

you're a spark in the dark

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/87924091) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/87924091>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Heated Rivalry - All Media Types
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike , Montreal Voyageurs Montreal Metros Team Ensemble (Game Changers) , Scott Hunter (Game Changers) , Yuna Hollander , Rose Landry , Jackie Pike , Wyatt Hayes , Zane Boodram , Brandon Wiebe , Ottawa Centaurs Team Ensemble (Game Changers) , Luca Haas , Troy Barrett , Harris Drover , Ottawa Centaurs WAGs Ensemble (Game Changers)
Additional Tags:	Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Established Relationship , Secret Relationship , Coming Out , Homophobia , Racism , Montreal Voyageurs Montreal Metros Being Assholes (Game Changers) , Hayden Pike Finds Out About Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Good Friend Hayden Pike , Ottawa Centaurs Player Shane Hollander , Ottawa Centaurs Player Ilya Rozanov , Supportive Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Angst with a Happy Ending , Phone Sex , Marriage Proposal , Engaged Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Blow Jobs , Anal Sex , Anal Fingering , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander Speaks Russian , Shane Hollander Walks Ilya Rozanov Like A Dog , Shane Hollander Calls Ilya Rozanov "Baby" , Shane Hollander Can Fight
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-07-04 Completed: 2026-07-28 Words: 70,006 Chapters: 31/31

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by [starkspangledass](#)

Summary

When Shane hears his teammates make homophobic comments about Scott Hunter, he starts to think that maybe Montreal isn't the place for him.

Or, Shane joins the Centaurs earlier.

Notes

This is probably going to be at least a 20k fic, if not more so strap in. I will try and update often. This is one of my favourite concepts to read about in a fic so I'm really excited to work on this.

This will be angsty to start with but it will get lighter. The metros just suck and Shane is in his feelings.

TW for homophobic and racist comments.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

When Shane walked into the practice rink, ready to start training for the new season, he thought nothing would bring him back down to earth. After a summer at the cottage with Ilya where they had *finally* admitted to their love, and also being able to have his parents and his boyfriend – yes, *boyfriend* – in the same room without it being some kind of nightmarish horror story, well then no one could blame him for not being able to stop smiling.

He was just so *happy*. They have a plan, only a year of having to do the Montreal-Boston distance. Only one year until they're only two hours apart without a border between them. One year until they can come out as friends and be seen in the same vicinity without question.

As Shane walked into the locker room, he set his bag down in his stall and started dressing into his practice gear. Just as he sat down to put his socks on, a couple of his teammates walked in. He smiled and nodded his head at them in greeting. As he was about to pull on his first skate, he froze.

A few more of the guys had piled into the room, their voices loud enough for everyone to hear.

“–Just hope our first match of the season is against him. Can't wait to put that fag through the boards hard enough to be out for the season!”

The other guys Comeau was talking to laughed hard and booming.

“Fuckin' aye!” Drapeau whooped.

“Wish the league would just kick him out, no place for him on the ice.”

Shane felt like a bucket of ice was poured over him, his chest constricting, feeling like the air had been punched out of his lungs. He couldn't *breathe*. He could feel the bile in the back of his throat.

“You good, buddy?” Hayden said, dropping onto the bench next to him, jostling his shoulder.

Shane flinched, snapping his head to Hayden. He swallowed, and nodded, his mouth pulled into a thin line.

“You look like you're about to be sick. Shit, you don't have the flu or something, right?”

“No,” Shane choked out. He cleared his throat, earning him an eyebrow raise. “I, uh, I'll be back.”

He grabbed his phone from his bag and practically ran out of the room. He didn't even have shoes on. He unlocked the phone and was calling Ilya before he was even out of the room.

"Shane?" Ilya's voice alone already made him feel better. He doesn't know how he hasn't passed out yet, he thinks it's been minutes since his breathing was normal.

"I-I cant—" Shane started. He was breathing heavy and yet couldn't get the air to stay in his lungs at the same time. He rounded a corner and dropped to the floor, his back to a wall, chin on his knees.

"What's wrong? I thought you were at practice?"

"I am. Th-the guys, they—"

"Shane, moya lyubov', please breathe," Ilya said, his voice dripping in concern. "You are having panic attack?"

Shane nodded which he knew was stupid since Ilya couldn't see him. He knew Ilya would know though and Shane didn't trust his voice. His cheeks felt wet and he realised that at some point he had started crying.

"Okay," Ilya spoke and he sounded like he had put the phone on speaker, "One second... okay, Google said we need to do breathing exercise!"

Shane thinks he could hear him mutter a *what the fuck is that?* before he said louder, "Alright it says breathe in for four seconds and breathe out for four. Can you do that for me, lyubumiyy? We will do together, yes?"

Shane closed his eyes and tried to breathe alongside Ilya through the phone, but eventually, he was able to breathe well enough. He felt something touch his arm and he opened his eyes to find Hayden on the ground next to him. He didn't say anything, just laid a hand on Shane's arm and squeezed it.

Shane continued breathing and after another minute, Ilya asked, "You are good now, yes? Tell me why you were like this."

Shane closed his eyes again and turned his head. He couldn't look at Hayden when he answered, "a couple of the guys were talking about Scott."

"Ah," Ilya said, "not in a good way?"

"No. They uh... they called him a 'fag' and talked about targeting him and putting him out for the season. Said they hoped he would get kicked from the league."

"Who was it? Give me names."

"No, Ilya," Shane said, sniffing. "I'm not giving you a hit list."

"Why not? They have one, I have one. Is only fair."

Shane snorted at Ilya's simple tone, as if he was saying something that was common sense.

"No," Shane repeated, but he quirked lips in a small smile. "No hit list. I don't even know why I reacted so badly. It's not like that stuff hasn't been said before."

"You reacted like this because it is scary," Ilya said softly. "Because you are scared for yourself. And this stuff shouldn't be said. It is not said in my locker room and it should not be said in *any* locker room."

"I know," Shane said and a small sob broke out. Because it was true. Hayden moved to wrap his arm around him. After a moment Shane whispered, "I don't know if I can go back in there right now."

"So then don't. Take a moment or take the day off, you cannot go in there crying anyway."

"It's literally the first day and I'm the captain. I can't just go home because I heard a slur."

"You would be taking it because you are not okay right now. And was not just a slur."

"Fuck, I know."

Shane took a breath and wiped at his tear-stained cheeks. He wishes in that moment that he wasn't a captain, that he wasn't *Shane Hollander*. He wishes this wasn't the team that he was giving himself to, that he wasn't putting his blood, sweat, and tears into. But this was his life and this was his team. And he hadn't been able to practice with them since the day before the crash with Marleau.

"Okay," he said. "I'm not taking the day off but, I won't go back in for a little while. I was here early anyway."

"Okay," Ilya said. "Promise you will go home if you need to?"

"Yeah, I promise. I should let you go."

"Call me tonight. Ya tebya lyublyu." *I love you.*

"Ya tozhe tebya lyublyu." *I love you too.*

"Pronunciation still needs work but is okay, I will give you a pass right now."

"You're an asshole."

"You love me."

"Yeah," Shane breathed. "I do."

He said goodbye and hung up. He rubbed a hand down his face and sighed. How was he supposed to go back in the room?

Hayden cleared his throat and Shane started, forgetting he was there, despite the fact that his arm was still over his shoulders. Hayden smiled and said, “so how many Ilya’s do you know?”

“Just the one,” Shane said, hoping that was the end of the conversation.

“Why are you calling Rozanov then? And dude, ew, you call him Ilya? And did you speak Russian at the end there?”

“I didn’t speak it well, but yes,” Shane said. “Also, his name *is* Ilya. And I called him because...”

“Because?”

“I’m gay.”

“Oh,” Hayden said, slumping against the wall. Shane stiffened which caused Hayden to straighten back up, “shit, man, sorry. Fuck, that was a bad reaction. Thank you for telling me. I love you, nothing changes that, especially this. And this stays with me, I won’t even tell Jackie. I just thought you were gonna say he was like your new best friend or something, I was fucking relieved it was just you being gay.”

“Right.”

“What’s that got to do with Rozanov? Wait, did you tell him before you told me? What the hell, man?”

“Hayd,” Shane said. “He knows because he’s my boyfriend.”

Hayden blue-screened. He blinked slowly and Shane could see his brain trying to process this information before he slowly said, “I think maybe I misheard you. Come again?”

“He’s Lily.”

“No, that’s—no. You’ve been talking to her for years.”

“Yup.”

“Shane, you hate him. He’s Rozanov! He’s an asshole!”

“Okay, first, I don’t hate him, everyone just thinks I do. I love him. A lot. And second, he’s not actually an asshole.”

“You literally just called him one like two minutes ago!”

“Well, I mean,” Shane started and then sighed dejectedly. “Okay, yeah, he is an asshole. But he’s not *mean*. He’s not cruel or bigoted or anything like that. And he is also kind and sweet and just helped me through a panic attack. He’s *good* and I love him.”

“Does he love you?”

“Yeah. He does.”

“Okay, man,” Hayden nodded. “Fine, but if you guys break up, let me know. Jackie has tons of gay friends. Oh man, I can’t believe how many women I’ve tried to set you up with. You should have told me sooner. Wait, what about Rose? Or was that like one of those PR things?”

“No,” Shane chuckled. “Rose was real, I was just trying to see if I could be straight, I guess?”

“Damn, dude. You really are gay then if it didn’t work with her.”

“Yeah, that’s kinda the point.”

“Right, that makes sense.”

They sat in silence for a moment before Shane let out a breath and started getting up. Meltdown over, big moment done, time to get back to reality. Shane knew what the room would be like now, he just had to keep his head down. Try and ignore comments. Block it all out or just push through it. He can breakdown again later at home if he needed.

“We should get back to the locker room. Practice should be starting soon.”

“You gonna be good?” Hayden asked.

Shane hesitated but nodded. “I have to be.”

“Fuck man,” Hayden said, shaking his head. “You shouldn’t *have* to be, that shit they said isn’t okay. You can’t force yourself to be alright.”

“I do,” Shane snapped. “I’m the captain, this is my team.”

“Shane. I love this team – you know I do. It’s *our* team. But about 80% of them are homophobic assholes.”

“So what? There are homophobes on every team. It’s hockey.”

“Fuck, Shane. I don’t know if *I* like the idea of you going back in there. Some of the shit they were saying even after you left was fucking disgusting.”

“Just because I’m gay, doesn’t mean I shouldn’t be in the room. I just wasn’t expecting to hear it. And I know to expect it now. I’ll be fine.”

“You don’t deserve that. I hate to say it, because this is our team, but *they* do not deserve *you*.”

“What do you want me to do?”

Shane was starting to get worked up now. He’s confused and a little angry. He’s never been the best at social queues but it was hard to not pick up what Hayden is implying.

“Maybe you should ask for a trade? Or like your contract ends this season, right? Don’t resign. Go to a better team, a nicer one.”

“Leave Montreal? What the fuck?”

Okay, Shane was right. Hayden was *definitely* saying that. Which is just leaving him fucking bewildered because why the hell would Shane leave Montreal? This is his fucking team. He was drafted here, he *made* this team. He’s the captain who’s led them to two cups! What. The. Fuck.

“I can’t believe I’m saying it either,” Hayden said, holding his hands up. He placed them on Shane’s shoulders and looked him in the eye. He looked like a kicked puppy and Shane could tell how hard this was for him to say. “But Shane, you are my best friend. You are more important than this team, than anyone else in that fucking room.”

“This is my team,” Shane whispered, and fuck, he was crying again.

“Yeah,” Hayden sniffled, his eyes rimmed red. “But there are teams out there that aren’t this one. That don’t have Comeau or Drapeau or Wilson or any of those other fucking guys. There are teams that you would be safer on. And I think you should look into them.”

“It’s my team,” Shane repeated, choking out a sob. Hayden wrapped his arms around him and rubbed his back while Shane cried into his shoulder.

“Just think about it. And you should take today, go home. Please, Shane. I’ll tell Theriault you’re sick, I think some of the guys think you are anyway.”

“What? Why?”

“You looked like you were gonna hurl, and after you ran out a couple of the guys said—”

He cut himself off, and shook his head. Shane pulled back and looked at him.

“Said what?”

“Shit man, I don’t wanna say it,” Hayden muttered, shaking his head more vigorously. At Shane’s raised eyebrows, he groaned and continued, “fuck, man they said you must have Asian bird flu or something.”

“Oh wow, how original of them,” Shane snarked. He’d heard those comments almost as long as he’s been on the ice. He was glad to know the men on his team were as creative as grade schoolers.

“Yeah, fucking charming, right?”

Shane snorted, “Yeah, hard to believe half of them are divorced.”

Hayden laughed and patted his back. “Come on, Hollzy, let’s go get your shit so you can get outta here.”

Shane nodded and they slowly walked back to the locker room. Before they opened the door to it, he turned to Hayden and in a quiet voice said, “you can tell Jackie, by the way.”

Hayden made a confused noise and tilted his head.

“Earlier,” Shane clarified, “you said you wouldn’t even tell Jackie about, y’know, *me*. You can tell her.”

“Oh, thank fuck, I did *not* wanna keep that from her.”

Hayden let out a relieved sigh and pushed the door open. The room was – thankfully – empty, everyone else most likely out on the ice. Shane made quick work of getting redressed in his clothes, neatly placing his equipment back in his stall. He nodded at Hayden when he grabbed his bag and left.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Shane calls Yuna and they discuss what to do.

Shane closed the door behind him, toed off his shoes, and dropped his bag at his feet. He felt numb, his brain so overloaded with thoughts that he couldn't grasp onto a single one. He was hollow and maybe a little in shock.

He unlocked his phone and hovered over the button to call his mom but he stopped. Would she be disappointed? She was the world's biggest Metro's fan. She had just, a month prior, asked Ilya the question *so you have no loyalty to Boston?* She had managed his career, got him sponsorships, got him to this team. How was he supposed to tell her he wants out?

He never thought in a million years he would want out.

He pressed call anyway, half hoping the call wouldn't pick up.

"Shane, honey, aren't you at practice?"

"Mom," he said, a sob breaking the word.

"Sweetie? What's wrong?"

He gulped, took a breath, and whispered, "I don't think I can be a Metro."

"What? I'm confused, why not?" she asked. "What are you talking about, Shane?"

"Hayden agrees, he said I shouldn't resign. He doesn't think I should be in the room."

"Shane. Tell me what happened."

He let out a long breath and sniffled. "I had a panic attack after a few of the guys said some shit about Scott Hunter. I came out to Hayden and he sent me home, said he'll tell coach I'm sick. He said... he said he doesn't think I'm safe. That I shouldn't resign or I should request a trade or something. That I shouldn't be a Metro."

"Oh baby," Yuna said. Shane, at her gentle tone, started sobbing hard, tears falling, shoulders shaking as he curled into himself.

"I think he's right, Mom. I'm sorry, I know you love Montreal, but I think I should leave."

“Shane, no,” she said and Shane froze. “You shouldn’t be apologising. They’ve been my team since I was a little girl, yes, but you are *my son*. Do not apologise for this, never for this.”

Shane’s body relaxed he but cried harder at her words.

“But I *am* sorry. I don’t know why this is different now. I’ve known I was into men since before I was even on the team! I’ve been with Ilya since before I met anyone on the team! The guys have *always* been homophobic or fucking racist or misogynistic! Why is it different now? Why am I different?”

“Because Scott Hunter showed you that being gay is possible. And I’m taking it that the team didn’t like that?”

“No, mom, they were talking about hurting him bad enough to end his season.”

Yuna started yelling and cussing so fast, Shane could only make out some of it like *fucking bastards*, and *wait until I get my hands on them*. Shane almost laughed at the absurdness, only ever hearing his mom crash out like this before over a hockey game.

After a while of holding his phone to his ear, silently listening to his mother yell obscenities, he finally spoke, “so I take it, you’re not mad at me not resigning?”

His mother stopped her cursing and said, after taking a calming breath, “Shane, I will only be mad at you if, after this, you *did* resign with them. They made you cry. Fuck them all, we can find a team that’s better. I’m only mad at them, not at you, never at you. I’d burn all my Metros merch right this second if I had a lighter in my hand.”

“Well, I don’t think you need to do *that*, geez,” Shane laughed. “No starting any fires, please.”

“Why not? Worse that could happen would be an arson charge. It would be worth the jail time.”

“You’re ridiculous.”

“You’re no fun,” she mused. “Okay, so what’s the plan then?”

“I don’t know...” Shane trailed off. Fuck, what is his plan? What teams could be better? He’d want to stay in the same conference, so no west coast teams. He also immediately crossed Toronto, Dallas, and Tampa off the list, those teams were known to be rife with homophobia, just like Montreal. Boston was also off the list – he’d be flayed alive by the fans if he even considered going there. If they could afford him then New York was a strong maybe. He doubted Scott Hunter would have come out if his team was unsafe. Not that Shane was planning on also coming out, but he certainly didn’t want to share a jersey with linemates that thought targeting a gay man was an acceptable thing to joke about.

His brain short-circuited as a certain team crossed his mind, one he knew would have the cap space for him. It was friendly, he knew that. The whole team always shows up for Pride

Nights with excitement. They went all out for them, wearing pride jerseys and tape the whole game. He knew their social media account was heavily supportive of LGBTQIA+ initiatives and knew that most of the team had publicly posted their individual support of Hunter. He had never heard even vaguely racist or otherwise bigoted remarks on the ice from any of the team. They hadn't made the playoffs in years, they needed serious work done, Shane would have to get used to the feeling of losing. But, Shane thought, if not one, but *two* generational talents joined the team, they might not *have* to lose. And, he almost cried at the realisation, he could play on the same team as the man he loved.

"Ottawa," Shane choked out. "I wanna come home. To Ottawa."

Yuna made a thoughtful hum. "That could work. They would take you, God knows they need more depth in their centre. You'd be close to us, that would be good. Only a couple hours away from Hayden, Jackie, and the kids too. They're rebuilding, and they definitely have the cap space for you and they'd--"

"They'd have Ilya. In a year."

"Oh," she breathed, "Ilya."

"Yeah. Think they'll have us both?"

"They would be stupid not to. Both of you on a team together? It's almost unthinkable, you'd be unstoppable together."

"Is it doable though? Can they even take both of us?"

"Let's loop in Farah. Ilya too, and his agent."

"He was going to change his agent, I think, and get one that doesn't have ties to Russia."

"Hmm," Yuna made a noise. "Would he be interested in signing with Farah? It would make things a lot easier, less people knowing about this, and it would make arrangements with the foundation a lot smoother. Less go-between if one agent covers you both."

"I can ask? Wouldn't that make things obvious though? Foundation together, same team, same agent?"

"I don't see why. It would only make more sense to have the same agent because of the foundation. And with the 'friends' story, it could make sense also. We can say Ilya was looking for a new agent, asked you for recommendations, and you gave him Farah's details."

"Okay," Shane said. "I'll ask. I was gonna call him later tonight anyway so I'll bring it up then. I'll also email Farah and ask if we can set an appointment up sometime this week."

They wrapped the call up soon after and Shane moved to flop down onto his couch, his mind racing. He was almost guilty at how excited he was at the prospect of leaving his team. But he knew he had to, if both Hayden and his mom thought it was a good idea.

And playing on a team with Ilya? If the All-Stars game was any indication, Shane wondered if maybe it was meant to have that star power and dynamic on the same team year-round. And *God*, he could be in the same city as Ilya, maybe even the same house. They could, in a year, be *living together*. A year ago, that thought would have sent him into a spiral, but now? The thought made him giddy – it made his heart skip a beat.

Surely, he couldn't possibly have this? Was this maybe too easy?

But Shane knew deep down, that maybe this was just what he was supposed to do. That after 7 years of being with Ilya, maybe they could finally start to have a life together.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Shane shares his plan with Ilya and they have phone sex to celebrate.

Chapter Notes

Rating went up, so just a fair warning, this chapter is explicit! If you do want to skip the smut, stop reading after Ilya says, "I can be." The rest of the chapter after that point is not important to the plot!

Also this is my first time writing phone sex so hopefully it's good.

Enjoy the update and let me know what you think!

When Shane called Ilya that night on Facetime, his nerves had started to get to him. What if Ilya didn't want this? What if this was too much too fast? What if he thought it was too risky for them to be on a team together? What if after he got off the phone this morning, he realised he didn't want Shane anymore? That he was too much, that this was all too much?

But that didn't happen. When Shane mentioned the possibility of them both going to Ottawa, he saw Ilya's eyes and face light up.

"Hollander!" he yelled, voice absolutely filled with glee. "Ottawa! Us!"

Three words were about all he was able to say.

"Yes, *Rozanov*," Shane said, "Ottawa. I was looking into it all day, and look, I think we would both have to take a bit of a pay cut, which I know isn't ideal—"

"Shane, I do not care about this. You are saying that we will be on the same team. I will do it for free if it meant I could play with you."

"So, you're okay with it?"

"Yes, Shane, I am so so okay with it, please do not say this is big prank. Because I will enforce no take backsies."

The fuck? Shane thought before blurting out, “where the fuck did you learn ‘no take backsies?’”

“Cliff,” Ilya said simply, shrugging. “I tried to be nice friend and share my good vodka with him, he makes smart-ass remark, I go to take vodka from him and he says to me, ‘fuck off, no take backsies.’ Was very educational, I let him finish his drink.”

“Huh. Right, well, this is not a prank and I’m not taking it back. I’m serious about this, I’m gonna talk to Farah in a few days. And oh shit – by the way – what do you think about signing with her as your agent? It could make things easier, and saves two separate agents reaching out discreetly to the Cens management to gauge interest. And maybe if it’s just her, they might be more receptive of the idea of taking both of us, instead of one? Like, maybe if they think they might get one of us, because of the rivalry, they might think they can only choose one? But if we share an agent and she is asking about both of us, then it could come across more like a package deal–”

“Shane, lyubimiyy, you are rambling, slow down, this is lot of words.”

“Shit, sorry,” Shane said. He took a breath. “I think you should have Farah as your agent.”

“Okay.”

“Really? Okay? Just like that?”

“What, you don’t think I should? Is your idea,” Ilya said, “you even gave big speech about it.”

“Right,” Shane nodded. He took a moment and then said, “do you think we should tell her? About us?”

“Yes, we probably should. She cannot say anything, right?”

“No, it would be confidential.”

“Okay, so I sign with her, we tell her about us, and she gets us to Ottawa.”

“That feels like an oversimplification, but yes, that is the plan.”

“Also,” Shane said, gulping. Fuck, he was nervous again. His eyes flicked around looking at everything but his phone screen. His throat felt a little tight so he cleared it. “I was thinking – you know – economically, it would make sense to have one property instead of two.”

There was silence for a moment and Shane looked at his phone, watching as Ilya’s lips twisted into a mischievous smirk.

“Shane Hollander,” he said, drawing the name out. “Are you asking me to move in with you?”

“I just think that it would be better financially, it would be stupid for us to be paying for two separate houses. And maybe it would also be nice to *live together*.”

“Shane Hollander, do you have a crush on me?”

“Fuck off,” Shane said, scoffing. His cheeks were burning and he looked away.

“Oh my God, you *loooove meeee*,” Ilya teased. “You have big fat crush on me and want to live with me and share a boring mortgage with me.”

“You are so fucking annoying,” Shane groaned. “I’m hanging up.”

“No, don’t go,” Ilya whined. “Tell me more about how you want to live with me because of money and not because of love.”

“Ugh, why do I put up with you?”

“Keep going, I’m close.”

“The fuck?”

Shane looked at the screen and saw Ilya with the biggest shit-eating grin he’s ever seen. He wagged his eyebrows and said, “did you actually think I was touching myself?”

“No,” Shane said, probably too quickly. He blushed even darker.

“I can be,” Ilya drawled out, his eyes darkening and Shane saw his shoulder move slightly.

Fuck, Shane thought, the sight going straight to his dick. He shifted his hips and the fabric of his sweatpants dragged over his hardening erection. His hand jumped to it, and felt it swell up more.

“You are touching yourself?” Ilya asked.

“Yes.”

“Show me.”

Shane propped his phone up on his bedside table and moved back on the bed. He slowly teased his hand down his stomach and gripped his cock. He could hear Ilya take a sharp breath and saw Ilya had set his own phone down. Shane could see him making slow, lazy stokes of his own dick, his pants pulled down just enough for his cock to be free. Shane groaned at the sight. He was fully hard now.

He plunged his hand inside his pants and brushed his thumb over the tip, his hips jerking up at the touch. His slit was wet and he used his thumb to drag the precum down his shaft, the glide of it feeling so good, it elicited a moan.

“Fuck, Shane,” Ilya breathed. “Take your pants off, let me see.”

Shane rolled them down, his cock springing free and slapping against his stomach. He pulled the pants the rest of the way off and quickly folded them, placing them on the bed beside him.

His hand went back to his dick, stroking it a few more times, he looked at Ilya, could see how hard the man was, red and throbbing. He ran his palm over his tip, he was so *wet*. He spread it down, his hips jerking his cock through his hand.

“Stop,” Ilya ordered, and Shane removed his hand, whining at the loss. “Get the lube, I want you to then turn over and work yourself open for me.”

Shane nodded and grabbed the bottle from his bedside, uncapping it and squeezing some onto his fingers. He turned over onto his knees and lowered himself, spreading his knees slightly and presenting himself to Ilya. He rubbed a finger over his hole, teasing himself before slowly sinking a finger inside. He moaned lowly at the feel, his cock twitching where it was between his stomach and the bed.

He heard Ilya groan and heard a click of Ilya opening up his own bottle of lube. He looked over his shoulder and saw Ilya spread it down his cock. Shane leaked more at the sight, he could feel his sheets get wet from it.

Shane pulled his finger out, added more lube, and started working a second finger inside, pausing to adjust slightly before he started moving them slowly in and out. His hips shifted, humping the bed as he fucked himself on his fingers, his cock rubbing against the bedspread with every thrust.

“Ilya,” he moaned as he hit that point inside and he let out a, “oh fuck, Ilya.”

“Fuck, sweetheart, look at you. Humping the bed, so desperate for me.”

“Yes, Ilya, for you. Feel so good.”

His hips started losing rhythm as he felt his orgasm start to build. He moved his free hand to his trapped cock and started stroking it, trying to match it to the brushes of his fingers over his prostate.

“Fuck, I’m close, gonna cum.”

“No,” Ilya ordered and Shane whined. “Not yet. Stop touching your cock.”

“Please,” he choked out but obeyed, taking his hand away.

“No,” Ilya said. “I think you can hold on a little longer.”

Shane started humping the bed again, needing to chase the friction. He gasped when his cockhead caught on the sheet at the same time his fingers grazed their spot. He almost came from that feeling alone. He wasn’t going to last much longer.

“Please,” Shane begged, “please let me come, Ilya. I need it.”

“Not yet, malysh.” *Baby*. “Be good boy for me, don’t come yet.”

Fuck, Shane thought, the Russian endearment spurring him on. He picked up his pace, fucking his fingers in harder and deeper, his thrusts becoming frantic.

His moans were sounding out, and he could hear Ilya's heavy breathing.

"Ilya please, *please*, I need to come, I'm so good, please let me, fuck, *please*."

He was babbling and he knew he was getting more incoherent, the sheets soaking from where he was leaking. His hips were stuttering in short bursts.

"Yes, fuck, come for me, Shane," Ilya cried out and Shane let out a long moan as he came hard, his hips thrusting as he rode out his orgasm. He removed his fingers from his hole, whining at the emptiness.

After a few moments, he rolled over onto his back, lifting his head to look at his phone. He saw Ilya looking at him, could see the cum from his own orgasm pooled around the base of his softening dick.

Once both of their breathing evened out, Shane whinged a little as he said, "ugh, now I have to change the sheets."

Ilya snorted. "This is your own fault."

"How the fuck is this my fault?" Shane said, narrowing his eyes at the other man. "You initiated this."

"You make big romantic plans and asked me to move in with you!" Ilya exclaimed. "Of course we have phone sex. So is your fault, not mine."

"Fuck off, you started touching yourself first!"

"Okay, fine! Was tie!"

"No it fucking wasn't."

Ilya huffed and pouted. "Wow, my boyfriend is so mean to me."

"Yup. So mean."

"Is okay, I still love you."

"Wow, lucky me," Shane snarked, then said softer, "I love you too."

"Yes, we went over this, you have big crush on me, is very embarrassing for you."

"You're an asshole. Okay, I have to shower and change the sheets."

They said their goodbyes and hung up. As Shane was pulling the sheets off the bed, he grinned to himself. He was going to *live* with Ilya. Despite the fact he was going to have to stick out a season in Montreal with a bunch of assholes and nothing was actually confirmed with Ottawa, he still can't believe this was his life. That he could be so lucky as to have this.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Shane has his meeting with Farah to discuss Ottawa.

Shane got through the next few days mostly on autopilot. He had started that first day – technically the second one – with getting called into Coach Theriault's office and was chewed out for leaving the day before. He just promised it wouldn't happen again, and threw himself into practice. Practice was not great, it seemed like most of the team shared the same sentiments as Comeau and Drapeau, most of them either joining in or laughing whenever the topic was brought up. Shane tried not to react too strongly, just clenched his jaw and tightened his hold on his stick.

He didn't talk to Hayden more about anything more either, they didn't really get a moment alone. Shane knows that his friend had figured out that there might be a plan because when Shane seemed more at ease than he should be after his meeting with the coach, he had sent him a knowing look. He also knows that Hayden had told Jackie because before his phone call with Ilya, Shane had received a couple of messages.

Jackie

!!!!!!

WHAT

Shane

Guessing you know then?

Jackie

SHANE HOLLANDER YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND AND YOU DIDN'T TELL ME???????

it's like you don't even love me

Shane

You know who I do love though...

Jackie

LOVE?

Hayden did not say you were IN LOVE

i give you godchildren and you stab me in the back by not telling me about you and your boy
I NEED DETAILS. SPILL.

Shane

Whoops, gotta go! Getting an important phone call. Bye!

Jackie

SHANE HOLLANDER GET BACK HERE

SHANE

okay, i see how it is...

we are so having a catch up soon, i WILL get details

So yeah, Jackie knew. He did later promise that he could visit on the weekend and he knew there was no way he was walking out of the house without Jackie dragging information out of him.

Shane had a meeting with Farah on Thursday. Ilya had emailed her on Tuesday, the day after Shane's first practice, and had asked for her representation and had signed the contract with her on Wednesday. She didn't press for any further details when Shane had also emailed and asked that Ilya join the meeting.

It was a video conference call that Shane took on his laptop and both Shane and Ilya had entered it first, Farah coming onto the screen a few minutes later.

"Okay," she said calmly. "What is the deal?"

"We want to go to Ottawa," Shane said. "Next season when we both enter free agency."

She looked shocked. Shane realised then, that he had never seen that expression on her face before. He supposed he's never done anything to elicit one.

"Can I ask why? I was under the impression you hate each other."

"We do not hate each other," Ilya spoke up. "We are together and we want to go to Ottawa."

Farah was silent for a moment, blinking rapidly. She took a deep breath and asked, "I take it that this is serious then? Is there a plan to come out?"

"No," Shane rushed out, "absolutely not. It is serious, but we are not coming out."

Farrah nodded, "so why both of you to Ottawa? It's two hours from Montreal, we could move Ilya and keep you here. Or we could move you to a team closer to Boston. Ottawa is certainly... a choice."

"Yes, they are bad team," Ilya said. "But we would make them good. I would like not to have Russian passport so we planned for me to go to Ottawa alone but then..."

He trailed off and Shane could tell that his eyes flicked over to Shane on his screen and Shane picked up, "I can't stay in Montreal. They're, um, not good. About Scott Hunter. I don't want to stay in a locker room like that and if Ilya and I were found out for some reason then..."

He cleared his throat and mumbled, "I don't know if I would be safe."

It hurt to admit and he could feel his eyes fill up, but Shane *knew* he wasn't safe. He knew that the guys would probably check him harder during practice and wouldn't cover him on the ice. He wouldn't be safe. And they already thought he was weird, different to them. Whether it was his race, his aversion to social situations, or his lack of participating in "locker room talk". He had heard their quips, their *golden boy, Hollander, can't do anything wrongs*, their *no drinking is fucking stupid, one drink wouldn't kill yous*, their *dude, stop being a robot all the time. It won't kill you to jokes*, their *don't bother inviting Hollzy, he won't come to the club, bet he's never even fucked a woman. Probably just goes home to jerk off to a highlight reel*.

So yeah, if they had found out he was gay, even more different than them, he wouldn't be safe.

Shane heard Ilya let out a string of curse words before saying, "Shane, you never say this before. I know you told me what they said about Hunter, but fuck, you never say you feel this way. I do not want you in that room."

"I'm not at risk right now, so I'm fine. It's just that I wouldn't be if we were found out. And yeah, I won't feel safe until I am out, but I'm okay for now. I can do this season."

"Alright," Farah said, "here is what I am going to do. I have contacts within management in Ottawa. I will reach out, discretely, and I will see if there is interest. For both of you."

"I will also," she continued, "draft up some statements. Contingencies in case your relationship is ever revealed. I will also look into Shane's contract, if in the case you are both outed before the move, to see what we can do to get him out of Montreal early before he is hurt. Ilya, will I need to do the same? Are you safe in Boston?"

"I think so," Ilya replies. "There are some guys on the team that I do not think will be okay with me being bisexual, but I do not think they would do anything about it. I am more worried about Russia. I am public figure so if we were found out, even me just being bisexual will be seen as promoting gay propaganda which is illegal. Is why I do not want Russian passport. I would be safe, I think, with my work visa. But if anything happened, if I am dropped by league or team, I would not be so safe anymore."

And fuck, Shane didn't know this was so unsafe for Ilya. The thought that Ilya could be taken from him just simply for loving him, punched his breath right out of his lungs. He knew Russia wasn't the safest place for gay people, he recalled a comment Vaughny had made back in the ice cream shop in Sochi. And he knew Ilya wouldn't be able to go back to Russia if the world found out. But he didn't know that Ilya's safety hinged entirely on hockey.

"I will create a contingency plan for that too," Farah said. "I'm not as well versed on immigration laws as I would like to be, but I do think if worst came to worst, we could make a case for asylum. I will have a look into it."

The call wrapped up soon after and Shane was already calling Ilya on his phone before he had shut his laptop.

"Moya lyubov', calling so soon? You cannot last even a minute without me?"

“You want to talk to me about not mentioning my safety in my own locker room, but you don’t tell me about yours with Russia.”

Ilya groaned. “Shane, sweetheart, we have talked about it. I told you I would not be able to go back home. And I told you that it would be good not to have Russian passport.”

“But you never told me that you could be forced back there. You never said that your visa is the only thing keeping you safe. What if you’re outed and they revoke your visa? What if you get hurt and can’t play hockey? All it takes for a career-ending injury is a bad hit.”

“Then I do what Farah says,” Ilya said, his voice soft. “I will not go back. I will hire best immigration lawyer I can get and I will find a way to stay. Okay?”

“I can’t—” Shane choked out. “I can’t lose you.”

“You will not. I promise. I am like gum on bottom of shoe, you cannot get rid of me.”

Shane nodded took a deep breath. “Okay.”

Chapter 5: Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Montreal vs. New York game.

Chapter Notes

TW: homophobic language

Me: yeah this will be like 20k words

Also me, 10k into the fic and Shane is still in Montreal: damn nvm i guess :/

Montreal didn't have a preseason game against New York until the end of October, their 3rd game of the season. As they drew closer to it, the vitriol in the room grew and it seemed almost as if there were only a few people who didn't join in. Shane's skin felt itchy and he felt so nauseas when someone would make a comment about Hunter or just so casually would throw around a slur. It was a couple days away from the game, one where they would be on the road, that Shane decided that he needed to do something.

He first sent off a message to Scott, warning him that the team had put a target on his back – he received a thumbs up in response – and then he went to his coach.

When he brought up that he was concerned, that he didn't think that the stuff that was said was okay, that he was uncomfortable, Coach just looked at him and said that he was the captain and it was his duty to control the locker room.

It was the end of the last practice before they were set to travel when Shane had enough. They were in the locker room, after they had wrapped up and Comeau had just said to Andropov, "careful when you board Hunter, make sure he doesn't rub his fag germs on you."

"Alright, that's enough!" Shane raised his voice, clenching his fist so hard he knew there would be crescent marks left from his nails. "I don't want to hear any of that shit said in this room. And if I see any of you go after Hunter outside of a normal, *legal* check, or treat him differently than anyone else on his team, I will bag skate you until you drop."

The room stood still, everyone staring at him. Shane doesn't think there has ever been a moment on this team where there has been complete silence like this. He knew as soon as he

looked at all their faces that he was probably not going to enjoy the rest of his time on the team.

After a moment, he heard Wilson let out a snort and said, “fucking chill, Hollzy. It’s a fucking joke.”

“It’s not,” Shane said sternly. “You shouldn’t have to use a slur or a threat to make someone laugh. If you want to joke, do it without being a fucking bigot.”

“What’s it to you?” Comeau sneered, “It’s not like Hunter is here to hear it,”

Shane took a step towards him, fists clenched at his sides. “It doesn’t fucking matter if he’s here or not. The things you are saying are fucking disgusting. *I* don’t want to hear it.”

“Don’t be a fucking pussy, Hollander,” Drapeau called out, and Wilson beside him made an affirming hum. “If Hunter wants to be a cocksucker, we should be allowed to call him one.”

“Okay guys,” Hayden interjected. Shane turned to shoot him a look, shaking his head ever so slightly. The last thing he needed was to get Hayden on the team shit list. “Look, just cut the jokes out. There’s plenty of other shit you can talk about other than Hunter. I agree with Shane. I don’t like hearing it either. Cut the slurs out.”

“Of course, you back Hollander, Pike,” Comeau spat. “Fucking kiss-ass.”

“Enough!” Shane said. He closed his eyes for a second and took a calming breath. “Just stop. All of you. We are a team. But we should be able to be a team without anyone feeling uncomfortable. Stop making homophobic jokes. Simple as that, it shouldn’t be hard to do.”

He turned around and walked out of the room.

Things were tense on the flight to New York. Thankfully, as they were heading to Boston for another game two days after, Shane would just have to get through this match before renting a car and driving straight to Boston. To Ilya.

Hayden tried speaking to him, and Shane was only half listening. He could tell that he had fucked up by speaking up. Most of the guys spent the flight shooting glares at him and Hayden, and Shane but no one so far had said anything about it. Most of them were on their phones and Shane had a very strong suspicion that there was a group chat outside of their team one as every few minutes, some of them would laugh at something.

JJ had, thankfully, also talked to Shane a little at the airport and he did apologise for not backing him at practice. Shane just told him it was fine, he hadn’t even wanted Hayden involved, and the conversation was left at that.

Once they arrived in New York, the team went to check into the hotel before heading straight to the game from there. Shane, as he wasn’t going to stay the night in the city, took a taxi with his baggage straight to the arena. He entered the visitor locker room alone, placing his bags in one of the stalls and slumping down onto a bench, head in his hands.

He wishes in that moment while he was alone that he could call Ilya. But Boston was currently playing a game against Buffalo, theirs being an afternoon game, and Montreal's an evening one.

His phone buzzed in his pocket and he saw that he had a message from Scott.

Scott Hunter

So how revved up is your team?

Shane

I'm not with them right now, they're all at the hotel

I'm really sorry about them

I tried telling them to lay off, I'm hoping they do, but I can't promise anything

Scott Hunter

You're not with them?

Shane

No, at the arena

Locker room

Scott Hunter

Come to ours

Shane stood up and walked out of the room, asking Scott directions to the Admiral's locker room. He got there a couple minutes later and knocked before entering.

"Rook," Scott greeted, nodding at him. There were a couple other guys milling about, a few of them shot confused looks at Shane.

"Hunter."

"Figured it would be best to talk here in case your team walks in and sees you talking to me. I assume that wouldn't go over well?"

Shane shook his head. "No, probably not. They're already pretty pissed at me, if they knew I warned you, I'd end up even more of a pariah."

"That why you're not with them?"

"No, uh," Shane gulped, his eyes flickering around the room, trying to get his wording right. "I'll be driving to see my partner after the game. So didn't need a hotel room."

Hunter levelled him with a calculating look. "Didn't know you were locked down. Must be some girl."

Shane coughed into his fist at the word *girl* and sputtered, "Yeah! They're, uh... they're great."

"I'm sure. Probably someone very nice and polite for Canada's golden boy."

Shane snorted at this, and said, “I’ll pass that sentiment along to them.”

“Why does that sound like a threat?” Scott said, and Shane just gave a small smirk, not bothering with a reply. Hunter sent him a suspicious look, narrowing his eyes before continuing, “okay, I don’t know if I wanna touch on that. So, who do I need to look out for out on the ice?”

“Most of them,” Shane said, and he found himself so disappointed at his team. “Comeau, Wilson, and Gagnon might be the ones to look out for the most. Drapeau and Miitka haven’t been great either, but they’re goalies so at most you might get some comments, but nothing physical. Andropov also, watch out for him. Pike and Boiziau are safe. Laine, one of the younger guys, I think is also safe. He hasn’t really joined in on any of it. Everyone else... you should still look out for. That’s it.”

“Fuck, you weren’t kidding when you said the whole team. I could have about 14 guys trying to check me all game, and about 16 of them hurling bullshit?”

“I’m sorry,” Shane apologised. “They’re my team and I’m supposed to be their captain. But I don’t think they’ll follow me if I tell them to not do this. I already tried yesterday. It didn’t go well.”

“No, Shane,” Hunter said. “It’s not on you. You’ve tried and that’s all I could ever ask. It’s not on you if they won’t follow you. And you already gave me a heads up, too. That is appreciated. What does your management say? Do they know?”

“I went to Theriault,” Shane replied. “I didn’t go to the GM though, but Coach told me it was a team issue and that if I had a problem, it was on me to fix it and control the room.”

Scott blinked slowly at this, his mouth dropping open a little. “Shane, what the fuck? That’s not how it works.”

Shane just shrugged. “It won’t matter for long.”

“You’re jumping ship?”

Shane nodded just once and Hunter’s face was full of surprise. Shane figured he would soon be seeing that expression a lot.

“Fuck, just tell me it’s not to Boston. Last thing anyone needs is you and Rozanov on the same team.”

Shane shot him another smirk, “nope, not Boston.”

Shane felt a little better when he wandered back to the visitor locker room. Thankfully, it was still empty. He started dressing up in his gear as the rest of the team slowly trickled in. Shane could feel the room was filled with tension before he even turned to look at any of them. It was almost stifling.

When the game did start, it was an immediate mess. Montreal played like shit. They were disconnected, their checks on Hunter were borderline illegal, and definitely too hard. Hunter,

at least was covered pretty well so he wasn't checked too often.

The first fight of the game started halfway through the second period, Wilson and Vaughan throwing punches after Wilson had high-sticked him. Shane immediately flew down the ice to Hunter to pair up, not trusting any of his team to not use this as an excuse for an attack. Hunter, gave him a grateful look and patted him on the back in a silent thanks.

When the intermission started and the Metros piled into the locker room, grumbling about Wilson's lost fight, and angrier than Shane has ever seen them, Shane just stood there glaring at them all the entire time, not even bothering to give them an inspirational speech. Hayden stepped up to do it, but the guys barely paid him any attention.

When the third period started, the score being a very disappointing 5-1 New York, Shane was feeling more and more alone out on the ice, but was still able to score his second goal of the night, Montreal's only goals of the game both his with Hayden and JJ both assisting.

Comeau got a penalty for charging at Hunter, and then when he got out of the box, racked up another for fighting, making two fights break out. This one was a little more of a brawl with about 6 players jumping in. Shane was too far away to pair with Scott again, but luckily Hayden was able to get there before Andropov did. Andropov glared at Hayden, turned to throw one at Shane and skated off to pair with another player.

The game ended at a humiliating 8-2 loss, and Shane sped through media. Questions were asked about Montreal's aggressive play-style for the night and their disconnect, about the tension on the ice. Shane just answered in boring, media trained replies like *yes, we didn't win tonight, that is unfortunate, but we will work hard, review where we went wrong, and come back stronger.*

He didn't say a word to his team, just quickly had showered, and left silently, lugging his baggage to a car rental place and drove away.

When he arrived around midnight at Ilya's home, he just input the code to the front door, toed off his shoes and walked further into the house to fall into his boyfriend's arms.

"That was a shit-show," Ilya announced.

"Yup."

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"No," Shane sniffled, and a couple tears fell from his eyes. He was so over crying about this.

"Okay, malysh," Ilya said, hugging him closer. *Baby*. "Tell me about something else then. Anything."

"Hunter said you are nice and polite."

"What the fuck?"

Shane quirked his lips up into a small smile as he rubbed his face into Ilya's chest. "I told him I had a partner and he said that they must be a nice and polite person."

"I need to make a phone call," Ilya said. "I need to set record straight. I cannot have Hunter thinking this."

Shane snorted. "I don't think he knows it's you."

"Still. Come, let's go. I need my phone."

Ilya pulled him over to the couch and grabbed his phone from the coffee table.

"Wait, you're actually calling him?"

"Da," Ilya said, nodding as he unlocked it and scrolled through his contacts. He clicked onto a profile that was labelled 'Grandpa' and pressed the call button. When the call connected, Ilya put it on speakerphone and practically shouted, "Hunter!"

"What the fuck do you want, Rozanov?" Scott's voice was a little gruff like he might have been asleep. "It's the middle of the fucking night."

"Yes, yes," Ilya spoke. "We know it is past your bedtime and your nursing home is very strict about this, but I heard very distressing news and I need to fix it."

"I'm too fucking tired for whatever weird shit you have to say."

"But Hunter! You say I am nice and polite and I think that we need to talk about it. I am not this. Please do not ever say this again. Is hurting my feelings."

Shane giggled a little when he faintly heard Scott mutter, "didn't know you had those."

"Yes, I have many feelings, especially when you tell lies like this to my boyfriend."

"Your fucking *what*?!"

Shane decided to take pity on the poor man. "Sorry about this, Scott. I wasn't expecting him to call you when I told him."

Scott let out a choked noise and squeaked, "Hollander?"

"Yeah, it's me," Shane said. "To be fair though, I did say that I would pass your sentiment along. Just, y'know, I didn't expect Ilya to call you in the middle of the night about it. So, sorry for that."

"I'm sorry," Scott said and Shane could hear him let out a long breath. "You two are together? You, Shane Hollander, and *him*, Ilya Rozanov?"

Ilya let out an offended scoff at the judgemental tone that Hunter said his name in. He immediately jumped in to say back, "fuck you, old man, I am a delight!"

“You literally woke me up to call to argue that you *aren't* nice!”

“Yes, well,” Ilya said, “Is semantics.”

“Right. Is this like a big prank? Rook, please tell me this is a joke.”

“Is very real!” Ilya exclaimed. “We are boyfriends. You do not remember me telling you that like two minutes ago? I am very worried. I know the signs of dementia, Hunter. I can get you in contact with a good doctor.”

“Ilya, shut the fuck up,” Shane said. He then confirmed to Scott, “no, this is not a prank or a joke. Ilya and I are together.”

“I need a drink,” Scott muttered. “I need to drown in an entire bottle of liquor. Rook. Shane. Why?”

“I love him,” Shane said and Ilya gave him a soft look.

“I love you too, lyubimiyy.”

“Oh, God,” Hunter said. “You two are sickening. I can’t believe my little rookie has been turned to the dark side. What happened?”

Ilya got a wicked grin on his face and before Shane could stop him, Ilya said, “he has been sucking my dick for 7 years. I turned him to dark side before we were in MLH.”

“No.”

Scott’s voice was filled with horror and Ilya looked absolutely delighted at this.

“Yes.”

“*The whole time?!?*”

“Yes.”

“I’m retiring. I am going to retire and become a full-time alcoholic.”

“Okay, you have fun with that. Goodbye, Hunter!”

Ilya pressed the button to end the call before Scott could reply. The phone immediately started ringing and Ilya declined the call. He declined the next one and then texts started coming through and Ilya laughed as he turned the screen to show Shane that Hunter was currently cussing Ilya out.

Shane grabbed his own phone from his pocket and saw Hunter had messaged him as well, just once, just a message that said *I hate that he's your boyfriend. Please consider someone else. I know a couple guys.*

Shane replied with a simple *No, thanks. I like this one* 😊

Chapter 6: Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Don't want to spoil this one, so no summary.

I really hope you enjoy this one!

There is some smut, so if you don't want to read that, stop reading when Ilya goes to brush his teeth. If you do want to read it... have fun ;)

Waking up to Ilya has become one of his favourite things. Shane feels like it has been too long since the cottage where he last was able to. He got so used to falling asleep next to his boyfriend and waking up to him that the first few days after the cottage Shane had issues getting to sleep and would sometimes reach out to Ilya's side and would be panicked for a moment before realising that Ilya wasn't there.

But now, he was looking at Ilya's face as the sunlight shone through, illuminating his features. He was beautiful and Shane wanted this every day.

They hadn't heard much from Farah about Ottawa but it is early in the season, there was still so long to go until they reached free agency. There was still time.

Shane untangled himself from Ilya carefully as to not wake him and he started his morning routine. After he was showered and had made his morning shake, he headed out to the rental car to grab his luggage. It did bother him that he hadn't brought it inside and unpacked it yet but he was so in need of getting to Ilya last night that he forgot it.

He brought it in and carried it upstairs to the bedroom, placing it on his side of the bed and he started to quietly unpack. He had brought a few items to keep here so that he could travel light when visiting Boston so he started putting them away in Ilya's closet.

He was about halfway done when he glanced at Ilya and saw the man was awake and watching him.

"Morning," Shane said. "I didn't wake you, did I?"

Ilya shook his head and in a groggy voice, said, "good morning."

Shane opened his second bag and started unloading that one. He was just taking a sweater out when he remembered what he had hid underneath it and dropped the sweater back in so

quickly before Ilya could see. His head shot to look at Ilya and saw the man staring at him with an eyebrow raised.

“What was *that*?”

“Nothing,” Shane answered quickly. Probably too quickly. Shit.

Ilya narrowed his eyes. “You are being weird. Was there something wrong with your sweater?”

“No.”

He moved towards the bag and went to grab the sweater with a mischievous glint in his eye. Shane grabbed the whole bag in a panic and moved it away.

“What are you hiding?” Ilya asked. He then gasped. “Is something naughty?”

“No, you freak. It’s nothing, I told you.”

Ilya shrugged. “Okay. If is nothing then show me.”

Shane shook his head and clutched the bag to his chest.

“Okay, fine, do not show me. But I know it is bothering you that you are not unpacked so I will keep watching.”

“Fuck,” Shane breathed.

Okay, he thought. Fuck, I may as well do it now.

He loosened his grip on the bag and slowly placed it back on the bed. Before he moved the sweater out of the way, he took a long breath and looked at Ilya.

“Alright,” he said. “I was going to bring this up later today. It’s nothing bad! I was just... I got scared after our meeting with Farah last month and I went on a little spiral looking at Russian laws and immigration and I looked at Reddit threads of people who had to apply for citizenship and what that process was like. And I found that through work it can take between one and three years to get permanent residency, and then another three to five years for citizenship.

So, then I looked up other ways and how long that takes and I found a way that is a bit shorter... It takes about a year or possibly two for permanent residency, and then you have the three to five years for citizenship. So, it’s slightly less time, but it also doesn’t completely hinge on work so if anything happened and you got hurt or something else went wrong, then you would still be protected.”

He paused to make sure Ilya was following along and Ilya nodded encouragingly. Shane took another breath and continued, “and I also want you to know that it isn’t *just* for this, it would also be because I love you.”

“I love you too,” Ilya said, smiling. “So, what is it?”

Shane reached inside the bag and pulled out the small box and he heard Ilya’s breath catch.

“I know everything is a little shit at the moment and we don’t know *for sure* that we can both go to Ottawa. But I love you and thinking about us having a future all I can think about. I think about waking up with you every day and I think about getting to hold you and kiss you every day. I think about living with you and we’re married and happy and *together*. And I want that more than anything.”

“So,” Shane said, walking around to Ilya’s side of the bed and dropping to one knee and opening the box. It showed a gold ring with a black band going around the middle of it. “Ilya Grigoryevich Rozanov, will you marry me?”

Ilya’s eyes started to well up and he let out a sob, throwing himself at Shane as he said, “yes. I will be married to you.”

Shane’s own eyes started to water and he moved his arms around Ilya, hugging him close.

“How did you know my middle name?” Ilya asked into Shane’s shoulder.

“Wikipedia.”

“Ah, of course. How often do you look at my page?”

“That’s not important.”

Ilya snorted and pulled back to kiss Shane softly on the lips. He deepened the kiss slowly before pulling back again.

“Wow,” he said. “You must really love me to let me kiss you with my morning breath.”

“I will allow it only this once,” Shane chuckled.

Ilya stole one more quick kiss before grabbing the box out of Shane’s hand and picking the ring out of it. He slid it onto his finger. It was a little loose, maybe a half size too big, but it fit. He smiled down at it and a couple tears sprang free. He wiped them away and kissed Shane again.

“Ya tebya lyublyu.” *I love you.*

“I love you too.”

“Wait here. I am going to brush my teeth.”

Shane nodded and unpacked a couple more things while Ilya was gone.

Ilya stalked back into the room and snaked his arms around Shane’s waist and pulling him into his chest. He kissed Shane hungrily, his mouth tasting of toothpaste. He licked into Shane’s mouth and slowly backed Shane into the bed until the backs of his knees hit the bed.

He lowered Shane onto the bed and pressed open-mouthed kisses down his jaw while he moved one of his hands to the front of Shane's pants.

Shane gasped at the touch, hips bucking up into Ilya's hand. Ilya ran his hand over his groin, Shane's head throwing back as he moaned, his dick hardening. Ilya used this to kiss his neck, sucking at it, almost enough to leave a mark.

His hands moved and he pulled Shane's shirt off, throwing it onto the floor. He lowered himself onto his knees on the floor and unbuttoned Shane's underwear, pulling both them and Shane's shorts down his thighs, Shane's cock springing free, slapping against his stomach, wet at the tip with precum. Ilya quickly pulled the shorts and briefs off fully and dove in, swirling his tongue over the slit, licking up the mess.

Shane let out an *oh fuck* as his hands came down and tangled themselves in Ilya's curls.

Ilya sucked at the tip before kissing his way down the length. He licked up the shaft and took Shane into his mouth, Shane groaning as he hit the back of Ilya's throat. Ilya sucked, bobbing his head, moving one hand to Shane's balls. His other hand came to grasp the base of Shane's cock and Shane gasped when he could feel the cool of Ilya's ring on his dick. His hips jerked up and, his cock hitting the back of Ilya's throat as he fucked into his mouth. Ilya moved his hands to Shane's hips, holding them down as he continued sucking him.

"Fuck, Ilya, I'm close," Shane moaned and then whined when Ilya popped off.

"Not yet. You will come on my fingers and then my cock."

Shane's dick twitched but he nodded and moved up the bed as Ilya went to grab the lube from the bedside table. He laid against the pillows, his legs open so Ilya could slot himself in between them.

Ilya uncapped the bottle and squeezed some onto his fingers, rubbing it into them to warm it up. He set himself between Shane's legs, kissing his chest before taking a nipple into his mouth and sucking at it as his fingers circled Shane's hole. Shane arched his back from it, letting out a long moan, his dick leaking.

Ilya inserted a finger and crooked it, the tip of it grazing Shane's prostate. He slowly fucked his finger in there, Shane breathing a *fuck Ilya*. He added more lube as he started adding another finger. He moved them in and out, scissoring them, the stretch feeling so good that Shane was getting close just from that.

Ilya inserted a third finger and fucked all three inside, massaging that spot relentlessly.

"Fuck Ilya," Shane moaned, "right there."

Ilya continued fucking Shane on with his fingers and bent to take Shane's cock into his mouth, sucking him down, and before Shane knew it, he was coming into Ilya's mouth. Ilya continued mouthing at his dick as Shane rode out his orgasm. After a moment he popped off and pulled his fingers from Shane's ass, Shane moaning at the loss.

Ilya swallowed the noise down as he leaned up to capture Shane's mouth. They moved their lips against each other, getting more and more deeper, their tongues moving against the other's.

"Okay," Ilya mumbled into the kiss, lightly slapping Shane's ass. He lathered some lube onto his hardened dick. "I want to see you. I want you on top."

Shane nodded and wrapped his legs around Ilya, using them to flip them so that it was Ilya now laying flat. Shane crushed his mouth to Ilya's again, kissing him for a few moments before he lined himself up with Ilya's cock. He grabbed the top of the headboard and slowly sank down, Ilya's dick stretching him a little, until he bottomed out.

He started moving, grinding himself on it, his own dick starting to fill out again. He picked up his pace, the bed shaking from the force of it.

"Oh god, Shane," Ilya groaned and Shane took that as encouragement, moving his hips more and when he did, Ilya's cock hit his prostate, causing him to moan.

He fucked himself down onto his boyfriend, hitting that spot with every grind.

"Yes, fuck, Ilya. You feel so good."

Ilya planted his feet flat on the bed, grabbed Shane's hips hard, and started thrusting his hips up, meeting Shane's, fucking into him harder.

Shane knew Ilya was getting close because his breathing was getting heavier, his moans louder and when Ilya moved his hand up to grab Shane's wrist, Shane saw the ring on his finger and started coming a second time, untouched. The clench of his hole around Ilya's cock sent him over the edge as well, coming hard inside Shane.

Shane slumped down onto Ilya, his bones jelly and Ilya wrapped his arms around him, holding him there against his chest.

They moved after a minute, before the cum between them could dry and Ilya slipped out of Shane, making him feel empty. He could feel come leaking out of him but Ilya pulled him up off the bed and they headed to the bathroom to share a shower.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Metros practice and then they play against Boston.

Chapter Notes

A shorter chapter, but here you go :)

Me: I want to write a nice, lighthearted story about Shane and Ilya moving to Ottawa together!

Also me: ANGST ANGST ANGST

Me: I love Shane, I want to give him the world. He should never be hurt or feel bad ever

Also me: Here's Shane suffering from the Metros being assholes to him

The rest of the day was relaxing. Shane called his parents after the shower and almost went deaf at his mom shouting excitedly into the phone. They used Ilya's home gym before lunch and then spent the rest of the day lounging on the couch.

Shane had messaged Jackie and Hayden, and Scott separately, but ominously.

Besties and Hayden

Shane

photo of Ilya across the couch, the ring on full display

Hayden

?

Did you mean to send a photo, bud?

Jackie

SHANE HOLLANDER

SIR

IS THAT A FUCKING RING????????????????

Shane



Hayden

You give me a headache sometimes man
Congrats, though!
I mean, it's Rozanov, but congrats

Jackie

i'm sad that this means we can no longer run away together, shane, but i am happy for you
you're all grown up and getting married
FUCK i'm crying

Hayden

I mean, I'd hope you weren't gonna run off together
I'd miss the kids

Jackie

oh no, babe
we would leave them with you

Shane

100% would not have taken the kids with us.

Scott Hunter

Shane

Good news! You do not have to deal with Ilya as my boyfriend anymore.

Scott Hunter

It's been like 12 hours that I've known and now you're broken up?

Shane

Oh, no, we didn't break up.

Scott Hunter

You just said he wasn't your boyfriend anymore???
Wait
No
Please no

Shane



“Did you tell Hunter?” Ilya asked and Shane’s eyes snapped up from his phone to look at him.

“Uh, yeah,” Shane said. “How did you know?”

“Because he just sent me a message that says ‘Congratulations, Roz. I want an invite to the wedding. And if you ever hurt my rookie, I will put you through the boards so hard you’ll end up having to be surgically removed from them.’”

Shane snorted. “You know it’s so funny he calls me his rookie when I was only ever on his team as a rookie for one All-Star game.”

“Yes, but you imprinted on each other,” Ilya said. “Like gay mama duck and gay baby duck.”

“You have such a way with words. What will you respond to him with?”

“I told him that I was going to go on Twitter and tell everyone he threatened me. And then I told him, I would be willing to let it go if he could tell me a story from his childhood because I don’t know as much as I would like about the Stone Age.”

“He’s literally three years older than us.”

“Yes, he is ancient, it is so sad.”

Shane just huffed and shook his head, a smile on his lips.

The next morning was bittersweet because, although they got to wake up and do their morning routines together, they did have to say goodbye around 9am to both go to their own practices with their teams ahead of their game that night. Shane’s team would be flying home the next morning so they would only be able to have one more night together.

Shane parked the rental car and tried – and failed – to take a calming breath. He was dreading facing his team. How he had come to utterly despise them so quickly was a little heartbreaking.

He was early to practice, getting into his gear and onto the ice before anyone had even turned up. He was doing some practice shooting when the team started trickling onto the ice alongside Theriault.

He met the team at centre ice as they gathered around so Theriault could tell them that their performance two nights ago was appalling. He told them that they needed to ‘get their shit together’ and to ‘stop acting like a bunch of cocksuckers and play hockey.’

They played a scrimmage, and Shane was checked hard, his ribs flaring up in pain. He was so winded and taken aback he didn’t even know who it was. He got checked a couple more times, hard, but not as bad. He pushed through and thankfully the rest of practice wasn’t *too bad*. He did hear a comment Comeau made as he skated past headed towards the locker room, calling him ‘fucking soft.’

When Shane went to take his gear off, he groaned from his ribs. He pulled his shirt up and saw that there was large bruising covering his left side.

“Dude, what the fuck?” Hayden said, leaning closer to have a look. “Was that from the game the other night?”

“No, practice just now.”

Hayden’s eyes went wide. “I think you need to go to the team doctor and get that checked. Know who it was?”

Shane shook his head and finished undressing, heading to the showers. When he got out, he dressed and headed to see the team trainer.

The doctor looked at his side, poking his ribs a few times. He told Shane it was likely just bruised, fractured at most. He didn’t scratch him from the game, but did advise him to take some Tylenol and come back if it gets worse.

Shane went to his coach. He had never been checked that hard at practice before *ever*. Coach just looked at him, said maybe it was a mistake, that Shane didn’t even know who it was. Shane said he had a suspicion that it was because he had stood up to the team. Coach just told him that if it was a room issue, he was captain and he needs to fix it.

Later, the game started, and although he was playing good, Ilya was going hard against some of the Montreal team. He seemed angry, checking hard when he could. The game wasn’t as messy as the previous one, but Montreal still played shit. There were a couple times where Shane thought some of the team were icing him out, not passing to him.

By the end of the second period, Shane’s ribs were starting to get to him and he asked Theriault for less ice time for the third period. He didn’t seem pleased with Shane’s request, but reluctantly agreed.

The game ended 6-2 to Boston, one goal from Shane, and one from JJ. Ilya had scored a hat trick. Shane couldn’t even be mad about it because Montreal didn’t deserve to win playing like this. He felt a little guilty for thinking like that.

Shane went home. Ilya was asked for celebratory drinks apparently, but he messaged Shane to say he was coming straight home.

As soon as his fiancé arrived, he stormed into the house, and straight to Shane, and without a word, Ilya was lifting his shirt and looking at his ribs. He took a sharp breath at the sight.

“How did you know I was hurt?”

“Pike,” Ilya answered shortly. When Shane was confused, Ilya elaborated, “I was at practice, and I get a text from number I do not have. Says it is Hayden, that he got my number from Connors and that one of your teammates hurt you. Didn’t say he who did it, so I ask and he says he doesn’t know. But he said he has ‘hit list’ of potential people and gave me some names.”

“So, that’s what happened tonight? I saw you were angry and I noticed you were going after certain people.”

“Yes.”

“Jesus, Ilya,” Shane said. “You can’t do that.”

“They hurt you,” Ilya mumbled and his lip trembled. Shane’s heart broke a little more.

“Baby,” Shane breathed and Ilya broke, falling into his arms. “I’m okay.”

Ilya nuzzled into his neck and they just stood there like that for a while, arms wrapped around one another.

When Shane had to leave the next morning for the airport, he was a little distraught. It would be three weeks until they could see each other again. Not as bad as the month and a half they just did, but it seemed that it might get harder and harder every time.

He drove off, returned the rental car to the company it belonged to, having bases in both New York and Boston, and then walked into the airport. The duffle bag he was carrying was a little hard on his ribs, but he managed. Hayden did take it from him though, when he met the team. Shane murmured a small *snitch* to him, to which he got the worst impression of an innocent look he had ever seen in return.

Chapter 8: Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

TW: homophobic language

The next few weeks flew by. Shane's ribs weren't fractured, thankfully, just bruised, and they started healing slowly.

Montreal had a couple more games, but after Shane didn't say anything further to his team, they started back up again with their bigoted remarks. This seemed to bolster the team and they did start winning a few of their games. They were still disconnected, still didn't pass to Shane as much as they should be, but they worked well with the rest of the team. Apparently, hockey could be won with the power of friendship and homophobia, it seemed.

Shane kept his head down, told Hayden too as well. He just grit his teeth and moved on when someone made a comment. *He just had to get through this season*, he repeated to himself like a mantra. He had gotten pretty good at disassociating during practice and any time he set foot in the locker room.

Farah had got back to them, saying that there was interest. They would likely be taking pay cuts, but the Centaurs were open to taking them both. Apparently, her connection on the team was wary at first about the prospect of signing both of them to the same team because of the rivalry, but Farah had assured the guy that they didn't hate each other and were actually *looking* for a team together. She didn't quite tell him that outright, but she did imply it. Plausible deniability, so that there wasn't proof of collusion.

Shane and Ilya were ecstatic and, when Boston was set to play Montreal, his fiancé was able to fly in a couple days ahead of the team.

When Shane met Ilya at the door of his condo and Ilya immediately pulled out a small box. A ring for Shane. It was similar to his own ring, it was gold, but the band around it was silver instead of black. It fit too, and Ilya had said that he had measure Shane's finger while he was asleep.

Shane cried a little bit. It had felt like his sides were being sanded down a little, having to deal with his team, but having Ilya with him, and to have his own ring, a physical reminder of their plans, brought tears to his eyes.

Ilya pulled another box out, this one a little larger, and inside was a gold chain, for Shane to be able to wear the ring around his neck, like Ilya was able to. While Ilya would wear it on

his finger around the house when he was alone, he had slotted it onto his chain next to his mother's crucifix when he was anywhere else. And now, Shane could too. He could have it with him everywhere he went.

For the first time in three weeks, Shane was happy.

They spent the next couple days at home in their own little bubble. It was perfect. Shane didn't even have practice. Their game was an afternoon game and Ilya would be flying out with his team directly after it, so when they left separately to head to the arena, they said their goodbyes.

Only Hayden noticed his new necklace, he smiled and patted Shane on the back, not saying anything. He did apparently text a certain someone about it though, because after the game – where they lost, because while they were playing *a little* better, Boston was actually a good team – Shane unlocked his phone to see a message from Jackie that said *'heard about the ring. pics or it didn't happen.'*

Shane just chuckled, shaking his head before snapping a quick picture and sending it off.

The apartment was dark and quiet when Shane got home, a reminder that Ilya was gone. Shane deflated, moving through the apartment alone.

Montreal was on the road after that, winning two out of five games, and then back home where they lost two more times in a row. The locker room was stifling and Shane's only calming grace was his ring around his neck, he was constantly grabbing it, using it to ground himself.

The Metros blamed Shane for their losses despite Shane being the only one to put points on the score board in every game. But apparently, he wasn't scoring enough. He wasn't getting the puck enough, and it was *his* fault, despite the fact that it was his team that wasn't sending it to him enough.

The fans were angry and the media was bloodthirsty. Everyone could see that there was tension on the ice, that Shane wasn't getting passes, that he would sometimes not be covered enough. They all knew it was a locker room issue, and Shane was being asked about it after every game. Shane would just give a small *we're working together, we're a team. We'll review the tape to see where we went wrong and fix it from there.* The reporters tried pushing, asking about the disconnect, but Shane would just purse his lips a little and deflect.

It all came to a head at practice after that second loss when they were playing a scrimmage.

Comeau had just cursed out Shane after he had lost the puck. Their team was down, the other half of the Metros working better together, and Shane was done.

"Fuck you, Comeau," Shane spat. "Maybe if you actually fucking covered me, I'd be able to keep the puck!"

"You're covered fine, maybe you should just stop playing like ass!" Comeau retorted.

“Start acting like we’re on the same team then,” Shane said. He turned to face the rest of the team who were now looking on at them. “You all have a fucking problem with me because I told you I didn’t want to hear homophobic shit. I haven’t even fucking said anything since even though you have, and yet you all still treat me like a fucking pariah!”

“Get off your fucking high horse, Hollander—”

“Enough!” Coach Theriault roared. “Hollander, my office. Now.”

Comeau sneered at him as Shane turned away to follow Coach off the ice. He unlaced his skates and shucked them off, dropping them on the floor next to the ice. He walked behind his coach, walking all the way into his office.

Coach jabbed a finger at one of the chairs in front of his desk, a silent order for Shane to sit while he rounded the desk and sat in his own chair.

“Want to explain what the hell is happening with my team?” Coach asked. “Why the hell you think it’s acceptable to yell at them?”

“Yes, sir,” Shane said, taking a calming breath. “A couple months ago almost everyone was saying all kinds of stuff about Hunter. Calling him slurs, ‘joking’ about targeting him. I didn’t like it, and you told me I needed to handle it myself if I had an issue... so I told them to stop. They didn’t like that and gave me a cold shoulder. They started checking me harder, stopped passing to me as much, and I haven’t been as covered as I should be.”

“You need to fix this. I do not care what you have to do, but you are the captain. You should be controlling the room, leading them, not screaming at them during practice. If you cannot do that, I will take that ‘C’ off your chest. Do what you need to do.”

Shane was shocked for a moment, flinching internally, the threat of losing his captaincy turning his blood cold. He recovered quickly, blinking and saying, “yes, sir.”

“I don’t care what kinds of shit anyone is saying. Man up and get over it. This is hockey, not a pride parade. You’re here to play, so you need to figure out how to do that with this team without whinging about a few words.”

Shane nodded and stood, walking out of the office, and straight to the locker room. The rest of the team were there, off the ice. He saw someone had brought his skates in.

He cleared his throat and spoke loud and clear, “I know we’re having our differences, but I need us all to leave it here. We cannot keep bringing out onto the ice. We keep losing because we aren’t working as a team. So, whatever issue you have with me, keep it inside this room.”

“You were the one who made this an issue, Hollander,” Drapeau said. “We were doing fine until *you* decided you had a problem.”

“All I wanted was for you to cut the slurs and lay off Hunter. That’s it. I was feeling uncomfortable and I didn’t want to have to hear all that shit.”

“So what?” Comeau said angrily. “We have to be uncomfortable with a fairy in the league, but you can’t be uncomfortable with a few jokes?”

“You were talking about hurting him!” Shane raised his voice. “That’s not fucking okay!”

“You know, with how hard you’re riding his dick right now, I’d think *you* were a fag.”

Shane flinched and his body froze up. He felt a hand land hard on his shoulder and his head snapped up to see Hayden glaring at Comeau with a murderous glint in his eyes.

“Shut the fuck up, Comeau,” Hayden said, his tone showing finality in a way Shane has never heard before. “That’s enough.”

“Stay out of this, Pike,” Comeau warned.

“No,” Hayden said, shaking his head. “You all made this a team issue. I’m part of this team.”

“Hayd, it’s fine,” Shane said. He turned back to the rest of the team.

Before he could speak up, JJ interjected. “It’s not fine, Hollander. You are our capitaine.”

Not for long, Shane almost blurted out. But instead, he just nodded and said, “yeah. I am. And I am telling you all to just keep it off the ice.”

He sounded almost pleading towards the end.

He looked to Comeau and then slowly looked around at every member. “Say what you want in this room, I don’t care anymore. But keep it off the ice. Out there we have to work as a team or we will lose. Do you think you all can do that?”

There were some affirming hums and a few yeses murmured throughout the group.

“Fine,” Comeau agreed begrudgingly.

“Good. Let’s get back to practice.”

The guys all started filing back out of the room slowly, heading off to the ice. Shane sat on a bench and reached for his skates to put on.

“How was the talk with Coach?” Hayden asked, slumping down next to him. They were the only ones left in the room.

“Threatened my captaincy – told me to ‘man up’ and do what I need to do to fix the room.”

Hayden let out a curse and then in a low voice, said, “you getting out?”

“Ottawa, free agency. Just have to get through this season.”

Hayden nodded at this. “Good. I’d feel better if you got out faster, but at this rate we’re not making it past April anyway.”

“It’s only November,” Shane all but whined.

“Yeah, I know, bud. When do you see Rozanov next?”

“He’s driving back up here in a few days,” he replied as they stood to walk out towards the ice. Hayden nodded at this and told Ilya to bring him over for dinner.

Chapter 9: Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Shane and Ilya visit the Pikes.

Chapter Notes

This is just a nice, fun chapter. Enjoy!

“Pike,” Ilya deadpanned when the door opened.

“Rozanov,” Hayden said, matching his tone.

“Uncle Shane!” Ruby yelled, barging past her dad and throwing herself at Shane so hard he almost fell over. Once she successfully clung herself to his leg, she looked up at Ilya. “Who’s this guy?”

“I’m Ilya,” he introduced himself. “I am friend of Shane’s. Who are *you*?”

“I am Jade!” she said through a toothy grin.

“Ruby,” Shane said, his tone full of warning but said through a smile. “It’s not nice to lie.”

“Ugh, Uncle Shaneeeeeee,” she whined. “We had a plan! I was going to be Jade, Jade was going to be Amber, Arthur was going to be Ruby, and Amber was going to be Arthur!”

“Ah, is that so?” Ilya mused. “Well then, *Jade*, it is nice to meet you.”

She gave him a calculating look, narrowing her eyes, before nodding and making a satisfied hum. “Wanna play princesses?”

“How did you know I like to play princesses?” Ilya asked with fake bewilderment. “You are mind reader?”

“Maybe,” she replied ominously before grabbing his hand and pulling him into the house, pushing past Hayden. Shane chuckled and followed them inside.

They all came to a stop in the lounge room where Jackie and the other kids all were.

“Ah!” Ilya said, pointing at Jade and Arthur. “This must be Ruby and Amber, yes?”

The girls giggled at this, both nodding. Jade spoke up, “what’s your name?”

“Ilya.”

Jade repeated his name, rolling the sound of it over her tongue.

Jackie stood up and walked over to the three other adults, hugging Shane before turning and pulling Ilya down into one. “It’s so nice to finally meet you!”

“Ah, Pike, you never told me your wife is so beautiful!”

“Oh, really?” Jackie asked, spinning around to raise her eyebrow at her husband.

Hayden spluttered, “That’s because I’ve never told him shit!”

“Swear jar, Pike,” Ilya said with a smirk and Hayden turned to point a finger at Shane.

“I hate you,” he declared. “You could have picked anyone else and you chose *him*.”

Shane just grinned back at him. The twins dragged Ilya off to play and Shane reached down to pick Arthur up. He, Hayden, and Jackie all went and sat on the couch.

“How are you holding up?” Jackie asked him.

“Better that Ilya’s here,” Shane replied. “Practice was a little better yesterday. I told the team to leave everything inside the locker room and it’s only been a couple days and it seems like they have. I think they’re sick of losing. I don’t know how long it will last, but I’m hoping it’s enough for now.”

“Hayden said you mentioned Ottawa?”

“Yeah,” Shane said, nodding. He squeezed Arthur to his chest a little tighter. “Ilya and I are both free agents after this season. We’re hoping to both go there.”

“Wait,” Hayden chimed in. “He’s going too? He’s leaving Boston?”

“Yeah. That was actually what was gonna happen first, but then Montreal got unbearable for me, so now I’m going too. Farah has a contact at the Cens and they’re open to taking us both.”

“He’s leaving *Boston*?”

“Yes,” Shane confirmed. “It’s only two hours from here. It’s shorter than the distance between here and Boston, and there isn’t a border to cross. Also, Ilya was looking into Canadian citizenship so he was thinking about moving to a Canadian team anyway.”

“Yeah, but like that’s huge. He was going to move countries for you.”

“Well, yeah.”

“Fuck, I think he loves you.”

“I’d hope so since we’re getting married.”

“Oh shit, I forgot about that. Yeah, okay, that makes sense.”

“Swear jar,” Jackie piped up, staring at Hayden like he was insane. “Also, please remind me again how many concussions you’ve had?”

“Only like three.”

Shane grimaced. “Yeah, that sounds about right.”

“Wow, you know, I’m feeling very unloved right now.”

They talked for a while longer until the timer went off on the oven and Jackie went to check on dinner. Ilya wandered out, wearing a plastic tiara and what Shane thinks might be sparkly lip gloss. He looks extremely happy with it, and declared that Shane’s presence was requested by the royal court.

Shane, still holding Arthur, walked into the twins’ room and saw that the girls were also dressed for the occasion, both in tiaras, Ruby also in fairy wings, and Jade was wearing about a dozen necklaces.

“We needed a prince for a royal wedding and Princess Ilya has chosen you as his prince.”

“Princess Ilya?” Shane quipped, smirking at his fiancé.

“Yes, Shane,” Ilya said, as if it was the most obvious thing. “We *are* playing princesses.”

“And you chose me as your prince?”

“Well, I wasn’t going to royal marry Hayden Pike.”

Jade cleared her throat. “Prince Shane, do you accept Princess Ilya’s pro-prop—”

“Proposal,” Ilya gently helped.

“Yes. That. Proposal.”

Shane smiled and said yes.

She handed him a cape to put on while Ruby got two plastic heart rings, one pink, and one purple.

The girls herded the two men around to their spots they were supposed to stand in. Shane plopped Arthur down onto the ground and he immediately walked over to the toy box to look in there. The twins stood in climbed on top of one of the beds so that they were taller.

Ruby cleared her throat and declared them ready to begin.

“This is the wedding of Shane Hollander and Ilya...” Jade narrowed her eyes at Ilya.

“Rozanov,” he supplied.

She nodded. “Rose-noff.”

Shane snickered and Ilya nudged him. “Shane. Keep it together. Is our wedding day.”

“Shane, do you promise to love Ilya and be his husband forever?” Ruby asked.

Shane smiled up at his fiancé, feeling so overcome that this was his life and that he could have this.

“I do,” he said quietly, full of feeling.

“Ilya,” said Jade, “do you promise to love Shane and be his husband forever?”

“I do,” Ilya said, his tone probably too emotional for a fake wedding. “Forever.”

“Okay,” Jade said. “Do the rings now.”

Ilya took Shane’s hand, and slipped the child-sized purple heart ring onto his pinkie, down to his second knuckle. Shane huffed out a shaky laugh and he took Ilya’s hand and wiggled the pink ring onto the end of Ilya’s pinkie, barely able to get it to fit. He glanced up at Ilya and he could tell both of their eyes were glassy.

“I now pronounce you husband and husband,” Ruby said.

Jade elbowed her. “*I* was supposed to say that!”

“No, you weren’t! You were supposed to say the kissing thing.”

“Oh yeah. You may now kiss.”

Shane blushed a little but leaned in and Ilya met him half-way, their lips touching softly in a brief kiss. The girls whooped and threw handfuls of paper they’d ripped up into the air. After their kiss, they rested their foreheads together and they stood there like that for a moment.

A minute later, after Shane wiped his lips clean of the lip gloss from Ilya’s, Hayden came into the room and told them dinner was ready.

They all headed out of the room.

“What was the important princess business?” Hayden asked.

“I am now a married man,” Ilya replied and Shane nodded in agreement. They held their hands up to show off their new wedding rings.

“Married *princess*,” Jade corrected.

“Yes. Sorry. I am married princess.”

Dinner was a surreal experience, Shane, Ilya, and the twins all still dressed up. After, the three eldest Pike kids all left to go play, and it was just the adults left along with baby Amber.

“So, Ilya,” Jackie said. “Shane never told me how he proposed.”

“Ah, was very romantic,” Ilya spoke. “He gave big speech about immigration laws and said he would marry me so I can be Canadian citizen.”

“It sounds so bad when you say it like that,” Shane groaned, slumping in his seat.

“He did tell me it was also because he loved me, so he gets points for that.”

“Wow, thank you, I’m so glad my proposal has a point system,” Shane said sarcastically.

“Yes, you got a nine out of ten because I was not fully awake yet and because was like very last minute. Speech was not even prepared.”

“I didn’t plan on doing it in that moment! I thought I would have a few more hours!”

“Is okay, moya lyubov’, I forgive you.”

“Well, I give you a zero out of ten because you didn’t propose.”

“Ah, not fair! You cannot give me rating on something that I never did!”

“Should have proposed then. But, it’s okay,” Shane said, his face breaking into a smile. “I forgive you.”

Ilya pouted and harrumphed. “You are mean husband.”

“You knew that when you married me.”

“Married?” Jackie squeaked before looking very stern. “Shane Hollander if you got married and didn’t tell me, I will kill you.”

Shane chuckled and held his hand up with the plastic ring on his pinkie. “Relax. It was a fake wedding with the kids.”

“Was very real wedding,” Ilya insisted solemnly and Shane softened.

“Yes, of course.”

“Ugh, you guys are so cute,” Jackie said. “When are you going to have your second wedding?”

“Probably in the summer, maybe at the cottage,” Ilya answered.

Shane nodded. “You guys and the kids are invited, of course. Will probably just be you guys and my parents. And Scott Hunter, probably his boyfriend, too then also – what was his name?”

“Kip,” Ilya supplied.

“Right, Kip. I was thinking also Rose. She knows I’m gay, so it would be good to tell her about Ilya.”

“Ugh,” Ilya groaned. “Rose Landry.”

Shane sighed. “Ilya, for the millionth time, I am gay. Rose is just a friend.”

“Yes, yes, you are super gay. So gay you have big celebrity girlfriend.”

“Okay, first of all, I’m regular gay. And secondly, I am sorry about that.”

“Okay, fine. She can come.”

“Thank you.”

“So that she can watch me marry you and know she has no chance with you ever again.”

“I think she already knows that.”

“Good. Oh, I would like to have Sveta there. She is my best friend and closest thing I have to family. She also knows I am bisexual and that my ‘Jane’ is a man.”

Shane paused for a moment, memories flashing in his mind, replaying *sometimes, we fuck*, and *I could marry Svetlana*, but Shane shook them out of his mind. He knew there wasn’t anything happening between them, obviously, and Ilya was marrying *him*.

“Okay,” he agreed. “I think that’s everyone.”

“Will you invite JJ?” Hayden asked and Shane hesitated before just shaking his head.

He knew JJ would be okay with Shane being gay, but he didn’t know if he would be okay with the *Ilya Rozanov* of it all. And Shane didn’t know if he wanted to risk it. If Hayden hadn’t been there during the panic attack and phone call, Shane probably wouldn’t have told him either. Hayden had already admitted a while ago that if he hadn’t observed Ilya comforting Shane through the phone, he might not have taken it as well himself.

“Maybe I will tell him later, when Ilya has permanent residency and is safe,” Shane said.

“But not until then, at least.”

Ilya rested his hand on Shane’s thigh under the table and squeezed it.

They all talked a little more, mostly about the season so far, some talk about Christmas plans, and also about the kids among other things. Ilya successfully ragebaited Hayden no less than five times, Hayden raising to every one without fail, but no actual arguments broke out. After a while, Ilya helped Jackie with the dishes and Shane helped Hayden put the kids to bed.

Shane and Ilya went home soon after that, Ilya promising Jackie he would return next time he was in town to which Hayden groaned at, but didn’t actually look that displeased.

When they got home, Shane was so happy to be alone with Ilya, his social battery almost run out. They showered together and crawled into bed, Ilya settling himself right on top of Shane, crushing him. It felt comforting, similar to Shane's weighted blanket. Shane just wrapped his arms around Ilya, content to have him there.

Chapter 10: Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Shane has a meeting with his coach and the GM, and then he is headed off to the All-Star game!

Chapter Notes

Me: this fic will be around 20k words!
Also me, 20k into the fic: so actually...

Well into January, the Metros were holding steady. The team was still tense. They weren't as violent, but they weren't a cohesive unit. For every three games won, they were losing one. Shane was getting goals, carrying games on his back, but he was alone. Unless he was the only one with control of the puck, or getting an assist from Hayden, he wasn't getting passed to. He was covered at least, but beyond that he was ignored. He threw himself into longer practices, adapting his play to help the deficiency. He was playing better hockey than he ever had, but it was single-handed. For his shifts on the ice, it was him against an entire team. He was running himself ragged.

Towards the end of the month, when he arrived at the last practice before the All-Star break, Shane was called into a room with his coach and the GM.

"Shane," the GM, Darren, said as he took a seat. "Thanks for coming in."

Shane just nodded politely but didn't say anything.

"As you might be aware, your contract is coming to a close and we've sent out a couple offers to your agent, but we haven't been able to land an agreement. We're just wanting to check in with you and see where your head is at with this. Is there an issue with the offers?"

Shane shifted and ran his hands up his thighs. "I think this is a conversation you should be having with my agent."

Darren smiled tersely. "We've tried, but negotiations have not been happening. We love having you here, you're our star player. What can we do to find an agreement? Is it a money issue? Do you have a certain amount in mind?"

“No,” Shane replied curtly. “I will not be resigning. That is why my agent has not negotiated a new contract.”

Both Darren and Theriault looked gobsmacked at this news.

“You’re not resigning? Theriault echoed.

“No.”

The GM cleared his throat. “Does this have anything to do with the issues I’ve heard about in-fighting going on in the locker room at the start of the season?”

Shane nodded. “That’s the main reason, yes. I’m not comfortable in that room or with this team anymore. I’ve been given the cold shoulder, yelled at, hurt in practice, and left uncovered on the ice. It’s been a little better lately in that regard, but I don’t feel safe.”

“Even though the issue has been resolved?”

“It hasn’t,” Shane said simply. “It’s been managed. Yes, the team isn’t as bad out on the ice to me, I haven’t been hurt again and I’m not left alone against the D-men on other teams. But the locker room is far from okay. I’m ignored on the ice and as soon as we step off it, it’s even worse. I have to sit by in the locker room as homophobia runs rampant, sometimes even racist remarks too. And I can’t fight against it again because then the team will go right back to how it was.”

“You’re willing to walk from this franchise – from this team – because of locker room talk?” Darren asked, astounded.

“It’s not just locker room talk. It’s distrust. And I am over this. I have to bite my tongue when someone makes threats against Scott Hunter. I have to sit by as I’m subjected to hearing slurs. I have to not react when someone casually talks about doing despicable things to a respected veteran of the sport who is a better player than all of them combined. And I have to do that just so I don’t have to worry about being checked hard enough during practice that I get hurt.”

“I understand emotions are running high right now with the other guys. But this thing with Hunter will blow over sooner or later. Everyone is probably just getting used to the idea of having someone like that in the league.”

“Hunter has been in this league for years. We’ve played against the Admirals countless times. There isn’t anything to get *used to*. He’s the same guy he was a year ago.”

“Come on, you know what I mean. The guys are uncomfortable sharing the ice with someone who promotes that lifestyle. It’s an adjustment, but they’ll get over it eventually. Surely you can just resign with us and wait it out?”

“No, I can’t,” Shane stated. “I won’t. If they have an issue with Hunter, they have an issue with me. If they’re uncomfortable sharing the ice with us, then I am uncomfortable sharing a team with them.”

The sentence landed heavy in the room and Shane just realised what he implied. The room was thick with silence for what felt like hours. Hooked up to a lie detector, Shane wouldn't be able truthfully to say if it was seconds or years that passed.

He gulped and continued, "I thought I would see out my entire career here. I thought my jersey would hang in the rafters after I retired and I wanted to never have to play in another team's colours. But I am done. It's either the room changes, and you let some of those guys go, or I walk. But I will not resign if this team continues on like this. I can't."

Theriault leaned forward. "Now, Hollander, I think you're being rash. You can't just give an ultimatum like that. Those are good players, they're irreplaceable."

"Then that's your choice," Shane replied. "And it's my choice now to not sign another contract with the Metros."

"We gave you a career," said the GM through a scoff, "we put our faith in you and you repay us by throwing that away over *this*?"

The words slapped him in the face. As if everything he had built was *owed* to anyone else. As if he wasn't *Shane Hollander*. He had won two cups. He alone, was constantly dragging the team to wins, this season alone had proved that.

Shane was now officially done with this conversation. "*I* gave me my career. If you hadn't drafted me to this team, I would have been signed somewhere else and I would be just as successful. I don't owe you anything. Call my agent."

He stood up and walked out of the room, down the hallway, right into the locker room where he snatched his bag from his cubby and left, ignoring the stares from the team.

He made it all the way home before he broke, sobbing into his steering wheel. He kept going, ugly, snotty, and loud until he ran out of tears and he started to feel nothing. He slowly extricated himself from the car, not caring if any of his neighbours were in the car park witnessing anything, and walked himself inside.

He called Farah before he even took off his shoes, blurting out a, "I need you to waive my no-trade in my contract. I need out."

She didn't sound surprised, just muttered an *about time* and started devolving into logistics, saying she was expecting to have to do this since they first talked back in September. She talked about how since he had a no-trade clause, he could waive it for certain other teams. She was already prepared to waive it for Ottawa only, "forcing" him there.

Shane immediately agreed and told her to do whatever she needed, even if she had to add other teams to the list. He just needed out. He could always go to Ottawa when his free agency started.

He hung up the phone and saw he had some messages from Hayden and Ilya.

He called Ilya, and was met with a panicked, “Shane? Are you okay? Hayden messaged me saying you left practice.”

“I did,” Shane choked out. “I was pulled into a meeting with Coach and the GM about extending my contract with the Metros. I told them no and it just got worse. I left and I just told Farah I want a trade. I can’t – I can’t stay. I tried. I really tried.”

He was sobbing by the end of speaking and Ilya tried soothing him. “Shh, it’s okay, moya lyubov’, it’s okay.”

“I think I told them I’m gay,” Shane whispered. “At the meeting I kind of implied that I was like Hunter. What if they tell? Ilya, what do I do?”

“Nothing. Shane, you only implied, yes? They do not know?”

“No, they don’t know. Not for sure, but–”

“No but... Shane, they will look like assholes if they say anything. You have meeting with them and then ask for trade. Will look bad for them if they tell after this.”

“Maybe... I’m just so tired. I’ve given them everything and they don’t even care. I hate it. I just want to play hockey.”

“You will, lyubimiyy. Just not with them.”

Shane broke down a little more at that. They stayed on the phone for another hour before Shane said he had to have a shower. His face was covered in tears and snot, and his skin felt itchy, like it wasn’t his own.

He turned the shower on hot and sat at the bottom of the water for he didn’t know how long. He felt both empty and filled to the brim with emotions and he didn’t even know where to start when sorting through his thoughts. Eventually the water ran cold and Shane slowly got out.

He dried off and crawled into bed, not even bothering with getting dressed. A couple hours later, he heard the code to his apartment activate and the door open. A minute later, he felt movement as someone was dipping under the covers and wrapping himself around Shane. Shane just turned over in the arms, burying himself into Ilya’s chest.

“How are you here right now?”

Ilya ran his hands up and down Shanes back and said, “I started driving when Pike messaged me. I was in the car earlier when you called.”

“Thank you,” Shane breathed, “I needed you.”

“I know. I am right here.”

They stayed like that for a while until the room went dark as the sun went down outside. Ilya coaxed him out of the bed and helped him get dressed, Shane’s energy so low he needed the

assistance. He followed his fiancé out of the room and down to the kitchen, sitting on a stool and watching as Ilya made them some dinner.

Ilya talked about everything and anything, Shane just silently listening the whole time, not saying anything. He didn't have it in him to even voice words after the day he had. After the months he had.

They spent the next day together, just relaxing in the apartment, wrapped up in each other. He called Hayden in the afternoon, and told him everything. And then called his parents and told them as well. They offered to visit, but Shane declined, just wanting to have time with Ilya. They were going to the All-Star game with him anyway.

A day later and they were both on a flight to LA for the All-Star game. Ilya had changed his ticket so that he could fly from Montreal instead of Boston and so they met with Yuna and David at the airport the next day. Shane didn't even care that he was being seen with Ilya in public, they were going to "come out" as friends later in the year anyway for the Irina Foundation. And they would hopefully be on the same team after this summer anyway.

Ilya was able to be seated with them, thankfully, and so he took the seat next to Shane while Yuna and David took the two seats in front of them.

They didn't touch for the duration of the flight, but they did watch a couple movies together. Ilya even chose a Rose Landry movie for one of them which was a little comforting.

They landed around 3pm that day LA time, and headed to the hotel to check-in. After they unpacked in their separate rooms, they all met up again in the hotel bar to mingle with the rest of the all-star players. They would be on the same team again, so it was a breath of fresh air to be in a hockey space with Ilya and not have it be expected for them to be at each other's throats.

They did come to the decision to make a beeline for Scott though, a public show of support.

Scott was with Vaughny and Kip, and he introduced Shane to his boyfriend.

"Oh, you're Shane!" Kip said excitedly. "I have heard so much about you!"

"Good things, I hope," Shane chuckled.

"Yes," he assures him, "And I know that despite you only ever dropping gloves with him and no one else, that he is actually very fond of you. I swear I almost caught him looking up adult-adoption once."

"What was that fight about anyway?" Vaughan asked and both Shane and Scott groaned as Ilya lit up from beside them.

"I know! He thought Hunter was being homophobic! Is very funny story."

"Ilya!" Shane hissed. He turned and gave the rest of the group an apologetic smile. "Sorry about him, he didn't come installed with an off-switch."

“Wait, how did you come to the conclusion Scott was homophobic?” Kip said and Shane moved so quickly to slap a hand over Ilya’s mouth.

“Nope,” he said. “No way. You’re done talking. You—ugh, what the fuck?!”

He pulled his hand away with a disgusted expression after Ilya had *licked* his hand. Ilya had a shit-eating grin on his face.

“You put your hand on my mouth! Had no other choice!”

“Well, you sure as shit didn’t need to fucking *lick* me.”

“Okay!” Yuna said, cutting in. “Behave yourselves, boys.”

“Yes, Yuna,” Ilya said sheepishly, pouting. “Sorry.”

“Suck up,” Shane shot at him before meeting his mother’s stern look and sighing, mumbling a, “sorry, Mom.”

“Better,” she remarked and David just chuckled watching his wife and boys.

“Wow,” Scott snorted. “You need to teach me your tricks. I’ve never seen Rozanov be shut up before.”

“Sorry, class is not open to octogenarians,” Ilya said.

“Where did you learn that word?” Shane mused.

“Easy. I look up Scott Hunter on Google and that is what it tells me he is.”

“Oh yeah, that makes sense.”

“Fuck you both,” Scott said, shaking his head.

“No thanks, I’m not interested in a threesome,” Ilya said and Shane snickered before he could think better of it.

“I hate you both so much.”

“Sorry, Scott,” Shane said. “You’re right, we’ll stop. We should be respecting our elders.”

Scott rolled his eyes and let out a long-suffering sigh.

“You know,” said Kip, looking between Shane and Ilya. “I thought you two were supposed to hate each other.”

“No, no,” Ilya denied, throwing an arm over Shane’s shoulders. “We are best friends.”

“Against my will,” Shane snarked but shot a small smile to his fiancé.

They eventually mingled with other people in the bar, moving around as a small unit. To the outside, looking like a Captain with his parents and his Alternate Captain, but to themselves, they were just happy to be in each other's company. A family.

The last couple days have felt like hell, and Shane was likely going to be busy after, but he was happy to relax for the weekend and play hockey with Ilya.

Chapter 11: Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

All-Star weekend ends on a high note and Shane goes home.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the slow updates the past day, I had to visit my parents. Hopefully I can go back to banging out roughly two chapters a day now that I am back home with only my cats to distract me.

I would like to just say thank you to everyone who has left kudos and comments, I love you all <3

As always, enjoy!

The All-Star weekend started in full swing. Shane dominated in some the skills competitions with his only real competitor being Ilya. At one point, Shane was so smug that he beat Ilya in the speed challenge by a full second, that he just skated right past his disgruntled fiancé with a grin so full of delight, having finally proven that maybe he wasn't a "slow hockey player".

Ilya was not amused and they bickered about it for the rest of the day. Shane was having so much fun.

With the event being held in LA, they were both able to meet with Rose the night before the final game at a restaurant. Shane had messaged her asking if she would like to meet his partner and she had immediately agreed, said she would rather die than not. Shane didn't tell her anything else, just that he was seriously seeing someone and that he was in love.

When he walked into the restaurant, she looked confused for a couple seconds at the sight of Ilya before her face transformed into pure shock, her jaw dropping as they slid into the booth.

Ilya looked so pleased at her stunned reaction.

"Shut up," Rose said, her mouth opening and closing like a fish.

"I didn't even say anything?" Shane offered.

“Shane please tell me that I’m not dreaming. Someone pinch me!”

“Okay, Rose Landry,” Ilya said, his tone full of disgust as he said her name, while reaching across the table to pinch her.

“Ow!”

“Ilya,” Shane said, sighing.

“What? She said to pinch her. What was I going to do, not pinch Rose Landry?”

“Okay, first,” Rose cut in, “why do you keep saying my full name like that? And second, what the fuck – is this real?”

“You know what you did,” Ilya scowled, narrowing his eyes at her.

“Oh my god, Ilya, stop being a baby!” Shane groaned. He turned to Rose. “Sorry about him, he’s just being jealous. Which I will say for like the millionth time, makes no sense.”

“Why is he jealous? He does know you’re gay, right?”

“Not so gay he could not leave me for famous girlfriend.”

Shane facepalmed and Rose lit up, “wait is he the peg?”

Ilya looked very confused and then his face went through several different phases of joy as Rose recounted the break up conversation. He was laughing by the end, loud and full-chested before pointing his finger at Shane and complaining that Shane had never told him that he had to be told he was gay.

He then proceeded to embarrass Shane by being a total gossip and revealing to her that Shane came out to him after 7 years of sucking his dick. Shane thinks that maybe he should just escape to the wilderness and become a recluse. He’s seriously considering it.

“Okay, I think maybe this was a mistake,” Shane said. “There was a miscalculation and I think you two should not have met. Ever.”

“But how else would she come to our wedding?”

“Your WHAT?!” Rose exclaimed. Some heads turned from some of the nearby tables and Shane thought that maybe he might spontaneously combust.

“Did I not tell you about that?” Shane tried weakly.

She narrowed her eyes at him and said, “you know full well Shane MiddleName Hollander that you did not.”

“I actually don’t have a middle name.”

“You know what? I actually don’t care. Spill. I want all the details.”

And so he told her, only stopping when the waiter came over to serve them. It was nice to talk about their relationship after so many years of hiding. He never thought he could have this. He never wanted to shut up about Ilya ever again.

When they got back to the hotel, for show they went their separate ways, back to their own rooms, then after five minutes, Shane left to go to Ilya. On the first night, Shane had taken a small bag of his toiletries and pyjamas so that he could spend the nights with his fiancé. He would then set an alarm for 4am so he could sneak back to his own room the next morning without risk of anyone seeing him.

Farah called about an hour before the game and he stepped out of the locker room to take the call. He would be starting practice in Ottawa when the break was over. He ran back into room with the biggest smile on his face.

“Ottawa?” asked Ilya excitedly. Shane nodded and Ilya punched the air. “Fuck yes!”

“Otta-who now?” chimed in Wyatt Hayes, the goalie for their team, who was also the new goalie for the Centaurs.

Shane turned to him. “I just got traded to the Cens. I guess you’ll be seeing me at practice next week.”

Hayes’ eyes bulged and he sank to the floor with a *holy shit*.

“Rook?” Hunter said. “Did you just say you were traded?”

“Yup,” Shane said, still with the biggest smile on his face.

“Fucking finally!” Scott replied, throwing himself at Shane and giving him a crushing hug. “Bout fuckin’ time.”

He pulled back and ruffled Shane’s hair which Shane couldn’t even be mad about. He was finally out of Montreal. Everyone else in the room looked confused, like it was so unthinkable for Shane to be happy about leaving his team for the Cens.

“I mean, I know the Metros have been pretty shit, this season especially,” Vaughny said. “But I didn’t think I would ever see someone *happy* to be going to Ottawa.”

“Montreal will regret everything they have ever done,” Ilya said, a dark look crossing his face.

“I don’t think I can feel my legs,” Hayes said from the floor. “That’s normal, right?”

“Definitely not,” Shane mused.

“This is like, not a prank, right? I think you have to legally tell me if it’s a prank.”

“It’s real, man.”

“Holy *fuck*.”

They went out and won the game. Shane has never felt so at peace on the ice, so *happy*.

The next day, Shane and his parents said goodbye as they went their separate ways, Ilya to Boston and Shane, Yuna, and David back to Montreal. His parents helped him pack up some of his things and load it into his car and that night, the three of them drove home to Ottawa.

He would stay with his parents until he could find a new place. So, on the car ride there, as David drove, Shane looked at houses. He sent a few that he liked off to Ilya, since soon it would be *theirs*. He was looking at ones that had a lot of space, with a lot of privacy.

It wasn't unusual for other players to live together or billet newer players, so Shane wasn't too averse to their teammates knowing they live together – platonically – come next season, but he didn't need the world to know and speculate. That was something that he didn't want or need. Living in the light with Ilya would be nice when they retire, but while Scott did show them that being queer in hockey was okay, Shane didn't know if he would come out until then. He was already so different, with being one of the only Asian men in the league, and he didn't want to add to that list by telling everyone he was also gay. He didn't want to be the face of diversity. He just wanted to play this sport while he also happened to love a man.

Shane's first practice with the Centaurs wasn't for another couple days, but the day after Shane had gone to Ottawa – two days after the phone call from Farah – Shane was supposed to meet with the coach, the GM, and the alternate captain of the team. He was also there to do some media, likely a video for social media, and then also field some questions with some reporters about the trade.

The public was notified of the trade while Shane had been on the plane, and the cost of Shane was for a fourth-line winger, and a veteran who was looking to re-enter Montreal anyway as he was wanting to retire soon with the team he had started in the league with. The two of them were definitely not worth the same as Shane, but Farah had told him that Montreal was pretty eager for the trade to take place, calling Shane a “liability” – whatever that was supposed to mean.

Shane was a little mortified to see that the Centaurs' social media account had welcomed him by posting a photo of Shane at 5 years old in Centaurs pyjamas with matching bedsheets. He immediately knew his mother had something to do with it and declared her a traitor.

When Shane arrived to the facility, he was buzzing with nervousness. Not only would he be the new guy, but for a very small moment, Shane was terrified that the team might not be much better than the Metros.

Nevertheless, he got out of his car and walked inside.

The Centaurs had overgone a lot of changes recently. They were a bottom-rate team whose defence downright sucked and their old coach was known to be very old-fashioned. This season though, they had not only obtained Wyatt Hayes from Toronto, but they had a new coach who was younger than most others in the league.

Brandon Weibe, the new coach, welcomed Shane with a warm smile and a firm handshake. He was standing with the GM – who introduced themselves in similar fashion as Paul Drought – and Zane Boodram, who wore the ‘A’.

Shane had met Boodram in passing a couple times, mostly on the ice and once at All-Stars. He seemed nice and laid-back from what Shane could remember.

“Hollander!” Boodram said. “Zane Boodram, but everyone calls be Bood. Great to have you here, we’re all so excited to play with you. You’re a legend.”

“Glad to be here,” Shane replied.

“Well, it was stupid of Montreal to let you go, but their loss is our gain.”

“On that note, we should move this to a private room,” Paul said, leading the way to a small board room. Shane followed, a little tense, dreading to have this conversation so early. At the sight of Shane’s stiff posture, Paul spoke, “this isn’t going to be a huge conversation, we are just wanting to understand more of the situation and why you chose to leave a team such as Montreal for a team like us and what we can do to best help you through this time. You do not need to provide any details you are not comfortable with.”

Shane let out a relieved sigh and relaxed a little.

“Okay,” he said.

“Why don’t you start with why you waived your no-trade?” Coach Weibe asked. “Again, you do not have to tell us everything, but we do know from what their GM said that it was a team culture issue, and we are just wanting to know how we can be a better fit here.”

“Uh, yeah,” Shane said, fidgeting with a loose thread on his shirt. “The team have always been very... loud with their opinions on certain topics. Made “jokes” about certain kinds of people.”

He paused for a moment before continuing, “the start of this season, it just got worse. They would make comments about Scott Hunter being gay. Not just comments, they were targeting him specifically, making threats. I didn’t like it and when I asked them to cut it out, they stopped being a team with me. I had to learn to play alone on the ice. They ignored me, stopped passing the puck, stopped covering me out on the ice during games... checking me hard enough to get bruised ribs during practice...”

He could see the three men in the room grow uneasy at his words, and Shane didn’t care if it was in his favour or against it when he bulldozed on, “I was coming to a close with my contract, I’m a free agent at the end of this season and I didn’t want to sign with them again. Coach Theriault and the Metro’s general manager called me into a meeting and asked me why I wasn’t accepting their offers, and I told them I didn’t want to extend my time with them. The meeting didn’t go well and I walked out, called my agent, and asked for her to waive the clause in my contract. That’s it. That’s what happened.”

“Holy shit, man,” Bood breathed out.

“Thank you for sharing that with us, Shane,” Paul said. “I want to first-and-foremost say that while no team or organisation is perfect, we do hope that we are better than that. What happened at Montreal is not how we like to handle things here.”

“Exactly,” Weibe interjected. “We do not accept that kind of behaviour, on or off the ice.”

Bood nodded encouragingly. “That’s not how I run the room. You don’t need to deal with kind of shit here, and if you do, you can come to any of us.”

“Thanks,” Shane said. “That’s a relief. Truthfully, I chose Ottawa specifically because I knew that it would be different. I don’t want to feel unsafe in a locker room again, and I know what kind of guys are on this team.”

“Thank you for choosing us then,” Weibe said. “I hope we prove you right.”

Chapter 12: Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Shane meets some of his team.

Bood was showing Shane the tour of the facility, stopping dead in his tracks and sighing loudly when they entered the locker room.

“–when do you think he’ll get here?”

“Dude, I think he already is! There was a new car in the parking garage when I got here.”

“That could totally be anyone’s though!”

“Oh shit, could I have dibs on first fist bump?”

“No fucking way, dude! Also, I think he’s more of like a handshake guy or like maybe a polite smile and nod guy.”

“You guys are so embarrassing. He’s obviously a hugger!”

“What fucking drugs are you on? That is the least hugger guy I have ever seen. I’m reporting you to anti-doping.”

“Why is he cuddle-shaped then? Huh? Explain that.”

“You sound like you have a crushhhhhhh.”

“Dude, he’s *Shane Hollander*! Name one guy who *doesn’t* want up in all that!”

“Yeah, shit, you got me there.”

“I don’t think he’s actually all that,” Shane said, leaning on the doorframe. “Heard he’s a real dick.”

Eight hockey players turned around in terror. One of them let out a high-pitched squeak, and another gulped so hard it was heard by everyone in the room.

“Hey guys,” Shane waved. “Nice to meet you all.”

“What the hell are you all doing here?” Bood asked, quirking an eyebrow.

“Nothing!”

“What, is it illegal to visit our own locker room? Lock me up, officer!”

“Dance lessons.”

“Ran out of food at home.”

“I’m here for Hollander.”

“You have no shame, Bergy.”

“At least I didn’t lie! Fucking dance lessons?”

“What? It could happen! I have moves!”

“Boys!” Bood shouted and the other’s piped down. “Please stop. You’ll scare off the new guy.”

Shane did his best to hide his amusement. He failed. “I am very scared. Might have to get myself traded again now.”

Hayes walked over, and threw his arm around Shane, “don’t worry, Hollzy, I’ll protect you. No need to leave us so soon.”

“Woah,” someone spoke, a younger member by the looks of it. “You call him Hollzy?”

Wyatt shrugged as best he could given that he was practically on top of Shane. “Oh yeah. He’s my best friend. We go all the way back to like three days ago.”

“He pretty much fainted when he heard I was coming here,” Shane deadpanned.

“Okay, he is now my ex-best friend. I am taking new applications.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” someone said (Shane thinks his name might be Dykstra?). “How does Hollander know you almost fainted? Weren’t you both on planes when the news broke?”

“He found out when I did, the day before,” Shane explained. “Before the game.”

“Hazy, you knew for like a whole day? And you didn’t tell us?”

“I didn’t wanna jinx it!” Wyatt protested. “Also, I was in shock.”

“Et tu, Hayes.”

“Why are you here, Hollander?” another younger player asked. “Not that, I’m complaining! But like why us? We’re kinda ass.”

Shane shrugged, not wanting to get into it all again. “Heard there were dance lessons. Metros didn’t offer that perk.”

Laughs rang out but no one pressed him further, and Shane was relieved.

A little while later, after actual introductions took place, the tour continued, the entire pack of Centaurs joining.

“Oh, and here’s Harris! He’s on our social media team.”

Shane was met with a bearded man, who Shane could see wore multiple pride pins on his jacket. Shane’s eyes lingered on them as he shook Harris’ hand.

“Hi, Shane! It’s so nice to meet you. I have so many ideas to run through you! Oh, and I loved the photo your mom sent me of you as a kid! Super cute!”

“Hi,” Shane said. “Nice to meet you too. And please do not mention it, I can’t believe she sent that.”

“Oh, she sent that and more! I have a video of your peewee team playing here!”

“Please tell me it’s not the one where I faceplant.”

“It’s not, but maybe I should ask her for that one.”

Harris was nice, and Shane didn’t think he had a “gaydar” as Ilya had called it, but he was about ninety-nine percent certain that Harris was gay. And from what he could tell in the time that they filmed a short video for social media, the team weren’t looking at him or treating him weird. They were all really nice to him, treating him like he was a member of the team, and Shane didn’t know what to do with that information. Were they all just waiting for him to leave the room before they started to talk about it? Surely, they couldn’t all not care that they’re sharing a conversation with a queer person? They were hockey players. Where was the sneering? Where were the jokes?

Shane knows that this team is different. That’s why he’s here. But there was about half an hour of being in Harris’ company and not a single hockey player looked like they didn’t want to be there. Not a single one looked uncomfortable. Were they *all* really okay with this?

Shane’s head was swimming. Maybe it was different that Harris wasn’t a player who was “tainting the sport”. Maybe they were just waiting until he wasn’t in the room. Maybe they were all treating him nice as a prank that they would all laugh about later.

By the time Shane was set to do the press conference with some reporters about the trade, he was feeling lost. It was all too much. He wasn’t sure he was breathing, the room feeling like it was caving in on him, he felt like his head was going to explode.

“Hollander? Shane, man, you gotta breathe.”

Shane blinked and saw Hazy in front of him. He tried breathing, he did, but the air just caught in his lungs and got stuck.

He closed his eyes and tried to figure out what was happening. Was he dying?

“C’mon dude, breathe. In and out. In. Out.”

Shane tried to listen and follow along but it was like his ears were filled with water, the words muted and distorted.

He remembered the last time he felt like this and his mind replayed Ilya’s voice counting his breathing. He screwed his eyes shut and tried to follow the memory of Ilya’s directions. Breathe in slowly and then out.

Shane regained himself after a few minutes, his chest tight, but the air in his lungs was no longer caught.

“You good? Just sit there. Here’s some water.”

He was handed a bottle and he uncapped it and took a sip. He looked around and saw everyone looking at him with concern.

“Sorry,” he said. “I don’t—I don’t know what that was.”

“Don’t apologise,” Bood said. “Just relax, focus on breathing.”

“Happens to the best of us, man,” Chouinard said.

“So... this is a great first impression, huh?” Shane said weakly.

“Eh, this is nothing,” Holmberg said. “Young full on ran into a door and knocked himself out on our first day here. He broke his nose. There was blood *everywhere*.”

“Oh yeah?” Young said, “well, Bergy decided to eat five hot dogs during lunch and we had to clean the ice after he vomited doing drills after!”

“You know full-well it was seven hot dogs! Put some respect on my name! At least *I* stayed conscious.”

“Children!” Bood said. “You are both equally as embarrassing. Congratulations.”

“Seven hot dogs?” Shane said full of disgust.

Holmberg shrugged. “I was hungry. I regret nothing.”

Shane snorted when he heard someone mutter, “maybe you should.”

He rubbed his hands over his face before looking at everyone around him. He didn’t see any judgement in their expressions. He took a deep breath and said, “okay. I should go do the presser.”

“Dude, you do *not* need to do that right now,” Bood said.

“Yeah, man,” Wyatt agreed. “I think you had a panic attack. You should just take it easy.”

Shane shook his head. “No, I think I just want to get it out of the way. I’m good now. I don’t even know why that happened. I can do it.”

“Only if you’re sure, Shane,” Harris chimed in. “No one is forcing you to do this now.”

“Yeah,” Shane said. “I’m good now.”

Shane got through the press conference with very basic answers, answering questions with carefulness. *What do you think of the trade?* I’m excited, I grew up as an Ottawa fan, it’s nice to come back here. *Our sources say that you are the one who asked for the trade, why is that?* I’m grateful for my time at Montreal, but I think my values are more aligned here, and I’m keen to start working with this team. *The Centaurs are currently at the bottom of the rankings, how are you expecting to change that?* I think there is a lot of potential here, I’m excited to start practice and see if we can work together to climb the rankings. *The Metros seemed a lot tenser this season and there are rumours of in-fighting – does that have anything to do with the trade?* I won’t lie, we did have our differences and that did translate on the ice, but I’m looking forward to working with this team, the guys here are all great and have been very welcoming.

By the time he was done with the reporters, he was a little exhausted.

He tried hard not to give away too much about the culture at Montreal, so he kept it vague. His mom this morning over breakfast practiced his answers so they showed just enough to explain so that speculation wouldn’t run rampant, but not too much as to reveal the real reason for the move.

The guys were all waiting for him outside of the room, clapping him on the back and assuring him he did great. He was a little taken aback at the comradery but he felt a little more at ease when he saw they all seemed genuine. None of them brought up his panic attack, no one teased him for being weak. It was nice.

He was done for the day after media, and practice wasn’t set until tomorrow, so after a little while – and Shane being added to their group chat – he bid his team goodbye and left the facility.

His phone was blowing up a little as Bood dropped him into the chat and he glanced at it.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏒🏆

Zane Boodram (Boodylicious 🍑🍑💪) added Shane Hollander to the group chat.

Boodylicious 🍑🍑💪

Begging you all not to embarrass me

Boyled Egg 🍳 (Liam Boyle)

HOLLZYYYYYY

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻 🍷 (Oliver Young)
Woah, I now have Hockey Jesus' phone number?

Choubacca 🍺 (Nick Chouinard)
Hi Shane! Welcome to Ottawa!

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵 🗣️ (Evan Dykstra)
SHANE HOLLANDERRRRRR

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️ (Tanner Dillon)
hey man, keen to meet you tmrw

stop a goal, save a life 🏠 🦱 (Wyatt Hayes)
HI SHANE I SAY LOUDER THAN EVERYONE ELSE

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️ (Ben Holmberg)
HOLLZY MY MAN

Boodylicious 🍑 🍖 💪
Y'all had one job

Shane

Hey guys! Was great meeting some of you today. Keen to play on this team 😊

Oliver Young (Young and Beautiful) changed Shane Hollander's name to Hockey Jesus 🏒
🙏.

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
omfg young
KISS ASS 🙌

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻 🍷
what, you disagree?
that's kinda mean, man

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
NO
I AGREE
HOLLZY PLEASE I NEED YOU TO KNOW I ALSO THINK YOU ARE HOCKEY
JESUS 🙏🙏
I WILL BUILD A CHURCH FOR YOU

Choubacca 🍺
Honestly, I also think the name fits

stop a goal, save a life 🏠 🦱
Bergy, I am begging you to have some shame

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

begging? HOT 🥵

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵 🗣️

If you guys scare Hollander off, I will end you all

Hockey Jesus 🏒 🙏

Haha, I promise I am not scared

Love the enthusiasm!

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

WOAH HOCKEY JESUS LOVES MY ENTHUSIASM

Young and Beautiful 🧑 🍷

thank you, hockey jesus

Boodylicious 🍑 🍷 💪

You guys need to have more dignity

Shane chuckled and pocketed his phone. The Metros group chat was basically a graveyard which Shane knew was likely because there was at least one other chat without him in it. This one though, seemed active and even though Shane didn't like group chats much because of the endless buzzing of notifications, he was actually enjoying this one so far.

He was less nervous to start practice tomorrow. The guys all seemed fun, and they didn't seem to look down on him after his panic attack. He knew that it would be a long road, and he would have to lose a lot of games, but he was happy to put in the work to help turn the team around.

Chapter 13: Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Cens vs Metros

Chapter Notes

Fuck the Metros! All my homies hate the Metros!

TW: homophobic language

Have fun and enjoy!

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

Shane had one practice with the team before his first game as a Centaur. He was on a line with Bood and Dillon. Dillon was an okay player, but with promise. Bood was great, he was able to keep up with Shane just like Hayden was back in Montreal.

The team was frankly shit. But practice was the most fun he has had with a team in a long time. They lost their first game as well as their second and third. It was definitely an adjustment. Shane was taking the title of Alternate Captain, sharing with Bood. They did offer him the 'C' but after Montreal, he needed a small break.

Walking into the locker room before that very first game and seeing a jersey with his name on it in Ottawa colours was surreal. Shane felt everything come crashing down for a moment. He would not wear his old jersey again. He would be in Centaurs red and black. Turning the jersey around, he ran his fingers over the 'A' stitched onto it. He felt guilty for abandoning the team he gave so much to, then he just felt anger and sadness.

Ottawa had no chance at the playoffs, but Montreal was playing just as bad, if not worse. They didn't have Shane there to score their goals, and the world was noticing it.

Shane had looked at a couple houses on his days off, all approved by Ilya.

Ilya had a game with Montreal in March so they made a plan that he was going to take his car which was still at Shane's apartment, and drive it to Ottawa before Shane would drive Ilya to the airport for him to fly to his next game.

It was a busy time and Shane wasn't being able to relax. Even when he tried, all he could think about was how much he had to do. He had to find a house, move everything from his apartment out to Ottawa, and then also sell his apartment. His mom did offer to take photos of the condo to send off to his real estate agent which will make things a lot smoother. He really owed her a spa day.

The houses he looked at were all great, but there was one that was the clear winner. It was large with 5 bedrooms, which Shane was going to convert one into a trophy room. There would also be enough bedrooms for a couple guest rooms, one of which could act as "Ilya's" room for when they had teammates over. The kitchen was gorgeous with marbled countertops, and had plenty of space for two people to cook. The garden out back was stunning, and the land was surrounded by tall hedges, so there was plenty of privacy. It was also near the rink, and about a 20-minute drive with traffic to his parents, so Shane would not have to travel far for anything.

Shane had immediately put down an offer.

Going into March, Ottawa had a home game against Montreal. It was Shane's first game with the Metros where he wouldn't be wearing Montreal colours.

He avoided his ex-teammates' gazes all through warm ups even though he could feel their glares. As he skated out for the start of the game, he felt chilly, and not because of the ice.

Hayden tried to catch his attention as they both skated out, on opposite sides of the red line. Shane's ears were ringing though, so he just skated towards the centre.

As he leaned down for the face-off, he heard Gagnon spit out a, "fag."

Shane froze for a second that lasted a thousand years, and on pure muscle memory and instinct alone, he won the puck, shooting it off to Bood. He chased after him, but was immediately checked. Hard and illegal as he didn't have control of the puck.

He was winded and had dropped. As he got onto his knees to try and get up, Comeau, who had checked him, sneered, "how much do you get on those knees for Hunter?"

Shane's head snapped up to look at him, he felt everything else slip away and was about to charge at Comeau, when a ref skated over and gave Comeau a penalty.

Ottawa had the power play, and Shane played it, scoring his first goal against his old team.

As he skated off the ice to change his shift, Weibe had him sit out until the team trainer, Terry, could check him over. He didn't hit his head, so concussion protocol was not needed, but he was ordered to ice his ribs and shoulders that he could feel some pain in.

He was put back onto the ice when there was five minutes left of the first period. They were up 1-0 as Wyatt was playing like a mad-man, not letting Montreal score. As he went out for another face-off, he heard Andropov say, "your team know to watch out for you in the showers?"

Shane clenched his jaw so hard he was surprised he didn't crack any of his teeth. He kept his head down. He lost the face-off but no one scored again that period. Montreal was playing like their only goal was to get to Shane, and not the puck.

He felt panic rise in him as they all piled into the locker room during intermission. He turned to Coach Weibe, saying, "I need to talk to you."

Coach pulled him away from the team, leading him down the hall to a private room.

"This about why Montreal is going hard against you tonight? I can pull you from the game if that's what you need."

"I'm gay," Shane blurted out and he saw his coach's eyes widen in surprise.

Weibe nodded his head and said softly, "thank you for telling me that, Shane."

"I think they know," Shane whispered, his tone filled with fear.

"Do you have any idea how they might know?"

"During my meeting with Theriault and the GM, I implied that I was like Hunter."

"And you think they told the team?"

Shane gulped and nodded, his throat tight. Coach was silent for a few moments.

"I think you should be scratched from the rest of the game. We can tell everyone it was for injuries, no one would doubt it from the way the Metros have gone after you tonight."

"No," Shane said quickly. "That's what they want. They want to not share the ice with a gay person. I won't give them that."

"Okay, but if at any point you need out, or if I think it's gotten too bad, I'm pulling you. Deal?"

"Okay."

Coach looked at him for another long moment before he spoke again, "I want you to know I understand how scary this all is. More than most. I know what it's like to carry that with you."

"How do you mean?"

"Back when I was first playing," Weibe said. "I had a relationship with another player. It didn't work out in the end, and I went on to meet my wife, but I did have to carry that same secret. I still do."

"Oh, you're...?"

“Bisexual,” he confirmed. “I want you to know that you are not alone. And this team is not Montreal. We have your back, so if you need to lean on us, we are here.”

Shane’s eyes prickled. “Thanks, Coach.”

They walked back towards the locker room and when Shane walked inside, he went straight to his phone. He saw that he had messages from Ilya, his parents, Hayden, Jackie, and Scott.

Hayden

Coach told us as we were leaving for the ice
The team knows
Please be careful, Shane

Jackie

i am going to burn down the Metros
we’re here if you need us 💖

Mom

I am going to kill Comeau. He didn’t even try to make it look like an accident
Let us know you’re okay, that was a bad hit
What is going on with Montreal?
They’re targeting you

Dad

We love you, son

Scott

Roz roped me in. Here for you, Rook. Let me know who I need to put on a certain list that for legal reasons have nothing to do in any way with violent crimes.

Lily

Fuck Comeau
What are they all saying to you?
You look like angry kitten
Is very hot
Pike just messaged me
FUCK 🤬
I am going to burn all of the Metros to the ground

Let me know you are okay, lyubimiyy
I love you 

Shane pressed the call button.

“Moya lyubov’?”

“They know.”

“Yes, Pike told me. Are you okay?”

“No,” Shane said, a tear dislodging from his eye. He turned away from the team, facing his cubby. “No, I’m not.”

He felt a hand land on his shoulder and squeeze. He didn’t look to see who it was.

“Do you need me to come to you?”

“No,” Shane said sharply. “Absolutely not. You’re all the way in Philly and you have a game there tomorrow and you are not missing it to drive here. I swear to God, Ilya, if you skip that game and cost your team a playoff spot—”

“Okay,” Ilya said laughing quietly. “But you will call me when you need, yes? Every intermission, if you need.”

“Okay. I will. Ya tebya lyublyu.”

“Ya tozhe tebya lyublyu, Shane.”

Shane hung up and put his phone back in his stall. He looked and saw Wyatt next to him, his hand on Shane’s shoulder.

“You good, man?”

“Yeah. Just want this game to be over.”

“Then let’s get back out there, yeah? And Shane,” he leaned closer to whisper. “You don’t have to deal with whatever is happening alone. We’ve got your back.”

“Thanks, Hazy.”

They all went back out to the ice to start the second period. The game continued to be brutal, and Shane was taking hits, the rest of the team barely managing better. Montreal was out for blood. Literally.

Every time Shane was near someone, against the boards or at a face-off, the comments were endless. The Metros were baiting not just him, but every member of the Centaurs. None of

them rose to it and Montreal alone were racking up penalties. The Centaurs seemed locked in in a way that they had never been before.

The second period ended and the score was 5-0, two more goals from Shane – his first hattrick for this team – and, one from Bood, and one from Dykstra.

As the team returned to the locker room, Shane was a bundle of nerves. There was no way that there was a single teammate who didn't know now, surely.

"Fucking Montreal!" cursed Bergy, kicking a bench. "Fucking homophobic, useless, raging *assholes*."

"Alright, guys!" Bood commanded the room, all eyes to him. "I know they're kicking us hard, but I want to say how proud I am of you all. Fucking beautiful hockey out there. Especially you with the hatty, Hollzy. And Hazy, you're killing it on goal, man."

"Fuck yeah!" Young whooped. "Dude, it's gonna be a shut-out, I'm telling you right now."

"That's the goal," Wyatt grinned and a few of the guys let out a groan at the pun.

"Boo! Terrible!" Chouinard said, his hand in the air throwing up a thumbs down.

"Tomato! Tomato!" Bergy shouted.

"Fuck you all, that was great!" Hazy said. "None of you are any fuckin' fun."

Shane looked around at his team, none of them laughing at *him* or looking at him in disgust. No one making a joke or mentioning anything the Metros have said tonight. They looked angry at the comments thrown on the ice, but their glares weren't aimed at *him*. In the month that Shane has been a Centaur, none of them have said anything even vaguely bigoted. No homophobic jokes, even when someone talked about the Admirals. No racist or misogynistic comments when talking about other cultures or women. Nothing.

Shane was so confused and he reached for his phone.

"Solnyshko," Ilya's voice soothing him. "You are doing so well. I am so proud of you."

Shane screwed his eyes shut. "I don't know what to do."

"You do not need to do anything, lyubimiyy."

"I hate them so much. They were my *team*."

"Yes. But they are not now. They did not deserve you. They are proving that tonight."

"I wish you were here," Shane confessed.

"I wish I was too," Ilya replied. "I hate that you are hurting and I cannot help."

"You are helping. I just miss you."

“I miss you too, Shane.”

They stayed on the phone for another couple minutes before Shane had to go.

“Alright, listen up!” Shane raised his voice to the room. Everyone looked at him. “I want to thank you all. You’re playing amazing and you’re playing smart. I know Montreal has been hell this game and I know they’re pushing buttons. But you’re all staying strong. Thank you.”

He let out a breath as he looked around him. “I want to end this game the same way. I want them to go home without a single goal. I want them to go home humiliated at how they performed tonight. I want them to be embarrassed at how they act. I want you all to go out there and show them that we are better than them.”

“Fuck yeah!”

“We got you, man!”

“Let’s fucking go!”

The team cheered around him and they headed back out to the ice, energised and ramped up to play the last period.

Montreal looked downright murderous when they saw the Centaurs rallying together.

They started and it was clear Montreal was getting even sloppier. The Centaurs were going to walk away with multiple injuries, but the Metros will walk away as losers.

After a gruelling period, the buzzer rang out as the game ended and the Cens won, a whopping 8-0 final score with Bergy, Bood, and Shane scoring a goal apiece.

Montreal lost Shane Hollander and they lost the game.

Chapter End Notes

I want it to be known I wrote this chapter this way with Shane not explicitly coming out to the team just because Montreal are trying their hardest to make him.

I think that it’s important to show that none of them are forcing him into a conversation he isn’t ready to have. They’re just showing up for him unconditionally and making sure that he feels safe.

Chapter 14: Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Ottawa vs Montreal pt. 2!

Chapter Notes

Enjoyyyyyy

TW: homophobic language

One week later, Shane was in the Bell Centre gearing up for his second match against Montreal. It would be the last game against them this season, before they head off to Toronto to play the Guardians.

It made Shane's skin feel itchy as he entered the visitor's locker room of this building instead of the normal one. This used to be his barn and now he was just a visitor.

The last week has been filled with anxiety. He was constantly checking social media to see if anyone on his old team had revealed his secret to the world. They hadn't. And no one on his new team were prodding Shane to talk about it. No one hinted or brought up what they all had heard throughout the whole match last week. The Cens have been so supportive, no one has forced him to talk and not a single one of them have looked or treated him any differently.

It seems that winning that last match was bolstering and that energy carried them to another win against Tampa Bay. They did lose the game after *that*, though, but unlike losses with the Metros, this team weren't discouraged afterwards.

And now they were sitting around the locker room, Dykstra's absolutely *awful* music blasting, and everyone was in high spirits. It almost distracted Shane from the fact that they were about to play another game against Montreal.

Shane reloaded Twitter, looking to make sure that he was still locked inside the closet, when he saw some posts. No, it didn't out him as gay, but it seems some of his old teammates were still disgruntled and had started liking and retweeting certain tweets.

Montreal FTW 🏆 @metrosfan1999

photo of a Montreal Hollander jersey burning

Game ready! #FUCKYOU24

Liked and Retweeted by Patrice Drapeau ✓ and Gilbert Comeau ✓

Matt 🏒 @mattloveshockey

Ottawa losing their last game is just proof that Hollander isn't SHIT

Liked by Gilbert Comeau ✓

Liked by Patrice Drapeau ✓

Liked by Adrian Wilson ✓

Liked by Kieran Andropov ✓

Liked by Peter Gagnon ✓

Liked by Ryan Taylor ✓

GO METROS ❤️❤️ @montrealhockey14

Hollander wasn't even good at hockey. He's a bottom-rate player now stuck on a bottom-rate team

Liked and Retweeted by Gilbert Comeau ✓

keep it out of hockey 🏒 @kickouthunter

photo of a man seated in the Bell Centre

Ready to watch Sh*ne Holl*nder get what's coming for him #gometros

Liked by Patrice Drapeau ✓

Hockey Man @hockeyfan55

Need someone to knock that traitor out so hard he can't get back up #recreatemarleauincident

Liked and Retweeted by Gilbert Comeau ✓, Patrice Drapeau ✓, and Adrian Wilson ✓

Shane was seething. They were openly showing their hatred. They were loud about it and trying to send a message. They were trying to rewrite history to show that Shane wasn't the only good thing about them. That he wasn't Shane *fucking* Hollander.

He headed out with his team for warm ups and he got through it without a word.

In hockey, when a beloved and respected player returns to play in their old barn, a tribute is made. Usually a video or some kind of acknowledgement that this player was welcomed back, thanking them for their years of service. When it came time for Shane's to play, everyone in the stadium looked to the jumbotron. Nothing played.

The game was about to start, the starting lines about to take to the ice, and there was no tribute. A final slap in the face to Shane.

Shane skated out, filled with rage but also resignation. Of course, this was what he was worth to Montreal. He was nothing. No dent was made, no Shane Hollander-shaped hole left.

Shane bent down for the face-off, Gagnon's face looking at him, full of smugness. "Not even worth a show, huh?"

Shane didn't reply and when the puck dropped, he moved fast.

Shocked gasps rang out around the arena as everyone watched as Shane made a goal from centre ice. He knew that was insane. He knew it would probably be the best goal of his career, that it would be talked about for years to come, and would be in every one of the highlight compilation videos people made of him.

"How much am I worth now?" Shane asked, quirking his lip up in a smirk that Ilya would be proud of.

Gagnon looked gobsmacked as Shane's teammates cheered and crowded around Shane, Bood shouting, "that was fucking diabolical!"

Shane played like a man possessed for the rest of the period, proving against what his old teammates thought. Because if there was one thing he knew how to do, one thing he was good at, it was hockey.

He had a hattrick before the first period even ended.

When Shane got into the locker room during intermission, his teammates swarmed him excitedly, and his phone was drowning in notifications. He rolled his eyes at the one from Ilya.

Lily

that was so hot, hollander 🤪
sexiest thing i have ever seen
jerked off to it 🍆💦💦

The rest of the game played out in similar fashion. Shane put up another three goals, earning him a double hattrick as well as assisting on two more goals. It was arguably the best

performance Shane had ever given in a game.

It was when the clock was down to two minutes, when Shane had enough. The Metros were playing smarter, despite not putting up any points, but they were not taking as many penalties, opting to instead check harder than they should be, and the vitriol they spat as they did it was almost unbearable. The Cens were not only walking bruises, but they were pissed.

So, when they were down to two minutes left on the clock and Shane was up for a face-off, the game practically done, Shane heard Comeau say, “get on your knees for any other captains, or just that other faggot, Hunter? What about for Toronto? Boston? You get down for Rozanov?”

Shane’s eyes snapped up to Comeau at the mention of Ilya, and as the ref dropped the puck, Shane dropped his stick and his gloves so fast that no one else could even realise until Shane’s fist connected with Comeau’s jaw.

He landed another shot to Comeau’s nose, could feel the crunch as it broke. He got in a third punch when Comeau finally raised his fist to fight back, grabbing Shane’s jersey and throwing a punch to Shane’s cheek. He went to throw another one when Shane dodged it and immediately punched him again and Comeau crumpled to the ice, unconscious.

Shane looked down at his old teammate in disgust before skating directly to the penalty box before the ref could even call it. As he sat down on the bench, he smirked when he realised that he just got himself third unofficial hattrick of the game, a Gordie Howe hattrick – a goal, an assist, and a fighting major all in one game. Ilya would be proud.

He stewed in there until the game ended shortly after. The Cens were celebrating, yelling, cheering, and piling onto him as soon as he left the box. The game ended on a humiliating 0-12, the Centaurs taking the game in another shutout.

The team continued their boisterous cheering even after they got to the locker room, and it brought Shane back to the times when he won the Cup. The Cens were acting as if they had just won one in overtime in Game 7. Not a single one of them were upset at him for taking a penalty. They were *celebrating* it.

He showered quickly, his knuckles stinging as he washed the blood from them, then was pulled for post-game media. He really didn’t want to have to deal with reporters after the game he just played, but he knew there was no way to get out of this one.

“Shane,” one reporter said. “You’ve never been one known for fighting. Can you shed some light on what led to this one?”

Shane took a breath and said evenly, “I think that homophobic language, while said often in this sport, has no place on the ice. I do apologise for fighting – it’s not the example I like to set, but I also do not condone bigoted language.”

“What was the language used? Was this just normal chirping or something worse?”

Shane hesitated, thinking over his words. “I am not going to repeat a slur to you. I think you can infer what was said from that alone. I also think that if you have to use a slur for a chirp, not only is it no longer a chirp, but it’s hate speech. And it should be called as such. I’ll leave it at that.”

“Hollander!” another reported piped up, “can you confirm if this was in any way to do with Scott Hunter coming out as gay last season?”

“Again, I will not divulge what was said any further.”

“We’re getting reports that Comeau has sustained a broken nose and jaw along with a concussion. Do you think you went too far?”

Shane clenched his own jaw to hide that he was feeling a little proud at the news. “I wish him a speedy recovery.”

Another reporter cuts in, “you made a goal tonight from centre line which has broken the record for fastest goal in both the start of a game, as well as fastest goal from the start of a period, sitting at 3 seconds. Can you talk us through your thought process for making such a move?”

Shane hadn’t realised that he had broken a record and he smirked a little as he replied, “I think that if certain people have the idea that I am any less of a hockey player, or that I don’t hold my worth on the ice, regardless of what colours I wear, then they should be reminded of that. That goal and final score of the game also reflects that.”

The reporter looked a little taken aback from his uncharacteristically smug reply, but recovered and asked, “it’s usually tradition for a team to pay tribute to a returning player of your standing, which was skipped tonight. Were you surprised or disappointed that this did not happen tonight?”

“It was unexpected, and I won’t lie – it did sting for a moment. I did give my all to the Metros for 7 years, playing in this arena, winning two cups with that team... but there’s no obligation there to acknowledge that, and I’m not focused on the past. I’m a Centaur now, and with how *this* team – my team – have been playing, especially tonight, I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”

He answered a few more questions, the Cens PR lady, Alice, only having to shut down a few who tried pressing further on the details of the fight.

Once he was done, Terry met him back in the locker room to check his hand and cheek. The skin on his knuckles was broken and the skin around them was bruised, but no other damage. He was also going to be sporting a black eye for a little while, but otherwise he was fine.

He reached for his phone and laughed at the wall of texts he had from Ilya.

Lily

SHANE

YOU FIGHT

THAT WAS SO FUCKING HOT 🥵🥵

THEY ARE SHOWING YOUR FACE IN BOX

THAT SMIRK IS SO FUCKING SEXY

I JUST REALISED

GORDIE HOWE HATTRICK

i need to have sex with you right now

i just came so hard to that smirk 😊💦

you killed me. i am dead

UGH YOU LOOK SO HOT WITH THOSE KNUCKLES

ah, so Comeau said something homophobic

breaking news, water is wet

what did he say though? i know you would not have snapped from just a slur

YOU SMIRKED AGAIN

FUCKING SEXY 🥵😍😏

Shane

Jesus, Ilya, you almost drained my battery.

Wait, did you actually jerk off to my fight?

Lily

HI SHANE

and, yes. i did 😊👹

Shane

Freak.

Lily

only for you 🥵

Shane rolled his eyes, a smile pulling at his lips as he pocketed his phone. God, he loved Ilya so much.

He called Ilya after the team got back to the hotel. He was sharing a room with Hazy, who was currently calling Lisa – his wife – out in the hall. Shane had taken to sharing with Wyatt on the road and the two had grown close. He hasn't told him about his sexuality or Ilya, but he's certain that he knows about both, never surprised when Shane was on the phone to his fiancé, only ever acknowledging it in any kind of way to say a quick 'hi' to Ilya.

"Shane!" Ilya said when the call connected, his smiling face filling the screen.

"Hey, baby," Shane replied, and he could see Ilya's smile wider at the nickname.

"What did Comeau say to you? Fight was so hot, you look so sexy when you are angry."

Shane huffed a laugh. “I don’t understand what was so sexy about it.”

“You know it’s hot. Don’t act like you have never jerked off to *my* fight compilations on YouTube.”

And yeah, okay, Shane did not have a leg to stand on there. Sue him, Ilya looked good grinning and covered in blood. And he had gotten so flustered one day when Ilya had been trying to find a video he had previously watched, only to find multiple other videos showing his best fights. Ilya had laughed hard and loud at that, to the point of tears.

“So... what was it about? What did he say?”

“He brought you up,” Shane admitted. “He’s obsessed with me and Hunter. Thinks – I don’t know – that we must be together or something. He asked if I got down on my knees for other captains, and he said your name. I just lost it.”

“You fight for me?” Ilya asked, sounding touched.

“I mean, kind of, I guess, yeah.”

“You must be in love with me or something.”

Shane snorted. “Yeah, I must be.”

“And that goal? Was so hot.”

“Yeah... I was just so fucking mad at them. I saw all the shit they were liking on Twitter about me and I just—I just wanted to prove that I wasn’t worthless. That I was good at hockey. That I was better than them.”

“You are,” Ilya said, his tone final. “You are better than all of them combined. They did not deserve you and you show them why. And with sluttiest goal I have ever seen.”

“How can a goal be slutty?” Shane asked at the exact moment Wyatt walked into the hotel room, not even looking surprised to hear those words.

“I don’t know, you were the one who made slutty goal.”

Wyatt nodded in agreement with Ilya and said, “yeah man. It was a slutty goal for sure. Hey Roz.”

“Hazy!” Ilya cheered. “Please give Shane a kiss for me for that goal. Actually, no. Do not kiss him. If you kiss him, you die. Hands off.”

“My hands are off! He’s all yours, you possessive bastard.”

“Good. Okay, lyubimiyy, tell me all about your other goal in second period...”

They continued talking for a little while longer, discussing the game at length. It wasn’t until the phone call was wrapping up that Shane realised that Wyatt had said that Shane was *Ilya’s*,

and didn't seem disgusted, only exasperated. There was no longer doubt, no deniable plausibility. He knew, and he was still there, just laying on his own bed, flipping through a comic book.

Whenever Shane was not alone, when saying goodbye to Ilya, he would say “*ya tebya lyublyu*.” This time though, Shane realised he didn't have to hide it. Out loud, instead, he said, “I love you.”

“I love you too, Shane. Goodnight, moya lyubov’.”

“Night,” Shane said, hanging up the phone. He turned and looked over at Hazy. “Thank you.”

“Anytime,” Wyatt replied with a smile.

“I'm gay,” Shane confessed. The words were out there now, no guesswork, no plausible deniability, no hiding. Just stated as a fact.

Hazy just smiled wider and said, “thanks for telling me, man.”

“You don't have like questions or anything? About me or Ilya?”

“You don't need to tell me anything you don't want to, Shane,” Wyatt said. “I'm not owed anything. You're not any different to me than you were before just because you like men. Or, a man, I feel like I need to specify in case Roz like appears out of thin air.”

Shane chuckled. “I think you're safe, he's in Boston.”

“Good. Montreal has already killed me enough tonight – I do *not* need your Russian boogeyman boyfriend killing me in my sleep.”

“Fiancé, actually,” Shane corrected, reaching up to fidget with the ring on his necklace.

“Oh, so the ring *is* for that!”

They talked more about everything and Shane was surprised when Wyatt told him about his sister, who was a lesbian and was married to another woman. He showed Shane photos of his nephew who was born last year. It felt like it was cementing even more that Shane was exactly where he needed to be. With the people he needed to be with.

He saw Hayden and Jackie the next morning, the rest of the team were heading home since they had a couple days rest before they were headed off to Toronto. Shane decided to stay behind in Montreal and head to Toronto straight from there so that he could see the Pikes and to sort some things out with his condo. The sale of the house went through so he was set to move everything soon.

It was at Hayden's that he saw the news break.

Chapter 15: Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Introducing Troy Barrett

Chapter Notes

Y'ALL I WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGISE

I did not realise that I was leaving you guys hanging like thatttttttt until the comments started piling in so sorry!

I worked so fucking quick on this chapter to get this out so you didn't have to wait too long because I didn't realise how I was leaving y'all

But guys, chill!!! No one is dying or hurt!

Also as a treat for dealing with a cliff hanger i did add some smut at the end! If you don't wanna read that, just stop reading after Shane gets to Boston. Enjoy! Love y'all



TW: discussions of sexual assault

An anonymous Reddit post detailed a woman's account of sexual assault at the hands of Dallas Kent. The post was graphic, long, and Shane had to stop reading it a couple times. It was horrific.

It wasn't the first time that a player had been accused of something like this, but this was still heartbreaking.

Dallas Kent is the star centre of the Toronto Guardians and known to everyone as an obnoxious asshole. He is brash, arrogant, and bigoted. He's been publicly homophobic and sexist on social media, and on the ice.

The Pikes and Shane pour over the news, reporters and social media are calling these allegations false, talking about how Kent was a terrific player and that they hope this doesn't mess with his play. They all talked about how hard this must be for Kent. The comments on the post were mean, calling for the woman to delete it. It seemed like everyone was rallying behind Kent.

The team group chat was going crazy.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏒🏆

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

holy shit, you guys see this????

Choubacca 🍺

Man, I did NOT see that coming

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

i did. that man is EVIL

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️

damn, this is so crazy

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

Fuck, everyone is saying this poor woman is crazy

Young and Beautiful 🧑🗨️👄

what's happening?

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

dallas kent r*pe allegations

Young and Beautiful 🧑🗨️👄

wtf??? FUCK DALLAS KENT

Boodylicious 🍑👄💪

Yes, fuck Dallas Kent. But guys, as much as we hate him, this is just one allegation I do believe it, but I need you all to be smart about this and stay off social media until we have the go ahead from the GM to talk about it
That clear?

Young and Beautiful 🧑🗨️👄

lips are sealed 🤐

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

yes, boss 😊

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

Yeah man, clear

Choubacca 🍺

Got it

Boyled Egg 🥚

Clear

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️

okie dokie 👍

Hockey Jesus 🏒 🙏

Clear.

stop a goal, save a life 🏠 🚒

Clear

Shane swiped over to a private chat with Wyatt

Shane

Just checking in, I know you were on a team with him. How you holding up?

Hazy

Not surprised, but I'm so disgusted

Think the league will do anything?

Shane

Doubt it.

Hazy

Yeah, it was wishful thinking

Shane

I'm here if you need to talk.

Hazy

Maybe later, yeah?

Shane

Later.

He saw he also had a text from Ilya so he looked at it.

Lily

please use your new hockey fighting skills on kent

actually no

do not because you will get hurt

you are alternate make someone else do it

Shane

I am not siccing anyone on him.
They will probably go after him without me telling them to

Lily

BORING 🙄

you should offer \$1000 to whoever hits him first

Shane

Absolutely not.

Lily

BOO 🍅🍅

Shane met with his team at the airport in Toronto and they all headed from there to the hotel. No one talked out loud about it until they were all piled into a conference room with Coach Weibe in the hotel.

So far, the league and news sites have been hammering that the story is fake. Kent has not been scratched from the game happening tonight. The story did ramp up when this morning, a video was released showing Troy Barrett yelling at Kent, calling him a “piece of shit rapist.”

This was shocking when it came out. Barrett was known as Dallas Kent’s best friend. His lackey. He was just as homophobic, joining in with Kent’s bigotry on the ice. And he was seen in the video outright calling Kent a rapist.

Just as Coach was about to start addressing the room, he had to step out to take a call.

“Holy shit!” Bergy exclaimed, looking at his phone which showed a news alert. “Barrett’s been traded!”

“WHAT?!”

“No way, dude! Where to?”

Bergy looked up from his phone. “Us.”

The room fell silent before someone scoffed and said, “yeah right, dude.”

“I’m not kidding.”

All of their phones started buzzing with notifications as people started texting and calling them all.

Shane stood up, and told everyone to turn off their phones. “Now. Until Coach is back in this room and we know what to do next.”

When Coach entered the room again a minute later, he took one look around at the team said, “you all know?”

“It hit the news,” Young said. “Bergy got a Google Alert about it.”

Coach sighed. “It’s true. He won’t be on the ice tonight, but he will be travelling tomorrow with us to play in Boston. He’s a Centaur now. I know his reputation, so I need to go over a few things.”

“First, I want to make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated. That’s already a pretty firm rule, but I want to reiterate it and want you all to know that if any of you experience anything, please reach out to either me, Bood, Hollzy, or Paul. Secondly, I would like you all to give him a chance. We are a good group, and I want you all to give him a warm welcome. Getting traded isn’t easy, let’s not make it harder for him. Lastly, about social media and Kent, you are all allowed to say and post what you want, however I do need to warn you that after the Barrett trade, you may catch heat from the league so please be careful. I don’t want any of you punished like he was. When it comes to reporters, however, we are being asked to say ‘no comment.’”

Weibe looked around the room. “Any questions?”

“Yeah,” Dykstra said. “Hazy, man, you were on a team with him. What’s he like to play with?”

Everyone looked to Wyatt who squirmed in his seat a little. “He’s a good player, but he’s an asshole which everyone knows. I do think we should give him a chance though.”

“He’s like super homophobic, right?” Chouinard asked.

“Yeah,” Wyatt said, letting out a long breath. “He’s been pretty loud about that, mostly on the ice. But maybe that was just him following Kent and the other guys in Toronto. I think we should be careful though, about what we say around him until we know him more.”

And shit, Shane was now thinking about what this could mean for *him*. He dealt with homophobia in Montreal, but it wasn’t aimed at him until he was out. Having someone in his locker room who could know and be hateful to him about it could be bad. He couldn’t go back to that kind of room, not now. Not when he found a team like this.

He laid his head on the table, taking a few deep breaths before standing up and focusing his sight on a spot on the table.

“You’ve all been great and really welcoming to be. I’m happy I came here. You all know Montreal wasn’t great. *Isn’t* great. We all still have bruises and broken ribs from them. The reason I left them was because the homophobia was so unbearable this season after Hunter came out. I tried to get them to stop, but they turned on me. So, I left.”

He kept focusing on the table, not wanting to look at anyone, especially when he spoke next. “A week and a half ago right before we took the ice against them back home, Coach Theriault outed me to them. So, they came out onto the ice swinging. They were already

pissed at me, but this gave them an excuse to play like they did. You all heard them. You heard what they would say and so I know that you all know. And none of you have forced me to talk about it and none of you have treated me any different and so I want to thank you for that. I can't force you to not speak about it around Barrett or tell him, but I am asking you just to be careful about this, at least until we know how he will be with it."

"Please," he added, pleadingly. "I don't want to feel unsafe again."

Shane finally looked up and he saw Bood rounding the table, crashing into him. "We got you, man."

Shane could feel someone else grab onto him, and a few moments later, the team was surrounding him in a big group hug.

The game against Toronto was long, the team were all injured and although they were better than Montreal, Toronto did beat them 3-1. No one went after Kent, which was probably *only* because they were already so tired and hurt after Montreal.

They met with Barrett in the airport the next morning. He looked angry and no one could blame him. He was just traded to the worst team in the league after his best friend turned out to be a rapist.

Shane and Bood gave him a polite welcome, and Hazy was pretty nice to him, but the rest of the team weren't as nice. They weren't ignoring him, but they weren't being anywhere as warm to him than they had been with Shane.

When they landed in Boston, Shane left the team to go to Ilya, his body flowing with relief and warmth when he entered the house and found his fiancé shirtless in the kitchen, wrapping his arms around him.

"My Shane," Ilya greeted, cupping his hand around Shane's cheek. "I missed you."

"I missed you too," Shane said, leaning in to capture Ilya's lips. The kiss was slow, but quickly turned hurried like they were on a time limit.

"Fuck, Ilya," Shane moaned into his mouth as Ilya moved a hand down to cup over his clothed dick. He was already half-hard and as Ilya made quick work palming him, he was fully-erect, leaking and straining against his jeans. His hips moved, rubbing his cock into Ilya's hand, chasing the friction.

Ilya started kissing down his neck, sucking lightly at it before unlatching and pulling Shane's shirt off. He moved his hands to the button of Shane's pants, quickly undoing it and sliding the zipper down. He pulled the jeans down to Shane's thighs and grabbed the base of his cock before moving it against the length, thumbing over the slit and using the precum to slick up his hand.

"Oh fuck," Shane said, throwing his head back at the feeling. Ilya pumped his hands a few times before reaching behind Shane in the kitchen and fishing a bottle of lube out of a drawer.

“Turn around,” Ilya ordered, and he spun Shane around and Shane rested his hands on the countertop as Ilya dipped a lubed up finger against his hole.

Shane moaned and pushed against the finger, forcing it inside, moving his hips to fuck himself onto it. Ilya quickly moved it out and added more lube and added another digit inside. He made quick work of it, pumping them in and out, scissoring Shane open.

It wasn't long before he added another and then removing them all, Shane whining at the loss of them. But then he felt Ilya's cockhead against his entrance and he pushed back into it, rubbing it against him.

“No, no, lyubimiyy,” Ilya growled into his ear, as he gripped Shane's hips hard to stop them from moving. He used his other hand to push Shane's chest onto the counter. “You work so hard on ice. I will do work, you just stay like this, yes?”

“Yes,” Shane breathed and then moaned as Ilya pushed inside. “Fuck, you feel so good, Ilya.”

Ilya drove into him hard, hammering Shane's prostate over and over, both of them moaning loud.

“God, Shane. Look at you taking my cock, my good boy.”

“Ilya,” Shane moaned. Ilya continued to pump into him. “Fuck, right there, baby. Fuck, fuck, I need to cum I'm so close.”

“Soon, Shane,” Ilya said, gripping his hip tighter and picking his pace up, the sounds of skin slapping against skin filling the kitchen.

“Please, Ilya,” Shane begged. “I need to, please. I can't hold on.”

“Me too, fuck, Shane,” Ilya moaned, moving a hand around to pump Shane's cock. “Come for me.”

Shane cried out as he came hard, the mess splattering onto the side of the counter in front of him and clenching around Ilya who followed his orgasm. Ilya slumped forward, covering Shane, holding him tight.

“I missed you,” Ilya mumbled into Shane's skin.

“I missed you too. So much.”

Chapter 16: Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Shane is in Boston and then New York

Chapter Notes

it is 3am right now where i am and i am tired but felt like i could bang out another chapter. please enjoy

this chapter is very dialogue heavy, but i thought we needed a little break from the angst from the past couple chapters so enjoy characters talking to one another

“So, Troy Barrett?” Ilya asked later when they were wrapped up in each other on the couch.

“Yeah. I met him earlier at the airport. He seemed nicer than usual. I mean he looked angry but he didn’t call anyone a fag.”

“It’s still early.”

“I came out to the team,” Shane said and Ilya looked at him in shock. “I mean they knew anyway since Montreal spilled the beans.”

“Well, yes, but I didn’t think you would actually have the conversation. You were avoiding it.”

“I know, but with Barrett’s rep, I didn’t wanna have them like discussing anything about it around him, so I asked them not to.”

“And how did it go?”

“Ottawa is fucking weird,” Shane revealed. Ilya started to look murderous, so Shane quickly continued, “it ended in like a big group hug.”

“Wow, is like big rainbow land up there. Do they hand out lollipops when you enter the city?”

“Now that you mention it, Harris did bring a bag of lollipops to work the other day and started handing them out.”

“You are joking?”

“I’m actually very much not joking.”

Ilya stared at him for a moment like he was waiting for Shane to reveal that there were never any lollipops, but when Shane said nothing, he just started laughing.

Shane never wanted that sound to stop.

He was happy to spend the day with Ilya. They only had until tomorrow morning since they both had practice before the game. After the match though, they would be back here until the next day when they would both be heading out to Buffalo and New York.

Shane hated parting ways with his fiancé to go to practice, but he was just happy still to get even a day. And they still had after the game.

Practice was fine. Barrett was put on the line with Shane and Bood, moving Tanner back a line. It worked, there was real potential there. Barrett did seem off his game though. He didn’t say anything mean, but he was playing angry.

At warmups, Shane was standing around talking to Bood, Wyatt, Bergy, Young, and Dykstra, with Barrett standing with them not talking, when he felt something poking at his back.

He let out a long sigh. “Ilya. What do you want?”

“How did you know it was me?” Ilya said and Shane turned around to face him, and Ilya pulled his stick back away from Shane.

“Because no one else is that annoying.”

“That is offensive. Hey, guys, did you know your Alternate Captain was so offensive?”

“How is that offensive? It’s the truth!”

“Is against my culture.”

“Bullshit, it is! What do want?”

Ilya tilted his head very slightly it was almost missed, silently urging Shane to follow him away to talk about something more privately. Shane immediately moved so they could talk.

“Hey Roz,” Wyatt called after them.

“Hazy! How is Lisa?”

“Nope. Not happening.”

“What? I didn’t say anything!”

“I’m not getting her to sneak you into the WAG chat.”

“Ah, you are no fun. Tell her I love her!”

“I will not be doing that.”

Once they moved away far enough Shane raised his eyebrow at Ilya.

“Okay, do not be mad,” Ilya said.

“I’m already not liking this.”

“No, is nothing bad. But Svetlana said she wanted to come over and hang out tonight.”

“Okay...?”

“I haven’t said yes, I wanted to know what you wanted. But it would be nice to introduce you two.”

Shane nodded. “Yeah, of course. Would be good to meet her before the wedding.”

“Good, good. So, how was practice?”

“He’s angry but so far he hasn’t taken it out on anybody.”

“That is good, at least.”

“Have you actually been trying to get into the WAG chat?”

“What? I am WAG. Makes sense.”

“You’re not my wife or my girlfriend, so no, it doesn’t make sense.”

“You take that back! I will be wife soon enough!”

“Uh, no you won’t?”

“Eh, husband, wife, is same thing. Potato, potato.”

“You’re supposed to say it differently, like potaytoe, potahto.”

“Oh.”

The game was a complete disaster. Barrett was a mess, which then translated to the whole line being a mess. He got a penalty and then *another*. Shane knew he was going to have to have a chat with him soon if he continued like this. But it was only his first game after the trade, so Shane didn’t want to press him too early.

It was of no surprise to anyone when Boston won 5-1.

Shane beat Ilya home, and then got up to greet him when he heard the door code be put in. Except it was instead a tall, gorgeous woman opening the door instead.

“Uhhh,” Shane said. “Hi. You must be Svetlana. I’m Sh—”

“Shane Hollander,” she said, very confused. “Yes, I know. Why are you here? In your rival’s house?”

Shane muttered a *for fuck’s sake, Ilya*, before saying louder. “He hasn’t told you, yet?”

“Told me what?”

“That we’re together? Me and Ilya.”

“*You* are his Jane?”

“His Shane, yeah.”

“I am going to kill him. He is dead.”

“Please don’t kill my fiancé.”

Her eyes darkened. “You are engaged? You are getting married?”

Shane sighed. “He didn’t tell you that either?”

It was then that the door code went off again and Ilya walked in to see both Shane and Svetlana there in his entryway.

“Ah, looks like party started without me.”

There were many things that Duolingo taught but fast, angry Russian was not one of them. It was a little amusing though seeing Ilya look like a chastised child who got caught with his hand in a cookie jar.

Eventually, Ilya did seem to apologise to her, and she looked content enough from it. They moved to the lounge room and all sat down on the couch as Ilya ordered takeaway for delivery, making sure to get something that fit with Shane’s diet.

Svetlana was nice and she was obsessed with hockey, so she and Shane got on pretty well. Shane was a little intimidated for the first half hour or so, probably a little to do with meeting someone new – someone special to Ilya – and also a little because it was clear that she and Ilya were close. Shane could see how they looked together and it made him realise that Ilya really could have it so much easier with a woman. With Svetlana. But that half hour went on and Shane could see that the two of them got on more like siblings and he did know deep down that if Ilya wanted easier, he wouldn’t be with Shane. But he was.

So yeah, after a while, Shane opened up more to Svetlana and they swapped hockey knowledge and statistics and embarrassing stories about Ilya. It was nice.

When Shane reached New York the next day, he was excited to see Scott. They would be meeting that night after the game at a bar, the Kingfisher. Shane knew it was a gay bar, but he also knew that multiple other players, including Ilya, had visited it and no one was writing headlines theorising *their* sexualities. He was also just nervous. It would be his first time being in a gay bar.

“We should totally all go out for drinks after the game! Bit of team bonding to close out the road trip!” Bood offered on the bus ride to the hotel.

“Ah, maybe another time for me,” Shane said. “I’m meeting Hunter at the Kingfisher – a bar – after the game with a couple of the Admirals.”

“Even better! We’ll join!” Bergy said.

“Okay, first of all, you are nineteen, so you are underage and not going to any bar,” Shane said. “And second, it is a gay bar. So, I don’t know, would you guys want to do that?”

“Fuck yeah!” Hazy said. “The kiddos can all stay in but us men should all go!”

“Fuck you,” Young said. “We’re not kids!”

“If you can’t drink, you are not an adult. Therefore, you are a kid.”

“We can drink! Just not in stupid America.”

“Too bad, so sad,” Bood said. He raised his voice to announce to the whole team. “Alright, team drinks at the Kingfisher tonight after the game! I expect everyone who can legally drink to be there. Team bonding!”

A couple of the guys cheered, assenting to the plans.

It wasn’t until they were all piling into the bar that Shane realised that not everyone was privy to the gay part of the gay bar, and so the team had accidentally brought Barrett.

“Rook!” Scott greeted and Shane hugged him hello. He turned and did the same to Kip and Vaughny. “Didn’t know you brought the team with you, but the more the merrier! Come on in guys.”

“Yeah, Bood wanted to go out for team drinks.”

“Well, hope everyone has fun. How’s Roz?”

“Still himself.”

“Sorry to hear that. Is it terminal?”

“Probably.”

Scott snorted and looked around the bar. “Having this many hockey players in a queer space feels a little like a hate crime.”

He wasn't wrong. It did feel a little weird. Shane could see that his team all at least looked happy to be there. "They've been really good about me."

"All of them?" Scott asked, nodding his head in the direction of one of the tables where Barrett sat alone.

"He doesn't know. But he hasn't left this place yet and that's a start."

"Maybe you should go see if he's okay. He looks about ready to drive himself to the nearest bridge."

Shane didn't disagree, so he walked over and slid into the seat opposite Barrett.

"How you holding up?"

Barrett glanced up at him. "Fine."

Shane nodded, sighing a little. "I know Bood called this outing mandatory, but I do want you to know that if you are uncomfortable, you can leave. You do not have to be here if you don't want to. No one will hold it against you."

That last part was a little bit of a lie, but the last thing Shane wanted was for anyone to stay somewhere when they were uncomfortable.

"I'm not—" Barrett started. "I'm not uncomfortable."

"You do know this is a gay bar, right?"

"No shit," Barrett said sarcastically, gesturing at the multiple pride decorations around them.

"Just making sure," Shane shrugged. "And you're... okay with that?"

"I'm not homophobic!" Barrett objected which Shane just raised an eyebrow at as if to say *really?* "I'm not!"

"Sorry," Shane said. "Your track record isn't great in that area, most of the players in this room who have faced you on the ice can attest to that."

"Fuck! I know," Barrett said dejectedly, slumping in his seat. "Sorry."

"It's okay," Shane reassured. "I mean it's not really, but as long as you don't keep doing or saying that shit, then it can be."

"And you all are okay with all this?" Barrett gestured around him again.

"Clearly," Shane deadpanned, waving his hand over in the direction of some of the team happily talking with some of the other patrons, one of which seemed to be trying to teach Dykstra how to put eyeliner on.

Barrett looked a little hesitant, but asked, "can I tell you something? In confidence?"

“Yeah, of course.”

“I’m gay.”

Shane was flabbergasted. His mouth dropped open and he was speechless for several seconds. “You’re gay?”

“Yes,” Barrett said, and Shane noticed he looked a little terrified which made Shane realise that he wasn’t acting very appropriately.

“Shit, sorry, I’m just surprised. Thanks for telling me?”

Barrett looked at least a little more settled at that, no longer looking like he was at knife-point.

“Uh,” Shane said and cleared his throat. *Okay, he thought, he was doing this.* “Me too. Gay.”

It was Troy’s turn to look gobsmacked, and he let out dumb, “huh?”

“Yup.”

“You? Shane Hollander? You’re gay?”

“Very.”

“Does anyone else know?”

“This team, Scott Hunter and Kip, his boyfriend. The Metros know, too. My parents, my friend Rose—”

“Rose Landry? Wait, shit, isn’t she your ex?”

“Yeah, she is,” Shane chuckled. “Didn’t work out, obviously, because of the whole *gay* thing. But she’s great.”

“Right,” Troy said. “And are you seeing anyone at the moment then?”

“Uh, yeah,” Shane said, pulling at his chain around his neck holding his ring. “Getting married, actually.”

“Oh, congrats.”

“Thanks, man. What about you? Got anyone?”

“I did, but he broke up with me. Like a couple days ago. He’s engaged to someone else.”

“Well shit, that sucks. Especially with everything else, Kent and the trade...”

“Yeah, hasn’t been the best few days.”

“Well, you know, you can lean on me, on this team. We’re all here for you if you need it.”

Troy just nodded, but didn't say much else about it. And Shane wasn't going to push.

Shane let out an exhale he hadn't known he was holding the last few days since the trade news, now that Troy knew about him. At least he knew that this wasn't going to cause another Montreal situation. He didn't know how things were going to play out, since Barrett was a *mess*, but at least he wasn't sitting with bated breath, waiting for the shoe to drop.

After a while, he went back to Scott.

"How'd it go?" Hunter asked.

"Well, he's not homophobic. So, at least I'm not waiting for *that* to start. I don't know... I don't think he's doing the best right now. He's going through it."

"He'll get there. Maybe. Or maybe not, who the hell knows?"

"Not me, that's for sure."

Scott was silent for a moment before asking, "and what's it really been like? Montreal and Ottawa? How you handling it all?"

"It's been a long few months," Shane said. "I thought leaving the Metros would solve it all, but then found out about me. They came after me, after the Cens. Some of the shit they said during those two games was fucking gross. And they just kept going and going."

"What did Comeau say for you to lose it?"

"He brought up Ilya. I mean, he brought up you too, but yeah, he just said Ilya's name and I didn't even think, I just hit him."

"I don't think I've ever seen you that pissed, even when you fought me."

"Yeah, that was barely a fight. We didn't even hit each other."

"Yeah, and now I am very thankful for that now that I know that's what happens when you land a punch."

"I'm 200 pounds of muscle! I don't know why everyone thinks I can't hit hard."

"Well, they do now."

"Good! I hope Montreal remembers that next season."

"With their concussion records? They'll be lucky to remember next month."

Shane snorted. Then he sighed. "I keep waiting for them to tell others. I keep expecting to wake up to a social media post or I keep walking into every game expecting another team to know. It's fucking exhausting."

"You could always beat them to it?" Scott offered. "Come out on your own terms."

Shane shook his head. “No. I can’t. It’ll make everyone write think-pieces every time I’m seen talking to another guy. It’ll make it look obvious if I’m seen with Ilya. One look at us together and our cover is blown. I can’t put Ilya at risk like that. Not until he’s more protected and has his pr card. Plus, I don’t want to be known as the gay hockey player. I’m already not white and with that alone, I’m constantly put under a microscope, every achievement tied to that. I don’t want to add something else to that. I don’t want to become *another* label.”

“Fine, but if at any point that changes, I can help. However I can. Or if that’s taken from you, then I’ll still be here. For you both.”

“Thanks, old man.”

“Wow, you just had to go ruin the moment.”

“Had to, we were getting too sappy. It was uncomfortable.”

Chapter 17: Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Troy still struggles with the trade

Chapter Notes

short chapter because i did not feel like up to much today but i hope you all enjoy!

The Cens had practice the morning after they got back to Ottawa. Shane met the team early because Harris had messaged them all about an idea for a video to welcome Troy to the team. Which means the team were present for Troy meeting Harris and kind of freezing, his eyes glued to the pride pins adorned on Harris' clothing.

Shane knew, obviously, that Troy was likely having the same thoughts that Shane had about them, but unlike Shane, Troy did not have a panic attack about it. Shane was also aware that since the rest of the team didn't know what Shane knew, that the others had not exactly liked this reaction, some of them stiffening and looking ready to step in when needed.

It definitely made for a tense day and Shane didn't blame Troy for booking it out of the facility when practice came to a close.

"Jeez, he's in a rush," Hazy observed. "Where's the fire?"

"Maybe there's a bigot convention in town?" Bergy joked.

"He's not homophobic, guys," Shane said, sighing. "Trust me."

"Oh?" Bood said. "You sure about that? He was a little weird earlier with Harris."

"I came out to him at the Kingfisher. He was good about it. He's probably just not used to being surrounded by queer people. He'll get there."

"Wait, he knows? Damn, you work quick. He hasn't even been with us a whole week!"

Shane shrugged. "We were in a gay bar. I think if he actually had an issue with gay people, he wouldn't have stayed there with us."

“So, like,” Young said. “We can talk about all that shit that went down with the Metros now? Feel like we all need to unpack that more and like warn him for next season what it’ll be like.”

“Yeah,” Shane agreed. “You can all talk about it.”

“Fuck yeah! I’ll let the whole team know!”

Before Shane could begin to imagine how Young was going to do that, his phone buzzed with a message from the group chat.

“Did you just have that like ready to go?”

“Hell yeah, man.”

Shane sighed and rolled his eyes.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏒🏆

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️

hollzy GAY hollzy BEAUTIFUL hollzy LIFTED BAN ON MONTREAL DISS TALK

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

thank FUCK

FUCK THE METROS ALL MY HOMIES HATE THE METROS

#endhomophobia2018

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️

#gayloveishot 🍷

Boodylicious 🍑🍷💪

You kids are exhausting

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️

you love us 🙄🙄

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

Oh, Barrett knows then?

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Yeah, he knows

Thank you all for not spilling the secret, but he’s all good and does not hate gay people

T as in Troy 🏀

NO

I’m not homophobic!

I love gay people!
Platonically.

stop a goal, save a life 🏠 🦸
Good to hear, man

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️
glad we can talk about mtl now
that was all so fckd

The next couple practices and games were a little better, but Shane could see Troy was still struggling, looking tired and still angry. It didn't help that they had another game against Toronto towards the end of March, Troy's first one against his old team.

Everything seemed to come to a head that game. Dallas Kent went after Troy incessantly and Troy was playing his worst game so far on the Centaurs. He never rose to Kent's words which were mostly about being a traitor, but he was obviously getting more affected. In the locker room, during intermission before the third period, Coach Weibe asked Troy if he wanted to sit out for the rest of the game and Troy declined saying he could handle what Kent had been saying.

But just as their line skated out to the ice, Kent, raised his voice, "you know, I heard something interesting from a friend on the Metros the other day."

Shane froze with dread, his breathing quickening. He could see Troy stiffen from the corner of his eye.

"Didn't know you were okay with playing with a fag, Barrett."

"*You motherfucker*," Troy snarled and charged at Kent, shucking off his gloves and socking his old teammate in the face.

They both hit each other again and again, growing bloodier with each punch. Eventually a ref stepped in and Troy was ejected from the game for fighting before the puck drop and Kent just sneered at him as he was escorted off the ice.

The Cens lost the game and they all piled into the locker room, defeated, no one really said anything as they all showered and changed out of their gear.

Bood handled media for the game, and so after the rest of the team left, it was just Shane and Troy – still in his gear – left.

"You can't keep going like this," Shane said. "You're playing like shit, you rack up penalties, and you just got yourself kicked from a game."

"Fuck you," Troy spat. "I got kicked out of the game for *defending* you."

"And I get that," Shane said. "I fought to defend someone. I beat the shit out of Comeau. But I didn't do it at a time that would get me ejected and probably fined. I didn't do it at a time

where I was playing bad, not scoring, and not working *with* my team. I wasn't costing the team a win when I did it. I wasn't falling apart when I did it."

"So, what, it's just okay for him to call you a fag?"

"He's been calling me one for years! You did too!" Shane exclaimed. "You were a bully. You said that kind of shit all the time and you heard him say it too. How is it different now?"

"It's different! We didn't know! *I* didn't know. And I was just trying to fucking hide. I did it in a shit way, but I was fucking terrified of people thinking I was gay that I hid behind being homophobic and a shitty person. I don't want to be that guy anymore. I don't want to be like Dallas Kent. I don't want to sit by and do nothing when he says that shit. And someone like him knowing about you is terrifying, I would be shitting myself if he knew about me. Aren't you fucking scared that he *knows*?"

"I've been scared for weeks since Montreal found out, just waiting for them to spread the word. I'm scared of everyone knowing and I hate that I had to find out that Kent of all people knows about me, but that is *my* issue, not yours. I don't need you to be my guard dog. What I need you to start playing hockey – *good* hockey – so that we can start proving to people like him that we belong on that ice."

He sighed, tired from the game and this conversation, but continued, "you're a good player, a great one. And I think this team could be great for you. I know you're going through it right now, but when one of us is playing like shit, the whole line suffers. You want to not be that guy anymore? Then you need to start trusting us and working with us. This team is amazing, they're all great guys and like it or not, you are a part of this team now. Stop trying to do everything alone, stop wallowing in self-pity, stop fighting. Pull your act together and prove you can be a better person than Kent is. A better person than you were."

By the time he finished talking, Troy had his head buried in his hands.

"We only have a few games left this season. Don't throw them away and waste them."

"I'll try," Troy said, lifting his head as Bood silently entered the locker room, surveying the two of them. "Are you going to be okay? About Kent?"

"Toronto is versing Boston next," Shane said simply like that explained it all.

"That is so fucking ominous. What the fuck does that mean?"

"Means I know a guy."

"What like a mob hit or something? What the fuck?"

"No, it means he has to deal with a pissed off Ilya Rozanov."

"Why's he pissed?"

"Because I'm gonna tell him that Kent knows and called me a slur."

“Roz knows?” Bood asked. “Is that why he pulled you away to talk last game with them? Is Montreal like telling everyone we go up against? No one else has said anything in other games.”

“No,” Shane said. “Well, I don’t know about the Montreal thing, so maybe yes to that. But Roz has actually known for years.”

“Your rival knows? And has known? For years?”

“Yeah,” Shane said and tried choosing his words a little more carefully until he knows Ilya won’t mind him sharing about their relationship. “I’ve known Ilya since we were seventeen, before we were even drafted. We don’t actually hate each other, we’re friends and he’s known longer than anyone else, even my parents.”

“But you guys always look like you wanna kill each other,” Troy said, confused. “You’re *friends*?”

Shane nodded. “Yep.”

“I feel like my whole life is a lie.”

“We’re actually going to announce a charity together this summer.”

“Everyone is going to be so surprised you guys don’t hate each other.”

Shane wanted to tell them that people were going to find out when Ilya moves to Ottawa to play on the same team, but refrained. No one could know that the move is planned. Technically, it wasn’t since there hasn’t actually been an offer from the Centaurs, and there wouldn’t be until Ilya reaches free agency. But no one could know and accuse them of collusion. So, Shane didn’t say anything further.

True to his word, Troy *did* start trying, and he even came to a team BBQ at Bood’s house. Shane himself hadn’t been to one yet since he’s only been on the team a couple months and was busy dealing with moving on his days off, so it was nice to finally go to one. The WAGs were all really nice, and it was nice to meet Lisa not over the phone.

Troy seemed to relax more at the gathering and he fell into the team more as the night went on, a stark difference from sitting at a table alone in the Kingfisher.

It wasn’t long before they were playing their last game of the season, and they were all free to enjoy their long summers while other teams would go onto the playoffs.

Shane headed to Boston to stay with Ilya through Boston’s playoff run, which unfortunately, only lasted one round. Ilya was a little bummed, especially as it was his last season with Boston, but they were still both happy to head to the Cottage for their summer.

Chapter 18: Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Ilya joins the Cens

Chapter Notes

Just a short chapter to finally welcome Ilya to the team! Please enjoy! Love to everyone who has read and interacted with this work

On July 1st, Shane extended his time at Ottawa, signing for a low \$7 million a year for an 8-year contract. It was low because for a player of his calibre, it was almost insulting to sign for that amount when he was worth so much more. But Shane didn't need higher, he could cover any costs he ever has with his endorsements, and he was there for the team, not the money.

It was shocking to everyone that wasn't Shane, his parents, and Farah, when Ilya Rozanov signed to the Centaurs as the new Captain for the same amount and also for 8 years on that same day when he became a free agent.

Social media went ballistic, confused at the news, because it made sense for Shane Hollander to stay where he was, but why would *Ilya Rozanov* move to Ottawa, who were still down at the bottom of the league. Not to mention, that the public were only aware as the two hockey players as rivals, so no one was to wrap their heads around them as teammates. The public and even the staff were even more confused, when the next day, the two entered the Canadian Tire Centre – the Centaur's rink – and they were not in fact, at each other's throats.

They filmed a couple videos with Harris and Gen, the photographer for the team, took some photos of Ilya in his new jersey. Solo shots, and then a few shots with both Shane and Ilya in their jerseys, side-by-side, smiles unable to be wiped from their faces. Bood also showed up for a few minutes to join in with some photos of all three Ottawa captains.

They told Bood about their relationship because Shane trusted him, and it felt a little weird for two of the three captains to know about something that could affect team dynamics. Plus, Shane had gotten closer to him since he arrived, so he wanted to share this with him.

Shane has never been happier to finally have Ilya there with him, the Captain and Alternate Captain, for the same team. They were living together, they shared a team, and in just over a

week, they would be getting married with only their closest friends there.

They headed straight from the Cens facility back to the cottage to resume their time there.

The team chat had been blasting the whole day and a half since the news had broken. Shane had muted every notification on his phone that wasn't the group chat, his parents, and some of their friends, so it was fun to see his teammates devolve into madness.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏒🏆

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

yooooooooo wtf

AM I BEING PUNKD

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

ILYA ROZANOV???

Young and Beautiful 🧑❤️

whattup??

YO???

Boodylicious 🍑🍷💪

I'm trying to remember if I took drugs

Because how the hell else would explain this?

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

no seriously

you legally have to tell me if i am being punkd

T as in Troy 🏀

I think I might be having a stroke.

ROZANOV???

Boyled Egg 🥚

I mean, it seems legit?

But also, like no way???

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️

so just to get this straight

we have both hollander and rozanov on the same team?

are they going to kill each other?

stop a goal, save a life 🏠🦱

Nah, man

They're cool with each other

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻🔪

damn we are never losing ever again

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

GUYS

IS THIS REAL?????

THIS IS NOT A PRANK???

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Hey, guys! I can confirm this is very real 😊

With that said, please be nice and welcoming

And also please know that I am being forced to do this...

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏 added Ilya Rozanov to the group chat.

Ilya Rozanov

hello

i hope you are all ready to bow down to your new god

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏 removed Ilya Rozanov from the group chat.

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Nope, never mind

Should have seen that coming

That one was on me, I apologise for that

Choubacca 🍺

Did you seriously just remove our new captain from the team chat?

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Yes, and I would do it again

He is in time out

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

daddy hollzy being #strict 😡

stop a goal, save a life 🏠🚒

Down, boy

Boodylicious 🍑🍷💪

Unfortunately, Hollzy, as he is part of the team, he does need to be in the chat

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Fine.

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏 added Ilya Rozanov to the group chat.

Ilya Rozanov

ah, i have been released from my solitude?

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏
Behave.

Ilya Rozanov

wow i love a man who is #strict 😭

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

huh i am noticing something 🤔🤔

hey, roz quick question

where were you about 20 years ago

Ilya Rozanov

i was like 7 so in school probably

why

Young and Beautiful 🧑🔪

bergly never knew his father

Ilya Rozanov

weird overshare but okay

what does this have to do with me?

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

were you ever in vancouver when you were 7

Ilya Rozanov

no, i was in russia

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

Okay, now that the world's weirdest paternity test is out of the way...

I would like to let everyone know that we will be hosting a team get together at our place next month on the 18th to welcome the rookies ahead of training camp so please let us know if you will be able to come! Partners are welcome 😊

I will send the address closer to the date.

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

Cait and I will definitely be there!

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

count me in

but i gotta know

when you say we and our... hollzy did you get you a man????

Young and Beautiful 🧑🔪

AND YOU'RE LIVING WITH THIS MAN
WHO IS HE

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏
Relax, guys.

Ilya Rozanov

yes, is true
i think how you say in english is
we shacked up together?

T as in Troy 🏀

That means more like you're together and then moved in to share a house together
You might be more thinking of billeting?
Like Hollander is hosting you until you find a new place or your footing with the new team
and city

Ilya Rozanov

ah, no
i will not be looking for other place to live
will be living with hollander forever
he will never be rid of me

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️

ohhh so you guys are just gonna be roomies
like me and bergy

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️ changed Ilya Rozanov's name to Hollzy's Roomie 🧢🏠👩🏻👨🏻

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

AND THEY WERE ROOMMATES

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏
Yes. Roommates.

The wedding was held at the cottage with Shane's parents, the Pikes, Rose, Svetlana, Scott, Kip, Wyatt, Lisa, Bood, and his wife Cassie. It was nice, and Shane was a little glad he could finally call Ilya his husband. And not just from a wedding thrown by six-year-olds.

Shane looked around him at everyone. Rose and Svetlana were talking to each other, getting along great, wrapped up in their own little bubble. Wyatt, Hayden and Bood were off chatting about the upcoming season. Jackie, Kip, and Cassie were talking about WAG gossip with David. Yuna was having a blast sitting at a table for a tea party with Ruby and Jade. Scott was nodding very seriously along with Arthur's nonsensical toddler babbling.

And Ilya was sitting right next to him, holding his hand tight and Shane had no desire to pull away anytime soon.

Chapter 19: Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Meet the rookies!

Chapter Notes

Hope you enjoy this one. The gang is now all here!

Also there is a tiny bit of smut at the end so if you want to skip it, stop reading after everyone leaves.

Shane was freaking out a little in the hours before the get together. It would be his first time hosting a team event – he never even did it at Montreal – but Ilya was the Captain and he was an Alternate. It just made sense for them to host.

Shane was running around the house, making sure things were neat, that there were enough drinks for everyone, that there were enough appetisers made up. He even made sure to collect all lube bottles that Shane and Ilya would stash around the house. He didn't want to have to explain to his teammates why there was one stuffed in a crevice of the couch or one in the lawn chair outside. He would rather be set on fire than have that conversation.

Ilya was excited to meet everyone in person and show off the new game room. They had expanded on the house since Shane had bought it a couple months ago, adding on a game room for Ilya and a sun room for Shane to do yoga in. Being able to do that was something that Shane was so happy to do, just more proof that this house was theirs. That they were building a life together.

The game room had a a table for board and card games, a pool table, a foosball table, a Pac-Man machine, darts, and – Ilya specifically said was non-negotiable – a racing game, like the ones that arcades would have with steering wheels, pedals, and car seats.

“Lyubimiyy,” Ilya said, coming up behind Shane, wrapping his arms around him as Shane dusted the same photos on the wall that he had already dusted three times today. “Calm down. Everything is clean, everything is ready.”

“You don’t think these are too much, do you?” Shane said, gesturing to the photos he was dusting. “They’re not too revealing?”

The photos were outtakes of their CCM shoot. There were four, one with them focused – the one that was used for the ad – one that was of them with soft smiles, one with them fully laughing, and another one with them in a fit of laughter. Ilya had gifted them to Shane for the wedding and it had brought Shane to a state of almost-tears of joy and love.

“It is not a sex-tape,” Ilya soothed. “We look like friends. No one will think otherwise.”

Shane nodded. “You’re right. I know, I’m just nervous.”

“If someone notices an unfluffed cushion, just blame me.”

“Fuck, is there an unfluffed cushion?”

“No, no, is just joke,” Ilya urged, but Shane was already stepping out of his grasp and heading towards the lounge room. Shane heard him sigh before saying, “you have fluffed them all five times. They are fine.”

“Well, now it will be six times.”

Before Ilya could reply, the doorbell chimed and they both rushed to the front door, swinging it open.

A nervous rookie stood on their doorstep.

“Mr. Rozanov, Mr. Hollander,” he said, sticking out a hand to shake. “I am Luca. Haas? Um, it’s a pleasure to meet you both. I’m a huge fan.”

“You are early,” Ilya said as Shane shook Luca’s hand.

“Oh, I’m so sorry,” Luca rushed out, talking fast and panicked. “You said 3pm and I know it is 2:55, but I thought it would be okay! I can go and then come back?”

“Relax, Luca,” Shane said, shooting a glare at his husband. “Ilya is just messing with you. I like to be on time, too. Come on in.”

“Oh, okay, thank you Mr. Hollander.”

“Just Shane is fine. Or Hollander or Hollzy if you prefer that.”

“Yes, Mr. Shane. Er – I mean Mr. Hollzy. No! Hollander! Yes, Hollander.”

Ilya’s shoulders were shaking in silent laughter and Shane lightly slapped his arm to tell him to stop.

“He is you,” Ilya whispered, giggling.

“He is not, now be nice,” Shane chastised.

“So, Haas,” Ilya said, composing himself and turning to face the rookie as they make their way inside. “You are Swiss, yes?”

“Yes, from Zurich!”

“Are you liking it here? You are settling in okay?”

“Yes, I am moved in with Will, um, LaPointe? The other player on the team.”

“Oh, that’s good,” Shane said. “Our rookies from last years intake are also roommates. You guys getting on okay, then?”

Shane wasn’t sure if he was imagining Luca’s cheeks flushing slightly. “Yes, he is nice.”

“That’s good! Well, please feel free to help yourself to anything here. We have drinks in that fridge over there, you’re welcome to anything in there, and we have some appetisers set out so grab whatever you want.”

Shane heard the front door open and a voice ring out, “HOLLLLLLLLLLZYY!”

“In the kitchen!” Shane yelled back.

Hazy appeared with Lisa in tow, throwing his arms around Shane.

“Lisa!” Ilya said excitedly, lighting up.

“Sorry about barging in,” Lisa said, hugging Ilya in greeting and then Shane. “Someone doesn’t have manners apparently.”

“I have manners!” Hazy said, still wrapped around Shane. “I was saving Hollzy and Roz from having to walk all the way to the front door.”

“Yes,” Shane said, shaking Wyatt off. “The ten steps would have been so much work.”

“Exactly!”

Shane huffed and shook his head and turned to the rookie. “Hazy, Lisa, this is Luca Haas.”

“Haas! What’s up, man?”

Luca looked a little frozen, like he was not expecting attention so enthusiastic from the goalie. “Uh... not much?”

He looked to Shane for help who took pity on the kid. He turned to Ilya, prompting him with, “Ilya, didn’t you want to show them to the game room?”

“Yes! Good idea, moy muzh,” he said. *My husband*. “It is finally ready, come, Hazy, Haas, I will show.”

He led the two players away, leaving Shane and Lisa in the kitchen.

“What’s that one mean? Mush?” Lisa asked, grabbing a glass and uncorking a bottle of wine. Lisa knew that Shane was slowly learning Russian for Ilya. He had a 551 day streak on Duolingo and he had slowly been picking up more, some days trying to only speak in Russian.

“Muzh,” Shane corrected with a smile. “Husband.”

“You guys are so cute,” Lisa said, reaching over and pinching Shane’s cheek. “Ilya’s trying to get you both into the WAG chat, you know?”

“Ugh, I know,” Shane groaned, sitting down on a stool at the bench and slumping onto the counter. “He won’t shut up about it.”

“I mean, you guys are technically WAGs – or well, HABs? So, why not?”

“Because only you and Cass know we’re together? No one on the team other Wyatt and Bood know. They know about me, not us, and we don’t want to tell anyone. So many people know already and I don’t want anyone to feel weird about it. The team are still adjusting to the fact that we don’t hate each other.”

“Okay, so I have an idea,” Lisa said. “First of all, the team would be more than okay with it and we all know that, but I get your fears there. Secondly, the WAGs are not the team and we would not tell anyone, even our partners, but also, I have been thinking... Wyatt said that you and Ilya are saved as Lily and Jane, right? In your phones? So maybe we can add them instead. Obviously, the girls will know that Lily is a man, but we can just say that you don’t want to share his real name. For privacy. The girls will all understand.”

“Isn’t that like lying though?” Shane rebutted. “Since they won’t know that it’s us?”

“It’s not lying, and they won’t care if they find out. It’s just an idea to think about.”

“Maybe.”

The doorbell rang and Shane went to answer it.

“Hollzy!” Bood said, standing with Cassie and a someone else that Shane recognises as the other new rookie. “We found a stray.”

“Hey, man. I’m LaPointe. Thanks for inviting me.”

“Nice to meet you,” Shane said, shaking his hand.

“Ayyyyyyyy!” a voice rang out behind Bood – who groaned – and the others. Bergy appeared, throwing an arm around Bood shoulder. Young came in behind him. “The VIPs have finally arrived, I know you must be so excited to see us.”

“Fresh meat!” Young said, throwing his arm around LaPointe.

“‘Sup?” LaPointe said. “I’m LaPoint, or Pointy, of that’s your thing. I’m the new rookie.”

“I’m Young!”

“I didn’t call you old, man.”

“No, like my name is Young.”

“Ohhhh, right, my bad.”

Shane cleared his throat. “Okay, glad you all could make it. Why don’t we all go inside, yeah? Follow me.”

He led them through to the kitchen, directing them to grab any food or drinks they wanted and Ilya appeared with Wyatt and Luca in tow.

“Bood!” Ilya greeted. “You beautiful man, you have arrived!”

“Rozy!” Bood said dramatically. “It’s been too long, brother.”

“It’s been a month,” Shane quipped.

“Yes, is too long,” Ilya said. “And Cassie!”

“Hey, Ilya,” Cassie said, pulling him into a hug before he turned to LaPointe.

“Ah, and who is this guy? You adopted a toddler?”

“Ilya,” Shane said sternly. “Stop messing with the rooks.”

“But is fun!”

“Ilya.”

The Russian man let out a big sigh and petulantly said, “ugh, fine.”

“Whipped,” Hazy said, snorting.

“Oh my god, Hazy, who asked you?” Ilya said.

The house started filling in more as the others started arriving, and they all moved to the game room. Shane ended up versing Ilya in a game of pool and gloating as he won. Ilya then said that Shane must have cheated and that ended with them having a small tournament as they tried besting each other, first to five wins. It was bloodthirsty, it was long, and it was very satisfying when Shane won.

“Glad to see the rivalry isn’t dead,” Chouinard remarked as Shane revelled in his win.

“Oh, it’s very real,” Shane said. “Love to see Ilya lose.”

“Must be so sad for you when I always win then,” Ilya said.

“You literally just lost.”

“Wow, you win one thing.”

“I won at cards last week.”

“You had Yuna on your side. You basically cheated.”

“Oh, so should I tell my mom that you think we cheated?”

“NO! Do not tell Yuna. She will skin me alive.”

“I mean, if you think she’s a cheater...”

“Hollander, I will do dishes for whole month. Please do not tell her.”

“Two months.”

“One and a half.”

“Deal.”

The night continued on, eventually they moved to the backyard as the grill was fired up for dinner. Bood basically begged to work it, so Shane had pre-prepared the meat the day before, following Bood’s recipes for marinating it meticulously.

“So, Luca,” Shane said, coming up to stand by the younger man. “What do you get up to in your spare time?”

“Oh, I draw sometimes.”

“Really? That’s cool. I’ve never been talented in that area. You’ll have to show me sometime.”

This seemed to do nothing but fluster the boy. “M-maybe, haha.”

“Not if you don’t want to, of course.”

“No, I can find something!” Luca said determinedly. He pulled out his phone and scrolled to find something. “Here.”

It was a painting of a rink from a high angle, a game being played on it. The figures were a blur, moving around. The colours were vibrant, and the shading and details were amazing, the subtle reflections of the players were nice. It looked almost real.

“This so cool. Is this the kind of thing you usually draw?”

Luca hesitated before saying, “...yes?”

It was obvious even to Shane who usually had trouble reading people that it was a lie, but he didn’t press. “Well, you’re really talented. That work is amazing.”

Luca blushed deep at the compliment and Ilya appeared at Shane's side. "Ah, what is going on here?"

"Luca was just showing me some art that he does. He's really good, I'd buy the work he just showed me."

"Ooh, show me!" Ilya urged. Luca turned his phone to Ilya, looking a little stunned at Shane's words. "Oh, this is cool. You make this?"

Luca nodded, looking a little wide-eyed.

"We should buy," Ilya said, nudging Shane's shoulder. "Would look good in lounge room."

"It would," Shane agreed. Then said to Luca, "would you be willing to sell a print to us?"

"You want to buy my art?" Luca said weakly.

"Yeah, it's really good! How much would you want for it?"

"Oh, no, I wouldn't charge you! I can just send it to you and you can get it printed!"

"No, no," Shane said. "You should get paid for it. You probably worked very hard."

"No, I can't take your money, Mr. Hollander."

"Just Hollander is fine, and I insist," Shane said.

Luca hesitated like he was thinking something. "Okay, I will sell for 5."

Shane nodded and asked for his Venmo. Luca then looked at his phone in shock after Shane sent the money. "Um... M-Hollander, this is not \$5."

"Oh, I thought you meant \$5000. That's okay, you keep it, kid."

Luca looked like he was ready to combust but still said, "thank you."

The night came to a close around 9pm, people starting to slowly leave until it was just the newlyweds left.

Shane collapsed onto the couch and Ilya fell down with him. Shane rolled onto him, burrowing his head into the crook of his husband's neck. Ilya brought his hands up around him, rubbing them up and down Shane's back.

Shane nuzzled into him, hitching his leg up to rest over Ilya's hips, Ilya's hand coming down to grip under his thigh to hold him there. Shane shifted against him, dragging his groin against Ilya's side, his leg grinding slightly in its spot.

"Mmmm," Ilya moaned, gripping his leg tighter. Shane continued to slowly hump against him, massaging his leg against Ilya with every movement.

Shane pressed his lips to the skin of Ilya's throat, darting his tongue out to taste him. He started sucking at the spot, nipping slightly. He kept thrusting his hips as he worked on Ilya's neck.

He could feel Ilya swelling under his leg and that made Shane's own cock harden fully. The drag of his dick over Ilya's hip felt amazing and he started thrusting harder against it. He could feel himself start leaking and knew it wouldn't be long until he was wet enough for a patch of his khaki pants to show it.

"Fuck, Shane, just like that," Ilya whimpered when Shane shifted so his knee could press against Ilya's clothed bulge. Shane continued his humping, moaning lowly, slightly muffled as he was still latched onto his husband's neck.

He kept thrusting into Ilya until they were both panting, moaning messes.

"God, lyubimiyy, you feel good, don't stop," Ilya begged and Shane picked up his pace, humping him. "Fuck, I'm going to cum, please, Shane, don't stop, fuck."

Ilya kept babbling, moaning and whimpering as Shane slowly built to his own orgasm, his pants soaked from his precum.

Ilya came with a long groan, his fingers clenching down hard enough on Shane's leg that there would probably be bruises left and the feeling of that sent Shane to his own finish, panting into Ilya's neck.

They stayed like that for a while, just cuddled into each other, Shane tucked into Ilya's neck, an Ilya's arms around Shane.

Chapter 20: Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Ilya starts practice with the Cens

Chapter Notes

Hey y'all! Hope you enjoy this one!

I wanted to try something different at the end, so I hope y'all like it!

Also there is some smut so if you don't want to read it, then stop after their first practice and then start reading again where the group chat starts! <3

Shane pulled the car into the carpark and Ilya squeezed his hand before letting go. They grabbed their bags from the back and headed inside.

When they got to the locker room, a few of the guys cheered.

“Why are we celebrating?” Ilya asked.

“Dude, you’re actually here!” Dykstra said.

“Yes, you all know this. You were in my house two weeks ago. We are in team group chat.”

“Yeah, man,” Young said. “But like you’re actually here. Like, we for sure have both Hollander and Rozanov.”

“You for sure had both of us since July,” Shane said.

“Shane!” Ilya practically yelled excitedly. “Look!”

He pointed to their cubbies. Their stalls were next to each other, the names above reading Hollander on the left and Rozanov on the right. Almost like their new legal hyphenated last names were. And shit. Yeah, this was real.

“*Baby*,” Shane said in Russian, his eyes glassy. “*We are here. Together.*”

“Yes, my love. We are.”

Shane looked to his husband and saw that they were both on the verge of tears.

“Hollzy speaks Russian?” Bergy asked.

“A little,” Shane said. “I’m not fluent or anything.”

“Do not listen to him,” Ilya urged. “He is liar. He has been learning for year and half and some days at home we only speak it.”

“Yeah, but it’s not fluent. It’s conversational.”

“Hate to break it to you, Hollzy,” Young interjected. “But if you can speak a language for a whole day, you’re probably fluent.”

“Whatever,” Shane said and dropped his bag into his stall.

Practice started and Coach wanted to show off the power play line to get everyone amped up.

It was Shane with Ilya and Bood on his wings and it was electric. Shane didn’t even need to look to know where Ilya was. He would just send the puck and Ilya would be there. It was almost like they had a telepathic link. They sank the puck in the goal and their teammates cheered.

“Holy fuck, we are never losing again!” Chouinard roared.

Coach Weibe tried a few different variations for the first two lines and found one that was absolutely lethal. Ilya would be with Bood and Barrett on the first line, with Shane, Luca, and LaPointe on the second. Shane didn’t like to assume that they would be winning any games, but yeah, he couldn’t imagine many teams winning against them.

The day ended up with Shane in a new group chat with both of his wings. He had never been big on group chats, finding them overwhelming, but he didn’t seem to mind being in these ones.

When they got home, Ilya immediately jumped him.

“Fuck, Shane,” he said against Shane’s mouth. “Is so sexy playing with you.”

Shane moaned against him, sucking on Ilya’s tongue. “You looked so hot today when you scored off my assist. Almost jumped you right then and there.”

Ilya practically dragged Shane upstairs to their room, throwing him onto the bed. He tore Shane’s shirt off, his own following directly after. Shane quickly shucked off his pants, his underwear with them, not even caring where he threw them.

He pulled Ilya’s face down, crushing their lips together, his other hand moving to palm over Ilya’s clothed cock. Ilya moaned into the kiss, hungrily licking into Shane’s mouth and jutting his hips, chasing his hand. He reached down and took his own pants and underwear off.

Ilya started moving his lips down, pressing open-mouthed kisses down Shane's chest and down passed his balls. He bent Shane's legs up against his chest and dived down, licking Shane's hole.

Shane's hands held his legs against himself, moaning at the feeling of Ilya licking into him.

"Ilya," he breathed, "fuck, yes, baby, *fuck*."

It wasn't long before he was a whimpering mess, Ilya fucking his tongue into him, loosening him up.

"I'm gonna come, baby, fuck, fuck, fuck, *fuck*."

He came hard, ropes of white shooting out of him, dripping down his shaft. Ilya brought his head up and used a hand to gather Shane's cum. Shane whined at it, sensitive from his orgasm, but Ilya still touched him, until his hand was full, then used it to lather his own cock.

He rolled Shane over onto his stomach and lined his dick with Shane's entrance and pressed inside, Shane's own cum used as lube. Shane moaned and moved his hips up, pushing up to his knees.

Once Ilya was fully inside, he started making short, hard thrusts, gripping Shane's hips hard. Shane started moving his hips back and forth to meet Ilya, his own dick hardening again.

"Look at you," Ilya said, "can't help yourself. Just have to fuck yourself on my cock."

Ilya slapped his ass and Shane moaned, rocking back onto Ilya. "Yes, fuck, need you."

"You did so well today at practice," Ilya groaned, thrusting harder into him. "Wanted to fuck you right out there on the ice."

Shane whimpered, his dick twitching, and his hole clenching around Ilya.

"You want that, yes?" Ilya asked. "Want me to take you like this out there. Show everyone what a slut you are for me."

"Y-yes," Shane answered, moaning at Ilya's words as he moved his hips faster. "Want you so bad. Always want you."

Ilya slammed into him, pounding his ass harder and faster, and Shane was so close to coming again already.

"Fuck, Ilya," he said, moving to touch his cock. "Wanna come, I'm so close."

Ilya grabbed his hand moving it away from his dick. He pushed Shane down so his head was pressed into the bed as he thrust into Shane. "No, no hand. You come on my cock only."

"I'm not gonna last, baby, need to come."

Ilya picked his pace up, hammering his cock against Shane's prostate. "Fuck. Come for me, Shane."

Shane came hard and fast, his load shooting out of him, Ilya still fucking into him, riding out his own orgasm.

Ilya slipped out of him a few minutes later and went to the ensuite, coming back with a washcloth. Shane laid there as Ilya wiped his ass clean. Shane hummed at the feeling of it brushing against his sensitive hole.

"I never want to stop playing on the same team as you," Ilya confessed. "I think I am spoiled."

"If you're spoiled, then I am too. I don't think we can ever be anything other than this. We're made for each other, I think."

Later, after they've had dinner, Shane is on his phone, talking with Luca and LaPoint.

father and his baby birds 🦢🐣🐣

Will LaPointe added Shane Hollander and Luca Haas to the group chat.

Will LaPointe changed the name of the group chat to "father and his baby birds" 🦢🐣🐣.

Will LaPointe

AYOOO SECOND LINEEEE 💪

Luca Haas

Did you really name the group chat that?

Will LaPointe

yeah man

can't just not give it a name

Luca Haas

But why that?

What if Hollander thinks it's weird?

Will LaPointe

he's literally called hockey jesus in the other chat

i think he'll be okay with this

Luca Haas

But he's not our father?

Will LaPointe

dude if you weren't like 9 years younger than him i would think he gave birth to you

Luca Haas

What does that even mean???

Shane

It means he thinks we are similar

I am okay with the name, it's okay Luca

Unless you're not okay with it? In which case we can always change it

Luca Haas

NO

It's okay, I don't mind it!



LaPointe

ok good noice 🍷

we got the seal of approval

Will LaPointe changed Shane Hollander's name to papa 🧑

Will LaPointe changed his name to child #1 🧑🏆

child #1 changed Luca Haas' name to child #2 🧑🥈

child #2 🧑🥈

Why am I number 2?

papa 🧑

Is that a pregnant man emoji?

Is that supposed to be me pregnant with you both?

child #1 🧑🏆

yeah duh

and luca you're no. 2 bc you came second in the draft 🗳️

child #2 🧑🥈

Not to you??

child #1 🧑🏆



The next day was basically the same, although Shane and Ilya were both pulled into Harris' office to make a video for the team's social media.

"Okay," Harris said. "So pretty much everyone online thinks you two still hate each other."

"Even though we've come out as friends?" Shane asked. And they had, a month ago they held a press conference to announce the Irina Foundation. Shane had hoped that would be

accepted and people wouldn't think they couldn't stand each other.

"Yeah, looks like people think it's just a case of you both just starting a charity for PR like other celebs sometimes do."

"So, what should we do?"

"I have an idea for a video where you guys play a game. I know we did a couple vids back in July but a lot of people thought you guys were putting on a nice face. And the videos were short so it didn't show much, they were just introducing Ilya to the team really. I thought maybe we could do a longer video that shows more of what you're like together."

"Sounds fun," Ilya said. "What will we film?"

"Have you guys heard of the newlyweds game?"

Shane froze at the term for a second but then realised that he had in fact heard of the game. "Isn't that where like you ask one of us a question about the other and has to guess the right answer?"

"Yes! Shall we do it?"

Transcript of video:

[The video opens to Shane and Ilya in chairs, both holding a small whiteboard and markers.]

Ilya: Hello, everyone! I am Ilya Rozanov, Captain for Ottawa Centaurs!

Shane: Hi, I am Shane Hollander, one of the Alternate Captains for the Cens.

Harris (off camera): So what we will do is I'll ask you questions, and you will both write the answer down on a whiteboard of what you think the answer for the other is and you then reveal it to see if it was guessed correctly. Ready?

[Both Shane and Ilya nod]

Ilya: Yes! I will win, of course.

Shane: The *bleep* you will! You're going down, Rozanov!

Ilya: Shane, you can't say *bleep* in video. And I will win, I am so much better!

Shane: Get ready to lose.

Harris (off camera): Okay! Let's maybe keep the swearing down... okay here we go. Question 1... What is your favourite food?

[Both of them write their answers, Ilya taking a little longer. They nod to Harris off camera when done.]

Harris (off camera): Okay, Ilya. What is yours?

Ilya: Easy! Chicken parmigiana.

Harris (off camera): Solid choice!

[Shane, looking very smug, turns his board around to show “chicken parm” written on it.]

Harris (off camera): And point for Shane! Okay, then, Shane please give your answer.

Shane: *thinking* Hmm I think it depends... I do love salmon when I have it with my diet, but if we are talking about food outside that, then maybe a Snickers bar?

Ilya: Ha!

[He turns his board around which reads “salmon but if off diet then snickers”.]

Shane: Ugh, how did you even know about the Snickers?

Ilya: *shrugs* Yuna told me.

Shane: Why was she even telling you that?

Ilya: She was telling me about time when you were kid and refused to come off ice unless she gave you Snickers.

Shane: She is a traitor to me.

Harris (off camera): Okay, moving on! Question 2... What is your favourite movie?

[Both write their answers down.]

Harris (off camera): Ilya, what is your answer?

Ilya: Fast and the Furious! I like big action movies and cars so is perfect.

[Shane nods and reveals his answer which reads “fast and furious?”.]

Ilya: I need to win, please start knowing less. What is yours?

Shane: No chance and it is When Harry Met Sally.

Ilya: *pumping his fist* Yes!

[He turns his whiteboard around showing it saying “when harry met sally”.]

Shane: You got lucky.

Ilya: There's like a thousand movies! How is it luck?

Shane: There's more than a thousand movies! And I don't know... you just got lucky.

Ilya: We have watched it like 8 times this year.

Shane: That doesn't mean it's my favourite!

Ilya: Obviously it does!

Harris (off camera): Alright, guys! Question 3... Are you a dog or cat person?

[Both Shane and Ilya quickly write their answers without needing to think.]

Ilya: I love dogs.

Shane: I think I would be more of a cat person.

[Both reveal that they got the answers correct.]

Harris (off camera): Wow! Okay, that was a fast round! Question 4 is... What is the name of your best friend?

[They write their answers down. Shane is blushing slightly.]

Harris (off camera): Okay, what's your answers?

Both (looking at each other): You.

Shane: *bleeeeeep*

Ilya: Ah, dammit.

[They both turn their boards around to show "Svetlana" and "Pike" written down.]

Shane: *sighs* I didn't realise we were both going to be sappy.

Ilya: The one time I have to write Pike's name down and it was all for nothing.

Shane: Don't act like you hate him. You're friends.

Ilya (looking disgusted): I am not friends with *Pike*.

Shane: You literally are. We had lunch with them like a week ago!

Ilya: I had lunch with you and beautiful Jackie. Her dumb husband was just also there.

Shane: You bought him a limited edition card that he has been looking at buying for ages!

Ilya: Yes, and he was my enemy when I did it.

Shane: You are unbelievable.

Harris (off camera): Y'all done? Can we move on?

Shane: Yes, sorry Harris.

Harris (off camera): Good. Last question... If your house was burning down and you could only save one thing, what would it be?

Ilya: Does it have to be object or like does person count?

Shane: It's obviously an object! ...Right?

Harris (off camera): Yes. Object only.

[They start to write their answers down.]

Shane: Wait! Uh, like what would we be wearing? Like would be wearing something that we always wear?

Harris (off camera): Weird question, but let's just say that you're wearing what you always wear.

[Shane nods and writes his answer down.]

Shane: ...Okay, done.

Ilya: Yes, me too. Okay, my answer is 2014 MVP trophy.

Shane: Mine is the Rookie of the Year award.

[Both of them turn their boards around to show that they are both correct.]

Shane: Oh, we tied then. Should we do another question?

Harris (off camera): No, it's okay to tie!

Shane: Right, but like, we should have a winner.

Ilya: Yes, I agree. We should keep playing until I win.

Shane: Well, you wouldn't *bleep* win anyway, so it would be until I do.

Ilya: You would not win! I would!

Shane: *bleep* you, it would so be me!

Harris (off camera): Yeah, no. We're done here! Say goodbye to the people.

Ilya: Goodbye, people!

Shane: Yeah, bye! *goes back to arguing with Ilya*

Harris: *sighs and turns the camera to face him* Well, I tried.

Chapter 21: Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Ilya's first games as a Centaur

Chapter Notes

Here you go! Enjoy! <3

Ilya fit into the team well. He was a good captain. Of course, Shane knew this, but getting the first-hand experience was different. And hot. Very hot.

The team was working well together as well, it felt like the team was finally full. Like there was something missing that was now found. Shane had even come out to his rookies after he heard them discussing a new queer show that they were watching together. Pointy had just said a “good for you, daddio” and Luca had just beamed a big smile at him and stammered through a “thank you for telling me!”

Troy was doing a lot better as well. Shane knows he spent some time hanging out with Harris over the summer, and he knows that he had started an Instagram page where he shows support for victims of sexual assault. Shane also knows that the Commissioner was not happy about it and had called him. Shane knows this because they had talked about it as he had also received a call – not a long one, but a warning one – that was basically a “I heard that you might be gay, please do not come out publicly about it.”

But Troy was definitely lighter and was playing better too. He was putting in the work, and everyone could see the difference. Playing Ilya’s wing had also struck up a friendship between the two and Shane was glad that Ilya could have a closer friend on the team like he himself had with Wyatt.

Ilya had also gotten a therapist, Galina. He had confided to Shane after a few bad days that he was sometimes sad, like his mother was. Shane had helped him find someone in Ottawa who spoke Russian. The first few sessions were draining for Ilya, and Shane had held him tight afterwards. But they were helping. Not perfectly – Ilya still had some bad days – but there was a difference. Shane was so proud of Ilya for accepting he needed help and for seeking that help.

Shane had decided to see his own therapist, a nice lady called Lexie, who helped him start to unpack his issues that he has with Montreal. She helped him find some breathing exercises that he could do if he was to have another panic attack. She was also someone who was LGBTQIA+ friendly, being a member of the community herself, and Shane had opened up about his own queerness. He has been told that he might have some internalised homophobia, especially when it comes to the hockey part of himself.

By the time their first match-up of the preseason arrived, the team were hyped up. They were so ready to show everyone that they were finally a team worth watching. It was a home game and was sold out. The closest they had come to a filled out rink was Shane's first game against the Metros. This, however, was fully sold out, all seats taken with not a single one empty.

The crowd when they skated out were so loud it was deafening.

Shane beamed at Ilya, who returned his own blinding smile. Shane reached out and pulled Ilya's head down, bumping their helmets together.

The game was fun. It was against Detroit and it was kind of pitiful the way that there was barely even a fight. The Cens won 6-1, both Ilya and Shane getting two goals apiece, Luca scoring his first ever NHL goal, and Bood and Troy also scoring. It was electric.

The locker room was almost as loud as the crowd had been, celebrating as if they had won the cup. Even after they all left, the group chat was going wild.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏒🏆

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
LETS FUCKING GOOOOO

Sunburnter Dillon ☀️
holy fuck we r never losing boys

THAT'S THE POINT 👉
AYO BOYS FUCKING GREATTTTT JOB

Boodylicious 🍑🍷💪
Fuck that was beautiful boys
So proud of you all 🥰

Young and Beautiful 🧑❤️
fuck we are really just never losing again 😭😭

Hollzy's Roomie 🏠👥
You all played well

So proud of all of you
And especially proud of Haasy for getting his first goal 🥳

Hollzy Jr. 🧑🎨🖍️
Thank you, Roz! ❤️

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👩👦🏠
You are welcome, son ❤️

Hollzy Jr. 🧑🎨🖍️
You are not my dad ❤️

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👩👦🏠
Shhhhhhhh quiet now or I will ground you ❤️

Hockey Jesus 🏒️🙏
I'm also proud of all of you
You all played brilliantly
We've come so far
Now rest up all of you, we are only just getting started! ❤️

THAT'S THE POINT 👉
yes, dad

Young and Beautiful 🧑💋
I shall rest, mama shane 🧑

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
whatever you say daddy 😊

Hockey Jesus 🏒️🙏
Why do I feel like Bergy's message has nothing to do with me being parental?

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👩👦🏠
watch yourself, bergy 😐

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
yes sir 😊
plz do not put me on bag skates
i will leave all fake flirting to you

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👩👦🏠
you better 😞

“Why do I feel like your jealousy is going to get us found out?” Shane asked as they got in the car to go home.

“Ah, no. If we are found out it will be because you will not be able to keep hands to yourself when we are on road trips.”

“You’ll have you own room though? I’ll probably be rooming with Hazy again.”

“Yes, I will have own room which means you will not be able to resist sneaking into it.”

“I absolutely will be able to resist!” Shane countered.

“Okay,” Ilya said, disbelief in his voice.

The next day they were standing in a hotel in Tampa, and Shane was forcing himself to take his bags to *his* hotel room with Hazy.

As they got to the room, Wyatt looked at him with confusion. “Aren’t you gonna be in with Roz? Figured I’d have the room to myself.”

“Why would I be with him? Captain’s get their own rooms.”

“Yeah, but...y’know...”

“I can’t,” Shane explained. “If people see me rooming with Ilya who only has one bed in his room, they’ll find out.”

“Yeah, I guess that would look a little weird...”

Later, Shane was in bed trying to sleep. It had been an hour and a half and all he could think about was the absence of another person next to him. His arm would reach out and find nothing but a cold side of the bed. He had spent the last six months sleeping next to Ilya. And now he was sleeping next to nothing.

“Fuck this,” Shane muttered, grabbing his phone. He saw that Ilya had messaged him four numbers, his room number.

Shane put on some socks and his shoes and walked to the door.

“’Bout time,” Wyatt called from his own bed.

“Fuck you,” Shane replied, opening the door and stepping outside. Once he got to the right floor, he sent off a message telling Ilya to let him inside. Ilya opened the door with a smug look and Shane said, “don’t say anything.”

Ilya wrapped his arms around him. “You took too long, I missed you.”

“I missed you too,” Shane confessed, burying his head in Ilya’s chest. “I was just laying in bed not being able to sleep because you weren’t there.”

“I don’t think we can be without each other anymore,” Ilya said into Shane’s hair.

“Guess not.”

Ilya led him over to the bed and they crawled in and Shane laid his head down onto Ilya, his husband's arms coming up around him. Shane hummed, contentedly and the next thing he knew, Ilya's phone alarm was going off and it was morning. Shane lifted his head and saw that he had left a drool spot on Ilya's chest and he wiped his mouth.

"Shit!" he sat up straight as Ilya groaned and reached for his phone. Shane reached for his own phone, seeing it almost dead. It was eight in the morning. There would be no way for Shane to sneak back to his own room without running into someone. "Fuck, this was such a bad idea. What am I going to do?"

"Is easy, moya lyubov'," Ilya said, rubbing his eyes as he typed something into his phone. "Just wait. I will fix."

Ten minutes later there was a knock on the door and Ilya opened it and came back with Shane's bags.

"What...?"

"I messaged Hazy," Ilya said, dropping the bags on a chair. "Now your stuff is here and if anyone sees you leave the room you can just say you came in early to hang out."

"Fuck, I love you," Shane said, reaching into his bag and fishing out his toothbrush and toothpaste.

"I love you too."

They got ready for the day together. Shane felt so behind on his day, usually waking up a couple hours early. They had an afternoon game, so there was no morning practice, but Shane still felt out of place, his normal routine ruined.

He would have to miss his morning yoga and he would probably have to cut his gym session shorter than usual. Ilya suggested a different type of workout, but Shane was worried about someone overhearing so he ended up on an exercise bike in the hotel gym. Not until after a very quiet blowjob session though.

Thankfully, he only ran into Bood on his way back to Ilya's, who just wagged his eyebrows when he saw Shane go into the room. Ilya had asked for two keys to the room when he checked-in, knowing Shane wouldn't last long before giving in.

Their game against Tampa was starting and Shane could tell something had happened. A lot of the players were shooting looks at Shane. He could tell most of the team noticed.

Ilya bent down for the first face-off and Shane could see the moment Ilya froze after the centre for Tampa spoke. He was seething, and when it came time to switch lines, Shane understood why.

"Well, if it isn't the pride parade," a Tampa player named Stone said.

"How original," Shane snarked.

“Suck many dicks lately?”

“Not as many as your wife,” Shane retorted because Stone was in the middle of a messy divorce because his wife had just been outed as having had multiple extra-marital affairs.

LaPointe nearby guffawed and Luca choked on a laugh.

“Fuck you, fag!” Stone growled getting in Shane’s face.

“No, thanks, not interested.”

“Cut it out, guys,” the ref said and Shane skated down the ice a bit further for the face-off.

After his shift, and a blocked shot on the goal, he skated back to the bench, slumping down next to Ilya.

“Don’t fight them,” Shane ordered. “I don’t care what they say about me, I barely even know these guys, they’re nobodies.”

“What did you say to Stone?” Ilya said after nodding in agreement to Shane’s command.

“Brought up his wife.”

“Oh, the one that cheated?”

“Yep.”

“Wow,” Ilya mused, “look at you, being all mean. Is very hot.”

“Keep it in your pants, Rozanov.”

“I’d rather keep it in yours.”

“Jeez, Roz,” Dykstra said. “I can’t tell if that is good flirting or not.”

“Any flirting I do is good flirting.”

The game was not the smoothest – and thankfully it was only a few players saying stuff to or about Shane – but they did pull through with a win 5-2.

When the team returned to the hotel, Shane milled about in his and Wyatt’s room for a while before heading to the floor above to Ilya, luckily not running into anyone.

“Ugh, is this what it was like last season?” Ilya asked, when Shane flopped onto the bed next to him.

“Not really. It was worse with Montreal and then after that it was only Kent who had been told and we only went against him once. Seems like the cat is out of the bag now though. I haven’t seen anything online but it might just be like an open-secret in the league.”

“I wanted to punch every one of their faces.”

“Don’t. I know it sucks, but they’re just trying to mess with us so we fight and lose because half the team is in the sin bin.”

“You do not deserve this, moy lyubimiyy,” Ilya said and he sounded devastated.

Shane straddled him, wrapping his arms around his husband.

“It’s okay,” Shane soothed. “I mean its not, but its just a few meaningless people. They don’t matter.”

He could feel a spot on his shirt get wet from where Ilya’s eyes were and he ran a hand up Ilya’s back and into his hair, massaging his scalp.

“Plus,” Shane added. “Most of their comments were *so* lame. Like I think I heard most of them in grade 5. They were really not that great at being homophobic, was kind cute, like baby’s first hate speech.”

Ilya snorted. “Yeah, they didn’t have good imagination, very uncreative.”

“Exactly.”

They stayed like that for a little while, just holding each other.

Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Cens vs Metros 2: Electric Boogaloo

Chapter Notes

I am so tired and it is 2am but here you go! Hope you all enjoy! Love y'all, ugh <3

TW: homophobic language and mention of suicide

The Centaurs were on a roll. They had won 8 of their 10 games, a lot better than they were when they were losing those 8 out of 10. They were finally being looked at as serious competition, their ticket and merch sales had gone up, and the team were all happy. They did face a couple homophobes here and there, but overall, they were definitely having a good time.

Shane had to have an additional two therapy sessions on top of his normal schedule in the lead up to versing the Metros in Montreal for the first time this season. He was so anxious he had deep cleaned the oven twice. The locker room was still filled with good vibes, but it seemed to be undercut with some tenseness. Everyone was either locked in looking like they were preparing for battle, or they were bursting with nervous energy.

The guys who were there for the games last season knew what they were walking into, and the three new players only knew parts. Ilya did know quite a bit, but he wasn't there and didn't hear what was being said and he wasn't there covered in bruising. Shane was worried about Luca and LaPointe though. It was bad enough that Bergy and Young were rookies dealing with that, but now there were two more added to the mix. Two eighteen year olds who had no idea what to do or expect.

It was just before they were about to take the ice that Shane decided he needed to say something.

"Alright, guys listen up!" Shane raised his voice and everyone stopped to look at him. "I know everyone is worried about this game. You're all either wondering how bad this is about to be, or you know what it will be like. I need you all to remember that no matter what they say out there, you are all better than them. We didn't have this power last season and we still

put up 20 goals over two games. Either they are going to remember how to play hockey, or they'll focus on me. Either way, I want you all to go out there and show them that you are worth more than them."

He looked around him and continued, "they could potentially say the worst things you've ever heard, but I want you all to try and move past it. Please try and play good, *clean* hockey. Obviously, if they cross your line too far, by all means do what you want... but other than that, I just want you to go out there and try your best. Whether your best today is shit hockey because of how they play, or your best is a double hatty like I pulled against them last time, I just want you all to do what you can."

The Cens cheered, and they all headed out to the ice.

Ilya hung back a little to fall in beside Shane and said in Russian, "*that speech was so sexy of you. Can you give speech like that later tonight?*"

"*Maybe if you behave,*" Shane said back, giving his husband a small smile.

When they stepped onto the ice, Ilya pulled him in to bump their helmets together, a small tradition they had started.

Shane's line was starting this game, Weibe figuring that the Metros would not be expecting it. And he was right, since the starting line for Montreal was provided, and it was not the line that they would have usually put against Shane.

Shane skated out with Luca and Pointy, reminding them quietly to be ready.

Andropov was the starting centre for this game, and he already seemed angry that it wasn't Gagnon out starting against Shane.

"Thought you hid behind a Russian guard dog now, running down off to second line?" Andropov quipped.

"Ah, but I knew you would miss me too much," Shane rebutted. He looked around. "What, no Comeau? Did he not want to see me again?"

"Fuck you."

They lined up for the face-off and when the puck was dropped, Shane easily flicked it back to LaPointe. It was like taking candy from a baby.

The thing about coming from Montreal, is that Shane had spent 7 years practicing shooting against Drapeau. That means that he knows where best to aim and he knows what Drapeau's tells are. So, it really is no surprise when less than a minute into the game, Shane scored. He played for one more face-off before switching lines with Ilya.

"*Beautiful goal, my love,*" Ilya whispered in Russian when they passed each other.

"*Now you go get one.*"

“For you.”

That sounded like a promise, and Shane was filled with pride when Ilya did get a goal a minute later. They were only a few minutes into the game and they were up 2-0. They continued playing, the four lines cycling through. Montreal were not holding back. Their checks were hard, crushing the Cens players to the boards. The vitriol was horrid. Comments like *“what Captain are you sucking off this year?”* and telling Luca *“watch out in the showers, kid.”*

Shane shook them off, but he knew that they got to Ilya, when, in the second period, Wilson said something to Ilya, and Shane watched as Ilya froze and then – so quickly Shane almost missed it – dropped his stick and gloves and punched Wilson so hard he almost fell backward. Shane was already on the ice as he was about to switch lines and so he was skating over there fast as Ilya landed one punch and then another. Ilya had been hit once, his nose bloody. Wilson was currently on his knees, Ilya fisting the front of his jersey to hold him up.

“Ilya, stop,” Shane yelled in Russian. *“Drop him. Now.”*

Ilya stopped punching and looked up at Shane.

Wilson laughed from below him and said, “he bitch to you like that in the bedroom?”

Shane’s eyes sharpened at those words and in that moment he fucking *hated* the man and so he nodded his head slightly to Ilya who’s face split into a wicked grin, blood dripping down his mouth, and he gave Wilson another punch to the face. Shane could only then think about how fucking *hot* that was.

Wilson wasn’t completely unconscious when they dragged him off the ice, but Shane didn’t care. Ilya skated past him to the penalty box, and Shane muttered, *“what did he say to get you to drop gloves?”*

Ilya stopped and looked disgusted as he said, *“he asked if I thought David was upset his mail-order bride gave him a fairy for a son.”*

“Good work then.”

Ilya grinned at him and continued skating past.

“Since when the fuck do you speak Russian?” JJ asked from nearby.

“Bout a year and a half,” Shane replied, smiling at him.

“Was I seeing things there or did you seriously give Rozanov permission to continue beating Wilson?”

“He deserved it.”

“And you two are like friends? I saw that video where you called him your best friend. Was that a lie?”

Shane shook his head. “No. He is.”

“What the fuck?” JJ said, looking confused. “That guy? You hate him.”

“Clearly I don’t, I learnt a whole language for him.”

“I don’t understand.”

“You don’t have to,” Shane said, shrugging. “You’re my friend and so is he.”

“Okay, man.”

Ottawa had to face the Montreal power play, which was kind of pathetic and not hard to run their time out. When Shane had returned to the bench, Weibe had only asked the question, “worth it?” to which Shane nodded and Weibe then shrugged and said, “okay then.”

By the time the second period ran out, the Cens were completely thrashing the Metros 9-0. Shane had scored his fourth goal of the night while Ilya was in the box.

It was in the third period when Shane heard Comeau say to Luca against the boards, “Do you think if we push him hard enough, he’ll take himself out? Save us having to do it.”

Shane took one look at Luca whose face showed a truly devastating expression that Shane never wanted to ever see again, and so he skated over and pushed Comeau against the boards, ripping his helmet off, and punching him in the jaw so hard that a tooth went flying. All it took was one other hit before Comeau was laid out flat on the ice.

He groaned which was an indicator that he wasn’t fully knocked out and so Shane leaned down and snarled, “don’t say shit like that him ever again.”

He turned to Luca and asked, “you okay?”

Luca nodded, wide-eyed, and so Shane skated himself over to the penalty box, stepping inside and sitting down. He looked over to catch Ilya’s eye and saw a look that absolutely had no place in a rink filled with people. He blushed a little, flustered.

The Metros lost, a massive 14-0. Hazy blocked 20 shots on goal, not a single one getting past him. Shane made five goals, Ilya and Troy both had three, and Luca and Bood had one. It was the highest amount that the Cens had scored so far.

Shane and Ilya both covered media, sparing Bood from having to field questions about their fights.

The first reporter asked them both why they fought.

Ilya answered first. “Wilson is bad person and said very inappropriate thing so I punched him.”

“Same here,” Shane said. At this point, he didn’t care how bad he was making Montreal seem. “I don’t think telling an eighteen year old that his teammate should commit suicide is

appropriate for a hockey game. Mental health is not something to use against anyone and making jokes like that is why a lot of people have trouble wanting to get help. So many people hold their self-worth in the words people say to and about them and that kind of talk is unacceptable. I also think there is a difference between bullying and chirping. And there is a difference between being a bigot and a hockey player. I hope certain players learn that soon.”

Another reporter cut in, “Shane, you just used the term ‘bigot’. Could you please elaborate on why you chose to use that word about this?”

“Is simple, no?” Ilya asked. “We just played a game against a few of them.”

“So, your statement is that the Metros are bigots?”

“No,” Shane said. “That’s not what he is saying. Not all of them are – there are some good players, and some other people in the organisation.”

“But there are some that are bigoted?”

“We wouldn’t be sitting here explaining our reasons for dropping gloves if there weren’t.”

The reporter looked taken aback like he wasn’t expecting Shane to answer so bluntly.

“Mr. Hollander,” another reporter said. “Making a comment about mental health is not... kind – but I fail to see how it is a bigoted remark. Can you explain this further?”

“Clearly,” Ilya answered. “The comment itself was not bigoted, but it was said because the person making it is a bigot.”

“That word is starting to not sound like an actual word at this point,” Shane muttered. He then said louder, “are there any questions about the rest of the game? I think we’ve made ourselves clear enough about this.”

“Yes,” Ilya agreed. “We just won 14-0. Let’s talk about that.”

After, when Shane and Ilya had rejoined the team, they were all about to walk out of the arena when a loud voice called, “Uncle Shane! Uncle Ilya!”

The married couple turned towards the voice and saw the Pike twins running to them.

“My pikelets!” Ilya boomed, scooping them both up. “How are my goddaughters?”

“They’re my goddaughters,” Shane said as he wrapped his arms around Ilya and the twins, sandwiching the girls. “And how are my beautiful nieces?”

“Eh, what’s yours is mine, so they are mine now.”

“We’re good!” Jade said, turning around and latching onto Shane.

“Mom says we can go out for ice cream,” Ruby said. “Are you coming with us?”

Jackie appeared next to them carrying Amber. “Sorry, guys, they ran when they saw you.”

“Jackie! Give me my niece!” Ilya demanded, handing Ruby off to Shane so he could grab at Amber. Shane had to adjust to holding both girls.

Amber cooed and grabbed Ilya’s nose, squeezing it. Ilya spoke through it, his voice nasally as he said, “ah you like nose? Yes, is broken, please be careful.”

“We saw you both fight!” Ruby said excitedly. “It was so cool!”

“There was blood everywhere!” Jade said gleefully.

Shane winced. “Sorry, Jackie. Girls, it’s not okay to fight, please know that.”

“Yes, unless person is mean, then is okay,” Ilya told them.

Shane sighed. “Ilya. Not helping.”

“Am too. Teaching them life lesson.”

It was at that point that Hayden – carrying Arthur – appeared with JJ.

“Daddy, look!” Jade said. “We found Uncle Shane and Uncle Ilya!”

“I can see that,” Hayden replied and turned to Shane. Shane could see JJ mouth ‘*Uncle Ilya?*’.

“How you holding up? That was rough.”

“I didn’t even get hit, I’m fine.”

“I got hit!” Ilya grinned proudly.

“Congrats,” Hayden deadpanned. “Happy for you.”

“Sorry to cut in guys,” Weibe interjected from behind them, standing with the rest of the Centaurs. “But we have to head out.”

“Right, yeah, sorry,” Shane said. “Okay, girls, we have to go, but we can come visit on the weekend, okay?”

“Yes, we will bring ice cream to make up for not going with you now,” Ilya offered.

“Okay,” Ruby said a little put out. “How much?”

“Big tub for us all to share.”

She considered this then nodded. “Deal.”

They said their goodbyes and left with the Cens.

“Man,” Dykstra said. “You guys were adorable with those kids.”

Shane just smiled at him and mumbled his thanks. He agreed. Every time he saw Ilya interact with kids, he wanted nothing more than for them to have their own. Shane should be thankful that he doesn't have the right tools for childbearing because he was sure he would have given Jackie a run for her money on the number of times he would have ended up pregnant.

Chapter 23: Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Aftermath of the match

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, hope you enjoy this chapter! Decided to have a bit of fun. Today was so tiring so only had time for the one chapter. Hope it's good though 💖

It was on the bus to the airport that the run-in with the Pikes were brought up by Chouinard. Shane was honestly proud that they lasted all of five minutes.

“Damn, Cap,” Choui said. “I didn’t know you were so close with Hayden Pike.”

Ilya’s eyes narrowed and his face got a sour look. “Do not say that. I am not close with *Pike*.”

“You sure seemed it,” Young chimed in.

“Yeah, man,” Dykstra said, “the kids call you ‘Uncle Ilya.’”

“Ah, I see where you are getting confused. No, I am close with Jackie, she is goddess among women and her children are beautiful babies. Montreal’s best player just happens to also be there.”

“Wow, Hayden went from 15th to best?” Shane asked.

“Yes, it pains me to say. But I hate him least out of all of the others and you are no longer a Metro, so...”

Shane hummed and pulled his phone out. He watched as Ilya narrowed his eyes as Shane opened his text thread with Hayden.

“Shane,” Ilya warned. “Do not tell him this.”

“Why not?” Shane asked innocently. And to be very fair, Shane had no intention of actually sending anything to his friend.

“Do. Not. Tell. Him.”

“I’m sure he would want to know!”

“Please, moy lyubimiyy,” Ilya begged. “I will do anything. You cannot tell him. Anything, I will do it. Please.”

“I don’t know...” Shane said with fake unsureness.

“I will drink gross smoothie every morning.”

“Hmm,” Shane considered.

“I will quit getting McDonalds!”

Someone on the bus let out a long whistle and a “oh damn, he serious.” And yeah, that was an almost-extreme offer. While Ilya hated the smoothies – he had never had one but he thinks green is an unnatural drink colour – he *loved* McGriddles more than any other food. Shane knew he wouldn’t actually make Ilya give it up, but *Ilya* didn’t have to know that.

“Maybe...” Shane thought for a moment.

“Both. I will do both. Smoothie and no more McDonalds!”

“Okay,” Shane agreed easily. “It’s a deal. I won’t tell him.”

Ilya exhaled and his whole body relaxed, slumping in his seat with relief. “That was close one.”

“Walk ‘em like a dog, eh Hollander?” Bergy said from the front of the bus, turning around to grin at him.

“Huh? What’s that mean?”

“Oh, I know this one!” Ilya said. “Means I do and agree with everything you say without complaint just because you say so.”

“I don’t know about that... I hear you complain plenty. And you don’t do everything I say. And if anyone knows anything about us, it’s that you *don’t* agree with what I say.”

“Yes, moyo solnyshko, whatever you say.”

“Can we talk about that game now?” LaPointe piped up. “Is that what it was like last season?”

“Pretty much,” Shane said. “I was hoping they would learn their lesson, but apparently not.”

He was hoping that they would have been humiliated at their losses and would whip back into shape to try and actually win the game rather than only managing to maim the Cens

players. But it was like they were desperate to prove that the only good thing about them was Shane.

“Yes,” Ilya said. “Is like they magically forget how to play hockey when they are against a gay person. Is no wonder why they do not want gay people in the league.”

A few of the guys laughed and Shane let out a snort and said, “imagine every team had a queer person. They’d never win again.”

“They can hit hard, though, I’ll give them that,” Troy said, stretching. “I don’t think my back will ever feel the same again.”

“They don’t hit as hard as Hollzy though!” Wyatt cheered. “I saw Comeau lose a tooth!”

“He got off easy this time too!” Dykstra pointed out. “Last time they had to wire his jaw shut after it was broken so it could heal!”

“Shame for everyone that they opened it back up for him,” Shane remarked.

His phone buzzed in his hand and his stomach dropped when he saw that his mom had sent him a tweet.

Gilbert Comeau  **@gilbertcomeau5**

Shane Hollander just gloated to a reporter about his vicious attack on me, justifying it. After I chirped his teammate, not even him, he decided to inflict physical harm. Not only did he do this last season, putting me out for the rest of our games and landing me in hospital where I needed surgery, but now he is continuing his tirade 1/2

 **Gilbert Comeau**  **@gilbertcomeau5**

Shane Hollander is dangerous and should not be allowed to keep hurting others. I call for the league to investigate him and remove him from this sport for the safety of others 2/2

Liked by Patrice Drapeau , **Adrian Wilson** , and **5.3k others**.

“Oh, great,” Ilya said, reading over Shane’s shoulder. “He is still running his mouth.”

“What the fuck?” Shane hissed in both disbelief and panic, looking at his husband for help. Because, yeah, *what the fuck?*

Ilya thought for a couple moments and then reached for his own phone and said, “I will handle this.”

Shane watched as Ilya made several tweets in retaliation.

 replying to Gilbert Comeau

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

this you?

link to a compilation video of Comeau fighting which is 2 hours long

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

telling someone that they should kill themselves is not a chirp or a joke. what is a joke is gilbert comeau's face

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

don't want to lose any more teeth? easy! step 1 is don't be homophobic!

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

gilbert comeau killed my father. i do not have proof of this but i also do not have proof that he didn't kill him. plz explain yourself @gilbertcomeau5

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

i thought the most unfortunate thing about him was that his name is gilbert but then i saw his face

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

As someone who has spent many hours on the ice inflicting physical harm to other players, I call that the league investigate Gilbert Comeau and remove him from this sport for the safety of others.

Ilya Rozanov  **@ilyarozanov**

as someone who has spent many games facing gilbert comeau, i call for the league to remove him from this sport because he is not a good player

“Everyone! Listen the fuck up!” Ilya said, raising his voice. “Comeau has asked the league on Twitter to remove Shane because he is violent. I need you all to go online and tweet about how violent Comeau and other players are.”

“Yes, Cap!” a few of the guys responded.

“I am going to pretend I am not hearing any of this,” Coach said as he pulled headphones over his ears.

“This is not necessary, guys,” Shane urged, a little more panicked. The last thing he wanted was any of them getting in trouble because of him. “I have an agent and she can handle this. Comeau is butthurt, but the league won’t drop me. Hell, Ilya fought Wilson tonight! And worse!”

“Ooh, good point!” Ilya said and started furiously typing. Shane sighed and opened his phone, resigning himself to this. He sent off an apology text to Harris – vowing secretly to buy him something nice – and then looked at the tweets from his teammates.

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

i also fought tonight! why is hollander getting all the credit? i worked very hard
#cancelrozanov

Luca Haas ✓ @lucahaashockey

I already admired Shane Hollander but after tonight, he is my hero! It is never okay to say such horrible things like Comeau did. I’m proud to be on the same team as Hollander ❤️

Troy Barrett ✓ @nottroybolton

Fighting is a part of hockey. You know what’s not a part of it? Being a homophobic dick.

Zane Boodram ✓ @bbqatboods

Shane Hollander is one of the greatest hockey players of this generation. A league without him is not a league worth playing in. Proud of you tonight, brother 🙌

Wyatt Hayes ✓ @hazyongoal

Shane Hollander is a sweetheart and has never done anything wrong, ever! Comeau on the other hand...

Evan Dykstra ✓ @evandykstra

Say shit, get hit! 👊

Will LaPointe ✓ @pointymlh

hollzy is the most level headed guy i know. if you are saying something that gets him to snap, maybe what you said was not okay. also he is a mama bear and you came for his cub. maybe don't do that 🙄

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

@gilbertcomeau5 maybe you should be focusing on not cheating on your wife when you're on the road. @mariacomeau plz ask your husband about where he is when he was in tampa. and boston, toronto, new york, and vegas!

Scott Hunter ✓ @scotthunteradmirals

Shane Hollander is a great hockey player and a great man who I am so proud of. As the only other guy who he has ever fought while in the MLH, all I will say is that he only dishes out when he needs to. Love you, Rook!

↩ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

omg a fossil! @smithsonian come get your man!

↩ **Scott Hunter** ✓ @scotthunteradmirals

Go fuck yourself, Roz 🙅

↩ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

@kipgrady come get your nursing home patient before he breaks hip

Carter Vaughan ✓ @vaughnyhockey

Gilbert Comeau has fought me 3 times. The man is clearly unhinged and does not have any regard for other's safety. Hollander has not fought me once, even when I dared him to. The man is clearly a cutiepie who is not a danger to other players.

Ollie Young  **@youngdoeshockey**

hollzy's punches on the ice have only landed on one man. i don't see how he is a danger to other players, but that's just me

Ben Holmberg  **@bergyshootspuck**

The past three games against the Metros, they have been checking us hard enough to the point that we are all covered in bruises and they were slinging slurs at us the whole time. Maybe Hollzy isn't the one to watch out for Comeau. Maybe he was just reacting to your own violence

Ottawa Centaurs  **@ottawacentaurshq**

We stand with our Alternate Captain, Shane Hollander, who took a stand for mental health, homophobia, and who also stood up for another player!

Tanner Dillon  **@dillontanner**

Gilbert Comeau is upset that from the hundreds of fights he has started unprompted, he lost two that he didn't start. Maybe he is the issue

Liam Boyle  **@liamboyleottawa**

Homophobia isn't chirping, it's bigotry. Someone was going to punch Comeau, it just happened to be Hollander. If Hollzy is looked into because of this, then maybe someone needs to look into Comeau too

Hayden Pike  **@haydenpike35**

I played with Shane for 7 years. He is a good player, dedicated to the game, and who I would trust with my life. He is family and I am proud of him for drawing the line where he did. A lot of things are unacceptable to say and that was one of them. Love you, brother! 

 **Ilya Rozanov**  **@ilyarozanov**

okay, you get a pass this once but i am watching you 😞

 **lauren** **@hollandergirly**

what did hayden ever do to you?

 **Ilya Rozanov**  **@ilyarozanov**

he breathed near me wrong once 0/10 experience do not recommend

 **Hayden Pike**  **@haydenpike35**

Do you ever shut up? @shanehollander24 can you please slap him for me?

 **Ilya Rozanov**  **@ilyarozanov**

ah you are threatening me with good time. yes @shanehollander24 please do 🤔

Shane felt filled with pride seeing his teammates supporting him. He liked everyone of their tweets. Well, he liked *most* of their tweets. There was only one from Ilya that he liked, not interacting with the others.

“Thank you, guys,” Shane said out loud to the quiet bus. He looked to Ilya specifically and reached out to squeeze his hand in gratitude. Ilya squeezed back.

He sent off a message to Farah, asking on what he should do, explaining exactly what was said on the ice for clarification. He also sent out a couple of messages saying thanks to Hayden, Scott, and Vaughny.

The team got to the airport shortly after, and after a short flight, they were landing in Detroit and heading to the hotel. It was almost 10pm when they got to the hotel and Shane was so tired, his knuckles and body sore from the game, and he didn’t even bother going to his and Hazy’s room, just following Ilya straight up to his. He would think of something later – maybe he can say that he was going to talk to Ilya for a bit before heading off to his own room for sleep?

But that was a problem for tomorrow, he told himself as they took a quick shower together to wash the airport off them, before crawling into bed.

“Are you okay?” he asked as they lay there, Ilya blanketing him. “I know what Wilson said to you about Mom and Dad was fucked. And what Comeau said was shitty too.”

“I am okay,” Ilya said. “I do not like them talking about Yuna and David like that. No one should talk about them like that... but I am okay now. Was very therapeutic, punching him. Plus, you giving me permission like that? Very hot. If I was not so tired I would show you how hot I found it.”

“I was hot? You all covered in blood was so fucking sexy, Ilya. I don’t know why but it was.”

“You are freak, Hollander.”

“Don’t act like you weren’t turned on by me fighting, I saw how you looked at me when I was in the box.”

“Yes, if we were not in middle of game I would have had sex with you right there. You are so sexy when you are mad. Moy zloy kotonok.”

“Your angry kitten? How am I a kitten?”

“You look like a kitten! Especially when mad.”

“Fuck off, I do not!”

Ilya started laughing hard. “You look like one now!”

“Fuck you, I’m going to sleep.”

“Okay, me too. Good night, my love.”

“Good night, baby.”

Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Shane and Ilya spend time with the rookies

Chapter Notes

So sorry about not posting anything yesterday, but I was travelling to the city to go see The Odyssey with my ex-fiancé of 6 years (broke up a couple months ago but still friends).

I did find out last night like 2 minutes after the movie ended that he might be talking to someone else though and then I noticed that every single post with or about me have all been deleted from his insta which sucked and I ended up crying on his couch (which is actually my couch) at 2am while he was asleep and then catching a 4am train home so I started writing this on my phone on the way home to distract myself.

I know we are broken up but it wasn't because we didn't love each other or anything so I was having a lot of feelings about it, especially because we agreed that we weren't completely writing off the idea of being together again. Plus, it was my first relationship so first experience with anything (except for a few kisses with some girls). So first ever break up.

Anyway, small rant over, but I am back home now, so should be back to writing more before going back in a couple weeks to watch Spider-Man.

Hope you all enjoy! 😊 ❤️

When Shane woke the next morning, Ilya was still on top of him, dead to the world, drooling on Shane's chest. He didn't have the heart to wake or move him, so Shane just took the time to look at his husband, his face peaceful. His nose was a little swollen and he had a faint black eye, but he still looked so beautiful. While Ilya slept on, Shane carefully reached out an arm for his phone, switching it on and seeing that he had a message from Farah with a statement for Shane to look over and post to social media. He skimmed over it and didn't find any issues, so he copied it and made a new tweet.

Shane Hollander ✅ @shanehollander24

During the game against Montreal last night, I overheard Gilbert Comeau say to a teammate that he “hopes I take myself out to save them [Montreal] having to do it.” Mental health is very close to home to me, especially as I just announced a couple months ago that I was co-founding the Irina Foundation, a charity that will help fund support for mental health and suicide prevention 1/5

 **Shane Hollander**  **@shanehollander24**

In that moment, I decided that it crossed a line, and I threw a punch. It is not the first time that I have fought Comeau, but what he said was not okay. I will not be apologising for this, but even though it is a part of hockey, I do truly hope that I never have to drop gloves again 2/5

 **Shane Hollander**  **@shanehollander24**

Thank you to my teammates and friends who have come out in support of me in this moment. I appreciate and admire all of you 3/5

 **Shane Hollander**  **@shanehollander24**

Since everyone is talking about my fight, I want to show my support for Rozanov’s fight too. I commend him for standing up against racism, and would like him to know that I am proud of him for doing this 4/5

 **Shane Hollander**  **@shanehollander24**

I would also like to take this moment to express that bigotry has no place on the ice. If you have to use hate speech or prejudiced language to get under someone’s skin, then you aren’t chirping someone – you are just being hateful 5/5

Ilya started shifting in his place and Shane looked back at him, seeing his husband’s eyes slowly blink open.

“*Good morning,*” Ilya said sleepily in Russian.

“*Morning,*” Shane replied, moving his head down to press a kiss to Ilya’s forehead.

Ilya squeezed his arms around Shane for a moment, then rolled off him. “*You will want to do your yoga, yes? I will watch.*”

“*Pervert.*”

“*Always, for you.*”

Shane rolled his eyes and got up, going over to his bags and grabbing out his yoga mat. True to his word, Ilya did watch the whole time. After, Shane got ready to go to the hotel gym, and Ilya went back to sleep for a while.

Shane joined the rest of the team at breakfast a couple hours later. No one even brought up Shane going to Ilya's room last night, so either they were all too tired to notice, or the ones that saw did not care for an explanation and probably assumed Shane had gone to his own room later on.

Young was the first one to break the silence on the game, though, asking Shane, "I saw your post... what was it that Wilson said to Roz? I just thought it was probably homophobic."

"It was also homophobic," Shane said. "But Ilya hit him because he called my mom a mail-order bride."

"Jesus fuck," Bood said. "What the fuck is in the water in Montreal that makes them all think that saying that shit is fine?"

"Shane wouldn't know," Ilya piped up. "He filters his water."

"Is he fucking insane?" LaPointe said. "He thought he could say that shit to Roz? Or, like, any of us?"

"He was asking for a fight," Ilya said, shrugging. "But maybe he will not talk about David or Mama Yuna like that again."

"Yeah, something tells me he didn't learn his lesson," Dykstra said. "He'd need a working brain to learn."

"This is true. I will just have to keep teaching him this lesson, then."

"Funny how Hollzy was the one telling us before the game that we should ignore them all and then you both go out there and fight."

"Yeah, exactly," Shane remarked. "I told you all not to fight. I didn't say anything about *me*."

"Yes," Ilya agreed. "And I am not good at following directions so is no surprise I fought. So is Shane's fault if anything."

"Oh, well if it's *my* fault."

"It is. Everyone blame Hollander! Captain's orders."

"You're an asshole."

"So you tell me everyday."

"That's because it continues to be true everyday."

"You keep—"

Bergy cleared his throat. "You guys are worse than my grandparents."

"At what?" Shane asked.

“You’re like an old married couple but you’re not even married.”

“You are calling us old?” Ilya said, narrowing his eyes at the younger man.

“Well...” Bergy said, shifting uncomfortably. Shane narrowed his own eyes at him.

“We are 27!” he objected sternly.

“Okay, so you’re not *that* old, but you are still like... older... than me.”

“Dude,” Young hissed. “You’re gonna get us put on bag skates.”

“They’re gonna kill us,” Luca panicked. “We’re going to die because Bergy couldn’t shut up and now all of us younger guys are going to suffer.”

“Younger guys?” Ilya said as he snapped his head to look at the rookie. “We are young!”

“I didn’t mean it like that!” Luca protested frantically. “You are very young! We all think so, right guys?”

He looked to LaPointe, Young, and Bergy for help, his eyes wide. The first two nodded and quickly shared their agreement, but Bergy muttered, “I mean...”

“This is painful,” Troy said awkwardly, standing up and laying a hand on Holmberg’s shoulder. “Bergy, it was good knowing you, but I can’t watch this.”

He walked out of the room and Bergy didn’t even look bothered, he just picked up a croissant on his plate and shoved half of it in his mouth in one bite. Luca – the poor kid – looked about two seconds away from having an aneurysm, Young looked like he was trying to make himself look as small as possible, and Pointy looked like he was strapped to a bomb that was about to go off.

Shane sighed, resigned. “Okay, we are going to move on from this.”

“I’m not!” Ilya urged. “I am very young! Am not old!”

“Sure,” Bergy scoffed through a full mouth of food. Shane was glad he was not the only one disgusted at the site, some of the other guys looking on, their expressions mirroring Shane’s.

Later, after the game and dinner, the team were back in the hotel, Shane and Ilya in their room. They were sitting in silence, Ilya was scrolling on his phone while Shane was reading a book when someone knocked on the door.

Ilya got up to answer it and as soon as he opened the door, four men barged in, carrying various bags of snacks, pillows, and blankets.

“Oh, good! Hollzy’s already here!” LaPointe said, dumping the stuff in his arms on one of the chairs in the room. “We were about to message you!”

“Why?” Shane asked, cautiously. “Why are you all here?”

“Sleepover!” Young said, flashing an excited smile.

“We are all having sleepover in my room?” Ilya asked, closing the door. “Why?”

Bergy shifted in his spot. “I felt bad from breakfast this morning when I called you old so we decided that we should all have a night of bonding.”

“And you chose this room?” Shane asked, confused. “The one room that only has one bed? Would it not make more sense to use mine and Hazy’s room?”

“Oh, we did not think of that. That’s okay! We already thought we were sleeping on the floor. Hence the pillows and blankets.”

“For the record,” Luca piped up. “I did not think this was a good idea. I told them we should have messaged first and asked.”

“So polite,” Pointy said, winking at Luca who in turn blushed. “We didn’t wanna give you guys a chance to decline.”

“I’m not sleeping on the floor,” Shane objected.

“That is a-okay,” Young said, giving a finger gun. “Captains get the bed, and us young—*ehem—other* guys will take the floor.”

“Nice save,” Ilya deadpanned. He then let out a deep sigh. “Okay, this is happening. What will this sleepover entail?”

“We will be watching a movie,” Luca said. “Which we bought snacks for.”

“So, just movie and sleep? That’s it? You barge in here to watch something and sleep on floor?”

“Yup!” LaPointe said. “We did buy face masks too though, so we can do those.”

And that is how they all ended up lounged around the room with face masks on, watching Toy Story. Young had brought some paper and had played a couple games of something called MATCH which apparently prophesised that Shane was going to someday live in a house while being married to Batman where they would have two kids drive a bus. One minor argument started over a game of Go Fish. There was orange Cheeto dust staining Bergy’s shirt. Ilya was growing very frustrated at not knowing how to build a house out of cards. LaPointe had even taken a selfie of the night’s activities and posted it to Instagram which was a little humiliating.

When it came time for bed, the four younger guys had squished into the bathroom, desperate to brush their teeth all at the same time like a bunch of overgrown toddlers. It was weirdly very endearing. Shane was a little nervous to sleep in a bed next to Ilya with other people in the room, knowing that at some point the couple would likely find each other in their sleep. But when the “kids” all started setting up their “beds” they all ended up in what was pretty much a big sleep pile which Shane had no doubt had to be very uncomfortable.

In the morning, the younger guys all seemed happy and relaxed which was a little baffling given how they all slept. Shane did have a brief moment of panic when Bergy looked at him and said, “huh, I never realised you and Roz have matching rings that you wear around your necks. That’s cute. It’s like how me and Young have our friendship bracelets!”

“Yeah, man!” Young cheered, raising his arm to show off the plastic beaded bracelet. “Glad to know you guys do that too!”

LaPointe turned to Luca and asked, “why don’t we have matching friendship jewellery?”

Luca looked between Shane and Ilya’s necklaces like he was adding up something in his head. He turned to LaPointe and said, “uhhhh... is that something you want?”

“Yeah, we should get something.”

“Sure,” Luca agreed and LaPointe looked ecstatic.

As the guys all started packing up to leave, Luca said he was gonna hang back for a minute to ask about something for practice. When the others left, Luca turned around to Shane and Ilya and asked, “friendship rings?”

“Technically,” Shane said. “In a sense.”

“You’re together? You, Shane Hollander and you, Ilya Rozanov?”

“Yes,” Ilya confirmed. “We are married.”

Luca looked like he might burst. Then his expression changed as though he just realised something and looked at Shane. “So last night, you weren’t just in here hanging out before bed?”

“No,” Shane replied. “I was here because I was going to be sleeping here.”

“Yeah, that makes sense on why your pyjamas and toothbrush were here. I don’t know why I didn’t put that together sooner. Plus the matching contracts, the living together, and the Russian.”

“Is kind of obvious, yes,” Ilya remarked. “Kind of funny how no one is picking up on it. I even call Shane Russian pet names and no one has noticed. Everyone thinks we are just roommates and best friends.”

“It’s a good cover,” Shane said. “No one knows. I mean, a few people know, but that’s it.”

“Does anyone else on the team know?” Luca asked.

“Bood and Hazy,” Ilya answered. “Coach probably knows too because we had to declare it to management when we signed contracts.”

“Why don’t you tell the team? I think everyone would be okay with it.”

“Is safer this way for now until I have at least permanent residency. We will not deny if asked but is also a little funny. Everyone knows we are close, I am always flirting with Shane, we wear wedding rings around necks, Shane stays in my room on roadies even though he has own room with Hazy... and yet no one has figured it out.”

“It is a little funny,” Shane chuckled. “I’m kind of convinced we could walk into the room holding hands and they just wouldn’t think anything of it.”

“Best buds,” Ilya snorted.

“You guys have actually held hands around us a couple times,” Luca revealed. “If you guys sleep on a plane or bus, you kind of hold hands in your sleep and one of you always end up asleep on the other. We all just thought maybe that you are just a little co-dependent after being forced to pretend you don’t like each other for so long and now that you are on a team and living together you have to be around each other and touching all the time.”

“I guess it is a little like that, but just not with friendship,” Shane considered. “No one has really pointed it out though.”

“Is probably because everyone thinks I am straight.”

“Right,” Luca said. “Yeah, I think only a few people on the internet think otherwise.”

“They do?” Ilya asked delighted.

“Uh, yeah,” Luca said, his ears tinging a bit pink. “It’s only a few people but they think you guys are together and have been for years.”

“People know?” Shane asked a little panicked.

“Only a few people!” Luca hurriedly reassured. “There’s like maybe thirty people in all. It’s just a few hockey fans. Most other people don’t believe them or anything.”

“How do you know of these people?” Ilya queried.

Luca visibly and audibly gulped. “I saw a post once? Uh, like ages ago! Yeah, was not like a part of it. It was just there. On the internet. Of a few people – not me – shipping you two.”

“Oh, shipping! I have heard this! People shipped me and Marly back when I was in Boston!”

“Yeah, I think I’ve heard some people ship me and Hayden together which I always found weird because he’s married with kids,” Shane said.

“Ew, Pike,” Ilya said, scrunching his nose in disgust. “You would never go for *Pike*.”

“Oh, and you would for Marly?”

“He is good looking.”

“Is that so?” Shane asked, quirking an eyebrow at his husband, his eyes darkening.

Ilya gave him a mischievous smirk. “Yes, is so. Very handsome.”

“...yeah, I’m gonna go,” Luca said quietly and all but ran for the door.

Chapter 25: Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Shane goes viral online

Chapter Notes

Enjoy! Love y'all 💖

Going into November, the Cens were doing well. The team and fans were still getting used to winning, and knowing what the team was like before did take the sting off of losing. Not that it was often, but it certainly didn't feel like the end of the world when it happened and it was a lot rarer.

Winning with this team, though, was amazing. Shane had never been one to carry on with the celebrations before, usually opting to go home and review tape or just have a quiet night in. He didn't particularly like going out, the floors of clubs and bars always sticky, dealing with drunken teammates was tiring, and it was always so loud. Shane also didn't like to drink during the season so he was always the most sober person there and would be constantly having to fight off his teammates when they tried forcing him to drink, always complaining that he wasn't *fun*.

With this team, Shane did go out with them to a bar or club. Not all the time – he *did* enjoy staying in – but he was finding himself out with the guys a lot more than he ever did before. No one was forcing him to drink, they didn't even offer it anymore – they just accepted that he was going to drink ginger ale or water and that was that. If someone was getting drinks for the table, they asked, but no one looked at him weird or try to convince him to join in. They just came back with shots or beers for the others and a ginger ale for him.

Shane started to give in though sometimes and had a few drinks. Not from peer pressure, but more from the fact that he didn't care to be so disciplined. He was already looked at differently from the press for fighting and he was finding it a little freeing. He didn't feel like he *had* to be perfect. None of the other guys on the team were as strict with their images, and they were all happy. He wanted to be more like them.

There wasn't a single guy on the team that he didn't like. No one made comments about him being a "hockey robot" when he was stubborn in wanting to review tape. No one tried forcing

him to hook up with a girl when they went out – they even subtly redirected some of the women that came up to him so that he wouldn't have to do it. And of course, that was because they knew he wasn't interested, but they didn't try to hook him up with guys either. They were okay with him just being there sitting in the booth the whole night if that's what he wanted to do.

Shane was finally glad to have these guys and he wasn't as drained when he went out with the Cens than he used to be with the Metros. And being able to go out in public to a club with his husband was nice even if the world thought they were just teammates. So, even after a long game, when Bood suggested they hit up a joint, Shane went. The team usually opted more for a bar, but they did sometimes go out clubbing and so that is how Shane found himself plastered on photos circulating social media showing him taking a couple shots of tequila and looking happy and free.

It wasn't the first time that Shane had been photographed out with the Cens and not looking like he was forced to be there at gunpoint, but it was the most viral. Maybe it was because the photos were of him at a club, downing a shot instead of at a bar nursing a beer. Maybe it was because there were now so many other photos of Shane out with the team and this one was just one time too many to ignore. Maybe it was because Shane looked like he was having the time of his life.

Either way, there were now news sites picking up the story, trying to spin it in a way that wrote him as losing control of himself or wrote it in a way that only highlighted how different Shane was with his new team. Some even blamed Ilya.

Shane had woken up next to his husband, his mouth dry and his head pounding after that night and saw that he was trending on Twitter.

TMZ  **@tmz**

Is Rozanov's bad boy persona rubbing off on Hollander? See photos of the former Montreal Captain clubbing...

 **Nat**  **@censcenscens**

OMG! Shane Hollander clubs now??? SINCE UH WHEN

 **Tomas** **@tominhockey**

is shane okay??? he never used to be like this at montreal!

 **Shayden**  **@shaydenforever**

ew can rozanov not force his teammates to do this shit? shane, baby, come home. hayden would never force you to drink or go out  

Hockey News  **@mlhhockeynews**

Is this a cry for help or simply just a new Shane Hollander?
Photos taken last night show the hockey star's drunken night out...

 **Matt**  **@mattloveshockey**

wow i had no idea that man even knew how to smile

 **METROS FTW**  **@metrosfan1999**

shane hollander knows what alcohol is? 

 **emily**   **@hollanderlover**

damn he hated the metros, didn't he?

 **Greg** **@hockeygreg**

istg if he starts playing like shit because he's started drinking, i am going to kill rozanov for making him do this 

 **Maddie**  **@madelynlorenza44**

Ugh can't believe another hockey player is turning into a party boy. I thought Shane was one of the good ones 

MLH Updates  **@mlhupdates**

The Centaurs had a big night out! Here are the details of what the team got up to...

 **Paul**  **@censfan**

Huh, I think something is telling me that Hollander didn't like Montreal

 **xan**  **@shnehollndrhole**

ykw? good for him. he deserves to let loose

 **lex**  **@shanesfreckles**

Shane Hollander clubbing is a good thing! Now I actually have a chance! Now all he needs to do is go out in Boston and he'll be mine 

 **Luke** **@lukehockey**

aww baby's first tequila shot

Page Six  **@pagesixnews**

Spiralling out of control! Does Rose Landry's ex have a drinking problem? Fans are noticing that Shane Hollander has been out partying more often...

 **Rose**  **@roselandryfan**

Wow! So happy Rose got out before this 

 **Patrick** **@hattrickpatrick**

I thought Hollander didn't go out? I think he pretty much only went out with the Metros when they won the cup...

 **Toby**  **@hockeyfan97**

Is Shane... happy? I did not know that man knew how to have emotions.

Shane groaned. Did people really have a problem with this? No one was talking about the rest of the Cens drinking. He was a grown man and he's had alcohol before! Why is it such an issue? Before he thought too long about it, his fingers moved and he made a tweet.

Shane Hollander  **@shanehollander24**

Didn't know it was illegal to drink alcohol? My bad I guess 

His phone started buzzing in his hand as Ilya started to wake up. Shane smiled at him and gave him a quick peck before looking back at his phone.

 **old people and the children they birthed** 

oldest child  **(Young)**

UNHINGED

you still drunk, dad?

least favourite child  **(Bergy)**

oh didn't realise you knew how to joke lmao

media trained MY ASS 

tallest child 🧑 (LaPointe)

damn they really out here trying to arrest a man for smiling 😊

favourite child 🧑 (Luca)

Are they really trying to blame Roz?

Wasn't he the only one sober last night?

dad 🧑

I am too hungover for media training

Yes, Ilya was the only one sober.

papa 🧑

What happened?

least favourite child 🧑

Link: [twiter.com//...](#)

“Shane, you did not...” Ilya said staring at Shane’s tweet. His brain seemed to catch up and he started laughing.

“Fuck off, it’s not that funny.”

“Is very funny,” Ilya said, trying to catch his breath. “No boring statement apologising and promising not to drink again?”

“Do you think I should?”

“No, you are grown adult. You are allowed to have fun. You do not owe anyone anything.”

Shane thought for a moment. “I guess.”

“Shane, if you make a statement about this, I will go on tweet rampage talking about how you are a big liar and about how you are not sorry at all. I do not think you want me doing this.”

“Fine, I won’t. But maybe I shouldn’t drink for a while. Let it blow over.”

“Is up to you, but you do not need to. Drink if you want, don’t drink if you do not want. Is not like you are drinking all the time. I have seen you have alcohol like eight times in the entire time I have known you. You had two beers a month ago and then nothing until last night.”

Shane knows Ilya is right. He knows his therapist would also agree. She’s been working with Shane through his struggles with his public image and feeling like he needs to always be perfect. It was something that he needed more help with since his second fight with Comeau. She would agree that this is not something that he should try and fix, that he doesn’t need to put out a perfect statement or swear off alcohol and fun.

So, Shane moved on with his day. He took it a little easy since he was hungover, but he tried putting Twitter out of his mind.

Ilya was not helping. He would sit there on his phone and every couple of minutes he would giggle and send a tweet to the group chat with the kids. Apparently, some people had turned one of the photos of him drunk off his ass smiling into a meme. Ilya was having the time of his life with them, even posting some of them to his Instagram stories.

Shane had thought the whole thing would blow over, but a couple days later after a game, Shane was pulled for media.

“Shane,” one reporter said. “Do you have anything to say about the recent chatter online about your big night out?”

“No,” Shane said. “It was a fun night out with my team and that’s all it was.”

“Nothing to say about the speculation that you seem to be partying a lot more?”

“I wouldn’t necessarily say that. I like this team and I like spending time with them. Whether we do that at a club or in someone’s backyard makes no difference to me.”

“You’re known as someone who doesn’t drink or party during the season and in previous years, you were never involved much in nights out with the team. Is there a reason why you go out with the Centaurs when you didn’t with the Metros?”

“I like this team,” Shane repeated. “The team here is really special and we’re all close. We go out to celebrate wins sometimes. I don’t drink a lot, but I did the other night because I felt like it.”

“Does this have anything to do with Rozanov as captain? He was known for clubbing and drinking at Boston as well as fighting on the ice – which you have done recently. Has he influenced you at all this season? Has his leadership changed the way you play?”

Shane either wanted to let out a deep sigh or start a new fight. Did people really think that was all there was to Ilya? Did they really think that he was – what? – corrupting him? Like he was just a lost sheep following the leader?

“I want to make something very clear,” Shane said evenly. “Ilya Rozanov is a great captain and a great man. I did not fight because of him, I fought because Comeau said something out of line. I fought him last season when he said something then too, which was before Rozanov was my captain. I am not forced or dragged out of my house to go to a bar or a club against my will. Rozanov is not pouring alcohol down my throat. I go out with my team because I want to and I drank the other night because I wanted to. You all think that he is a big bad influence but in reality he is not.”

He took a breath before continuing, “Rozanov was actually the only one sober the other night so I fail to see how anyone could think he is a bad influence. He never makes anyone feel uncomfortable and never forces anyone to do anything they don’t want to. Please stop treating him like he is not worthy to be a captain to this team and please stop infantilising me.

I am a grown man and me getting drunk once on a night off shouldn't be some big scandal. The memes are funny, I will say, but anything other than that needs to stop. There's no deeper meaning and despite fifteen other guys on the team all drinking, none of them are being questioned like this."

The reporter at least looked chastised, which was a little satisfying.

Another reporter spoke up, "would you like to comment on the goal that you made in the second period tonight?"

Shane answered and thankfully, the rest of the questions were about the game.

When Shane walked back to the team after, Ilya said in Russian, "*we need to go home right now.*"

"*Why? What's wrong?*"

"*That was very hot and if we do not leave right now, I will do something stupid like have sex with you in front of everyone.*"

Shane's face flushed and he turned to his teammates and said loudly, "bye, guys! We're going home!"

Chapter 26: Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Cens would probably never be able to do a puzzle but they would at least have all the pieces.

Chapter Notes

Just dumb boys, but they have good hearts <3

Enjoyyyyyyy!

The hardest thing about being in a secret relationship but on the same team was the road trips. Whenever they were on the road, they weren't able to have sex. They could sometimes share quiet hand jobs or blowjobs, but nothing more than that. Walls in hotels were so thin, sometimes they could hear conversations in other rooms. There was just no way they could have full sex without everyone finding out and hearing it. Shane wouldn't be able to look anyone in the eye if they had ever heard them having sex.

Their luck ran out when Shane had bitten Ilya's shoulder to keep quiet and the guys had seen the mark the next day in the locker room when they were getting ready for a game against the Admirals.

"Damn, Cap! You sexiled Hollander?"

The question was a little absurd because why would anyone think Shane and Ilya shared a room? As far as anyone else should be concerned, Shane shared with Hazy and since Ilya was the Captain, he got a room with only one bed. So, how the hell would Shane have been sexiled?

"What do you mean?" Shane asked, a little panicked. "I room with Wyatt?"

Dykstra just looked at him like he was insane. "Dude, you room with Roz."

"No, I don't!"

"Uh, yeah you do?" Chouinard cut in. "You're always in his room. Hazy doesn't even get put in a double room anymore."

That, Shane did not know. He shot a look at Wyatt who just gave him an apologetic smile.

“Yeah, man,” Boyle said. “And sometimes whoever is rooming next to you guys hears your early-ass alarm go off in the mornings.”

“Captains get their own room! There’s one bed!”

“Well, yeah, you guys share,” Dykstra said, shrugging while continuing to look at Shane like he was crazy.

“...You all know we share a bed?” Ilya asked slowly.

“Was it supposed to be a secret or something?” Choui asked. “You two are so co-dependent we all thought it was just what you guys do.”

“And you thought I would have sex with someone else while with Shane?”

“You have a bitemark on your shoulder,” Bergy said, pointing to it and looking so confused.

“Shane bit me!” Ilya said defensively. “Was bit by Shane, not someone else!”

“Ohhhhhh,” Dykstra said. “Did you like piss him off or something?”

Ilya’s face split into a grin and Shane moved so quickly, slamming his hand over his mouth. “Nope. You are done talking.”

Ilya tried to speak from behind Shane’s hand, his eyebrows waggling. Thankfully, the sound was muffled so no one could tell what he was saying. Shane turned to face his teammates.

“None of you think we’re weird for sharing a bed?”

“Well,” Young said. “We think you guys are weird, but not for sharing a bed. We were literally there at the sleepover and saw you guys share.”

“Yeah,” LaPointe chimed in. “You guys are all touchy all the time. You can barely go 10 minutes without touching or being in the same room. Makes sense you sleep in the same bed.”

“And you all don’t think it’s, like, gay?” Shane asked warily.

“I mean, unless you guys are having sex or whatever, then I don’t see how it’s gay,” Choui said. “And even then, then good for you guys for getting laid, I guess.”

“You two do kind of look at each other in a gay way,” Bergy observed. “I’d think you both have big fat crushes on each other if Roz wasn’t straight.”

“You two would be cute together...” Troy said from the other side of the locker room, standing with Harris who was there with the team this road trip. “It’s kinda like you two are basically married anyway.”

Ilya pried Shane's hands off his mouth and spoke, "you think we are married?"

"*Basically* married," Troy emphasised. "Obviously, you aren't actually married but you may as well be."

"Why would you think we aren't married?" Ilya said and Shane snapped his eyes to him, glaring dangerously at his husband in warning.

"Are you?"

"Maybe, maybe not," Ilya replied ominously.

"Right," Troy said, then his eyes widened as he looked like he realised something. "Wait, aren't you engaged, Hollander?"

"What?!"

Several voices rang out in surprise and Shane internally groaned. Fuck, why did he have to tell Troy that?

"Uh, no," Shane said, gulping. "Not engaged anymore."

"You were engaged?" Bergy said. "Did you guys like break up?"

"But you're still wearing the ring?" Troy – the traitor – said. And you know what? He is officially demoted back to Barrett.

The whole team zeroed in on Shane's necklace where his ring sat.

"We did not break up," Shane confirmed.

"So, you're married?" Young asked excitedly. "Do we get to meet him? What's his name?"

Shane looked to Ilya for help. In Russian, he asked, "*what do we do?*"

"*I think cat might be out of bag, my love.*"

"*Fuck.*"

Shane sighed deeply and watched as Ilya – grinning widely – turned to their team and hooked his finger through his own chain, showing off his ring.

"Yes, it is true," Ilya declared loudly. Shane thought things couldn't get more mortifying but at that moment Coach Weibe walked into the room. "Shane has big, fat, gay crush on me and asked me to marry him."

Coach sighed loudly from the doorway. "Coach a team they said. It'll be fun they said."

"Ah, you love us," Ilya said to him.

The rest of the room was silent, almost everyone shocked, mouths open, eyes wide.

“You two are married?” Barrett said, his voice full of disbelief. “You’re together?”

“Yes,” Shane said evenly, reaching out to grab Ilya’s hand. “We are together. We got married in July.”

“Holy shit!” LaPointe exclaimed as he quite literally jumped into the air in excitement. “Fuck, this is so cool!”

“I can’t believe we have a winning team because of the power of gay,” Dykstra said, slumping down on the bench in front of his stall. “This is why Roz moved here, right?”

“Pretty much,” Ilya confirmed. “And I am bisexual, not gay.”

“You’re actually together?” Choui asked, and he looked close to crying. “You’re in love?”

Shane chuckled, turned to look into his husband’s eyes, and said, “yeah, we’re in love.”

He pulled Ilya down into him, crushing their lips together and the room erupted into complete chaos. Some people were screaming and whooping in celebration, crowding the married couple like they had just won the cup. Others were still frozen in shock. Some were even jumping around, clinging to each other shouting, “let’s fucking gooooo!”

Shane had never felt so much love in one room before. Even when the team went out onto the ice, they were all so happy it seemed to be weirding out the Admirals and the fans in the crowd. They were playing so well, and not a single one of them weren’t smiling wide. At one point Ilya patted Shane on the shoulder as they passed each other swapping shifts and the team went crazy, cheering loudly.

Halfway through the first period, Scott looked at the majority of the Cens in their bench and asked Shane, “what the fuck is up with your team? Are you all high or something?”

“They found out about me and Ilya,” Shane confessed. “They’re... excited.”

“Jesus, they all look like they won the lottery.”

Shane snorted. “They probably see it that way.”

“Assuming you’re all coming out to the bar later, then?”

“I don’t think an alien invasion could keep them away.”

“Your team is so fucking weird,” Scott said, shaking his head in disbelief. “Happy for you, kid. You deserve ‘em.”

“Yeah, I do.”

And Shane believed it. His team was the best and he was so lucky.

Beating the Admirals was not something that they had been able to do yet since Shane joined – although this was the first game against them this season with Ilya on the team – but the

Cens were so bolstered and fired up, that they did actually pull off a win 5-1.

They all piled into the Kingfisher later, teeming with happiness. The team were so excited that they even beat the Admirals to the bar. Shane sat in one of the booths and Ilya slid in next to him, draping an arm over his shoulders, their rings on their fingers instead of around their necks.

“Fucking look at you two,” Wyatt said, grinning so widely at them.

“You were at our wedding. I don’t know why you’re so sappy about this.”

“Exactly! I was there and now look at you! Out to the whole team and sitting in a gay bar together!”

“Wait, Hazy, you knew?” Young said, turning over in his spot from the booth behind them.

“Yeah, man. Sharing a room with Hollzy last season meant being there when he called Roz every night.”

“I also went to the wedding!” Bood said, walking up to the table carrying a round of beers – and a ginger ale.

“Was it just you two that knew?” Bergy asked.

“Luca knew, actually,” Shane revealed. “He figured it out the morning after the sleepover when you pointed out our rings.”

“Oh, shit!” LaPointe said, laughing hard. “We called them friendship rings!”

“Yes, not your brightest moment,” Ilya chuckled.

“Fuck, we’re all dumb,” Young said. “We thought you guys just like platonically held hands and shared a bed.”

“Wait, they did that and you all thought they were just friends?” a voice asked from behind them. Scott appeared, looking at them all like they had grown extra heads.

“Dude, they’re co-dependent,” Bergy said, shrugging. “We just thought they’d die if they weren’t in the same room for longer than a few minutes.”

“They live together and are best friends, we just thought this was them being normal,” Dykstra added.

“Uh, what’s the gossip?” Vaughny asked from next to Scott.

Shane just lifted his hand, showing his ring and Ilya did the same.

“Fuck, boys, you’re married? I thought you were just like hooking up or something.”

“You *what*?” Shane said incredulously.

“You thought we were hooking up?” Ilya asked slowly, confusion on his face.

“I just thought there was like a vibe,” Carter said, shrugging as though it was an obvious thing. “Cool that you’re married though. Congrats, next round’s on me.”

Scott looked around at the Cens and said, “so, you all thought they slept in the same bed and figured they were just friends?”

“I’ve seen Hollzy crawl inside Roz’s jumper while he was wearing it,” LaPointe shrugged. “Seen Roz do the same thing. Figured they were just like that.”

“Were you two even trying to hide it?” Scott zeroed in on the couple.

“No one thought it was more!” Shane said defensively. And it was true. None of them even blinked if they walked in on Shane napping on top of Ilya, inside his sweatshirt on the couch in the break room. They didn’t blink when Ilya would sometimes wrap himself around Shane and stay attached, even if Shane was moving around and walking. No one blinked when Ilya once sat on Shane’s lap at a barbeque despite there being open seats next to him.

“What gave it away, then?” Scott asked and Shane flushed deep as Ilya lit up.

“Shane bit me!”

“Do I wanna know why?”

“No,” Shane mumbled, “you do not.”

“Ooh, was it a sex thing?” Bergy said. “You never said.”

Scott looked grossed out but perplexed. “Wait, how did it reveal them if you guys didn’t even know if it was a sex thing?”

“Stupid Barrett opened his big ass mouth, that’s how,” Shane grumbled.

Barrett chose that moment to chime in for the first time during the conversation with, “I lost first name privileges?”

“Yes.”

“Aw man,” Barrett whined. “What do I have to do to earn it back? Last time I came out, what do I do now?”

About twenty heads snapped to look at Barrett and he seemed to realise what he just said.

“Shit,” he said and cleared his throat. “Uh, forget that I said that, please.”

“*You’re gay?*” Scott and Ilya both asked at the same time.

Troy groaned and slumped in his seat as Harris patted him on the back sympathetically. “Yup.”

“Jeez, how queer is Ottawa?” Carter laughed and that set off a couple other guys.

“There’s like four, it’s not *that* queer,” Luca muttered.

“Who’s the fourth?” LaPointe asked, nudging Luca from beside him.

“Hmm?” Luca said, looking up at him. “What?”

“You said there’s four.”

“No!” Luca rushed out. “I-I didn’t! I meant three! There is three. Only three! I… miscounted? Yeah, miscounted.”

Shane winced and wanted nothing more than to turn the conversation away from Luca, the poor kid, and the rest of the table did start talking about something else, but Shane heard Pointy lower his voice and say, “so you weren’t saying you were queer?”

Luca looked like a deer caught in the headlights. “No! I’m not.”

LaPointe’s shoulders dropped slightly and he let out a small, “oh, okay.”

Shane looked to Ilya and grimaced. He was never good at picking up on social cues, but even he had picked up on that.

The team all decided that this was a big night, they now had *three* out queer players and were sitting with a fourth one from another team. Shane had never known hockey players could be so accepting, but they all celebrated and toasted to the four of them all night.

“How’s married life treating you?” Scott asked at one point.

“Really fucking good,” Shane replied.

A couple hours later, Harris was persistent on getting a few photos of the night, insisting especially on one with Shane, Ilya, Troy, and Scott. He said that although the public wouldn’t know what the photo was really for, the team would. And so that’s how there ended up being a photo of the four of them in a booth. It was a little chaotic. Ilya was giving Scott bunny ears who in turn was looking like he was trying to blow Ilya up with his mind. Troy looked wasted, his cheeks red and was grinning happily to the camera. Shane was mid-laugh, his head thrown back into Ilya’s shoulder as his husband’s arm was still around him. The background showed that it was clearly a gay bar with a pride flag on the wall next to them, and it showed the rookies were sitting in the booth behind them, heads pushed together as they were wrapped in their own little bubble.

Shane loved it so much he saved it and posted it to his own Instagram and Twitter.

Chapter 27: Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

Metros are mic'd up!

Chapter Notes

This one is a bit longer than usual so I hope you all enjoy!

I felt like this was something that needed to happen. Mic'd up games happen and I felt like this would have happened at some point if not by the Metros but by the rest of the league as it is an open secret that Shane is gay.

TW homophobic language

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

The vibe in the locker room since that game in New York was ecstatic. Everyone was so happy that they had a married couple on the team. They were the *first* queer marriage in the MLH and they were the first queer marriage on a team together. The Centaurs could not get enough of them.

Shane had thought maybe they would be uncomfortable, but the first time Ilya gave Shane a quick peck at practice, they were only met with cheers. And it kept happening. It did die down a little, but no one seemed weirded out if Shane and Ilya displayed any type of affection with each other. Shane thinks this might have something to do with the fact that the only thing that changed about their behaviour was that there was now kissing added and that Ilya's crude jokes or flirting were ramped up more and everyone knew the flirting was no longer fake.

The photo of the queer members of the league did gain popularity – even though the public did not know that there was more than one member in the photo. But people seemed to love how happy they all seemed to be in a gay bar. People were talking about how no one had ever seen Shane laugh, and definitely not a full laugh with his head thrown back. People were talking about how Shane and Ilya looked comfortable cuddled up, but – thankfully – only a small percentage of the public thought they looked *too* comfy. And only a few people had noticed that you could see both Shane and Ilya wearing rings on their ring fingers. No one except for maybe two people online were saying that they were secretly married.

They were photographed in a gay bar and no one online was saying that any of them – except for Scott – were gay. Everyone just seemed happy that the Centaurs were great supporters of the community. Especially because some of the other photos Harris had shared to the team's socials showed the rest of the team mingling enthusiastically with the other patrons.

Shane loved that in almost every photo of the night where he was visible, Ilya was right there, glued to his side, arms thrown around him in some way, the two looking so at peace with the physical contact like they had been doing it for years. Which they had – but this did seem to help “prove” their friendship online to those who were so sceptical after the Irina Foundation was announced.

The team were set to play a game against Montreal on a Friday. It was going to be the third game against them this season, the previous one played out similar to the first game, but without any fights.

The morning of this game, it was announced on the Montreal Metros twitter account that Comeau was to be their new captain and that going forward, he would be wearing the ‘C’. It was also announced, that their two captains – Comeau and Hayden – would be mic’d up for the game.

The news had sent Shane into a panic attack right in his spot in the kitchen. He had dropped to the ground, feeling the cold tiles underneath him. Ilya was out for a run and Shane was alone, trying to remember how to breathe. He tried to do the exercises that his therapist had taught him, but his brain could only focus on the news, worst-case scenarios running through his mind.

At some point Ilya came home, practically crashing through the front door and dropping down to Shane’s level. He grabbed Shane’s face and forced him to look into his eyes.

“Breathe, Shane,” Ilya urged. “You remember exercises?”

Shane shook his head, his chest hurting from the pressure of the trapped air.

“Okay... I will do them with you, just copy me.”

Ilya walked him through it, holding the breaths and then exhaling. Inhale and exhale. Again and again.

Eventually, his breathing got better, but his mind was still racing.

“What do I do?” Shane asked, choking out the words and feeling helpless.

“What do you want?”

“I don’t know!” Shane said desperately. “What if this is a trick? What if they’re doing this to force me to come out and then they just don’t even say anything during the game so I did it for nothing? What if they out me during the game? They say something and then that’s it – I’m out and everyone knows? What do I *do*?”

“Slow down, moya lyubov’,” Ilya said. “What do you want to do? Do you want to make post? Send out a statement right now? Come out?”

“I just want to play hockey,” Shane sobbed.

“I know, malysh,” Ilya whispered, cradling Shane’s head and bringing it down to his shoulder, holding it there. “I know.”

Shane was a mess the whole day. When he entered the locker room to get ready for the game, everyone either shot sympathetic looks at him or patted him on the back encouragingly, telling him they were here for him no matter what.

Hayden was with JJ out on the ice near the centre at warmups so Shane skated over to them, wary of how he worded things to not give himself away.

“How is this going to go?” Shane asked, looking at his former teammates.

“Sorry, man,” Hayden said. “I hate this is going to happen. I tried to stop it.”

“Hayd, stop,” Shane said. “It’s not your fault. You’re my brother and you always will be. How bad will it be?”

“Hollander,” JJ said with an apologetic look. “I think it might be best to sit this one out.”

“I’m not doing that. If this is going to happen then I want to hear it myself.”

Ilya skated over and tugged on Shane’s sleeve, cocking his head in a questionable way. Shane just shook his head and sighed. Ilya nodded and turned to Hayden and JJ.

“Pike,” he said, “I do not see Jackie and my nieces in crowd. Where is my family?”

“They’re *my* family, you’re just a stray that Shane insisted bringing around. And you’ll see them after the game at home.”

“Yes, Ruby tells me we are going to be watching Frozen.”

“Unfortunately, the movie was lost somewhere and we could not find it,” Hayden replied, looking the farthest thing from guilty. “Very tragic.”

“Ah, is good thing I promised to bring my own copy!”

Hayden glared at him, borderline murderous. “Burn it. Do not bring that into my house.”

Ilya started skating away, calling back, “a promise is a promise!”

Hayden turned his glare to Shane. “I am going to pay an Etsy witch to curse both of you.”

“Why me?” Shane asked, confused.

“You brought him into our lives. This is on you.”

JJ looked between the two of them before landing on Hayden. “You’re inviting *Rozanov* over? What the hell? What about me?”

He said Ilya’s name like it was a curse word and Shane was just about to say something when Hayden cut in sharply and firmly with, “it’s family night. The girls miss their uncles so it’ll just be us. I can do something with you another time.”

“Why the fuck is Rozanov family? When did that even happen? You hate him!”

Shane just responded to this with, “it’s been like a month since we’ve been able to see them outside of FaceTime, JJ. Sorry, it’ll just be us this time.”

“That doesn’t answer anything, Hollander. I get that you’re best friends with him all of a sudden, but that doesn’t explain this.”

“Yes, it does,” Hayden insisted. “Shane is friends with Rozanov and he brought him over once like a year ago and he was great with the girls. They love him and he’s family now. Drop it.”

“Fine, whatever,” JJ conceded with a sigh and skated off.

“Do not tell him that I called him family,” Hayden warned Shane.

“You’re mic’d up, man,” Shane said with a grin. “Too late for you.”

As Shane skated away, he chuckled when he heard Hayden let out a string of swears.

For a while the game seemed like any other game. The Metros still checked harder than they should be, but no slurs or directly homophobic language had been said. At most, there was a vague insinuation.

However, near the end of the first period, Shane was slammed against the boards by Comeau who sneered, “saw the picture of you at that bar. Likely place for you to be.”

“It’s a great place,” Shane said, pushing back at Comeau and passing the puck across the ice to Luca who quickly flicked it to LaPointe who shot it at the goal. “You should go sometime.”

“I’ll leave it to your kind,” Comeau replied, throwing him a disgusted look. “Already had to share a locker room with one, don’t need to share a bar with more.”

“Good thing I’m not a Metro anymore then. I’d rather *my kind* not have to share with *you*.”

During intermission, Shane refused to even look at his phone, not needing any distractions. He noticed that no one else on the team looked at theirs either. The room was tense – nothing like it had been since the team found out about the married couple.

During the second period, Shane gave out on his hope that his secret was kept. Comments were being thrown, still relatively tame compared to the other games, but Shane knew it was over.

Every time a Centaur was within distance of Comeau or Hayden, someone said something. If Shane was to be judged in a courtroom with a jury of his peers of being gay with the evidence alone being the transcripts of the game, he would be unanimously declared guilty.

Around the start of the third period, while on the power play line, Shane heard Comeau say to Ilya, “you watching out for your rookies? You know how those kinds of guys are with kids, gotta keep ‘em away.”

Shane was about to swing at him himself when Ilya beat him to it, his fist connecting with Comeau’s nose. Shane was actually really proud of how long Ilya held out without fighting. His husband kept throwing punches, one after the other, just wailing on the Montreal player. Comeau got a few hits in, but that was all.

“Don’t fucking say that about him!” Ilya roared, hitting him again. A couple players tried pulling Ilya off Comeau, but he didn’t budge.

“Call off your fucking watchdog, Hollander!” Andropov yelled angrily as he unsuccessfully attempted to pull Comeau away from Ilya.

“Sorry, he’s not trained,” Shane replied, shrugging. Andropov tried to grab Ilya who in turn snapped his teeth at him. “Watch out, he bites.”

Eventually, the refs broke up the fight and dragged Ilya off to the penalty box after they made the call for a major penalty. Shane skated up to Comeau who was – unfortunately – still conscious and said, “I know you hate me because you guys are nothing without me and because I’m gay – but say shit like that again and he will be the least of your problems.”

“Go fuck yourself,” Comeau spat through the blood dripping from his nose and mouth.

Shane smirked and almost replied with, “I’d rather fuck my husband.” Instead, he just skated away.

Ilya was out for five minutes and the Cens were down a man, but it didn’t make too much of a difference since the Metros decided they no longer knew how to play hockey.

The game ended 8-1 with Hayden scoring the Montreal’s only goal. Coach Weibe asked Shane if he wanted to handle the press with Ilya or if he should pass it off to Bood but Shane told him that he would do it. At least this way, he was sparing Bood from the mess and he would be able to control what was said about the game.

The first question – of course – was, “Comeau’s mic picked up what you said to him – can you confirm that you are gay?”

Alice, their PR lady, shut it down with a curt, “questions about the game only.”

The reporter took it in stride and decided to then rephrase by asking, “the game tonight was filled with comments indicating that you are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community with you yourself saying it out on the ice – is there any truth to that?”

Shane shared an incredulous look with Ilya while Alice – the angel – said, “nothing about the player’s private lives. We’ll move on to someone else, please.”

Shane shot her a grateful smile and turned back to the reporters.

“Ilya,” someone said. “You drew a penalty for fighting tonight, can you talk about why it is that you decided to hit the captain of another team?”

“He said something bad,” Ilya said simply and didn’t elaborate further.

“...Okay. Shane, a moment was picked up of you during the fight of your exchange with Andropov – do you have any comments about that?”

“Yes,” Shane said, leaning forward. “Rozanov will bite if given the chance so it’s best to keep away.”

Another reporter – who Shane knows is Russian – jumped in to ask the next question, querying in Russian, *“the Centaurs have had a great start to the season, especially when it comes to Montreal where your games so far have come to 14-0, 12-2, and now 8-1. Can you talk more about how this team has been able to accomplish this?”*

“Yes,” Shane replied easily. *“The team we have here this season is really special and everyone is very talented. Both Rozanov and I have been at the top of the league for the past eight years, consistently at the top of the scoring race. We have an insane amount of talent and we work great together with the other members of our team.”*

“I agree with Hollander,” Ilya said after giving Shane a blinding smile. Shane knows that he maybe shouldn’t have just revealed that he knows another language, but he just wants to get through this conference quickly. And if it gets Ilya to smile like that then whatever comes from it was probably worth it. *“This team is the best right now because we have the best players, and that’s not just because the two of us are here. Everyone on this team works hard and we all click together really well. I am very proud of our team.”*

“Mr. Hollander, did you just speak Russian?” the first reporter from the night asked.

Alice was about to step in probably to remind them to keep to questions about the game, but Shane just said a quick “yes” and moved on.

“This question is to either of you,” another reporter called out. “The game today was rough and there were a lot of negative comments that will probably get called chirping. How do you all stay so calm against that?”

“Well, clearly I did not,” Ilya joked. “But that was nothing compared to what they usually say. Usually, they are worse but what they were saying during game was live so they had to tone it down.”

“How much worse could it get?”

Shane answered this one, cutting Ilya off who looked like he was going to speak again. “It was definitely better tonight – this was like their PG rated version – but we have all learned

that it is best to ignore it and just prove ourselves better by winning the game. We focus the energy on scoring goals instead of fighting... mostly.”

“And so your comments from previous games with Montreal about bigotry were because of these comments?”

“Yes.”

There were a few more questions about the game, but Alice did end the conference after a couple more reporters tried asking about Shane’s sexuality.

The Cens were all still in the locker room after, waiting for Shane and Ilya.

“You good?” Wyatt asked Shane, putting a hand on his shoulder.

“Fantastic,” Shane said dryly. Then he sighed. “What are people saying online?”

Bergy answered this with, “a lot of people are supporting you and calling Montreal shitty. There’s a couple people who have a problem with it, saying that the league is getting too gay now that there are a total of two out players, but they’re the minority.”

“Is there anything you want or don’t want us to say online?” LaPointe asked.

“You can say whatever you want,” Shane said, “The cat is out of the bag now and people know so you can all talk about it if you want. Given that a lot of what was said was picked up live, it might be best if as many of us we can could put out a few words showing support for the community itself and saying that we don’t share the same values as Montreal, so try and at least do that.”

A few of the guys audibly assented and everyone took their permission to go online quickly by pulling out their phones. Shane bid the team goodbye and he and Ilya left to go to the Pike’s house.

On the way, they both posted on Twitter and Shane liked and retweeted all of his teammate and friend’s tweets, even Ilya’s unhinged ones.

Shane Hollander  **@shanehollander24**

Tonight we played a game against Montreal where multiple bigoted remarks were made. As sad as this is, it is not new in this sport or with the Metros in particular. Loving someone regardless of gender should never be something that is made into something ugly like this. I hope there is change and that it starts now   #hockeyisforeveryone

Ottawa Centaurs  **@ottawacentaurshq**

Giving nothing but love and support to both our Alternate Captain, Shane Hollander as well as the LGBTQIA+ community 🏳️🌈❤️ #hockeyisforeveryone

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

#hockeyisforeveryone but maybe it shouldn't be for the metros ❤️🧡💛💚💙💜

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

do not ever put his name in your mouth ever again @gilbertcomeau5 or you will have my fist in there instead

Scott Hunter ✓ @scotthunteradmirals

It pains me to see such blatant homophobia in this league. I have experienced it a lot more since I've come out and I hate to see it targeted towards someone as talented, brave, and resilient as @shanehollander24 #hockeyisforeveryone 🏳️🌈❤️

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

you were there when sport was invented and you did nothing #cancelscotthunter #fossilsdontbelonginhockey #begaydontbeold

↩️ **Scott Hunter** ✓ @scotthunteradmirals

You are exhausting and I hate that I have to be nice to you today

Wyatt Hayes ✓ @hazyongoal

Love you @shanehollander24! Hate you @montrealmetrosofficial 🙄🏳️🌈❤️

↩️ **Wyatt Hayes** ✓ @hazyongoal

Also, #hockeyisforeveryone and no one should have to suffer at the hands of homophobia. There are multiple LGBTQIA+ charities that you can donate to which I will link to this tweet. Please donate if you can ❤️

Troy Barrett ✓ @nottroybolton

There are a lot of issues within this sport and one of them is homophobia. It is never okay to be hateful towards someone because of who they love 🏳️🌈 #fuckthemetros #hockeyisforeveryone

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

@gilbertcomeau5

picture of the "how many times do we have to teach you this lesson, old man?" meme

Luca Haas ✓ @lucahaashockey

Shane Hollander is such a kind person and the things I hear out on the ice about him and the LGBTQIA+ community are heartbreaking. No one should have to hear even a fraction of what was said during the game tonight #hockeyisforeveryone 🏳️🌈❤️

Hayden Pike ✓ @haydenpike35

Shane, I love you. You are my brother and my best friend (other than my wife).

Tonight I played a game with my team. This team has been filled with hate towards the LGBTQ+ community especially since Scott Hunter did a brave thing and came out as gay 1/4

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

Earlier today, we were told that both Comeau and myself would be mic'd for this game. I immediately knew that this was going to be something that would cause strife for someone who I consider family. I knew that this game was probably going to be a little better than the four previous games we have played against Ottawa since Shane left us. But I also knew that this game would out my best friend about something that he has kept close to himself for so long 2/4

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

I was proud when Shane got out of Montreal because we did not deserve him. He was treated horribly and that was before he was even outed to the team which didn't happen until he had already left. I watched as this team almost broke him. He loved this team so much and he stayed a lot longer than he should have because although we failed him, he didn't want to leave 3/4

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

I am appalled at my team and I am ashamed of their behaviour, not just tonight, but for a lot longer.

No one should be forced out of the closet. No one should have to hear anything like what was said tonight by members of my team. No one should be bullied for who they love 🏳️💖

#hockeyisforeveryone 4/4

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

this is a lot of words. did not know you knew how to do that

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

Can you not be nice just this once?

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

hope you are excited to watch frozen in 10 minutes 😊

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

I AM BEGGING YOU PLEASE NO

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

ah, but you think we're family so now we have to 💖

↩️ **Hayden Pike** ✓ @haydenpike35

It was fake. I didn't say that. I was hacked.

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

hacked on live tv??? sure jan

Zane Boodram ✓ @bbqatboods

#hockeyisforeveryone and it is especially for people like Shane Hollander who proves everyday that he is someone to look up to 💖🏳️

Will LaPointe ✓ @pointymlh

i share a line with hollzy and have never seen someone so dedicated to this sport than him. if gay people play hockey like he does then maybe the secret to being a good hockey player is to be queer. apparently the secret to being a bad one is being a metro so i hope nothing but the worst for them after this 🏳️🏳️🏳️ #hockeyisforeveryone

↩️ **Will LaPointe** ✓ @pointymlh

also @gilbertcomeau5 please never come to my defence ever again. you did it in a gross way but you're also ruining my chances at tapping that

Ilya Rozanov ✓ @ilyarozanov

As a Russian man, it is very dangerous for me to speak on these matters, but I cannot stay silent. What the Montreal Metros have said tonight as well as other nights is never okay. Shane Hollander is a talented, brave, and kind soul and he – as well as others in the community – should never be faced with this language or hatred.

I stand behind him as a proud Captain and 1st overall draft pick of our year ❤️

↩ **Shane Hollander** ✓ @shanehollander24

It was #rigged

↩ **Shane Hollander** ✓ @shanehollander24

@pointymlh did I do it right?

↩ **Will LaPointe** ✓ @pointymlh

yes, papa you are #correct

↩ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

EVERYONE SHANE HOLLANDER IS A SORE LOSER! EVERYONE POINT AND LAUGH AT 2ND OVERALL DRAFT PICK

↩ **Shane Hollander** ✓ @shanehollander24

#homophobic #cancelrozanov

↩ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

NO am not homophobic! my best friend is superrrr gay! #freerozanov

↩ **Shane Hollander** ✓ @shanehollander24

He is just regular gay! #staycancelled

JJ Boiziau ✓ @jjboiziau

We failed @shanehollander24 not just tonight but every night. I am truly sorry that not only did you have to deal with this team when you were our captain, but you still have to deal with them when you're not 🏳️❤️ #hockeyisforeveryone

Evan Dykstra ✓ @evandykstra

We here in Ottawa stand with @shanehollander24 and the LGBTQ+ community 🏳️❤️

Ben Holmberg ✓ @bergyshootspuck

What happened tonight is just a fraction of what the Metros have inflicted since our first game against them with Hollzy on our side. It's not okay and it never will be 🏳️❤️
#hockeyisforeveryone

Ollie Young ✓ @youngdoeshockey

proud to stand with hollzy and with the LGBTQIA+ community. proud to be on a team where my captain stands up for his team. proud to be a centaur 🏳️❤️ #hockeyisforeveryone #ally #fuckthemetros

Carter Vaughan ✓ @vaughnyhockey

The Admirals stand against hatred towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community and we stand with Shane Hollander who we all admire greatly. I've known Shane for a long time and he does not deserve this. No one does 🏳️❤️🧡💛💚💙💜 #hockeyisforeveryone

Rose Landry ✓ @roselandry

Shane Hollander is my best friend and my favourite gay ex-boyfriend. He is one of the best people I know and I am always so proud of him #hockeyisforeveryone 🏳️❤️

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

emphasis on EX 😞😞

↩️ **Rose Landry** ✓ @roselandry

girl, chill HE IS GAY

↩️ **Ilya Rozanov** ✓ @ilyarozanov

yes he is so you lostttttttt 🤝🌀

↩️ **Rose Landry** ✓ @roselandry

@shanehollander24 come get him he's being possessive on main again

Chapter End Notes

I feel like I should add that I specifically chose for Shane not to make a statement coming out. I think that queer people should not have to come with a disclaimer and have to “justify” their existence. Straight people never have to post to confirm their sexuality. And I think Shane doesn't need to put out a statement confirming his own sexuality. He is a person who is famous because he is an athlete but that does not mean that his private life should be public. Also, with the game going how it did, his statement on the ice was enough and he should not have to give in and confirm it more than that because it is not owed to anyone ❤️

Chapter 28: Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

This one is short because I am writing this with a double ear infection and a fever and half way through I got a migraine so I don't know how good this will be but I am still #dedicated. Hope y'all enjoy though <3

Shane didn't know if maybe the Cens were all a little braindead or not, but he was always astounded by their dedication to be so accepting. It was like they were all allergic to being hateful. Throughout Shane's entire life of hockey, he has never been on a team like this and he genuinely believes that there isn't another team even remotely similar to this one.

It's like every time Shane thinks they couldn't possibly like him or it's too much, they prove him wrong. Panic attack on the first day? They just made sure he was okay. Homophobic ex-teammates? No forced confrontations, only acceptance. Married to the captain of the team? Celebrate at a gay bar. Outed during a game to the whole world? Show support online and continue treating him no differently in person.

He keeps waiting for them to quit on him, but they never do. They just keep showing up.

He thought that when he sat down in the break room a few days after that Metros match that this would be it.

The married couple had gotten carried away lately since they weren't hiding from the team. They no longer had to pretend they weren't having sex. That means that Shane is currently covered in hickeys and has bruises on his hips from where Ilya had gripped him tight the night before and Ilya had scratch marks up his back, his chest littered in bites and hickeys. It was a little humiliating that his teammates had noticed that morning and sent wolf-whistles their way. Shane was a little terrified that this would be too much with it being undeniable proof that they have gay sex.

Instead, the guys chirped them about it, but with no disgusted tones or expressions. They were all so delighted about it.

Wyatt walked into the room and slid into a seat opposite Shane. "So... fun night?"

"I will pay you \$200 right now to walk away and stop speaking."

"You could pay me a million and I would not do that."

Shane groaned and folded over, his head landing on the table. “I hate this team. I’m begging you all to start being more homophobic.”

“We’re not that bad.”

“Dykstra asked me an hour ago if all gay sex involved as much biting. He wasn’t even being sarcastic – genuinely seemed to want to know.”

“Roz is pretty chewed on.”

“Bergy asked me what it’s like to suck a dick and wanted to know if I thought he would be good at it.”

“Answer was no, right?”

“Absolutely,” Shane said without hesitation. “I don’t know why they’re all asking now. They’ve known about me being gay since March!”

Hazy made a thoughtful hum. “Maybe they thought you weren’t having sex. Like sure you’re gay, but that didn’t mean you were getting laid. Now there is proof. A lot of it.”

“It’s not *that* much,” Shane said, rolling his eyes. “Is it?”

“Dude, you both look like you’ve been mauled. You could probably go out there and tell the guys that you were attacked and they would probably buy it. I think the marks on Roz’s back like *definitely* bled at some point.”

Shane grimaced. “No comment.”

Wyatt snorted and shook his head. He stood up and gestured for Shane to follow him. “Come on, stop hiding out in here. I heard Young had some very important questions about tops and bottoms.”

Shane let out a deep sigh but stood up to follow. “I’m asking for a trade.”

Ilya was apparently ecstatic to finally talk about their sex life, leaving no detail left out. Shane entered the gym to find some of the team and Harris were huddled around his husband like they were kindergarteners at story time as he recounted their first hookup.

“Damn, Cap!” Choui said. “How old were you guys?”

“Nineteen,” Ilya grinned and mouths were dropped.

“I’m sorry,” Harris said, his mouth opening and closing like a fish. “Are you saying that you two have been together this whole time?”

“Yes, since summer before our rookie season!”

“CCM commercial?” Luca asked, a thoughtful look on his face.

From the doorway, Shane raised his eyebrows. “How’d you know that?”

“I guessed!” Luca insisted, flushing slightly clearly not realising he guessed out loud. His face looked like he was one second from getting into a car and driving off, never to be seen again. “I know some people online – not me – have been theorising for years now and I once – years ago – saw a post that put that as a possible starting point.”

“Oh, the shippers!” Ilya said delightedly. “Yes, they were right.”

“Wait, if you guys got together then,” Young said looking confused. “What was with Roz’s ho phase? And Rose Landry?”

“Ugh, Rose Landry,” Ilya groaned, pouting. “Stupid name and bad actress.”

“We were casual until last year,” Shane explained. “And Rose was great when she sat me down and told me I might be gay. And she was at our wedding, Ilya – stop acting like you hate her.”

“Uhhh,” LaPointe butted in. “You mean to say you were casual for like seven years and then got married like a year after you got serious?”

“We were always serious,” Ilya shrugged. “We just thought we couldn’t be together and we tried very hard not to fall in love.”

“So Hollzy was having sex with Roz for years and didn’t clue onto the gay thing until he was told?” Bergy asked.

“I thought I might be bi!” Shane defended. “Or I thought maybe it was just like a phase or something and I would eventually find a girl I could like!”

“That’s a little depressing, man,” Bood said.

“Yes, is very tragic,” Ilya agreed. “Now, does anyone want to hear about the time Shane left me?”

“Oh yeah?” Shane said, cocking an eyebrow. “We could always talk about the time you ghosted me for six months after you took my virginity even though you begged to do it for two years?”

“Ah, no. That one makes me look bad. We will do my story.”

Shane sighed, resigned, and hid his face in his hands as Ilya recounted the memory.

The Cens continued to be overly-supportive to them over the next month. It was nice but it was also like Shane was constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop even though he knew they were all good guys. But it never did. And Ilya was thriving which was a little reassuring.

Before they knew it, the Christmas break rolled around. Shane had agonised on what to get Ilya as a present for so long until he broke and asked Harris for an idea because the guy

seemed like he would be a good gift-giver. It was their first Christmas as a married couple and he didn't want to get it wrong.

Harris had helped him, and after thinking it over obsessively and talking with his parents, Shane decided he was going to go with the suggestion. That was how he found himself getting up early on the day to drive to the Drover farm.

Ilya still wasn't awake when he returned and Shane snuck into the room, carrying the present.

"Wake up, baby," he whispered, shaking his husband awake.

Ilya blinked open his eyes, yawning widely and focusing on Shane. It took a couple seconds, but then his eyes flew open comically wide and he gasped. "Shane, moya lyubov', please tell me I am not dreaming!"

He snatched the gift out of Shane's arms and cradled it to his chest. The puppy barked excitedly and started licking Ilya's face, her tail wagging.

Ilya was sobbing and running his hands through the dog's fur. Shane chuckled, sat on the bed next to him and said, "you're not dreaming. Merry Christmas, Ilya."

Ilya wrapped an arm around him, hiding his face in the crook of his neck, clutching the puppy between them. "Thank you. I love you so much."

"I love you too," Shane said into Ilya's hair, kissing the top of his head.

Chapter 29: Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

After Christmas and All-Stars

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for the kind wishes! Good news... it worked and my ear infections are slowly going away! Bad news... I did not update yesterday because I am in the hospital because I now also have pneumonia! Yay! 💔

More good news though! Hospitals are so fucking boring and my grandma brought me my laptop so I can write again! ❤️

Hopefully I can try and get a bit done here and there. Anyway, enjoy this one!! Love and appreciate you all - you are all so kind and amazing 💖

Shane was quickly finding himself regretting getting a dog – Anya, as Ilya had decided to name her – because now their house was covered in dog stuff.

Shane had bought a couple things on the way home from the farm, but now – only three days later – he walked into the house to see that Ilya most likely bought out the entire stock of the pet store. He had Anya clothed in a tutu and shirt and was currently trying to keep a tiara from falling off her head. And there were toys *everywhere*. There were four separate dog beds stacked on top of each other. There five varieties of collars.

Shane let out a deep sigh. “Ilya. What the fuck?”

“What?” Ilya asked, looking completely confused.

“It looks like a pet store threw up in here!” Shane said, gesturing around them. “Why do we even need four dog beds?”

“Is for different rooms, duh,” Ilya said sounding as though it was obvious. “One for bedroom because you refuse to let her sleep on bed. One for lounge room. One for game room. One for outside.”

“Why is she in a tutu?”

“She is our princess – she must be dressed like one.”

“What princess wears a tutu?”

“Ruby and Jade.” And shit, he’s got him there.

Shane pinched the bridge of his nose and let out another sigh. “Why do we need fifty different dog toys?”

“She deserves them,” Ilya said, shrugging.

Yuna and David were not any better. They referred to her exclusively as “their granddaughter” and when Shane and Ilya had to leave for their first road trip after the break, they were practically shoved out the door so their parents could have “quality time with their first grandchild.”

And, no – don’t get Shane wrong – he *loves* Anya. Even though they had barely had her for two weeks, he was a slight mess on the plane ride to Florida and was constantly sending messages to his parents on his Instagram account for updates.

It got a little easier after that first roadie but having Ilya with him helped more. He was just as much of a mess.

Of course, All-Star weekend was different. Ilya was planning on going but he chose to attend the funeral of Duncan Harvey, a player who had committed suicide via an overdose. It was a sore spot for Ilya so Shane didn’t fault him for going.

This was also going to be his first league event as an openly gay man. He was so nervous. He knows he most likely wouldn’t have to answer too many questions from the press about his sexuality as Crowell has probably vetted the questions so that they don’t focus on the fact that the MLH has *two* gay players who are All-Stars. Not to mention Shane was picked as the Captain of his team – likely because the league didn’t want to publicly seem like they were homophobic.

He just tried to focus on the weekend. At least he could catch up with Scott and Kip, Vaughny, JJ, and Hayden – who was a first time All-Star – and who had brought his family with him.

Instead of going to the bar first thing, he headed straight to the outdoor pool knowing that the Pikes would be there. He was pleasantly surprised to see all the people he wanted to see all hanging out.

“Unca Shane!” Arthur squealed and waddled over.

“Hey, buddy,” Shane greeted, scooping up the toddler. The twins ran over and attached themselves to his legs.

“Did you bring Anya?” Ruby demanded excitedly at the same time as Jade asked, “did you bring Uncle Ilya?”

“Puppy!” Arthur perked up at the name of the new addition to the family.

“No, she’s at home and Ilya couldn’t make it either.”

“Can we call him?” Ruby asked, both twins and Arthur looking upset at the loss of their Uncle.

Shane smiled at the three of them. “Okay, fine. But he’s not at home so Anya won’t be there to say ‘hi’ to.”

As he took out his phone, the adults walked over and he gave them a quick nod in greeting before FaceTiming his husband.

“Moya lyubov’!” Ilya greeted in a fashion that was probably not suited for the funeral he was about to attend soon. He waggled his eyebrows and said, “what is wrong? You missed me?”

“Not even a little,” Shane chuckled through the lie. “Your nieces and nephew wanted to say ‘hello.’”

“Ah, where are my little godchildren?” Ilya demanded, his grin widening. Shane extended his arm out to show the three oldest Pike kids.

“Hi!” the girls yelled at him as Arthur’s face lit up in a big grin as he waved in an incredibly adorable way that almost looked like he was making grabby-hands.

“*Hollander,*” Ilya said in Russian, his face flushing slightly. “*I am on my way to a funeral and you show me a video of you holding a baby?*”

“*Control yourself.*”

“Hi, girls,” Ilya said in English. “And my little Artyusha. Ah, but where is baby Amber?”

“She’s here!” Jackie said as she carried the youngest child, moving into the frame and waving Amber’s arm. “Hi, Ilya.”

“Jackie!”

“How are you, babe? We all miss you here.”

“Ah, I am good. I wish I could be there too.”

“When do we get to see Anya again?” Ruby asked.

“Hmm,” Ilya hummed thoughtfully. “Shane and I might be able to bring our daughter to visit in two weeks, maybe?”

Shane ran through his schedule in his head. “Yeah, that could work – we have a couple days free so we could make the drive. Does that work for you guys?”

He looked at Jackie and Hayden and faltered a little when he realised that JJ was there and had just heard this whole exchange.

“Yeah, man!” Hayden agreed, eyeing JJ warily. “Should be able to swing that.”

“*Why do you look a little shocked, solnyshko?*” Ilya asked in Russian, obviously picking up on Shane’s split-second of panic.

Shane just faced the phone to capture the adults.

“Wow!” Ilya exclaimed in surprise. “A pensioner and his great-grandchild!”

“Fu-*udge* you, Rozanov,” Scott replied, glancing with wide-eyes at the young children in front of him.

Shane snorted and muttered, “nice save” to which Scott shot him a glare with narrowed eyes. Shane did not even act guilty, just smirked back at him.

“Sup, Rozy!” Vaughny waved as Kip also greeted Ilya with a wave and a grin at Scott.

“Vaughnyyyyyyy,” Ilya said, dragging out the name. “Wow, this is a lot of people. Nice to see you all, but I would like to talk to my godchildren now, goodbye.”

“He didn’t even say ‘hi’ to me,” Shane heard Hayden mutter lowly as he walked away a few steps with the Admirals crew, leaving only Jackie and JJ around Shane and the kids. Hayden’s phone buzzed in his hand and he raised his voice to call out, “fuck you, Roz!”

“Swear jar!” all of the other Pikes – except Amber and Arthur, of course – and Shane and Ilya all called out.

Shane manoeuvred the group, with the twins still attached to his legs and Arthur in his arm, to a nearby lounge chair to continue talking to his husband with the kids.

“...and Lulu in the other class is so *mean*,” Jade whined.

“It’s true,” Ruby insisted, nodding vigorously. “I want to fight her.”

“Ugh, Lulu!” Ilya groaned sympathetically. “Does she still have bad haircut?”

“Yes!” Jade said happily. “It has barely grown!”

“Ah, then knowing that is sweeter satisfaction than a punch would be, yes?”

“Nooooooo,” Ruby said, exasperated. “I want to make her nose look bad too!”

Shane did a very bad job of covering up his choke of laughter. He quickly got himself under control and said, “but that would make you mean then. You don’t want that, right? It’s not very nice to fight.”

“Didn’t you break that guy’s nose when you fought?” Jade asked, cocking her head curiously.

Shane panicked. “No comment.”

Ilya let out a snort before saying, “yes, is true – Shane did that – but the man hurt your uncles and a lot of other people with his fists. It’s not nice to fight someone, but this man was a very bad man and so it was okay to fight. Just this once.”

“Didn’t you fight someone too?” Jade enquired. “And you fought someone else last week too! I heard Daddy say that you should have hit him harder.”

“This is true,” Ilya said, nodding. “I should have. But he was also being a bad man and he was being mean to Uncle Shane.”

“Why does everyone want to be mean to Uncle Shane?” Ruby asked and she seemed a little distressed, so Shane balanced Arthur on his knee and wrapped an arm around her.

“You know we are married, yes?”

“You’re silly,” Ruby said, fighting a smile. “We did the first one and we were flower girls at the other one!”

“Yes,” Shane cut in. “And you were the most beautiful flower girls we’ve ever had!”

“We were your *only* flower girls,” Jade pointed out.

“Exactly,” Shane said, reaching out to bop her nose. “But a lot of people don’t like that we are together because we are two men. Your Mom and Dad told you about this, right?”

“Yes,” Ruby nodded. “They said that there were a lot of a-holes that don’t like gay people because they think it’s wrong.”

“Yes,” Ilya said. “And there are a lot of a-holes like that in hockey and a lot of people found out that Shane is gay. So, they are mean to him. So, it is okay for me to hit them because they don’t like that he is gay and that hurts him. And that is one of the only times that it is okay to fight, okay?”

“Okay,” Ruby acquiesced. “Fine, I will not punch Lulu for saying that my backpack is ugly.”

“Good girl,” Ilya said. “Shane, give her big pat on head.”

“She’s not a dog, Ilya,” Shane sighed, but he did pat Ruby’s head which she seemed happy with.

“Puppy?” Arthur asked, looking around for a dog.

“No, baby,” Shane said. “No puppy right now, but soon, okay?”

Arthur pouted a little but nodded and tucked his face in Shane’s neck. Shane cuddled him closer and ran a hand up his back.

“The funeral starts in an hour, Shane, do not do this to me.”

“Behave, my god!”

He didn't have time to speak to JJ one-on-one until a few hours later – which was a blessing and a curse – because on one hand, he didn't have to deal with it straight away, and on the other, he was filled with anxiety the whole time. He has never been good at reading people and he absolutely cannot tell if JJ is surprised, pissed off, okay with it, or a mixture of all three.

They were at the bar, but not the only ones sitting there so he had to be a little careful of how they worded things. He wasn't sure if he was relieved to have the safety net of having the conversation in public where it wouldn't be a big fight – or if he was even more anxious in case JJ didn't care that they were in public.

“I'm sorry I didn't tell you,” Shane started.

“I thought we were best friends,” JJ said in a low voice. “Or at least friends. But friends usually know when the other one is married.”

“I know,” Shane said. “That's why I'm sorry. I didn't want to exclude you – but I couldn't tell you.”

“How many people know then?”

Shane winced. “A few. My parents. Hayd and Jackie and the kids, obviously. The Cens know. Rose and our friend Sveta also. Scott, Kip, Vaughny know too. I think Eric Bennet and a couple other New York guys might also know. I didn't realise it at the time but some of them were at the Kingfisher once when we all went there a couple weeks back after the Christmas break. We wear our rings when we go there because it's safe and one of the only places we don't have to hide.”

“So... your whole circle – including your entire team and like half the Admirals know – but you couldn't tell me?”

“I know. And again – I am sorry. But I have had a pretty shit year if you couldn't tell. Most of the people who know now only found out recently and weren't even at the wedding last summer. The Cens only knew I was gay because the Metros outed me to them. And then to the whole world. It's been fucked and I couldn't risk that for him too.”

“I'm not the Metros,” JJ said and he was fully angry now. “I had to find out you were gay from Coach. Which sucked, because it seemed like Pike knew already. And you brought him around to theirs over a year ago now which means he knew about him for a while too. Why not me?”

“Maybe,” Shane said, trying to keep his voice level. “It was because on my first day back last season Hayden found me when I was on the phone to him as he talked me down from a panic attack. We didn't choose to come out to him, it just happened. And you hate Il–*him*. You hate him. The amount of times I have heard you call him a ‘cocksucker’ over the years didn't exactly make me feel secure in choosing to tell you.”

“How long has this been happening, exactly?” JJ demanded. “Two years ago, you were with Rose Landry and now you’re married to this fucking guy. No way you did this all that fast.”

“Fuck you,” Shane said. “It’s been longer than I’ve even known you.”

JJ looked gobsmacked. “What?”

“Yeah,” Shane said. “We waited so long because we didn’t think we were *allowed* to be together. You know where he comes from, right? It’s so fucking dangerous for him to be with me and he still *chose* me, knowing he would not be able to go back home. Ever.”

Shane took an – unsuccessfully – calming breath and continued, “It’s not safe. I can’t just tell everyone. Especially unless I know they’re going to be a hundred percent okay with it. Because this is *his life*. I value that a fuck of a lot more than your feelings. You are my friend, and I do trust you. But I just didn’t know if I could about this. But you know now. Congratulations.”

“Were you ever going to tell me?” JJ asked and he sounded a little broken.

“Yes,” Shane agreed. “When he gets permanent residency and he’s not in danger of being taken away from me if this got out. I was going to tell you then.”

JJ nodded at this. “Okay. I’m still mad at you because so many other people know and I didn’t. But I think I get it.”

“Good,” Shane said simply and he got up and walked around for a bit, doing the mingling with other players that was expected.

When he got up to his hotel a while after, he pulled out his phone to text Ilya.

Lily

how did it go with jj?

Shane

Could have been better but could have been a whole lot worse
How was the funeral?

Lily

boring, but i do not regret coming
i invited price to be a coach at our camps

Shane

Sounds good. Did you see the photos Mom and Dad sent?

Lily

yes! anya looks so beautiful 🥰🥹

Shane

She is very cute

Lily

yes, we make cute babies 😊

Shane

we did not make her

Lily

do not say that!
we made her
she is ours

Shane



Chapter 30: Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

A little more of All-Stars and then back home.

Chapter Notes

I am still sick but I am getting better and I should be able to go home tomorrow! It took me so long to write this chapter because I have been resting and I've been so sick and tired so I could only do a bit here and there at a time.

I wrote some smut in this one, not a lot, but some. Writing smut in the same hospital room as a 80 year old woman was not on my bingo card for 2026 but, alas, here we are. If you want to skip the smut, stop reading when Shane gets home and start again when the bigger paragraphs start up where he starts talking about the season.

This fic will likely be wrapping up soon! Most likely one or two more chapters after this. So I hope you all enjoy! :)

Shane had never spent an All-Stars without Ilya before. Even at ones where they didn't hook up, Ilya was still at least there. He was a part of the competition, he was there at the bar or on the ice, he was there somewhere at the hotel. Now he was not and Shane felt like he had a missing limb.

Maybe his teammates were right about Shane and Ilya being too attached to one another because he felt a little lost without him.

"You're pouting," Scott said, sliding into a chair opposite Shane at the hotel bar.

"I am not," Shane objected, frowning at the other man.

"You look like if Roz doesn't walk through that door right now, you'll burst into tears."

"That's an exaggeration," Shane said, rolling his eyes.

"It's really not. You look miserable."

Shane frowned even deeper. "I just miss him."

"It's been like three days."

“Three days too many.”

“What’s three days too many?” Hayden asked, sitting down at the table with them.

“Apparently, it’s killing Shane to be without Ilya for a couple days,” Scott said.

“Ugh,” Hayden groaned. “That guy.”

“Stop pretending you hate him,” Shane said.

“I do hate him.”

“He’s an emergency contact at the girl’s school.”

“Jackie’s fault.”

“He’s been added to the list of people who are allowed to visit you in the hospital if something were to happen to you.”

“Only in case it comes down to it because I know you’ll be upset and need comforting.”

“You wished him a ‘happy birthday.’”

“I was being polite and Jackie made me because you married him like a couple days before.”

“You both cried together watching Toy Story 3.”

“I had something in my eye and he was checking it.”

“You keep Ilya’s preferred Vodka brand at your house even though he’s only been drunk at your house once from wine.”

“It’s just good manners in case he wants to drink again.”

“You got him a Christmas present.”

“The whole family did.”

“Yeah, you all gave him one gift but you also gave him a second one from just you.”

“To get a leg up on him. Try to get in his head, y’know?”

“You’re encouraging the kids to learn Russian even though you don’t know how to speak it.”

“I want them to be bilingual and you also speak it. He just happens to also be Russian.”

“You wear a friendship bracelet that he made with the girls.”

“I just like the way it looks. And he gave it to me because it was one of the rejects.”

“There’s a picture of him on your fridge.”

“Jackie put it up.”

“You dropped gloves for him.”

“Anderson called him a commie.”

“What, you’re gonna drop gloves for every Russian guy in the league who gets called that?”

“Maybe.”

Scott started laughing by this point. “I can’t believe Pike is best buds with Rozanov.”

Hayden looked offended. “I am not!”

He pulled out his phone and started typing furiously. Scott’s phone that was on the table started ringing, his phone lighting up with the name ‘DO NOT ANSWER’. Hunter sighed and answered it.

The sound of angry Russian was so loud coming from it that Shane could hear it.

Scott held the phone away from his ear and said to Hayden, “telling on me to him only makes you look *more* like you’re friends.”

Shane held his hand out for Scott’s phone. Into it, he said, “Ilya.”

The angry Russian stopped and Ilya replied happily with, “Shane! My love!”

“Stop yelling at Scott. All he said was that you and Hayden are friends. Which you are.”

“I am not *friends* with Hayden *Pike*.”

“Yes, you are. Now stop committing elder abuse and leave Scott alone.”

“Okay, fine. Anything for you, moya lyubov’.”

“Good. I’ll talk to you later. Love you.”

“Love you too, Shane.”

Shane hung up the phone and passed it back to Scott.

“Was the chirp necessary?” Scott asked.

“Very,” Shane replied.

“You used to be so sweet.”

“You used to be young but that time has also passed.”

Scott sighed. “I walked into that one.”

The rest of the weekend passed and before he knew it, he was on a flight back home to Ilya and Anya. The moment he walked through the door, his whole body relaxed as both his husband and dog met him at the door.

“Fuck I missed you,” Shane said into Ilya’s chest after he fell into the man’s arms.

“I missed you too. So much.”

“I feel like I was going insane. Are we insane for not wanting to be apart?”

“No, we just spent so long like that and we don’t want to do it anymore.”

Shane looked up at him. “You know Scott has you in his phone as ‘DO NOT ANSWER?’”

“He has never not answered when I call. He is obsessed with me.”

“He needs to get in line.”

“Ah, there is line? And who is at front?”

“Me, asshole,” Shane said as he pulled Ilya into a kiss. Ilya melted into it, pushing Shane against the door. Shane’s hands found Ilya’s hair which he tugged on when Ilya grinded his hips against Shane’s brushing their groins together, their cocks already half-hard. Ilya moaned at his hair being pulled and wrapped his arms around Shane’s thighs, lifting him against the door causing Shane to wrap his legs around his husband’s waist.

Ilya always kissed him like he was starving and this was his last kiss. His tongue would lick into Shane’s mouth, and when he would moan, Shane could feel it vibrate through him.

Ilya grabbed Shane’s ass for support and carried him through the house to the couch, lowering him onto it and tugging off both of their shirts.

He kissed down Shane’s chest, his tongue circling a nipple which caused Shane to moan loud and arch into it. Shane brought his hand down to his erection, needing to touch it, to have some friction but Ilya grabbed it, wrapping his fingers hard around his wrist and pinning it to the back of the couch. Shane gasped at the tightness of Ilya’s fingers, bucking his hips up.

“No touching,” Ilya warned.

“I need to,” Shane breathed. “Please.”

“I will do it,” Ilya said, releasing his wrist. “You just sit there and look pretty.”

Shane whimpered when Ilya brought his own hands to the button on Shane’s pants. Shane bucked his hips up against the hands, but Ilya moved to pin them down.

“No moving,” Ilya ordered. “I will touch you but if you move, you will not come.”

Shane whimpered but stilled his hips. Ilya unbuttoned his pants and pulled them down his thighs, dragging his briefs with them. Shane’s cock sprang free, hard and aching and the next

thing he knew, Ilya was swallowing him down. He used one hand to grip the base of it and moved the other to Shane's chest, rolling a nipple between two fingers.

"Fuck," Shane moaned, arching into it as he brought his hands to Ilya's hair.

Ilya pulled back. "No moving. Be good and stay still."

"Yes, fuck, I will," Shane said, nodding. "Please, I'll be still."

Ilya brought his lips back down around Shane's cock, bobbing his head, sucking him down and then flicking his tongue across the slit when he was at the tip of it, before going deeper and deeper, moving the hand on the dick to his balls while he continued to play with his nipple.

"Ilya," Shane whimpered, yanking at his curls. "God, Ilya, fuck, like that."

Ilya groaned around him, and picked up his pace, sucking him faster. It took everything in Shane to not move his hips and fuck Ilya's mouth.

"Fuck, Ilya, please," Shane babbled. "Feel so good. Please let me – I need to come."

Ilya moaned and lifted his mouth off him. "Come for me, lyubimiyy."

He wrapped his lips back around the cock and swirled his tongue around the slit, before sucking lower and lower as Shane came hard in his mouth. Once Shane was finished, Ilya popped off and kissed him hard, the taste of cum on his tongue.

Shane flipped them so that Ilya was beneath him and he wasted no time in sinking down onto the floor and tugging Ilya's pants down.

He took Ilya's hard cock into his mouth, lapping up the precum and pressing open-mouthed kisses to the tip of it, darting his tongue out to lick at the slit. He took the length of the cock down until it hit the back of his throat. He relaxed his throat so that he could take Ilya all the way down and then started bobbing his head, sucking up and down.

Ilya slid a hand down his shoulders, kneading at his back, the other finding a place in his hair. He bucked up into Shane's mouth and Shane moaned at it. Ilya took that as permission and he started thrusting, fucking into his mouth, meeting Shane's pace.

"*Fuck*, Shane," Ilya moaned. "You are made for this. Made to take my cock."

Shane moaned even louder at the praise, drooling onto Ilya's dick, his own cock twitching at the words. He picked up his pace, sucking harder.

"Feel so perfect, moya lyubov', such good mouth."

It wasn't much longer before Ilya's cum was hitting the back of Shane's throat, hot and salty. Shane swallowed it down and raised himself up, crawling onto Ilya's lap to melt into him, their lips finding each other's.

“Missed you,” Shane mumbled.

“I missed you too,” Ilya replied. “Let’s not spend a weekend apart ever again.”

“Deal.”

All-Stars was fun, but playing on an actual team was so much better. The Centaurs were doing so much better than ever before. They still had to deal with homophobes targeting Shane but the further into the season they got, the teams started playing more seriously and leaving him alone more. Of course, they did still keep it up a little bit, especially teams like the Metros who had no chance of making the playoffs and therefore only had a plan of trying to make sure the Cens couldn’t make it there alive either.

They all turned up even worse after Ottawa’s Pride Night where Troy Barrett decided to come out. It was bittersweet though because while Troy got to have his moment and the team rallied around him and they were all really happy for him, Ilya wasn’t able to come out. He didn’t have his permanent residency yet. Not that they planned to come out to the world then or even as a couple, but after that Pride Night, Ilya had looked so quietly devastated that Shane told him that once he was safe from Russia, they didn’t have to hide. He could tell the closet was killing Ilya a little, even though so many people knew already and he had the support, but seeing him forced to call Shane a *friend* in public stung for both of them.

The first few games after that night were a little brutal now that there was a grand total of two out players on one team and some people were still very much homophobic but it turns out they were as bad at that as they were at hockey because the Centaurs were steadily at the top of their division and would most likely be going to the playoffs.

Shane had no doubt that they would be going. He was a little nervous though because playoffs were brutal and not a lot of people on the Cens had ever played in them before. That alone makes Shane think they might only last one round because hardly any of these guys have had to play in those conditions. The bruising and broken bones. The fatigue. The gruelling clock that would go into overtime for some of the games. The only rest being a day here and there if it wasn’t spent on travelling. And there would be more rounds if they made it through with a possibility of all four rounds running to seven games each.

As they got closer to them, it was looking increasingly likely that they would be playing the playoffs. Shane and Ilya took point and ran drills like there was no tomorrow. They were at the rink early everyday and would stay long after practice was over, training and doing more drills. A lot of the guys opted to join them with some of it.

Before they knew it, they had secured the spot. They would be going to the playoffs, something this team had not seen in a decade.

Halfway through the first round and the group was already running wild with their superstitions. Most of them weren’t shaving. LaPoint had to not only listen to but also dance to the Hoedown Throwdown from the Hannah Montana movie. Boyle was not allowed to touch the colour green. Luca was having to read a book a day since the first couple times they had won, he had done just that and now he was stuck doing it and Shane was aware that at one point he would have to start providing him with kid’s books. Bergy was “forced” to get

McDonalds for lunch every day which Shane is starting to think is not an actual superstition but is just a way to not be judged for eating five cheeseburgers.

They were working. The team won the first round in five games and advanced to the second. That one took seven games, but they pulled through. The third round also lasted seven games.

They were headed to the finals.

Chapter 31: Chapter 31

Chapter Summary

Cup Final! ❤️

Chapter Notes

Thank you all so much for reading this. I love and appreciate you all. Whether you just read it or you read and kudosed, I love you. Thank you 💖

I've read every one of your comments and it was those that helped me through writing this. Thank you to those people especially ❤️

It's been a pleasure writing this 🖤

Playoffs were long. The team was so tired and there were multiple injuries.

They just won Game 5. They were now only one win away from the Cup. It was still likely that the series could run to Game 7, but there was a change in the locker room after the game. They knew they had this. In two days, they could have a cup.

The group chat was buzzing.

Centaur boyzzzz 🐎🏏🏆

Boodylicious 🍑🍖💪

Rest up, boys, because we are ABOUT TO WIN A CUP 🏆

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️

This is insane!!!

We got this!!!

THAT'S THE POINT 👉

damn, bergy is using capital letters

he means shit
this is serious

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️

dad and papa are doing a bang up jobbbbb
fucking legends

Hollzy Jr. 🧑🏻🎨🖍️

I think Hollander is going to win the Conn Smythe!
I would say that Roz would... but Hollander is killing it

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👤🏠

i will excuse you just this once haas
only because you MIGHT be correct
but do not betray me again
and i might still win it!

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏

I don't want to jinx it.
But if we do win, I think it would be going to me
Suck it, Rozanov

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👤🏠

gladly 😊

T as in Troy 🏀

BOOOOO 🍅🍅
No flirting in the group chat!

stop a goal, save a life 🏠🚑

NO!
Don't listen to him
Flirt more! 😊

Hollzy's Roomie 🗨️👤🏠

don't be so homophobic, barrett

T as in Troy 🏀

I'M GAY
NOT HOMOPHOBIC

THAT'S THE POINT 👉

then don't boo our parents
their love is beautiful 😍

Big Dykstra Energy 🎵🔊

We're about to win the Cup with the power of gay
And because Montreal decided to be fuckheads

Hockey Jesus 🏒🙏
We'll toast to them when we win
So happy to have been hate-crimed with you all ❤️
It's been a pleasure

Hollzy's Roomie 🏠👤👤
to homophobia! 🍺

Sherlock Holmes 🕵️
TO HOMOPHOBIA 🍺

Young and Beautiful 🧑🏻❤️
#homophobiawins ❤️

Boodylicious 🍑🍖💪
Yeah, I'm not toasting to homophobia, Roz
Happy for you though or whatever

Hollzy's Roomie 🏠👤👤
BOOOO 🍅

The morning of Game 6 started as a normal one. Shane woke up early and went for a run with Anya, Ilya still asleep when they got back. Around 8, Ilya woke and started his own routine. They didn't have practice that day, but they did both work out a little in their home gym.

Around 11, Ilya was headed to the store for some ingredients for lunch. And about half an hour later, he was crashing through the front door.

"Shane!" Ilya yelled out, running into the lounge room where Shane was reading. He was carrying a letter in his fist and his face was filled with excitement.

"What is it?" Shane asked, putting his book aside.

Ilya thrust the letter into his hands and Shane looked down at it. His eyes went wide and he glanced back up at Ilya. "Really?"

Ilya nodded and his face was split in a huge grin. "Really."

Ilya Rozanov was a Canadian permanent resident. He was safe.

Shane practically lunged at his husband, crashing their lips together. It was probably one of their toothiest kisses because they both couldn't stop smiling.

When they arrived at the rink, Ilya didn't let go of his hand except for when they got out of the car. As soon as they did and they grabbed their bags, Ilya was immediately rounding the car again to grab his hand. And that's how they walked into the facility. Together.

Harris came across them first before they could get to the locker room.

“Harris!” Ilya greeted with ecstasy. “Are you ready to start filming cup champions?”

“Ilya!” Harris said in the same tone. He looked down at their hands. “I see you two are being less subtle today.”

“I am about to win the Cup with my husband – I do not care about being subtle.”

“It could go to Game 7,” Shane chimed in. “And we could lose both tonight and that game.”

Ilya looked at him in horror. “Excuse him, Harris. He is obviously dumb.”

“I said that we *could* lose,” Shane reiterated. “We won’t, but it is a possibility.”

“Yuna says we will win,” Ilya pointed out. “She is magic and knows this. Sveta also agrees and she is never wrong.”

“I also think you guys are gonna win,” Harris said. “Power of the rainbow.”

“Everyone is gonna be so pissed,” Shane said. “If we win. This team is so gay and they’re all going to hate it.”

“Queer,” Ilya corrected. “And, yes. They will. Which is why we will win – so we can shove it in so many people’s faces. Montreal will regret everything.”

Shane gripped Ilya’s hand harder and nodded before leaning in for a quick peck. “Okay. We are winning.”

“How is Anya?” Harris asked.

“Still adorable,” Ilya said. “We make cute babies.”

“We didn’t make her,” Shane said, rolling his eyes.

“Then how did I give birth to her? Explain that.”

“Easy. You fucking didn’t.”

Ilya gasped dramatically. “I so did!”

Harris walked with them to the locker room – probably to talk with Troy about something. Those two were so obvious in their crushes that even Shane picked up on it. Troy was always bringing the social media manager coffee and they hung out quite a bit during the summer at the Drover farm.

When they stepped into the room, they froze as they saw the whole team was already there. All of them, even Coach.

Bood cleared his throat and stepped forward, gesturing to the bench in front of their stalls. “Please take a seat.”

“Is someone dead or something?” Shane said without moving from the doorway. “What is happening?”

“It’s nothing like that,” Weibe reassured. “Just take a seat, boys.”

Shane and Ilya shared a confused glance but went over to the bench and sat down.

Wyatt stepped forward and looked at them with a smile. “We all want to thank you both. We wouldn’t be here without you.”

Shane let out a breath. That’s all this was.

“This year has been hard,” Hazy continued. “Shane, you especially, have gone through so much. I saw you have a panic attack on your first day here and I saw you breakdown during intermission during that first Montreal game. But you never stayed down. You kept pushing through and you believed in this team. And you brought your annoying menace of a husband along and seeing you both being able to breathe and grow on this team together has been amazing. Even if we don’t win tonight or in two days, I want you both to know that you are so loved here and we all could not be happier that you chose us. Thank you for getting us here.”

Shane was man enough to admit that he was tearing up. The grip of Ilya’s hand in his tightening showed that they were both affected by this.

Troy stepped up next. “I was traded here as punishment and I was having the worst time. I found out that my best friend was a rapist and I was dumped by my boyfriend who turned out to be cheating on me all within a couple days of each other. But you, Shane – you showed me that I wasn’t alone and told me to take a chance on this team. And when Ilya came to us it was like a weird dream. And then you told us that you were together and it showed me that I could have a good life as a gay man in hockey. You showed me that this team was worth everything. And now we could win the Cup. And it’s all thanks to you both.”

“I was drafted here,” Bood said. “Not once have we come this far. This team was the bottom of the league. We weren’t taken seriously and we weren’t winning. When I was told that we got Shane Hollander – fuck – I just about passed out. And when you came to the team and we got to know you, none of us could understand how lucky we could be. And when I was told in July that we signed Ilya Rozanov, I thought that maybe I had lost my mind. There was just no way. But then I walked into this building the next day and saw you and you both looked so happy and I realised that you were about to change this team into something greater. I got to watch you both get married and exist on this team together. I couldn’t be prouder of both of you. Thank you.”

Shane and Ilya were both crying by the time Bood finished talking.

Shane stood up and wiped at his face. “Thank you – all of you. This whole year has been amazing despite everything. We’ve all gone through so much and not once have any of you decided that it’s been too hard. Even when all we were getting was hit hard by men who hate me, none of you turned away. You all let me in and accepted me. You never forced me to come out or resented me for putting a target on your backs because I’m gay. You all gave me

a team that showed me nothing but love. I didn't know that a team could be like this. We chose this team because we knew that it could be the most accepting one, but we didn't see just *how* amazing you all could be. Thank you for giving us a home where we could feel safe."

The guys took this chance to crowd around and engulf both Shane and Ilya in a big group hug. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

When the game started, it was electric. The team were bolstered and ready. They were all excited not just to win, but to also finish with the brutality that is the playoffs.

It was when they were towards the end of the game, three points up, that Shane and Ilya were on the bench side-by-side. They were about to win the Cup. *Together*. This is what this all was for. This team worked so hard to get here. Shane and Ilya worked so hard for this moment. They were about to win the biggest trophy and they were about to do it together. They were married and happy and they were about to win.

"Put your ring on," Shane demanded to his husband. At Ilya's questioning look, he said, "just do it."

He started sliding his own off of his chain as he wandered over to Coach.

"Put me and Ilya in for the rest of the game," Shane said. "There's two minutes left. Let us play it together. Please."

Coach just gave him a nod. "Alright. Both of you in. Bood can go in with you."

"Thank you."

They changed lines and played the last of the game, Ilya scoring the last goal just as the buzzer went off. They had won the MLH Cup finals with a score of 6-2.

Time froze for a single second. Because they had done it. Shane looked at Ilya and everything slipped away.

Shane immediately dropped his helmet and gloves and shucked off his helmet as he skated towards Ilya who was looking at him with a blinding smile. He copied Shane's movements, removing his own gloves and helmet, skating forwards as they crashed into each other.

Shane grabbed Ilya's face and kissed him hard. He could hear their team roaring in the background but he didn't care. He had just won the cup with his husband. Ilya had one arm snaked around his waist and the other in his hair, their tongues moving together hungrily.

After a moment, Shane pulled back to breathe, resting his forehead against Ilya's and said, "I love you."

"I love you too. So much," Ilya said, kissing him again.

The team crashed into them, crowding them and cheering loud.

Commissioner Crowell did not look happy when he walked out onto the ice. He didn't look happy when he shook their hands and awarded Shane with the Conn Smythe. And he didn't look happy when Ilya lifted the Cup and passed it to Shane, giving his husband a peck when he did so.

When the team got back to their locker room, they were all yelling and jumping around and it wasn't long before someone started drowning them all in champagne.

"WE FUCKING WON!"

"LET'S FUCKING GOOOOOOOOOO!"

Shane had won the Cup twice before. Those were some of the best moments in his life, he was so elated. It was nothing compared to this. Winning with this team. Winning with Ilya.

The three captains all got pulled for media after they had showered.

"Shane, Ilya," one reporter started. "Can you confirm if the two of you are together?"

"Yes," Shane replied. "We are married."

"We celebrate our one-year anniversary next month!" Ilya said with a huge grin.

The silence was deafening for a moment.

"So, you are both gay?"

"No, no, no," Ilya said. "I am bisexual. Shane is super gay."

"I'm just regular gay," Shane said, kicking Ilya under the table as he rolled his eyes.

"Did you both plan to come out like this? Were you replicating Scott Hunter's big moment?"

"No!" Ilya objected. "We are not Scott Hunter. We are so much better."

"We just won a Cup together," Shane said. "I wasn't thinking about copying Scott – I was thinking that we just won and I wanted to kiss my husband."

"Hollander is very hot when he wins," Ilya shrugged. "Cannot resist kissing him."

Another reporter asked, "how long have you been together? You say you've been married for almost a year. Were you together when you were rivals?"

"Yes, we were together before that," Shane explained. "We will not be giving a timeline. But we are in love and married and committed to each other."

"Did you move to Ottawa to be together?"

Shane hesitated at this one, but Ilya answered it. "No. Shane moved here first because Metros decided they wanted to try out losing. Then I moved here because I wanted to be with Shane."

“And the whole team is happy with having a married couple?”

“Yes!” Bood cut in, smiling. “We couldn’t be happier. We are proud of them both and we are happy that they came here. We wouldn’t have a Cup without them!”

“So, the team knew?”

“We had to disclose when we signed,” Shane said. “So, management knew as well as a couple of the players. The whole team found out back in November. Everyone has been amazing with it and have accepted us. We have a great team here.”

“Shane, this is your third Cup, and Ilya, this is your second. How does it feel to have another one under your belts?”

“Feels so good,” Ilya said. “We will now have five Cups in our trophy room at home.”

“Definitely running out of space in there,” Shane joked.

“We will just have to expand. Especially when the Cens will keep winning Cups.”

“Hell yeah, we will!” Bood said, clapping Ilya on the back.

The bar was packed with Centaurs when Shane and Ilya arrived. It was their regular bar, and most of the team were half-way drunk already. It didn’t take long before most of them were drunk, Shane was tipsy, and Ilya was on his way to drunk that the team moved to a club. They were carrying the Cup out around with them.

Shane and Ilya were having a blast at the club, dancing and grinding on each other. It was so freeing being able to love Ilya loudly. They were in public, kissing and dancing and they didn’t have to care about everyone finding out. Because everyone knew. Shane could just *be* with his husband.

Admittedly, they did end up having drunken sex in the bathroom stall of the club. It was cramped and fast and clumsy, but it was fun. When they exited the bathroom though, they stopped dead at the sight before them. Across the room, Luca had his tongue shoved down LaPointe’s throat.

Their mouths dropped open in shock.

“About fucking time,” Shane muttered when he recovered.

“Was starting to think they were never going to admit they liked each other,” Ilya mused.

“Now Troy and Harris just need to get over themselves.”

“I do not think that will be an issue,” Ilya snorted, jutting his chin in the direction of one of the booths where Troy and Harris were cuddled up, sharing a small kiss.

“This whole team is so gay.”

“Lucky us.”

Shane thought about the year and a half they had. He thought about that first day when he walked into the Metros locker room. He thought about the suffocating feeling he would have for months – every practice and game. He thought at one point it might kill him. The shame he felt for being tied to that organisation. The hatred they made him feel for them. The betrayal he felt that made him sick to think about. Because that was his team. He had worked so hard for them, giving his all. And they acted as if he was nothing. Not a good player that was constantly dragging them to wins. Not their captain that led them to two Cups. But they decided that he was something to hate. That he was not worth it.

But then he thought about the Centaurs. How they took him in, made him feel safe at every turn. None of them looking disgusted at him after that first game. No one confronting him about what the Metros said or how they acted. Just acceptance and love. They didn't feel ashamed of him when he came out, they just agreed to keep his secret. They didn't hate him when they continued to get hurt at the hands of the Metros every game. They welcomed Ilya with open arms and didn't care that he and Shane lived together and hugged and shared a bed. They didn't even think they were together, just that they were close friends. And they were all *happy* when they did find out that the two of them were married. So happy that they cheered and whooped when the couple kissed and they all showed up to the Kingfisher, even the underage ones. This team loved them both quietly and loudly. They were everything a team should be.

Shane smiled up at his husband. “Yeah. Lucky us.”

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