

As It Ever Was : An interview with Shane Hollander-Rozanov on life after a Hollywood Ending

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As It Ever Was : An interview with Shane Hollander-Rozanov on life after a Hollywood Ending

by [Sureeeeeeee](#)

Summary

An exclusive new interview with Canada's Golden Boy Shane Hollander-Rozanov on life before and after winning his 3rd Cup.

Set after a year after TLG. Got the idea from all the great print interviews Hudcon, Tierney, and Reid have been giving that I made this interview/Shane reflection piece. Also got inspired by some of the great social media fics floating around here as well

Notes

No Beta cause I don't have one. If any part of the timeline is fucked up or you notice that I have mixed show and book in some way. My mind is a mess from all the edits, fics, the tv show, and book together. Don't question it I beg.

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

“As It Ever Was”

by Tess Arnold

If ever a place was living up to its name The Quiet Gardens in Montreal was certainly trying its best to dampen the noise caused by the photo shoot in it. The ever present hum of assistants talking, the smacking of shoes on the brick ground, and whirl of machines seems to be dampened here next to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, a church that has lived in Montreal since 1931. While everyone else seems out of place with their quick energy one man seems to be more than in the right place: Shane Hollander.

Well formally Shane Hollander. He has since added to the long list of titles and accomplishments that followed his name before. Instead of addressing him as Shane Hollander 2011 MLH Rookie of the Year, 3 time Cup Winner, Ottawa Centaurs center, and established hockey legend you should do it properly. It is now Shane Hollander-Rozanov, loving husband to star hockey captain Ilya Rozanov-Hollander. And they will expect you to say it properly.

Shane is coming off an incredible season where the Ottawa Centaurs have brought home the cup to a town no one ever thought would see it in their lifetimes. A seemingly picture perfect story of the hometown boy delivering a flawless run beating his old team in the process and destroying up and coming franchises in his wake. A run that not only proves but emphatically cements the myth and legend of the perfect Canadian Golden Boy. As real of a Hollywood ending as one can get.

Shane is one of the first to point out that this is bullshit.

”This was by far the hardest cup. We had to really earn it from the pre-season until the last match,” he tells me over a cup of herbal tea. Shane and I are sitting on a bench beside the ivy covered windows of the church. There’s a pause in the shoot for the crew to reset some of the lighting and fix a technical error, so I’ve taken the chance to continue our conversation now. Shane takes a long drink from his tea before seeming surprised he left a ring of lipgloss on the lid. It’s endearing to see after having been used to many many models who sip on their water bottles using straws to prevent such problems.

"Pardon my ignorance but wouldn't playing with your husband, a champion in his own right, make it easier. You've both seemed to have never played with someone on your skill level before?" I ask.

Shane tilts his head at the question, thumb rubbing over the side of the cup before answering. We had established early on that I knew not much about hockey. My hockey knowledge is limited to the coverage of what one sees at the Olympics and any major scandals of pop culture worth. The Hollanov reveal, a playful ship name given to the first couple of hockey even before their relationship was made public for their rivalry turned seemingly charity based friendship, broke containment in a way few things do in modern life.

"In a way I guess," he starts off before pausing. "It's easier because I don't have to think when we play together. I can make a play and Ilya is always right there and vice versa. But, hockey is a team game and joining a new team regardless is hard. The way I left Montreal the season before made it even worse. It was a lot..." Shane trails off staring at his tea while taking a breath.

"Athletes get traded a lot though. Were you prepared in your career regardless to start over on a new team should you get that call?"

That causes Shane to look back up at me as he bites his bottom lip.

"No. I don't think I would've been ready no matter how it happened to be sent to any team," he responds. "How can one get ready to be rejected by the place that built you? I don't think anyone is ever ready to be cast away from what they love."

And that really is the core of it. Hollander wasn't just traded- he was rejected by the team and city he ostensibly built. No matter what he says though any hockey fan or pundit is quick to tell you that Hollander built Montreal, not the other way around. It was why you can still see fans with a Hollander #24 bumper sticker or his name laid across their back at games. Why there was hot debate earlier in the year if he would receive a tribute upon his return. (He did even if some fans felt it was lacking for a former captain and 2 time cup winner). If his number should be hung up immediately or did they need to wait for the formality of retirement.

I spent a few days asking random people in Montreal to see what reactions I would get and the answers varied. Not to mention the endless debates online. Even if he built this city back up from the depths of the league, the city wasn't ready to decide what to do about their former leader.

Which makes today's photo shoot even more symbolic in my eyes. Hollander cuts an impressive figure in his double breasted chocolate suit with wire glasses. The glasses rest on top of his nose along with his infamous freckles. The freckles have been a key feature of the Hollander appeal since he first entered public awareness in 2008. He has a Rolex Submariner Date "Red Sub" on his wrist, an endorsement he's held for many years. His dark hair has gotten longer than he used to leave it in his days in Montreal requiring a stylist to artfully rearrange it every few shots. Having watched old footage from his interviews it was clear to me that this version of Hollander is more relaxed than before. I make this comment as we sit down again between shots.

"Oh really?" He blinks at the observation. "I didn't think it would be so obvious. But yeah, Ilya makes sure I relax more now. He says I'm gonna go gray before I'm 35."

"Hey, some people like some salt and pepper mixed in. Makes them look distinguished. Would you leave the gray in?"

"True. I haven't really thought about it much to be honest. Ilya will probably have more of an opinion to be honest than I will," answers Hollander-Rozanov.

As yes the other half of the hyphen. Ilya Rozanov-Hollander, originally immigrating from Russia and now officially a Canadian citizen as of the past few months, is Shane's famous husband. He had one Cup before earning his second with Shane this last year on the Centaurs. He is considered a Boston legend who played for 8 years with the team. His name is so respected in that city that he still gets both applause and loving boos every time he returns to their arena. Something he himself encourages when he goes back.

What makes Ilya even more famous is how he is often billed as Shane's opposite.

There were a million edits comparing the two that existed before their relationship became public. Now people use those edits to try to find evidence of the early stages of the pair's relationship. The two have been very clear about keeping the details of when and how the

pair became a couple personal. Which still leaves people with questions about their marriage. This includes how the two stay a couple, something both have been quick to shut down when talking publicly. A now famous clip from the Ottawa Centaurs media had the two answering fan questions where they both called each other an 'asshole' and then proceeded to explain in sickeningly sweet detail why the other was an incredible player. The clips on twitter have over 20 million views because everyone couldn't get enough of the rare insight into the couple.

Their teammates are well known for giving the duo much loving guff in the team's media releases about how they behave with each other in the team's locker room, plane, and bus. Including but not limited to: Arguing over movies, carrying each other's bags, keeping each other's favorite snacks in those bags, sharing water bottles, and other countless anecdotes that have spilled out from the Centaur's social media.

While some teams might try to hide away that they have married stars on the team, the Centaurs have not. This may have to do with the fact that the Centaurs media is handled by Harris Drover who is dating player Troy Barret. It may have to do with the fact the Centaurs are the queerest professional hockey team ever assembled. But, it may simply stem from the fact that there was no way to avoid it. Hollanov was the story of the last season even before they touched the cup at the end. A fact Shane Hollander-Rozanov now accepts.

"It was a lot at first...Actually, it is still a lot. I'm not a social media guy and I don't think I ever will be. Ilya is much more equipped for the internet than I could ever hope to be. Harris, our team's social media manager, has been great about the whole thing too. There was already such a spotlight on the team because of him and Troy. Then I came and turned it into a whole production everyday. I think the only way I've made Harris's life easier is by distracting Ilya from saying more outrageous things in interviews or on Twitter or X or whatever it's called now. Otherwise, it's always something." He confesses. I remark that it must be hard to block out that much noise everyday. Anyone else would be exhausted by the sheer amount that comes in from one platform not to mention in person from the many fans in various arenas.

"Yeah," he huffs out in a slow sigh. "But, I've always been good at sticking to hockey. Tuning it out to focus on what's on the ice and what the team needs. Luckily I guess, I've had a lot to work on by joining a new team. Even if I'm not the captain, I haven't tried to change the habits and routines that made me a champion the first two times. I think my husband wanted to break my film iPad at one point cause I just kept watching game tape." It sounds like the perfect answer. A classic move by Canada's Golden Boy: A title held by Shane from even before he played his first bit of MLH hockey. Which is why my next question presses the line a bit.

"Is it more or less exhausting than being closeted for the past ten years?"

The question strikes him physically as for a moment his cup of tea is frozen on the way to his lips. Shane blinks, takes a long pull from his cup, and tilts his head. I worry that it's too personal and this will be the end of our conversation. But, Shane surprises me as he rolls his shoulders and gazes out at the garden before answering.

"I..." he starts and pauses "I think less exhausting."

He takes another sip of tea and I feel like I can see him physically shift an idea around before continuing.

"To be honest, keeping it a secret was killing me in a way I didn't know. I was being a coward even if at the time it seemed like a good plan. We both agreed to keep our relationship a secret, but Ilya was much braver than I was about the whole thing. I try not to think about the regrets of it all because the ending is more than I could've hoped for but..."

He takes another sip of tea as somehow The Quiet Garden is now actually quiet despite the camera crew. We let the half sentence sit in the air before he picks it up himself.

"But what keeping it secret did to both of our mental healths and all the years we lost to trying to keep something that wasn't real.... I thought that I would stay in Montreal until I retired and that wasn't reality. I wish I could've figured that out earlier, so we could've started our real life. That's not to say the years before I joined the Centaurs weren't real but..." He taps his finger a few times before continuing.

"Ilya and I deserved my bravery before we were outed. We had planned already to come out that summer, but he deserved someone loving him out loud before that. I deserved to know what kind of place I was in before that. But that's such a slippery slope, as I've talked with my therapist about before, that I don't like thinking of it that way. I like to think about what comes next, not what happened before that we can't change."

And what comes next for the ‘God of Hockey’?

A summer retreat at the couple’s cottage before leading camps for the Irina Foundation. The foundation is named after Ilya’s late mother and raises money for mental health programs specifically suicide prevention. The pair have helped expand the camps each year to not only provide a safe space for kids to learn about the game that shaped them but advocate for mental health. In a sport that often views mental health as a distraction and hindrance rather than an important part of players’ lives, the charity was already revolutionary when they announced it years ago. Now given the subsequent reveal of their relationship and marriage, it’s seen as a bright beacon of change to push how queer players are treated in the hockey community. Fellow out player Scott Hunter leads the New York camp with new camps set to open in Philadelphia and Seattle this summer as well led by other players from teams in those cities.

I remark once again that it seems like a Hollywood ending. Shane huffs a small laugh at that.

”Yeah, but it’s not over. We both plan to play for a few years yet. There’s good hockey to be played for sure. Also, I think our coach and teammates would kill us if we tried to retire into the sunset now,” Shane responds. “It’s the same as it ever was: Put pucks in the net and try to win the cup again ”

The shoot has wrapped up and an assistant is coming over to tell Shane that he can change back into his street clothes. We shake hands before departing as I head to my hotel to go over my recording from our interview. On the street, I pass a girl with a keychain hanging off her bag that says #24 Hollander along with another keychain that is a heart with the colors of the lesbian flag. I almost want to ask her if she’s a fan and what she thinks, but in the end, I refrain.

Because despite what Shane Hollander-Rozanov says,

it is not the same as it ever was.

End Notes

1. The Quiet Garden is in fact a real garden in Montreal. I have never been, I just liked the idea of Shane in a Quiet Garden. Tess Arnold though is not real, a complete fake name.
2. The chocolate suit is complete reference to the Timid photoshoot Hudson did. Love those photos but I think Shane would not agree to the yellow sweater pics even if those are great.
3. And again, If any part of the timeline is fucked up or you notice that I have mixed show and book in some way. My mind is a mess from all the edits, fics, the tv show, and book together. Don't question it I beg.
4. There are so many great social media fics available so please make sure to show some love to the people basically recoding twitter or reddit or any medium on here. Actual wizards.

And thanks for reading, I hope it was worth your precious minutes.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!