

Happy April Fool's

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Happy April Fool's

by [isthereusername](#)

Summary

“Is just an idea,” Ilya shrugged. “April Fools is next week. I post pictures from the wedding and see how long it takes for people to figure out it is not joke. All of the important people already know and it would be funny to watch the rest of the idiots try to figure it out.”

Over the years, they had made a game of suggesting outlandish ways they could come out. Eventually, they actually follow through on one of the ideas.

Notes

This was heavily inspired by when Courtney and Shayne from Smosh hard launched their relationship by posting wedding pictures on Instagram on April Fool's Day. People went crazy because they had kept pretty much their entire relationship a secret then announced it in the most troll way possible. I like to imagine if Brad hadn't posted that video, Ilya could have convinced Shane to come out like this (even if Yuna definitely wouldn't approve).

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

Ilya proposed the idea over breakfast as he picked at the egg white scramble Shane had made him, choosing to distract himself from the amount of vegetables he was eating at seven in the morning with ridiculous ideas.

“What?” Shane asked into his mug, rubbing his eyes.

“Is just an idea,” Ilya shrugged. “April Fools is next week. I post pictures from the wedding and see how long it takes for people to figure out it is not joke. All of the important people already know and it would be funny to watch the rest of the idiots try to figure it out.”

Over the years, they had made a game of suggesting outlandish ideas of how they would come out. It started after Shane’s parents had found them at the cottage, when the shock and terror was a little less visceral. Ilya had teased Shane about all of the compromising situations Shane’s dad could have found them in and was gleeful in the blush that spread across Shane’s cheeks at each outrageous suggestion.

Once Shane had felt confident in their five-year plan, he had started making jokes too. Ilya had called him after his first week as a Centaur, excited to share that he had found out the secret betting board that the guys had made to speculate why Boston had traded away the captain who had brought them a Stanley Cup and multiple deep playoff runs.

He knew his reputation preceded him, but some of the ideas were objectively ridiculous. They ranged from a secret tryst with the owner’s daughter that had ended poorly to fleeing from the American authorities. On his screen, Shane was wearing his glasses and guffawing openly as Ilya read out each of the bets his new teammates had made.

“You should put \$100 on yourself moving to be closer to your secret lover slash arch-rival Shane Hollander,” Shane suggested slyly once Ilya had read out all of the bets. They had made eye contact through the phone and then both doubled over laughing so hard that it took several minutes before either of them could get out another full sentence.

Ilya knew he was joking of course. Shane still panicked anytime he thought someone figured out that he and Ilya were more than just rivals. On several occasions, Ilya had calmed him down after Shane had a panic attack at the thought of being outed. So while they joked about the craziest ways of announcing their relationship in private, in public they maintained the facade of two rivals that fought it out on the ice.

But very, very slowly their circle began to expand. Hayden figured it out and they let him tell Jackie because the two really were a package deal. Ultimately, that meant all of the Pikes knew, even if the kids were still a little too young to really understand anything. Ilya told Galina, comforted by the way she promised doctor-patient confidentiality after that session, even though he knew she would never tell anyone. After some needling from Yuna and David about having people outside of hockey, Shane told Rose and Ilya told Svetlana.

The public story changed too. Once they announced the foundation, the media no longer painted them as the arch-rivals in constant competition. Eventually, even fans stopped

playing up the ‘Hollander vs. Rozanov’ narrative that had plagued them since their rookie season. They were now two veterans who put their differences to bed.

Despite their progress, whenever they talked about announcing their relationship it remained much closer to jokes than an actual plan for years. Shane had taken the first step by telling the Voyageurs locker room he was a gay a few seasons after Ilya moved to the Centaurs, but the reception was far from acceptance. So he ignored the occasional snide comment behind his back and they agreed to table coming out as a couple.

It was stupid, but Ilya had joked about it in his messages to Shane when he thought the Centaur’s plane was going to crash into a fiery ball. He knew Shane would be devastated, so he wanted to put one last smile on his face.

I love you so much, moy lyubimyy

There is so much I want to say, but I always want you to know I love you

You should tell everyone at my funeral

About us

Don’t warn them. I will be watching you all and I want to see their faces. I will smile down on you with mama

That night, when they were tangled up with each other in bed all sleepy and sated from celebrating their engagement, Shane touched the ring on Ilya’s neck over and over again. He still couldn’t quite believe that Ilya was still here and that he had said yes to forever.

“Would you really want me to tell everyone? If you had—” his voice cracked, not quite able to force out the ugly possibility that Ilya might have died on that plane.

Ilya held Shane’s shaking hands in his. “Oh moy lyubimyy. It was stupid joke, meant to distract you from all of the sadness.” He paused, contemplating his next words. “But I would. Maybe not right away, especially if you were not ready. But eventually, I think it would be good to share our love with the world. I would not want you to bear the weight of it alone.”

He let go of Shane’s hands to brush away the tears that had escaped from Shane’s eyes and made glistening tracks running down his face. Their eyes met, both searching for comfort in the fact that they had a thousand more nights ahead of them where they could lay in bed together. That their last night had not come, would not come, for many more years.

In the end, Ilya couldn’t help himself. “It would be funny though. If you surprised everyone at my funeral. People would see serious Shane Hollander get up to talk and think oh no just another boring speech. But then you would shock them all with secret gay affair and they would think you are not as boring as you really are.”

Shane hit him lightly, “it’s not an affair if we are dating, dumbass.”

Ilya smirked. “We are not dating anymore. We are *engaged*.” It was still so exciting to say. Even in his head, he already corrected himself from calling Shane his boyfriend to his fiancé.

Shane was clearly also excited by the way he rolled his hips against Ilya, already hard again.

They made love for the second time tonight and then a third. Eventually, they drifted off to sleep pressed up against one another so closely that you couldn't really tell where one of them started and the other one stopped. Ilya dreamed of giggling with his mother at an array of shocked faces sitting in pews. Shane looked truly striking in his tux, even if his eyes were brimming with tears. Suddenly, the dream shifted and instead of looking down at Shane, Ilya was standing next to him. He was still wearing a tux with wet eyes, looking out at a crowd of familiar faces, but this time he was saying "I do."

A few months later, his dream came true. It was an intimate backyard wedding at the cottage with only the people who already knew about their relationship. They had decorated the pier the way they had talked about their first time at the cottage, when even a proposal had seemed impossibly out of reach.

Ilya and Shane both walked down the aisle surrounded by flickering candles and their closest friends and family. Jade and Ruby each brought one of their rings down to them, throwing handfuls of rose petals Yuna had picked from her garden. Rose took pictures on a fancy camera she borrowed from a photographer friend, insisting that Shane and Ilya immortalized the moment when so much of their relationship had to be erased for safety.

By the time they had gotten back from their honeymoon in Spain (mostly spent holed up in their villa overlooking the ocean, but really who could blame them), Rose had sent them an entire folder worth of pictures from their wedding. Shane wasn't quite sure how she had managed it, but the way she captured them was truly magical. The shots were mostly candid with moody lighting from the candles and other lights they had scattered around the yard.

Ilya had gotten a bunch of them printed and framed as a housewarming gift for Shane when he moved in with him in Ottawa. Shane had thought getting a housewarming gift was ridiculous because he had probably spent more time with Ilya in Ottawa than in his Montreal apartment over the past few years, but it was still such a thoughtful thing to do that he didn't tease Ilya about it for too long.

It was also so special because for so long of their relationship, they had either avoided taking pictures or deleted them as soon as possible. Even a year ago, they never would have dared to have such intimate moments immortalized in a frame, even in their house. As captain, Ilya occasionally hosted the team and there certainly would be questions if he had photos kissing a rival captain hanging up in his house, despite their public partnership with the foundation.

But now, Shane wasn't a rival captain but a teammate. His switch to Ottawa had caused slightly less uproar than Ilya's because it was his hometown, but it still left many hockey fans shocked. The Montreal front office had certainly tried to get Shane to stay, but he didn't want to spend another year stealing a day or two to spend with his husband in between practices and games where his teammates whispered slurs at him if he wasn't at his absolute best.

So he took a pay cut to move to Ottawa, who were glad to have another star center even though they didn't really need one. He played it off to the media as wanting to spend more time with his parents as they got older, which was helped when his dad slipped off of a ladder and broke his ankle. A fan posted a picture of him wheeling his dad out of the hospital and

suddenly his agent had been fielding calls from journalists, confirming that Shane's dad was not dying and just injured.

Ilya assured him over and over again that the Centaurs would be more than okay if they came out to the team, but Shane was still cautious. He wanted to make a good impression on his own, without the guys treating him differently because he was married to their captain.

Shane wouldn't say (and Ilya knew, even if he didn't say anything) that he was also a little bit scared of coming out to another locker room after what had happened in Montreal. The sudden iciness had been jarring and each snide comment made Shane acutely aware of how being gay was perceived by most of the NHL.

It wasn't until the end of training camp, when all of the veterans were back and most of the cuts had been made that Shane really got an idea of how different the Centaur's locker room was from Montreal's locker room. Ilya told him that Barrett, his right wing, was gay. Fuck, they had even gotten into a fight about it because Shane had been jealous. But hearing it was very different from seeing Barrett give Harris, the team's social media manager, a chaste kiss after filming a short clip for TikTok.

After seeing the kiss, Shane quickly looked away and scanned the rest of the players who were still out on the ice to see if any of them had noticed. Most of them were focused on the ice, but Dykstra had clearly also seen the kiss. His eyes met Shane's almost challengingly, as if daring him to say anything. There were no wolf whistles or chirps about it, the kiss was just... normal.

So slowly, he settled into the team fabric. It was achingly nice. He and Ilya still drove separately to practice each day, often due to necessity because Ilya had a captain's meeting or Shane had physio. Ostensibly, Shane had bought a house a twenty minute drive from the stadium but he was just renovating it as an investment property. Ilya had teased him that he was going from 'Mr. Hollander-Rosanov' to 'Mr. Real Estate,' but he knew it made Shane happy.

On road trips all of the veteran players had separate rooms as required by the player's union. Sometimes they would sneak into one another's rooms after a big win and celebrate, covering their sounds by turning a tv on or by covering one another's mouth with a kiss. It was so different from the ways they had spent their nights sneaking in and out of hotel rooms at the beginning of their relationship. Now, it was fun and exciting because they knew they still had each other once they got home.

Still, Shane knew they weren't as subtle as he tried to be. After years of hiding it should be simple to shift from Shane and Ilya to Hollander and Rozanov. But sometimes he would catch himself staring just a little bit too closely at his husband. When he surreptitiously tried to see if anyone had seen, usually he was in the clear. A few times, he had seen their goalie, Wyatt, notice but he had never said anything about it.

Over the past few months, they had talked a lot about whether or not they should come out to the team. Shane had finally realized that the Centaurs really would be supportive of them (Ilya refrained from saying I told you so, but he was still a bit smug about it). However, it never seemed like there was a perfect time or way to announce it.

But god, they had come up with so many ideas. Ilya came up with most of them, many of which included someone walking in on them or some other indecent scenario he conjured up just to see Shane blush. Others were ridiculous, but plausible.

As they set up for the Centaur's holiday party, Ilya had pulled out a sprig of green and red with a waggle of his eyebrows. Shane had rolled his eyes at the mistletoe, but had still helped Ilya hang it up on the doorway to the kitchen. They had made out lazily under the mistletoe at Ilya's insistence—"is tradition!"—but Shane had steadily refused to use *mistletoe* to announce their relationship.

One morning, Shane had woken Ilya up with a trail of kisses down his chest. He had sucked lightly at one spot when he noticed Ilya was awake, leaving the slightest mark. "Hmmm, maybe I should make an S out of hickies; let everyone know who you belong to."

Ilya's pupils darkened in clear arousal, but he had also shaken his head. "No, your marks are for my eyes only. No one else deserves to see this."

Shane was incredibly nervous the first time they played the Voyageurs in Montreal. There was no real bad blood, but it still felt like a betrayal to be in the visitors locker room instead of the one down the hall. Ilya had taken him into the hallway and calmed him down in the way only he could, but Shane couldn't help but still feel a trickle of anxiousness. "Do not be nervous," Ilya said. "We will crush them because they are nothing without you and then I will kiss you at center ice. Will be very romantic, I will dip you like girl and everything. Will be so romantic that the dinosaur Scott Hunter will be very jealous, da?"

That had finally gotten Shane out of his own mind. He shoved Ilya lightly with his shoulder. "We can do the first half of that. I'm not so sure about the second half." And sure enough, they had destroyed the Voyageurs 7-2. It was such a beatdown that Ilya had only made one or two snide comments to Hayden when they grabbed a beer after the game.

Shane proposed the next outlandish way they could reveal their relationship when Ilya accidentally left his wedding ring in the locker room after a game.

Due to the risks of a degloving injury, they both didn't wear their wedding rings while on the ice. Ilya wore his on the same chain as his mother's crucifix. Because he had dedicated his first Stanley Cup win to his mother and the foundation was named after her, it was pretty well known across the league that he had worn the crucifix even as a junior in honor of her. A few players had noticed the addition of a ring after the airplane, but he had brushed it off as a family heirloom he wanted to keep close following the harrowing experience.

Shane also wore his around his neck, strung onto a thin silver chain. The ring had gotten a few glances the first time he had taken off his shirt in the locker room, but no one ever directly asked him about it. That was most likely because his reputation preceded him. The entire league knew he was intensely private about his personal life from the one disastrous time a reporter had tried asking him about Rose Landry.

But usually, they had put their rings back on by the time they were home. So when Shane noticed that Ilya wasn't wearing his ring while making them dinner, he frowned. Through his

husband's thin shirt, he could tell it wasn't hanging around his neck either. Trying to keep his concern casual, he asked "is there a reason you aren't wearing your ring?"

Ilya's eyes darted down to his hand then to his chest in confusion. Shane watched his expression shift from confusion to panic to realization and then sheepishness. "My love, I am so sorry. I must have accidentally left it in my locker after the game. You know I would say something before ever taking it off on purpose," Ilya said with a wince.

Shane hummed with a slight glint in his eyes, irrationally happy to see how distraught Ilya was over not having his wedding band. "So forgetful," he teased lightly. He traced where the ring would usually be on Ilya's finger, clenched around the spoon he was using to mix the chicken. "I guess you need a more permanent reminder. I'm thinking my name tattooed right here, so you can't forget who you married. Show my name off for everyone"

At that, Ilya turned around and pinned him against the kitchen island. He was clearly delighted by the idea, because he pulled the loose sweatpants Shane was wearing down in one fell swoop and reminded him just how much he loved his husband. They had to remake dinner, but it was well worth it.

A few weeks later, Ilya suggested the April Fool's post. Shane took a bite of his breakfast, mulling over the idea. He knew it was a joke, but it also felt... perfect. It was very them. He was silent long enough that he realized Ilya was looking at him waiting for a response. Slowly, Shane said, "I think it's a good idea."

An enormous grin spread across Ilya's face, lighting him up with obvious glee. "Really?" Ilya asked and Shane could already see the gears turning in his husband's head.

Trying to keep it casual, Shane shrugged. "Why not? You're right, the people who we care most about already know. The team would think it was funny and the league can't do anything about it now that we are on the same team. I think we both know the front office would support us."

Ilya picked him up off of his stool, giving him a kiss as he spun them around. Anya got excited by the commotion and soon enough she was brought into the hug as well. Eventually, they returned to their cold eggs and got ready for practice, but for a few giddy moments it felt like the world stopped.

Ilya was still on cloud nine when he got to the practice rink, unable to stop smiling. Bood bumped his shoulder in the locker room. "You good Roz?"

"Yeah. Everything's perfect," Ilya responded. That earned him a weird look, but Bood dropped the subject and finished putting his pads on.

For the entire practice, he and Shane were on fire. The team happened to be drilling penalty kill formations, so they were on the ice together. Each time they passed the puck, it felt like there was a little bit more weight lifted off of their shoulders. Soon enough, they wouldn't have to carry their secret anymore. That made them fly on the ice, easily skating around their teammates pretending to defend them. Poor Wyatt was in the goal, forced to block shot after shot from the duo.

Wiebe was delighted with them when they got off of the ice. “Fuck, do you two know we’ve already clinched a playoff spot? If you keep that up into the playoffs, we’ve got a real chance to bring it all together this year.”

Even though there was still a few days before April, as they were lying in bed that night Ilya thrust his phone over to Shane. He put his Gretzky biography down, eyes watering when he saw what was on his husband’s screen: a drafted post on Instagram. For how much the post represented, it was pretty simple.

The first slide was the two of them kissing on the dock after they said ‘I do’, the last rays of the sun illuminating them from behind. The halo of light around their heads contrasted dramatically against their dark suits, making them look almost angelic. Shane’s hands were around Ilya’s neck, buried in the curls he let grow out over the off-season while Ilya wrapped his hands around Shane’s waist, bringing them impossibly closer together. At the edge of the frame rose petals were visibly scattered at their feet. It was unmistakably intimate and romantic.

As if the first picture was not clear enough, the second made it obvious they were married. It was cropped much closer than the first one with just their waists to knees showing. They were holding hands and Shane had his other hand resting lightly on Ilya’s wrist. Both of their wedding rings were glinting in the flash Rose had used, as well as a peek of Shane’s watch from under his suit jacket.

Third was a much older shot, from their first summer at the cottage. Ilya had admitted to Yuna that they had very few pictures of the two of them together because they were worried about potentially getting hacked and exposed. She had pursed her lips but ultimately assented. Still, she had taken a polaroid of them sleeping on the couch, so cuddled up under an afghan she had knit. It brought a tear to Shane’s eyes, seeing how much younger they looked.

Finally, there was another candid shot from their wedding. It was later in the night, after everyone had a few drinks. Both of them had lost their jackets and their bowties hung loosely around their necks, highlighted by the fact a few buttons of their shirts were undone. The string lights twinkled above them as they swayed slowly to the music. There were a few people blurrily dancing behind them also dancing, but the camera’s focus was on the intense way they were staring at one another.

“Fuck, Ilya. It’s so perfect. I love you so, so, so much,” Shane said shakily. He swiped out of the preview to see Ilya had captioned it with a simple red heart.

Ilya swiped away a tear from the corner of Shane’s eye with his thumb. “And you are sure that you want to do this? I promise we do not have to—”

Shane interrupted his husband before he could finish. “No, I want to. I really want to. I’m so ready to be able to show the world how much I love you.”

They shared a slow, syrupy kiss after that. It deepened, but didn’t lead to anything. It didn’t need to because they were no longer limited to quick fucks in impersonal hotel rooms. They had *forever* together.

Four days later, they were lying together in bed. Ilya's finger hovered over the post button, hesitating. He asked, "are you sure?"

Shane nodded. They had spent so long waiting, it really did feel like some extended joke they were playing on the world. It wouldn't be a surprise to everyone: the people at their wedding knew they planned on announcing it sometime soon, but they hadn't told anyone exactly how. Ilya had been insistent on ensuring it was a surprise.

The only people they had warned about their post were Farah and Harris. Shane had insisted, feeling bad for the two that would have to field the media and press inquiries. At least Farah knew about the two of them, but the Centaur's social media manager was completely blindsided by their relationship. He had taken the surprise well and promised not to tell Troy until the post went up, even though Ilya was pretty sure the right wing had figured out that something was going on between him and Shane.

Knowing that they were prepared for whatever the response was, Ilya pressed post. Immediately, their phones began buzzing with new notifications.

In general, people seemed confused on whether it was a prank or not. About half of the comments were adamant that this was an elaborate April Fool's joke and that the pictures were either staged or photoshopped. The other half insisted the kiss and touching had to be genuine.

It was honestly insane how quickly people had dug up clips and pictures from the past decade of the two of them. There was a gif from the All-Star game in 2017 when Ilya had kissed Shane's cheek after his goal that had received nearly two hundred thousand likes in the comments. Right below it was a zoomed in photo of Ilya walking Anya, where you could just make out a blurry ring on his left hand. People had also edited them into a bunch of memes and Shane was impressed but slightly concerned by how quickly people were able to superimpose their faces into the pictures.

Ilya was delighted by the comments. He scrolled through them, reading particularly funny ones out to Shane. Because he was feeling like a bit of a little shithead, Ilya liked any of the comments that made Shane laugh regardless of which side of the debate they were on.

It only took a few more minutes before the texts started rolling in.

Rose

GUYS!!! SO PROUD OF YOU TWO!

pic credits to moi

I'm going to repost it by the way <3

Hayden

Rozanov was this your idea?

I hate to admit it, but it's genius

Yuna & David

We are very proud of you boys and love you so much

Let us know if we can help in any way

Very excited to wear our jerseys to the game tomorrow!

Svetlana

Guys these comments are the funniest thing I've seen all year

Congrats though, very happy for you

Harris

Your post is already going viral haha

I can't believe how much traffic we're getting on the Centaur's accounts

(in a good way)

Congratulations to you two :)

Troy wants me to let you know he's very happy for you guys and can't wait for practice.

Eventually they would get up. Shane would take a quick shower while Ilya meandered downstairs to make them breakfast before they faced the world. But for a few more moments, they stayed in bed just enjoying the presence of one another.

When they finally did leave the warmth and comfort of their home to head to the rink, for the first time the entire season they took the same car. Ilya even let Shane pull him to the practical sedan he favored rather than his own more flashy car. Shane drove with one hand on the wheel and his other resting on the console, fingers entwined with Ilya's.

Before they went into the rink, Ilya pulled his husband in for a chaste kiss. "No matter what happens, we will get through it together."

Shane met his eyes for a beat before nodding. Even though he tried to hide it, he was clearly nervous. Shane was consistently one of the first ones in the facility. He liked to take his time getting changed while the locker room was still quiet. But today, Shane had let Ilya hold him for a few extra minutes in bed. Ilya suspected it was because he wanted to avoid downtime before practice where their teammates would ask questions.

The locker room had almost emptied out by the time Shane and Ilya arrived. Most of the team must have already left for the ice, because Haas was the only one still lacing his skates. He furrowed his brow a little at the two of them coming in late and together, but didn't say anything as they started pulling on their pads.

They both changed quickly and joined the team as they began doing warm-up laps. Shane could tell a few of the conversations died out when people noticed that he and Ilya were on the ice, but no one had said anything yet.

It wasn't until they had completed a few more laps with their teammates sneaking glances at the two of them before someone broke the ice. Bood sidled up to them, matching their sedate pace. "Hey guys, Cassie showed me your post this morning. That prank is funny as fuck, right? When did you have time to plan all of that?"

Hayes skated up behind them, slapping Bood on the back of the head. "Dude you're so dumb. It's obviously not a prank. They wear matching wedding rings for god's sake" Shane wasn't even sure why Hayes was on the ice. Usually the goalie was doing stretching and mobility work still, especially this close to the post-season.

Dykstra turned around, skating backwards so he could talk to them. "Hayes, how the fuck do you know that?" He stared at Ilya and Shane for a second. "Wait guys, is it a prank?"

Soon enough, every guy had formed a loose crowd around them, yelling over one another about whether or not the post was a prank. Finally, Ilya pulled off his glove and let out a loud whistle. "Okay, okay. I understand you have a lot of questions about me and my sexy husband, but we do still need to practice. I need each one of you to be at your best so I can win another Stanley Cup, yes? So we will answer three questions, then we will skate. Okay? Okay."

There was a little bit of clamoring, before Bood yelled out, "I am Assistant Captain, so I get to ask the first question!" There were a few groans, but everyone else went quiet. "Guys, is this actually serious? And not an April Fool's joke?"

Ilya responded, "no, no, it is serious. Okay, well, post might be a little bit of a joke because we thought it was funny to watch everyone flip their shit. But me and Shane are very serious." Shane nodded, even though he elbowed Ilya slightly when he said it was a joke.

There were a few whistles and audible "whoas" from the huddle.

"Haas, you fucker is this why you ask to sleep in my room anytime you are next to Rozanov in the hotel?" Boyle asked indignantly.

"Um, there might have been an incident in Las Vegas that I didn't want to repeat." Haas said guiltily. "I swear though, I thought most of you guys knew they were together. They clearly aren't very quiet!"

"Wait, so is this why you came to Ottawa?" Chouinard asked next.

At the same time, Shane and Ilya said "yes." There were a few shocked glances at that, so Ilya told Shane, "you take this one."

"Um, well, yeah, a big part of the reason I came to Ottawa was to be with Ilya. I loved Montreal and I probably would have stayed there until I retired, but I could never openly be

with him while a Voyageur. Fuck, I couldn't even be gay and on Montreal. And my parents are here, so it was really the only team I had my agent negotiate with."

Ilya gave him a long glance, then motioned for him to continue. "Oh, and Ilya came to Ottawa. For me. His contract with Boston was expiring and it was a much more manageable distance from Montreal. Also with everything going on in Russia, he wanted Canadian citizenship rather than American citizenship once he was done playing." Shane trailed off kind of awkwardly, not knowing what else to say.

A voice piped up from further back in the huddle, Young projecting his voice over Holmberg's shoulder. "Holy fuck, this has been going on since Ilya played in Boston?"

Shane rubbed the back of his neck nervously. "Yeah, it's been a while."

Ilya rolled his eyes. "My husband does not know how to answer a question apparently. This is why the media hates him." That earned a few scoffs because everyone knew the media *loved* Canada's golden boy Shane Hollander. "We have been dating since 2017, but began seeing each other the summer before rookie year."

There were a few jaws that dropped at Ilya's admission. Shane rolled his eyes a little, his cheeks warming at the thought of the picture of the two of them decked out in CCM gear as teenagers framed on his nightstand.

"Wait, so when did you get married?" Barrett asked.

"No, no, no. We said three questions and you got three questions." Ilya said. "We are playing D.C. tomorrow. They might have half of their first line out right now, but they are still a strong team. So right now, I need you to focus on hockey. We'll talk later, okay?"

There was a chorus of "Yes, Cap!" Slowly, the huddle dispersed as the players skated off to continue warming up.

Shane and Ilya stayed where they were. It felt surreal, for the team to know and accept it—accept *them*. They stared at each other for a while, soaking up the moment. But then the assistant coach was gathering them for some passing drills, and it was just another day on the ice.

It was a short practice because no one wanted to be fatigued or injured going into the next day's game or the playoffs. Soon enough, they were all cooling down and headed to the locker room. Shane could tell most of their teammates were trying to give him and Ilya space, but were still itching to ask questions.

Ilya was helping one of the rookies with a trick shot, so he skated over to his husband. "Hey, what do you think about inviting the guys over for dinner tonight? I know they still have a lot of questions and it might be nice to host as a couple for once."

If Ilya was surprised by the suggestion from his husband who usually hated having a large group of people over, he didn't show it. His eyes softened a little bit, knowing how important

it must be for Shane that the guys accepted them. “Yeah, babe. That sounds amazing. Let’s go tell everyone.”

So a few hours later, there were twenty-some odd hockey players digging into the pasta and meatballs they had catered. Ilya had hosted plenty of team get-togethers over the years, but for the first time they hadn’t taken down the pictures of them in the front entryway. For the first time, Shane didn’t pretend to ask where the wine key he had bought Ilya was. For the first time, Ilya licked the sauce away from the corner of his husband’s mouth. For the first time, they held hands under the table for the entire meal.

The team had a lot of questions, which was fair. Their questions also made Shane and Ilya wonder how some of the guys *hadn’t* realized the two of them were together. Apparently, they had become much worse at sneaking around over the years. To be fair, no one was sure whether they or LaPointe were more embarrassed that LaPointe had walked in on them kissing in the locker room a few weeks ago and just hadn’t said anything.

The dinner was full of laughter and love. It spilled over into their living room, where the guys crowded around as they shared stories about their relationship. Shane couldn’t believe how lucky they were to be in a position to tell other players about these things without getting cussed out.

Still, Shane was quite a bit more reserved than Ilya, who was enthusiastically telling the guys about the time Ryan Price walked in on them making out during one of the foundation’s hockey camps. He simply leaned back, resting his arm casually around Ilya’s shoulders. They had sat like this on the couch a thousand times before, yet it still felt so special to display the casual intimacy now in front of everyone.

Eventually, everyone slowly filtered out. Tomorrow, the two of them would address the media in the pre-game scrum and face the fallout from the hockey community. There will be supporters holding pride flags when they skate onto the ice and there will be people who post videos burning their jerseys. But that was a problem for tomorrow and it was a challenge that they would face together as Ilya Rozanov-Hollander and Shane Hollander-Rozanov.

End Notes

I hope you enjoyed! I was debating about adding a second chapter with the media scrum/game, but I felt like this was a good place to leave it. Also, I wrote this as a break from my longer work so if you liked it, please go check that out!

Thank you for reading + any kudos or comments are always appreciated :)

EDIT 4/3/26: Wow wow wow thank you all so much for the new attention on this fic! I am so glad it's bringing people joy. This fandom is truly incredible to write for.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!