

## lover, come over

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# lover, come over

by [LArtemys](#)

## Summary

She's got her mouth open, too, ready to snap at him to leave, because Shane does not need this right now. He can come back, if he has to, when her son's less fucking vulnerable, high on painkillers and reeling from mood-swings; not that she thinks he will, which, good. Really, she's just about to, when Shane's voice sounds.

"Ilyaaaaa!" he lets out delightedly.

For another long moment, nobody moves.

Rozanov's face has contorted. His brows are furrowed and he's looking only at Shane. Is he confused? Yuna's pretty damn confused. Because—

"Il-yaaaaa!" Shane repeats, loud and sounding – ecstatic, really. Absolutely ecstatic.

Yuna stares at Shane's bruised face and tries, desperately, not to cry. She loves hockey, loves it with all her heart, is obsessed with Montreal and her son's career – but she hates it, too, when it leaves Shane broken, collapsed on the ice. It's not *okay*. It's never okay, seeing him there, helpless and hurt. It's even worse when she's not there.

Yuna and David had been at home when it'd happened. They'd put the game on in the background, as they were wont to do with all of Shane's games, and Yuna'd been ironing as David made dinner, the two of them talking lightly together about nothing much. It'd been perfect, really. Her younger self would never have thought it, but she lives for those quiet evenings with her husband, easy and calm, the smell of good food wafting through the house and the croon of the speaker in the background. A good night, she'd thought. Shane'd been on his A-game. In the face-off, he'd stolen the puck from Rozanov, and raced across the ice, and he looked like he was really, truly enjoying it. He'd been smiling. Yuna'd remarked on it.

Then, suddenly, silence.

Yuna'd looked up at the sudden hush. The audience's usually a constant white noise, the calling and hooting and booing merging together into one dull sound. The commentators remarked on every pass Shane made, especially tonight, when they were playing Boston. Silence was never – ever – good.

She hadn't known who it was at first. There was just a figure in a blue jersey, smashed onto the ice. She'd stood up, squinted. Was it Hayden? But no, *PIKE* was there, plastered on the back of the figure throwing himself onto the Boston player that'd caused the fall. Was it Gagnon? Then –

"And Shane Hollander's down!" the commentator had announced, and everything in Yuna went still.

Shane's been injured before, of course. It's hockey. Yuna'd been forced to cope with it ever since Shane was nine and first bowled over by one of the other players – bigger than him, bulkier than him, *always* more aggressive than him. He usually gets up, though. *He usually gets up*.

He doesn't this time.

After that, everything blurred into one. David had sprinted upstairs, and he'd grabbed the overnight bag that they'd never used, that was needed only for emergencies, and then he'd been down and Yuna'd remembered how to breathe again and they were in the car, rushing-rushing-rushing to where their son was, miles away, being carted off to hospital in Montreal.

They'd got there as soon as they could. It wasn't soon enough. But the doctor had calmed them, reassured them, told them, "Your son's alright, Mr and Mrs Hollander, he's just got a fractured collarbone and a mild concussion. Don't worry." Then he'd added, with a friendly grin, "He'll be out for the playoffs, though, I'm afraid." A Voyageurs fan. As if Yuna cared about the playoffs.—Shane would, though, she remembered, and told herself to give a brittle smile and thank him. She did.

She's here, now, sat at his bedside. It's not a familiar position, not like it would be for a lot of hockey families. Shane's just that good. Yuna's overwhelmingly glad it's not. She doesn't think she could cope if he got himself in here every season.

It's been a few hours since he'd first woken up, blinking dazedly at her and David, drugs pumping through his system to keep him relaxed and pain-free. It'd been startling, actually, the easy grin that slid onto his face when he'd spotted them. Shane'd smiled slow and smooth and genuine. It'd crinkled his eyes up and he'd been squinting, too, because of the bright lights, and he'd looked *happy*. Happy and loose in a way that made Yuna realise he was usually so, so tense; so, so stiff.

He'd been slow to wake. He'd shifted, and grumbled to himself, and Yuna and David had rushed to his bedside to be right there when he finally blinked himself to consciousness. His head flopped a bit, and he'd muttered something she couldn't quite make out that sounded like "*Ill-ya*," and repeated it over and over again. She still doesn't know what it means. He'd stopped saying it when he realised she and David were there, had quietened down and looked at her and then *beamed*. Then his grin had gotten smaller, regulating, but he'd greeted them in a soft, slurred voice, and very quickly gotten tired again and drifted off. That'd been around midnight, Yuna thinks, maybe later. David had exhaled and kissed her and gone off to book them a hotel for a couple days. Yuna couldn't bring herself to go with him. Because he knows her, and he loves her, and probably because he feels better if Shane has one of them there, he'd gone without protest. She'll join him tonight, she thinks. When Shane's been awake for more than just a few minutes.

She just sat with him, watching him breathe; she checks the clock and the heart-rate monitor every so often. She'd managed to get a few hours in around three a.m., crashing in the stiff armchair in the corner of the private room Shane's in, and she'd woke up again at half seven, her phone glaring in the dull dark of the room. One of the nurses must have switched the light off when they'd seen her asleep. Yuna's thankful.

Now, the little numbers on the screen say *08:47*. Visiting time's started. Not that anyone'll be by for a couple hours yet, thank God, because Yuna really can't deal with people right now. Except David. He should be here shortly too, the only saving grace. Him, she always wants by her side.

As if summoned by her thoughts, there's a gentle knock at the door, and it's pulled open. David walks in, circles under his eyes, but they're certainly not as bad as hers are bound to be. His expression softens when he looks at her, and she smiles a little helplessly.

"How's he doing?" he asks lowly.

"Alright, I think," she says honestly. "But –"

"It's never easy seeing him like this," David agrees.

Yuna lets out an exhausted sigh. "Yes," she says. "Yes. Nothing's changed since you left. He's just..."

They both turn to look at Shane. As if he senses eyes on him, he shifts, face scrunching up a little before it smooths back out. Yuna smiles again, unwittingly. She loves him *so much*. He's never liked eyes on him outside of hockey games; never liked touch, either. Yuna'd been surprised he'd coped so well with hockey, back when he first started. Now she knows better. Shane's made for hockey; ironically, sadly when she thinks too much about it, it's the love of his life.

There are bruises on his face, blossoming deep purple from where the helmet dug into his skin when he hit the ice. It makes him look fragile. Yuna sniffs a bit, and pushes those tears back again. David wraps a grounding arm around her shoulder, and she melts into him.

"Come on, love," he murmurs. "Go take a minute, clean up." He squeezes her gently. "There's a washroom down the hall, for visitors who've stayed the night."

Yuna nods. "Alright," she says softly. Shane's out. There's no need to speak quietly. They do anyway. "I'll be back."

She ducks out of the hospital room and heads down the corridor. A nurse spots her and, with a kind smile, indicates the washroom on the right. She must look a mess, then, Yuna thinks sardonically – then pushes the thought away, because the nurse was just being nice. She's in a mood. It's to be expected. The door swings open and she spots herself, pale in the mirror, messy-haired and haggard, and curses. It's a good release. Yuna *hates* looking rumpled, and she's exhausted, and stressed, and it feels necessary to let that escape a bit lest she explode.

The tap gushes water, and she finds a solid, lukewarm temperature. There are make-up remover pads in her handbag, and a make-up bag as well, and she finds herself relaxing at the familiar routine as she wipes her face and prepares to start anew. A thin layer of foundation, concealer for her under-eyes, some bronzer and contour; then, a light loop of eyeliner, and brown mascara, gently applied. Her heart-rate slows.

Yuna's a prepared person. She takes a toothbrush out of the bag, and relishes in ridding her mouth of a that disgusting sleep-taste.

Hairbrush, then, a few long strokes through her hair. The straight texture's one she can thank her ancestors for today; if she'd had waves or curls, she'd have started cursing anew. Another glance in the mirror proves her to be a new person. She looks like herself again, and she'd be lying if she said it's not an utter relief. Toilet, next, and then she's off back down the corridor, the nurse sending her a warm smile now she's seen how much better Yuna looks.

Nothing's happened. Of course it hasn't. Shane's still lying there, fast asleep, awfully vulnerable all hooked up to the wires and beeping machines. David's brought a book to read in the corner, some new murder mystery series he's obsessed with, and he looks up at her entrance, face going open in a smile once he sees it's her. She joins him silently.

"Feeling better?" he hums.

"A lot," she admits.

He doesn't tease her yet. "Love you," is the only reply.

"Love you, too," she says, meaning it with every atom in her body.

She gets to work, then. Something inside of her has clicked back into place with David's arrival, and she can focus on managing the aftermath. Texts from well-wishers have come in in their dozens, friends and colleagues and distant family. There are a few emails from Shane's coach, his agent and his PR manager checking in. Yuna can respond to those later. Instead, she goes to the people that actually know Shane.

Hayden's texted:

*How's he doing? Any updates? [21:44]*

*I'll come visit tomorrow afternoon. [21:44]*

*Sorry I can't come sooner. [21:45]*

*Hope you're both doing OK. [21:46]*

A smile crosses Yuna's face, because she likes Hayden. He's Shane's best friend – one of Shane's only friends, which is a thought that'll never stop hurting. Yuna knows her son's never been the best at socialising. He doesn't click with people, finds conversations awkward and eye-contact worse, and he cringes from most touch like it's poison. She remembers when he was a kid, and sometimes he'd get these panic attacks, where he'd curl over himself and wheeze and the moment, *the very moment* Yuna or David tried to reach for him, he'd recoil like he was about to be stabbed and let out an almost-shriek, and Yuna would almost *sob* but hold it in because that'd only send him spiralling more than he already was.

It's *something*, Yuna thinks. They haven't gotten him diagnosed, though, because as much as it could have been useful – for school, for accommodations – it'd only harm in the long run. Especially in hockey.

But the point is, Yuna'd been shocked silent the first time Shane let Hayden throw a friendly arm around his shoulders. And Hayden, bless him, had beamed like he *knew* just how special it was. Like he knew just how much trust Shane was putting in him with that simple movement. And sure, it's not all the time. Sometimes he'll cringe violently, grimace almost-apologetically but keep far, far away from any skin contact, every sensation making him flinch like he's touched a live-wire. But sometimes the smell of cheesy pasta and garlic bread will make him want to curl up and hide, and the TV will make him shudder like he's sick. Yuna and David aren't allowed close all the time, far from it. He's let Hayden hug him. That's – it's beyond amazing, and Yuna'd gone teary-eyed when she saw it.

Hayden essentially gained Yuna's absolute approval from that alone, without even considering everything else. He's one of the most stable young men she's ever met, off the ice. He's been with Jackie since he was – what, twenty? Which is sort of insane for her to consider. She'd only met David at twenty-two. He's never cheated, never had any rumours about girls or clubs or controversy, and he's got his family, too. Yuna's met Ruby and Jade a few times, and little Arthur too; she thinks Jackie might be pregnant again, which, good for her. The kids know Shane well. She remembers how her heart had *exploded* when she heard them call him "Uncle Shane" for the first time.

She texts back:

*He's OK. He's got a concussion and a fractured collarbone, so no hockey for a bit. [09:21]*

*Other than that he's fine. [09:21]*

*He woke up a bit in the night, but he went back to sleep pretty quickly. [09:22]*

*Please do come visit. He should be awake properly by then. [09:23]*

*Thanks for texting. [09:24]*

He's probably still in bed, spending time with Jackie. Yuna doesn't blame him for it in the slightest, after the shitshow that was yesterday. She saw him launch himself at the player that knocked Shane down – she's not sure who it was, actually. She's not sure she wants to know. Yuna'd hold a grudge for the rest of her life, she's fully aware of what type of a person she is.

She loses herself in mindless admin for a bit, reassuring and organising in a way that's endlessly familiar. The sun rises higher in the sky, peering through the vertical hospital blinds, casting shadows over the floor. David looks up from his book to reach over and squeeze her leg a few times, wordlessly affectionate.

Shane wakes at twenty-past-ten, announcing his rising with a low groan and starting to shift in the bed. Yuna and David are at his side in an instant, and she represses the instinct to grab his good hand, feeling tears sting behind her eyes again. She tells herself she's done that too much today, and instead summons a warm smile. She and David watch as his eyelids flutter, and his hand twitches as he tries to bring it up to rub his eyes, but he can't quite manage it. A grumble escapes him, kind of adorably, and she's powerless to stop her smile widening.

"Hey, sleepyhead," David greets him gently. "Nice to see you all awake."

Shane blinks at them blearily. His gaze jumps from David to Yuna then back again, and his brows furrow before he seems to realise something, and that wrinkle between his eyes vanishes again. He coughs, and clears his throat, and Yuna's reaching for the water left on the side-table before he can even say anything.

The nurse'd left it there when she came by early this morning to check his chart, before David got here. She'd told Yuna that Shane could wake again at any point, likely this morning, and not to worry at all if it took several hours. He'd probably be a bit dazed, Yuna was informed, and undoubtedly funny because they'd got him pumped with painkillers; there'd probably be mood swings. Another nurse would be by in a bit to check in, but there shouldn't be any problems. The room had been full of medical professionals the first time he woke up, but that's all out of the way now. "It should be smooth sailing from here," she'd said. "If you need anything, there's a call button by the side of the bed, but I don't think you will. Like I said, there'll be another check-up at some point during the day, closer to lunch. Your son'll be just fine, Mrs Hollander."

"Drink it nice and slowly," Yuna says soothingly, and Shane obliges, letting her gently guide the cup to his mouth before swallowing. He backs off after a moment, clears his throat, blinks hazily again, and then that drugged-out smile spreads back across his face.

Yuna's whole body relaxes.

"Heyyyy, mom," he drawls. "Heyyyy, dad. Nice to see you-u."

Yuna almost coos. "Nice to see you too, honey," she says. "Finally up, huh?"

"Up, huh," Shane repeats. "Yeah, 'm up. Where's –?"

Yuna smiles again, and it feels more genuine than it has since Shane went down on the ice. He's asking about Hayden, probably; must have seen him jump on that Boston player. She tells him, "Hayden's at home with Jackie. He'll be over this afternoon. He's been worried about you."

Shane blinks heavily. "Wha'? Why?"

David chuckles. "You're kind of in a hospital bed, buddy."

"Ohhh. Oh dear," he says, and then his face sort of spasms – falls, then lights up again, and he tells them, "He'll be *reallllyyy* worried."

Yuna and David laugh lightly together. Another long blink from Shane. He's so out of it. It's kind of lovely to see him like this, despite everything, all loose and lax and happy. He's not hiding himself from them at all. Yuna hadn't realised how much he did, but now he's not, it seems obvious. She thinks her heart breaks a little.

"I'm sure he is," Yuna says.

Shane grins. Then his face contorts to confusion and he says, "Wait, Hayden?" and Yuna remembers the damn concussion, and how his brain's sure to be frazzled for a hot second.

"Yeah, Hayden," David says. "That's who we're talking about, bud."

Shane says, "No—" and then, "Oh. O-kay." His eyes flit around the room, as if he's looking for Hayden, and Yuna feels a helpless pang of amusement. Shane's alright. He's looked after, in a hospital bed, and she and David are there with him – she's allowed to find this state he's in funny, she decides. "When's *he* coming?"

"Hayden?"

"No!" Shane grouches, and he sounds exasperated, now – but then he pauses, like his brain lags, and changes tack: "Ohhh. O-kay. Yeah. Hay-den."

"This afternoon," Yuna reminds him gently.

"O-kay," he says again. He's put a strange accent on the word, every time he says it, and it makes Yuna go soft and squishy. He used to do that a lot, back when he was a child, just her

little boy. He'd repeat the words she or David said, like he simply had to feel them out for himself, learn the way they sounded in his voice before anything else could happen. He'd stopped at some point – Yuna can't remember when, but she remembers when she realised he had, and how something inside her had simultaneously fractured and gone boneless with relief. It's bittersweet, to hear again. It brings her back.

There's a comfortable silence. David and Yuna watch Shane, the movement of his thoughts inside his head, playing out on his face in real time. He's grinning to himself, now, wide and sweet and... strangely private, somehow. Yuna can't quite look away.

"Do you need anything?" she finds herself asking, after a long moment of watching him smile.

Shane's eyes snap to her face, as if he'd forgotten he's not alone. He giggles a little – and, really, she can only describe it as a giggle, a sound she doesn't think she's heard from him *ever*. He mutters something to himself, so quietly Yuna doesn't catch it even from her position right by his head.

"What's that?" David says gently .

Another giggle. His eyes are bright and a little foggy but so, so happy. "Nope," he drawls. "Nothin'. 'Cept—" He cuts himself off, then repeats, slower, "Nothin'."

Yuna pries, "What's *nothing* mean?" because it's clearly not nothing , and she's perfectly prepared to do anything her son needs right now.

Shane frowns back at her. "Nothin' you can do anything 'bout."

"Shane—"

"Nope," he says stubbornly. They look intently at each other for a moment, Shane's eyes on her forehead but drifting, every so often, to make eye-contact, and Yuna feels faintly ridiculous, having a stare-down with her concussed son. David's smirking a little, but she ignores him until Shane decided he's had enough, and turns his face away from her entirely.

"Shane," she repeats.

He lets out a long, long sigh, and David snorts at the sound of it, because Shane sounds like an exasperated eighty-year-old man. When he looks back up, his eyes are twinkling with repressed humour, and it's like the whole interaction never happened when they all start laughing. For once, Yuna lets it go.

"Alright," she says, and chooses to refocus the conversation: "Well, if you want to know what happened with the game —"

He perks up even more. "Oh my *God*, the gaaame!" He fixes his full attention on her.

Yuna can't help but smile. She'd checked the game scores after he'd woken up for the first time, realising immediately that he'd want to know. Shane's obsessed with the results of

normal hockey games, let alone ones against Boston – or, rather, against Rozanov, she thinks distastefully. The two of them have been rivals since before they even met.

"Montreal won," she reassures him proudly. "The team carried it after you got taken off. Two-one, to Montreal. The boys got all fired up."

Shane beams. "Yes!" he exclaims, his eyes lighting up – then, unexpectedly, the smile vanishes again and his brows pull together. Yuna feels her own so the same, and she exchanges a quick glance with David, because what's wrong now? And she's about to ask, and not let it go this time, when Shane mutters, "But that doesn't make sense?"

Oh. Of course. "Rozanov," Yuna grumbles, because – and she hates to admit it – Rozanov is the second best player in the league, only falling short to Shane, and without Shane, it doesn't add up that Montreal won. It's downright odd, actually. But she's not about to question it. Maybe Rozanov was startled, seeing the only other player at his level get properly injured. Maybe the team got so passionate about Shane's injury that they managed to get past the Boston defence. Either way, it doesn't matter. Montreal won. Shane won.

A quick smile darts across Shane's face, there and gone. "Yea-ah," he sighs.

"I'm not sure what went on," she says, and tilts her head in a *so what?* expression. "You won, though, that's what matters." A light tease. "The team avenged you."

"Was an accident," Shane says. He sounds like he means it, too. Too nice, her boy.

"Of course it was," David says, and adds, because she won't, "It was a clean hit. Just had nasty consequences. It's hockey, we all know it happens." This is pointed to Yuna. "I'm just glad you're okay."

"What do I have?" Shane asks.

Of course, he won't know! Yuna tells him, "You've got a mild concussion and a fractured collarbone." She grimaced at him apologetically. "I'm sorry, honey. You're out for the playoffs. But it's nothing permanent."

Shane's eyes widen. "I'm *out* for *playoffs*?" They well with tears. "Oh *nooooo*, mom, that means Montreal has no chance!"

Yuna and David pause, genuinely quite shocked at the show of arrogance, before they both break into peals of laughter. Shane stares at them, looking stunned.

"I'm not joking," he insists wetly.

"Oh – oh, honey, we know," Yuna manages to get out. He stares at them uncomprehendingly.

"Shane, buddy, we're not laughing because –" David starts to say, when there's a knock at the door.

They all pause. Yuna's face hurts a bit, David's still got a large grin on his face, and Shane's eyes are damp, his face frozen in an expression of sheer offense. David calls out a cheery

greeting. A nurse sticks her head, eyebrows raising when she looks at them, but she doesn't comment.

"Hi," is all she says. "Mr Hollander? You've got a visitor." And if Yuna doesn't know better, she'd say they woman sounds baffled.

Shane stops. His face smoothes over. Yuna looks at him, and sees something like *hope* rising behind his eyes, and— She's a little unsure about letting someone in with Shane in this state, but she's not about to crush that look in his eyes, that barely-concealed anticipation. It's heart-wrenching. It's like he can't quite believe someone's coming to visit him, which is – frankly, ridiculous. He's the best player on (in Yuna's entirely unbiased opinion) the best team in the world. It could be *anyone*: the team, the coach.

She turns to the nurse and smiles politely, and says, "Send them in, please."

The nurse smiles back. "Of course." The door swings closed behind her.

Yuna moves back from the bed, heading to the chair in the corner, David following her. She's sure whoever the visitor is, they'll want to go up to the bed so they and Shane can have a proper conversation. David grins at her, and she sees it on his face that he's a little thrilled. They'll keep it quiet, but it's *nice* that someone wants to come see Shane so early on, that's not Hayden. It's *nice*.

Shane shuffles a bit, fiddling with the covers. His eyes are wide and bright, and he watches the door single-mindedly.

"Who d'you reckon it is?" David asks.

Shane doesn't answer until a moment later. He's forced a puzzled expression over his face, and grumbles, "I don't know?" but that hope blossoms behind his eyes, and her husband can't conceal his fond smile.

"Probably someone from the team," Yuna says. "He's good friends with JJ Boiziau, I think."

"Right," David agrees. "That'd make sense."

Then there's another knock, quieter, and the door's being pulled open before anyone can even call a welcome. A man darts inside quickly, his head ducked low, shoulders stiff, dressed in casual sports clothes.

The whole room stops.

It's Rozanov.

Yuna's brain glitches. She, David and Shane stare at him, at Rozanov, as he hurriedly closes the door and whips around to look at Shane. She clocks the very moment he sees them. It's like every muscle in his body goes taut. His eyes are round, for a moment, expression that of unguarded shock before it shuts down, and he's absolutely still.

The silence echoes, just for a moment. And then Yuna's online again, and she finds herself absolutely boiling with rage.

"Hello," David says unsurely. "Uhm, Rozanov... Are you—?"

Yuna barely hears him. Wasn't it *enough* that Boston out Shane out of commission in the first place – ruined a season for him, the chance to get a *third cup* for Montreal? Rozanov's Boston's *fucking* captain, and Yuna absolutely holds him responsible for what happened! Now, salt in the wound, Rozanov's here to – what? Kick Shane while he's down? Check a box in the name of sportsmanship and good press? Whatever it is, she wants him gone, like, *yesterday*, sportsmanship or not – and she highly, highly doubts it is sportsmanship, because since when has fucking *Rozanov* ever been sportsmanlike? Never, is the answer, his whole damn reputation is being entirely *unsportsmanlike*—

She's got her mouth open, too, ready to snap at him to leave, because Shane does not need this right now. He can come back, if he has to, when her son's less fucking vulnerable, high on painkillers and feeling from mood swings; not that she thinks he will, which, *good*. Really, she's just about to, when Shane's voice sounds.

"*Ilyaaaa!*" he lets out delightedly.

For another long moment, nobody moves.

Rozanov's face has contorted. His brows are furrowed and he's looking only at Shane. Is he confused? Yuna's pretty damn confused. Because—

"*Il-yaaa*," Shane repeats, loud and sounding – *ecstatic*, really. Absolutely *ecstatic*.

She turns to look at him. The heart monitor's beeping faster, but his whole face's lit up. Happier than she's seen him – *ever*. Even now, since he's woken up, high and open on the drugs. Rozanov clears his throat, but Yuna can't focus on him. She's just looking at Shane, because that look of *pure undiluted joy* is one she never wants to leave his face. She thinks distantly that she'd kill for that look.

"I, um," Rozanov's saying slowly, "I just wanted to—" he breaks off, clears his throat, asks, "Are you okay?"

He's saying it to Shane, but to David and Yuna too, she notes absently, and forces her attention away from Shane's face to Rozanov's. It *is* sportsmanship, then, apparently; how rare. He's pale, actually. Concerned by the drugs? Probably. He probably hadn't realised how bad it is. Yuna's face drops automatically into a scowl, but it's not as fierce as it should be, because she keeps darting glances back at Shane and he still looks *elated*. Like seeing Rozanov has brought him all the joy in the world.

Alright, she decides on a whim, regretting it already. Alright, Rozanov can stay to say his piece, even though she should be getting rid of him before he can gather any more chirping material from drugged-Shane. *Anything* to keep Shane beaming like the heavens have descended down to earth.

Shane's answer's come immediately, easily.

"Concussion and a fractured collarbone, our for the playoffs," he says, only slurring a little. "But..."

"Could've been worse," Rozanov fills in.

Yuna bristles, because – what? Actually, how dare he? Could've been worse? Could've been worse? Who's he to say that! When it's Shane who's the one in hospital, put there by Rozanov's goddamn team, with Rozanov walking away *fine*, absolutely goddamn *fine*—

David's hand closes on her knee before she can get up and spit at him. She whirls around, eyebrows raising incredulously, but before her mouth can even open Shane's talking again, airy and relaxed and happy, as if this is all perfectly normal.

"Could've been worse," he echoes Rozanov, and a look proves him smiling at his arch-rival, soft in an entirely alien way.

"Marleau feels terrible," Rozanov tells him mechanically. "He did not mean to hurt you."

So it was Marleau, then, was it? Yuna hates Rozanov a bit more for informing her, actually, because she's going to keep up a grudge for the entirety of her life, now, and that's *exactly why* she didn't want to know—

"I know," Shane responds. He sounds like he's reassuring Rozanov. "Part of the game," he continues lightly. "We all get our bell rung eventually, right?"

The "right" is a gently wheedling prompt on the end of the sentence, all of Shane's bright, bold happiness cooled into something *soft*, intentionally, deliberately soothing. Yuna doesn't know what he's supposed to sound like when he's talking to his arch-rival, but she knows it's not whatever *this* is. Shane's attention is honed on Rozanov, and his body language and face are *open*, a little – no, it's not *fond*, it can't be *fond* – smile curling his mouth up.

The answering "Right," comes automatically, ingenuine. Even Shane, drugged to hell and back, notices, which in itself is astonishing. His brows crease.

"Hey," he calls gently. "Heyyyy," and he's extending a hand, outstretched in Rozanov's direction like he wants him to – what, hold it? Rozanov's staring at it like it's diseased. Of course he is. Even Yuna can't blame him for that. What's he supposed to do, when his rival's high and injured and suddenly wants to hold hands? Yuna should kick him out, that's what she should do. Before Shane can embarrass himself any more than he already has done; God, he'll be mortified when he remembers this, after the drugs have left his system. Yuna's angry at herself for letting Rozanov stay in the first place.

She makes to stand.

David doesn't let her. She sends him a disbelieving look and opens her mouth to ask what the hell he's doing as he pulls her back down onto the chair. A single stare stops her. Very deliberately, he shakes his head.

"Wh—" she starts, but before she can get it out, Shane's interrupting her.

Her attention jumps to him, and Yuna feels her heart clench. What the hell is David playing at? Why the fuck isn't he letting her *get rid of Rozanov*? Shane's face has dropped entirely, now, and he's looking directly at Rozanov with big, wet eyes. Rozanov's looking more and more panicked, eyes darting from Yuna and David to Shane and back again, like he's begging them, *what do I do?*

"Ilya," Shane says, very seriously now. "Ilya, come *heereeee. Il-yaaa!*"

Rozanov takes a few halting steps forward. He flicks another panicked look in their direction.

"Ilya!" Shane insists.

"Hollander—" Rozanov starts, stops.

And – why has Yuna only just noticed this? Shane's been calling him *Ilya*.

Shane's making grabby hands, now, his pout deepening, genuine tears swimming in his eyes. They look alarmingly like they're going to fall, too. Yuna's breath leaves her in a punched-out sound. And maybe Rozanov's not a complete asshole, because he's totally out of his depth here and the sight makes him pitch hurriedly forward to stand right by Shane's bedside, going as far as to let Shane reach out and clutch at his hand.

"Okay, okay," he's muttering desperately, his accent curving over the words in a way that's oddly familiar. "Shh, shh."

The very moment their fingers interlock, Shane relaxes back into his pillows. "Yes!" he mumbles, triumphant. He looks up at Rozanov in a way even Yuna can only describe as adoring, and coos, "Bet-ter."

Rozanov's expression cracks right down the middle. He looks utterly *devastated*. Even if every inch of Yuna's attention wasn't fixed on him and Shane, she'd still be able to see the way his shoulders and hands shake. David's grip tightens on her knee. Rozanov brings a trembling hand up, very, very slowly, to stroke down Shane's face. Shane's eyes shut in pure bliss.

Yuna, suddenly, has absolutely no idea what's going on.

Her hand lands on David's. She doesn't turn to look at him. She doesn't think she could move her eyes if she tried.

"You scared me," Rozanov mutters, distinctly fragile sounding.

He's intently not looking anywhere near David and Yuna. Yuna stares at him. What does he mean, Shane scared him? Why's he scared? Why're they close enough for Shane to hold his hand? It's – insane, why's Rozanov holding Shane's hand? Why's Shane letting Rozanov go anywhere near him, let alone rub shapes on his palm, trace over his brow? Shane *hates* touch. He hates it.

He melts into Ilya Rozanov's like it's the best thing he's ever felt.

"I'm sorry I didn't... text you, last night," Shane says softly. His eyes are glued to Rozanov's face. The words are pieced together carefully, like he's trying to imbue them with meaning.

"No," says Rozanov at once. "Is' okay." His thumb smoothes a little circle under Shane's eye.

"I was excited about last night," Shane continues in that excruciatingly sincere way he's been speaking, now Rozanov's holding his hand. "I'm mostly mad at Marleau for... fucking that up."

Yuna's missing something. She's missing something big. She feels like an outsider in her own son's hospital room. It's becoming entirely obvious that Shane and Rozanov are far, far more than what she thought they were. Friends, at the very least. Close friends. Close enough friends that Shane's pressing his face into Rozanov's palm, eyes sliding shut now, a little, content breath escaping him, like when Rozanov's touching him, everything's right with the world. Yuna thinks the exact opposite.

She tries to force her mind to work, to unpick what the fuck's going on. Last night, Shane said: he and Rozanov were planning to meet up last night, before – everything else happened. The thought is foreign. Her Shane and Rozanov, meeting up after a Boston-Montreal game, *last night*. Why hasn't Shane told her they don't hate each other? Why is it taking him being drugged up and Rozanov coming to visit him in hospital for Yuna to know anything about a non-professional relationship of any sorts, let alone a friendship, between the two of them? She doesn't get it. There's a puzzle piece missing, and *Yuna doesn't get it*.

"He feels really bad," Rozanov tells him earnestly.

Shane smiles wider and turns his face even more into Rozanov's palm, nuzzling into it. Rozanov lets him, for a moment, before he seems to recall Yuna and David, and he moves his hand away.

"What's going on?" Yuna hisses.

"Yuna," David insists under his breath. "Not. Right. Now."

Rozanov has heard, though, it's obvious. He's making to let go of Shane's hand, is backing away from Shane's immediate vicinity. Yuna should be glad about it. She can't be, though, when Shane whines the very second Rozanov's grip loosens, and clings tightly, distressed, frantically lurching to drag him closer instead.

"No, no, no," he hurries, and starts talking rapidly like it'll give Rozanov no choice but to stay. "Y'know, I had a whole plan to ask you somethin'!"

Rozanov freezes.

"Maybe," he says, very carefully. "It's better if you just rest now."

Shane barrels on, heedless. "I was going to ask you—"

"Hollander—"

"Will you... come-to-my-cottage-this-summer?" Then he smiles, slow and self-satisfied, peering up at Rozanov's tortured expression closely. "*Don't* go to Russia. Come to my *house*, it's so *private*, no one will *know*—"

Yuna's heart is in her throat.

"Hollander, you know we can't do that—"

Rozanov's reply is hushed, like he's trying – in vain – to keep Yuna and David from hearing too much. He's not darting looks at them anymore, though. All of his attention is sharp on Shane, so intense Yuna thinks she'd be sweating if she was the focus of it. Shane doesn't seem to feel the same. She's never seen him look so comfortable. He's just smiling, up at Rozanov, a soft little thing. Smitten. It's a smitten look. She's never seen it before.

"We could have a week, or even two." Shane sighs longingly, "Be completely alone." He finishes on a whisper. "*Together*."

Rozanov looks agonised.

"Maybe," he says, strangled, in a way that means no. "Maybe."

Shane frowns, but Yuna can't focus on that. She thinks she might be having a stroke. It's like a lightbulb has exploded in her brain, a dazzling epiphany. It's *insane*. It's totally, absolutely insane.

It makes sense.

*Together*, Shane said. *Together*. Rozanov's thumb under Shane's eye, smoothing over his skin like it's a movement he's endlessly familiar with. The way Shane lent into the touch, the way he's still leaning into the touch. How they're both utterly captivated with each other, how Shane's not looked away from Rozanov even once since he walked in the room. Rozanov's ashen skin, the way his eyes are shadowed like he hasn't slept, his halted speech, his *terror* that somehow she's only just noticing. They're—

Something heavy coalesces in her chest even as her mind whirs. Memories flick through her mind's eye. When did this happen? How long has Shane hidden? She grasps at once at the All-Stars game, the pride that ripped through her when she saw Shane didn't flinch at the kiss Rozanov smacked on his helmet after they won. *Hah. Of course* he didn't flinch. She'd put it out of her mind, then; now, she remembers the way he'd smiled bright and wide, and how she'd thought it was victory buoying him, but— Everything's suddenly in technicolour: how he'd wrapped his arms around Rozanov in return, squeezing their bodies tightly together for a long moment before they'd released each other, and skated off, and the grins hadn't fallen from either of their faces until they'd been off the ice.

She's not sure what her face is doing, but Rozanov takes an abrupt step back from Shane.

"I should go," he says, half to himself.

Any ounce of contentment leeches from Shane's expression. "What?" he demands. His face crumples. "What, no, Ilya—"

Rozanov hesitates. "I—"

"No, no, no, don't go," Shane whimpers, and he moves like he's prepared to launch himself off the bed onto Rozanov, if that's what it'd take to keep him here. The heart monitor starts beeping louder again. "No, Ilya, you can't go – I need you –"

*I need you.* God.

"Shane—"

"—You, uh... You don't... have to go, son," David offers haltingly.

Rozanov's head jerks to him. "What?" he says thickly.

"This isn't... you don't have to go," her husband repeats. He sounds cautious, like he's trying to soothe a wounded animal, one that could lash out or run away at the slightest provocation. "I think – I think Shane wants you to stay." Which is probably the understatement of the century.

"*Ilya*," Shane repeats, needy, whining.

Visibly, all of Rozanov's willpower collapses. He's back at Shane's side so fast it's almost impressive, cradling Shane's hand again, bending over him to wipe at the tears leaking from Shane's eyes. All of the tension bleeds from Shane's body. He slumps back into the bed. The heart monitor slows. His face turns towards Rozanov's like a flower to the sun, and he tilts it in a clear invitation for Rozanov to start touching again. Rozanov does. Little circles over his freckles. A happy, relieved sigh leaves Shane's mouth.

"Good," Shane mutters, muffled. "Don't ev-er go, *ever* again."

"Okay," Rozanov says helplessly.

*O-kay*. That's who's accent Shane was mimicking earlier. That little o-kay, playful in his mouth, proof he's thinking of Rozanov always, even when he'd just woken up from anaesthesia. He'd muttered, "Ill-ya," last night. "He'll be reallllyyy worried," Shane said. No, not Hayden. "When's *he* coming?" *Rozanov*. Always Rozanov.

There's a strange lump in Yuna's throat.

Rozanov murmurs something to Shane in Russian, and he settles further and murmurs back, "I missed you," and Yuna's struck again by the distinct impression she's intruding. The way they are together is – startlingly intimate. They look at each other like they're the only two people in the world. Like they're in love. Rozanov traces lightly over Shane's lips. Shane's eyes flutter shut. A soft, involuntary smile is quirking his lips.

"I missed you too," Rozanov replies lowly. "What would I do without my slow, boring hockey player, hmm?"

Shane's eyes slide open, sparkling with humour, but he doesn't respond to the chirp. Instead, he sighs, "Yours," and tilts his head.

Yuna's brain stalls for a moment. They're *together*, she'd have to be blind and firmly, firmly in denial not to work that out, but – she's not fully comprehended what that means. Because Shane's asking for a kiss. And, like he's entirely incapable of denying him, Rozanov presses a brief one to his lips, studiously not looking over at David and Yuna.

"Thank-you," Shane hums.

"Always," Rozanov says simply. Shane's head tips back up like he can't help it. Rozanov kisses him again.

Her mind will replay it over and over again in the coming days: the gentle press of lips against lips, Shane's quiet request and Rozanov's quiet fulfilment, the ease of it, like it's something they've done a hundred times, a thousand. There's something overwhelming about seeing Shane like this. *In love*, Yuna thinks. Her son's in love.

She thinks Rozanov just might love him back.

Because, he's here. He's right by Shane, clutching his hand, body braced and stiff, probably more than overwhelmed right now. He's just involuntarily come out to his – what, boyfriend's? – parents, who he doesn't know, who've only ever known him as the enemy. Shane's enemy. Shane's biggest rival, the reason he's not known as a *once-in-a-generation* talent, just a *generational* one, the man that'll win the trophies if Shane doesn't. Since forever, Rozanov's been someone to hate and curse out and shit-talk. Yuna can abruptly remember years of jabbing insults at him. He knows it, too. Whenever he remembers Yuna and David are in the room with them, everything about him tenses. He probably guesses exactly what she's thought of him. He's probably terrified.

But he doesn't move.

The silence lingers, awkward. Shane's oblivious, his eyes closed and smile persisting, clinging onto Rozanov's hand. Rozanov's back gets more rigid with every second that passes. Yuna should say something. She should reassure him, reassure Shane, promise that she would never, ever condemn them for loving each other, never ever. For some reason, she can't get her voice to work.

"I, erm," David says eventually, disjointedly. "So, you..."

It's obvious he's got no idea what to do. Rozanov looks at him a bit sardonically. He smiles tersely and offers, blunt, "Ah, so you had no idea, then."

David laughs a little hysterically. Yuna knows how he feels. "No, no idea. At all. Whatsoever."

"Hmm," says Rozanov, and tugs a little at Shane's hair. Shane's eyes open and his smile goes sappy at once when they lock eyes. Rozanov tells him, "We are very good at keeping this secret, apparently."

Shane doesn't clock what he's trying to do: use him as a buffer between David and Yuna, and himself. He just sighs dreamily, "Yea-ah," and doesn't stop staring at Rozanov. A brief pause, and he mutters contemplatively, "I think the team knows about Lily, though."

Rozanov's stare goes butter-soft. He laughs, and combs through Shane's hair. It's pure affection, the sound of it, and it sucks most of the tension from the room. It rings through Yuna's ears, openly adoring. It makes everything feels very real, all of a sudden.

David's smiling. "Lily?" he asks, less uncertain.

Shane makes a little noise. "Uh-huh," he agrees. He doesn't expand.

Rozanov laughs again, intensely fond. "Да, Lily. Is what I am called, in Shane's phone. Like he is Jane in mine."

Faintly, Yuna says, "I think I've seen that name pop up before."

"Probably," Rozanov says. "We text a lot."

"We've always texted a lot. Even *before*."

Rozanov hums. "Да. So, is useful, codenames."

Of course. *Of course* they are. Yuna thinks about how the league would react if it knew anything at all, about their relationship. It's been pushing the Hollander-Rozanov rivalry for years. She thinks about how she'd reacted, when Rozanov first came in. She'd not even *thought* that the official narrative could be just that: a narrative. Even a public friendship between them would have to be carefully approached: hinted tentatively, put through the right PR stations, built up slowly. The fans'd be appalled that their two beloved rivals had put the enmity aside and reconciled. And that's just with a friendship. A relationship – one as loving, as soft, as the one she's just borne witness to – would be a whole nother matter entirely. Scandal, cheating accusations, homophobia. Yuna thinks about the challenges Shane's faced for being Asian-Canadian in the NHL. They'd only grow tenfold if the world found out he's gay.

–Everything grinds to a halt. Yuna feels tears sting her eyes, the great lump in her throat only growing. She doesn't even know if he *is* gay. She doesn't even know. He hasn't told her – hasn't felt *safe enough*, to confide his sexuality to her. His own mother. He could be bisexual, pansexual– she doesn't know. *She doesn't know*.

It feels keenly like heartbreak.

She keeps it in. She'll cry later, most likely. She can't cry now. Shane's too vulnerable, and Rozanov would probably panic, and so would David, albeit in a more familiar way. So she swallows her sorrow and self-loathing and regret, and looks up.

"What's *before*?" David's asking curiously.

Shane giggles, then blushes bright red. Rozanov looks flustered.

"Ah," he says slowly. "Um. That is, before we got together?" It sounds like a question.

Shane huffs. "Not really," he protests.

Rozanov pins him with a look. "Shane—"

Shane blinks innocently at him.

"What?" David says it teasingly, but confusion is there, too, and innate curiosity.

"Uhm," Rozanov stalls. Yuna's never seen him like this before. It's awkward, and hesitant, and he shoots a glance at David like he's silently pleading with him not to ask. Her own curiosity awakens, and Yuna grabs onto it with both hands, letting the sense of failure drift until it can be dealt with. "*Господи, помоги мне*. Well—"

"Come on, Rozanov," she urges, twisting her tone playful, actually feeling it when she sees Rozanov's eyebrows raise before he coughs something into his fist. "Don't be shy."

Ridiculous. Rozanov, *shy*.

Shane scoffs. "Mom!" he says loudly. "Call him *Ilya*!" He grins, sudden and wicked, directed at Rozanov—*Ilya*, who takes the playful expression in stride, like it's normal to him, like he's seen this joy and mischievousness on Shane's face before even if Yuna hasn't— "Then I'll say!"

"No, please—" he groans.

"Ilya," she grins. He looks away like it'll hide the small, pleased smile that's crossed his face. Yuna thinks she likes him.

Shane beams, and then he tucks himself closer to Ilya and says proudly, "Before's before we were exclusive, and it was just hotel rooms!" and Yuna thinks, suddenly mortified, *oh*— and Ilya's giving her and David a look that says *told you not to ask* as he starts to grin, then chuckle, and Shane's grinning too, looking pleased as punch to have made Ilya laugh, and Yuna—

Yuna thinks she likes this.

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