The Specialist

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/72126336.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, Wyatt Hayes, Zane Boodram, Evan Dykstra, Troy Barrett
Additional Tags:	Post-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers), Established Relationship, Married Life, Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander, Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov, (Very) Minor Injury, Grumpy Ilya Rozanov, Fluff
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of "You are so cute."
Stats:	Published: 2025-10-08 Words: 1,413 Chapters: 1/1

The Specialist

by dntat

Summary

Shane gets injured and can't join the Centaurs road trip. The team desperately wants him back, both for his ability on the ice and his ability to deal with Ilya.

Notes

I know next to nothing about hockey game schedules so my apologies if this is wildly inaccurate.

Trying to clean out my WIP folder. Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

The first two days of the road trip were normal enough.

After landing in Florida late on Thursday, the Centaurs played an excellent game on Friday afternoon, winning 4-1. This was immediately followed by a raucous night out. Ilya was in his element. His laugh was the loudest. He downed every beer. He threw back every shot.

He was solidly drunk when he video called Shane from the bar, panning his phone over the table so everyone could shout hello before turning the phone back to himself.

“How are you doing, Hollander? Do you miss me?”

Shane wrinkled his nose from where he was laid out on the couch. “First of all, you called me. But yes, I miss having you here to fetch me things.”

Ilya grinned. “Maybe you should have thought of that before twisting your ankle the day before a road trip.”

“Maybe I'll hire a sexy nurse to take care of me while you're away,” Shane countered.

Ilya’s grin turned into a mock glare. “You would not. You do not like having strangers in the house.”

Shane laughed, causing his freckles to crunch up under his eyes. Ilya wished he could touch them. “No, I wouldn't,” Shane agreed. “Now get back to the team, I can hear them chirping you.”

And the other Centaurs were indeed yelling at Ilya to get off the phone. With a final goodbye to Shane, he pocketed his phone and grinned at his team. “What? Do you not love your partners? Do you not want to talk to them?”

This subdued a few of them, but Bood rolled his eyes. “Of course we do Roz, just not when the team is out for drinks.”

Ilya laughed and joined them for another shot.

- - - -

That Saturday, hungover but still riding the high of yesterday's win, they flew to Buffalo. There, they were able to rest a bit more before Sunday, where they played again. Another win, 3-1 this time, with Ilya scoring an impressive two goals and an assist. It was the kind of game that usually had him putting himself right in the middle of the celebrations, soaking up both the praise and teasing that would come from his team.

But when they went out that night, Ilya was subdued. Instead of grabbing shots, he nursed his beer until the glass grew warm in his hand. Instead of cracking jokes, he lingered in the background, allowing others to take the spotlight.

The team, long used to Ilya's moods, mostly left him alone, besides the odd elbow nudge or raised eyebrow. Ilya waved them all away with a smile.

- - - -

Monday morning they flew to New York, where they were slated to play that afternoon.

“You coming out tonight, Roz?” Evan asked as they flew. He was leaning over the back of his seat. Ilya looked out the window. “We’re going to hit up the Kingfisher after the game.”

“Not tonight,” Ilya said shortly. With a shrug, Evan slid back down into his seat.

“Anything you want to talk about, Roz?” Wyatt asked from across the aisle. “Seems like something's bothering you.”

“Am fine,” Ilya grunted. “The only thing bothering me is Dykstra’s shitty passing in the game yesterday.”

Evan stuck a hand above his seat and flipped Ilya off. “My passing was just fine, you miserable bastard.”

Bood, who had claimed the window seat beside Wyatt, leaned forward to look at Ilya speculatively. “Y’know what I think it is?” he said. “I think he’s missing Hollander. Isn’t that right, Rozanov? You've gotten too used to having your husband around.”

Ilya glared at Bood. “I do not know what you are talking about.”

Bood just rolled his eyes. “Sure man. Whatever you say.”

- - - -

The game against the New York Admirals that afternoon was messy, with several penalties on both sides. They won, but barely, thanks to Troy scoring a dirty goal right at the end of the third period, bringing it to 2-1. As soon as he was allowed, Ilya skated off the ice and stomped into the locker room. The team gave him a wide berth.

Later, in his hotel room, Ilya lay on the bed. He was scrolling through his phone, ignoring the persistent texts from the team asking him to come to the Kingfisher when suddenly a different name flashed across his screen. A video call from Shane.

He swiped the notification open quickly. “Hollander. Why are you calling?”

Shane smiled as he looked at Ilya. “What’re you doing in your hotel room? I thought you'd be out celebrating with the guys. You were amazing today.”

Ilya gave a half-shrug, but he didn't miss the heat in Shane's eyes as he spoke about Ilya's time on the ice. “Ehn. I did not feel like it tonight.”

“Well, I wanted to tell you that I got cleared this afternoon. Doc says I’m good to go.”

Ilya sat up. “What?”

“Yeah, I'll be flying in tonight, unless you guys don’t want the help with the next few games.”

“When?” Ilya demanded. “When do you come?”

“I'm at the airport now. My flight gets in around midnight.” Shane paused, and Ilya could hear the amusement in his voice when he spoke again. “Coach said hopefully this news will make you stop being such a pain in his ass.”

Ilya was already swinging his legs out of bed. “Text me the details. I will pick you up.”

“Ilya, the team will send a car, you have curfew–”

“I will be there,” he interrupted. “Curfew does not apply to this. I will see you soon.”

- - - -

At breakfast the next morning, Ilya loaded his plate with toast, eggs and bacon before settling down with his teammates, who watched him with suspicion.

“Is he... is he humming?" Evan whispered.

“And he’s smiling,” Bood said. “Why is he smiling? What the hell happened last night?”

Wyatt's look of confusion turned into comprehension. “Oh. Oh, I see.”

"You see what?" Evan demanded.

Wyatt tilted his head towards the lobby, where Shane Hollander had just stepped out of the elevator.

As Shane made his way towards the dining area, he saw the team silently staring at him. He offered a small, slightly hesitant wave before heading to the buffet. Breakfast obtained, he slid into the open chair next to Ilya.

Troy broke first. “Looks like we know why Roz is in such a good mood this morning.”

“What’re you talking about?” Shane asked.

Bood pointed an accusing fork at Shane. “You’re looking a little tired. Did you get in last night?”

“Yes?” Shane said, the confusion obvious on his face now. “I got to the hotel around one in the morning. Why?”

"Bet that isn't when you went to sleep though," Troy muttered, and the teammates around them chuckled.

Evan leaned forwards. “A certain starting center of ours has been a total asshole for the past few days. We were about to send him back to Russia.”

Ilya was spreading a thick layer of jam on a piece of toast that already had a thick layer of cream cheese on it. He looked utterly unbothered by the conversation. “I do not know what you are talking about. I am a joy to be around.”

“Bullshit!” the table chorused.

Evan gestured with his knife between Ilya and Shane. “So this is the secret. Whenever Roz is in a bad mood, we just need to bring in the right specialist for the job.”

“Oh, Shane is definitely is a specialist,” Ilya agreed with a smirk.

"Please don't," Shane sighed.

Ilya continued as if he hadn't been interrupted. "He takes a very hands on approach. Very thorough. Will not quit until the job is... done."

The team groaned good naturedly as Ilya bite into his layered confection, still grinning.

Shane’s ears were red, but he was laughing, his shoulders shaking slightly as he looked down at his plate. Ilya, for his part, was demolishing his breakfast with gusto. Once finished, he slung an arm around the back of Shane’s chair. “You are all just jealous,” he said, spearing a melon slice off Shane’s plate. “My husband is back. My mood is improved. You should be thanking him.”

“Oh, we are,” Troy said. “We really, really are. Welcome back, Shane. For all our sakes, please never get injured again.”

Shane finally looked up, meeting Ilya’s gaze. Ilya’s smile softened into something meant just for him.

“Yeah,” Shane said, his own smile matching Ilya’s. “It’s good to be back.”

End Notes

Comments and kudos are like new HR TV show stills - nothing gets me more hyped.

You can also shout about Hollanov with me on tumblr or Instagram.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!