

Secrets Everybody Guesses

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77901991) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77901991>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	Gen , M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Heated Rivalry - All Media Types
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Scott Hunter (Game Changers) , Cliff Marlow , Svetlana Vetrova
Additional Tags:	5 Things , 5 +1 things , POV Outsider on Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , POV Outsider , Spoilers for Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , canon compliant but it's a bit of a mix of show and book canon , canon-typical homophobia (roger crowell is in this so y'know) , Book 2: Heated Rivalry (Game Changers) , Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , content warning: roger crowell
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-18 Words: 5,108 Chapters: 1/1

Secrets Everybody Guesses

by [nomsy](#)

Summary

contains spoilers for The Long Game

Five people who found out about Shane and Ilya before the video, and one who was taken by surprise.

Notes

this is mostly book canon but uses some elements of the show especially for Svetlana and Scott, and just a word of warning that there are some spoilers for The Long Game

title from the George Bernard Shaw quote :)

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

1

It's freezing. Ellie could be at home with Linda right now, wearing that new underwear she bought and trying to see if that might get them out of their slump. Instead, she's standing at a hockey rink, not even getting on with her work.

There's a break because the two kids they've got filming this commercial need to compose themselves. They keep bursting into laughter. It's grating, maybe because Ellie has a migraine coming on. Or maybe just because she's not young any more and hates being reminded that twenty-year-olds have energy and joy and dreams she doesn't.

"Cigarette," she announces, heading for the door.

"I'll join you," Jake says, following her.

"You're trying to stop smoking," Ellie reminds him.

"Screw that," he says.

"I thought you threw away your cigarettes." She pushes the fire door open, and they step out into the grotty yard.

"I did. That's why you're sharing yours with me."

"Luke will know you smoked," Ellie says, even as she holds out her cigarettes for him to take one before lighting her own.

Jake shrugs. "He stopped going to the gym, he can't lecture me."

"Your marriage is so happy."

"Like yours is perfect."

"We just went to Aruba a couple of months ago," Ellie says. It had been good. It helped. She thinks.

"Hm," Jake makes, blowing out smoke. "Expensive holidays don't fix everything. Trust me, I've tried."

Ellie sighs. "Well, I'm trying other things, too."

"All right, that's more than enough information."

She laughs and takes another drag of her cigarette. "It was easier when I was young."

"Marriage?"

“Just... everything.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Those guys in there, I used to be like that.”

“A professional hockey player who can’t be serious enough to wrap this without us having to do overtime?”

Ellie rolls her eyes. “You know what I mean.”

“Yeah,” Jake says. “They’re annoying the shit out of me, but... yeah. Good energy. Seemed to be having fun, right?”

“They did.”

“Do you follow hockey?”

Ellie shakes her head. “Not at all. It’s a big point of contention with the in-laws. They’re obsessed. All I know is their team always loses. Called the stupid Horses or something like that, or their logo is a horse, or whatever. You watch hockey?”

Jake grins. “Yeah. Big Montreal fan. Real pain, having to work with Rozanov.”

“That’s the Russian one?”

“Yes. Got drafted by Boston.”

“I’m guessing that’s bad?”

“The worst.”

“And the other one? The pretty one?”

“Montreal. Shane Hollander. Thank god he’s with us, he’s going to be great. They’re meant to be the next big thing in hockey, these two. They’re already building them up as nemeses or whatever. They’ve not even played any NHL games yet.”

“Dramatic.”

“Yeah... they had this tension in there, don’t you think? Not like they hated each other, just, you know, intense, right?”

Ellie nods. That much had been obvious. “Sure. Must be a lot, expectations like that. Probably good to have someone who gets it, even if you want to beat each other.”

“Yeah. I guess it’s good for the ad, intensity. But it’s annoying as hell that they can’t keep it together.”

“Linda’s never been intense,” Ellie says, losing herself in her thoughts for a moment. Actually, she loves that about Linda. Maybe Ellie’ll buy a bottle of nice wine on the way

home. Maybe some chocolates, or flowers.

Jake drops his cigarette and grinds it out with his heel. “Lucky you, I suppose,” he says. “All right. Back to work it is. Thanks for this restorative conversation.”

“Back at you. Let’s get these kids in line. Hopefully they can leave their rivalry crap and whatever is amusing them so much aside and we can get this wrapped.”

“Right. I’m not cut out to be a babysitter.”

“Me neither. Once we’ve got the footage, someone else can supervise them to make sure they’re not murdering each other in the showers.”

Jake sighs and looks wistfully into the distance for a moment. Well. He looks wistfully at the dumpsters at the other end of the yard. “I had a rival once.”

“You?”

“No need to sound so surprised. I had a wild youth. Well, wild thirties, at least.”

“Uh-huh. Sure. Who was this rival?”

“Guy in my wine tasting club. Real asshole. Thought he knew more about Riesling than me. Always showing off.”

“What did you do about it?”

Jake grins. “Married him,” he says as he heads back inside.

Ellie stares at the dumpster for a moment, the image of the boys laughing with each other on the rink in her mind. “Huh,” she says.

2

It’s not like Scott *knew*. He just thought back then that the numbers that Rozanov quietly told Hollander had to be a room number. That, or the combination to some secret safe containing weapons or drugs or stolen diamonds. While all of the latter seemed likely options for Rozanov, they definitely did not seem like something Hollander would be involved in.

So, as insane as it appeared to Scott, it was most likely a room number.

And Scott just – hell, he only wanted to get confirmation one way or the other. To maybe just not feel so fucking alone any more.

His ears are still ringing from Hollander's punch even as he exits the locker room. He can feel his pulse in his jawbone. So yeah. Confirmation.

He is very aware that he went about it in a stupid and, honestly, a cruel way. If someone had made an implication like that to him, he would have punched them, too. He didn't think it through, and he has no right to complain or feel sorry for himself now. He can't even be angry at Hollander. Except for that thing where Hollander said Scott was forty-five. Scott is definitely angry about that.

His mind is reeling, a little. He keeps thinking, *it's not just me*. Then he keeps thinking, *if I'd just known earlier. Maybe I could have fixed things. Done better with Kip*.

It's not fair to blame Hollander and Rozanov for Scott being a coward, obviously. But he just wishes – he just wants – he can't even figure it out.

Kip, a voice in his head whispers. *You want Kip*.

Of course I fucking want Kip, he tells it.

But he's too much of a coward to do anything about it.

He pushes it out of his mind for years. He doesn't forget, exactly. He just compartmentalises, because otherwise, how is he meant to do his job?

But after the All-Star Weekend in Tampa, he can't ignore it. He wonders how no one else realises. It's like there's a magnetic pull around Rozanov and Hollander, and when they play together, or just look at each other, there's no one else.

He keeps thinking *at least they have each other, I have no one*, then hating himself for it. Keeps pitying them because clearly this is all they're letting themselves have. Keeps thinking *it doesn't matter, none of us will ever have more than this*. None of them are allowed sunshine.

He fucking hates that Elena was right. He wants more. He deserves more. They all do.

Someone has to do something, he thinks. He tries to push the thought down like he always used to. It doesn't quite work.

He remembers Rozanov kissing Hollander's cheek. The way they looked at each other. Maybe, Scott thinks, if he is brave enough, he can have that. Maybe sooner than he used to think.

If fucking Rozanov and Hollander can get their shit together, surely so can he.

Ana loves the day shift. She loves it. She will murder anyone who thinks of putting her back on the night shift. *Anyone*.

The day shift today is especially good, because Shane Hollander is in hospital.

Of course that's not really a good thing. She's not happy that he's hurt. She watched the game, and she was horrified like everyone else when he went down. She's only happy that he's in hospital. And awake. During the night shift, she wouldn't even really see him or maybe get to talk to him. But during the day shift, it's way more likely.

If there is one thing Ana loves in the entire world, it's hockey. She might actually love hockey more than the only other two things she loves in her life, which are her mom and, obviously, the day shift.

And if there is one player that people agree is the best in the world, it's Shane Hollander. Except for the people who think it's Ilya Rozanov.

Either way, it's great for Ana, because they're both in the room when she comes in to check on Hollander.

Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov in the same room! And Ana is there to see it! Ana is breathing *the same air* as Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov. Okay, it's filtered hospital air because the windows don't open. But it's the *same* filtered hospital air as the two greatest living legends of hockey.

She has to get the joke about Rozanov trying to smother Hollander with a pillow out of her system (her mom will think it's so funny when Ana tells her), but she forces herself not to ask them both to sign her clipboard. The job comes first. No matter how much she would like to pull up a chair and talk hockey. Or like, bow in reverence.

"I was just leaving," Rozanov says.

"Bye-bye," Hollander says, his big dark eyes glued to Rozanov. Ana wants to pinch his little cheeks.

Rozanov and Hollander change their tone to business-like all of a sudden, but even then, they don't sound like Ana would have expected. Not as... distant as she would have thought. She guesses they must respect each other a lot, being the only players at their level. She thinks they have known each other for a long time. She remembers some commercials, interviews, an awards speech one year. Probably, in a way, they care about each other.

The door closes behind Rozanov. Hollander beams up at her. They gave him all the good drugs. Ana knows them, she got them herself after she got a nasty infection when her wisdom teeth were removed. It was *amazing*.

"Hello," she says. "How are we?"

“Good,” Hollander giggles. “Better now.”

“Better than last night?”

“Mh-hm,” he goes. “And this morning. And ten minutes ago.”

Oh god, does he mean now that she’s here? Hopefully he’s not one of those patients who’s, like, *into* nurses. Once, a guy kept complimenting her scrubs in a creepy way. She ended up swapping shifts with a colleague to get away.

“That’s good,” she says neutrally. “You can probably be released later today, or latest tomorrow.”

Hollander smiles vaguely at her. “Good,” he says. “I wanna go home.”

Thankfully not some weird nurse fetish, then. She should have known Shane Hollander wouldn’t be disrespectful, even on drugs.

“Wass’ your name?” Hollander slurs.

“I’m Ana,” Ana says, checking that all his vitals are okay.

“I’m Shane,” Hollander says politely. “Nice to meet you, Ana.”

“Nice to meet you, too, Shane,” she says. She can’t suppress a smile while she checks the previous shift’s notes. “Your heart rate is looking better.”

“Hmmm,” he says. “I’m more happy now.”

“Good,” she says. “Well, you can just rest up now and myself or a colleague will check in on you again later, all right?”

“Ilya was here,” he says, beaming again. “He came to see me.”

“That was very nice of him,” Ana says.

“He’s very nice,” Hollander mumbles. “So nice. An asshole. But so, so nice. And so warm. Like. Like the sun in Tampa.”

Okay, then.

“He’s so good at hockey,” Hollander says. He looks like he’s dropping off to sleep.

“I think so, too,” Ana says.

“And so handsome,” Hollander says. “’n so, so... Ilya.”

Ana decides not to comment. It’s just the drugs. Probably.

Svetlana pours herself some vodka. “Ilya,” she says, jumping onto her sofa on her knees. Without spilling the vodka, of course. She has practise. She never spills a drop of alcohol. “Are you at home? Do you want to go out?”

“Sorry,” Ilya says. “I can’t tonight.”

Svetlana blows a raspberry down the line. “Boring! No excuses.”

“Svetlana,” Ilya says, sounding slightly distracted. “Hang on.” Then, apparently to someone else in the room with him, he says, in English, “What the fuck are you doing?”

“Oh, what, you can do this but I can’t?” It’s a man’s voice. He sounds bright, and teasing.

Ilya obviously meant to mute the call, but didn’t. Perfect. Svetlana wants to spy on him.

“Is different. Pike would not know. He is not smart.”

“Oh, and *Svetlana* is smart?” Svetlana doesn’t love how the man says her name. She herself always liked maintaining a positive attitude towards Ilya’s other lovers. Jealousy isn’t healthy.

“Yes. But is not that. She would realise.”

“Oh, right, she’d know from experience.” Even over the phone, Svetlana can tell the man is upset now.

“Shane,” Ilya says. Svetlana freezes. She doesn’t think she has ever heard Ilya sound that tender.

“Or do you just want to propose to her now?” The man called Shane says.

“*Shane*,” Ilya says again. “I was only suggesting to marry her to try and find way to have citizenship, to be together with you in the future. You know that. Now we have better plan, yes? I will come to Canada. We will be together.”

Svetlana would be offended by Ilya just assuming she’d marry him, but her head is spinning. Shane. Shane. Something about Pike. *Canada*. She knew Jane was a guy. She did not think that guy was *Shane Hollander*.

Shane fucking Hollander!

The only hockey player better than Ilya.

... Fuck, that’s hot.

She's lost track of the conversation for a minute. When she pays attention again, Ilya is saying, just as tenderly as before, "I love you."

"Fine," Shane says.

"Only you, Shane."

"I believe you, okay?"

"Maybe I need to show you," Ilya purrs. "I will convince you."

"Okay, if you don't want me to give you a blowjob right now, you need to stop talking like that," the other man says. "I need to be sucking you, like, yesterday."

"I did not say I did not want," Ilya says. "I will never say that."

There's the sound of a quick kiss.

"I love you, too," Shane says. And then, in the most horrible pronunciation Svetlana's ever heard, he adds, "Ya tebya lyublyu."

Another kiss, then Ilya's voice again. "Now I will say goodbye to Svetlana and then you can suck my dick and we can be loud because I will not be on phone. Okay?"

Svetlana hears Shane laugh.

There's rustling, then Ilya speaks again, still in English and slightly panicked. "Fuck. I think it was not mute."

"What?" Shane asks. He sounds distinctly more stressed than before.

Svetlana braces herself.

"Svetlana?" Ilya says. "Are you there?" He's switched back to Russian.

Svetlana holds her breath.

"Svetlana? Hello? Svetlana?"

She waits another few seconds.

"Ilya?" she says lightly. "Sorry, are you back already? I went to get some more vodka when you said to wait, and I left my phone in the living room. Did I miss something you were telling me?"

"Ah, no problem," Ilya says. He sounds like he's about to cry with relief. "I have to go. I'm on holiday with some teammates. But I'll call you in a couple of weeks when I'm back in Boston, okay?"

"Great, no worries," she says. "Have fun, and I'll see you when you're back. Enjoy your holiday."

“Thanks. You enjoy the vodka.” He hangs up.

Svetlana looks at the phone for a moment, before draining her glass. She feels anger flaring up inside her. After all this time, after everything, Ilya hasn’t told her? She knows he is a private person, even with her. She knows that he wants to keep Jane’s identity a secret, but she assumed – actually, she’s not sure. That there was something about Jane that Ilya would have had a reason to think she wouldn’t or couldn’t keep to herself. But surely he has to be aware that she would never tell anyone about him and Hollander. Obviously, if anyone else found out, it would be a shit show, she knows that. But Ilya should know he can trust her not to tell.

Now we have better plan, yes? I will come to Canada.

Shit. Ilya is planning to leave Boston. She assumed he was hoping to extend his contract next year. Which team in Canada could he move to? Her mind runs through different scenarios, none of them beneficial to Ilya’s career. None of the top teams will have enough cap space for him. Ilya must know that. Fuck.

I love you.

She already knew Ilya loves his Jane. She’s known for years, of course. Hearing him say it in that situation, when it clearly wasn’t the first time, is something else. She didn’t realise he and Jane – *Shane* – had actually worked things out, and, from the sound of it, started a serious relationship. Why else would Ilya move for him? Why else would they say I love you so casually, like it was a simple fact?

She gets up. She really does need another drink. She turns off her phone, though, and drops it into a kitchen drawer. She doesn’t want to be tempted to send an angry drunk text to Ilya just because she feels he betrayed her by not trusting her with his secret. His, and Shane’s. Maybe, she thinks, that’s the reason he wouldn’t tell, still isn’t telling now.

She takes a deep breath, and opens her best vodka. She deserves it.

Ilya will tell her in his own time.

He’ll get an earful about that marriage thing one day, though.

5

Cliff chuckles to himself as he joins the rest of the guys. “Rozy isn’t coming out,” he says. “Seems like he’s busy with a girl or two.” He definitely heard a moan through the door when he was talking to Roz.

There’s a mix of boos and whoops from the guys. Most of them are already drunk.

“Where’s Hollander?” someone asks.

“Who cares? He never joins these things.”

“I guess that means it’s everyone except Roz and Hollander.”

“Doubt Hollander would want to hang out with Marly after that hit a few years ago, anyway.”

“Nah, Hollander and I are good,” Cliff says. He doesn’t think Hollander could hold a grudge to save his life. “He never took it personally, and he knows I was sorry about it.”

In fact, Hollander had seemed less upset about it than Roz back -

We’re not alone. Ilya, they can see us.

The memory hits Cliff like – well, like a check against the boards.

Now, Cliff is not what people call a cerebral player.

But, fuck, he’s not stupid.

He remembers Roz’s ashen face after the hit, his silence in the locker room, him clutching his phone like a lifeline. Cliff knew somewhere in the back of his mind that there was something about that whole thing that needed explaining, some missing piece to clear up why Roz had been so upset, to justify the nonsense Hollander had been babbling when he was half passed-out.

After Roz and Hollander announced the charity, Cliff figured they had already been friends, that that was the reason for the horror in Roz’s eyes after the hit, even if he and Hollander said they became close only after Roz started playing in Canada. But now. Hollander and Roz both staying back tonight. Their exchanges throughout this weekend, too sweet for teammates, too intense for friends, too playful for co-founders of a charity.

Cliff groans, because he is way too drunk right now to think all this through, but his thoughts won’t stop racing, won’t stop going down a million different roads in his memory.

Fucking Ottawa, of fucking course. Fuck. Fuck. Cliff remembers the confusion when Roz announced the move, how it hadn’t made sense to anyone, how there was nothing, *fuck all*, anyone could think of to make Roz move to Ottawa except maybe his Montreal Girl, whose name some of the guys swore they’d seen on Roz’s screen was Jane.

Fucking hell. Montreal Jane.

Shane fucking Hollander.

It can’t be true, he thinks, but it is true, in fact, it’s the only explanation that makes sense, that explains everything that he knows about both Rozy and Hollander, going back years and years and *fuck*, he thinks of Ilya’s reaction to pictures of Hollander and Rose Landry, thinks of Hollander looking at Ilya poolside at the 2017 All-Stars Game, thinks of Roz texting before games and at airports with that Montreal Girl look on his face since Cliff first met him.

Holy hell. Roz and Shane Hollander. Cliff wonders how long it's been going on. How many other people know. If any other *players* know. He knows he can't try and find out, though. Cliff will stay silent. He will take that shit to his grave.

He did enough damage to them both back in 2017.

+1

It's 5.30am when Roger's phone rings. Thank god he's no longer married or he'd get the usual complaints.

"Wendy," he says crisply when he's picked up. Wendy is a fairly good PA, which means her calling at such a time is due to a real emergency and not incompetence on her part.

"S-sir," Wendy says. "I'm on the way t-to the office right now, please can you come in, too?"

He's already getting dressed. "Is this another Dallas Kent?" That had been blown entirely out of proportion, but he does not want another media shitstorm like that.

"Worse, sir," she says.

"Tell me."

"It's about Mr Hollander and Mr R-rozanov," she says. Her voice sounds even squeakier than usual.

"What's going on with them?"

"There's a v-video," she says. She sounds like she's bracing herself for impact, which is only slightly more scared than she usually is. So whatever it is, it might well be fixable.

"A video of them doing what?"

"Of th-them k-kissing, sir."

He pauses in buttoning his shirt. "Excuse me?"

"H-hayden Pike sent it as a FanMail v-video yesterday and the f-fan posted it to T-twitter around one o'clock th-this morning."

"I will see you at the office in half an hour," he says. "This had better be a fucking joke."

"It doesn't look like a joke," she says. Her voice dies on the last word.

“Why didn’t you call me earlier?” he snaps as soon as he’s through the door into his office.

Wendy hugs her phone to her chest. “I d-didn’t know earlier, Mr Crowell. I’m sorry.”

“I need you to be on top of this kind of thing. We should have got a statement drafted hours ago, as soon as that video was posted.”

“I know, sir, I’m really s-sorry. I’ve called the media t-team to come in and get s-started right now.”

“You should have seen it coming,” he tells her, sitting down at his desk. “After Rozanov and Hollander spoke to me about Barrett at the All-Star Game.” Fuck. How had he not seen it coming then?

She nods. “Yes, I sh-should have,” she says. “I’m s-so s-sorry.”

“They started running those fucking *inclusive* summer camps together years ago, and we already knew Hollander is gay. I need you to flag this kind of risk before things turn to shit like this.”

She’s still nodding frantically. “Yes, absolutely. I apologise.”

“When did this start?”

“I’m looking into wh-what I can f-find out right now, and it’s hard to s-say but -”

“Get to the fucking point, Wendy.”

“I th-think at least a couple of years before Mr Rozanov moved t-to Ottawa b-because no one ever has been able t-to explain that move p-properly s-so I think maybe he might h-have moved because of Mr Hollander, sir. And obviously at th-that point they w-would have been t-together for a while already.”

“That is ridiculous, Wendy, you read too many novels. Rozanov would never have compromised his career like this. This must have started after Rozanov moved. Got *close* working on the charity, probably.”

“S-sorry, sir. I d-don’t know what I’m talking about. I’ll keep l-looking into it.”

“Yes, and do it now. We need to stay on top of this, need to get them to post a denial. Say it was a prank. Get the team to draft the statement accordingly and get Hollander and Rozanov booked for an in-person meeting. I need to impress the seriousness of the situation to them. They’ll want to deny it, too, they know this kind of thing will ruin their careers. The public doesn’t want to see change in the league.”

“Of course, sir. You really th-think it was a prank?”

“No,” Roger says, much as he hates to admit it. He’d watched the video in the car, and it looked like anything but a prank. “But the truth doesn’t matter.”

“No, sir,” Wendy agrees quietly.

Two years later, damage control is becoming more and more frequent, because somehow Rozanov and Hollander aren’t going anywhere.

Neither is Roger.

“Sir,” Wendy squeaks, clutching her phone to her chest. “About the speeches last night.”

“Spit it out, Wendy,” Roger says. He’d known it was going to be another fucking stain on the league as soon as he’d been informed Rozanov was going to win MVP. Worse than Hunter back in 2017, which had been bad enough. Roger had the team write a short, neutral, hockey-focused speech for Rozanov to deliver, Rozanov decided to go completely off-script, and now Roger has to do the fucking damage control.

“Mr Rozanov went s-slightly off s-script in his speech,” she says.

Roger briefly closes his eyes. “Yes, Wendy. I was there.”

Wendy takes a breath and continues. “Well, you know how he talked about, you know, winning the Stanley cup with his team and his h-husband and how much it means and how much he l-loves...” Wendy trails off, then mumbles something unintelligible.

“How many times do I have to tell you to speak up, Wendy,” Roger says impatiently.

“S-sorry, it’s n-nothing, it’s just, people like the speech because it was so, so – sweet. And f-funny, too. I f-forwarded you some links, there are already s-so many articles coming out.”

Roger looks at her. “Wendy, do you like your job?”

She opens her mouth, closes it again. Then takes a breath. “Of course, sir.”

“Then shut your mouth.” Wendy’s not a bad PA, she’s lasted longer in the role than anyone before her, but he needs someone whose values are aligned with the organisation’s. He thinks about hiring a man sometimes, but even though he’s a tolerant person, he doesn’t think men are really suited to be PAs.

“Yes, sir. S-sorry.” And then, to his absolute horror and disdain, Wendy starts to cry, properly cry, right there in the middle of his office. Roger stares at her for a few long seconds. He wants her to leave, he wants to go home and be alone and drink a whiskey.

“Sorry,” Wendy gasps. “I’m s-so sorry, Mr Crowell.”

“Why are you crying?”

“M-my b-boyf-friend b-broke up with me last w-week,” she sobs. “And I saw Mr Rozanov’s speech and he is in l-love so m-much and that gives people hope, and I saw our draft statement and I don’t th-think it’s a good statement, and I -

He raises a hand to cut her off. She continues crying, but doesn't say anything else.

If he saw his girls more, maybe he would know how to deal with a situation like this. He tries to think of what he might say to them, if they were in Wendy's place. "Must have been an idiot of a boyfriend to break up with you," he says. "Good riddance, I imagine."

"H-he didn't like my long hours," she says, wiping at her eyes. "But I l-love this job. I love h-hockey."

Roger sighs. He doesn't love hockey, not any more. He can enjoy watching a game, but he has no passion left.

"Wendy," he says. "We are releasing that statement. They can do what they like behind closed doors. I do not want that involved with the league. That speech crossed a line."

"I d-disagree sir," Wendy says, wiping her eyes with her sleeve. Roger feels oddly like when he watched his eldest take her first steps. Wendy has never disagreed with him on anything. He doesn't like it, but he does think it will make her better at her job.

"I don't care," he says. "Now get back to work."

"Yes, Mr Crowell," she says, walking back to her desk, and dropping onto her chair with an air of exhaustion that has become typical of her.

Roger checks his watch and gets up. "I will leave this with you," he says. "Make sure it goes out asap."

She looks slightly surprised to be left in charge, but nods. "Of course, sir."

"See you tomorrow, Wendy."

"See you tomorrow, Mr Crowell."

Roger picks up his phone and wallet and heads out. In the lift, somehow, he can't stop thinking of his daughters. They're unlike Wendy – they're like him, determined and successful, and they leave people behind. He unlocks his phone with the thought of looking at their travel pictures on Instagram, which he never uses for anything else but to check up on them during times they're not in touch. Before he can click into the app, he sees the links Wendy forwarded him before their meeting.

Ilya Rozanov Celebrates MVP Win With Emotional Speech, Thanks Husband Shane Hollander

5 Sweetest Moments from Ilya Rozanov's MVP Speech

Ranking Shane Hollander's Reactions During Ilya Rozanov's Awards Speech

Poll: who's luckier, Shane Hollander or Ilya Rozanov (yes you can vote 'both')

As he crosses the lobby, he picks up his phone and makes a call. "Wendy?"

“Yes, sir?”

“Well done keeping me posted on the publicity around this. Keep an eye on that. We might have to change course down the line, if it becomes advisable at some point.”

Wendy makes a surprised squeaking noise. “All right, sir,” she says. “I’ll be ready f-for change.”

He thinks of adding something but can’t really figure out how to express it. So he just hangs up. Wendy’s used to that.

He speeds up his steps towards the exit. He really needs to get home if he wants to be rested for golf tomorrow. Now that’s a real sport.

End Notes

the 5+1 format makes me so nostalgic and I really wanted to write something with outside POVs, hope it was enjoyable to read. I might write a sequel / 2nd chapter of Ilya's speech that is referenced in the last part, I kind of have an idea in my head for that.

thank you for reading 💖

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