

Together at the Top

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Together at the Top

by [kaijuerotica](#)

Summary

It's 2026 and NHL players are finally returning to the Olympics. It's time for a do-over. It's time for redemption. It's time for Hayden Pike to get a fucking break from these losers.

Hollanov go to the Olympics

Notes

First of all, I want you to know I was already writing this before Canada decided to reveal their roster 2 days early which immediately made my opening inaccurate and I do consider that a personal failing.

Also most of the details of the Olympic Village haven't been revealed yet so I'm calling my shot here about how the beds are gonna be.

This, of course, lives in the vague hand-wavy world where they play hockey in the NHL which also features the team called the Metros.

Also Russia is still in the Olympics here bc I say so.

This also technically ties in with all my other post-canon fics on here but really just because these are my headcanons for their lives and careers post-canon so check those out if you want to see more of what I think.

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

D: Welcome back to *Man in the Crease*, your one stop shop for all things hockey. I'm Dan and it is shaping up to be an interesting day in hockey news, isn't it, Chris?

C: That it is, Dan. Olympic rosters are in and there's a lot to dig into here.

D: Of course, this year will mark the return of NHL players to the Olympic Games for the first time since Sochi in 2014.

C: Correct and these rosters have been anxiously awaited for months now.

D: Let's start with Team USA. What are we seeing?

C: Right off the bat, Carter Vaughn as captain of Team USA. That was an obvious pick but still very exciting to see.

D: Vaughn, of course, in his second season as captain of the New York Admirals and wasted absolutely no time. They made it to game 6 of the Cup round last year, narrowly losing to the Ottawa Centaurs.

C: He's also an Olympic veteran, having competed and won gold back in Sochi so you know he has a taste for it and is coming back for seconds.

D: And how about Team Canada? Anything sticking out to you?

C: Shane Hollander, another no-brainer for captain. I mean, the career this guy has had. Captain of the Metros for 8 years with back-to-back Cups in 2015 and 2016, another one in 2020, and of course who can forget that Hail Mary run last year securing Ottawa its first ever Stanley Cup. He won silver back in Sochi, too, so he's probably even more hungry for it than Vaughn.

D: And speaking of Hollander, should we talk about the Russian elephant in the room?

C: Ha ha ha, if you mean Ilya Rozanov, there's certainly a lot to talk about.

D: Is it a surprise he's competing for Team Canada this year?

C: Only if you haven't been paying attention, but it's always going to be big news when a player that good and that high profile decides to compete for another team. I even speculated when he got his Canadian citizenship 2 years ago that he'd be tapped for Team Canada.

D: Well, we can only assume Team Russia wasn't going to send him after the splash he and Hollander made a few years back.

C: I don't even want to speculate on that, Dan.

D: Rozanov and Hollander, of course, the first ever married couple to both compete in the

league. You have to wonder if the optics of sending them as a pair to represent Canada played into that decision in any way.

C: Not in any way that matters, as far as I can tell. Hollander may have the A in Ottawa but Rozanov has the C. And those two are absolutely electric when you get them on a line together. Taking one but not the other would just be Canada shooting themselves in the foot. Plus, with them being so neck and neck with their stats, I'm not even sure how you'd decide which one to take if you had to pick.

D: You know, with how successful these two have been, you have to wonder if the league is going to start making more of these guys share beds on the road just to increase team cohesion.

C: Ha ha ha, you said it, not me, Dan.

D: Let's talk about Team Finland. Matti Jalo...

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It had been a strange road to get here, Ilya reflected as he set his bag on the bed and unzipped it. Inside was a collection of red and white articles, almost all bearing the Canadian maple leaf somewhere on them.

“At least it smells better than last time,” Shane said behind him. Ilya turned and found Shane stretching out on the bed, wiggling a bit to test the mattress. “Ugh, these are worse though.” The room was small, with two narrow beds against opposing walls and a third along the wall opposite the door. They had a window and an overhead light, but bathrooms were shared amongst the other Team Canada athletes currently residing on their floor.

“Is it worse or are you just 34 and getting old?” Ilya teased. He walked over and forced Shane to scoot over so he could lay on the same bed. There wasn't nearly enough room for both of them and Shane was shoved up against the wall, but he didn't care. Ilya shifted a bit and reached back to punch the pillow. “Oh. No, it's definitely worse.”

Shane laughed and elbowed him. “Get off.”

“What the fuck am I seeing?” Hayden said from the doorway. He was staring at them and holding his own bag, looking unamused.

“Testing beds,” Ilya said. “Like Goldilocks. This one is juuuuust right.” He turned his head and started making loud kissy noises at Shane while Shane shoved him and grinned.

“You guys are the worst!” Hayden groaned. He threw his own bag down. Shane and Ilya both sat up, still laughing. “I'd be scared to have two people in a bed here.” He kicked the boxy leg of his own bed. “Shit's basically cardboard.”

Ilya shook his head. “Is fine. You see tiktok Matti Jalo posted? He is jumping on bed and he is biggest guy I know.” He'd shown Shane Matti's video earlier that day while giving him a very suggestive look. Shane had ignored it.

Hayden shrugged and pulled out the Team Canada fleece he'd shoved into his backpack. "You guys hungry?" he asked as he pulled it over his head. Shane and Ilya looked at each other, silently conferring. "I mean for lunch!"

"What, I can't look at him now?" Ilya asked. He crossed his arms and looked back at Hayden.

"Not like that while I'm here!" Hayden said.

"I was just seeing if he is hungry!" Ilya said.

"Yeah, we'll come get lunch with you, Hayd," Shane decided for them both. He was shaking his head but he was smiling. It had been years now but Hayden and Ilya still riled each other up. There had been a time when he hoped they'd get over it but now he was just glad most actual animosity was gone. There hadn't been a repeat of that disastrous first dinner where Hayden and Jackie had been properly introduced to Ilya, at least.

Some things just never changed. It had been a few years since he'd traded to Ottawa. A few great fucking years, at that. They'd gone to the playoffs Shane's first year with the Cens and taken the fucking Cup home this past year. Shane had a good feeling they could take the whole thing again this year, even if that felt insane to say out loud. Despite Crowell's annoyance, Shane and Ilya had been welcomed widely. It was pretty common to see pride flags waving any game they played, not just pride nights or even home games. Hell, even Boston had waved a few at their last game despite their rabid animosity towards Ilya since his transfer. Ilya still had the C for Ottawa, but Shane had an A and he supposed he'd be content with that for the moment. Shane had the C for Team Canada, anyway.

Shane missed playing with Hayden, though. It had been great to get back on a team with him. They'd stayed best friends in the years since he left Montreal. The drive meant he and Ilya babysat a bit less frequently but not never and Jackie made them come over for dinner relatively often. Hayden and Ilya would probably always butt heads but that was just how their personalities grated against each other.

They all left to find food soon after, Shane grabbing a pullover and Ilya tugging on the same fleece Hayden was wearing. Hayden rolled his eyes but didn't say anything and Shane tried to suppress his smile at the glint in Ilya's eyes.

"Remember we're here for three weeks," he said, nudging Ilya with his elbow.

"Eighteen days," Ilya said. He caught his hand and interlaced their fingers. "And I'm on my best behavior, Hollander."

Shane just shook his head, still smiling.

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The Olympic Village was a sprawling complex with dormitories, fitness centers, various dining options, and even a few temporary shops. Everywhere they looked were fellow athletes or staff, all proudly wearing their own countries' gear. Shane recognized a few faces here and there but with so many events and countries, it was overwhelming.

Amazingly, even amongst the throngs of people, Carter Vaughn managed to find them while they were looking for a place to sit in the meal hall on their third day.

“Hey, boys! Rozanov! Hollander!” he called from where he was eating with a couple of his Team USA teammates. They were all wearing matching jackets and the Americans definitely had a better designer than Canada did. As usual. “Need a place to sit?”

“Yeah, thanks,” Shane said, taking a seat with Ilya settling in next to him. “Good to see you, Vaughn.”

“You, too, man. Both of you. About fucking time they let us come back here.” Vaughn had a dazzling smile, no-doubt almost entirely fake teeth by now just like the rest of them but he clearly had a good dentist in New York. He'd been captaining the Admirals after Scott Hunter retired a couple years before. He had been named captain of Team USA as well. Shane and Ilya rarely saw him outside of games and All-Star Weekends but he was a good guy.

Shane turned to the guy sitting next to Vaughn, a younger player he recognized as being drafted to Colorado the previous year. “Hey, Shane Hollander,” he said, holding out his hand.

“Oh, I know,” the guy said with a laugh that told Shane he probably had his posters on his wall when he was younger. “Jake McCormick. Mickey.”

“Ilya,” Ilya said beside him, also shaking his hand.

“You guys know Slant?” Vaughn asked, gesturing to the man on the other side of him.

“Only professionally,” Shane said, nodding to him. “Good to finally meet properly in person, eh?”

Evan Slater was a winger who had been around the league nearly as long as Shane and Ilya, getting drafted two years after them. He'd bounced around some Western teams for a while but had been a star player for the Serpents ever since the Seattle expansion a few years before. He'd also reached out through the Irina Foundation several months prior and they were now in the early stages of setting up another Game Changers camp out west with him leading it. Even if Shane didn't know him personally, he had a good reputation and more than a few fans. He'd be a big draw for hockey camps, no doubt.

“Roz and Hollzy are fucking legends,” Vaughn said through a bite of chicken. “Not that I'm worried, of course.”

“Because you will already be heading home by the time we're on podium?” Ilya said. The US and Canada were in different preliminary groups so they wouldn't be facing off at least until the playoffs. Hopefully not until the gold medal game, if any of them had something to say about it.

“Oh, fuck off, Rozy!” Vaughn said, but he was grinning widely. “You can't even make it to opening ceremonies without chirping?”

“You haven't heard?” Ilya asked, looking between Shane and Vaughn in confusion.

“Heard what?” Vaughn asked.

“Oh my god. Is so embarrassing.” Ilya ran a hand over his face as he spoke. “I go to doctor recently, yes? Have some tests done. I tell him I can't sleep, can't focus, hard to even eat. You know what he tells me?”

Shane could tell Vaughn wasn't sure if he should be taking this seriously. Shane tried to keep his face impassive as he looked between them.

“What did he tell you?” Slant finally asked.

“I have to talk shit about Carter Vaughn every chance I get or I'll fucking die,” Ilya said.

The table erupted with laughter and even Vaughn had a grin on his face. They all talked as they ate, comparing their sleeping accommodations and talking about which events they were hoping to catch.

“Your buddy the figure skater still competing?” Vaughn asked a while later.

“Nah, he retired after Beijing,” Shane said. Truthfully, he hadn't done a great job of staying in touch with Joe after they stopped training in the same facility but he checked in on his career occasionally. “I'd still be down to catch the figure skating, though. They do some insane shit out there.”

“And the fact that they're all in spandex?” Ilya asked. He nudged him with his elbow.

“Entirely unrelated,” Shane said, taking a sip of his water.

Mickey had gotten up to go explore the dessert options and returned then with a slice of some sort of cake on a plate. It was golden brown with layers of frosting.

“What the fuck is that?” Vaughn asked, craning his neck to get a better look as Mickey sat down.

Mickey shrugged. “Found it with some of the Eastern European stuff. Medi- something?”

Ilya perked up when he saw it. “They have Medovik? Where? Tell me.”

Mickey pointed off to the side where he'd found it. “Over there. Back in the corner kind of.”

“You want anything?” Ilya asked, brushing Shane's arm.

Shane shook his head. “No thanks.” Ilya stood up, stooping to kiss him loudly on the cheek just to be annoying.

“Y'all are cute as shit, you know,” Vaughn was saying as he walked away. He almost turned back to catch Shane's blush but kept walking. He was on a mission.

He found the cake pretty easily and grabbed himself a slice. He was just putting the spatula back down when he heard a voice behind him.

“Rozanov!”

Ilya stiffened. He didn't need to turn around to know what he'd find. He could hear it in the roll of the *R*, the stress on the second syllable that nobody except native speakers used. The way the speaker seemed to spit the name out of his mouth like it was something rotten.

He turned, plate still in his hands, to find two men in matched Team Russia gear looking at him like he was covered in oozing sores. Ilya recognized one of them, vaguely. They'd played together in Sochi. He couldn't remember his name, not that he tried very hard.

“What the fuck do you want?” he asked, lip curling. He had figured some sort of confrontation might happen. It was major news when it was announced he would be playing for Team Canada. He'd been a Canadian citizen for over two years and hadn't been back to Russia since his father died but there were still some people who thought it was bad optics for Canada. He was high-profile and had previously played for another country, after all. *Previously failed, too*, Ilya was sure some of them wanted to say.

“I didn't realize Canada let fucking fairies play hockey now,” the one he recognized said. Vavilov? No. Something with a *V*.

Ilya opened his mouth to tell him this *fucking fairy* was one of the top ranked players in the world but let a smile spread across his face instead.

“What the fuck?” the other guy said. He was younger, possibly even a rookie. *“You have nothing to say? Just gonna fucking grin? What happened to that famous Rozanov wit?”*

Ilya kept smiling as a familiar man walked up behind them in a Team Canada fleece.

“Do we have a fucking problem here?” Shane asked, the Russian flying off his tongue despite the accent. Both men spun around to look at him in confusion. Neither spoke. *“Well?”* Shane demanded. There was a red-hot fury in his eyes that Ilya had rarely seen before.

The younger one laughed. *“Of course one faggot comes to rescue another.”*

“At least this one isn't a traitor,” the older one said. Vetrov? No, that still wasn't it.

Shane just shook his head and laughed. He looked at the younger. There was a cold smile on his face that didn't come anywhere near his eyes. *“Sorry to hear about the draft this year, Myagkov. Not being picked twice is hard. I can't even imagine. Maybe the KHL will pick you up next year?”* The younger player - Myagkov, apparently - stammered but Shane was already continuing. *“And Vlasov. Congratulations on being named captain. I heard you're facing Latvia first on Thursday. Better focus. Hope it's not a repeat of last time.”*

They both just stared at him, no-doubt shocked he could even speak Russian much less come in with such precise barbs.

“Fuck you, Hollander,” Vlasov finally said. It was moments too late and fell pathetically in the air between them.

"I'm not interested but we can ask Ilya if he's okay with you watching," Shane said, then blew a fucking kiss. Ilya couldn't believe what he was seeing. Who the fuck was this? He wanted to kiss him.

Both the Russian players recoiled as if disgusted, taking a step back which put them closer to Ilya.

"The rooms are a bit small but if you're okay sitting on the floor, I'm game," Ilya said. Both players looked like they were about to puke and sped off without another word. Shane waited until they were out of earshot to start laughing. Ilya laughed too and hung the arm that wasn't holding cake over his shoulder. *"Who fucking taught you to talk like that?"* he demanded.

"I learned from the best," Shane said, still laughing. "God, their fucking faces." He forced himself to stop laughing and reached up to cup Ilya's cheek. "Are you okay?"

Ilya shrugged and started them back towards the table, still grinning. "Fine. I expected worse." And being defended so thoroughly *in fucking Russian* had been enough to wash away most of the sting of the encounter anyway.

Shane hated that he'd expected anything at all but wasn't surprised. They'd talked about this before Ilya had even made the decision to try for Team Canada. The press coverage around Ilya getting announced as part of the team just confirmed that a lot of people would have a lot of say about it and some not particularly politely.

"Everything okay?" Slant asked when they got back. Ilya got the impression Shane left very quickly and the other men had likely at least seen the confrontation, even if they hadn't heard it.

"Fine," Shane said easily.

"Just some friends from back home," Ilya said with a sarcastic roll of his eyes. He turned back to Shane and switched to Russian again. *"We might need to keep Pike out of the room for a little while after this, though."*

Shane bit his lip and hoped his blush wasn't too obvious.

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The preliminary games started the day before opening ceremonies. They were important, but not nearly as much pressure as later games. The teams were sorted into divisions and they would play against each team to determine seeding for the playoffs and finals in a couple weeks.

They won their first game easily. Ilya had almost scored a hat trick but the Swiss goalie had made a save that he'd be reviewing on tape later that night, he had no doubt. They lost their second game against France but it was in overtime so not a huge loss for their standings. By the end of the week, they had secured their place in the quarter-finals and could skip the playoff games entirely. The seeding was exactly what they'd wanted, too. The US and Russia were also through to the quarters. They were on track to meet in the semis and Canada would

only be facing one of them if they made it to a medal game. It was a bit of a relief to only face one of them but it would still be a hard fight to get there.

After that, they had nearly a week free while the women's prelims took place. They had their training regimen and a limited practice schedule with so many events vying for ice time. Shane and Ilya were usually done with scheduled training by noon and had the rest of the day free after lunch. Shane had added every Team Canada women's hockey game to the calendar in his phone and they were doing their best to make most of them.

Shane always wished he had more time to watch women's hockey, too. Between the usual NHL season schedule and watching occasional games outside of it for his own professional interest, it was hard to make time for yet another hockey game. It was amazing to see how the game could differ so much and he reminded himself to talk to Leah and Max before the next camp to see if they'd spill the secrets of how they got so accurate.

He, Ilya, and Hayden all jumped up and roared when Canada scored a goal, taking the game against Switzerland from tied to Canada being in the lead towards the end of the second period.

When they sat down, Ilya put his arm around Shane's chair. Shane leaned into him slightly while listening to Hayden tell some story about one of the twins' parent teacher conferences as the period came to an end. They all expected it when the screen up above started showing various celebrities and Olympians in attendance. Shane straightened up a bit but Ilya kept his arm around him. Before long, the cameras on the screen up above - and no-doubt the televisions at home - showed the three of them there. Shane and Hayden waved but when Shane turned to look at Ilya, he leaned in and puckered his lips like they were on a fucking kiss-cam.

"Fuck off!" he said with a laugh, leaning away and hoping he didn't get in trouble if his lips were readable on tv.

Ilya got out of his seat enough to lean over and kiss his cheek, earning some cheers and hoots in the audience, along with some laughs.

"I hate you," Shane said, still laughing as the camera switched away from them to some musician he vaguely recognized.

"No you don't," Ilya said. "You know I am being selfish, though." Ilya looked smug. He'd recently discovered the world of hockey fancams on tiktok. He'd been scrolling along when suddenly a video of Marley popped up with clips of him over sped up music. It was intercut with stills from pressers with hearts all over. He'd since managed to fine-tune his algorithm to show him mainly fancams of himself, Shane, or the two of them together. Most clips came from their games and pressers but they were both sure more would pop up from them at the Olympics. And Ilya was going to diligently watch and save them, much to Shane's mortification.

It was towards the end of the week when Hayden mentioned to them he had an appointment with the physical therapist that afternoon and would be grabbing dinner with a friend on the

Finnish team after. They were eating lunch, Shane and Ilya joining him halfway through Hayden's meal.

"Oh?" Shane said, not able to help the way his eyes immediately flicked over to Ilya, who was meeting his gaze just as intently.

"Yeah, tweaked my shoulder yesterday so don't wait f- Oh my god, you guys are *not* subtle!" Hayden said.

Both of them looked back to Hayden. "Subtle about what?" Ilya said but he was already smirking.

"Yes, I'm gonna be gone until tonight! Just don't touch my stuff when you're doing it." He had finished his lunch and stood up to leave.

"You are good guy," Ilya said, stretching out his hand.

Hayden stared back at him. "I'm not fucking shaking your hand for that. I'll remember you said it, though." He gave Ilya a half-hearted middle finger and left.

They both finished their lunches in tense silence, both sensing the electric current of *need* between them. Since they'd arrived at the Olympics, they hadn't had a chance for more than a quick shower jerk off together after the incident with the Russian team and oh fuck did Ilya need that to be fixed immediately. Honestly, as much as he was grateful to have the whole afternoon with the room empty, he probably wouldn't need that long to get off.

When they got back to the room, they wasted no time in crashing together, both gripping and tugging at each other's clothes. With shirts removed and Ilya's pants pushed half down so Shane could rub him, Shane shoved Ilya backwards towards his own bed. Ilya went easily and Shane tugged his pants the rest of the way off his legs before kicking his own to the side. It wasn't even vaguely in the direction of the bin he was using as a hamper, which is how Ilya knew he was truly desperate.

Ilya was already hard when Shane took him in his mouth. He took him deep, savoring the feeling of his husband on his tongue after more than a week without this. He started bobbing his head and worked the shaft with his tongue while Ilya slid his hand into Shane's hair.

Shane's mouth was so fucking talented. He'd spent nearly two decades learning exactly how to suck Ilya's dick with the same level of focus he applied to anything else. He knew how to draw it out, how to tease him. He knew how to drive him relentlessly towards that edge.

Ilya had been right when he thought he wouldn't last long. He'd have been embarrassed if he hadn't been with Shane for so many years now. This wouldn't be the last time he got Shane's mouth on him and shot off like a teenager.

"Can't," he groaned. "*Fuck!*" Shane didn't slow down or hesitate, just sucked him through it and swallowed him down as he came.

Shane pulled off and grinned up at him. "Excited?"

"Fuck you," Ilya said with a breathless laugh.

"I think that's the idea, yeah," Shane said with a smug grin. He pressed a kiss to Ilya's hip, then slid up his body to kiss his mouth. Ilya could feel how hard Shane was as he straddled him, rocking his hips slightly against him. Ilya kept his eyes on Shane's face as he wrapped his hand around his cock and started stroking him. Shane's eyes slipped closed as he groaned. "Fuck."

"Are you going to last?" Ilya asked.

Shane's eyes opened. "Longer than you did." It was amazing how easy it was to ignite that competitive fire in Shane's eyes. Half a suggestion of a challenge and Shane was ready to go.

Ilya grabbed Shane's hips and flipped them. It was far from graceful on the narrow bed but he leaned in to press his forehead against Shane's as soon as he was under him. "Fucking prove it."

Ilya slid down his body and ran his tongue up Shane's cock. Shane moaned and lifted his head to look down at him. Ilya locked eyes as he took him into his mouth. He held his eyes as best he could, Shane's smoldering gaze making him feel like he was on fire. He bobbed his head, taking him as deep as he could.

Shane let his head fall back and slid his hand into Ilya's hair. He gripped enough to tug on Ilya's curls but not enough to control. Ilya always knew exactly how to work him. Years together and Shane was still begging and pleading for more, still reduced to gasps and whimpers whenever he had Ilya's mouth around his dick. And Ilya was on a fucking mission. He wasn't going easy on him. The room was filled with the sounds of slurping and Shane's moaning.

Shane tried to hold off. No, really, he did. And he certainly lasted longer than Ilya, but he still found himself spilling into Ilya's mouth far sooner than he had hoped.

"Fuck!" he nearly yelled. He hoped no one was in the neighboring rooms just then.

Ilya sucked him through it and then popped up with a smug grin. "You talk such shit, Hollander."

"Fuck off," Shane groaned. He laid his head back and covered his face with his arm. "I lasted longer than you."

"Did you time it?" he asked. Ilya came up to kiss him before he could answer and Shane was momentarily distracted.

"I know it was longer," Shane said against his lips.

"Whatever you say," Ilya laughed as he shifted sideways so he wasn't squishing Shane and

pressed a kiss to his shoulder.

Hayden made it back to the room just after dinner. Shane and Ilya had long since cleaned up, gotten dressed, and were now crammed together into Ilya's bed. Ilya was asleep behind Shane with an arm thrown over his waist and an occasional snore. Shane was laying on his side with his head pillowed on his arm and scrolling on his phone.

"You guys decent?" Hayden asked, peaking in.

Shane snorted. "Yeah, you're good." Hayden nodded and eyed his bed suspiciously. "Oh my god, chill. We didn't touch your bed."

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Shane found Hayden the next day at the speed skating prelims. "Hey," he said.

"Hey." Hayden nodded, glancing at Shane before looking back at the race. "Where's Ilya?"

"PT," Shane said. Ilya's hip gave him trouble sometimes and he had scheduled an extra session that afternoon.

Hayden just nodded, watching the race. Two teams of skaters were moving around the track, getting faster with each lap.

"Is..." Shane trailed off, trying to figure out how to broach the topic. He rubbed at his face awkwardly. "I know it's been...a lot, rooming with me and Ilya. Sorry if it's made you, um. Uncomfortable. Or something." The words were stilted coming out of his mouth. He needed to say it, though. This was the most Hayden had ever been around Shane and Ilya at the same time and Shane had sinking a feeling it wasn't going particularly well.

Hayden looked over at him, brows knit together. "What?"

Shane had to look away to try and put his thoughts together. He focused back on the racers. "It's just...I know you aren't the biggest fan of Ilya and he can be kind of a lot..."

"*Can* be?" Hayden asked, but he was smiling and nudged Shane with his elbow.

"Is usually?" Shane corrected, hanging his head with a smile.

"Look," Hayden said. "You know I'm giving both of you shit, right? And I don't have a problem with Ilya anymore?"

"What?" Shane was surprised to hear that. It seemed like whenever Hayden and Ilya were in the same room, they were driving each other up the walls. It was rare to hear either say anything overtly positive about the other.

"I trust your judgment and know you wouldn't be with him if he was actually a dick," Hayden said with a shrug. "Besides, he's grown on me over the years." At Shane's look, he quickly

added. “Just a bit! Only a tiny bit! Like a weird fucking mole I should probably get checked out by a doctor!”

Shane laughed. “So we're good?”

“Course,” Hayden said with a laugh. He elbowed Shane again. “Besides, if I actually hated Rozanov, I wouldn't have called him to babysit back in December, would I?”

“Jackie calls him to babysit,” Shane said but he appreciated the sentiment.

“No, I mean when I called him,” Hayden said.

“When was that?” Shane asked.

“Uh, back during the break in December. You were in New York filming an ad or some shit and Jackie's car broke down a town over.” Shane remembered hearing about Jackie's car. He didn't know what it had to do with Ilya. “So I called up Rozanov and asked him to babysit last minute. He was there like an hour later with a pizza. He didn't tell you?”

Shane shook his head. “No, he must have forgotten to mention it.”

Hayden fished out his phone and opened his texts. Shane huffed out a laugh when he saw Ilya was still saved as “Rozanov 🤨” even after all these years. He scrolled up a bit and showed Shane some texts dated December 23rd.

Hayden: How's it going?

Ilya had sent back a selfie taken in the mirror in the Pikes' entryway. He looked great, angling his face just right and his arms looked good as hell in the muscle shirt he was wearing. Then Shane noticed his hair was done up in messy french braids with colorful clips all over his head and a sparkly tiara balancing precariously on top.

Shane laughed. “He does love the girls.” *I want that for us*, he thought.

“And they love him,” Hayden said, shaking his head. “Here, I'll send it to you.” He forwarded the photo to Shane. “Point is, you're my brother, man. I mean that. And as your big brother-”

“You're like a year older than me,” Shane said.

“*As your big brother*,” Hayden continued, “it's my job to give your guy shit. But it's all love, I swear. Rozanov and I are good, and so are we.”

Shane was about to respond but was cut off as the whole crowd broke out into pained “oohs” when a slip took out 4 racers in one go.

“I'm glad,” Shane said once the skaters had recovered. “I love you, man.”

“Yeah, yeah, don't get all sappy on me,” Hayden said, then added, “Love you, too.”

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Since they'd qualified for the quarter-finals straight out, they had an extra day free while the other teams went through playoffs. Whoever won these games would progress through and the real competition would start for them. Russia and the US were through as well, with Slovakia rounding out the early roster.

Their first game was tough. Finland had won gold in Beijing so they were here to defend the title. Shane only knew a couple players by reputation. The exception was Matti Jalo, a massive defenseman who played for the Admirals. Ilya had gotten drunk with him once or twice during All-Star Weekend and said he was a good guy. He'd also seen at least two players get concussions off of clean hits from the man. Anyone that big, it was best to focus on speed and avoiding him. Shane mostly managed to get through the game unscathed, though the way Ilya was wincing by the end of second period told him he'd be making another appointment with the physical therapist.

They won the game, but barely. Canada won 1-0 in OT thanks to Hayden nabbing the messiest goal any of them had ever fucking seen. Shane swore it bounced off a glove, a skate, and the goal post before barely knocking in. But hey, a goal was a goal and Finland was out of medal contention. Now they just had to wait and see who they'd face in the semis. If they were lucky, it would be Italy. If they were unlucky, it would be Slovakia.

Shane got held back after the game to talk to some reporters and he finally caught up to Ilya in the stands watching Russia face off against France. Ilya was watching the game closely but he smiled at him as he approached.

“Found you,” Shane said. He sat down next to him and tugged Ilya's arm around him. “How are you feeling?”

“Fucking Jalo,” Ilya grumbled. “Great at a party. Fucking awful to take a check from.”

Shane nodded. “You make an appointment for PT already?”

“Tomorrow morning,” Ilya confirmed. “It's probably fine but fuck.”

Shane reached up to lace his fingers with Ilya's where his hand was hanging down and kissed his wrist. “And we're going against the Admirals like a week after we get back.”

“Better get ready to defend my honor, then,” Ilya said with a laugh.

Russia won the game, Slovakia pulled out another OT victory against Italy, and the Americans rounded out the day by beating Denmark 2-0. So that settled it. They would face Slovakia in 2 days.

Shane and Ilya got back to the room early, both exhausted and wanting to rest up before

training the next day. Hayden had received a call from Jackie and the girls and stayed behind to talk to them.

As soon as they got back, Ilya sank down onto the bed. Rather than lay down, he sat on the edge and crossed his ankle over his knee, then leaned forward to stretch his hip.

“Jalo really got you, huh?” Shane asked. He was standing in front of Ilya and reached out to scratch at the back of his head in the way he knew Ilya loved.

“Mm,” Ilya said, a smile touching his lips. “Been acting up since we got here, too.” He leaned forward further to deepen the stretch.

Shane let him be for a moment before patting his shoulder. “Lay down.” Ilya looked up at him in confusion, then started to lean back on the bed. “On the floor, Ilya.” Shane could see when Ilya understood and he shifted to slide down onto the ground. He stretched one leg out straight while Shane kneeled in front of the one he kept bent.

“Oh, do we have time before our chaperone gets back?” Ilya teased.

Shane just rolled his eyes and pushed Ilya’s knee up towards his chest. “Fuck off, Rozanov.” Ilya smiled and then grimaced as Shane pressed the stretch deeper. “*Too much?*” he asked in Russian. The physical therapist for Ottawa had shown them both how to do this at home so Shane could help Ilya.

Ilya kept grimacing but shook his head. “*Nyet*. Is good for me.”

Shane glanced at the clock and tried to mentally count the stretch time. “We’re definitely making you take it easy this summer,” he said. Ilya nodded but Shane knew from experience that would be an argument when the summer actually came around. Ilya couldn’t sit still for any length of time, even when he was supposed to be resting or relaxing. As Ilya’s grimace faded, Shane eased back on his leg and helped him shift into a different position before pressing him into another stretch.

Shane heard the door open behind him. “Whoa, should I come back later?” Hayden asked.

“I don’t want to hear it from you, either,” Shane said. Hayden laughed.

“How is Jackie?” Ilya asked from the floor. He was partially on his side now so he couldn’t see Hayden when he came in.

Hayden flopped back onto his bed. “Alright. Apparently Ruby got detention for fighting.”

Ilya couldn’t help the laugh he let out. “Are you raising a brawler, Pike?”

“With so many hockey players around, it’s a wonder she’s the only one.” Shane looked over and saw him rubbing his temples. “What time we have to be up tomorrow?”

“Early,” Shane said.

“This schedule blows,” Hayden said.

“Medal game is in a few days,” Ilya said. “Almost done, yes?”

Shane helped Ilya up off the floor when they were finished and he could tell by the way Ilya shifted his weight that it had helped for the moment. They all turned in soon after that. Shane got back from brushing his teeth to find Ilya already under his blankets and smiling at something on his phone.

“What's got you so happy?” he asked, leaning down to peck him on the lips before crawling into his own bed.

“Check your phone,” Ilya said. “She sent it to you, too.”

Shane saw a notification in the text thread with him, Ilya, and both his parents. Opening it revealed a picture of his dad asleep in a recliner with Anya asleep in his lap. She was on her side and his hand was on her like he'd fallen asleep giving her a belly rub.

“Glad to know she's being spoiled,” Shane said with a chuckle. His parents usually looked after Anya when they were out of town. They treated her like their grandchild.

“Of course she is,” Ilya said. “She deserves the best.”

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They played Slovakia in the evening of the semis. Russia and the Americans had played earlier. Neither Shane nor Ilya were there but they'd seen the results. 3-1 to Russia. The Americans would head to the bronze medal game against whoever lost this next game.

It was a brutal game. Slovakia won bronze in Beijing and were clearly on a mission to improve that this time around. Every time Shane thought he had an opening, one of their defenders was suddenly there. He took a couple hard hits into the boards and Shane could tell as he made his way to the bench that he'd be feeling it the next day. They eked out a 1-0 victory and Shane was just relieved they'd made it through.

One game to go, and it was the gold medal game. Win or lose, Shane and Ilya were leaving here with medals. That was something to celebrate.

The bronze medal game was the next day. USA vs. Slovakia. Shane saw clips of it between training drills. Both teams were clearly taking it personally to be out of gold contention. Now that they were knocked out of the final, they were desperate to cling onto any medal they could get and it showed.

“Jesus,” Shane said, watching one of Slovakia's defenseman slam Mickey into the glass.

“He'll be feeling that one later,” Hayden said. They watched as Mickey skated towards the bench with what looked like a bloody nose.

Slovakia came out on top. Shane considered reaching out to Vaughn but wasn't sure what he'd say. *Sorry you lost. Gonna go win my medal now.* He decided best not.

Shane had trouble sleeping that night. It was weird for him. He'd been through enough games, enough playoffs, hell even an Olympic final before. This one was different, though, and not just because it was Russia. This was his last chance. He wouldn't be coming back here in four years. Neither of them would.

He turned his head to look across at Ilya in the dim light from the window. He knew Ilya wanted this just as badly as he did. More, probably. He was already guaranteed a medal but gold would mean so much more. It would be proof. A redemption. Full circle.

As he watched, Ilya's head turned towards him. Shane saw the light from the window reflect in his open eyes. Ilya extended his hand towards him in invitation and Shane didn't need to be told twice.

He crawled over Ilya to squeeze into the space between him and the wall, letting Ilya pull the blanket up over him. Shane kissed his shoulder and then looked at him in the dim light. He knew they were both thinking the same thing. Neither needed to say it. Ilya pressed a kiss to Shane's forehead and another to his lips.

"Don't you fucking dare," came a tired voice from the third bed in the room.

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Getting ready for the game was a tense affair. Shane was pretty sure he'd said something to the team but he couldn't remember what it was. He just remembered Ilya giving him a terse nod while he chewed on his mouth guard and then he was out on the ice. Every seat in the arena was filled but Shane did his best to tune it out. It was just another game. It was just hockey. He was good at hockey.

He saw Myagkov on the other side of the rink. As if sensing his eyes, the Russian turned to look at him. Shane scowled and spit on the ice.

"Keep doing that and I will get jealous," Ilya said beside him. He put a hand on Shane's shoulder and used him for balance while he reached down to adjust one of his skates.

"What does that mean?" Shane asked.

"You know how it goes," Ilya said. "Boy meets Russian. Boy hates Russian. Boy maybe finds out he doesn't actually hate Russian."

Shane couldn't help cracking a smile at that. "I do have a type. He's too young for me, though." He took a deep breath and forced himself to loosen up. It was amazing how much Ilya's sly humor could help him relax. Fuck, he was glad they were here together.

Ilya won the first face off and then they were off. The Russians had a solid defense, closing every opening Shane spotted as they struggled to maintain possession of the puck. And Myagkov was *fast*. Every time Shane so much as touched the puck, Myagkov was slamming

into him. More than once, he heard the man mutter some Russian insult as he did it. Shane didn't even understand most of them.

The first period came to an end with no goals for either team. Shane was breathing hard as he sat down in his stall.

"You okay, dude?" Hayden asked. He tossed his helmet into his stall and took a long drink from his bottle.

"I'm gonna fucking hit Myagkov, I swear to god," he said. "Fuck." It had been a long time since a player had gotten under his skin like this. It had been...well, it had been Ilya probably but that was different.

"Olympics don't like fighting, *lyubovnik*," Ilya said, getting back from answering the same questions the press asked between each period. But Shane could see in his eyes he'd actually fucking love that.

"Then tell him to shut the fuck up," Shane said, unable to help the way a smile curved at one side of his mouth.

"*Tell him yourself*," Ilya said.

"*Maybe I will*," Shane said.

"I thought we talked about thi-"

"Oh my god Hayden shut up!" Shane said, laughing now and feeling at least minutely better.

The second period started off better. Ilya won the face off and they immediately pressed the offensive on the Russians. They were still closing every gap Shane saw but Ilya had better luck. He passed to Ilya who almost instantly pulled out a quick wrister. The puck sailed cleanly past the goalie's shoulder into the net.

Shane grabbed him as soon as he could, roaring in celebration with him. "Fuck yes!" he yelled.

"*Fuck you!*" Ilya yelled at the other team, then bumped his helmet against Shane's. "On the fucking board."

"Damn right." Shane grinned and released him so they could reset for the next face-off. As they took their positions, he saw Myagkov sub back in. Shane chewed his mouth guard and took a deep breath.

Myagkov won the face off, putting them on the defensive. Ilya stayed on him while Shane tried to run interference. As Myagkov knocked Ilya to the ground, he heard him spit another insult. Shane had to clench his hands to keep from dropping his gloves right there. He saw Ilya spring back up out of the corner of his eye and turned to keep dogging the Russian winger he'd been blocking.

Ilya passed to Hayden who took a shot. It was a Hail Mary and was easily caught by the goalie. The whistle blew and Shane skated forward for the face-off. Myagkov lined up opposite.

"You didn't come over the other night," Shane said. "I thought we had something special."

Shane won the face off. He passed to Hayden who quickly passed it back. He didn't have an opening so he passed to Ilya. The Russian d-line was good. Too fucking good. He needed openings.

In the middle of the chaos, he saw Myagkov wide open. Shane didn't stop to think. He moved. He checked him hard into the boards, uncaring that he wasn't anywhere near the puck.

The penalty was instant and expected. "24. Hollander. Minor. Charging." It was repeated in Russian. Shane just grinned at Myagkov and skated away to the penalty box. He knew he should feel bad. He'd given the Russians a free power play and left his team short-handed. Shane wasn't even sure when the last time he'd gotten a penalty for something like this was. But right now, he didn't care. The shocked look on that fucking asshole's face was enough. And so was the hungry look in Ilya's eyes when he realized what Shane had done.

Yeah, Shane couldn't bring himself to do anything other than grin.

Russia scored on the power play and Shane was back in moments later. He stole the puck from Vlasov. He sped to the Russian goal and took a shot before anyone else caught up with the change in direction. He missed but then Ilya was there grabbing the rebound and taking another try with a snapshot. Another miss, another rebound. The defense were on them while his own team tried to guard. Shane grabbed the puck and took a wrist shot. He aimed low. The goalie dropped fast but Shane's shot was faster.

He barely heard the siren announcing the goal over his own roar. His team was on him immediately, screaming and cheering. He felt Ilya pressing the kiss against his helmet before he actually saw him.

"You're a very bad man," Ilya said.

"I learned from the best," he said with a broad grin.

They were leading 2-1 when the second period ended. Shane wanted to collapse into his stall and breathe but he was almost immediately called to talk to press. He probably shouldn't be surprised.

"You're in the hot seat, Mr. Brawler," Hayden said with a punch to his arm.

"No, the Olympics don't approve of fighting," he said, entirely innocently.

He fielded the questions as best he could, trying to always turn it back to the team, working together, creating opportunities, taking shots. Same shit, different game.

“One more thing,” the reporter said just as Shane thought he'd somehow manage to get out without addressing it. “That check on Myagkov was unexpected. What was going through your head there?”

Shane forced himself to keep his face flat. “I tripped.”

The third period was brutal. Russia was pressing every advantage, trying to claw back another goal as the seconds ticked on. Canada was forced on the defensive while Myagkov and Vlasov repeatedly took shots. Ilya landed himself in the penalty box for slashing right at the end but it didn't matter. The Russians were exhausted and the Canadian goalie was relentless.

Before Shane could even believe it, the buzzer was sounding. The game was over. He actually had to look up at the scoreboard to double check before he believed it.

Canada: 2

Russia: 1

Then his entire team was around him, sweeping him up in a mob of screaming and crying. He was probably doing the same, he couldn't actually tell. His helmet had disappeared. Where was his stick? It didn't matter. Hayden was squeezing him around the middle hard enough to hurt through the pads. He couldn't even put his right skate down on the ground.

Then Ilya was beside him and he was kissing him and kissing him and kissing him. They were sweaty and out of breath and he didn't give a *fuck*. They were gold fucking medalists. They were kings.

._*._*_

Shane had to put his phone on silent during the celebration after. It seemed like every 4 seconds, he received another text congratulating him. People he hadn't spoken to in years were reaching out. Even a few of his old teammates from the Metros. Ilya showed him his own texts at one point that night and the notification bubble simply said “99+” which Shane didn't even know was a thing before. Ilya also showed Shane a quick scroll through his tiktok messages, where Svetlana had already sent him no less than 30 videos of Shane checking Myagkov, sitting in the penalty box, or being interviewed after second period. Oops.

Ilya didn't mention the unknown number that had simply sent “*Congratulations, Ilyushka.*” His finger had hovered over the block button before he closed out of the message. He didn't save the contact.

Traveling the next day was quiet. They were tired from the game, the celebration, and the fact that they'd only gotten about three hours of sleep before Shane's alarm had woken them up. Hayden was staying an extra day before heading home but their game schedule with the Centaurs and connecting flights forced them to leave early the following morning.

It felt surreal to go from such an intense environment back to real life. They had to take off their shoes and walk through scanners and try to figure out if Ilya's iPad needed to come out

of his carry on or not. They were both excited, proud, still struggling to catch up with the reality that it had happened. They won. And together, at that. A Stanley Cup and Olympic gold within 12 months wasn't too shabby. But they were also exhausted. They both slept most of the plane ride to New York.

Unfortunately, as much as Shane wanted to turn towards the AirCanada terminal and head home, he and Ilya were instead heading directly to Seattle. They were meeting up with the Centaurs in time to face off against Slant who was now back with the Serpents. They had plans to get dinner with the man while they were there and discuss more about Game Changers Seattle now that the Olympics were over. Luckily, after that they had a couple days off followed by a few home games in a row. Shane was looking forward to it. He needed to be in his own home and his own bed.

They got into the hotel in Seattle late the night before the team joined them. Luckily, the team had been kind enough to book one of the rooms a night early for them. As usual, they'd been given the same double queen room as the rest of the team and for possibly the first time, they both immediately collapsed into separate beds. The beds in the Olympic Village had been cramped and uncomfortable and oh god did Shane need to just lay flat and let his back decompress while he starfished in place. Glancing over, it seemed like Ilya was doing the exact same thing.

Shane hated to admit it but their age was catching up with them both. Ilya's hip gave him trouble periodically. Shane had a shoulder that got stiff when the weather turned. Hits they used to shake off on the ice sometimes lingered for days. He'd even noticed Ilya squinting at his phone more lately but hadn't yet suggested that he make an appointment for glasses. He would soon, though. He'd look good in them.

They were both nearly 35 now. It was their 17th season in the NHL. They'd both agreed, privately, that their 20th season would be their last. Even without age catching up to them, they both had other plans. It wasn't really possible to raise a family when both of them were on the road $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year. Shane loved hockey and would play it until his body broke down around him if he didn't know Ilya would force him to stop. But he loved Ilya more. He'd give it all up for the beautiful, golden image of Ilya by his side, raising their family together.

He fell asleep to that thought.

Shane was woken in the middle of the night by the bed dipping and then a cool flash of air as the blanket was lifted up. He reached out automatically and pulled Ilya in with him.

"You're needy," he hummed. Strong arms slid up around his neck and he wrapped his own around Ilya's waist.

"Shut up," Ilya groaned. He buried his face in Shane's neck and Shane pulled the blanket up higher around them.

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Comments and kudos are always appreciated ☺

ETA: It's 2/22 and USA just won men's gold! This also means I was 0/3 on the medal predictions made in this fic. Obviously Russia was never going to win silver bc they're not in the Olympics rn anyway (and in my heart I wanted Finland in their spot) but still, Slovakia being in the bronze game and missing it AND Canada getting silver instead of gold means I was so close and still missed it lmao

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