

Printer's Alley

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Printer's Alley

by [OpalApparition](#)

Summary

They're not dating. They're barely even friends. Shane should be in bed preparing for tomorrow's game. But when Ilya shows up in Nashville wearing a stupid cowboy hat and that dangerous smile, things go from routine to risky: meeting up with Rozanov is a terrible idea. Dancing with him in a crowded bar where anyone could see is worse.

But Shane's never been good at saying no to Rozanov.

Notes

This fic uses a work skin to simulate text messages. You may turn it off by clicking 'Hide Creator's Style', but it will affect the formatting slightly!

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

Shane's phone lit up on the nightstand and nearly vibrated off the edge. He'd been scrolling through his tablet, reviewing footage from morning skate, his dinner order already placed—salmon and brown rice, no butter, no sauce. The same meal he ate before every game. He was wearing his pajamas, and finished the five step Korean skincare routine. *His* routine.

His stomach dropped and twisted at the same time, which shouldn't have been possible. He picked up the phone.

Lily

Lily: you in Nashville?

The contact name still read Lily—unchanged for years now. Shane had thought about changing it dozens of times—typing out *Ilya* or *Rozanov*, thumb hovering over the save button, then chickening out and closing the edit screen. Lily was a joke, a holdover from when they were nineteen and stupid. Lily was safe.

Ilya was dangerous.

Shane stared at the message. Ilya was here. In Nashville. The same city. His thumb hovered over the keyboard, then pulled back. What was he supposed to say? What did Ilya want? His heart kicked against his ribs, too fast, and his free hand found the back of his neck, fingers kneading the tight muscle there. Shane hated that his body was already making decisions his brain hadn't agreed to yet. Like how his other hand, his thumb, was already halfway through typing: *Yes, there's a game tomorrow*

The response was immediate.

Lily

Lily: you in Nashville?

Shane: Yes, there's a game tomorrow

Lily: I know. Come out with me tonight.

Shane: Why are YOU in Nashville?

Shane chewed his lower lip. There wasn't a Bears game here so... why was Ilya? His thumbs were moving, and he typed: *What hotel are you at?*

... which he promptly deleted. That sounded like he was inviting himself over, which he definitely wasn't, even if the thought had crossed his mind three times since Ilya's first text. Every part of him was buzzing now. Wide awake in an instant, the part of him that missed Ilya never truly slept, and it woke up fast. *Ba-thump-thump*, his heart agreed.

Lily

Shane: Yes, there's a game tomorrow

Lily: I know. Come out with me tonight.

Shane: Why are YOU in Nashville?

Lily: <https://nashdowntown.com/events/>

Of course he'd avoided the question. Shane rolled his eyes and skimmed the digital flyer. Some band at some bar.

Lily

Lily: <https://nashdowntown.com/events/>

Shane: I've never heard of them

Lily: good!

Lily: no one will recognize you there. One drink. I will get you back early

Lily: unless you ask nicely to stay out longer 😊

Shane typed: *I can't.*

He stared at it. Deleted it. That sounded like an excuse. Like he didn't want to see Ilya, which wasn't true, which was the whole problem. He typed again: *Now?*

No. Too eager. He deleted it.

Lily

Lily: unless you ask nicely to stay out longer 😊

Shane: I can't go out on a game night

Lily: Not even when I ask nicely to suck your cock?

"Fuck, shit," Shane glanced at the door like someone might walk in and see the message glowing on his screen. His dick twitched in his sweats, which was the exact wrong reaction to have when he was supposed to be saying no.

He typed: *You can't just say that*

That sounded like a complaint, and it wasn't. It was more of an observation about how unfair Ilya was, how he knew exactly what buttons to push.

He tried again: *Maybe after the game*

No. That was basically saying yes. He deleted it.

What if someone recognizes us?

Too paranoid. Deleted.

I really shouldn't

Pathetic. Deleted.

Shane started pacing between the bed and the window, phone clutched in his hand, forking his fingers through his hair for the third time. What if someone saw them together? What if Ilya thought he was desperate, showing up like some... like they were... well, anything. They weren't dating. This was physical. Fun. Temporary. This was a fucking clandestine mess. Except Shane's chest ached every time they went weeks without talking, and that wasn't supposed to happen with casual hookups, or whatever he was calling this awful mess.

His phone buzzed.

Lily

Lily: unless you ask nicely to stay out longer 😊

Shane: I can't go out on a game night

Lily: Not even when I ask nicely to suck your cock?

Lily: so many little boxes Hollander

God, he could nearly *hear* him, that asshole. Rozanov's voice lived in the back of his head, curling around boxy English words and savouring the 'r' at the end of *Hollander* like a candy sweet on his tongue. No doubt he was smirking, too, and Shane's face went hot, flushing across his cheekbones where his freckles darkened against tan skin. Ilya could *see* him typing and deleting, typing and deleting like an idiot. He'd been caught overthinking, which somehow felt more exposing than anything else they'd done together.

He typed fast before he could second-guess it again:

Lily

Lily: so many little boxes Hollander

Shane: fine

And so he went; pajamas discarded, outfit changed twice before he could talk himself out of the door.

Printer's Alley at night was a riot of neon and noise spilling into the narrow street. During his panic stricken pacing, he'd looked the place up—how it used to be full of printing presses and publishing houses back when Nashville's newspapers ran here, before the clubs moved in during the '40s and turned the whole block into something else entirely. Brick buildings still looked the part, nineteenth-century facades stacked close together, but now they all wore glowing neon instead of newsprint.

String lights crisscrossed overhead between the old buildings, casting amber pools on the wet pavement where earlier rain still pooled in the uneven concrete. Somewhere behind the bar, a sign advertised Tennessee Whiskey Wednesdays which, judging by the crowd's volume... might have been *every* night. He'd seen photos online of bachelorettes in sparkly cowboy boots staggering through the alley like migrating birds, each group stamped with matching sashes proclaiming BRIDE TRIBE or LAST RIDE BEFORE THE BRIDE. Nashville seemed to treat weddings like a competitive sport.

Every bar entrance promised something different—live music, cold beer, escape—their signs competing in shades of pink and yellow and green that reflected in the puddles at Shane's feet.

And then, there it was.

Snitch had a line outside that trailed down the one side of Printer's Alley, but Ilya was leaning against the brick wall near the entrance, phone in hand. The cowboy hat hit Shane first—tan suede, wide brim, completely absurd on someone who'd grown up in Moscow, and probably still partly absurd to be worn at all even in Tennessee. Ilya straightened when he spotted him, that lazy grin spreading across his face.

“And this is what you come to me wearing? No disguise?”

Shane was still staring at the hat. This was a disguise...?

“Do not say anything about my hat,” Ilya said before Shane could open his mouth.

“I wasn't going to say anything,” Shane said, still staring. Suddenly he was more aware that he was just... wearing normal clothes. Had that been a mistake? Shane knew he was reasonably recognizable, a little famous even—extremely so, on the hockey scale—but less so on the regular scale, and even less on an international scale. The closest thing to hockey down here was the *singular* Predators jersey he passed on the way over, Subban's name still clinging to their back like a memory.

No one looked twice at him.

Surely he didn't need a disguise outside of Montreal, outside of Canada, and in this little alleyway in the middle of the country of Honky Tonk?

“You were thinking it very loud.” Ilya pushed off the wall and adjusted the hat. “Is American. When in Nashville, yes?”

“That’s not the saying.”

“Is my saying, and I like it. And you like me.” Ilya’s hand landed on Shane’s lower back, steering him toward the door, and Shane’s spine went rigid at the touch. They were in public. Anyone could see. But Ilya’s palm stayed there, warm through his shirt, as they bypassed the line. A neon sign promised Live Music Tonight, as if that wasn’t already happening in every building within shouting distance. Rozanov said something to the bouncer in rapid English, flashed two tickets on his phone, and then they were inside.

Bass hit Shane’s sternum, the rhythm claiming his ribs before his pupils widened enough to parse shadow from substance. Beneath dim lighting, the bar was small, all exposed brick walls industrial lights that glowed amber. A bar off to one side, little tables on the other. The ceiling hung low, black pipes crisscrossing overhead, and the checkered floor stretched back toward a small stage. Bodies packed the floor in front of the stage, the air thick with sweat and spilled beer and the fog machine haze catching colored lights. Shane’s shirt clung to his back within seconds, the heat trapped under the low ceiling.

Ilya leaned close to his ear. “You want a drink?”

Shane nodded because he couldn’t trust his voice. Ilya’s breath against his neck had already shorted out half his brain.

“Wait here. I will get drinks.” Ilya squeezed his shoulder and disappeared into the crowd, the stupid cowboy hat bobbing above the sea of heads.

No sooner than Ilya had darted off to track down some drinks, Shane was approached by a woman in a cropped tank top and cutoff shorts, her blonde hair in two long braids. She pressed close, her smile bright and confident. “Hey there, handsome. You look a little lonely. Want some company?”

She was looking at him with that curiosity he recognized: trying to place his ethnicity, whether she’d seen him before. Shane opened his mouth to decline, and he could already hear the long vowels in his own voice, soft and wrong in a room full of drawls. Would she be able to place his accent? Shane shifted his weight back, putting distance between them, only:

“He’s busy, sorry, sorry,” Ilya butted in, a beer in each hand as he cast a disdainful look in the woman’s direction. “Go away now. Shoo.”

“And what’re *you* doing with that hat, communist?” The woman scoffed in a poor imitation of his accent, glaring at his stupid cowboy hat. “You trying to blend in or something?”

Ilya didn’t miss a beat, gesturing with his bottle. “Yes, blending in just enough so I can go to your home and fuck your mother. You should not be talking to your stepfather this way. Go now, little girl.”

The woman rolled her eyes and abandoned the hunt, trudging off to find someone else to hook up with as the opener entered the stage. Ilya passed Shane a drink, hovering near his side. “This happen to you often?” He made a face. “It must be exhausting to have such a pretty face, Hollander.”

“Sometimes, but I don’t usually have someone to rescue me like that,” Shane shrugged, mentally recounting all the grabby-hands from overzealous fans and then all the various going-nowhere dates he’d been on before. Pretty girls with pretty smiles and pretty social media feeds and had stars in their eyes when they talked, when he paid for them to go out for some generic nice meal at a pretty-nice-generic-whatever restaurant. He went out. He *did*, with the team, with *girls*, but in terms of nights when it was just him at a bar... hm. When was the last time that happened?

“I owe you one, cowboy,” he said whilst simultaneously flicking the brow of Ilya’s hat. Shane pulled himself to lean against the counter itself, the wood sticky under his forearms, condensation from abandoned glasses pooling near his elbow as the lights dimmed for the next band on whatever lineup there was for this event. His head cocked to the side just so as he worked on his beer, watching as the woman slink back off into the crowd after her summary dismissal to find some other piece of ass for the night... and then watching Ilya as his shoulders dropped a touch, his free hand coming to rest on the counter next to Shane’s thigh, effectively body-blocking him from anyone else. Lingered close, hovering just at his side like...

Was that... possessiveness?

No, couldn’t be.

Shane took another swig of his beer and tried to convince himself. Ilya was just trying to keep other potential creeps from coming over, trying to keep both of their profiles low. Right. If people came in too close it could blow both their relative cover.

Incognito and undercover, like secret agents.

Ilya wasn’t at all jealous, not at all... Shane took another swig of his beer, not at all... hopeful.

Not for the first time, Shane glanced at the doorway. He shouldn’t be here, he should have stayed in his hotel room with his stupid bland salmon and brown rice. He could’ve said ‘no’, and gone to bed.

But Ilya was looking at him like *that*, and talking directly into his ear like *that*, like he had just before shoving him into the first available and convenient hotel mattress, like he had at that casino in Vegas after award ceremonies. Hot and focused, maybe a little predatory. Lilted voice rumbling like a purr and he wasn’t even fucking trying. Shane’s brain supplied the memory of Ilya’s head tipped back against the pillows, his throat exposed, the sounds he’d made when Shane had his mouth on him. The way he bit down on his lip when he...

Well fuck.

Shane drained half his beer in one go and hoped Ilya couldn't read his face.

The band started their set, heavier this time, and he tried to focus on the music. *Tried* being the operative word. The lead singer had a sultry, gravelly voice that filled the small venue, guitars layering over drums that thrummed up through his feet into his chest. It was good—energetic in a way that made the crowd sway and bob around them. He couldn't really recall the last time he'd gone anywhere just to see a band, either. Maybe that one time with Hayden —

Ilya leaned in, his mouth close to Shane's ear. "Music is always better live, yes?" His breath was warm against Shane's neck, and Shane had to grip his beer bottle tighter to keep his hand steady.

"Yeah," Shane managed. "Better."

Ilya stayed close for a beat longer than necessary before pulling back. Shane took another drink and watched the stage, trying not to overthink the distinct *lack* of space between them. Ilya's shoulder brushed his when someone pushed past behind them, and... once they were gone, neither of them moved away. The band transitioned into another song, faster, and the crowd pressed tighter toward the stage. Ilya's hand found Shane's lower back again, steadying him as bodies shifted around them. His palm was hot through Shane's shirt, his thumb resting just above Shane's belt.

"You having fun?" Ilya asked, leaning in again. His lips grazed Shane's ear this time, and Shane *knew* it wasn't on accident.

Shane's throat was dry. But. *But* instead of pulling away, he turned his head in, towards—be brave, Hollander—letting his lips brush against Ilya's jaw. "Yeah," he said, voice low enough that Ilya had to stay close to hear it. "I am."

"Ah. Good." Ilya's breath caught—just for a second, but Shane felt it. Good. He wasn't the only one losing his mind here. Ilya's fingers spread wider against his back, and Shane wondered if he could feel how fast Shane's heart was beating.

The band launched into their next song, heavier this time, the bass line thrumming up through Shane's feet and into his chest. The crowd surged forward, bodies pressing closer to the stage. Shane finished his beer and set the empty bottle on the bar behind him, his pulse still racing from the weight of Ilya's hand on his spine.

He could stay here all night, pressed against this bar with Ilya's breath on his neck every few minutes. That was safe, and no one would ever *know*. Or he could—

Or he could be brave. He could take what he wanted instead of waiting for Ilya to offer and to make the first move like he usually did. Shane had spent six years following Ilya's lead in this, waiting for texts, showing up when called, taking whatever Ilya was willing to give.

"Want to get closer?" Shane heard himself say. "To the stage, I mean."

Ilya's eyebrows lifted, that too-white grin of pearly fake teeth widening. "You want to dance with me, Hollander?"

Shane's face went hot, but he pushed off the bar and headed toward the crowd before he could overthink it. Ilya followed, his hand finding Shane's lower back again as they wove between bodies. That was normal. People did that at concerts and crowds and raves—entire trains of girls would link their hands up like daisy chains to snake through the throngs of people to get to the rail—and no one noticed or cared. Apart from Shane. Moving bodies kept pushing them together, the low ceiling trapping the heat and sound. The air grew thicker the closer they got to the little stage, humid with breath and bodies. Someone's elbow caught Shane's ribs. A girl stumbled past in heels, grabbing his shoulder to stay upright before disappearing into the mass of moving bodies. Lights strobed red and blue across the packed black-and-white checkerboard floor.

Shane turned to face the stage, but Ilya stayed close behind him, close enough that Shane could feel the heat radiating off his chest. They moved with the crowd at first, just swaying to the beat on that sticky floor, languorous and foolish and clearly just two friends, not even friends but two random men, enjoying the same song—

—but then Ilya's hands settled on Shane's hips from behind, fingers curling over, thumb sliding into the loop of his belt, and then they were dancing *together*.

And anyone—everyone—could see.

"I can hear you thinking again, Hollander. And we are *so* close to speakers," Ilya's hips pressed against him from behind, guiding Shane into the rhythm. Shane let himself follow, his head tipping back slightly as Ilya's breath ghosted over his neck again. Someone hooted nearby, glasses clinking at the bar, but the noise felt distant, muffled by the blood rushing in his ears. He stopped lying to himself. He did not come here for the sex. He came here because he was already gone, and had been for years.

"It is dark," Ilya murmured against his skin, "I have hat. You are not in Montreal, Hollander. No one cares how much you crave me here."

The music pounded through him, or maybe that was just his heartbeat. Ilya's fingers tightened on his hips, pulling Shane back harder against him, and Shane bit down on his lower lip to keep from making a sound. Ilya was right. No one here knew who he was. It was dark and the bar was small with a cover band playing and no one *cared*. Of course he'd never heard of the band, no one had. That was the *point*, and the greater irony wasn't lost on Shane either—that he felt safer being this close to another man here, in the middle of God fearing Tennessee, than he would anywhere in forward thinking Canada. Not because it was safer, but because he was *nobody* here. Outside of Americans that enjoyed Hockey, of which there was a startlingly less amount than those that worshipped football, he was anonymous. Montreal and home was nearly 2000 kilometers away. Everyone that cared about him, rookie of the year, *the* Shane Hollander, his marketing contracts, his team, all the parts of him that were not him at all, were so far gone that they disappeared on the horizon, leaving Shane here alone... with Ilya.

And it felt good to dance with him.

Too good.

Shane could name what he wanted now, standing here with Ilya's breath on his neck and his hands on Shane's hips: mornings. He wanted mornings, and waking up next to each other instead of Ilya slipping out before dawn like wraith or Shane escaping into lonely elevators. He wanted conversations that lasted longer than twenty minutes. He wanted the ability to text Ilya about the stupid thing Hayden said at practice without spending fifteen minutes agonizing over whether it was too much, whether it would make Ilya realize Shane thought about him constantly.

Because he *did*.

This was supposed to be uncomplicated. A release valve for the tension that built between them on the ice. For a no-strings-attached setup, all Shane could feel was *knots* anymore and... now that he was here and they were together, they were only just now starting to come a little bit loose. The beer had helped too.

Shane wasn't even drunk, but there was that shiver of loose anticipation anyway, inhibitions temporarily forgotten. He let his hips move, press. His own hand subtly covered Ilya's and squeezed, dragging him a millimeter closer still. Dancing side by side quickly starting to feel like more. Hands on his hips, back to chest, following the bassline with their pelvises. *Fuck*. Ilya's breath against his neck again. His voice. Shane's knees were weak, but Ilya held him close with one hand, guiding with the motion of his hips. That Shane was completely his to do with what he wanted, and he knew it. Maybe they both did.

"You are good at this," Ilya said into his ear, his voice rougher now. "I did not think you could dance. I wonder what else you are good at."

"Fuck. What are you *doing* to me?" Shane twisted his head to look at him, and their faces were too close, Ilya's eyes dark in the strobing lights. The song ended and the crowd roared, bodies pressing in from all sides, but Shane couldn't move. Couldn't breathe.

"Oh, I think I have an idea," Ilya purred against his neck, hands dipping lower, fingers toying with Shane's belt, the waistband of his jeans under his shirt, fingers hooking there, *under*.

"I've known it ever since we met. You're weak for me, all I have to do is whisper what I want. *Oh*, is that all for me? Hard already. You're aching, aren't you? You need me."

Yes.

Yes, he needed him.

Shane had needed him since that first time in the showers when they were eighteen and stupid and had no idea what they were starting. Shane Hollander, who'd built his whole career on control, on discipline, on doing the right thing—and here was Rozanov, seeing straight through him. Knowing exactly what Shane wanted before Shane could admit it to himself and, God, Shane wanted to be known like this. He wanted Ilya to keep looking at him like he was the only thing in the room, to be this hungry, this reckless, this *alive*. No one else made him feel like this. No one else saw past the captain, Mr. Perfect, Montreal's golden boy. Just *Shane*, desperate and burning and exactly where he wanted to be.

“We should—” Shane started, but his voice came out wrecked.

“Yes,” Ilya said, not even waiting for Shane to finish. “We should.”

The band started once more, one of their more popular songs, and a throng of blonde cowboy boot wearing women rushed at the stage, leaving a thin escape route behind them towards the back of the bar.... And that was how they ended up in the dark supply closet, the one beside the bathrooms, Ilya’s belt jingling as their eyes fought to adjust to the darkness. One hand on the knob to keep it shut tight, the other gripping Shane’s hip as Ilya sank to the filthy concrete floor.

“I ask nicely for this, remember?”

That asshole! This idiot! Shane’s belt came undone in a fraction of a second, jeans and underwear pulled out of the way like afterthoughts, and then Ilya’s mouth was on him. They were going to get caught, *anyone* could walk in, meeting up was one mistake but this would end both their careers! Shane fucking hated how Ilya brought out the worst of him, the part of him that didn’t *care* about being caught. He hated him. But Rozanov was, as always, really good at sucking cock, and he was, for whatever reason, willing to kneel in the filth like this for the opportunity.

And Shane wanted him incandescently.

Shane had to stifle the sounds he was making with a hand clamped over his mouth. Oh, *oh*, he had missed this, too many weeks between what secretive meetups they had in Canada. The heat, the pressure, the way Ilya looked up at him in the dark—Shane’s head hit the shelf behind him, his other hand finding Ilya’s hair. He could feel Ilya’s tongue, his lips, the obscene wet sounds barely covered by the music pounding through the walls. His knees nearly gave out when Ilya took him deeper.

He wasn’t going to last long like this.

“Get up, Rozanov—I—”

“You what, Hollander?”

“Fuck you. I need you.”

“Mmm. Yes, you do.”

And then they were shuffling again, grappling hands and open mouth kisses in the dark. Fingers trailing down, lube from Ilya’s because of course he brought some, because of *course* he had to know this would happen, then pressing, opening, and Shane had to screw his eyes shut because there it was again, the worst fucking part. Biting back weak, pathetic, little noises as he huffed and panted against the shelf drilled into the wall, feeling ridiculously exposed and open as Ilya’s fingers bullied their way inside. Ilya’s mouth slid off of Shane’s cock with a parting lick to the head that sent a jolt straight through Shane’s body, and said, “If you do not relax, I cannot give you what you want.”

“Right—fuck, okay.”

Shane forced himself to exhale, willing himself to relax despite the absurdity of the how and the what of his life. Fucking in a supply closet. This was a bad idea, a terrible idea, and if they were caught...

... but... Ilya seemed to love bad ideas, just as he seemed to love coaxing Shane into readiness. Despite his brain, despite the very real risk, Shane finally relaxed as Rozanov opened him with strong fingers and open-mouthed kisses on the insides of his thighs, and once he was ready, Ilya stood, leaving them back to chest once more, just like on the dance floor only this time he could *feel* all of him for real. Unlike their romps in hotels, there was little time for gentleness or patience for this though, and Shane had to bite down on his fist as Ilya pushed inside. It was rough. It was needy. And, honestly, Shane wanted the hint of pain, judging from how poorly he was muffling his moans now.

Thank fuck for the band playing louder than ever.

Shane’s mind was fracturing into pieces—the physical sensation overwhelming, yes, but underneath it the horrible knowledge that this was Ilya, that Shane had walked out of his hotel room and come here and let this happen because he *wanted* it, *needed* it more than he needed to be careful. And that was... terrifying, horrifying, all consuming. Rozanov made him senseless, Rozanov made him feel and crave and made a mess of him with the best sex of his life.

“Hush, Hollander. Anyone walking past will hear you,” Ilya hissed, not slowing down at all, the roll of his hips pulling another quiver out of the man against him.

“Rozanov you asshole—”

“Sh. Do not worry, Hollander, I am going to fuck you like you want.”

Ilya fucked like he talked: mean and sharp around the edges, pearly-white fake teeth and real bite, mean and soft, ruthless and downright *greedy*. His hand, with its golden skin and knobby knuckles pressed hard at the base of Shane’s own blushing cock, not so much teasing him but holding him there, firmly in place, so Ilya could better ruin him. The sound of him, breathing hard, *fucking* hard, and the slap of his sack echoing loudly in the tight space of the storage closet. There was a brief flare of pain from his ribs that he promptly ignored. A sting in his palm from where one hand scraped across the shelving, a protest from the muscles in his thighs from being pressed into strange angles, and then the brutal way Ilya was driving his cock inside. All Shane could do was hope that some poor janitor didn’t open the door needing a mop.

But it was hard to even worry anymore. Pressed up so tightly against each other, Shane’s mind was in a haze. Anyone could walk in on them at any second. Anyone could be listening just outside the door. Another deep roll, that strangled, muffled sound from behind Shane’s hand over his mouth. Ilya paused for a moment to catch his breath, likely burning up in too many layers in the stupidly hot closet, the lack of air flow and physical exertion already taxing. Shane whined and pushed back on him to spur him into resuming, needy and demanding.

Soft, depraved sounds were ripped from his throat as Ilya hilted deep inside—god, he was so fucking thick—and even though they were rushing, even though there was a broom poking into his ribs, all Shane could feel were the rising, overflowing, *immolating* ramps of pleasure rising like the tide each time Ilya snapped his hips forward. Every hit was like a lightning bolt through his spine and fracturing outwards to the tips of his toes and fingers. The only thing keeping him from floating away entirely was that goddamn voice in his ear and the way the 'R' of his last name rolled off the devil's tongue.

"*Yebat'*, Hollander, look at that face, absolutely gone and just needing to be fucked. You want it more than air. Sitting so pretty for my cock." Ilya leaned over his back, pressing him further into the shelving as his hand moved to stroke Shane's straining shaft, teeth nipping at his ear. Shane suddenly felt very small pressed against the wall and shelf, which was just as ridiculous as it'd always been because he *wasn't* small at all. He was nearly six feet tall, a wall of muscle, but there was Rozanov, *Ilya*, smirking down at him. Ilya's teeth at his ear, his throat, looking like he was choosing where to leave a mark, and Shane felt a flutter of horrible excitement.

How had no one found them yet? How soon would they? What would they think when they inevitably stumbled on them in the middle of the fucking supply closet next to the mop bucket and the cleaning supplies? He didn't get to think about it long, another filthy string of praise and debauchery purred into his ear:

"Such a good hole for me," Ilya groaned, nipping him again. "So tight. So warm. Fuck, Hollander, *ah*. You make me lose control."

Shane glared back over his shoulder at him, about to say—what could he even say? That the praise made his head spin? That he wanted to ask *do you mean it, am I actually good for you, or is this just what you say? Do you say this to anyone else?* But then—*ah!* Right there! The angle shifted and Shane forgot how to think, forgot everything except Ilya's hands on him and the sound of his name on that elegant tongue. Sparks and stars shot behind his eyes, wet heat building in sticky sweet pressure in his gut, rolling outwards towards his fingers. "Oh fuck, oh fuck, right there, don't stop—"

Boxes and bottles on the shelf rattled as Ilya pounded into him, hoping that the slap of flesh and breathy grunts were covered enough by the band to go unheard. His thumb rolled over the tip of Shane's leaking cock, stroking him against the timing of his own thrusts, giving Shane nowhere to go without pleasure.

He hummed in his ear, lips kissing over Shane's throat as a roll of paper towels fell to the ground, the racks shaking in time with his thighs. "Come on, Hollander. Come for me. I want it all, give it to me, taking my cock so well, and I want you to *come* as I fill you up. And then we're going to walk all the way back to your fancy hotel, this perfect hole dripping what I give you the whole way. And if you are good, if you ask *very* nicely, I will fuck it into you even deeper on the bed. This is what you wanted, yes? Ah. Prove it. *Come* for me, Shane. *Solnyshko*."

He had no idea what it meant, but the words were soft, velvet and sweet, and then a featherlight kiss to his neck.

Ilya fucked like he talked, yes, but also like how he played hockey: brutal and unrelenting and impossible to defend against. But then he'd do this, these soft moments and the gentleness destroyed him. As soon as Ilya pressed that last little kiss to his throat, so tender that he could be fooled to think it was love, so sweet his heart nearly cracked open, Shane came, right on command.

The world disappeared for a moment, somehow white and black at the same time as he pulsed into Ilya's waiting hand. He could feel his muscles spasming around the thickness of the cock in him, a cock that was grinding against him, into him, and against his prostate nonstop as Ilya came too. Boneless against the shelves and held up against Rozanov's, for a moment, he thought he was going to pass out. But then Ilya uncurled, and pulled Shane just enough up his cock to relieve the pressure against his core. Shane's breath was harsh in his own ears as he tried to pull his scattered mind back together, and when he shifted his legs to try and at least attempt to stand on his own, they trembled wildly.

Brain buzzing, Shane tried to hold onto something—the shelf, his composure, any sense of who he was supposed to be tomorrow. But Ilya was murmuring something soft in Russian—Huh? What?—and Shane's heart *hurt* with how much he wanted to understand it, wanted to know if Ilya felt even a fraction of this terrifying thing building between them. Then Ilya was pulling out achingly slow, creating an emptiness like a despicable void inside of Shane, one he simultaneously needed to be filled again and wanted to remain empty forever.

They weren't dating, they weren't... anything. It was a bad idea, the worst idea, to want him so much. It was a mistake to come out here tonight, the night before a *game*, just to cling to these scraps of moments.

Shane felt himself be spun around slowly and then propped on trembling limbs against the wall as Ilya straightened both their clothes without a word, leaving him leaking and ruined, just as promised, murmuring something soft and in Russian. Dazed still, Shane wrapped weak fingers around the nape of Ilya's neck to pull him down to, against sense and better judgement, kiss him again. Ilya startled, tensed, and then melted against his lips, giving back what softness he was given tenfold.

They weren't dating. They weren't anything.

... at least not by any definition they'd ever spoken aloud. Just this tacit understanding: text when you're in town, don't ask for more.

So why was Ilya looking at him like *that*, with those sparkling gold-green eyes, that curl to his lip, that...

Ilya pulled back first, his forehead resting against Shane's for a moment before he straightened and reached down to tuck Shane's shirt back in. His hands were quick but gentle, fingers smoothing the fabric into place. Shane's legs trembled when he tried to stand fully, and Ilya's hand found his elbow, steadying him.

"You good, Hollander?" Ilya's voice was quieter than usual, his accent thicker.

Shane nodded, not trusting himself to speak. His brain felt like static.

Hat back on, Ilya cracked the door open, checked the hallway, then led them back out into the venue. The band was still playing, the crowd still swaying, and no one looked twice at them slipping back into the noise and heat. Shane followed Ilya through the bodies, his hand finding the back of Ilya's shirt without thinking, keeping contact as they navigated toward the exit.

Outside, the night air hit Shane's overheated skin, cooling the sweat on his neck. His ears rang in the sudden relative quiet of the street. A group stumbled past, laughing, heading toward Broadway. Neon still reflected in the wet pavement, pink and blue and yellow bleeding together. He took a breath, trying to pull himself back together, but then he looked down.

Their fingers were laced together.

Shane's heart lurched. Ilya was holding his hand. On the sidewalk. In public. Ilya's thumb was stroking across his knuckles like this was normal, like they did this every day, like Shane was his. Like they were—like this was—

This wasn't hooking up in a supply closet where no one could see. This wasn't sneaky link texting at two in the morning. This was Ilya's thumb stroking across his knuckles on a fucking public street where anyone walking by could see them. Where someone could take a *photo*, and this could become real in a way that would follow them both home. This was what Shane wanted and what he could barely name since Vegas, the same amorphous need that had haunted him for years now.

But here it was. Ilya's hand in his. And it might ruin him to keep it, because Shane knew he could *lose* this. One question, one moment of honesty, one admission that this meant more than it should and they'd fall over the precipice, the one that meant that Ilya could pull away forever and end whatever it was this was, then disappear all over. And Shane would have to live with that, would have to go back to playing against him four times a year and pretend he wasn't frozen still, barely breathing, every time Ilya checked him into the boards.

Having him like this—in pieces, in stolen hours, ephemeral moments that dissolved by morning—was better than not having him at all.

Ilya's thumb stroked across his knuckles, and Shane looked up to find him watching with an unreadable expression, the stupid cowboy hat shadowing his eyes.

"What?" Ilya asked, looking to his left, to his right, and finding the street mostly empty outside of the occasional straggler hopping from bar to bar or waiting for their ride.

Shane swallowed hard. "Nothing."

Ilya knew. He had to know, had to know how whipped Shane was for him. Had even said it: *This is what you wanted, yes?*

Even worse, Shane knew the answer.

Leaving them... where?

They walked in silence down Printer's Alley, Ilya's thumb still tracing patterns on Shane's knuckles. The street was quieter here, the tourists thinning out as they got farther from the more famous Broadway only a few blocks over. Shane's hotel was six blocks north. He should pull his hand away. Should say goodnight. He had a game tomorrow. He didn't let go.

"Come on," Ilya said, tugging him forward. "Your hotel is this way, yes?"

Shane's pulse kicked up again despite everything they'd just done. "And how do you know where my hotel is?"

"I looked up your team schedule. You like fancy shitty places." Ilya glanced at him, grin crooked.

All Shane could do was blink at him.

"*What?* I have marketing gig—either in Chicago or Nashville. You think that was accident? What am I to do in Chicago all alone?"

Oh. There it was again. Rozanov said things so bluntly, so obviously, like the answer was as clear as the neon signs. Like Chicago hadn't even been a real option. Like choosing Nashville was the obvious answer to the question: *Where might Shane Hollander lose his mind the fastest?*

Shane's throat went tight, unable to swallow the realization that Rozanov had planned this. Had chosen Nashville over Chicago because Shane would be here. Had researched bars where no one would recognize them. Had bought tickets to a band he'd never heard of. Had *thought* about this, about Shane, which meant—

It meant Ilya wanted to see him. Had been thinking about him.

"Yeah," Shane said quietly, dropping Ilya's hand. "It's this way."

"Good," Rozanov said, barely acknowledging the distance. "I have another promise to keep. Assuming you say *please*."

"Fuck off, Rozanov."

"Oh, I plan to," Ilya said, migrating the stupid cowboy hat from his head onto Shane's, messing up the dark hair there. "Maybe I see you ride this time, hm cowboy? Do a little work? Is like rodeo."

"Seriously, I mean it, fuck *off* Rozanov—"

But he only laughed, and Shane's heart did a horrible little flip flop in his chest. They walked side by side, hands no longer linked but occasionally brushing, and Shane tried not to think about tomorrow. How he'd probably show up exhausted and distracted. How much trouble he'd be in if anyone found out.

How little he *cared* right now.

Tomorrow felt like another country. Tonight, Ilya's shoulder kept brushing his, and Shane couldn't remember why he was supposed to care, how he could care, about anything else.

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Snitch in Printer's Alley is a real bar in Nashville, TN, which is a great time and I highly recommend it.

Please don't fuck in the closet and do remember to tip your bartender.

And last but not least... thanks for reading! If you liked it, I'd love to yap in the comments.

Not sure what to say? Comment anxiety? How about...

- ❤️ "I liked/loved it!"
- 🌈 "this wasn't my favorite"
- 🤡 "save a horse, ride a Rozanov"
- 🏒 "dumb hockey boys make me happy"
- 🗡️ "this usually isn't my thing... and yet"
- 💀 "how dare you (affectionate)"

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