Scott Hunter doesn't know anything

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Scott Hunter doesn't know anything

by Blue

Summary

A few weeks after the All-Star Game, Scott watches a clip of Shane Hollander down on the ice and sees things a bit differently than the commentary.

Scott doesn't know anything, not technically. He's never wanted to know anything — if it isn't true, casting doubt is dangerous for everyone, but if it is true, then it's even more dangerous and the fewer people that know, the better. Right? Right. So Scott doesn't know anything. Not technically.

The thing is, he doesn't *not* know anything either. As much he's tried to bury it, he can't entirely erase the half a dozen things he's seen over the last seven years. Granted, he'd flipped on one of those spotlights himself because he'd been in a bad fucking mood, but the response had been pretty fucking definitive. Hollander had known exactly what Scott had meant and he'd come back swinging, good sport reputation be damned.

Whatever the thing is he doesn't know about, not technically, it's been happening since the beginning. Since the two of them were set on high with the expectations of millions on their shoulders and assigned roles to fill: Hollander as the golden boy and Rozanov as his opposite, the one throwing the punches and pissing everyone off. The light and the dark, the angel and the devil on everyone's shoulders. It was a hell of a lot to expect of a couple of kids who happened to play good hockey and Scott has seen enough cracks to know neither image is entirely true. They're a little true, sure, but the best lies always are.

Rozanov *is* an asshole, for one thing, but he isn't that kind of asshole, not the way Scott cares about and not the way a lot of the guys in the league are. He's a good captain, his team notoriously loves him, and Scott has seen enough at All-Stars and around the periphery to know he keeps it to players. It doesn't make him less annoying, but Scott can respect it.

Hollander is both better and worse at hiding, but Scott might have bought the persona if he didn't know what he technically didn't know. Not to mention it takes a certain ruthlessness to climb the ladder the way Hollander has, to play hockey that well and win as often as he does. You don't walk off with multiple fucking cups just by being a nice guy on the ice, and Scott knows better than to think it evaporates with the last buzzer. The sudden rage when Scott threw the thing he doesn't know in Hollander's face had just been a confirmation that he was capable of it, not a surprise.

Even if he does know something, there's no telling what the fuck kind of soap opera they've been acting out in the shadows. Scott had seriously side-eyed the whole Rose Landry episode and, good christ, had Boston been exceptionally brutal to play against while that was going on. Rozanov hadn't just been taunting other players those games, he'd been fucking *mean*, and Scott assumed he was one big bruise under his pads given the way he was playing. He sure as hell wasn't playing smart, it was actually the shittiest Scott could remember ever seeing him play, but it was brutal for everyone, and especially for Rozanov himself.

Then there had been the last All-Star Game. Everyone thought Hollander and Rose Landry were still dating, but Scott had known they weren't within a few hours of being in Tampa. He'd been damn close to grabbing both the idiots by their collars and bluntly informing them they were going to discover their closet had developed glass walls unless they re-learned some fucking discretion in how they looked at each other.

He'd been a little jealous, he can admit that. He still *is* a little jealous, or he would be if it weren't for what he's watching play out on TV.

The clip's being shown on every news report even remotely sports related: Hollander crumpled unmoving on the ice as Rozanov circles him with a look of absolute horror on his face. They're in the middle of a fucking sold out arena, on a field of white without a single shadow, hundreds of cameras and phones trained on them both, millions more people watching the live broadcast. He watches Rozanov's world shattering, the fear battling with shock on his face, while the broadcasters call it "respect" for the "enemy". Scott's stomach churns with nausea as Rozanov argues with a ref and snaps at the medics from a dozen feet away, barely looking away from where they're loading Hollander onto a gurney. A ref finally physically pushes him further back towards the bench, Rozanov not even paying attention to the fact he's heading toward the wrong team.

They report Hollander had been responsive and his injuries are non-life threatening, but he's out for the season. Scott turns it off. He'd bet a large chunk of money that Rozanov played the rest of the game because there wasn't any other choice, because it was crucial to keeping up the story they've built. He *had* to. It's what Scott would have done in his place because they don't get to have anything else, not when anyone's watching. Not anywhere someone might look.

*

The Admirals aren't out of it yet, so Scott plays hockey. He's allowed that and they pay him a lot of money to do it. Luckily he likes it, because everything else kinda sucks.

He looks for Kip in the stands at every home game. He's always there, still watching. He catches Scott looking for him every time, too, and even from that distance, even with the glare of the lights, he can see the sad smile Kip gives him. It breaks Scott's heart every time, but he plays better when he knows Kip's watching. Like if Scott can't give him half of what he deserves, he can at least give him that.

He has more than one nightmare where Kip is, nonsensically, on the ice, playing on some nebulous other team, and he goes down the way Hollander had.

*

Scott plays more hockey. It's what he's good at.

*

It's when they win the cup, just after, when he's alone on the ice while everyone else has someone to hold onto, that he remembers watching Rozanov the day Hollander took the hit. It had looked like hell on earth, the kind you can't change and just have to live with.

He knows Kip's in the stands. He looked for him earlier, the way he always does. Kip had smiled, the same sad smile.

That's when he suddenly gets deeply fucking angry at the whole situation. It all flashes through his head: He's not a kid anymore and he doesn't have half the world betting on some stupid rivalry that he's been assigned to. He's a fucking grown-up with a long career behind him. He just won a fucking cup. What are they going to do if he doesn't dance to this one unspoken rule? Fire him? Does it even matter if they do? Does it matter enough to be out here on the ice alone and to keep seeing Kip's sad smile in the stands every fucking time? To go home alone when he could be going home to Kip?

It's not really a thought, he just feels himself make the choice like flipping a switch. It's surprisingly easy for all that his heart is racing, which it'd be doing anyway because he *just won a fucking cup.* He's ready to fight the whole fucking league.

Scott skates over to the stands and waves Kip down. Then does it again when Kip stares at him in disbelief. He's giddy, he's terrified, and he has to take a deep breath, but he's fucking *done* being in the closet.

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