transparent

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77526706.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov, Original Female Character(s)
Additional Tags:	POV Outsider, Queer Themes, Queer Character, Coming Out, ignoring book canon bc i know ilya has a different agent in the books, Implied/Referenced Homophobia
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-11 Words: 1,274 Chapters: 1/1

transparent

by werealldreaming

Summary

Ilya Rozanov's agent keeps a rainbow flag in her pen holder, and a photo of herself and her wife on her desk.

Several years after they first meet, he trusts her with a secret.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Sonia's very first impression of Ilya Rozanov is that he's far too young. It's something she feels about all the rookies she meets, these eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds that are carrying millions of dollars worth of expectations on their shoulders. She knows how professional sports work, knows that being an athlete is a young person's game, but that doesn't stop her maternal instincts from kicking in.

Ilya Rozanov is no exception to that impression. She doesn't meet him at the beginning of his career, but a few years in, when he decides to stop working with the Russian agent he started his MLH career with.

"She is good, but she does not know all the American laws," Rozanov says, at the first meeting, when Sonia asks him why he's switching agents. He's very different than he is on the ice and in the media, quiet and careful with his words.

His gaze lingers on the rainbow flag she keeps in her pen holder, and the photo of herself and her wife, standing arm-in-arm in front of the Eiffel Tower.

"This photo…this is the woman you love, yes?"

"Yes," Sonia says, a little surprised. Most people don't comment on the photo, preferring to keep a layer of plausible deniability over their interactions with her. "My wife, Claire."

"You look very happy." He's smiling a little, expression ever so slightly softer than it was a few minutes ago. Nothing like the tight, plastered-on smiles that so many of her colleagues give her when they find out about her relationship.

Rozanov signs a contract with her an hour later, agreeing to have Sonia represent his professional interests. It's the rest of the proof Sonia needs to know that Rozanov's not just a good actor, that he genuinely doesn't care about her sexuality. After all, it would be easy for him to find someone else to represent him, to send her some vague email about how he doesn't think they'll "meet each other's needs". It happens with at least half of the potential clients she meets with.

And part of it is simply the way Rozanov has proven himself to her. But Sonia likes to think that even then, she has an idea of what's going on in his mind, that she can sense that he needs someone in his corner. But when Rozanov gets up to leave, Sonia tells him, "Claire and I are going to Italy this summer. If you'd like, I can show you some pictures when we get back."

Surprise flitters across Rozanov's face. "I would like that," he says. "Thank you."

She doesn't say anything to him, even as the years pass and their professional relationship develops. Not explicitly. But she continues to keep her rainbow flag, and she continues to tell Rozanov—Ilya, eventually—about her vacations with her wife, and the kittens they start fostering, and the roller derby league they're both part of. In 2015, in celebration of

Obergefell, she changes out the photo on her desk to a photo of her wedding, and she doesn't say anything when Ilya spends an entire meeting distracted, studying it.

Ilya doesn't say anything, either, but she can tell he appreciates it. She can see the way his shoulders relax ever so slightly when he steps into her office.

Working with Ilya isn't difficult. He lets her take the reins on most legal and financial matters, but he's easy to get input from when she needs it. He doesn't take on many brand deals that she has to spend time negotiating. And though Sonia knows that some people would despair over the way he presents himself in the media, coarse and impolite to his fellow players, he's never gotten himself into a true scandal.

She's expecting straightforward contract negotiation with Boston, when Ilya's free agency rolls around. There's no real reason for him to move, after all—the Raiders are a strong team, and Ilya is one of the strongest players on it. And as far as she knows, there's no tension in the locker room between him and any of the other players.

She goes to their meeting with a copy of his current contract, and some notes on the team's current cap limits and where she thinks they could press for better privileges and stronger protections.

But when Sonia gives him the folder, Ilya shakes his head. "I'm not staying in Boston."

"Oh," Sonia says. She looks down at her page of notes, frowning, then sets it aside. "Well, that's okay. I'm sorry for assuming. Were there any teams you were thinking of signing with in particular, or that you'd like to avoid?"

Internally, she's already crossing off a few teams. The ones that don't have good locker room culture, mostly, plus a few that she knows wouldn't be able to afford Ilya. She needs to ask Ilya why he wants to move, too; she doesn't want to send him back to the same situation he's trying to leave.

"I want to go to Ottawa. Play for the Centaurs."

All of Sonia's thoughts flee her brain. She can't keep herself from gaping, as unprofessional as it is. "*You*? Want to play for the *Centaurs?*"

The Centaurs are a joke to anyone that knows even a little bit about hockey. They haven't been to the playoffs in years. They have a loyal contingent of fans, of course, mostly folks that grew up in Ottawa, but there's no reason that *Ilya Rozanov*, one of the best players in the entire league, should want to join them. Especially not with the way Boston's been playing for the past few years.

Ilya laughs. "Yes. It is hard to believe, I know, but is what I want."

"But why?"

Ilya's good humor vanishes. He breaks eye contact, rubs the back of his neck awkwardly. "Ah. Well, that is complicated."

Sonia waits. It's a trick she picked up from a friend of hers, who works as a marriage counselor: stay silent, and the other person will start to talk, just to fill the silence.

It takes a few moments, but Sonia's hasn't had this trick steer her wrong yet, and Ilya's no exception. "I am…in a relationship."

There's a heaviness to the words that's utterly incongruous with the joy such a statement should bring. Sonia can hear what Ilya's not saying, and her chest aches. She can't stop herself from reaching out, putting a hand on Ilya's shoulder.

"Thank you for telling me," she says. "I'm sure that wasn't easy."

Ilya makes a faintly amused sound. "I don't have many chances to practice. I think you are the second I have told?"

Shit, Sonia thinks. *This poor kid*.

This poor twenty-seven year old kid, who might be in his first serious relationship. Who's decided that the person in charge of his professional interests is the person he trusts to tell that he's in love.

In all her years working in the sports industry, facing the homophobia of her colleagues and clients, Sonia's never felt as upset as she does now.

She can't say that, so instead she says, "If you want to tell me about them, I'd be happy to listen."

"Thank you," Ilya says. His voice is thick with emotion. He shakes his head. "It is… we are very far away. Ottawa is closer, that is main reason why I want to move there."

"Well, you're far from the first to move to be closer to a partner," Sonia says. She pulls her keyboard toward her and pulls up a new file to take notes in. "Let's see about getting you a deal with Ottawa."

End Notes

i hope you enjoyed! leave a comment if you're so inclined <3

tumblr

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