

i can't hide from you (like i hide from myself)

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by [princebutt](#)

Summary

“Who’s got you blushing like that, Shane Hollander?”

Shane’s gaze shoots up and his brain short-circuits, going completely blank with any good answer other than the truth – Ilya Rozanov makes me giggle like a lovesick fool. Shit.

“Uhh, my mom?” Terrible answer. What the fuck, Hollander?

“You’re a terrible liar, my friend,” Rose points out as she smirks and watches him carefully.

OR, Shane comes clean about his relationship with Ilya to Rose Landry.

Notes

Hello my loves!! Shane and Rose friendship is my passion and this was honestly such a blast to write! They are just the sweetest friends, tbh. Hope you enjoy!

Shane loves playing in LA. Between the sun and the warmth, and getting to see Rose if she's in town, Los Angeles has fast risen up the ranks of cities he enjoys coming to.

The Voyageurs get into LA early in the morning, with an afternoon practice and an evening game. But they don't fly out until the afternoon the day after, so Shane has arranged for brunch with Rose before the flight. That hasn't kept her from trying to convince him to go out with her and a few coworkers tonight, post game.

Rose: Come out with us. It will be fun. Miles is here 😊

Shane: I really shouldn't. I'm not drinking right now and you know I'm already incredibly awkward at clubs with alcohol in my system. Can you imagine without??

Rose: Booooo. You're no fun.

Shane: I'll see you at brunch tomorrow 🙄

Practice goes well, and Shane is happy with how the team looks for tonight's game. They're on a winning streak, having just come from Vancouver where they'd won, and before that a home game they'd also won. He intends to keep that up.

Something in him feels some guilt over their winning streak, considering how poorly Ilya's first season with the Centaurs is going. They'd talked on the phone last night after both of them had games, in which Shane had been victorious, but Ilya and the Centaurs had lost spectacularly. The fact that Ilya had moved for *Shane* still makes him giddy with that knowledge, but Shane wishes he could have gone to a better team.

Ilya will *make* them better, Shane reminds himself. He has full faith in Ilya's ability as a player and a captain to turn around the fate of the Centaurs.

The game that night goes well, and even though Shane is three hours ahead of Ilya, Ilya still picks up when Shane calls him. When he hears Ilya's voice roughed with sleep and finally sees his face pop up on the screen of his phone, Shane feels giddy with the way his stomach swoops. He hopes Ilya never stops having this effect on him.

"How was the game, sweetheart?" Ilya asks, cheek pressed into a pillow, curls tousled over his forehead. His eyes are squinting from the brightness of the screen, and Shane pushes his glasses further up the bridge of his nose as he crosses his legs at the ankle on his bed.

"Good, it went well," Shane says, his voice gently hushed. "Hayden is in the shower, so I thought..." with a shrug, Shane bites his lower lip and sighs. "I miss you."

It's been almost two weeks since Shane got to see Ilya, to hold him and kiss him and tangle his fingers through those curls. Two weeks seems like no time at all and also all of the time in the world, and Shane worries his lip between his teeth as Ilya brushes hair from his eyes (it's getting long and that drives Shane *crazy*) and adjusts, turning on the bedside lamp so Shane can see him better.

“I miss you, too,” Ilya promises. A whisper of a smile tugs at his lips, and he braces himself up on one arm. “Saw that goal in the third period, impressive stuff, Hollander.”

Shane’s cheeks flush at the praise and he shrugs, then picks at the comforter. “It wasn’t anything special,” Shane sighs, and his eyes flicker up to meet Ilya’s through the screen.

“You are always special, moya lyubov.” And, *oh*. That does things to Shane.

This isn’t new. They’ve known each other for so many years, and have been together in an official capacity for close to a year and a half. But somehow Shane still finds himself reduced to a puddle of emotions when it comes to Ilya.

The shower shuts off and Shane sighs. “I should go, Hayden is finishing up in the bathroom.”

A frown tugs at Ilya’s lips and he nods. “But he knows, yes?”

“He does, but –” The bathroom door opens and Hayden steps out in a towel. His nose wrinkles as he sees Shane on the phone, and he gestures.

“Yuna?” He mouths, and Shane shakes his head, fighting off a little grin.

This, of course, makes Hayden roll his eyes. Which makes Shane scoff. Which makes Ilya chime in.

“Hello, Hayden!”

“It’s still weird,” Hayden says as he moves over to his side of the room and rummages through his suitcase. Shane rolls his eyes and sighs.

“Is nothing weird about it,” Ilya argues, and Shane pushes his glasses back up the bridge of his nose.

“I think it’s time to go before you two start fighting,” Shane says mildly, because Hayden’s mouth was open and ready to run.

“Fine, fine,” Ilya says as he rolls his own eyes, and Shane goes a little soft for him, because even his frustration does things to Shane. “Will you see Rose tomorrow?” Ilya asks, and Shane nods.

“We’re getting brunch. No, you can’t come Hayd.”

“I wasn’t going to ask!” Hayden says, hurt expression on his features as he tugs on a shirt.

“You *always* ask,” Shane points out, and Hayden pouts further as Ilya snickers.

“You are married anyway, Hayden,” Ilya points out. “And I do not think Rose Landry would like to fuck you. Too blond.”

“Oh, fuck you, Rozanov,” Hayden says as he flips up his middle finger.

“He can’t see you,” Shane points out with a small laugh, and Hayden rolls his eyes.

“I’m gonna go down and see what JJ and the guys are up to, since I’m just getting *bullied* here,” Hayden says. He’s fully dressed now, and leaves the hotel room, pulling the door shut a little harder than necessary.

“Can’t you just be nice to him?”

“Was just being honest,” Ilya points out, and Shane rubs a hand over his eyes and sighs.

“Honesty isn’t always best,” Shane mumbles, and Ilya’s grin grows even wider.

“You love me, though,” Ilya prods, and Shane acquiesces.

“I do. I love you so much, and I miss you.”

“I miss you and love you, too. Now I should go to bed.”

They say good night and Shane hangs up, feeling a tinge of loneliness in the pit of his chest. He wishes he didn’t have to be apart from Ilya so much. There’s no way they could ever play on the same team, but secretly he hopes and wishes for it.

For a little while Shane flips through TV channels and checks texts, shooting responses back to his parents about the game and one to Rose confirming the restaurant. Hayden comes back about thirty minutes later and they watch some shitty action movie for a little while. Finally, Shane’s exhaustion wins out. He tosses the remote to Hayden and crawls under the sheets, and is asleep before he knows what hit him.

The next morning, Shane wakes up and shaves, brushes his teeth, then changes into a stylist approved outfit – khaki slacks and a dusty blue button up, with a leather jacket over it. Ilya had about lost his damn mind the first time Shane had showed off the jacket, so he snaps a picture now and sends it to Ilya, who is, of course, already awake due to the time difference, and sends back a string of heart eye emojis.

Shane takes an uber to the restaurant, and is led back to a table that’s a little secluded in a corner. Only a few minutes after he sits and orders himself a black coffee Rose appears, looking perfectly done up, as always, and grinning brightly as she pulls Shane into a hug.

“God, it’s so good to see you in person and not just on my phone,” Rose sighs and settles herself into her seat. Her hair is pulled back and she looks casual and sleek, like she didn’t try at all, though Shane knows that’s hardly true.

“It’s good to see you, too,” Shane agrees with a grin over the lip of his coffee cup. He takes a long sip and sighs, happy to have some caffeine running through his bloodstream. “It’s been too long.”

“It really has,” Rose agrees with a grin. Shane’s phone vibrates in his pocket and he takes it out, looking down at his texts. When he sees the selfie of Ilya flashing a peace sign and

making a kissy face, backwards ballcap on his head and an Ottawa Centaurs sweatshirt on, Shane can't help the stupidly silly grin that dances across his lips.

One of Rose's eyebrows quirks up, and she orders a mimosa and iced latte, before resting her elbows on the table, threading her fingers together, and placing her chin in her hands.

"Who's got *you* blushing like that, Shane Hollander?"

Shane's gaze shoots up and his brain short-circuits, going completely blank with any good answer other than the truth – *Ilya Rozanov makes me giggle like a lovesick fool*. Shit.

"Uhh, my mom?" Terrible answer. What the fuck, Hollander?

"You're a terrible liar, my friend," Rose points out as she smirks and watches him carefully.

Shane should know better than to lie to Rose. Maybe they haven't been friends for long, but she's perceptive. Hell, she knew he was gay before *he* knew he was gay, and she was pivotal in his admission to himself. And to her.

And honestly, Shane is thankful for that. He's glad Rose hadn't dragged things out and made him come to terms with things on his own, but confronted him instead. He doesn't know how long it would have taken for him to come to realizations without her helping him along.

A small sigh leaves Shane's lips as he tucks his phone back into his pocket and sits back in his seat, meeting her gaze over her menu she's absolutely not reading.

"Shane Hollander, are you *in love*?"

God, yes. He's so in love that he doesn't know what to do with himself. And honestly, he's tired of pretending. He's tired of tucking this away into his pocket, like it's something he can only look at when he's alone. It's not like he's ready to come out publicly, but he wants the people who are important to him to know the truth. Hayden knows. His mom knows. Why shouldn't Rose?

"I... yeah. Yeah, I am." He admits it boldly, and the grin that spreads across his lips at letting that fly off of his chest is infectious. Rose's own smile grows as she leans forward, nose scrunching with giddiness.

"Oh. My. God." Rose reaches for his hand across the table and squeezes, grin still in place, eyes bright with her excitement for him. "Well! Spill! I want to know *everything*."

The waiter comes back, then, and they both order their food. Shane steeples his fingers and bites his lower lip, wondering how much to tell her.

"He's really hot," Shane starts with the easiest thing – how lucky he is to have the handsomest man in the NHL as his boyfriend. "Like, so hot Rose."

"I'd expect nothing less. You have taste," Rose says as she flicks a strand of hair over her shoulder.

Shane laughs and nods. “That’s true. I’m very picky,” he teases, and Rose laughs along with him.

“Okay, he’s hot. What does he do for a living? Did you find a hot male nurse??”

That question is harder, and Shane wonders how far he can skirt around the truth without lying. “He, uhh, is in the hockey... world.” Shane finishes lamely. He scratches at the back of his neck, a blush creeping up over his cheeks as he sips his coffee again.

“No shit? Is he like, a manager or something? That’s insane. Could you get in trouble for dating?”

As he fidgets with his napkin, Shane’s eyes dart down and he sighs softly. He’s fairly sure he could get in trouble if he and Ilya were exposed. He’s certain the NHL commissioner would not like that news dropping. But... “I mean... I could maybe lose my job over it,” he laughs weakly at distilling his career as an athlete down to a job he could lose. It always feels so much bigger than a job – it’s a lifestyle. And thinking about losing it terrifies Shane. “And I don’t think people would be happy if they knew.”

Rose chews on his words, and he can practically hear the gears turning in her head. “Does he *play* hockey? You’re not... he isn’t a team mate is he?”

Immediately, Shane shakes his head. He can answer that one easily enough. “No, he’s not affiliated with the Voyageurs,” Shane confirms. He sidesteps the first question and just prays she won’t notice.

“You’re such an asshole. What aren’t you telling me?” Rose asks as her eyes narrow.

Inhaling deeply, Shane makes a decision. Rose is safe. Rose knows the importance of secrecy and keeping private things private. She can be trusted, he knows that with certainty.

“It’s... uhh. Ilya. Rozanov.”

There’s a beat of silence, and Rose’s jaw *drops*. Comically. Shane tries to smother his smile but he can’t help it – just thinking about Ilya and him together, as a thing, an option, has him giddy again.

“*Shane Hollander*, you little shit!” Rose tosses her head back and laughs, a genuine and free thing. “How...? How! I have so many questions, oh my god.”

Shane ducks his head to hide his blush. “Oh my god, I shouldn’t have told you!”

“Bzzt, wrong! You should have told me like, as soon as it happened!” Rose says as she pushes at his shoulder. “This is *huge*, Shane.”

“I know! I know. But it’s super lowkey and secret, right? We can’t... no one can know, Rose.”

Rose mimics zipping her lips closed and throwing away the key over her shoulder. “Your secret is safe with me, babe. Ok, so when did this all... happen? After you and I broke up?”

She taps her forefinger against her lips then gasps. “Was it him?? When I asked you if you’d been with a man, was it *him*?”

With a groan, Shane covers his face in his hands. “Yeah, it was him,” Shane admits from behind his hands. Rose kicks her feet under the table, subsequently kicking him in the shins.

“Shane!” She whisper-screams, and Shane peeks from behind his hands to see her expression of pure joy.

“I know!”

They both burst into a fit of giggles, and Shane feels light with the freedom this admission has brought. Being able to tell someone everything, to really reminisce and open up about his relationship, is *amazing*. Hayden didn’t want to know the details, and Shane wouldn’t dare tell them to his parents. But he can be open and honest with Rose, and that makes him feel lighter.

“When did you first—??”

Biting his lip, Shane shrugs. “I was 19. A long time. I mean I haven’t been in love with him this whole time... or maybe I have and I just was so far in denial? Either way. It was just sex for a long time. We realized it was... more... after you. At least I did.”

Sipping at her mimosa, Rose nods and gestures for him to say more.

Shane inhales deeply again and presses on with the story of him and Ilya. “That All Star Game in Tampa really... changed things. For us. And sealed the deal for me, I guess. Then Scott Hunter went and kissed a man on television, and...” Shane shrugs weakly, and holds his palms up helplessly. “It gave us some hope. Ilya came to my cottage that summer and we worked up a plan.”

“So *that’s* why he moved to Ottawa.” Rose’s grin is sly and sneaky, and Shane nods once, his grin easy and dopey with how happy he is to be honest about this.

Telling the story of him and Ilya wasn’t necessarily something he thought he wanted to share with the world. But now that he’s here, chatting with a friend who genuinely cares about his happiness, it buoys him. Shane feels some of that weight lifted, like he can breathe a little deeper and live a little freer because of it.

“Who knows?” Rose asks, always getting right to the point. “I mean... not many people know, right? They can’t because...”

Shane shakes his head and sighs. “No, not many people know. Hayden and my parents. That’s it, for now. And you, obviously.”

The waiter comes by with their food then, and Shane takes a bite to distract himself. Rose is still looking at him thoughtfully, and she cocks her head as she takes a bite of her own.

“Can’t you just... come out? What would it hurt?”

As he chews on his food, Shane also chews on her words. Why *can't* they just come out? The reasons against coming out stack up high in his mind, but at the forefront – it could ruin their careers. And that right there was the biggest and scariest reason. Shane's not ready to be done with hockey. He's not ready to give up that part of his life, especially if he's forced out for loving who he loves. It's unfair, but that is what it is.

“It's not that simple, Rose. I don't think the league will like it. They thrive off of our rivalry, and we're supposed to hate each other. So... if they lost that, they might not need us anymore. Who knows if we'll be signed again, or if they'll drop our contracts. Boyfriends playing against each other? It's one thing with Hunter, his boyfriend isn't in the league. This is a whole different game we're playing.”

As those words sink in between the two of them, Shane pushes his eggs around on his plate and heaves a deep sigh. He feels the unfairness of it all so acutely, but he's not sure he's ready to make waves with some big announcement yet. They have their plan, and Shane does best when he can stick to plans. He thrives off of knowing the next move and making carefully calculated decisions. He's not ready to drop this bomb.

After sipping her mimosa, Rose shakes her head. “You should have at *least* told me when you came out to me,” she says, and while she doesn't sound *hurt*, she doesn't sound pleased. And he gets it, because... they are close. But they weren't then, not like they are now. She might not have understood. Who could have known how she would have reacted then? And he couldn't risk it. At that point, he and Ilya weren't *anything*. Shane just knew that he had real feelings for Ilya then, but he hadn't labeled them yet, and at that point he wasn't sure if he ever would.

“It wasn't... what it is now, then. Then we were still just fucking, as far as I knew. It was just sex for a long time, until it wasn't, and then...” Shane spreads his hands out helplessly, and meets Rose's gaze head on. Her lips are spread in an encouraging little smile, and Shane slumps into his seat as he runs a hand through his hair.

“God, I love him so much, Rose,” He murmurs to his eggs, eyes downcast, fingers playing with the handle of his fork. “Like, too much. I don't know what to do with these big feelings. And it's always only been him. I can't believe I was so stupid to ignore it for so long when it could have been like this sooner.”

Shane's never really said that to anyone. He's thought it for a while, he's rolled it around in his brain, let the idea percolate and settle until it was just his truth. But saying it out loud takes his breath away, makes him so aware of how much a part of him Ilya has become that to lose him would be like to lose a limb.

As Rose opens her mouth to reply the server stops over to refill their coffees and waters. Shane watches the young woman then looks back to Rose, with her bright smile of hope and her constantly shining optimism.

“I'm glad you two are happy. I just wish you didn't have to hide it,” she says as she takes his hand and gives it a squeeze.

“Me too,” Shane murmurs honestly.

They eat their food in silence for a moment, Shane ruminating on all the truths he just dropped and Rose watching him with an expression that is almost melancholic.

“I want the best for you, you know,” Rose murmurs as she taps her foot against his under the table.

Looking up, Shane meets her gaze. “He is the best for me,” Shane insists, and Rose cocks her head.

“Even if you two can’t go public?”

It’s stupid, but Shane feels a rush of indignation. The fact that Rose would question if he even knew what was best for himself stings, and he frowns, brow furrowing as he takes a bite of eggs and stops, gathers himself up, and thinks before he speaks.

“Yeah, Rose. I wouldn’t want it to be anyone else. It can’t be anyone else.”

And as if that seals the deal, Rose nods. “Okay. I trust you, Shane, to know what’s best for you.” She gives him a genuine grin, one that doesn’t make him feel like he’s being talked down to but rather respected, and he’s thankful for that. Thankful for her. It makes sense that she’d question this, but he’s glad that Rose respects when he stands up for himself.

“So, is he —” Rose looks around then holds her hands out, indicating a length. Shane immediately flushes and ducks his head, trying to hide his smile and his embarrassment.

“Oh my god, Rose.”

“Well! He’s such a cocky asshole. Does he live up to the hype?” She wiggles her eyebrows and Shane rolls his eyes.

“He’s... *very* well endowed,” Shane promises, his voice dropping low as his cheeks turn bright crimson. Rose scream laughs, and heads turn towards them, to which Shane holds up an apologetic hand. “Oh my god, could you *not* draw attention to us please?? I don’t need the whole world knowing!”

“Sorry! Sorry!” Rose laughs and brushes a strand of red hair behind her ear as she grins fondly at Shane. “I like this side of you, Shane,” She says as she takes a bite of french toast and sighs, sitting back in her chair. “Maybe he is good for you, after all.”

They finish their meal and Shane checks the time. He’s unhappy to find he’s got to rush back to the hotel, but he doesn’t leave without holding Rose close and wishing they lived closer. After a long hug they part, and Rose hurries off to her car, waving as she goes. She’s about to climb in when she stops, and looks back at Shane.

“Tell him I say hi. And I’m always watching,” Rose teases before climbing into the car as Shane rolls his eyes.

“I’ll see you soon!” Shane calls as he turns towards his own car.

He feels lighter, somehow, on the drive back to the hotel. Hayden knows. His family knows. Now Rose knows. And it wasn't a seismic shift. Nothing catastrophic happened when he came clean. Maybe it's not as scary as it seems, after all.

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