

Five and a Half Beers and Just as Many Chalupas

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Five and a Half Beers and Just as Many Chalupas

by [Erisenyo](#)

Summary

Hollander as an opponent has always been focused and precise and an absolute nightmare for a defenseman, the kind of player you dread facing.

Hollander as a teammate is...well, he's still focused and precise, and intense about every drill and lift and film session to the point of being more than a little intimidating.

Hollander on five-and-a-half beers and just as many chalupas is something else entirely.

OR,

The Centaurs get to know Shane Hollander.

Notes

An immense shout out to the lovely community of Heated Rivalry writers out there who are an endless source of inspiration and encouragement. In typical fashion this started as basically a shit post I took seriously, because I'm never not thinking about Shane joining the Centaurs and what that transition is like for every involved, and also because I can never resist shenanigans.

A huge thank you to meesh, anna, and alex for the help bringing this one together!

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

October 2021

Evan didn't know what he expected of Shane Hollander, beyond their second line suddenly scoring a lot, lot, lot more goals. He knows the guy, obviously, or knows *of* him. The wedding, and the whole—video thing. Besides, it's impossible to play hockey or think about hockey or be vaguely aware of hockey and *not* know about Shane Hollander.

But Evan came up into the NHL through Cornell by way of Manitoba, and he might like to represent his roots more than is strictly necessary, but he's more than familiar with the fact that knowing of someone and *knowing* someone are two different things entirely.

Something he supposes the whole hockey world and beyond found out at the end of last season.

And Hollander as an opponent has always been focused, and precise, and really fucking annoyingly sharp on his edges, an absolutely nightmare for a defenseman. The kind of player you dread facing because he's going to rip you apart and then turn around all *oh gosh pucks in nets the boys stuck to the game plan* polite about it to the media after, like it wasn't all him anyway, like he didn't even have to try to do it.

Hollander as a *teammate* is...well, still focused, and precise, and really fucking annoyingly sharp on his edges. And intense about every drill, and every lift, and film. And about the meal plan, and being on time, and post-workout recovery, and stretching, and to be honest it's more than a little intimidating to be around and he's not even Holmberg or Boyle, suddenly expected to play up to that level.

And it's not that Evan expected Hollander to *match* Roz's boisterous energy—which has only grown with the brightness of his happiness, to the point it makes Evan a bit sad to think too much about, how *different* Roz is compared to the prior seasons. But Hollander is...serious. Quiet. Reserved to the point of being withdrawn, almost. He cracks smiles, sure, he listens to the guys' chirps and jokes, he rolls his eyes at Roz. But the guy's *awkward* in a way that says 'everything I'm about to say or do is being filtered through the seventeen layers of media training I've had since I was fourteen' and it's...yeah.

The head of media loves him. Harris is in despair. Roz is besotted.

And Evan—

"Oh, sorry, were you—" Hollander yanks his hand back like Evan was about to slap it.

"What? Oh." Evan glances at the rows and rows of neatly arranged-by-color-into-a-rainbow Gatorade. "I actually don't—"

"Sorry, Dykstra." Hollander trips a little over his name like he keeps doing, like maybe he's about to say another name entirely. "You probably have a whole—I didn't mean to take—"

"No, really, it's cool," Evan insists, back suddenly itching with that six-foot-four, two-hundred-pounds-and-change urge to appear smaller than he is, the one that he usually feels

more in the grocery store than the locker room. “I actually don’t really like—”

“No, no, I didn’t mean to grab your drink, I don’t want to mess up your routine,” Hollander says quickly. Evan blinks. His what? “I’ll just...” Hollander waves vaguely behind himself, already edging-and-then-striding-determinedly out of the kitchenette and Evan...

Evan is...confused.

He doesn’t even like Gatorade, not that he broadcasts that fact.

“He’s nervous,” Roz explains when Evan finally finds a roundabout way to ask why Hollander is so fucking jumpy about sports drinks. “He wants to do well,” he adds with a fond, exasperated kind of affection.

Evan stares. “Sure, dude,” he agrees after a moment, baffled. The idea that Shane Hollander could do anything else...the guy could tie his skates together and still be better than half the league, and Evan’s not really sure what Gatorade has to do with it.

So Shane Hollander as a teammate is...a lot. It’s *good*, line chemistry obviously takes time to come together. And a person has to get used to not having the C anymore, Evan expected that. But it’s good, it’s getting there, it’s just different, the way the start of every season is different with new faces in the room. Shane Hollander just happens to have a particularly noticeable one.

Shane Hollander drunk though—that’s something else entirely. He’d gotten *drunk* drunk at the wedding, not that Evan really hung out with the guy there, no one expects to see a groom at a wedding. And besides, it’s a wedding, it’s different.

But in the bar after their last pre-season game, all the team together, Shane Hollander on one beer—

“*Light* beer? Barely counts, Hollander,” Roz scoffs after stealing a sip, and Hollander glares, snatching back his glass and taking a gulp that Evan can only characterize as belligerent.

—gets loose enough to actually laugh out loud, not just smile. And to not just listen to the chirping as his beer drinks down, but to join in with his own jokes.

“Grill Master Weekly!” Wyatt laughs, snatching up Bood’s phone. “That’s not a thing!”

“It is!”

“Uh,” Troy says, coughing a little as Wyatt passes him the phone. “I...guess it is.”

Roz holds out a demanding hand, snorting when he sees the photos. “And what does *Grill Master Weekly* write about, again, with pictures like that?”

Evan starts laughing as he leans in to see the screen. “Damn, man, posing for sexiest grill-man alive or something?”

“I already am, hands down,” Bood says archly. “And you all saw it last BBQ, don’t pretend you didn’t.”

“Yeah, you were really having a hot *grill* summer,” Hollander puts in, which—well. It’s a dad joke, but it’s still a joke. And Bood is so surprised because it’s *Hollander* that he actually doesn’t respond for a full three seconds, so Evan will give Hollander the extra points regardless.

“Awful,” Hazy says, shaking his head.

“Terrible,” Roz announces.

“Not even original,” Evan agrees.

“And like, multiple years out of date,” Troy adds.

“Who taught you this?” Roz claps Hollander on the shoulders, putting on a serious face. “Was Harris? Pike? I will talk to him, tell him not to confuse you. You should focus on one language before trying others.”

Hollander huffs. “Still shut him up,” he mutters—

“No!”

“Because it was so bad!”

—looking...smug? as he drains the last of his pint.

Rozanov just props his chin on his fist and looks charmed instead of chirping back, which... feels about right, actually, with how the pre-season’s been going.

Shane Hollander on two beers starts to forget that he and Roz are trying to *keep things professional* in front of the team, whatever that means.

But a quarter of the way through his second pint, Hollander is relaxing into Roz’s side. Halfway and he’s ignoring his own side salad in favor of *blatantly* stealing Roz’s fries, and Roz just—scoots them closer. And by the end he’s fully leaning across Roz’s lap to argue with Haasy about Chicago’s power play—

“Their passing is sharp,” the kid says, looking a little like he might pass out.

“And their formations are a mess,” Hollander snorts. “So even if Ventner *can* get it together, which obviously he can’t...”

—like he has no idea Chouinard and Hazy were trying to have a conversation in between them, or that Ventner is generally considered the best player on his team, if not his division, and clearly Hollander is one of *those* types when it comes to hockey.

Rozanov still seems charmed, of course, because that’s Roz’s new current state of being. He just reaches under or around Hollander’s hip whenever he wants a fry and uses him as an armrest when he doesn’t. And Shane Hollander, who just last week blushed so hard at something Roz said in Russian that he just got up and left the room—Hollander just swats behind himself without even looking, and doesn’t actually do a single thing to push Roz off himself, or stop his conversation.

Evan contemplates his fresh beer for a moment. Then he pushes it toward Hollander instead, fascinated.

Shane Hollander on three beers actually accepts the invitation to play darts he’s been oh-so-politely declining all pre-season. And then promptly forgets to be polite—

“So we’re going to play Around the Clock, it’s pretty basic,” Holmberg explains. “We’ll shoot for order, and then—”

Hollander’s dart *thunks* into the bullseye. “I go first.”

—about the fact that he’s just been getting ready to fucking *hustle* everyone, apparently.

“What the fuck,” Young complains loudly as Hollander lands another perfect trio.

“I’m never even going to get to throw,” Dillon grumbles as he stalks back to the booth to grab his drink. “He’s going to win, and I’m not even going to take one shot.”

“Must bring back bad memories of games,” Roz says with mock sympathy.

“Maybe if you were better at shooting you’d get more chances,” Hollander calls back, managing to sound both utterly ruthless and completely absent as he lands another three shots, one after the other.

“Jesus Chris, Roz, you could have warned us,” Chouinard mutters, already slapping cash into Hazy’s hand.

Roz just takes a smug sip of his beer. “Is hand eye coordination, aiming, hitting corners. What did you expect?”

“Come fucking on,” Holmberg protests, looking like he doesn’t know whether to be annoyed or in awe.

“That’s called *accuracy* and *consistency*,” Hollander crows—actually *gloats*. He’s flushed and clearly tipsy as he takes another drink, somehow managing to look both entirely pleased with himself and absolutely giddy to be winning, and Evan...might be starting to get the whole *charmed* thing Roz is still rocking.

Wyatt shakes his head where he’s leaned against the side of the booth, watching. “You’d think alcohol would”—he waves vaguely—“do something. You sure there was real beer in those drinks, Roz?”

“None of your beer is *real*,” Roz scoffs, and they all look over to where Hollander is... bouncing on his toes in excitement for his text turn, eyes narrowed in that way Evan associates with that impending feeling of getting made a fool of on the ice.

Hollander notices them looking and actually tilts his head sideways in question, sending his hair flopping into his eyes.

It stays there, too, as they all watch him fail to blow it out of his face.

His nose wrinkles a lot when he’s annoyed, Evan observes, fascinated. Doesn’t want to put down his darts, either.

“So that’s a yes on the alcohol content,” Wyatt says into his drink, sounding like he’s laughing.

“They’re wondering how you’re so good,” Roz calls across the bar to him, like the asshole he is.

“Practice,” Hollander calls back as he tries to scrape his hair back into a low bun without losing his darts. “Something maybe you should think about,” he adds as Dillon hits the outer ring of the bullseye instead of the inner.

Hazy doesn’t even try to hide his laughter this time. “*Wow.*”

“I thought he didn’t do anything except hockey,” Holmberg comes over to complain.

Roz’s smirk is slow and lazy. “He does a few other things,” he says in a tone that makes Haasy *blush* and Evan choke on his next sip. “Also,” Roz adds as he smacks Evan on the back so hard he nearly slides off the edge of the bench, “his mom is terrifying to play against.” A dramatic shudder. “Bad idea. Ruthless.”

“Ha!” Hollander suddenly exclaims as Young full-on misses the board. “My mom could eat you for *breakfast*,” he says gleefully, and Evan eyes him, then Roz, wondering just how dialed-in on it Hollander actually is.

“This is so unfair,” Holmberg grumbles like he wasn’t the one to suggest the game.

“I mean what did you expect,” Troy says dryly, nursing his own drink. “He’s got the most accurate shot in the league.”

“Not true,” Roz immediately frowns. “I have best accuracy in league.”

“*Totally* true,” Hollander shouts, whirling around. “I beat you by 1.3 seconds.”

Roz snorts. “Yeah, *decade* ago. We are talking about *now*.”

Hollander’s eyes narrow. “Set it up right now, and I’ll—that wasn’t even *close*,” he breaks off gleefully as Dillon misses the bullseye by *maybe* a centimeter. “I thought you were the king of darts on this team, am I the king now?”

“I didn’t even say that, man,” Dillon complains. “That was Bergie.”

“Pretty sure you actually have to win first,” Holmberg grumbles, like anything short of both of Hollander’s arms falling off is going to let them catch up at this point.

“I’m not sure that’s how monarchy works, Hollander,” Roz adds on, the tone familiar mockery but his eyes hooded. “Is not like Stanley Cup, you see. Maybe if you read book not about hockey, you will know this. I will buy you one.”

“Fuck off,” Hollander says shortly before visibly tuning Roz out and focusing on winning.

Though Evan considers, as he goes to buy another round and watches the way Roz watches Hollander, and the way Hollander practically *preens* collecting his darts from the bullseye, cutting Roz’s booth a sidelong look, that maybe Hollander isn’t tuning out Roz as completely as he seems.

Shane Hollander on four beers—or maybe Shane Hollander with a fresh victory in him—wants to eat.

Hollander makes a face at the menu before slapping it down and announcing, “We’re getting Taco Bell.”

And apparently doesn’t remember or care about the meal plan, all of a sudden. Okay.

“Uh.” Troy glances around. “I’m not sure you can actually bring outside food into—”

“We’re getting Taco Bell.”

Also, it turns out Hollander isn’t *always* reserved to the point of being withdrawn in a group conversation—

“If we’re breaking the rules anyway,” Bood says, leaning into the conversation, “There’s actually a really good pizza spot—”

“No.” Hollander rolls his eyes and then enunciates, somehow without actually enunciating, “Taco. Bell.”

“Hm,” Roz makes a show of considering, voice shaking with laughter, “Don’t know, Hollander, pizza sounds pretty good right now.”

“Well, you’re wrong. Your ears are wrong. Your tongue is wrong. You’re wrong.”

—you just need to get the guy hungry enough, first.

“Oh, are we talking food?” Boyle perks up from the other booth. “I’ve been totally craving some McDonalds—”

“McDonalds? *McDonalds*? What are you, American?”

“Uh.” Boyle blinks at Hollander’s screwed up expression, glancing at the rest of the booth. “Yes?”

“Hold on, hold on,” Bood cuts in. “Are you—you, Shane Hollander, Captain Canada over here—trying to say *Taco Bell* is *Canadian*?”

Or maybe it’s less about getting him hungry, Evan contemplates as Hollander’s face gets that fierce, determined look Evan would normally associate with being down one and only a minute left on the clock.

“Chalupas,” Hollander says determinedly, “are for *everyone*.”

Maybe you just have to prod at something he cares deeply and passionately about.

“I mean, Holly’s got a point,” Chouinard says, clearly shit-stirring and just as clearly delighted about it, “Taco Bell is probably one of the healthier fast food options.”

“Wait, wait, how are we defining fast food,” Hazy immediately jumps in. “Are we including fast casual?”

“Obviously not, it has a different name.”

“Because if we’re talking SweetGreen, Playa Bowl—”

Roz gives them both a disgusted look. “Is not about *healthy*, is about *good*.”

Hollander rounds on him. “Are you saying chalupas aren’t *good*?”

Roz actually freezes halfway through draping his arm around Hollander’s shoulders. “No!” he protests, a noticeable beat delayed. “Did not—never said!”

“Oh shit,” Bood whispers as Roz turns fully toward his husband, free hand half-raised in placation. “Oh *shit*,” he laughs when Roz glances over to shoot them all a *chiding* look as he gets poked *hard* in the chest by Hollander.

“Oh, *let’s* go.” Hazy shares a sharp, thrilled grin with Bood before saying, louder, “Hollander, I think I’ve heard him say chalupas are the *worst*, actually.”

“Oh yeah,” Evan immediately agrees, realizing— “Like, multiple times.”

“First thing he said to me when I joined the team,” Troy plays along, making his face innocent as Roz spins toward them in outrage.

“No! Lies!” he says, his own eyes narrowing as he takes in their expressions.

“Payback, baby,” Bood grins, sprawling back in his chair.

“How many seasons of chirping has it been?” Chouinard agrees.

“And now the power is in our hands,” Holmberg says with relish as they all watch Roz’s attempts to soothe Hollander...

“—chalupa is *fine*—”

“Fine? *Fine*? I call Anya fine, and you get all—”

“You compare *Anya* to *chalupa*?”

“—when it has all the necessary textures, it’s the perfect size, it—”

“You saying Anya has a good *texture*? Stay away from dog, Hollander!”

...quickly turn into a squabble. “Kind of, I guess.”

“Better than nothing,” Wyatt says with a shrug, finishing his beer before calling out, “He raises some good points there about the crunchy and melty bits, Roz.”

“*Thank you.*” Hollander jabs a finger in Wyatt’s general direction before jabbing it back into Roz’s chest. “*And* it’s got lettuce for refreshment, *and* it comes with a Baja Blast, *and*—”

“Do you think we should be worried?” Dillon asks as Hollander continues to jab his points into Roz’s chest. “Are they like...fighting?”

Evan eyes all the room Roz has to take a step away, or take his arm off Hollander’s shoulders, and shrugs.

“Actually, you can get Baja Blast in some stores now,” poor Haas leans over to offer, trying to mediate. “We could order in some food and still—”

Hollander *scoffs*. At *Haasy*. “Yeah, *dumb* Baja Blast.”

“Yeah, Haasy, don’t you know that’s the dumb Baja Blast?” Young immediately picks up.

“It’s in a *bottle*,” Hollander agrees, disgusted. “There isn’t even a *straw*.”

Roz rolls his eyes, hesitating half-way through like he’s actually considering the point. Christ.

“You know,” Bood says thoughtfully as they watch Haas try to extract himself from the crossfire. “He’s actually being a bit of a dick about this. I didn’t know Shane Hollander could do that.”

“I don’t know why we don’t just do multiple orders,” Troy says, sounding faintly baffled. “It’s not like we can’t afford it.”

Hazy raises an eyebrow. “You want to be the one to suggest that to him?”

They all look over to where Roz and Hollander are on their feet now, Roz rolling his eyes and gesturing big as he scoffs and Hollander pulling himself upright, arms crossed and feet set and eyes narrowed like he’s about to nail a slapshot through two layers of defense.

“Your dick,” Hollander announces, drunk-loud and captain-serious, “isn’t going into my mouth until a chalupa does, Rozanov.”

Evan chokes, coughing on his beer along with Bood, Haas letting out a *squeak* and even Hazy wheezing and sputtering.

“Oh shit, dude,” Chouinard whispers as Shane fucking Hollander glares down Roz like he’s about to drop gloves in the middle of the bar.

“Oh *shit*,” Troy agrees, sounding stunned, all of them holding their breath and leaning forward, waiting as Roz sets his jaw and stares back, body squared and gaze face-off level and...

“Someone give me phone.” Roz thrusts out a demanding hand toward the booth without taking his eyes off Hollander. “Who has DoorDash? Is nearest Taco Bell walkable?”

“Yeah, I think I’ll keep that suggestion to myself,” Troy mutters as Bood just leans back and starts laughing.

“Great idea,” Evan says briskly clapping him on the shoulder as Roz walks by with his phone, muttering something about...Hayden Pike?

“So you like chalupas a lot, huh, Holly,” Bood smirks as Hollander strides over with a noticeably *bounce* in his step, looking flushed and triumphant and very, very pleased with himself.

“Yeah,” Hollander says, draining the last of his beer and grinning so big Evan can’t help but laugh a little as he offers the rest of his own beer for Hollander—*Holly*—to finish while he waits. “They’re the best!”

Shane Hollander on five-and-a-half beers and just as many a chalupas—

“Think it’s just chalupas?” Holmberg asks.

Young hums, then reaches over to put a Crunchwrap Supreme in front of Hollander, and Hollander finishes his *sixth* chalupa in two bites and then practically unhinges his jaw for the Crunchwrap Supreme and wow, okay. Evan is *not* going to think about that. Especially not with the way Roz is watching, his own quesadilla paused halfway to his mouth and his gaze looking a little...glazed.

—*and* a Crunchwrap Supreme goes from giggling at his own jokes, bouncing on his toes, and wanting to win things generally, to wanting to beat Roz, specifically, at anything and everything.

“Did they already know this game?” Troy asks as they all crave to watch Roz and *Holly* trying to set up another round of... whatever this game is called again. Evan and his sister just always called it Slap Hands.

“Hazy,” Evan says. He wasn’t there but—

“It was Wyatt,” Bood agrees.

“Hazy *definitely* taught it to them when you were getting drinks.”

Hazy just shrugs, looking smug, and Evan supposes other people might *also* be working through just a little bit of his feelings about Shane Hollander’s point totals versus the Centaurs.

“Okay but what is point,” Haasy asks for the third time, looking baffled. “Yes, slapping hands”—he waves vaguely— “but *why*?”

“It’s a camp thing,” Hazy repeats, like saying it again is going to make the kid understand.

“Like a recess game?” Evan tries. “Kids do it?”

“This is a thing everywhere?” Haas frowns, glancing between them like he isn’t sure they aren’t trying to pull one over on him, which—fair. “Children just slapping each other like this?”

They all look to the table Roz and Hollander have commandeered for themselves—“Need elbow room,” Hollander had grumbled, shoving mostly-steadily to his feet and nearly tripping out of the booth. The pair are arguing and chirping, swaying a little despite both being seated on backward-facing chairs. And in a heartbeat they both suddenly pull upright and focus, bodies going exaggeratedly still and their hands hovering between their chests, faces inches away and gazes locked like it’s a face off, tension vibrating between them...

“Children don’t really do it like that,” Evan admits as Hollander—*Holly*—misses his slap and Roz throws his hands up, shouting in victory.

“Fuck off, you cheater,” Hollander snaps, shoving at Roz’s chest and both of them somehow needing to grab onto their chairs for balance. “You cheater, you went *early*.”

“Not cheating when you tele—tele...make *obvious*. Just like you make obvious your shoot outs, why you so bad at—”

“Telegraphing? Fuck you, I’ll show you bad, I’m one of the top—”

“*One* of top? Not *the* top, Mr. Telegraphs His—”

“I’ll telegraph the puck right into your—”

“Same team now!” Rozanov shouts triumphantly. “What going to say, same team now!”

“Right,” Haasy says after a long beat as Hollander scrunches up his face before snatching at Roz’s wrists, tugging him sulkily into place for another round. “Okay.”

Bood makes an amused noise. “Guess Holly needs to workshop a whole new set of comebacks,” he says wryly.

Evan winces a little. “Living with Roz? Gotta have them at the ready.” *Truly* he can’t imagine. Roz can be relentless—though considering the way Roz had seemed besotted into enamored silence by half the things Hollander’s said tonight, maybe not...

“How are the hands?” Hazy asks dryly when Roz stumbles out, muttering about needing something to keep score.

“Soft and victorious, like always,” Roz says snootily, preening even he starts flipping over menus like someone is hiding a stack of paper beneath.

Troy shakes his head and pushes over the napkin dispenser as Haas hesitates a moment or two before asking, “Is he always like this?”

“Hollander? Da. Yes,” Roz says, looking pleased.

Chouinard eyes Hollander warily. “Crazy that it only takes five drinks.”

Roz snorts, gathering up napkins. “Takes him no drinks.” Which...Roz glances up when no one says anything, amusement flickering over his face. “I said. Always like this.”

Evan opens his mouth then promptly closes it again, twisting around to get a better view of where Hollander is...practicing his Slap Hand escapes, apparently. And also clearly judging the shit out of the dart game that’s started up...Evan exchanges a glance with Troy on the end of the booth, who edges out a little, just in case. They don’t need Hollander heckling Dillon anymore, or the poor rookies.

“It’s like an alter ego,” Haas finally says, sounding a little awed.

“Yeah, that’s some Clark Kent shit,” Bood agrees.

Holmberg snorts. “Taco Bellman?”

“What does he do, carry your bags to the elevator in the hotel?” Young scoffs. “Do better.”

“Yeah, he’s obviously entering his Baja Blast Zone.”

“His Chalupa Powers are activating.”

“He’s Nacho Chance to Score Man.”

“*Oof.*”

“No!”

“Bad.”

“*So bad!*”

“He’s Quesadilla King at *worst.*”

“You’re all wrong,” Hazy says, with authority. “It’s his Crunchwrap Supreme Mode.”

Roz frowns suspiciously. “Makes no sense, he didn’t even eat that.”

“We put one in front of him, he did,” Young assures him seriously.

Roz waves that away. “His order is chalupa—”

“Like *ten* of them.”

“—and baja blast and three extra Diablo sauces, always.”

A beat where Evan at least contemplates that ‘always’, then—

“Diablo Dude?”

“Sauce! Sauce Mode!”

“Uh, no, *Snake* Man, did you see what he did with his *jaw* and that—”

“Okay,” Hazy says over all of them, addressing Roz as the apparent new authority on Holly’s food-related superpowers, “But consider: Crunchwrap Supreme Mode sounds better than any of that.”

“...Fine, yes, okay,” Roz allows. Then he saunters back to their table, brandishing his napkins —

“No pen,” Troy points out. “How’s he gonna keep score without a pen?”

“Blood, probably,” Young says darkly.

—and noticeably *swaggering* when Hollander’s attention snaps to him like there’s nothing else in the room.

“You know,” Bood says as Roz grins lazy and sharp and says something in Russian as he settles back into his seat that has Hollander’s face scrunching up, “I didn’t always see it. Like, I was always supportive, obviously, but they’re so...” He shrugs. “But like *this*...”

They all lean out of the booth and twist around to watch the pair start their Slap Game again, and then immediately start squabbling about it, tugging at each other’s wrists and Hollander suddenly whipping out a lightning fast slap that has Roz *squawking* in outrage. “Cheat!” Roz cries out as Hollander hides his hands behind his back, grinning too hard to really sell whatever argument he’s trying to make as Roz tries to reach and grab around him, Hollander just leaning back more and more and Roz crowding into the space and...

“Yeah, I’m not really sure how they kept it a secret,” Wyatt says as Roz...maybe forgets about the game in favor of grinning into Hollander’s face from inches away.

“They aren’t exactly subtle.”

Evan hums his agreement, taking another drink of his lager as they all watch them set up for another round. “Holly’s totally winning, right?” he asks, the nickname not quite natural off his tongue yet. But that will come soon, he thinks.

“Oh yeah, he’s wrecking Roz.” Troy ticks another point onto the corner of the Taco Bell bag, with his pen. “Like I don’t know why he’s even arguing, clearly whatever he’s doing is working.”

“So,” Dillon says slowly as they finally set up for another round, Holly bright and sharp with the game and so clearly *into* it, and Roz into him, and... “Do you think it’s like—Roz? Or is it the whole...”

Evan pauses, considering all the ways that sentence could end, and all that would mean he knows, and...

Bood claps Dillon on the shoulder. “Let’s go with Roz,” he says, firm.

“And let’s not ask questions we don’t want answers to, maybe,” Evan adds through his mouthful of the last chalupa, since they’re for everyone. Holly can’t come for him since he was the one who said it. “Draw your lines on how much you want to know a guy,” he advises when Dillon frowns like he’s still thinking about it, pushing a beer pointedly across the table before settling more comfortably into his corner of the booth with his own drink, letting the well-known and becoming-known rhythms of this year’s team wash over him.

End Notes

I can't believe "Shane & The Centaurs" isn't a canonical tag yet and I will make it my mission to change that. What a time to be alive, huh?

Thanks so much for reading, comments, thoughts, kudos, yelling at me on [tumblr](#) are all welcome and appreciated!

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