

I Don't Wanna Wait Till the Sunshine Fades

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/90689421) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/90689421>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Hayden Pike , Farah Jalali , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Jean-Jacques Boiziau J. J. Dagenais
Additional Tags:	BAMF Shane Hollander , Bad Friend Hayden Pike , Bad Friend Jean-Jacques Boiziau J. J. Dagenais , He knows his worth , Shane Hollander is So Done , Shane Hollander is Traded , Farah Jalali is a genius , Montreal Voyageurs Montreal Metros Being Assholes (Game Changers) , Shane Hollander Leaves the Montreal Voyageurs Montreal Metros , Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Supportive Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Fluff , Light Angst , No Smut
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-09-07 Words: 6,805 Chapters: 1/1

I Don't Wanna Wait Till the Sunshine Fades

by [tasty_tarts_please31](#)

Summary

When Shane realizes that his whole team isn't actually all that ok with him being gay he decides that he's done waiting and making others comfortable at the price of his own happiness.

Notes

This idea genuinely kept me up at night until I was able to get it sorted. I don't know how trades work or if this would ever happen but let's all just pretend it does because fanfiction is for fun anyways. No AI used, any issues are straight from my brain.

As always thank you to ChaoticRussian2481 and justthingsifind for the beta read and encouragement.

Maybe eventually I'll write proper smut for this fandom but it's not in this story 🙄

Title from Glitter & Crimson-All Time Low

Shane hadn't expected his Sunday to go this way. In fact if you'd asked him an hour ago it would have been the absolute last thing he would have come up with. Instead he was now standing in his kitchen staring down at his phone like it had personally offended him after talking with his best friend and alternate captain about how betrayed and hurt he was.

45minutes ago

"What do you mean you're late for practice Hayden?" Shane asked with a lilt to his voice he hoped wasn't giving away how he was feeling.

"Fuck! I'm so sorry man, I really didn't mean for you to find out this way." Hayden was practically shouting and also trying grovel at the same time.

"Find out what exactly?"

Shane could hear Hayden cursing on the other line but it was as if he'd pulled the phone away from his ear and was trying to figure out what to say. After a longer pause than was normal he came back to the phone.

"The team has been getting together for the last couple months to practice.." Hayden said quietly as though a soft tone would ease the blow of what he was saying.

"Without me? Without the Captain of the team?" Shane cut him off.

"Well it didn't start out that way dude, at first it was just the new defense rookie wanting some pointers from Comeau and then JJ was brought into it because he's a stronger defense player than Gil man. Then Drapeau came in because it's more interesting to shoot goals when there's a goalie you know, then the other rookies were upset that Bronson was getting more training, so then JJ called me to come help with the forwards and it spiraled from there." Hayden rambled out in his defense.

"And what Hayd, you just never thought to call me, just slipped your mind?"

"NO, fuck man, no! The guys specifically asked that you weren't involved, said you're too intense and they weren't ready to start the season yet or something."

"Hmm" Shane hummed in response, not trusting himself to use words at that moment.

"Coach said to just wait until the season started then we could bring you up to speed."

"Coach knows? What the fuck Hayden!"

"Ok yeah I see how that looks, but man it's not like that ok! You have to believe me!"

"Why do I have to believe you Hayden? You've been lying to me this whole time, you just told me you and the whole team have been going behind my back for MONTHS to train and practice without me because what, I'm intense? What the fuck does that even mean? We're professional hockey players for fucks sake, it's an intense sport."

"Yeah man but you take it up a notch, and then the schedule came out and like our first pre-season game is Boston, you know how you're always amped up against Boston. I think the team just wanted some relief from that."

"Relief from me you mean." Shane took a deep breath and finally asked the question that was on his mind since starting this conversation, "be honest with me Hayden, you owe me that, is this because of me being gay? Are the guys having that much of a problem with it?"

The silence before Hayden started talking was the real answer but what he said instead was, "well it has come up yes, they're confused and upset you hid this from them the whole time."

"You know what Hayden, have a great practice, make sure the team knows I know and I'll see you all at the arena on Wednesday for our final pre-game practice. I can't believe this from you of all people, you're supposed to be my best friend. You know how much it meant to me to tell the team that about myself." Shane was now trying to actively hold back tears before getting off the phone.

"Dude, I know and I AM your best friend, I'm sorry ok, like I don't know what else to say."

"Nothing, I don't need you to say anything else Hayden. Bye."



Ilya and Shane's plan was finally falling into place, Ilya's free agency signing with Ottawa had been completed on July 2nd and while there was a lot of public uproar and confusion they had spent the first few weeks after the news had come out, wrapped in each others arms at the cottage and had only separated when Ilya finally needed to get ready for his training camp in Ottawa.

Normally the captain wouldn't join the new prospects and rookies but as Ilya was also new to the team he wanted the time on the ice with the players to help build rapport and integrate into the team which they both knew was going to take extra effort on his part.

Shane, as a way of showing Ilya how much he appreciated the changes and risks he was taking for their relationship, had come out to his team as gay at the end of the past season during the end of season party. While he had meant to do it, his delivery probably left a little to be desired. Just blurting out that no he didn't need them to wingman him to find a woman to spend the summer with, or ever, and why could have been a little more delicate but it was out there now.

Shane knew the team hadn't taken to that particular bit of information the best, but no one had seemed to have an actual problem with it, no disparaging remarks were made and Shane thought if they had the summer to come to terms with it everything would be fine. Apparently he had miscalculated.

Now faced with this reality he wasn't sure what to do, he didn't want to burden Ilya when he was already facing the pressure of the changes to his own day to day life. His mom would likely go the other direction, possibly making it worse by trying to sue or threaten the Metros as an organization which was not what Shane wanted in the least.

After choking down a dry protein bar, and then a Snickers he found in the back of the pantry, he decided it was the best choice to call his agent, just to talk through some things.

"Hello Shane, this is unexpected."

"Hi Farah, yeah I'm sorry about that, I hope I'm not interrupting your weekend." Shane said, thinking about how Ilya would probably make some quip about him being too polite and Canadian or something.

"Oh no Shane, it's no problem whatsoever. What can I do for you?"

"Well I wanted to tell you a couple of things and then ask your advice if that's alright?"

"Sure, of course it is, go ahead." She said, and once again Shane was thankful for her calm demeanor and no-nonsense approach.

Letting out the breath he didn't realize he'd been holding, "I'm gay and I'm in a relationship with another player. Uh, I'll pause there," he ended with what he thought was a decent enough laugh.

"Oh Shane, thank you for telling me, I know that was likely not easy. Am I able to ask who the other player is? If you're not ready to divulge that, it is completely ok." She responded with zero hesitation.

Shane realized that she was the first person he was able to tell wholly of his own volition and without any sort of questioning reaction, it was a nice change.

"Well he's not out, and while I'm pretty sure he wouldn't mind me telling you, but I'll ask him before I do. For now it's only important you know it's another player."

"Ok thats fine. So what did you need advice on? Are you looking to come out?"

"Oh no, nothing like that," Shane laughed as though that was worse than what he was about to say, "uh, how much trouble would it be, towaivemynoncompeteandfindmeanewteam?"

"Well I admit I don't know if I caught all of that but did you just ask me if we could waive your non-compete and look for a new team? Shane, it's the weekend before the season starts, this would be highly irregular."

"Yes, and yeah I know it is unusual, but like I'm Shane Hollander so..."

"So a lot of teams would want you," Farah laughed in response.

"Well, yeah, I suppose. I know you told me before that you get inquiries or something from other teams right? Just, fuck it, I came out to the team at the end of last season and I am now

realizing that it didn't go well. I have hidden this part of myself from my professional world my whole life and frankly I have no desire to keep doing so. I don't think I'd be in any kind of dangerous situation by any means but I can't imagine it is shaping up to be the best work environment, and if you knew your co-workers didn't want you there and that another company would be more accepting wouldn't you want to explore that option?"

"I understand Shane, I really do. Have you spoken about this with anyone else?" She asked and Shane could almost hear the gears turning in her mind.

"No, you were my first call, and honestly I would like to not tell anyone until it's necessary, in that I'm signing a new contract or Montreal terminates mine for whatever reason." He said quickly.

"So not even Yuna?"

"God no, could you imagine her reaction? No, best to leave her out of this discussion at this point. She does know about my relationship though so when she does get told this I am assuming she won't be blindsided."

"Ok, good information. So, well let's talk teams, we don't have a ton of time if you want this to happen before the season officially starts. What were you thinking? Boston could use a new center with Rozanov leaving."

Shane almost started laughing at that because while not wrong, wouldn't that just be the icing on the cake.

"No, I would like to stay with a Canadian team if possible. Not Toronto because their room is worse than Montreal, and Vancouver is so far away."

"So Winnipeg or Ottawa?" She questioned thoughtfully.

"Well Ottawa is my home town," he said, trying to be as casual as possible.

"You'd go to a team *with Ilya Rozanov*?" She asked, obviously confused, "don't you two actively dislike each other?"

"No, I know why you might think that, however the rivalry is only on the ice, in person we're friends. Even have discussed starting a charity which if we were on the same team would be much easier honestly."

"Huh, ok well gotta say didn't see that coming, but I know they still have cap space even with signing Rozanov this year, maybe not as much as you make right now but performance bonuses and such can be negotiated to bring you back to a similar range. Let me make a couple of calls, in the meantime, don't talk about this with anyone, it's enough of a tricky situation as it. Not impossible, but tricky. Let me get back to you."

"Ok, thanks Farah, I appreciate your help and support."

"Of course Shane, that's what I'm here for. I'll give you a call in a couple of hours."



Shane startled as his phone rang in his hand while he was pacing around his living room which he hadn't even realized he was doing before now.

"Hi Farah, you said a couple of hours it hasn't even been one yet."

"Oh I know but this couldn't wait, can I just conference you into this call I'm on with the LaFontaine siblings?"

"What, all three of them? You went right to the owners?" Shane exclaimed a bit louder than he would in normal conversation but as he was home alone it only startled himself, "I mean sure, yes that's fine."

"Ok great, one moment." And she was gone, he took that second to compose himself and put his professional mode into place.

Shane heard silence and then a faint clicking sound alerting him the call had connected.

"Hello, Mr. Hollander, are you there?" a man's voice Shane didn't recognize spoke first.

"Yes sir, I'm here. Thank you for making time to have this conversation on a Sunday."

"Oh no son, the pleasure is all ours I assure you."

"Ok everyone," Farah's voice cut in, "now that we're on the call together, let's catch everyone up to speed. I spoke with Mr. Hollander just a bit ago. We talked about his interests coming into this season, and the Centaurs ownership team is highly intrigued by those interests but they have a couple of questions that I really thought would be best answered directly by Shane. I didn't want to speak for you on these."

Shane hadn't been expecting this when he'd called Farah less than an hour ago but he wasn't sure what he was expecting at all so taking a deep breath just responded with, "of course, how can I help clarify things?"

"Well, firstly we want to let you know that we're very interested as well Mr. Hollander," a woman spoke up now, Shane placing her as Rosaline LaFontaine whom he'd briefly met at a fundraiser he'd attended with his mother a couple of years ago, "and with that being said we do, as Ms. Jalali mentioned, have a couple of questions about your intentions. As you know we recently brought onto our roster Mr. Rozanov with whom you've had public discourse with as well as the aspect that you've made public statements about retiring with the Montreal Metros as an organization."

"Ms. LaFontaine, please call me Shane, Mr. Hollander is my father," he said in what he felt was a lighthearted way, "and to your points yes, Ilya and I have had a public rivalry throughout our hockey careers, however this rivalry has always only been on the ice and we are actually decent friends outside of the rink. The rivalry has been primarily league and fan driven and while at times inconvenient it does make us strive to be better especially when playing against one another. When we played together during All-Stars games previously we

were able to connect well on the ice well and had a great time doing so, I don't believe that there would be any concern with our being able to do that on the same team full time. I do wish to clarify here that I have not spoken with him about this as an option and do not intend to until the conclusion of our conversations, whatever conclusion that may be."

Pausing there Shane heard murmurings and realized that Farah had texted him while he'd been speaking that his answer was perfect and she hoped he was right.

Taking that positivity to heart, he continued speaking. "To your other concern, you are also correct that I have in the past spoken about my desire and intentions to stay with Montreal for my career. However, I also know that hockey is not always cut and dry and things change. Values change and frankly, mine no longer align with that of the Montreal organization which is what led me to reach out to Ms. Jalali on this matter. To that end, I have a question about the Centaurs environment if you'd indulge me?"

"Of course Mr-Shane, please ask away," replied the man who had begun the conversation.

"How does your organization feel about LGBTQ rights?"

"LGBTQ rights? I'm not sure we have any specific policies in place but in that regard, there are also no policies limiting or restricting anything surrounding individuals and their personal sexualities, especially within the workplace. I know for a fact there are a couple members on staff that are openly a part of the LGBTQ community, Is there a specific reason you ask?"

"I am saying this in confidence but it is instrumental as to why I am looking at options now. I am a gay man. I came out to my team at the end of last season and while not hostile, the reception to that news has not been tenable. This has come to my attention very clearly today which has resulted in this conversation. I do not wish to leave one conflict for another. Would this be a problem for the Centaurs room?"

"Shane, thank you for sharing that with us," a third man spoke. "This is Gabriel and I can speak on behalf of our ownership and the organization when I say that we do not tolerate ill treatment towards any member, including our players, for their sexuality. Should we move forward and you experience any such thing, I would ask that you tell me directly. As one gay man to another, respectfully."

Shane smiled, maybe his first real smile since Ilya had left the apartment the week before.

"Thank you Mr. LaFontaine, that is refreshing and I truly appreciate it. At this point, are there other questions or what is the next step? You'll have to forgive me and my unpreparedness. I've never been in this situation."

"I do have one final question for you Shane," the man that Shane knows now must be the third sibling, Ricard, if his memory served him well, "if I may be so direct, why Ottawa? You know a player of your caliber would probably be desired by most teams, so why was Ottawa on the list?"

Shane had suspected this question would be coming and knew that it was a fair one, since even Farah had asked it. "Well, candidly sir, Ottawa's my home town and I grew up rooting for this team and watching hockey at the Canadian Tire Centre. I also ideally want to stay

with a Canadian team and there are far fewer of those than American teams. Ottawa felt like a great first place to start the conversation. As an added bonus, I'll get to have my father's home cooking more often." He hoped that was just honest enough without giving too much away about his intentions and true desire to be on the same team as Ilya.

A round of laughter could be heard coming through the phone's speaker. "Okay, well, thanks for joining us Shane. I'll give you a call in a few hours after I have more details." Farah cut in.

"Great, thank you all for your time, looking forward to hearing from you." Shane said before hanging up.

The next four hours found Shane meal prepping food he didn't even want to eat, cleaning the living room (it was already clean) and folding the load of towels that had come out of the dryer. Oh, and lying to his boyfriend. Well lying wasn't quite right, just omitting details of his day. Telling Ilya he'd stayed home and cleaned wasn't a lie, it just wasn't the most interesting part of his day.

He'd also muted the Montreal group chat but by the growing number in the red bubble on his messaging icon, he knew it was active and he was likely the main topic of discussion.

JJ had reached out separately apologizing so Shane knew Hayden had told him what happened. Shane just thumbs down reacted to his message and exited the thread.

Shane had just stepped away from his phone to put the towels back in the linen closet when it started ringing with the tone he'd assigned Farah. Dropping the basket in the hallway, he raced back to the coffee table, "Hi Farah," he answered quickly.

"Hi Shane, I have an update for you. I spoke further at length with the LaFontaines and also put in a call to Mr. McGreggory with the Metros."

"Ok and? What's the update?" Shane asked when Farah had stopped talking.

"Well, first, Ottawa is highly keen on you joining and are willing to negotiate to get you. It seems Mr. McGreggory wasn't aware of your disclosure to the team but once he was, well Shane, I'm going to be blunt, fuck him honestly."

Shane grimaced. "That bad, eh? I wasn't expecting him to beg and plead for me honestly but what did he say?"

"Well it's more what he didn't say, and the fact that he's willing to trade *you*, his franchise facing, lead scoring cup winning CAPTAIN, not to mention top player in the league, for two draft early round picks and a winger that, between us, the LaFontaines weren't upset to let go."

"Two draft picks and a wing? That's fucking it? I gave myself- no, I gave *everything* I had to give to this organization for the last eight years! That's all I'm worth to him?" Shane was practically yelling by the time he was done talking.

“He said, and I’m quoting, “it doesn’t matter much, players come and go, it’s just math but having the room uncomfortable, the organization uncomfortable, isn’t worth anyone.” And well, fuck him, like I said.” Farah was noticeably upset as well.

Hearing that, Shane had to sit down. Is that really what the owner of the team that drafted him all those years ago thought about him, or any of his players, apparently? Shane had always given his all to the team because he felt that he owed them something for taking a chance on him as a young player. Now he realized he had always just been a number, a means to an end, and that they didn’t care about him nearly as much as he cared about them. This just gave Shane even more of a reason to believe that he was making the right decision.

“Yes fuck him, fuck all of them. They’re not worth my time. I can’t believe I put up with them for so long,” Shane sighed, and felt defeated by the whole thing.

“What is the next step then?” He finally asked after a moment.

“Ottawa is gonna draw up a contract. I’m going to work with both organizations on the trade document but that will likely go quickly based on today’s discussion. We’ll likely have everything buttoned up by Tuesday end of day I would imagine.”

“Sounds good. I’m gonna go get my stuff from my locker tomorrow so I don’t have to see anyone.”

“From what you’ve said, and what I’m hearing from management, that might be a good idea. Shane, I’m sorry this is how this is going down, but I want to tell you I’m proud of you.”

“For being gay?” He asked, almost confused.

“No, for knowing what you’re worth and refusing to accept less. It’s not always easy and almost never the path of least resistance so I’m glad you stood up for yourself and are getting what you deserve. Even if maybe I would have liked a little more warning.” Farah sighed, ending her statement.

“Well, my boyfriend once convinced me I’m brave and I’m finally starting to really believe it,” he said, starting to laugh again as he was reminded of the prior summer and how it felt being caught. That felt like a lifetime ago now.

“He sounds smart and I hope to meet him someday,” she said and Shane could hear the smile in her voice.

“He’s the best, I’ll introduce you soon I promise. Thanks again Farah for doing this on a Sunday, don’t let me forget to give you a bonus this year.”

“Of course Shane. I’m always here to help you with anything.”

“So you’re telling Yuna then?”

“Sorry you’re breaking up, the connection must be bad, talk later!” Then the line went dead, and Shane couldn’t wipe the smile off his face.

Then almost immediately he got a text,

contact name: Farah Jalali (Agent)

received:

Please don't talk about this until the ink is dry, just best practice. Especially since the season is starting this week!. Have a good rest of your day.

sent:



note:

Farah Jalali (Agent) has notifications silenced.



Monday Afternoon

Shane was ready for this day to be over. He'd spent most of his morning avoiding calls and texts with both Ilya and his mother since he hadn't heard back from Farah yet. Now, it was just after one in the afternoon and Shane had hoped that he'd timed this trip right to avoid as many people inside the stadium as possible. Walking into the Montreal locker room, Shane was overcome with a heavy sadness, knowing that this would be his final time coming into this room.

Making his way over to his locker, he grabbed his duffle bag and started filling it with the things he wanted to take with him. He decided he could leave some of the branded items and typical things like stick tape, he had enough of that on hand at home and was sure Ottawa would be more than happy to supply it if asked. This way, it wouldn't look like his locker was totally abandoned yet.

Just as he was zipping the bag closed, the locker room door swung open, and Shane was faced with JJ. He took a deep breath and let it out as a long sigh because this was a conversation he was not in the mood to have.

"Ah capitaine! I'm so happy to see you. I came to work out, what are you doing?"

"Just getting a few things, was just about to leave actually."

"Ah yes, your beginning of season locker clean out. I thought you did that at last practice but ok. How are you? Ready for Thursday, playing Boston?" JJ asked quickly as if things were

normal between them when Shane felt they couldn't be further from normal if they tried.

"JJ, cut the crap. I'm not in the mood to talk to you," Shane bit back, standing up.

"Because of yesterday? Hayden told the team you found out about the extra practices. I'm sorry, capitaine. I really didn't mean for you to find out that way."

"No, you'd rather I hadn't found out at all, I'm sure. You know you and Hayden have been my best friends for years, and to be told by accident that you both were involved in keeping me out of something like that was really hurtful if I'm being honest."

"Shane, I know, and I know saying sorry won't be enough to make up for it, but can you see it from the team's perspective?"

"No, JJ, I can't, not at all, because from where I'm standing, I was deliberately left out of team activities by the entire team as well as our fucking coach because I'm gay. Sure, you can say it's the intensity thing, great cover up, but we both know it's not the real reason."

"You kept that from us for years and then just demanded we accept it, that was hurtful too, non?"

"No. I kept myself safe from this exact reaction, actually. I thought after Hunter came out and no one on the team made an issue about it that maybe it would be ok, but I was wrong. I shouldn't have to even ask, let alone *demand*, for you to accept me as who I am and the fact that I do and you all don't, well I'm not sure how to remedy that. I told Hayden when he wouldn't stop texting me yesterday that I'd let him know when I'm ready to talk so I'll say the same to you now. I'll see you on the ice, but until then, don't reach out." Shane looked over to his friend and turned and walked out of the locker room.



As Shane made it out to his car his phone was vibrating in his pocket. Assuming it was JJ trying to get him to come back inside he ignored it and drove back to his apartment. Once getting home and taking a look at the phone it was a text from Farah telling him to call her. He suddenly felt his palms go sweaty. He knew he had asked for a change and was really ready for one but now it was starting to feel too real.

"Hi Shane, hope this is an ok time?"

"Hi Farah, yes of course, I just got home. Was there an update?"

"Yes, the contract has been sent over to your email and I also got a call from the league office that they approved the trade, which is a formality and not something you need to be worried about. Take a look at the contract, let me know if you have any questions. Once you're comfortable, please sign it and then call me and we can chat about the next steps, which would primarily include the official meeting over in Ottawa and both teams making public statements about the trade. I know that can be overwhelming so we can work through it together."

“Ok, I’ll go look over the contract now. Anything specific I need to know about?”

“It’s a three year deal at \$2m less than you were at in Montreal due to cap space but added performance bonuses tied to both the regular season and post season and any awards you may be nominated for by the league. I made sure you’d be paid for nomination, not just winning.”

“Is there a no-trade clause? I’m not doing this now to just be traded mid-season or next year, Farah.”

“Of course, Shane, unless requested otherwise, I get all my clients no trade clauses by default.”

“Right, I know that. Actually, I know you asked that I not talk about this until it’s done, but I think if I don’t talk to my mom first it will be worse. Any issues with my discussing this with her in a manager capacity at this point?”

“No, that should be fine unless you’d like major revisions. Please don’t have your boyfriend review the terms, player collusion is still a concern for optics.”

“Right, of course not. Thanks, Farah.”

“Talk to you soon, Shane. Let me know if anything comes up or if you have any questions.”

Shane went to pull out his suitcase, because he was going to Ottawa that night, with nothing more tying him to Montreal.

By seven pm, Shane was pulling into his parents driveway, and grinning because Ilya’s car was parked in the street and, while he hadn’t anticipated his boyfriend being there, he was happy to know that Ilya felt comfortable enough to visit his parents without him around. That would make this conversation a bit tricky but he wasn’t going to not see Ilya any chance he got.

Collecting himself, he got out and went to the door. “Hey it’s me! Got room for one more at the table?” Shane called out, announcing his arrival knowing that his parents were creatures of habit and would just about be sitting down to dinner.

“Moy lyubimyy! What are you doing here?” Ilya exclaimed, coming around the table to kiss Shane hello.

Shane smiled, matching the energy Ilya was giving. “I just wanted to see my favorite people, it’s been a weird couple of days.”

Ilya frowned at that. “What has happened, my love? Tell me.”

“Shane, what’s wrong? Of course we love having you here, but you never come to visit the first week of the season,” Yuna said as she came to hug him after wiping her hands on a dish towel in the kitchen.

“Why don’t we have dinner and then I will explain to everyone ok?” Shane motioned to the table. “Maybe wine too?”

“Ok, now even I’m worried,” David chimed in.

At that moment, the oven beeped, making them all jump. David hopped up to go make sure the lasagna was done and Shane even decided he’d eat it with them.

After finishing most of the meal, at least all of what Shane was going to eat, he began by explaining what had happened the previous day with the phone call to Hayden and how he was really hurt by his team and that he knew they weren’t going to accept him. He added that that didn’t even include the fact that he was in a relationship with Ilya, only that he was gay.

“Ok, so what then?” Yuna asked him while Ilya was rubbing soothing circles on his back.

“Well, I may have gone rogue...” Shane said and then trailed off, not able to meet his mother’s eyes.

“Ah, what does this mean, rogue?” Ilya asked after a few seconds.

“It means that Shane did something without consulting anyone. What is it, Shane? What did you do?”

“Mom, can I talk to you in the other room, as my manager? Ilya, I’m sorry, I’m not leaving you out of this conversation on purpose, but with the season starting this week, I don’t think any team discussions should be had together.” Shane looked over at Ilya, who looked a little hurt but he understood the delicate balance of what the league required.

Entering his mother’s office, Shane decided it would be best to just tackle the conversation head on.

“I’m leaving Montreal,” Shane mumbled but Yuna’s loud gasp alerted that she had heard him just fine.

“I have a new contract I need to look over and sign, probably by the end of the night,” Shane continued while speaking with his head down.

“A contract with what team?” Yuna asked, her tone stilted but Shane couldn’t tell if her anger was with him, or because she wasn’t included in the decision, or at the situation in general.

Lifting his head, Shane looked at her with a smirk. “Ottawa.”

“You’re going to be on the same team? How were you able to get this to happen?”

“Farah’s magic. One of the owners of Ottawa is gay, which I learned in my call with them, and the Montreal owner is a right prick so the pieces fell together. The league office already approved it pending contract signing.”

“You spoke with the owners of the Ottawa Centaurs? When?” Yuna asked.

“Yesterday. I called Farah and we talked and then about a half hour later, I was on a conference call...” Shane stopped talking and was looking over at his mom again. Shane was anticipating a look of anger or confusion, anything except the smile he saw on her face.

“What is that look for?” He asked tentatively.

“Oh honey, I’m so happy for you, that you’re getting what you deserve. I’m so sorry you had to experience this to get here but I’m taking this as a good thing. Now our whole family will be able to be together all the time, we’ll be able to go to your games and not have to feel bad supporting only one of you. You’ll see, this will be great.”

Yuna had Shane pull the contract up in his email so they could review it together. She wasn’t happy about the pay cut but Shane told her that the money was his last concern and that they could get it back in other ways. He even said she could work on getting him a new endorsement if it would make her happy. He had put a pause on any new agreements for the last couple of years so this made Yuna very excited. The contract seemed pretty standard otherwise so Shane had no hesitations in signing it. He sent Farah a quick text that the signed copy was on its way back to her and that he’d understand if she wanted to talk in the morning now that it was late evening.

Shane went and sat next to Ilya on the couch, and they were settling in to watch the cooking show his dad was obsessed with. Then his phone rang - a facetime request from Farah. Shane looked over at him and met his eyes.

“I signed my new contract and that’s why she’s calling. Also Farah knows I’m with another player, I didn’t tell her it was you. She’d be good about this though and it may make sense to loop her in.” Shane said to Ilya before answering.

Ilya, loving that Shane was being so open about their relationship, grabbed his phone and accepted the call. “Hello Farah!”

“Oh! Um Mr. Rozanov, hello?”

“Hi Farah,” Shane grabbed the phone back and glared at Ilya.

“What! Is what you say, ripping off bandaid?” Ilya argued.

“Farah, this is my boyfriend, whom you clearly recognize. I’m sorry I couldn’t tell you before. Also, please know that I did not plan, or collude with him at all on the trade,” Shane said.

“Is true, he just told me now when he signed the contract. He has not told me what team though,” Ilya chimed in.

“Ok, sorry. I’m sorry, I know this is not professional but what the fuck, Shane? No warning? Is this the real reason?” Farah laughed and shook her head.

“Oh I like her already.” Ilya grinned over at Shane.

“Now that we are all acquainted, maybe we can discuss what we need to do next? Sorry it’s so late Farah, I wanted to loop my mom in before signing and I didn’t know Ilya was going to be here at all.” Shane tried to get the call back on track. “Also while yes, maybe some of my

motivation was driven by this, it was not the sole reason, but you can see why Boston wasn't the ideal choice."

"Shane," Ilya started, "what are you saying?"

"Ottawa, Ilya. We're both going to play for Ottawa." Shane was grinning as he looked at his boyfriend who he realized he had fully managed to shock into silence, maybe for the first time in the whole time he's known him.

Farah continued the conversation about logistics and getting Shane to the arena the next day to get fitted into a jersey as well as to meet some of the staff and potentially other members of the team. It was also discussed that the official trade announcement would be made the next day after paperwork was finalized on both sides and that Shane may want to stay off of social media for the day.

Once the call ended, the room stayed quiet for a few minutes, with only the tv playing in the background.

"Ok, so what's the new plan? What? Don't look at me like that! I know this wasn't the original plan and I know you have one, so what is it kiddo?" David asked.

"Well I know we were going to be trying to change the narrative, and I think this would actually be helpful because now, we can become friends who have to play together. Obviously we can't just come out right away, it's still not safe for Ilya yet, but maybe we'll be able to tell our team. I'm almost positive my being gay will make the rounds because the Montreal locker room isn't a safe space," Shane said to the group.

"Ok, but you don't need to confirm publicly if you don't want to. We just want what's best for you two boys," Yuna added.

"What do you have to say Ilya? You've been very quiet," Shane said, grabbing Ilya's hand back into his and looking at him now.

"I did not know I could be this happy. You know this last year playing apart was very hard for both of us, and I was ok with the plan but I am relieved that we don't have to do plan now and I get you everyday. And yes, we need to be careful but just having you close will be so much better I know." Ilya said, never taking his eyes off of Shane.

"Do you want to know my favorite part?" Shane asked.

"Tell me, solnyshko"

"We get to live together all the time now. No more leaving."

Ilya couldn't possibly have smiled bigger than he was at that moment. "Ok, but we are leaving here right now. I take you home with me."

Ilya jumped off the couch and started collecting his jacket and shoes from the doorway.

“I’ll meet you there, I need to have my car for tomorrow anyways.” Shane laughed at his boyfriend’s obvious exuberance.

“Bye mom, bye dad! See you at game on Thursday!” Ilya called out as he rushed out the door.

Shane watched him go, then turned to his parents and with a smile said, “goodnight, we’ll see you later.”

“We’re happy you’re finally home, kiddo. Love you, have a good night. Call us tomorrow when you can,” David said, giving Shane a hug.

“I’m happy I’m home too.” Shane said as he walked to his car and towards his future.

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