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by Beulaugh

Summary

With a thunk the puck slams home, a series of loud clanks following as it slides back into its resting spot. Shane growls and throws his arms into the air in frustration.

Fuck.

“I thought you were good at hockey, Hollander,” Ilya drawls, his tone dripping with smug amusement. He unfurls his long frame, standing tall and crossing his arms over his broad chest. His eyes sparkle wickedly, belying the angelic effect created by the dark curls falling into his eyes and the white cable knit sweater that Yuna gave him last Christmas. He looks fucking beautiful.

“Ice hockey, asshole. Not this air hockey shit.”

Notes

This is for my book besties alterlove2021 and Claire. Merry Christmas, my lovelies. I am so grateful to have you in my life and to rant and rave about books with you. THANK YOU for encouraging me to read this series, and an even bigger thank you for putting up with my first incredulous read through of wtf "I'm too demi for this shit." I've since read all the books twice and HR, RM, and TLG three times, and I am madly in love with all of them. Your friendship means the world to me!

I hope you like this teeny little fic that's been rolling around in my brain for months.

See the end of the work for more notes

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"Sha-ane," Ilya admonishes, his eyes cutting to the kids now lacing up their skates on the other side of the room. A slow grin spreads across his face. "Is good they got bored when you started losing so badly."

"F–" Shane catches himself just in time. Ilya's eyes dance, and Shane is torn between wanting to punch the smirk off of his face or kiss it off–the age-old struggle of being with Ilya. He resorts to a glare. "You are a menace."

"I think, maybe today–" and he looks at the score blasting brightly above the game, "That you are the menace. I was worried you might hit one of the kids with this hand-thing." He waves the pusher around, miming losing control and dropping it.

"I never– I wouldn't drop it!" he exclaims loudly, appalled.

"I don't know. You are terrible," Ilya says in challenge.

Shane narrows his eyes. "Am not."

"You lost 7-1. I like winning, but…that's pretty terrible."

Shane opens his mouth to retort and closes it. *Fuck.* Of course Ilya is taunting him at a kids' birthday party. Of course he's taken the bait. Of course his fucking husband is enjoying the shit out of kicking his ass at air hockey. If he'd known how bad he'd be, maybe he wouldn't have so readily agreed to Ilya's excited request to play.

But no, of course he did. Because after two years of marriage, he still gives into anything that makes Ilya glow with delight, and, maybe, maybe, when Ilya looks at him with that twinkling stare, that provoking shit-eating grin that screams superiority, like he's already won, well, Shane doesn't stand a chance. He still feels that deep pull to compete, to never back down from a challenge, to never let Ilya win. And now…now he's embarrassed himself in front of Ilya, Hayden, a few of his old teammates, and about twenty 10-year-old girls. Fucking great.

Taking a deep breath, he ignores everything else and focuses on Ilya. On his strong arms and built shoulders, standing so confidently and carefree. On his hazel eyes that can be simultaneously tender and aggravating. On the softness of his lips, the stubble at his jaw…on

the smug little curve at the corner of his mouth because he knows that Shane got lost just looking at him. Again.

Shane clears his throat, throws him a dirty look, and says, “I was just getting my game together.”

“No.”

“I was,” he lied.

“Sweetheart,” Ilya sighs, and it would be patronizing if his eyes hadn’t suddenly softened at the endearment. Shane’s heart flutters, as it always does when Ilya lets his gooey center show.

Ilya strides around the table, crowding up next to Shane and half sitting on the edge. “Okay,” he rumbles.

“Okay, what?”

Ilya leans forward, and Shane inhales sharply as his breath ghosts across his neck, sending very unwanted shivers down his spine. They’re at Hayden’s twins’ birthday party, for fucks’ sake! He’s so preoccupied trying not to be turned on that he misses Ilya’s next words. “What?” he asks, throwing him a glare and pointedly stepping back.

Ilya doesn’t miss the move, and his knowing look tells Shane he’d done it on purpose.

“Okay. Prove it.”

“Prove it?”

“We play again.”

“Oh.” Shane’s embarrassed to admit he kind of forgot what they’d been talking about. Ilya’s ability to distract him is a real problem.

“But…” At this, a suggestive smile spreads across Ilya’s face, and he closes the distance between them again.

“But?”

“We make a bet. What will you give me when I win?” Ilya crosses his arms, glowering tauntingly at Shane, his posture cocky once again.

Shane sputters, just as Ilya knew he would. “Wha–” He takes a step back, his gaze darting side to side to check where the kids are now. Luckily, they are lining up to get back out on the ice, so none of them are within earshot. “Like a– Like a blowjob?” he hisses.

Ilya barks out a laugh, and the corners of his eyes crinkle with fondness. “No, Shane.” He drops his voice just in case. “We both know you’d do that for me anyway.” Shane starts to

protest, but Ilya purses his lips crookedly and shakes his head, silencing the protest they both know is a lie.

Ilya crowds closer, bringing his lips to the shell of Shane's ear and once again sending those sparks galloping over his skin. Goddamn him! Shane tries to create space, but Ilya cups his cheek and holds him there as he says, "No, sweetheart, I want something special." He pauses and drops his lips to softly kiss Shane's neck, turning Shane's knees to jelly. His lips return to his ear, and he whispers, "If I win, you come out to the bar with me and sing me a love song at karaoke."

"What?" Shane croaks.

"You may blow me too if you want." Ilya's lips linger an extra moment at the spot under his ear, and then he stands to his full height, far too pleased with himself.

"The fuck?" Shane practically wheezes, letting it out on a long exhale.

"Children, Shane. Children."

"They're gone, Ilya, you smug-ass shit."

Surprised, Ilya looks around as if truly noticing their surroundings for the first time. He huffs in assent and then focuses back on Shane. "Is that any way to speak to your husband?"

"Sometimes, yes."

Ilya grins broadly and pulls him into a quick kiss. "Maybe."

Laughing, Shane pecks him again and then asks, "Fine. What do I get when I win?"

The wicked gleam is back. "You won't win. Is not possible."

"It is too!" Shane insists, trying to believe it himself. He will *not* lose like that again!

"Shane," he drawls, "You have to score to win."

"You–" Shane shoves him, and taken off guard, Ilya stumbles back into the table.

"Hey," shouts Hayden, coming over from the rink entrance. "Stop your weird aggressive flirting and either play or not. Some of us would actually like to play air hockey while the kids are busy."

"Not Shane," Ilya goads. "I don't think what he's doing can be called playing."

"Jesus fucking Christ," Shane thunders. He steps forward to the table, hipping Ilya out of his way and back to his own side. "Let's go."

He inserts the coins into the machine, saying testily, "Since you won't even entertain the idea that I can win, let's just assume that when I do, you will give me anything I want."

“Anything, huh?” Ilya asks, waggling his eyebrows.

Hayden groans from where he stands at the middle of the table. “I should probably leave. You guys are going to be gross.”

“Probably,” Shane says.

“Are you still here?” Ilya asks.

Hayden flicks him off and traipses over to lace up his own skates before heading out to join the kids.

Shane loses.

It isn’t even a contest. It’s barely a game.

Ilya’s arm moves like lightning, chasing the puck all over the table and slamming it hard straight at Shane’s goal, and Shane just can’t keep up. His timing is off. He misses the puck and hits the wall or embarrassingly just whiffs right past the puck in a flailing *whoosh*.

Of the two of them, Shane would swear he had the better hand-eye coordination, the better self control and mind-body awareness. Yet, here he is waving his arm chaotically all over the table while Ilya moves with grace and power.

It has to be those extra inches! Ilya’s just taller with a longer reach.

It definitely isn’t that Ilya moves with the grace of a lion, a cunning predator who knows exactly how to trap his prey.

It definitely isn’t the fact that Ilya looks hot leaning over the table, his brow furrowed in concentration, a light sheen of sweat on his upper lip glittering in the bright lights of the rec room. Each sure movement, each powerful swipe, every confident shift in weight, the deep concentration, they all put Shane off of his game, drawing his attention away from the puck, causing him to always react seconds too late.

It can't possibly be that.

Fuck, even Ilya’s trash talk is distracting. The way “Hollander” rolls off his tongue in a low purr that sends Shane’s stomach swirling. The way he shakes his ass when he thinks he’s being funny. The way his voice drops low, turning the snark into innuendo. The way his grin lights up his face, making him appear boyish and carefree, and Shane wishes Ilya could always feel this happy. The way he boasts, gloating like a child in a way that turns his pompous posturing into something endearing and adorable.

It’s disgusting.

And Shane is completely enthralled.

He loses 7-1. Again.

As his last chance at redemption clatters back home to wait until someone new inserts more money, Shane tosses the pusher back onto the now silent table and thrusts his hands onto his hips with a huff. It's infuriating that Ilya can be so naturally good at this too. He's already brilliant at hockey. It really isn't fair.

"Hollander."

"Fuck!"

Ilya approaches cautiously, ducking his chin to meet Shane's eyes, seeking consent and something that looks like forgiveness. Shane sighs, dropping his arms and beckoning him closer.

Lightly placing one hand on Shane's waist and the other on Shane's cheek, Ilya pulls him into a long kiss, cradling him close so that Shane finally relaxes and gives in to what he wants– Ilya. They kiss for much longer than is appropriate at a kids' ice rink birthday party, but no one interrupts.

Finally, Ilya steps back and says, "I think you should stick to ice hockey."

Shane releases a sound that sits somewhere between a growl and a "Fuck you" and moves to shove Ilya again, but this time Ilya catches his wrists, pulling him close and wrapping his arms around him. Rocking him side to side, he murmurs, "So what are you going to sing for me?"

—

And that is how Shane finds himself singing "I Will Always Love You" by Whitney Houston, on a dirty stage, at a gay bar, drunk as fuck while his husband stares up at him with a combination of pure love and unadulterated glee.

As the last note trails off, Shane meets his eyes, and says, "*Ya lyublyu tebya, ty chertov zasranets*."

Ilya's laughter booms loud enough to fill the bar, and as soon as Shane jumps off the stage, he gathers him up into his arms and kisses him until Shane no longer cares that he sucks at air hockey and can't sing for shit.

Later, with Ilya's dick in his mouth, he tries to ignore the fact that Ilya was right about this part too.

End Notes

Thank you all for reading! Kudos and comments are always squealed over and highly appreciated!

Translation: I love you, you fucking asshole.
(Please forgive me if it's inaccurate in any way. I used Google.)

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