya fall out? Who knows. Definitely not before I finish my current WIP. But I am constantly thinking about those boys so I will not be surprised if it happens. In the meantime, please share your thoughts! And maybe write your own cathartic Shane fic #LetShaneCrashOut (not a real hashtag but some fandom discourse is making me feel like it should be...).

Ok love y'all (especially if you comment or message me on tumblr hehe) MWAH

ETA 8/7/26: I got an influx of some very kind new comments today, not sure why but it has me thinking about this fic again. I can't make any promises but I do hope to come back one day to write a third chapter on what happens when Shane gets back. It will probably be quite a while until I get this published (do not be surprised if it is another year) but I do have about 2k written so far and will keep working on it as inspiration strikes. I also decided to make this part of a series of unrelated or loosely related fics exploring Shane's experiences with the "darker side" of hockey bc I really do have so many thoughts on Shane's experiences as a queer Asian man with autism in hockey and I think it is silly to think he wouldn't know about the bad parts. So feel free to subscribe to that, I have a couple one shots that are partially written already.

In the meantime, if you can't wait to find out what happens next, I have this Tumblr post that gives an overview of what happens when Shane gets back to the house and includes a snippet of their conversation.

Once again, thank you so much for all the love on this fic! I am so glad so many people have enjoyed my writing and found it cathartic to see Shane crash out! I truly cherish every comment

End Notes

I might come back and flesh this out more later. This is very different than the other types of fics I have written for HR but I hope some people like it. Comments are very appreciated! Thank you for reading! Come scream about these boys with me on Tumblr, I am always thinking about them

Works inspired by this one

the world is scared of hesitating things by Anonymous

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