

81 - ROZANOV

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81 - ROZANOV

by [OpalApparition](#)

Summary

They were always Rozanov and Hollander.

Last names like armor, like the numbers on their backs, 81 and 24, nothing more.

Then: tuna melts, ginger ale, and *Shane*.

Notes

This was written based off of ticklefighthockey's post [here on Tumblr](#).

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



Hollander.

Hollander...

Shane's reflection stared back at him from the Uber's foggy window, half his face lit by passing streetlights. Outside, Boston was a smear of streetlights and gray slush. His shoes were untied, since he'd shoved his feet into them at a sprint. He was still wearing Rozanov's fucking shirt and his underwear was likely still lying there on the bedroom floor; a messy, cotton ghost of the man he'd been just hours ago.

Do you like them? Girls.

His stomach churned. The lie had been: *I like girls*. The truth was stuck in his throat: *not really, not the way I'm supposed to*, and it was like acid on his tongue, as impossible to admit as it was to stay.

The driver had the heat on too high. Vanilla air freshener, thick and cloying, barely masked the smell of stale fries..

I like girls. But I also like you.

And the tuna melts. The ginger ale Ilya had stocked just for him. Sitting on that couch together, Ilya's hand in his hair, watching hockey like they were—like they could be—

What? *What* could they be?

Thinking about this was dangerous. Thinking led straight to the minefield of *feeling*, and today had already been one giant, catastrophic detonation.

He counted passing cars. Billboards. Buildings. Anything to make his mind go blank.

Shane.

Once the taxi dropped him off, he walked inside.

The lobby was too bright. His head pounded. Nausea rose in waves.

He was going to be fucking *sick*.

Shane kept his head down, counted the elevator buttons, and tried not to think about how Rozanov looked, the way he *sounded* when he said his name. Between them it had always been Rozanov and Hollander. Last names. Safe distance. Meaningless sex.

Until he'd said *Shane*.

Hayden looked up from his laptop when Shane walked in. "How'd it go with Boston Lily?" he asked. "You in love?"

"No!"

Shane dropped his jacket on the chair. "I—there is no 'Boston Lily', I mean, I wasn't—I wasn't seeing her. I'm gonna take a shower."

"Riiight. Okay dude," Hayden said, eyes narrowing just slightly as he gave a full head to toe once-over. "And the shower's to wash off the sex you *weren't* having?"

"Go fuck yourself, Hayden."

"Oh, I did. Couple of times." He winked, though he was still looking Shane over. "Thanks for the empty room."

Shane flipped him off and locked himself in the bathroom.

Inside, he turned the shower on full blast, hot enough to scald, loud enough to cover the sound when he dropped to his knees and retched into the toilet. His whole body heaved. Once, twice. Everything from Rozanov's kitchen coming back up: tuna, bread, ginger ale that burned his throat on the way out.

Shane.

He retched again. Pressed his forehead to his arm.

He could still feel the sweetness of Rozanov's mouth on his, and then—God, his *face*. The face that had, for one blasphemous hour, been Ilya's, and not an idol's. Then, in the space between one retch and the next, it was gone. He was just Hollander again, kneeling at the porcelain altar of his own panic.

He dry heaved a third time, knees creaking against the linoleum floor, head bowed.

This... this was what panic tasted like, Shane realized miserably, what running away felt like after leaving half a heart behind on a sofa.

Shane flushed, rinsed his mouth at the sink, and stepped into the shower. The water was hot enough to hurt, washing away the smell of Ilya's bedsheets, of ginger ale, of tuna. The phantom weight of Ilya's hand in his hair. If he could wash it all away, maybe he could pretend it never happened—that they were still just **81 - ROZANOV** and **24 - HOLLANDER**, two jerseys in a rink and not even people.

Shane stayed under the spray until his skin went red, until his lungs burned from the steam, until that was the only reason he couldn't catch his breath.

When he finally came out in sweats and an old Voyageurs t-shirt, Hayden was still sprawled out on his bed, scrolling through online forums. He glanced up, and Shane watched as Hayden's mouth flattened, the sharp line of a joke dying before it reached his lips.

Had Hayden heard him in there? Were his eyes red?

"Holls..." Hayden set his laptop aside. "Shane, you okay?"

And there it was, his *name*. Again. Shane sucked in a breath, trying to swallow past the dry knot forming in his throat and ignoring the very real, very *poorly timed* and astute concern, and how Hayden's gaze fixed on the tremor in his hands. Hayden had always been good at reading him, and sometimes it sucked to have a friend that knew him so well.

"I'm fine, man," Shane assured. "Seriously."

Hayden's eyes tracked over Shane's face, and he was sure he was taking a catalog of a ruin: the damp hair, the red-scrubbed skin, the way Shane couldn't quite meet his gaze.

"Alright, dude."

Hayden didn't push, which was worse somehow. It meant he knew.

Hayden pushed when things didn't matter, like when he'd ragged on and on about Shane's terrible taste in music, his obsessive 'bird-food' meal prep, and the way he color-coded his training schedule. Hayden went quiet when things were serious. When things were bad. This was bad.

Instead he just asked lightly: "Do you still want to go to team dinner at six? I was thinking about calling it an early night tonight and just flopping."

And then, right there, all the things he loved about Hayden and his *excellently timed* rescues. An out. An escape. Hayden was giving him an excuse without making him ask for it.

"Uh... I mean, if you're thinking about skipping," Shane started, sitting down heavily on his own bed, "... maybe I could stay back with you. Order room service?"

"*And* watch shitty hotel TV. There's a whole channel here that's just *Forensic Files* episodes back to back."

Shane nodded and let himself lay back against the cushions. His phone felt like a lead weight in his palm.

He opened his messages and scrolled to Rozanov's contact. *Lily*, and beneath all the evidence of years of hiding and scheming logistics. *Your place or hotel. Can't tonight, early practice. That thing you did with your tongue—do that again.*

He touched the contact name. Three options appeared:

Edit. Send Message. Delete Contact.

Three choices laid bare on a glowing screen. To delete was to perform a minor, modern exorcism. To banish 'Lily,' a ghost who never even lived, and pretend it could unmake the haunting.

His thumb hovered. A pixel away from absolution.

He should do it. He'd deleted numbers before—girls who wanted more than he could give, who started hinting about meeting parents or talked about next summer like Shane would still be around. He could do this, and it would be over.

But... his thumb wouldn't move. Deleting *Lily*, phantom or not, wouldn't delete what *happened*. A little button on a phone couldn't also delete tuna melts or feelings or the look on Rozanov's face, the feeling of his hands on his ribs, the sparkle in his eyes, or the fact that Shane had years now so desperately trying to convince himself that this was really just that—just sex—and he could be just as unattached as Ilya Rozanov.

Ilya Rozanov that liked *girls*, that was only wasting time with him because he was easy when they were in the same city, and—

And Ilya Rozanov who'd made him a fucking sandwich with a cold ginger ale and broke him open with his *name*.

Ilya Rozanov who was, for the first time, just *Ilya* from his own lips and it'd been terrifying and fragile and Shane had broken *him* open in return after he felt that little sigh of relief, that melt of Ilya's body against his, *kissing* him and it felt like *home* and—

He closed the app and put the phone face-down on the nightstand.

"So, *Forensic Files* or the complete collection of best horror movies from 2015?"

"You *hate* horror movies," Shane reminded him.

"Yeah, well," Hayden shrugged. "*You* like them. Oh, shit man, look, they've got *Alien*, too. Didn't you say that was like a perfect movie, Mr. Movie Buff?"

He did. Ripley, chased by a creature never fully seen, never named beyond *alien*, didn't worry about names. About feelings. No time to panic-puke in bathrooms.

She was a badass.

If only he could be one too.

The movie played. Hayden half-watched the chestbuster scene. Shane's mind drifted back across Boston. Back to that couch.

You called me Shane, oh fuck, oh fuck, and I ran.

—was Rozanov still there? Had he gotten up and thrown out the half-finished sodas? Washed the dishes?

Was Rozanov still there? Had he thrown out the half-finished sodas? Washed the dishes?

Bile rose in Shane's throat. The nausea returned. Had it ever left?

It was easy here, with Hayden, to pretend that it was all because of the movie, because of the eponymous alien ripping people's hearts out, and not because he'd ripped one out himself today, and that he knew—he *knew*—if Rozanov were to call him now, that he would answer.

Shane watched the screen as the creature tore through another member of the crew, thinking it looked a lot cleaner, even with all the blood, than the way the truth was trying to claw its way out of his own ribs.

That if *Ilya* asked him to come back, Shane would go.

But Ilya didn't call, and Shane didn't see him again until the Montreal-Boston game.

Shane crouched at center ice, stick poised. Across from him, Ilya settled into position, eyes forward, face blank.

"Rozanov." Shane kept his voice low. "About yesterday, I..."

Nothing. Ilya's gaze tracked the referee's hand, his jaw set. He could have been staring at a wall.

The puck hadn't even dropped and Shane already knew he'd lost something.

The space between them, usually electric with heat and foul language, had gone dead. A vacuum. The smirk was gone, replaced by a flat, punishing line. The air between them had turned to static.

He hadn't realized how much he looked forward to it. The arrogant once-over before the whistle. That lazy sweep of eyes that said *I know exactly where this is going*. Even the infuriating swipe of tongue over lips.

All of it, gone.

All night, Shane had braced for shrapnel, for a fight, a cruel joke, a searing remark. He *deserved that, and it would've—he would've understood, it was fair—*

But no, there was just this terrible glacial disregard, the aftermath to the explosion, where all the oxygen and sound and life had been sucked away, leaving only this killing cold.

Shane's palms slicked against his stick. "Ilya—"

The puck hit the ice.

Ilya's stick snapped forward. Shane lunged a half-second too slow, his timing shot, his weight caught on the wrong edge of his skates, and the puck was already gone, sent cleanly ahead to Boston's offense while Ilya skated away without a single glance back.

Shane straightened, sucking air through his teeth.

Hayden coasted past him. "The hell was that?"

Shane couldn't answer. He watched that name—**ROZANOV**—stitched in block letters across his shoulders.

That's where they ended. Where the whatever-the-fuck of them died.

At first names.

Ahead, Ilya *attacked*, and Montreal's defense buckled. He was always aggressive on the ice, lethal even, but there'd always been... warmth to it. Banter or taunts or something that had him wearing that shit-eating grin.

Yesterday, there had been Ilya. The cold ginger ale. The thumb against his lip. The soft, huffed breath of a name.

This is nothing, Hollander.

Today, there was only the jersey. The ice. **81 - ROZANOV** scoring the first goal of the game.

0-1

[Bsky](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [My Hollanov fics on AO3](#)

Like it? Hate it? I'd love to yap in the comments. I am lowkey zooted on pain medication after hurting my hand Monday and this was unbeta'd, so apologies for typos.

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

- ❤️ “I liked/loved it!”
- 🌈 “this wasn't my favorite”
- 🥪 “tuna melts are the sandwich of ANGST”
- 🥤 “the fact that Ilya went grocery shopping for sodas just for Shane KILLS ME”
- 🗡️ “this usually isnt my thing... and yet”
- 💀 “how dare you (affectionate)”

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