meet me in the afterwards

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by 17o2585

Summary

Many people have started turning their heads at the commotion. Ilya's half sure it's just another drunken brawl, a frequent byproduct of stupidity and poorly held liquor— but Svetlana, who is sitting angled towards whatever is happening, squints her eyes. Surprise splashes across her face. "*Podozhdite.* Isn't that Hollander?"

Later, when he finds Shane outside on the curb, Ilya says, "What the fuck."

"I'm half Japanese," Shane replies like it explains everything and like he didn't just deck a man flatly out. "My mom put me in Karate when I was little. What that guy said wasn't right, and he initiated it, so."

or: hollander gets into a bar fight. rozanov tends to his wounds afterwards

Notes

so im actually writing this from a hotel room in vegas. hmmm maybe will a hot russian girl will show up soon??? (no such luck)

See the end of the work for more notes

“Hollander.”

“Rozanov.”

“We meet again,” Rozanov continues, tone perfectly neutral, if not bored. “You are out tonight instead of preparing to get your ass kicked tomorrow?”

Hollander glances at the bartender, holding his ginger ale. His lips quirk just enough that it’s unreadable to the public but readable for Rozanov. “Hayden and JJ wanted to grab a couple beers,” he says. He lifts his can. “But you know.”

Rozanov reads the *you know* as *you know me. You know me and you keep ginger ale in your fridge for me.*

He wills his eyes to reply, *yes, I know you.* “Ah. I am with Svetlana, my friend from Russia.”

“That’s nice. Well, I’ll see you on the ice?”

“Yes. Will see you.”

Rozanov lingers at the bar for a moment longer, waiting for his and Svetlana’s drinks to be made. Of course, he had asked for a straight double shot of vodka, but Svetlana’s cocktail was more… elaborate. The description had read smoked cinnamon, whatever that meant.

“Here you go,” the bartender says, sliding over the drinks. “You know, I just wanted to say, I’m a big fan. Being able to make your drink is an honor.”

Rozanov smiles. “You want a picture?”

“It’s okay. Our place is strictly no photos or videos, remember?” She shrugs. “The policy’s there for y’all. Privacy and discretion, because I’m sure you get plenty of cameras shoved into your faces on the daily.” She pauses. “Although, if you’re offering… Would you be able to sign my shirt?”

“*Da,*” Rozanov replies as he grabs the marker from her. “Yes, I remember. That is why I come here so often. It is peaceful.”

Many nights, Svetlana and Rozanov do not converse, and instead sit in silence, enjoying each other’s company. They’ve been friends for longer than they have not— Rozanov does not remember a time in his life where she is not there.

Though he’s cut his ties with his brother, and in extension Russia, Svetlana has not. Her father is a supportive man. He is gentler than what Rozanov’s father was— as a famous

hockey player, he was a pleasant man to Rozanov, sometimes even doting.

“Sasha asks about you,” Svetlana says.

Rozanov purses his lips, shrugging lightly. “Tell him I am well.”

“*Da,* I did. I will see him in a couple weeks, when I go back to Russia.”

Behind them, there’s the unmistakable sound of voices heating up. A chair scrapes. A man starts yelling.

Many people have started turning their heads at the disturbance. Rozanov’s half sure it’s just another drunken brawl, a frequent byproduct of stupidity and poorly held liquor— but Svetlana, who is sitting angled towards the commotion, squints her eyes. Surprise splashes across her face. “*Podozhdite.* Isn’t that Hollander?”

Rozanov whips his head around. It is. It’s Hollander, *fucking Hollander,* standing in front of the goddamn man. Hollander has his hands up placatingly, but he looks angry. His cheek is stricken red. There’s a bright red gash, a singular stream of blood dripping from it. The man stumbles, jabbing his finger into Hollander’s space.

Rozanov gets up. He crosses half the distance with large, striking steps, before,

“Fuckin’ *oriental!*” The man shouts, swinging his fist.

Except he doesn’t land it, because Hollander grabs his wrist, twists, and kicks the man square in the stomach. He staggers backwards. Something eerie washes over Hollander’s expression — a mix of poorly concealed calm and sheer disgust. He touches his cheek, grimacing when the blood transfers onto his fingers.

“Cut this bullshit,” Hollander hisses at the man. “Walk away.”

“Fuckin’ *cunt*,” the man replies, and like the idiot he is, gathers himself with a running start and lifts his leg. Stupid decision, Rozanov thinks, because has he seen hockey? Hockey players? “Fuckin’ *bitch!*”

Hollander dodges, shifts his weight, and then punches the man flat out. This time, the man groans from where he’s sprawled on the ground, making no move to get up.

Rozanov crosses the rest of the distance, glaring at the man on the ground as he does. Before he can get a word in to Hollander, another voice booms. “That’s enough.” It’s the bouncer. “Sir, I am so sorry. Another patron let us know what he said and that he hit you first. We will take him from here.”

Hollander nods tightly. Rozanov catches the tremor in his spine. He’s barely able to refrain from reaching out.

“Hollander,” he murmurs, just quiet enough for him.

“Not here,” Hollander replies, voice taut. “Too many eyes.”

They watch as the bouncers drag the limp man out of the club. Another bouncer offers to lead Hollander away into the back to ask him some questions and give him a private place to clean up. Hollander exhales, and though the tension in his body doesn't dissipate, it wills his focus in. Rozanov twitches at the blood dribbling down the top curve of his cheek, mouth pulling into a frown. Hollander agrees, following the bouncer.

Rozanov's glad it doesn't seem like he's in trouble. Physical repercussions of bar fights are one thing, but legal repercussions are another. They're lucky they're in a place where no one could've gotten a video of it.

"He's feisty," Svetlana says, appearing behind him. "He has a good punch."

Rozanov nods appraisingly. "Yes. Good technique."

"His cheek was bleeding."

"Da." This time, it comes out jolted. An inkling of worry seeps out into his tone.

"Ilyushenka. I am sure he will be fine to play tomorrow. You hockey players are resilient." Her eyes sparkle. "And I know that playing him is your favorite thing."

Rozanov does not know what to say. He settles on, "I do not deserve you."

"Go," she says. "Be with him. I will leave now anyway."

"Do skorogo, Sveta."

"Poka."

He waits at the bar. At some point, the bartender, that girl from earlier, comes over. "Can I get you something else?"

"Do you have ginger ale?"

"Of course." She reaches into a cabinet and draws out a can, scooping some ice into a cup. The ginger ale fizzes as it's poured into a cup, foaming up at the top. "Here."

He brings the cup to his mouth, taking a sip. His nose wrinkles. "This is very ginger. Spicy."

She laughs, nodding. "Yeah. Canada Dry's a lot more mild, it's the one you'd mainly associate with ginger ale. It has a fuckton more sugar, so it's more palatable."

Rozanov eyes the can. He takes another sip, "I like this one. But I do not like it also."

"That's valid."

In the corner of his eye, he sees a familiar bout of dark hair make his way towards the door. He drops cash enough to cover the can and a hefty tip, waits a couple seconds, and then takes the rest of the can.

He finds Hollander sitting outside on the curb on the far side, where there's no foot-traffic. "What the fuck, Hollander."

"I'm half Japanese," Hollander replies flatly and like it explains everything. "My mom put me in Karate when I was little." He huffs, tugging a hand into his hair, elbows on his knees. "What that guy said wasn't right, and he initiated it, so."

"What did he say?"

Hollander laughs, but nothing about the sound reads amused. "He was racist, Ilya. Hayden and JJ had left already, but I decided to stay for a little bit, because—" *you were there* "—I don't know. I just wanted to. And then the guy was sitting next to me and started saying all sorts of things. I let him be at first, cause he was absolutely fucking wasted, but then he started saying shit about JJ, and then about me." His voice drops at the end, "And then he tried to scratch my goddamn face. His fucking ring cut me."

Ilya's never this shift in Hollander's tone, one that's downright pessimistic, cynical. If they weren't in public, Ilya would've sat down next to him and pressed the ginger ale into his hands, letting their fingers brush. He would've rubbed his thumb under Hollander's cheek, leaned in and kissed the cut better.

Instead, he hands Hollander the ginger ale and says, "Drink."

"Thank you."

"I tried some, by the way. It is too spicy. I like sugar." Hollander snorts. He lowers his voice to a murmur barely there, "The cut. I will clean it. Come in different taxi."

Hollander nods. "Okay," he says.

The relief of privacy is a welcome one. Ilya's place is lowly lit and warm. Hollander goes and sits down on the edge of his bed. Ilya inspects his cheek. "I will go get supplies," he says.

"Thanks."

He grabs rubbing alcohol, a couple of cotton balls, ointment, and a bandage. Hollander groans. "I'm going to look stupid, with a bandage on my face."

Ilya rolls his eyes, coming to sit in front of him. "You're a hockey player. You will live."

“I guess.” He hesitates, lips twitching the way it always does when he’s bracing himself to say something suggestive, “Will I still be pretty?”

Ilya laughs, delighted. “You will still be pretty. This will sting.”

Hollander winces as Ilya dabs the alcohol soaked cotton ball on his cheek. Reflexively, because of a mix of the smell of alcohol being so close to his nose and the sting, his eyes tear up.

“You’re okay, Shane. I’ve got you.”

“I know,” Shane whispers, and it’s supposed to mean nothing, but it means *everything*.

Ilya does his best to be quick with it. In distraction, he offers, “You are a good fighter. Good technique.”

“Thank you.”

“You are a black belt?”

“Yes.” Shane winces again as Ilya presses the cotton ball harder. Ilya murmurs an apology. “My mom put me in Karate when I was young. She went— *ouch*— and enrolled me in the most traditional studio she could find in the area. Just—*fuck*— to, you know, have me remain in touch with my heritage— *ow. Shit!*— and didn’t let me quit classes until I was a black belt. Not that I wanted to, though. My Sensai— *ow*— was a great guy. He taught me a lot. It helped me in hockey, too. It taught me how to play aggressive safely, if that makes sense. How to focus.”

“*Da,*” Ilya murmurs. “That makes sense.”

As he unfolds the bandage, Shane lets out a surprised noise, and then stops, zeroing in on it. He doubles over, forehead resting on Ilya’s shoulder. His body racks.

“What is so funny,” Ilya says, amused, though he damn well knows the answer. He rubs his arms around Shane’s back, back and forth, up and down. And then he traces a heart, and thinks, *I’m fucked*.

“Sofia the First? Seriously?”

“I do not know what this is.”

“The bandage. It’s Sofia the First.”

“I still do not know what this is.”

“Did you buy these?”

Ilya’s lips upturn. “Yes. It was cute. When I get hurt, I get to see a princess. Not bland skin color print.”

Shane's grinning like it's the funniest thing he's ever had the privilege of witnessing, eyes radiating warmth. Ilya, unable to stop himself, presses him in a kiss, continuing to tracing shapes on his back. Shane exhales, melting against him. "I know how to throw a punch, and it comes in handy, but that doesn't mean I throw myself into fights."

Ilya's chest rumbles against his. "You should," he says, eyes twinkling. "It was hot."

"Seriously?"

"Oh, yes," Ilya replies, grazing his teeth over Shane's ear. He nips at it. "You looked like angry little *kotenok*. If we weren't in public, I would've started cheering for you. And maybe kiss you too after you won."

"*Maybe* kiss me?"

Ilya smiles with his teeth, kisses him, and says, "*Maybe* yes."

Shane exhales when they part, busying his hands by straightening the collar of Ilya's shirt. "Well, that's one good thing to come out of it, I guess."

"What do you mean?"

"I hated that."

After a moment of silence to digest his statement, Ilya pauses. "Does it happen a lot?"

"Does what?"

"The hate."

"Oh," Shane replies. "For me personally, no. It's usually more… quiet. Bias comes out in small ways. Sometimes, during chirps, someone will say something flat out racist towards me, but I can't do much about it, because people say that's the game." He shakes his head, eyes twisting. "One time someone said, *can you even see the puck?* I didn't even realize it until after the game, because I never actually think about what the other person's saying while playing."

"Svetlana talks about this," Ilya replies. "Russia is very traditional. She is mixed. She has dealt with comments. What is the word? Prejudice? I am sorry you have to experience that.

"It's okay."

"No, it's not." Ilya kisses Shane's cheek underneath where the pastel pink Sofia the First bandage is. "Are you hurt anywhere else?"

"No, not really. My fist is a little red, though."

"Let me see."

"You know," Shane murmurs. "I want to meet her."

“Who?”

“Svetlana. She seems like a great person. A great friend to you.”

Ilya smiles. “Yes. She is. I owe her a lot.”

Silence drifts between them as Ilya tends to his fist. It’s not nearly as bad, but he gives it the same amount of time, care. When he finishes, he keeps holding that hand, squeezing. Shane closes his eyes, drawing forward so that he’s leaning on his shoulder, free arm looping itself around Ilya’s waist.

Maybe minutes, maybe hours have passed. It’s hard to tell.

Eventually, Shane blinks up. “I appreciate you, Ilya,” he says. “Thank you.”

Ilya smiles amusedly. “Anytime.”

“Why’re you laughing?”

“I am not.”

“You are.”

“I am not. I am simply admiring you.” When Shane huffs, cheeks coloring for a reason *other* than a cut, Ilya presses his mouth at his ear. “And Sofia.”

“Asshole.”

End Notes

as an asian american, i wanted to explore some instances where being half-asian shows up in shane's life. of course, this is not to say that every individual has the same experiences, but growing up, my parents enrolled me in a lot of cultural dances, martial arts, etc. as they sought to have me preserve/be educated on information, arts, culture of their home country. i can see that happening for shane, especially with the way yuna's character is shaped.

i love hearing your thoughts :) comments are always appreciated <3

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