

In the Sound of Bells

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In the Sound of Bells

by [villavona](#)

Summary

Shane texts him his second day in Sochi, after the Opening Ceremony is over and the sports are beginning.

Are you staying in the Village? he asks. Capitalization, proper grammar. Innocuous.

Nyet, Ilya texts back. Here in his country Shane can learn a little Russian. Latin alphabet, he can be generous.

Notes

the woke gay hockey show mind virus claims another victim.. no further arguments your honor. Set before the sports bit of the Olympics but after they've had Thee Tender Stairwell Kiss..

Title is from my GOAT Marina Tsvetaeva - Poems for Blok 5. At Home in Moscow.

Enjoy!

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

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The three little dots pop up, then disappear. Then pop up again. Jane says: Nearby? Or will I see you on the ice?

Ilya remembers the first few times, having to tell Shane what he wanted, having to lead him down the road his body was already on. Apparently not anymore. Apparently Shane can ask for what he wants now. Or something close to it.

You will see me on ice, he texts back. Biting gold medal. Adds two Russian smileys:))

Haha. That's what you think! Shane says immediately. Ilya rolls his eyes.

Maybe I will have to find something else to bite, he sends, and Shane's dots pop up and vanish three times. Ilya locks the screen and goes to lift weights.

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It's weird, Hollander wanting to meet up here. Hollander belongs to the other part of his life, the part of his life where Ilya is foreign, some kind of stateless person shepherded around under the nations of Boston & the NHL. He doesn't belong here, in Ilya's land, never mind they're a long way from Moscow. Ilya came here once as a child on vacation with his mother and brother, two weeks in August where his mother stood rotating like a shawarma on the beach, bronzing her skin and chain-smoking. He and Alexei made friends with the other kids on the beach, locals and vacationers, whose mothers looked like his but had their men with them, barrel-chested and reddening slowly in the summer sun, and who avoided Ilya's mother as if they'd catch something from her. With the other kids they ran in and out of the water all day and up onto the boardwalk where Alexei had befriended some of the busboys at a seafood joint, and in exchange for packs of plush cigarettes they lifted from their mother they brought out mussels and oysters to snack on. Ilya didn't like that arrangement or stealing from his mother, was frightened of the cooks who came out back to smoke grimly on their breaks, big men with hard hands who cursed in a rough dialect he didn't quite understand, sheltered boy that he was then. Alexei was fourteen and pissed he was stuck watching an eight-year-old all day, but Ilya's mother shooed him away when he went to go hang around her instead, her eyes on the fit young men playing foot volley or paddleball in the sand.

Ilya hasn't thought about that in years, but when Hollander texts him later that night to ask if he's busy he remembers the sand at night and the choppy waves, the stink of refuse from the restaurants' dinner rush, Alexei's teeth gleaming around a cigarette in the half-light from the streetlamp. Ilya up on the chained-off lifeguard stand, swinging his legs off the side while the smoke and laughter from Alexei and his friends drifted up. Their mother back in their hotel

with one of the foot volley men from the beach, the sound of her laughter from the hotel bar and the clink of ice cubes as she swirled her glass, his hand on her bared thigh.

Yeah, he remembers that. Sends Shane a pin, slaps his thighs, stands up and announces to the room at large, "I have a meeting. Skate at 9:30 tomorrow and if anyone's hungover we're doing bag skates. Tell everyone."

Some halfhearted grousing from his teammates. Ilya probably doesn't really have that much say over practice, but half of gaining power is pretending you already have it. These guys will be fine anyway, mostly young guys too earnest to go out, playing ping-pong in the Team Russia house lobby. They'll listen to him, their captain who's supposed to win it for them on home ice, but they won't be able to help him do it. Ilya swipes a condom from the IOC-provided bowl by the door, and then swipes another one. The kids on his team are barely even speaking to each other back in the game room. He shoves open the door and heads out.

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Hollander turns up to his pin looking hot under the collar. He starts to smile when he sees Ilya, but remembers the hill Ilya just made him climb and frowns again. Like an infuriated kitten.

"Good evening," Ilya tells him in Russian, just to be an ass.

Hollander frowns harder, and then says, "Where the fuck are we?"

"Sochi," Ilya tells him, and holds up one hand when Hollander opens his mouth to complain. "I show you. This is for, um." Fuck. He hasn't spoken English in almost a month; it always leaves him when he comes home. "Maintenance? For park."

"Why the fuck," Shane starts to complain, but Ilya jerks his head and he shuts up and follows. It's twenty meters at most to their destination, but in the dim night and over the rocks it feels like a minute, and Ilya thinks he's gotten it wrong until the little clapboard hut pops out around a corner, exactly like it was fifteen years ago.

Almost exactly. The door is missing, and someone's tacked up a torn canvas sheet over the doorway instead, but other than that it's just like it was when he and Alexei found it that summer, tucked away in the rocky promontory between beaches below the nature park, completely hidden from all sides. Three shitty walls and an open side facing the sea, the lingering smell of cigarettes, empties from kids hiding out here, plastic milk crates upturned to sit on. Classic.

"Creepy as fuck," Hollander comments, but without much effort, Ilya turns to look at him. Obviously he's thinking about something else, is shifting his weight from foot to foot. Ilya licks his lips, a little slowly, and Hollander's dark glinting eyes flick to his mouth. You couldn't call the night dark, with all the stadium lights ablaze and the new road lights laid out for the hundreds of thousands of visitors all swarming on the city, it's like the drive into Las Vegas false daylight from the desert. Ilya looks out across the Black Sea and thinks of Istanbul, maybe, Greece, beyond it, where they don't watch hockey and there's no ice to play it on, island after island of carefree drunken tourists gleaming, tanned and shirtless on the

decks of sailboats, eating grilled octopus against the jeweled Mediterranean. Ilya's never been.

"Rozanov," Shane says from behind him, sounding hesitant. "Are you good? Only, I'm thinking maybe you did bring me here to kill me," and this is where they are, so Ilya says teasingly:

"This you try to joke?" Wildly incorrect, but the love of God he can't remember it right now. He apologizes mentally to the Boston English tutor, and steps up into Shane's space instead. "I bring you for something else."

Shane takes half a breath, his chest shuddering against Ilya's. He's lost maybe four or five pounds in the past couple months, Ilya calculates, the jut of his collarbone is a little sharper, his jaw a bit more pronounced. He smells like travel shampoo and the brackish air and Shane Hollander.

He delays more, for whatever incomprehensible reason. Ilya doesn't understand him: they only text to meet up to fuck, they've never met for anything besides sex, and yet Hollander wants to do this dance anyway. He says, "Oh yeah? What did you bring me for," like that, without any inflection, like it's not a question.

Ilya doesn't have a lot of time, he has to help run practice tomorrow, needs to make it back to the house before the guys that went out do, maintain some credibility as the captain. But he can play the game. "Diplomacy, Hollander."

That earns him half a smile. "Diplomacy?"

Ilya nods, serious. "You are like. Foreign, um." Dignitary, but he can't remember the English word if he ever knew it. "Ambassador. For losing team Canada. I have national, ah, responsibility to, ah, welcome you in--in Russia." He sounds like a five year old with a stutter.

Shane glances around at the little hut. "This is where you welcome your international ambassadors? How do you even know about this place?" and okay, enough, Ilya thinks, they don't need to get into it, and grabs Shane's chin with one hand.

It's like a charm, how immediately he shuts up. Ilya still can't quite believe it. He runs his thumb over Hollander's lips, pulls their faces together for a kiss. Hollander's mouth is hot, familiar, the taste of him, the little sigh he makes into Ilya's lips. Good.

Ilya pulls back when Hollander starts getting antsy, pressing their bodies closer together, his fingers knotted in the hem of Ilya's shirt. He's all the way hard already in his sweats. His eyes are still shut, his face comfortably in Ilya's hand as Ilya considers what to do.

He isn't sure suddenly. Alexei brought girls here, a few times that summer, and Ilya remembers skipping rocks in the evening down below while they giggled, stumbled out of the little place fixing their long hair and tugging their little skirts down, ignoring Alexei's kid brother. The thought of it disgusts him now, his brother's heavy-boned hands, drunken teen groping with local girls amidst the shattered bottles and ballpoint graffiti. Shane isn't like that, standing obediently still with his warm gaze on Ilya now, innocently eager in his

arousal. His bottom lip is red and plush, shining with spit. Ilya wishes they had a real bed, a real room, anything besides this dump, but there are too many eyes and too many cameras in the city, and he's the captain of Russia's national team. It isn't possible.

Shane doesn't seem to mind, parts his mouth easily to coax his tongue around Ilya's thumb, sucking it into the heat of his mouth. His teeth graze the thin skin where it joins Ilya's hand, just barely.

Ilya reaches down with his other hand to palm Hollander through his sweats. Christ, but he's hard, blood-hot even under the fabric, and his mouth opens around Ilya's thumb to moan, a little noise that makes Ilya's body blaze with fierce light suddenly. He puts his mouth on Hollander's neck, kisses the skin there, open-mouthed, and gets another tiny moan.

More, thinks Ilya, Let me hear you, the lighting's dim and the traffic noise and the slap of the waves will cover everything, he wants Hollander to cry out with it. He pulls up Hollander's shirt, manhandles him back so he's sitting on a crate, his legs spread, and drops to his knees. Hollander makes a startled noise, but Ilya doesn't care, gets a fist around his waistband and tugs, freeing his dick and trapping his legs.

The weight of him in Ilya's mouth--ah, it's been a minute, hasn't it, they've gotten into other habits, but fuck, it's good. The taste, that intimate musk of him, like a bottle of concentrated Shane Hollander, it'd sell for thousands, Ilya thinks, and Shane's hand slips into his hair and tugs. It goes through Ilya like a shock, he digs his nails into Shane's hip, and Shane's head falls back against the boards.

Ilya sucks him, merciless, the noise of it obscene in the night, until Hollander's hips are jerking up helplessly into his restraining hand.

It's not like this with anyone else. Ilya's a big man, an athlete; Hollander obeys him but when he starts to lose his grip Ilya has to fight for it, physically, has to use all his strength to keep him still, like grappling a tiger, a bear. He pulls off to tease, breathes hotly down the thick length of Hollander's dick, lets his finger trace searing lines over Hollander's balls and press into the secret flesh behind them, and Hollander gasps, chokes out, "Fuck, Rozanov, goddamnit," Ilya's last name in his flat Canadian accent.

"Hollander," he sings quietly, the vein at the base of Shane's dick pulsing against his encircling fingers. "Tell me what you want, Hollander."

He squeezes Hollander, just once, runs his tongue firmly up the vein and over the slit, flutters around the head, and there it is, finally, wrung out of him: Hollander moans out loud, drawn out, and says, "You--I, uh," Ilya twists his wrist, once, twice, another gasp, a whimper, "You, oh God, to fuck me."

"No," says Ilya, and spits on his dick, saliva running over his own hand, and Hollander says, "oh, *God*," so desperately it sounds like a sob.

Ilya swallows all of him down as a reward, bobs his head and lets Hollander's dick hit the back of his throat. Hollander writhes under him, Ilya shoves his hips back fiercely, and he cries out, groans, half a sob, "Fuck, Il- Rozy, I'm--," a long breathless noise, and Ilya tastes

come flooding his mouth, the bitter salty earth of it for what seems like a long time as Hollander's abs clench, his hips stutter. He swallows it down, sucks again, and Hollander jerks below him.

When he starts flinching back from Ilya's mouth Ilya pulls off, strokes his fingers firmly down Hollander's bare hip. He presses a kiss to the jut of his hipbone; maybe more like six pounds, Hollander's abs flutter and his waist is so narrow in Ilya's hands.

"Jesus Christ," Shane says, his voice drugged. He draws one slender wrist over his eyes and blinks down at Ilya. "I think I saw the light."

"All right, Hollander," Ilya tells him, pulling the sweats back up so he can put his chin on Shane's thigh. "I know I am good. You will make my head big."

Shane grins at him. "You don't need my help with that." He chucks Ilya under the chin, gentle. "Come up here."

He pulls Ilya up alongside him, sits him down, his eyes on Ilya's. Ilya puts his hand on the back of Shane's neck and lets himself be drawn out of his Adidas warmups, jerked off slowly in Shane's warm spit-slicked hand, until he's about to come and his hand tightens involuntarily on Shane's nape. Shane humms idly, leans over and wraps his lips around Ilya, head bent over his lap as if in prayer, and Ilya comes into that sweet heat, hand over his own mouth.

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"So how *do* you know about this place?" he asks after. They're sitting out front facing the sea, which is restless, waves slapping the rocks.

Ilya runs a hand through his hair. "I come here, uh, with my family. As child."

Shane hums noncommittally. "We had something like this. Cottages on a lake, in Canada, usually."

What would that have been like, Ilya wonders. Just Shane and his two parents, his dad flipping hamburgers on the grill. His mom--Ilya can't imagine her outside of Shane's hockey life. Reading, maybe, watching the stars with her arm around a small Hollander at her side.

His own mother would have cooked, not real meals, the little snacks she knew Ilya liked. Alexei should have taught him how to fish, or something. His imagination fails him. His family would never have known how to spend a vacation at a cottage. When they came back from running wild with Alexei's bad friends that summer the hotel room would smell of stale smoke and what Ilya now knows was sex, and their mother would get out of the shower and pull Ilya to her in the king bed to watch old movies. Romance movies, sweeping shots of Europe, 90s crime capers, or really old shit, Chapaev, Soviet-era earnestness. She'd mock them all ruthlessly, ironically, Ilya snuggled at her side, not understanding, but with her hand in his hair and her body warm and familiar against him.

"You have cousins, Hollander?" he asks. "Or just you?"

“A couple.” Shane’s awkward again, maybe beginning to wonder why they’re still out here. Eight minutes: that’s how long before Ilya must take his leave and get a city bike on the beach road to go back to the house. “But they live in Vancouver. Just me, mostly.”

“My brother and I find this, uh--here,” Ilya says, jerking a thumb over his shoulder at the hut.

He can hear the smile in Shane’s voice. “Oh yeah? Your secret hideout? Summer adventures?”

Ilya laughs without meaning to. Secret hideout, for Alexei to smoke with the older kids, pass around a bottle, his genius for talking, making deals, bargains with people. Ilya off to the side, forgotten except for entertainment, sometimes, lobbed questions he knew he could only answer to make them laugh. “Da. Yes. Not so much like that. I was young.”

Shane doesn’t understand, obviously. Ilya wonders, sometimes, what Shane does understand. A cruel thought, but he can’t help it: Shane’s world is so narrow, so rigid. Hockey since he was a child, his house in the suburbs his parents have probably owned since he was born, no siblings, his mother running his whole life for him.

What does he know, what could Ilya possibly convey to him in his shitty, restrictive English, about what it’s like, running around Moscow when you’re a teenager skipping school for the first few times, tie and blazer shoved in your bag, drinking shitty beers at the bus stop and laughing over dice. What it’s like as a kid, games of street hockey, making bets, winning girls, everything a game and a fight. Oh, Ilya misses it but mostly doesn’t, but he can’t say any of it to Hollander anyway. Let him be the foreigner for once.

He stands up, offers Hollander his hand. “I have to, I think. Go back. Be captain.”

Hollander’s eyes curve in a little smile. “That’s right. Big man.” He stands up so they’re chest to chest again, his hand still in Ilya’s. He gives it a little squeeze. “Good luck.”

“See you in final,” Ilya tells him. Shane ducks his head and turns away towards the other beach, and the Olympic Village.

Ilya watches him go for a moment. His hood up, his hands shoved in his sweatpants pockets until he wobbles on the rock and has to put a hand out for balance. His off-brand sneakers, carefully not the sponsored and exclusive Reeboks.

A siren passes on the beachfront road, then a busful of what sounds like German partygoers, their voices carrying in the night. Ilya turns away and toward Team Russia house. Practice tomorrow morning, then the day after they play Latvia. He should be resting.

## End Notes

1. Sochi (via Google Earth) appears to have mostly sandy nice beaches and no rocky bits. I made it up for convenience.
2. I refer to Shane as both Shane and Hollander deliberately because they've made love, not just fucked at this point, but things are about to kind of fall apart. Ilya's not sure if he's got a foot in or not (he does). Hope this does not cause confusion.
3. I know hockey at the Olympics is group stage followed by eliminations, and I was going to try to be faithful, but actually Russia never even played Latvia because they got knocked out by Canada. Sorry to Ilya and Co. but they're about to suffer and even more embarrassing first-game exit. Ouch!

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