and should i wedded be

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by intertwingular

Summary

INSIDE HOCKEY'S ROYAL WEDDING

NHL stars Ilya and Shane Rozanov-Hollander tie the knot.

or, the Vogue Wedding Article

Notes

a quick disclaimer that this is a mishmash of book and tv show canon. the "cottage" (which is a fucking ridiculous thing to call that MASSIVE HOUSE, SHANE) is in quebec (tv show) instead of ontario (books). but i kept the book team names, partially because if i had to type MHL like 4000 times, i genuinely would have lost my damn mind. also voyageurs is such a better name than "metropolitans". what even is that! i also tweaked the wedding details - shane and ilya get married in the lakehouse, rather than in their ottawa home. i think it makes a lot more sense, symbolically (place where they resolve to actually come together for the first time, communication, privacy, etc.), and i think having a backyard wedding by a lake is waaaay more picturesque than a backyard in suburban ottawa.

if you have never read a vogue weddings piece, the general premise is that it's fashion/culture oriented reporting on relatively famous figures' weddings, or particularly beautiful weddings submitted to be featured. i figured ilya and shane would likely be asked to allow a feature to be written, but then something...else...happened in the meantime.

i wrote this in a fugue state over the course of 2 days. it is genuinely insane what these two gay boys have done to me. what the hell! (guy who absolutely fell for it again)

i hope you enjoy.

See the end of the work for more notes

INSIDE HOCKEY'S ROYAL WEDDING

NHL stars Ilya and Shane Rozanov-Hollander tie the knot

Olive Acosta
Senior Staff Writer, Vogue Sports

THIS IS NOT THE NORMAL KIND OF WEDDING WRITE-UP I DO. As a matter of fact, I don't normally *do* weddings — so a quick *thank you!* to both my marvelous section chief, Alma Feldman, who agreed to reshape my fanatic begging (a 15-email long chain, wherein three of those 15 emails were simply the words *ALMA PLEASE I WILL DIE IF I CAN'T DO THIS!* in as many different fonts as Gmail would allow me) into a somewhat sensible pitch, which was then given to our Weddings' chief, Francois Bouchard, who is also owed many, many thanks for allowing me to transcend my post to write this, very unusual, wedding feature.

Which I've also already botched — so let me say it, albeit belatedly, *днём свадьбы!* to NHL superstars Ilya and Shane Rozanov-Hollander. This weekend, the couple tied the knot in an intimate lakeside ceremony, held in the backyard of their idyllic cottage deep in the Quebecois wilderness. The guest list was a veritable whos-who in the world of professional hockey and beyond, ranging from Montreal Voyageur left winger, Hayden Pike — Hollander's best man — to Russian socialite Svetlana Vetrova — Rozanov's best woman — and even New York Admirals' captain, Scott Hunter, accompanied by his partner, Christopher "Kip" Grady.

But undoubtedly, even though the guest list was star-studded and stunning for it, there's no denying that the happy couple were the real stars of the show. Both Rozanov-Hollanders were rather bridal in their white wedding suits.

Hollander wore custom Peter Do: a single-breasted suit made of cream-colored silk with a striking asymmetrical train — a clear callback to the designer's recent work with flowing, asymmetrical cape-coats. Do was one of three designers guessed to potentially be behind the groom-to-be's wedding look, prior to the day itself, due to Hollander's ongoing collaboration with the New York based Vietnamese designer.

Rozanov, on the other hand, went a bit more traditional: a custom-made Brunello Cucinelli tuxedo, pinstriped so subtly that you couldn't even tell that it was until the golden threads caught the sunlight as it reflected off the lake. Unlike his husband, Rozanov has always been well-known for his striking fashion choices — long-time fans of his may remember those bear-rug patterned Jean Paul Gaultier shirts he had often been papped in during the mid-2010's — which made this rather reserved choice in wedding attire all the more striking.

Reportedly, Hollander was given away by his father, David Hollander, with mother-in-law Yuna Hollander standing in for Rozanov's departed parents (Grigori and Irina Rozanov) beside him at the end of the aisle. Hayden Pike's youngest daughter, Amber, was the couple's flower girl, while their dog, Anya, served as ringbearer.

All-in-all, it was a rather austere event — typical of the couple, who are notoriously private, despite their less-than private relationship reveal a few years back. It should also come as no surprise that the reception afterwards was far less so — I mean, if there's one thing professional hockey players know how to do, it's party like rockstars. It took barely thirty minutes for a keg to appear on the patio, which had already been decked out in fairy lights and tasteful floral arrangements — courtesy of Yuna Hollander — in preparation for the reception, which also took place at the couple's lakeside home.

The couple reappeared at the reception half an hour after it began, looking much more casual. Rozanov, in a return to form, emerged in a nearly sheer, barely buttoned, silk Gucci shirt, his tailored wedding slacks, and a pair of hot pink dollar-store flip-flops. Hollander looked comfortable, pressed against his husband's side in a sky-blue button down and a pair of loose linen board shorts — likely in deference to the balmy summer breeze that had been blowing through the backyard since the ceremony began.

And were this another Vogue Wedding write up, this would be where the article ended — I might include a few more lines about how beautiful the reception was, or how happy the grooms' friends and family seemed to be. I might even tell you how incandescently in love Hollander and Rozanov seemed with one another that night — no more so during their first dance, set to a slow, Russian song, which I later learned was a favorite of Rozanov's deceased mother — but you might remember how I confessed, at the very start, that this was not a normal Vogue Wedding report.

No, the most unusual part of the Rozanov-Hollander wedding was the fact that both Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov agreed to sit down with me before their big day and talk: about moving teams (Boston to Ottawa, Montreal to Ottawa), their career-spanning rivalry, the Irina Foundation, and most importantly, the road to getting married.

SHANE HOLLANDER MEETS ME AT THE EDGE OF THE GRAVEL-LINED DRIVEWAY LEADING TO THEIR LAKESIDE COTTAGE. As a sports-adjacent writer, I'm well-used to seeing athletes both in uniform and out — once (and she has graciously given me permission to rehash this incident in print), Korean skating champion Corinna Kim and I had been speaking in her locker room just after her win at Pyeongchang, and she had flashed me — just for a moment, and purely by accident. (We both had a good laugh about it once her mortification wore off, and have remained somewhat in touch ever since.) So I've always figured there was very little about seeing athletes in a state of relative undress that could shock me.

I was wrong. Standing there, in jeans and an old Boston Bears hoodie that must have been his fiance's, I found that Shane Hollander cuts a very different figure, from the rink, to the press room, to here, in front of his home — where he lives with his then-fiance, now-husband and their rescue dog, Anya.

“I was worried you might’ve gotten lost on your way in,” Hollander tells me, as he leads me up the drive, and through the half-cracked front doors. “There are a couple of different paths in this area — you know, other people with homes that are also pretty far out. I figured I’d wait for you out front — maybe be able to spot you if you took a turn towards our neighbor’s place.”

I ask him if his neighbor is someone I should be worried about, while he offers me a bottle of sparkling water. “Not really,” Hollander says. “It’s just — well, we’ve never met. But I’d like to respect their privacy anyway.” He laughs, gesturing at himself. “You know how it is.”

I guess I do. Many sports-slash-features writers in the past have bemoaned Shane Hollander’s infamous reticence towards the press. Sure, he’ll play gamely along with post-game questions, and even ones hurled at him when the Voyageurs and now the Centaurs would hold open practices. But anything beyond that — sans that one, hour-long Spittin’ Chiclets interview he did back in 2019 — is like attempting to break into Fort Knox. The amount of *Unfortunately, Shane is unavailable to comment at this point in time* emails that sit in my inbox alone could paper several large buildings. To say nothing of the poor bastards over at the Athletic.

So why me? I ask him. Why Vogue?

Hollander looks at me consideringly. “I don’t say this as an insult. But, um, I’m sorry if it comes across as one,” he tells me. “But Vogue felt easier. Not as high stakes.”

That’s fair. Vogue has never had the history more established, sports-centric publications like The Athletic, or even Deadspin, have with the Rozanov-Hollanders, to say nothing of their relationships with hockey as a sport. As a publication, it took until April 2002, with the “Shape Issue,” for Vogue to begin covering sports in a more holistic — not as purely aesthetic — manner.

Is it about who’ll read this article, then? I have to ask.

“No, not at all,” Hollander assures me. He braces himself easily against the lip of the large, dark marble island at the center of the kitchen. The lakehouse is all open concept — one room flowing seamlessly into another. The sliding doors to the deck are open, just beyond the fridge, and Hollander invites me to step out into the early-summer sunshine to speak on the patio — the very same one that would later house his wedding reception, a week later. “It’s just — look, you spoke with Farah [Jahlali, Hollander’s long-time PR rep] before we agreed to this, right?”

When Hollander smiles at me, it’s wry. For a man with a reputation for being a walking, talking hockey robot, he’s pretty expressive when a camera isn’t being shoved into his face.

“When I left the Voyageurs it was…interesting,” he tells me. “I mean, I was expecting to spend the entirety of my career there. Which is crazy, because if I’m being honest, even though it’s only a two hour drive, Montreal is still a little too far from home for me most days. I’m an Ottawa boy, born and raised. And, it’s just — well, when Ilya and I were deciding if we were going to sit down with you, one of the things we had to decide was how much we wanted to get grilled about our team changes.” He shrugs, and doesn’t meet my

eyes. “I mean, look. Ilya, he left the Bears before…everything. I, on the other hand…” He trails off, but I think I get the message anyway.

Is this his way of making a formal statement about his relationship with the Voyageurs? The rumor mill does, naturally, churn ever onwards — but even almost two years after Hollander’s outing and subsequent trade, it continues to gossip about his departure from them.

“God, no. Look, I still talk to guys from the Voyageurs. Hayden’s going to be my best man next week. It’s just — sorry.” I watch as Hollander takes a moment to think. “I knew, when I started playing for the NHL, that I was getting myself into…something. There’re a lot of cameras involved in professional hockey. Too many, if you ask me.” I laugh. Hollander, aside from his many, *many* hockey-related accolades, is also somewhat of a modelling wunderkind. Following his silver medal at Sochi, he was one of three Olympians chosen to feature in that year’s Sports Illustrated Body Issue. To say nothing of his many Rolex ads, and that one uber-viral Calvin Klein campaign. I’ve been told those pictures wreaked havoc on Grindr for at least three months after they dropped.

“I do prefer this.” He gestures between the two of us, and then outward, to the lake sparkling just beyond. “And it is nice to be able to just talk about us. Sorry. Ilya and I, I mean.”

I get it. I really think I do. The thing with Vogue — the thing with *writing about sports* for Vogue — is that we just aren’t a sports publication. Sure, we cover a lot more things sports related and sports adjacent, these days — God only knows how many articles some of my coworkers have been tasked to write about another (not to name names) famous sports-related relationship this year — but our focus isn’t really the game. It’s the aesthetics, the lives, the people. And I think both Hollander and Rozanov are ready to step off the page and become *people* — not just players. You may not think much of that distinction, but I do. I really, really do.

“Not that we’re planning to make this a regular occurrence, though. Sorry,” Hollander says. I watch though, as his attention is pulled away from me by the sound of his own name, being yelled from somewhere deeper in the house. “That’ll be Ilya.” Hollander leans around me, looking back into the living room. He calls for his fiance to come meet us out on the patio.

“Sorry for being late,” is the first thing Ilya Rozanov says to me. He looks comfortable — a little flushed from the heat, and thoroughly unbuttoned in a white wife-beater and loose pants. His engagement band is easily visible too, hanging off the same gold chain as his crucifix. “Anya ran into a friend by the shore.”

“She better not be muddy,” Hollander says, warningly. “We *just* gave her a bath, Ilya.”

Rozanov pulls a face at his husband. “She is a dog, Shane, that’s what dog does — they get messy.”

“There are trails around the lake. You don’t always have to take her into the marsh area — oh my God, *Ilya*, did you let her roll in it?” I turn around, and sure enough, Hollander and Rozanov’s dog, Anya, is trotting around inside their home — looking muddier than she normally does when featured on Rozanov’s Instagram.

“She loves the marsh, though. Always gets so sad when we don’t let her go! You want me to say no to that face?”

The two devolve into what is most definitely a well-worn argument. I find myself forgotten, standing just across the way from them, and I can’t help but wonder how they hid this — the casual, clear affection, the way they stand, leaning into one another’s space as if the other is the magnetic North to his South — for a month, let alone a still-undisclosed number of years.

If the Instagram photos, Hayden Pike’s infamous FanMail video, and the hundreds of game day clips of them together on the bench didn’t convince you before, let me make an honest attempt to. Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander are in love. It would take a far blinder person than I to miss that.

But regardless of love, I still have an article to write — and plenty of questions left to ask. So I ask if the both of them are ready to sit down with me. (And I do regret it, just a bit.)

“Sorry,” Hollander says. It’s very Canadian of him. Rozanov wrinkles his nose and laughs.

“Sure, sure,” he tells me. “I don’t mean to hold us up. Anya is sorry too.”

We take our seats on a few of the Adirondack chairs scattered across the deck. Rozanov pushes his closer to his husband’s, and I watch as they lace fingers over top of the arm rests.

I start with an easy enough question: how are they handling the road to marriage? I remember the months leading up to mine — there were moments I was certain my wife and I weren’t even going to make it to our City Hall appointment, let alone the small party we held afterward.

“Shane is losing his mind,” Rozanov says. “He has to think *so much* about clothing and colors and —” He makes an explosive little gesture with his unoccupied hand. “You know?”

Hollander rolls his eyes. “Shut up, I’m not *that* bad.”

Rozanov locks eyes with me as he assures me that it’s pretty bad. While the two are working with a well-known, Ottawa-based wedding planner [Bittle Bridal LLC], it sounds as though both are still fairly involved — though, clearly, one of them is much more stressed out by the minutiae than the other.

“My mom’s been a huge help,” Hollander says. “She’s doing a lot of the meetings for us, since a lot of the planning took place during the season.” The Centaurs have recently completed a fairly successful bid for the Stanley Cup — knocked out of the running in Game Six by the San Jose Seals, who then went on to win the Cup this year. But though they didn’t win the Cup, it did leave precious little time for the couple to handle the little details that go into planning a wedding — like the cake, the music, or the flowers. All of that was taken on by Hollander’s mother.

Yuna Hollander, I learn, is actually doing the floral arrangements herself. According to her son, she’s been practicing the Japanese art of *ikebana* for longer than he’s been alive.

“I think it is nice to have…touches of Shane’s culture,” Rozanov tells me. “A lot of times, I think is too easy to brush away. Off. You know.”

And what does Hollander think of that?

“It’s nice.” Hollander squeezes his husband’s hand as he says this. “I mean — look, there’s always been a lot of buzz about me being Asian. Well, Wasian. First Asian captain in the NHL, highest-ranked Asian draftee in the League’s history — a lot of firsts.”

First openly gay player to be married to another player.

“That too,” Hollander says. “But a lot of those firsts are there until people decide they don’t really matter. I’m Asian, yeah, but I’m half — my dad is white. It’s a weird balancing act, and a lot of times, I think people like to let one lapse in favor of the other. I’m either just Japanese — no reference to my dad — or I’m a kind of off-looking white guy. I’m either just gay, or I’m just a hockey player. Things tend to swing in the direction of what’s most comfortable for people to label me as. And on a level, I’m fine with that — it doesn’t really affect me in my day to day life. Those I’m closest with don’t do that.”

But the public? His fans? The League?

“I’m a player. I’m a public figure.” Hollander shrugs. “It’s part and parcel. Even if it is a little strange-feeling, at times. But Ilya always makes space for it.” He smiles at his husband here, warmly. It feels like something I shouldn’t really be privy to — like I’m intruding, just a little.

“I want to. It is important to Shane, so is important to me, too. We make room for each other in little ways — that is part of being together, being married.” Rozanov grins toothily. “Helps keep me out of Anya’s house, too.”

Compromise — and keeping one another’s needs in mind — are definitely important for any relationship, but especially for one between two high-level players who spent the majority of their careers being pitted against one another. Timeline-wise, the most popular guesses place the start of their romantic relationship around the 2017 All-Stars Game, the first time they would play for the same team. A year later, in 2018, they announced the Irina Foundation, named for Rozanov’s deceased mother, and dedicated to championing mental health initiatives in hockey and beyond, as well as hosting the annual Game Changer summer hockey camps. Still, they were on historically opposed teams the entire time. I ask them both if their on-ice dynamic ever gave them issues with their relationship.

“No,” Hollander says flatly. It’s clearly a question he’s gotten often.

“We like competing,” Rozanov adds, looking rather cheerful for a man who’s just admitted that he and his husband enjoy knocking each other into the boards. “Make things much more exciting. Of course, I win more, but I always think, good, let Shane try.”

Hollander shoves Rozanov hard enough to nearly shove him out of his Adirondack chair. “No you do *not*. And besides, *who* has more cup wins between the two of us?”

“Well, that—”

“*Me*.”

They bicker for a few more minutes, but it’s all good natured. That, I think, in and of itself is enough to answer my question — hockey’s first couple is in no danger of losing their competitive edge anytime soon. If they ever really were to begin with.

“On and off ice, we’re in support of one another,” Hollander tells me, after they’re done shoving each other around. “And sometimes that support looks like wiping the floor with Ilya’s ass. Other times, it looks like coming together to figure out what we could do to support the next generation of hockey players.”

The Irina Foundation — Hollander and Rozanov’s firstborn, so to speak. It’s an admirable initiative, and the added touch of being named for Rozanov’s late mother adds a certain kind of haunting beauty to it.

“I already know Shane loves me before the foundation, but when he gave me the name, I really know. It was like new confession. Boof. Right there.” Rozanov smiles softly. “In this way, she makes it over with us.”

The NHL has, in more recent years, been supportive of various mental health related charities, the Irina Foundation being one among the many. But, in truth, it’s the meaning that the Irina Foundation has to Hollander and Rozanov that elevates it beyond the rest.

“When you’re a kid and people first really look at you on the ice — maybe it’s when you’re in peewee, bantam, or even high school — the pressure does start to build.” Hollander and Rozanov would both know; there are articles dating all the way back to their earliest days as kids, just beginning to play in the little leagues, calling them both the hope of their respective country’s hockey scene. Hollander, in particular, had been given the coveted title of “The Next One” when he was still a peewee, referring to none other than the patron saint of hockey himself, Wayne Gretzky.

“It’s tough. And hockey is — it’s a rough sport, especially when you’re a kid. When you have all those expectations, and all those eyes.” Hollander rubs a hand down his face. The topic, I know, means a lot to both of them — but it is, as I also know, an exhausting one to talk about. “We’ve seen firsthand what happens when you put kids in these situations with no support or safety net. You muddle through it, and you try to make the best of it, and yeah, sometimes it does turn out alright in the end, but it’s not something that we should be asking these kids to do on their own.”

Rozanov has similar feelings. “I think, you know, it is cultural difference in some way. But Canada, I am learning, is not so different from Russia about these things. You do not talk about it. You push through, you — cope. Hockey speaks similar language. Push through and skate. Just focus on next goal, next game, better league, better team. But you know, is also incredibly lonely that way.”

Is that where the Game Changer camps come in?

“Yes,” Rozanov says. “It is good for them, I think. Kids can come, play hockey, meet players who are still active, [players who] are retired, and for us, we get to play part in how they grow on ice and off ice before they come to try and steal our titles.”

“The camps sort of become their own support networks,” Hollander adds. “When you’re on that trajectory, for the NHL, KHL — just, professional hockey as a whole, you get sent to a lot of developmental camps. Same as any other sport, I guess.”

“We met at development event. Kind of.” Rozanov smirks at Hollander. “My first win against you.”

Hollander and Rozanov first came face-to-face at the 2008 International Prospect Cup in Saskatchewan, playing for Canada and Russia respectively. It would only be half a year later, June 2009, that they would meet again at the draft in Los Angeles. I had to ask — did they already know of one another before that?

They both look at each other. I get the strangest feeling that an entire silent conversation is happening between them, just over my head.

“We spoke a bit at the IPC,” Hollander tells me. “I thought he was kind of rude, to tell you the truth.”

“First thing he says to me, he says hi, hello, I’m Shane Hollander, and then second thing is, you shouldn’t be smoking here.” Rozanov laughs boisterously, to his husband’s clear — but fond — embarrassment.

“It’s a terrible habit.”

“One I break! For you!”

Hollander rolls his eyes. “And the Bears’ management.” He looks at me conspiratorily as he says this. “Anyway, we knew each other, but I wouldn’t really say that we were…friends.”

“Still very much rivals. First I beat him on ice, then I beat him in draft. You looked so upset to be second,” he coos, smug.

“I didn’t take it well back then, yeah.” Hollander laughs sheepishly. “I was a bit of a sore loser.”

“*Bit*.” I can only watch as Hollander pinches his husband on the top of his hand. “Ow!”

“Anyway, I still beat you in our first game — *and* I won our face off.”

I tell them that I’m impressed they still remember this. Both of them tell me that it’s a bit of a *thing* between them — they’re constantly keeping score. First it was career victories: who won which game, who scored more goals during the season, who had the Cup, the Conn Smythe, the Rocket, etcetera. Now, though, Rozanov tells me that it’s more about victories in practice. Their lines often scrimmage, and the couple is careful to keep track of who the ultimate score swings in favor of from practice to practice.

It really does hit me then, the breadth of just how long these men have known one another, and the things they had to overcome to be together. Thirteen years is a long time to know someone. For Hollander and Rozanov, that time spans nearly half of their lives. Was there ever a point in time where they thought it wasn't meant to be?

"A lot, at first," Rozanov tells me. "I mean. At first, you think — oh, this will just be fun. We are similar people, even though Shane is stick-in-dirt, and I am fun, party boy." He rubs a thumb over Hollander's hand, almost as if to tell him it's just a joke. "And then I realize this is serious. And that was — scary, you know." He doesn't say anything more.

"I spent a lot of time kind of in denial about a lot," Hollander admits. "Being gay. Being into Ilya. But when I knew, when I had that lightbulb moment — you know, where you kind of just go oh, right, this is it. This is the way forward — I was all in. I had to be. Otherwise, I think I might've gotten scared again. I might not have this if I did." He smiles at Rozanov, and then at me. "I wouldn't trade what I have with Ilya for anything. Sure, it was kind of an insane journey to get here. Maybe I'd try and shave off a few years, if you really asked me. But I'm happy. I'm in love. I get to have this for the rest of my life."

"Me too." When Rozanov says this, he has eyes only for Hollander, still sitting right next to him, in that other Adirondack chair. "It's sappy, and I think, if I say this, maybe I ruin my tough guy reputation a little, but I don't care. I have a home here, with Shane. For the longest time, I think that home is only in Russia, because Russia is where my mother is buried. Russia is where I am from. But now, I think home is what we make. And Shane makes Ottawa home."

Hollander cups his husband's face after he says this. It's an unbearably tender moment, and one I will realize is echoed in their vows a week later, when Hollander cupped Rozanov's face, and told him that he would always keep a can of Coke in the fridge for him — even though, in Hollander's own words, "it's the most disgusting soda [he's] ever tasted in [his] life."

By the time the Rozanov-Hollanders and I are done talking, it's well into the afternoon, edging into evening. Their dog, Anya, has come to sleep at her parents' feet, curled into a muddy ball, wheezing quiet little doggy snores. I've stayed longer than I planned to — my hotel room is in Trois-Rivières, which is itself an hour drive from their cottage on the lake.

I thank them for giving me so much of their time. Hollander thanks me for taking the time to come out, and then — at the very end, as we are standing on the threshold between his house and the gravel driveway I walked down earlier in the afternoon, he asks me a question.

"Why did you want to take our article?" He asks me. "Why write this? I looked you up. You cover ice sports, sure, but not hockey." *Definitely not weddings* goes unsaid, but I sense it regardless.

"My younger brother loves hockey," I tell him, after a moment's pause. "He used to play, played all the way through college. He was pretty good, I think. But he didn't play after that, though."

"And he is…gay?" Rozanov rests his chin on his husband's head as he asks me this.

“Yeah.” I can’t say much more than that. There is something so disarming about telling the truth — something I am certain my own brother felt, when he sat down at dinner when we were in high school, and came out to me and our parents both. I felt much the same a few years later, when I had just graduated from university and dating men all together, and had a similar, but no-less nerve-wracking, conversation with our parents after they’d finished moving me into my very first New York apartment.

Rozanov looks at me, and it feels a bit like he can see through me. He has a piercing stare — they call Hollander a generational playmaker, the greatest mind in modern hockey, possibly hockey full-stop, but it’s Rozanov who looks *through* you as though you are made of nothing so much as glass.

“I hope he picks it up again,” Rozanov says. “One day.”

Me too, I say. I hope he does. And I think he will. The game my brother left behind in college was a very different game from the one Hollander and Rozanov currently helm. Sure, the rules are practically unchanged. Sure, the fighting is still as intrinsic to it as the ice itself. But you don’t have to be an expert in the sport to recognize that a new wind is blowing across the rink.

And these gentlemen — Ilya and Shane Hollander-Rozanov — are at the forefront of it. The so-called first husbands of hockey, finally husbands at last. I have no idea the true length of their journey, and the path they took to get here is no clearer than it was when I first arrived. But I think those details are unimportant. What matters is that they’re here. And hopefully, one day, another pair of players just like them might find their journey to this coveted place that much easier, thanks to them.

Olive Acosta is a GLAAD Award-nominated journalist, former speed skater, and senior staff writer for Vogue Sports. When she’s not chasing down an Olympian for a story, you can find her in New York City, losing at poker to her wife and taking their two cats for walks in Central Park.

To learn more about the Irina Foundation and how you can get involved, visit www.irinafoundation.org for more information. Sign ups for the Summer 2022 Game Changers Training Camp will open in late March.

End Notes

inspiration for shane's wedding look (yes i know timeline-wise this doesn't come out for another 3-4 years but the concept of shane hollander wearing a backless peter do suit won out over my incessant need to be period accurate.)
inspiration for ilya's wedding look (partially chosen thanks to those actors awards photos of the hudcon)

the "next one" tidbit is stolen, shamelessly, from sidney crosby's own lore. if rachel reid didn't want me to steal from sid crosby's career, she shouldn't have made shane so similar to him. LOL.

if you made it this far, thank you for reading. it's a bit of an unusual style for me, personally - and it's been a while since i've had the opportunity to write something resembling an article, but it does feel nice. hopefully i will write a proper, plot-adjacent, fic for them soon.

you can find me on twitter and tumblr. lots of screaming about heated rivalry on both.

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