

how many hockey players does it take to make a meal?

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how many hockey players does it take to make a meal?

by [forever_er](#)

Summary

Hayden kisses Jackie on the cheek, then peers over Shane's shoulder at the batter.

"Is it supposed to be that lumpy, man?" He asks it so innocently, like maybe it is supposed to be lumpy. Like maybe he just doesn't know what batter is supposed to look like. Shane supposes he probably doesn't. He's never seen Hayden make anything more complicated than a protein shake.

Shane hangs his head. "No."

Hayden laughs, Jackie laughs, and the kids clamber all over him to get a peek at the lumpy mixture.

"That looks yucky," Ruby observes with an air of wisdom from where she has managed to climb onto Shane's back.

"I don't want to eat that," her twin agrees from her mirrored position on Hayden.

Jackie looks at Shane pityingly.

"Shane, sweetie, I'm sure Ilya will be happy with anything you plan for him. Does it have to be a meal?"

Shane glowers. "Yes."

Or, the one where Shane Hollander gets it in his head that he has to make a traditional Russian dish for Ilya as a grand romantic gesture

Notes

This was originally supposed to be a short, fluffy piece of nonsense. Unfortunately (fortunately?) the Ilya and Shane in my head told me it was highly unlikely they would not have sex, so now there's that.

It is my personal headcanon that Shane Hollander believes he is not romantic, and I agree with him except for the fact that he LOVES a grand romantic gesture. Come to my cottage? [Spoiler moment for the long game]? When my guy locks in, he locks in.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy!

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

May 2019

“Shane, honey, I’m trying to be helpful here, but you’re making it so difficult,” Jackie says between choked off laughs.

Shane understands why she’s laughing. He gets it, he does. If he saw Hayden standing in this kitchen covered in flour and staring desolately at a burnt pancake, he’d be laughing too. Unfortunately, Shane is the idiot today.

“Shane, please tell me you’ve made pancakes before.”

“It’s more difficult when they’re thinner!” Shane hears his voice getting higher and more defensive, but he can’t help it. He’s not a culinary wizard. He can make burgers, he can make hotdogs, he can whip up an egg or throw a salmon in the oven, but for some reason, this fucking blini is going to kill him.

Hayden does arrive then, coming into the kitchen followed by a chorus of children screaming and running and generally causing chaos.

Hayden kisses Jackie on the cheek, then peers over Shane’s shoulder at the batter.

“Is it supposed to be that lumpy, man?” He asks it so innocently, like maybe it *is* supposed to be lumpy. Like maybe he just doesn’t know what batter is supposed to look like. Shane supposes he probably doesn’t. He’s never seen Hayden make anything more complicated than a protein shake.

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“Shane, sweetie, I’m sure Ilya will be happy with anything you plan for him. Does it have to be a meal?”

Shane glowers. “Yes.”

Jackie throws her hands in the air, placating. “I’m not saying you can’t do this! I’m just pointing out there might be an easier solution.”

Hayden pats Shane consolingly on the shoulder. “Yeah buddy, you have other skills. Like, hockey. And being really nice.” Hayden pauses for a second, then says, “And dating down.”

“Hayden,” Jackie warns.

“Am I wrong?”

“Hayden,” Jackie says again, and this time it is certainly a threat.

“Ilya fucking Rosanov,” Hayden mumbles once more under his breath.

Shane covers his face with his hands, which is immediately a mistake. He feels his eyelashes being glued together with batter and flour entering his pores. He exhales slowly through his mouth.

“Can we try again?” he asks, ignoring the jibes. “He never says it, but sometimes I think maybe Ilya’s homesick.” He takes another inhale and raises his eyes pleadingly to Jackie. “It might seem silly, but this is important.”

He pointedly ignores the way Jackie’s eyes go warm and gooey over this admission. He also pointedly ignores the constipated look on Hayden’s face that Shane has learned is his “this would be so cute if it wasn’t about Ilya Rosanov” face. Shane could probably never be called a romantic, but he loves Ilya so much that it physically hurts him sometimes. And he knows this is a good idea. He can feel it the same way he could feel that Ilya needed to come to his cottage, the same way he knew he needed to approach him in Saskatchewan.

Last week, after Montreal had lost game 3 of the second round of playoffs, Shane and Ilya had FaceTimed.

Ilya had made fun of his backhand only once, and only after offering his disapproval of the refs.

“Was not fair,” he’d said. “They should investigate these referees. Seemed like they wanted to fuck Scott Hunter and were not concerned with whether hockey was being played.”

Shane could have probably disagreed, but his heart was warmed by Ilya’s support.

“I don’t think they wanted to fuck Hunter, Ilya.”

“Trust me, I know what it looks like when people want to fuck hockey players.”

“Oh yeah, you have experience noticing when people are flirting with Scott Hunter?”

“After spending time with him and his boyfriend?” Ilya had made a face of disgust. “Yes.”

“You told me last year you thought they were a good couple!”

“Good does not mean not totally disgusting.”

“We’re totally disgusting,” Shane had pointed out.

“Yes, but we are sexier about it. If people knew, we would be all over magazines and tabloids.”

Shane laughed, but it stung, too. They *would* be all over the tabloids, and that's why they couldn't be public like Scott and Kip.

There had been silence on the line, and then—and Shane wasn't sure why he'd asked—"Do you have any end of season traditions?"

Ilya had smiled, and it was soft and fond, the kind of smile Shane thought of as only for him. "So boring," he'd said, and Shane had known it for the *I love you* it was.

"Such an asshole," he'd returned. His own *I love you*. "Answer the question."

Ilya had rolled his eyes, but he'd dutifully thought about it. "Not for many years, unless getting on sad flight to Russia is tradition."

"I'm not sure that's a tradition, no."

Ilya's eyes had shuttered for a moment, then cleared. Shane was just beginning to learn that this meant he was about to talk about his mom.

"There is one thing, I think," he said. "When I was young, just a few times after the season ended, my mother made me a big breakfast feast. All the foods my father forbade during the season—not enough protein, too much sugar. Whatever. And my favorite was always her blini—her pancakes. She served them with sour cream and jam." Ilya smiled, then, and it was sad. It broke Shane's heart a little every time Ilya talked about his mom, and a little more every time Shane wasn't there to hold him when he did.

"Sour cream for breakfast?"

Ilya had rolled his eyes, and Shane had smiled. He wanted to be there for Ilya, but Shane was finding sometimes Ilya sat silent and sad, and annoying him was the best way he knew to help when he couldn't physically comfort Ilya.

"Yes Hollander, sour cream for breakfast. This from someone whose national cuisine is tree sap on snow."

"Wow, national cuisine. I knew you stole my dad's *New Yorker*."

"Fuck off," Ilya had said, looking at Shane like he'd hung the stars.

"You fuck off," Shane had rebutted, feeling like his heart would burst out of his chest with affection.

They'd hung up soon after, but the conversation had wormed its way into Shane's brain, and he knew he couldn't let it go until he did something about it.

—

Early June 2019

"Well, it's not lumpy this time, I'll give you that much." Jackie says.

“The cooked blini is impressively both raw and burnt, though, buddy.”

Shane does not know why he’s friends with these people.

“It’s not rocket science. I don’t understand why I can’t cook a fucking circle of batter.” Shane says.

“Fucking batter!” Arthur repeats, and Shane apologizes as he places a quarter in the swear jar Jackie holds up for him.

“Don’t use that word, honey, it’s not nice,” Jackie says, and Arthur seems confused.

“Batter is not nice? What about the batter on the Blue Jays?”

“No not that word, honey, the other—“

“Don’t say ‘fucking’, Arthur,” Hayden chimes in, and then abducts Arthur into the living room with such haste that Shane can only quietly shudder at the idea of activating Jackie’s ire.

“That’s my man,” Jackie says instead, fondly, and Shane laughs. Then she says, “Have you considered this is psychosomatic, in some sense?”

Shane looks at her dumbly. “What?”

“Well, you know the yips?”

“YOU CAN’T TALK ABOUT THE YIPS,” Shane and Hayden shout in unison. Shane feels like he should knock on wood or something to undo any bad luck, but he ignores the urge because he is a grown man, damnit.

“So superstitious,” Jackie sighs. Then she says, “All I mean is, maybe you’re so worried about making this a perfect, romantic gesture for Ilya that you’ve gotten too in your head about it. I’ve had things you’ve cooked before, Shane, and everything has been excellent. So this shouldn’t be difficult for you. Why do you think it is?”

Shane considers this for a moment. Objectively, Jackie is right. He has cooked before, and it’s always fine. He and Ilya even cook with each other all the time. Thinking about the way they choose recipes together and bump hips while chopping vegetables makes Shane’s heart feel squishy and his eyes feel dangerously wet, so he pivots back to the question at hand.

It just feels like a big deal, to try to make something Ilya’s mother had made for him. To recreate something that might make Ilya feel more at home. It feels so big, in fact, that Shane hadn’t thought twice before begging Jackie to help him perfect the recipe, something he’s never done before.

Well, then. Shane perhaps has his answer.

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Late June 2019

Shane is at the cottage with his mother when he tries again. His kitchen is a disaster zone, he knows he has strawberry guts in his hair from when he mashed one too hard, and he thinks maybe this time, he got it right.

“They’re perfect, Shane,” his mom says, taking a bite. Shane knows she means it. She would let him know if they sucked.

He looks down at the plate he’s made, and he has to admit that the food looks good. He’s made jam, the blinis look delightfully thin and soft and delicious, everything smells incredible. He takes a bite, and it tastes... fine. Good, even.

But it doesn’t feel right.

Shane sits at the kitchen table and his mom follows suit, taking the chair next to him.

“What’s wrong?” she asks, straight to the point as usual. She levels him with a stare that brokers no argument.

“I don’t know,” Shane answers honestly. He feels himself sagging under the weight of his self-appointed task. “I just feel like, how could anything I make be good enough for him?”

His mom levels him with an even harder stare. “Shane,” she says, and he knows she means *I love you, but you’re being stupid*.

“I don’t mean it like that, I just mean. I don’t know what I mean. I want to bring a piece of home to him here, but I don’t even know his mom’s recipe, I don’t know how she made things, I don’t know if this is going to make him miss her even more or if this is a nice thing to do.” Shane drops his head into his hands and rubs at his temples in frustration.

“Will you look at me, please?”

For a moment, Shane can’t, too caught up in his internal storm of insecurity. When he finally does, he feels tears perched on his waterline. Just perfect.

“Ilya loves you so much,” his mom says.

Shane knows this. He loves Ilya just as much, feels like the luckiest person in the world that Ilya has chosen him back. They’re perfect together, a matched set. Hollander and Rosanov, never one without the other. Two years ago, Ilya had joked that he’d propose to Shane right here at the cottage, but Shane also knew it wasn’t a joke. Shane knows, the way he knew hockey would be his forever, that Ilya is, too. He knows that someday, Ilya will be his husband, that they’ll be together, able to be themselves in public, able to hold hands with matching rings. He wants that day to come so badly that sometimes he can’t breathe for wanting it. So, yes. He knows Ilya loves him.

“He loves you so much, that I don’t think he would ever be disappointed by you trying to do something nice for him. But,” and here she pauses, making sure that Shane makes eye contact

with her again before continuing, “If you want this to be about honoring Irina, think about what might make that happen. What’s your favorite thing that I make?”

“Everything you make is incredible,” Shane responds automatically.

His mom laughs and shakes her head. “I raised such a charmer, huh?” She pats Shane’s arm affectionately, then asks, “And why do you think everything I make is incredible?”

Shane isn’t sure, actually. “Because you make it with love?”

She shrugs. “Maybe. Or maybe it’s something else. The point is, there’s something special for you about food that I make. Think about why that is a little more, and maybe that’ll help you figure out why you’re so disappointed by your blinis.”

Shane sits with this and his mother gets up and ruffles his hair. “I don’t think Ilya will be disappointed no matter what you do. I think he’ll be touched you put so much thought into this.”

Shane sighs. She’s right, and still...

“I’ll think about it. Thanks, mom.” He follows her back to the counter to begin cleaning up, and gives her a quick hug. “Thank you for everything.”

She brushes it off, but Shane can see she’s secretly pleased.

“Stop trying to charm me and get back to the task at hand,” she commands, and Shane laughs. His mom is the best.

—

July 2019

When Ilya pulls up to the house, Shane is nervous. It’s been weeks since he last saw him because they don’t see each other during playoffs, and alongside the nerves, Shane feels like he’s starving.

Ilya looks incredible, as always, and Shane’s not sure if that makes his nerves better or worse, but he knows what it’s doing to the hunger. His tank top is low-cut, and his biceps are prominently on display, almost glistening in the low light of golden hour. His cheekbones look like they’ve been chiseled out of marble, and—yeah, great, Shane’s dick is taking an interest already.

Shane takes Ilya’s bag from him to the same protests he always receives, and then the moment his front door is closed, Ilya has him pushed up against it.

“I missed you, *moy lyubovnik*,” he says as he kisses Shane’s neck, and Shane can’t help the shiver that runs up his spine or the way his brain melts. He feels Ilya’s tongue trail slowly to the juncture of his shoulder, where he begins sucking at the skin. Shane moans, and he feels his dick tent the front of his shorts.

“I missed you so much,” Shane says, and pulls Ilya’s mouth up to his. He licks greedily into Ilya’s mouth and separates only to pull Ilya’s tank top forcefully over his head.

“You want me that badly, sweetheart?” Ilya asks, and Shane is on his knees before he makes the decision to drop.

He rips open Ilya’s fly and swallows him in one slick movement. Ilya groans, and Shane preens. He sucks sloppily around the head of Ilya’s cock and then swallows him deep, pulling him in by his ass.

“Fuck, Shane,” Ilya says it like a prayer. Shane pulls off with a wet pop, and stares up at his boyfriend from between his legs. Ilya runs his thumb reverently over Shane’s spit-slicked bottom lip, and Shane sucks it into his mouth without a second thought. The way Ilya hisses at the motion is enough for Shane’s control to break, and he can’t help but press the heel of his hand into his erection to relieve some pressure. Even after all these years, Shane can’t believe how much he *wants* Ilya, how much he needs him in every way.

“I need you,” Shane whispers, unable to keep it in. He lays his head in Ilya’s palm and stares up at him, feeling like adoration is pouring out of him, like he’ll suffocate them both in it.

This time, Ilya pulls Shane up, dragging him hungrily until they’re face to face again. Ilya devours him, kissing Shane so passionately that Shane’s knees feel weak again. He kisses back, threading his fingers through Ilya’s hair and pulling at the strands. Their erections press together, one unclothed and one confined, and Shane groans into Ilya’s mouth as Ilya gasps into Shane’s.

“I love you,” Ilya growls, and Shane responds by sucking on Ilya’s tongue.

They maneuver somehow, slowly, painstakingly between kisses, to the couch where Shane all but throws Ilya down. He rips off his own shorts and settles on top of him, but Ilya flips them over immediately.

“Let me get you ready,” he says, and it’s so gentle and so sweet in the midst of the uncontrollable haze of lust Shane is feeling that he blinks back tears.

“Fuck, I love you,” Shane says as Ilya pulls out the lube from the side table. Moments later, Ilya slips one finger inside him with ease.

“Did you already open yourself up for me?” Ilya asks, and it’s dark and passionate and his eyes are full of possessive heat.

Shane’s ears feel like they’re on fire, but he nods. “Wanted to feel you,” he mumbles, and Ilya swears. He dives back down to steal a filthy kiss that leaves Shane’s head spinning.

Ilya is quickly able to insert three fingers without resistance, and Shane is out of his mind with want—he’s rocking wantonly into Ilya’s fingers trying to take him deeper, his dick is leaking heavily, begging to be touched, and he hears himself moaning loudly but can’t bring himself to care.

“You’re so beautiful when you’re gone for me, Hollander,” Ilya says, and Shane’s eyes roll into the back of his head.

“Fuck me, Rosanov,” he grits out, and Ilya doesn’t seem to need any other instruction, because he removes his fingers, slicks himself up, pushes into Shane with one deep thrust. Shane all but wails.

“Yes, fuck, just like that,” he moans, and then his moans are lost in the slide of their bodies, in the tension building between them, in the fire building building, building to an inferno as Ilya thrusts and thrusts and thrusts.

They crash together, a kiss that becomes gasping into each other’s mouths as they both tumble over the edge—Shane, untouched.

“Love that trick,” Ilya says, moments later, smirking.

“Asshole,” Shane replies, smiling.

—

In the morning, Shane watches Ilya walk blearily down the stairs and into the kitchen. He kisses Shane on the forehead with his eyes half-lidded, then goes immediately to the coffee machine and starts brewing a cup for himself before fully looking around.

When he does, Shane shuffles back and forth, embarrassed.

On the table are all of the ingredients that could possibly be used in a traditional Russian blini. There’s stuff for the batter, but Shane has also put out sour cream, honey, and fruit to make homemade jam. There’s even caviar and smoked salmon in case Ilya wants something savory.

“What is this?” Ilya asked, and Shane loves the way his voice sounds in the morning, doesn’t think he’ll ever be tired of hearing that deep rasp that clings only to the first syllables of the day.

“It’s, um,” and he finds himself blushing, suddenly insecure. He looks down at his feet, and Ilya is there in front of him in a second.

“Shane,” Ilya says, so, so softly—so softly it sounds like he might break. He raises Shane’s chin so they’re eye to eye.

Shane kisses him, and it’s a tender thing. He hopes it grounds Ilya the way it does him. He looks into Ilya’s beautiful eyes and thinks: *beloved*. His heart aches.

“I wanted to make you something that reminds you of home,” he begins, lacing his fingers through Ilya’s. “I know your life has changed so much the last few years, and I know you say you’re fine, but I thought it might be nice to feel like that little kid eating at his mother’s table again.”

Ilya is silent, and Shane swallows nervously, but continues on. “You had mentioned that your mom made you blinis at the end of the season a few times, and I thought it might be nice for you to have them again. But even though Jackie tried to help me and my mom tried to help me, they just didn’t come out right. So, I realized something.”

Ilya continues to stare at him, wordlessly, his eyes locked on Shane with the kind of intensity he usually reserves for the puck in a face off. Shane squeezes his hand, and Ilya squeezes back. Shane lets out a breath.

“I realized that what makes some food so good is that our loved ones made it. And I know that your mom can’t help us today, but I thought maybe we could make them together, and it would be like we’re continuing on her tradition with her. Like Irina’s with us, passing it down to our family, all of us together. What do you think?”

Shane could die of embarrassment when he realizes he implied that he and Ilya are—what, a family?—but before he can beat himself up too badly, he realizes that Ilya is crying.

Fuck, he knew he would fuck this up. Shane immediately cradles Ilya’s head in his hands. He peppers him with kisses, covers Ilya’s cheeks, his nose, his forehead. “Hey,” he says, kissing him again and again, “Hey, tell me what’s wrong. Tell me how I can make it better,” he pleads. God, he’s such an idiot. Why would he think it would be good to remind Ilya of his horrible childhood?

Shane isn’t sure what Ilya is going to say, but he’s shocked when he hears him whisper, his voice cracking, “I love you.”

“You what?” Shane can’t help but ask. He stops kissing him so he can bring Ilya’s eyes up to his own.

“I love you,” he says, and then he’s pulling Shane to him and holding him so tightly Shane feels his ribs creak.

They sink to the floor like that, Shane cradling Ilya, Ilya holding Shane like he’ll disappear.

A few minutes later, when Ilya’s tears have dried, Ilya looks at him with such care that Shane thinks his own heart will burst. “I don’t deserve you,” he says. “How do I get to keep you?”

And Shane can’t let that go, can’t let Ilya sit there and say things like that. “You’re such an idiot. You can’t get rid of me even if you want to. I’m yours. I’m always yours. I’ve always been yours.” He runs his hands through Ilya’s soft curls. “You know that.”

Ilya turns Shane’s hand and kisses his wrist at the pulse. “I can’t believe it.”

“I can’t believe I get to call Ilya Rosanov my boyfriend, so that makes two of us.”

“We are idiots,” Ilya says, like that explains it all, and Shane can’t help but laugh. Ilya watches him for a moment, and then he’s laughing too, and they’re both laughing and clutching each other on the floor in Shane’s cottage at ten in the morning and they’re idiots but they’re *each other’s* and that’s all that’s ever mattered.

Later, Ilya teaches him how to make blinis “the right way.” It’s a simple process, it’s an easy recipe, and it feels right in the way Shane has been envisioning this whole time. Ilya smiles at him, and Shane beams back, and he may be imagining it, but he feels a warmth enveloping them, like a loving presence.

They sit down, and Ilya piles his plate, groaning happily at the first bite. Shane takes his own bite, and it’s wonderful.

“Just like my mother’s,” Ilya says, and his voice is full of wonder. Shane feels like if he loves Ilya any more, he’s going to die of it. And yet every time they’re together, he finds a little more room to love him a little bit more.

Shane knows he’s going to fuck up. He knows that he isn’t as observant as he could be, knows that he’s obsessed with hockey in a way that sometimes blots out the world. But he also knows that Ilya is his sun, is the thing his world revolves around. And he knows that he will try as hard as he can to be a good partner to him, even if he can’t be perfect, and even if they can’t be out.

He looks at Ilya sitting next to him at the kitchen table, smiling in a way he so rarely does: all bright, shiny teeth and crinkling eyes. There’s a smudge of batter on his cheek.

“You’re so beautiful,” Shane says—can’t help but say, needs to say.

Ilya’s smile widens even more, somehow, and he leans over to kiss Shane. Shane tastes sugar and sour cream on his lips.

“Thank you for this,” Ilya says, a hot gust.

“Thank you for teaching me.”

In his head, Shane adds: *Thank you for taking care of him as long as you could.*

He’s not a particularly spiritual person, but he hopes that, wherever she is, Irina Rosanov can hear him.

End Notes

Thank you for reading! If you enjoyed, feel free to leave me a comment. I always love to hear what people's favorite lines are :)

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