

5 Times They Almost Get Caught and the 1 Time They Do

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5 Times They Almost Get Caught and the 1 Time They Do

by [bellarchives](#)

Summary

Five times Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov almost got caught together... and one time that they did.

Notes

i love a 5+1 and this idea captivated me the second it crossed my mind. hope you enjoy, and thank you for reading!

for mei, my greatest supporter and my sweetiepie angel; thank you for everything. katie and orion, my hollanov brainrot is all your fault, thank you. sandy you are everything, thank you for fact checking my zero hockey knowledge.

1- March 2011

Shane would not meet up with Rozanov again.

Maybe if he told that to himself enough, his body would comply with his brain. Unfortunately, logic flew out the window the second he had an opportunity to be alone in a confined space with Ilya Rozanov. He lost all semblance of common sense and self control. Even Rozanov's vanity barely dulled the magnetic pull Shane felt in his gut whenever the pair found themselves in each others' orbits.

In an effort to deplete his body of energy in a different and hopefully more productive way, Shane heads to the hotel's gym. Maybe if he runs on the treadmill until his legs turn to putty, he wouldn't text Rozanov back. He wouldn't go to the fourteenth floor. He wouldn't wait to see that stupid smug face open the door with his annoying all-knowing smile and that damn glint in his eyes that caused an electrical fuse in Shane's brain. He wishes he could send his brain back for a factory reset. Maybe that would be the fix for this particular bug.

As he sets an immediate brutal pace on the treadmill, Shane's mind wanders. It was a hotel gym not unlike this very one where he had an unspoken competition with Rozanov, where they'd sat in the sound of each other's panting, sharing water from Rozanov's bottle. Great, the exact place he'd gone to get away from the asshole brought him right back to the forefront of Shane's mind. He increases the machine's inclination just as the gym's door swings open to reveal the man himself: the very object of Shane's frustrations and desires. Rozanov walks into the gym with a small duffle bag in hand, and he doesn't even notice the fellow gym-goer at first.

Shane slams down on the emergency brake button as he whisper-yells, "what the *fuck* are you doing here?" Rozanov's face transforms from mild shock to intrigue in an instant once he realizes his company.

"I figured," he says lightly, "I had time to work out before you came over." He slowly makes his way towards the storage cubbies on the other side of the room. His leisurely manner makes Shane's blood boil even more.

“I wasn’t coming over! I didn’t answer your text!” he replies in exasperation. Shane is really sick of this guy. So presumptuous. Conceited. Taunting. Tall. Muscular. Wait.

Rozanov smiles and turns to Shane as he simply replies, “yet.” He strides into the gym’s bathroom and washes his hands. It takes everything in Shane not to stomp over to the asshole and physically shake some sense into him. Oh, wait. It appears that he *has* stomped over to the asshole and grabbed him by the collar of his shirt. Well, at least he wasn’t shaking him.

“Where do you get off-“ Shane begins before Rozanov cuts him off with a kiss. It’s fervent and aggressive, just the way they’re used to. Shane can’t help but melt into him, and he’s grateful for the grip he already has on Ilya’s shirt. That anchor might be the only thing keeping his knees from buckling.

When he finally pulls away for a breath, Rozanov replies, “I was thinking I get off right here.” Shane looks around like a terrified cartoon. He peeks underneath each stall and even kicks one door open for good measure. He then pulls Rozanov to stand in front of him and shoves him into the nearest cubicle. He locks the door and angrily turns on his heel, only to find himself smushed against Rozanov’s chest. Shane maneuvers his way behind him and uses his foot to close the toilet lid. He then wiggles his way back towards the stall door and holds onto Rozanov’s shoulders. Shane then pushes Rozanov down to sit on the toilet seat (there’s no way in hell Shane would’ve sat on that germ infested nightmare) and lets out a breath before grabbing his face and kissing him with such ferocity that Rozanov actually slides backwards and flushes the toilet with his elbow. Yeah, Shane would absolutely remain standing.

Ilya uses his lower vantage point to kiss his way down Hollander, peppering kisses from his neck to his chest and down his torso. Hollander pulls him back up for a longer, deeper kiss, letting his hands linger on Ilya’s jaw. Ilya reaches and grabs onto a chunk of Hollander’s smooth hair to pull his head backwards, giving him more of Shane’s neck to ravage. The low sigh Hollander lets out only encourages Ilya further.

Just as Hollander moves to pull Ilya’s shirt off, the bathroom door slams open, and someone calls out, “what the hell is all that slamming!” The second he hears the bang of the door, Hollander climbs onto the closed toilet and crouches in the minuscule space behind where Ilya sits. He looks like deer in headlights, and Ilya almost laughs at how silly Hollander looks squatting behind him. Hollander can see a giggle approaching and clamps his hand over Ilya’s mouth; Ilya raises an eyebrow seductively in turn.

Ilya swats Hollander's hand off of his mouth as he clears his throat and says, "sorry, I have... stomach ache. I... am pooping." He turns back to look at Hollander, who is currently staring at him in bewilderment. They had spent enough alone time together for Ilya to read the expression in his eyes. He could practically hear Hollander's shrill *is that the best you could think of?* in his mind. To really sell the story, Ilya cries out and slams his hand into the stall door. When he leans forward, Ilya conveniently forgets Hollander is resting most of his weight on Ilya, so this motion makes him slightly lose his balance. Hollander throws his hands out beside himself to steady his position and smashes into the stall walls before clutching onto Ilya for dear life. This makes an even bigger ruckus, and the silence that follows is more painful than the pinching of Ilya's shoulders where Hollander now latches onto. If Ilya closes his eyes, he can imagine there is a cat digging its claws into his shirt. He bites his lip and looks away so Hollander doesn't cover his mouth again. On second thought...

In lieu of a response, whoever had walked into the bathroom turns around and leaves, muttering something along the lines of, "they don't pay me enough." The pair waits either ten seconds or ten minutes, Ilya can't tell the difference in this moment, before making a noise or movement. Hollander gently tiptoes back onto the ground and peeks through the hole lining the stall door for any sign of another person remaining in the bathroom. Just as he was about to let out the breath he'd been holding in, Ilya yanks Hollander onto his lap and resumes the kissing of Shane's neck.

Hollander jumps back up and whisper-scolds, "are you *crazy*? We absolutely *cannot stay in here!*" He's looking at Ilya as if the curls on his head had instantaneously turned bright purple and started wiggling around.

Ilya is simply bemused. As he opens his mouth to reply, Hollander cuts him off: "No. No, get up. You are going back to your room, and I will leave this bathroom and gym in ten minutes. Just a waste of my time," he trails off grumbling. He turns around and uselessly flushes the toilet with his foot before opening the stall door and shoving Ilya out. Ilya hears the lock click once more and sees no movement from Hollander. He imagines Hollander standing there in silence, humiliatingly staring at a blank spot on the shut door for ten minutes. He feels endeared by this. Or maybe this is just amusement.

Ilya reaches the bathroom door and turns his head slightly, his hand on the handle; "you said you'll wait ten minutes?" he asks over his shoulder.

There is a five second blanket of silence before he hears a whispered “yes” in response.

“Good,” he calls back, “then I will see you at my room in fifteen.” He shuts the door before he can hear Hollander pointlessly object.

Ilya unhurriedly picks up his belongings from the gym cubbies and walks back to the elevator without a care in the world, taking his time walking down the hallway. He isn’t sure if Hollander would actually show up at his room after this debacle, but he had to act with the confidence that he didn’t feel in his chest.

Fourteen minutes later, Ilya hears two successive knocks on his room door.

2. October 2012

Ilya is in a bad mood. Not only did Boston lose to Montreal tonight, but Hollander managed to score *two more goals* than he did. *Well*, Ilya thinks to himself as he steps into the hotel’s elevator, *I’m sure we’ll work that out in a few minutes*.

He brings a smile to his own face at that thought and stares out at the lobby before the elevator doors begin to close. When they start moving, Ilya sees Hollander’s parents standing thirty feet away. Even if he hadn’t spent a slightly embarrassingly long time looking up pictures of him online, Ilya would’ve been able to spot Mr. Perfect’s features in his mom and dad. Ilya even recognizes Hollander’s dad’s shirt from something he’s been photographed in before with his son. On that note, maybe Ilya needed to Google Hollander less often.

Just before the doors shut, he realizes that the Hollanders look stressed. Are they arguing? Wait, did they even argue? Ilya and Hollander never ventured too deeply into each other’s personal lives, but Ilya was pretty sure he remembered Hollander describing two supportive, loving parents. Perfect family for Perfect Hollander. Ilya breathes out slowly and watches the floor numbers rise.

The elevator gently chimes and the doors glide open onto the fifteenth floor. Ilya runs a hand slowly through his curls before reminding himself that his hair was about to be tousled, tugged, and dampened with his sweat. Plus, it's not like any small changes he could make to his appearance would subdue Hollander's desire to see him. While that thought is reassuring, it still doesn't stop Ilya from continuing to adjust every part of his outfit as he makes his way down the hallway.

He double checks his last text from "Jane" and triple knocks on the door to room 1559. After a beat of Hollander presumably looking through the peephole, the room door opens. Or rather, the door is opened with barely enough room for Ilya to squeeze his body through. He rolls his eyes as he pushes the door open more and shuts it behind himself once fully through.

"Absolutely not," Ilya says as he walks past Hollander towards the bed.

"What did I do!" Hollander asks innocuously, yet his winning smile could've powered the entire hotel's electricity. Ilya tries not to think about Hollander's handsome, giddy grin, but this attempt is overruled by a hand pulling him backwards. Hollander releases Ilya's hand and pulls him by the waist, grazing his hand across Ilya's cheek. Ilya feels goosebumps on his arms and a tug in his chest.

Hollander moves Ilya's head to meet their eyes as he whispers, "are you really gonna be a sore loser tonight?" The tender moment is broken in an instant as Ilya backs Hollander into the wall and holds him there a moment.

Just as quietly, Ilya replies: "I won't be sore tonight. You on the other hand..." he trails off, and Hollander pulls him in for a ferocious kiss. The pair never break apart as they walk back towards the bed until they hear a rap on the door. Almost immediately after, they hear someone fumbling with the doorknob.

On instinct, Shane shoves Ilya. He starts waving his hands like he's trying to direct a plane's landing, but unlike Shane, Rozanov acts quickly and calmly. He opens Shane's closet door and slips in, quietly shutting it just as the room's door swings open.

“Mom!” Shane tries to sound pleasantly surprised instead of deeply horrified as she strides past him and immediately starts searching around his room, only heightening his fear.

“Honey, have you seen Dad’s watch?” she asks as she opens cabinets and drawers throughout the room; “he thought he might’ve left it in here when we came in earlier. He’s driving me crazy; I told him it would turn up but he’s lost without it.” She’s currently standing in front of the closet door with her hand on its handle. Shane swears he’s sweating more now than he was during tonight’s game.

“Y-you know dad,” he attempts to appear nonchalant as his voice cracks, “it’ll, uh, show up eventually!” At his words, his dad rushes through the door with a gold watch in hand and a smile of relief on his face. That watch could’ve been hundreds of years old made by David’s direct ancestor and Shane would still be more relieved than his father that this search party could end.

Yuna, on the other hand, simply looks unimpressed as she asks, “where was it?”

David looks sheepishly at his wife and son as he answers, “the pocket of my jeans.” Shane couldn’t help but laugh at his dad’s silliness, even when his heart was attempting to leap out of his chest. At least now this little family chat can end immediately. Shane has other plans to attend to, all of which included the Russian stowed away in his closet.

“Well, that was fun! What time are we meeting for breakfast tomorrow?” he asks as he pulls his mom in for a hug and walks her to his door.

“Oh,” she answers, “seven, right?” she asks, looking to her husband.

He nods and Shane claps his hands together: “perfect! I’ll be there at 6:59!” He opens his door and his parents walk out on cue. They exchange good-nights and Shane shuts the door as slowly and normally as he can manage. He rests his head on the wood as he attempts to steady his heartbeat.

He still can hear his parents’ voices on the other side of the door; his mom asks, “did he seem okay?” to which his dad replies, “he’s probably just tired. You know how he needs his alone

time.” Their footsteps peter off the further they get from his room, and Shane doesn’t dare lift his head from the door until he’s heard an uninterrupted silence for five seconds. He counts. He finally lifts his head and turns around to find Rozanov standing right behind him.

“Jesus Christ,” Shane jumps backwards, “don’t do that.” Rozanov starts to snicker, and Shane almost snaps at him. How would Rozanov have felt if it was *his* parents almost walking in on them? But considering how well the situation went, Shane didn’t want to pick a fight. Plus, Rozanov’s stupid soft laugh brought a swell to his chest. Shane feels the chuckle bubble in his throat, and he lets himself let it go. The pair find themselves standing in Shane’s suite laughing over the ridiculous encounter and their narrow escape for a brief minute. As they settle down, Shane sees that a look of unease lingers in Rozanov’s eyes, and he searches Shane’s face for any remaining concern.

“Are you... okay?” he asks, inching closer to Shane. Rozanov reaches a hand up to his head and gently runs his fingers through Shane’s hair. Shane closes his eyes at the sensation and feels grounded in the moment by Ilya’s touch. He nods quickly and shakes his body out, as if to shake off any remaining panic from his body. He takes the hand of a bemused Rozanov and guides him towards the bed.

As Shane attempts to pull Ilya’s shirt off his head, Ilya stops him, “hold on. Are you *sure* you are okay? We really don’t have to.” His hands are on Shane’s to stop him, and Shane feels Ilya’s thumb rubbing the back of his hand soothingly for a beat. He feels frozen in time with his hands on the hem of Ilya’s shirt, anchored gently in place by Rozanov’s gentle touch.

Shane feels panicked during these tender moments with Rozanov. On the ice, Rozanov studies him; Shane’s moves are anticipated or later added to Rozanov’s encyclopedic memory to be expected for their next meeting. During their hookups, well... there is a range of emotions Shane experiences during these meetings. But when Ilya and Shane stop to have an intimate and personal interaction, even if it merely lasts a moment, it terrifies Shane. He feels transparent, and every emotion he feels is lit up like a neon sign hanging above his head. Shane finds himself most scared when they stop and remember who and where they are, or when aspects of their lives leak into their meet ups. Even amidst all these fearful thoughts, he feels something in his chest unravel at Ilya checking on him, and he can’t help the small smile on his face.

He nods and continues to pull Ilya’s shirt off as he says, “all good, thank you. Now, where were we?” he asks rhetorically, his hands taking their time to trail up Rozanov’s waist. Shane’s hands make their way into Ilya’s hair, and he weaves his fingers through them. He pulls Rozanov’s face to his as their lips meet. They’re unhurried, moving in slow motion.

Shane feels comfortable with tonight's change of pace. He just needed to remember to set the deadbolt on his door the next time Montreal played Boston.

3. January 2014

It's almost funny how familiar Ilya has become with Hollander's Montreal apartment. Well, his hookup apartment. Ilya has never seen Shane's *actual* living space; he's only ever seen the sterile, staged exhibit that Hollander had purchased so as to not be caught with Ilya. God forbid Ilya Rozanov be seen anywhere near the home of Shane Hollander. One time, Ilya offered to buy them Coke and ginger ale at a nearby gas station on his way over since Hollander said he hadn't bought any. Ilya had to physically pull his cell phone away from his face to protect his ear from the shrill sound of Hollander's panicked shrieking.

Of course Ilya understands. Two rivals being seen arriving at each other's places would appear odd. But still, Ilya can't help the burning sensation that lingers in the back of his throat every time that he texts "here" as he approaches the unmarked doors of the hollow building. He walks through the unlocked door and up the staircase; Hollander opens the door to the pristine apartment just as Ilya's feet reach the landing.

Ilya walks in and peers around the unlivd-in living space to check for any signs of change as he removes his shoes at the doormat. The decorative teal pillows remain in almost their exact same positions on the sofa from months prior, and coasters are placed equidistant from one another and the respective pillows. While he discontentedly can't compare this space to Hollander's real home, he can see parts of Shane behind the handiwork of the interior designers. The lighting is entirely on dimmers to prevent any brightness overstimulation (he described the concept as 'loud light' to Ilya once), there's a Roomba running once a day so he can comfortably walk barefoot, and the cabinets are full of disgusting looking, colorless snacks that Hollander swears by.

With a jolt, Ilya wonders if Shane has brought any other guys to this apartment. Is this his gay apartment? His place in town for hooking up with men? Or was this his *Ilya* apartment, for only hooking up with one man he couldn't stand but desperately needed? Ilya honestly doesn't know if he actually wants the answer to this question. Sure, he personally slept around, but he had always done that. He hadn't known Hollander to do the same. *Right*, he

thinks to himself, *because Hollander and I know the ins and outs of each other's personal lives so well.*

“What?” Hollander asks in confusion at Ilya standing around and perusing. Ilya knows he is used to them hurrying along, but they have time today. He is allowing himself to be nosy in this moment.

“Just checking,” Ilya says casually.

Hollander rolls his eyes and asks, “for what *now*?” Ilya loves how little it takes to piss Hollander off. Later, he will allow himself to think about how strongly Shane lets himself feel his emotions and how much Ilya forces himself to suppress his own. Later. Much, much later.

“I wanted to make sure you stayed boring since the last time I was here,” he says as he slowly makes his way to the bedroom, running his hands along the hallway's walls as he takes his time to reach his destination.

“That's not even the dig you think it is,” Hollander's voice chimes from behind him, “I hired a decorator, remember?”

“Mmm yes, and somehow they still managed to capture the ‘blah’ you are unable to get rid of, even with money and helpers!” Ilya's smile is genuine as he turns around to face pissed-off Shane. He'll survive, his grumpy little scowl will be wiped off of his face soon enough.

“You're so...” Hollander's words fade away as he rushes towards Ilya and kisses him hungrily. He threads his fingers into Ilya's hair and pulls at the curls as if he's grounding himself into the very spot they're standing. Ilya runs his hands up and down Hollander's back, unable to decide on where he wants to touch most. He reaches for the hem and pulls Hollander's shirt up and once it's off, Hollander pulls away for long enough to take a breath and peel Ilya's shirt off of his already sweaty frame.

Shane pushes Ilya backwards into the bed and slowly straddles Ilya's lap. They move frantically, trying to make every move their mind is thinking of and their body wants, but

somehow it still feels like they're taking their time. Shane grabs a fistful of Ilya's hair and yanks his head back, kissing down his neck.

"Fuck, Hollander," Ilya breathes out before pushing Shane off to pull off his own pants. Once he throws them onto the floor, his new smartphone slides out of his back pocket. Ilya notices the screen is on, and he holds Hollander away with one hand and presses a finger to his lips with the other. He walks over and picks up his phone to see that he had apparently butt-dialed Svetlana two minutes and twenty-two seconds ago. He puts the phone to his ear and says her name, and Hollander's hand flies to his mouth once he realizes what had been done.

"Why hello, Ilya!" she chides in Russian, bubbling with laughter at his voice finally being directed towards her, "did you *mean* to call me? Or is this your way of making me jealous?"

"No, no," he responds in the same language, "that was by accident. Stupid new phone without buttons accidentally made a call when I was... busy."

Svetlana sighs as she says, "ah yes. Busy. I hope this 'Holly' isn't keeping you too busy to see me when you're in Boston next."

Ilya's eyes scrunch together in confusion as he asks, "Holly?" until he makes eye contact with Shane, whose sigh of relief could probably be heard on Svetlana's end if she was searching for it.

"Don't worry," she says kindly, "have a nice time with her and I'll see you soon. Stay safe!" before hanging up the call.

Shane falls back onto the bed and groans in frustration, but Ilya can see a relieved look on his face. He moves to sit on the bed next to where Hollander is laying with his eyes shut, and he runs his hands through Shane's hair.

"So apparently," he begins, speaking emphatically as if he was sharing a bedtime story, "the new smartphone I bought is actually a stupidphone. Because when I sat on your bed with you on top of me, my stupidphone called a girl that I know in Boston. Fortunately, she heard me say the name Holly. Unfortunately, Jane is much prettier name." Shane chuckles at this, and

Ilya is glad his eyes are closed so he can't see the grin that comes to Ilya's face at his charming, bubbling laughter.

"Shannon was also an option," Shane reminds him as he opens one eye.

Ilya shakes his head, "I would never be with Shannon. Too fake."

"It's a real name," Shane protests.

"I know, I mean a Shannon would be too fake for me," Ilya explains.

"Oh, of course," Shane plays along, "and what's Holly, then? Too much of a prude?"

"Holly? You mean the one who buttdialed another girl to make her jealous?" Ilya asks incredulously, "I would say *opposite* for Holly."

Shane sits up as he answers, "oh so now we're *slut-shaming* Holly? Wow. And by the way, your ass is the one who called her. Maybe your ass was thinking of her."

Ilya softens ever so slightly as he shakes his head, telling Shane, "no. Is only thinking of Jane." Stunned by the smallest response of tenderness, Hollander reaches his hand to caress Ilya's cheek, and he feels himself leaning gently into Shane's touch.

"Come on... Leah?," Shane tries as he gently smacks Ilya's cheek. Ilya feels a swell of endearment as he realizes this is an action he often makes towards Shane. He tries not to think of the idea of Shane picking up on his own mannerisms, and he won't later imagine other small actions or phrases that Shane has started doing or saying that he's collected from Ilya.

"That is awful. Do not ever say that one again," Ilya says as he moves towards Shane once more. Shane pulls him in for a kiss before he pulls Ilya's face away, his own expression one of concentration

“...Ella? Oh! Rosie?” he asks. Ilya can only laugh and kiss Shane further to shut him up. They didn’t need more names. ‘Jane’ and ‘Ilya’ do their job. ‘Hollander’ and ‘Rozanov’ work just fine. ‘Shane’ and ‘Ilya’... these almost feel like ghosts in the room at times. At least, ‘Shane’ does; the name haunts Ilya’s throat, threatening to break free.

4. June 2016

The worst part about being a famous hockey player by far was the award shows. Shane hated the social aspect of it all, pretending to be exactly who everyone wanted him to be while also never really being able to come out of his shell enough to be properly personable.

It’s the night of the Calder Awards, and Shane can’t help but stare into nothingness ahead of him from his seat at the show. Five years have passed since he won his own Rookie of the Year Award, and he was asked back to present it to this year’s new kid on the block. He was even given his own dressing room as a presenter stocked with anything he’d like. The only thing he could think of as a request was a mini fridge stocked with ginger ale. There was one other thing in the fridge he shouldn’t even have asked for, but he decided to pretend it wasn’t there; his own tell-tale heart in a Frigidaire cube.

Apart from awkwardly clearing his throat at the start of his speech, Shane’s award presentation goes off without a hitch. His eyes remained glued to the camera, only ever glancing away to read the teleprompter. He wouldn’t even let himself use his peripheral vision to find out if Rozanov was there. It felt weird to text and ask if he’d been invited to this event considering Shane is only attending himself to give out an award, so Shane truly has no idea if he’ll even be seeing Rozanov tonight. It almost feels worse not knowing if he’ll see Ilya, because he can’t properly prepare his witty comebacks in advance if he’s unsure of his target audience even being in attendance.

As nonchalantly as he possibly can during a commercial break, Shane scans the theater seats in front of him from left to right. No sign of Rozanov. He slowly turns around in his chair to assess the crowd behind him. By the time he reaches the section directly behind him, his eyes meet a pair that are already locked on him. An hour into the show is when Shane finally sees

Ilya Rozanov sitting four rows behind him. He attempts to curtly nod at Ilya but he can imagine it looks more like he's attempting to hold in a cough. Shane reaches towards his jacket pocket to grab his phone but stops himself. What would even be the point of that? What would the text even say? *I like your tuxedo? You look as sexy as ever? Would a smile kill you every once in a while?*

Now that he knows Ilya's behind him, Shane feels Rozanov's eyes boring into the back of his head. Is that Ilya's heavy breathing he hears? Oh. That's just his own. His heart is practically leaping outside of his chest, and Shane feels his tell-tale heart sitting four rows behind him. Any sudden moves will give him away, and so he tries to forget what Edgar Allen Poe wrote and keep his secret to himself. He remains rigid and facing forward for the endless remaining commercial break, and the lights dim once more to signal the return of the show. Shane's phone starts to ring (shit, he forgot to put it on vibrate) and he pulls it out to see a number he doesn't recognize. He answers the call and makes his way out into the theater's lobby.

"Hello?" he says once the theater doors have shut; he continues walking, seeking refuge in his dressing room. How nice, the Calder Awards anticipated his panic and provided him with a blissful hideaway.

"Is this Hallie?" a voice asks slowly on the other end. Shane should have known it would've been a spam call. He hadn't gotten one in so long so he'd mistakenly assumed he was immune.

With a sigh of relief he responds, "nope; you've got the wrong number." He hangs up the phone as he opens the door to his dressing room. He finds Ilya Rozanov sitting comfortably on the couch with the room's landline in his hand. Shane rushes to shut the door behind him and stares incredulously at the smug man in front of him.

"What the hell, Rozanov," is all Shane can manage at the moment. The only other words he can think to say are 'fuck you' and 'asshole,' but he knows he will probably say those soon enough.

"Hello, Hallie," Ilya smiles sweetly at Shane's frustration, "you were expecting me."

"I absolutely was *not*, you-" Shane stops himself as he watches Rozanov open the mini fridge and pull out a ginger ale bottle and the singular Coke can from the appliance. Rozanov holds

the ginger ale out to Shane, and Shane takes it. Their hands brush briefly, and Shane finds himself chugging half of the bottle before coming up for air. Leaving his bottle on the table, he sulks over to the couch and plops himself down next to a bemused Ilya.

“Why do you look so... lost? No, not right. Loser? Losing? Help me, Hollander,” Rozanov asks as he looks for the right word to encapsulate Shane’s demeanor.

“Defeated,” Shane offers and Ilya snaps his fingers in agreement.

“You look defeated! Did you think you would win Rookie of the Year two times?” Rozanov asks mockingly, “Because sorry, Hollander, but you are getting old.”

Shane smacks Ilya’s arm, “you’re like three weeks younger than me!”

“Three weeks is basically a hundred years,” Rozanov says dismissively, earning a quiet “asshole” under Shane’s breath. Rozanov finishes his Coke and places it on the table. When he leans back on the couch, he places his arm around Shane’s shoulder.

Ilya looks into his eyes and cups Shane’s cheek with his hand as he gently says, “look on the bright side, Scott Hunter can tell you all about being elderly. He’s been forty since we started as rookies.” Shane laughs instead of answering and stares up at Rozanov’s face. He only has an instant to recalibrate his memory to look for any new tooth caps, scars, or tattoos he’s acquired before Ilya pulls him in slowly for a long kiss. Shane breathes out and feels his whole body sink into the couch. Instinctively, Rozanov works to take off Shane’s bowtie and throws it behind the couch. Shane pulls away with a scowl and gets up to retrieve it, never willing to have his space be unkempt by any means. Ilya snickers as Shane ducks behind the couch to find the tie. He throws it back towards Ilya and it lands right next to the Coke can and ginger ale on the table.

At this moment, a knock is heard at the door before it immediately swings open to reveal a young woman with a headset, badge, and clipboard entering the room. She finally looks up from her clipboard to see Ilya Rozanov lounging on the couch of Shane Hollander’s dressing room.

“Oh! I’m-,” she begins to panic, “I’m so sorry, Mr. Rozanov! I was supposed to see if Mr. Hollander needed anything restocked, or...” she trails off quietly as Shane feels the question of Ilya’s presence in his room cross her mind.

“Do not worry,” Rozanov replies charmingly, remaining seated. Shane is frozen on his hands and knees behind the couch. Just as he’s about to mentally complain about being on the floor, he feels the softness of the rug he’s situated on. Even from this distance, he can smell the faint scent of laundry detergent on the rug. Well, at least that was one worry quelled.

“You know how long Hollander and I have known each other, miss?” Rozanov asks the terrified production assistant. When Shane hears no reply, he assumes she nods her head.

Ilya continues, “We started our rookie season together. Met even before that at qualifiers when we were seventeen. But you know what? We were rivals from the start. He challenges me in a way other players cannot. And I like a challenge.” Shane suppresses a smile as he hears Ilya stand up.

“But we aren’t really... friends. You know I like to mess with people, yes?” he asks the woman, “I am troublemaker, they say. So I came to play small prank on Hollander. Nothing that would embarrass him, but something enough to bother him all night. Something only he can know.

“So when you see Hollander without a bowtie, wearing his shirt one, two, maybe even three buttons open,” Ilya says this part slightly louder, “*you* will know I did that to annoy him. I also drank his Coke. But don’t restock that, I want him to know it’s missing.”

The young woman stuttered a moment before saying, “okay so... I should just... go?”

“Yes, you may,” Shane hears Ilya reply.

As the door swings open, Shane hears the woman speak quietly after a beat, “can I ask you something, Mr. Rozanov?”

Shane holds his breath for both himself and Rozanov while Ilya answers, “of course.”

“My girlfriend is a huge fan of the Bears, but especially you. Will you sign this for her?” She sounds so worried of rejection in this moment, but even Shane was thrown by the softness of Ilya’s tonal change.

“Of course! Why didn’t you ask before? What is her name? What is *your* name? Tell me exactly what you want to say. Do you want selfie?” Shane hears the door slam as Ilya presumably moves the conversation into the hallway, but he refuses to move from his hiding spot on the ground until he fully hears the fading of Ilya’s voice. Once he stands up, he finds his empty room the same as before he’d entered apart from the two drinks on the table. Shane picks the empty Coke can up and holds it in his hand for a moment before tossing it into the recycling bin. He brushes off his knees and readjusts his hair in the mirror before remembering Ilya’s words. He pops open two of his dress shirt’s buttons and holds the door handle. He pauses before deciding to open the third button as well.

When Shane returns to his seat, he makes sure to turn towards the rows behind him as he wades through fellow audience members towards his seat. His eyes find Ilya immediately, and the asshole is looking too happy over something as simple as making Shane slut up his outfit at a prestigious award show. Shane’s tell tale heart thumped even louder in his chest, but he let himself revel in the moment as he watched the rest of the show.

After the hosts say their last goodbyes to the audience, Shane feels his phone buzzing in his pocket. He doesn’t need to read it to know what it’ll say or who it’s from. Shane spends the afterparty guessing room number combinations, not picking up his phone to check until his night in public had ended.

5. June 2017

Never once in his life had Shane ever been bored. If he had nothing to do, he simply found something. He isn’t the type of person to lounge and watch hours of television; hell, he barely even rested when he needed to on a regular basis. This concussion and injury are sucking the life out of him, and everything he wants to do is off-limits until he fully recovers. Crosswords

and reading for long periods of time hurt his head more than they helped, anything that required physical activity was banned by his parents as they took care of him, and he got frustrated when he didn't immediately succeed at crocheting from Youtube tutorials. Talking to Hayden was pointless unless he wanted to either be tricked into babysitting on Skype again or talk about his beloved hockey that he missed so dearly. Maybe he should let his mom hit Cliff Marlow with her car after all.

All he can do is lay in his bed and think of Ilya. He can't imagine if the roles were reversed and he'd seen Ilya hurt before his eyes, carried out of the rink barely conscious. They hadn't spoken too much since Ilya had visited Shane at the hospital, but he knew it shook Ilya a bit. He felt it in the messages Ilya continued to send asking about his head and collar bone. He could feel it from the gigantic apology flower arrangement he'd received from Cliff that came with a miniature stuffed 'get well soon' bear. Based on what Shane knows about Cliff from Ilya, there is no way he thought of his own accord to send flowers and a stuffed bear to Shane's parents' house. How would Cliff have known Shane liked hydrangeas because they looked like three million tiny flowers in one? Or that he had been recovering at his parents' place?

He lets himself imagine Ilya scolding Cliff to send apology flowers. *No, no, he would've said, not big enough. He was laying on ice like a doll. Bigger! You just bought a new Rolex! Now add a bear. Because we are Bears! All the Bears are sorry! Now add a tip for the flower delivery man.*

Just when he starts imagining Ilya picking a bear that most resembled his tattoo, Shane gets a text message. Think of the Bear and he shall appear.

Lily: are you alone?

Shane finds it unfortunate that he looks up to find himself face to face with a mirror because he has the goofiest smile on his gay face at this moment in time. He clears his throat as he tries to regain his composure.

Shane: depends on what you have planned

Lily: I am supposed to plan something?

Shane: well if I have to leave the room to talk I hope it'll be worth my while

Lily: Skype me

Shane sits up in his bed as he readies himself for the only thing that could possibly get him out of his recovery funk. He opens his laptop and selects the only name in his recent calls, 'Lily,' for a video call. He isn't sure what he's expecting to see when Rozanov answers, but it's definitely not his shirtless body holding a glass of what he knows has to be vodka.

"It's ten in the morning and you're shirtless while drinking vodka," is all Shane's brain can process and let him say aloud.

Ilya shrugs as he answers, "you said to prepare something. All I had time to do was get naked. I already had drink before I texted."

"Okay but still the vod- naked? Not just your shirt?" Shane cuts himself off mid-sentence. Ilya's smirk before he takes another sip was the only answer Shane needed.

"You know," Shane begins loftily as he moves his hand up his chest, "I can't be doing too much physical activity. I'm still recovering."

Ilya downs the remainder of his vodka and replies, "who said you would be doing anything?" Shane's confusion makes Ilya break character and roll his eyes.

"You will only watch, Hollander. Obviously," Ilya says sardonically, tilting his own camera down to show Shane... literally everything. Shane lets out a breath he didn't realize he was holding in and runs his hands through his hair. His heart is beating as fast as it usually does when he's working out.

Just as Ilya starts to drag his hands down his chest with a moan, reversing Shane's opening move, Shane's room door swings open and he hears his name being called. On instinct, Shane shuts his laptop before turning and realizing his mother is standing in front of him, frozen in his doorway with a basket of his laundry.

"Mom!" he practically yells, face reddening and heart racing for all the wrong reasons.

"I'm sorry! I just wanted to give you..." Yuna stops speaking and places Shane's clothes, cleaned and folded the way he likes, in the corner of his room.

She turns back to Shane calmly and says, "I really am so... next time I'll knock I just- I didn't know you were watching p-"

"No! I wasn't!" Shane's voice cracks embarrassingly, not helping his case. He wasn't even lying, but maybe it was easier in this moment to let her believe he was. It took him a beat to realize she couldn't see what was on his screen. All she'd seen was him shutting his laptop after a compromising noise came from the computer. He would take this typical awkward scenario over this becoming an awkward coming out scenario any day.

"Shane," Yuna says softly; she attempts to reach her hand out to touch his arm comfortingly then pulls back as she decides against it, "we don't have to talk about this. This never happened, okay? Watch this."

At this, Yuna steps out of Shane's room and shuts the door. She knocks twice on the door and waits for an answer.

"C-come in?" Shane responds as a question.

His mom walks in the room with an unaffected expression on her face as she says, "honey, I did your laundry earlier and left the basket in here. Just wanted to let you know." With this she gives him a small smile and closes the door. Shane sits in silence, unable to even utter his thanks in response. It takes him a moment to remember the man in his computer who most likely has no idea what just happened. Shane opens the laptop to find the call had automatically ended, so he calls Lily back. The Skype calling tone rings for too long and

Shane almost hangs up before the call answers. The camera is facing Ilya's apartment window, and Shane finds himself giggling at the attempted precaution.

"You can come back, everything's okay," he says sweetly, and his heart leaps as he watches a handful of curls materialize in the corner of the screen. Little by little, Ilya's entire face comes into view, and Shane sees that he's put his clothes back on.

"I heard a lady..." Ilya ventures, "your mom?"

Shane nods and quickly replies, "she was on the other side of my computer! She didn't see anything. She just heard and thought I was..." He was too embarrassed to say it.

"You were what?" Ilya asks genuinely.

"Watching," Shane replies.

"You were," Ilya says obviously, and Shane shakes his head and rubs his eyes.

"No," he says quietly, "watching... porn."

Ilya stares at him stupidly before saying, "you were."

Shane incredulously responds, "no! That's just *watching*! I'm... participating?" he attempts.

Ilya's smirk returns to his face as he answers, "not what I was planning for you." Shane's blush feels like it's been permanently burned into his face.

"Asshole," Shane mutters.

“No, I am not showing it anymore, I put my clothes back on.”

“I didn’t mean that!”

Nowadays a lot of their bickering ended with them laughing, as it did now. Once Ilya calms down, his face hardens in the slightest. Shane can see Ilya searching his face for any signs of residual anxiety, and he can’t help the soft grin on his face at the action.

“I’m okay,” Shane nods. He flashes a thumbs up and an awkward big smile that makes Ilya laugh.

“That is how I imagine you smiled in pictures as a little boy,” Ilya remarks.

Shane grins mischievously as he asks, “you think about what I was like as a kid?”

Ilya opens his mouth to make what Shane can feel is a joke about what a loser he imagines Shane to have been, but he closes it before simply saying, “yes.”

Shane rests his hand on his face in an attempt to cover the stupid smile that was threatening to rip his face in half.

“I was a nerd,” Shane says dismissively,

“Oh, I know,” Ilya nods seriously, “I can see nerdy baby Shane with his gigantic smile and boring outfits when I close my eyes. You dressed like old man until you were ten years old, didn’t you.” He spoke the last part as a statement of fact rather than a question. The problem Shane had is that Ilya wasn’t wrong.

“I wore t-shirts and shorts that were too big for me sometimes,” he tries, but Ilya senses his hesitancy.

“You said ‘sometimes.’ Meaning I am right.” Ilya is beaming.

“How about I just have my mom send you my childhood photo albums?” Shane asks sarcastically.

“You are joking but I am not. Bring Yuna back in the room immediately. Yuna!” Ilya calls out, and Shane shushes him as he rushes to put his laptop’s volume down.

Shane pauses before noting: “you know my mom’s name.” Ilya doesn’t answer, but his face says what Shane is thinking. *I Googled you. I’ve been obsessed with you since we met. I know which advertisement campaigns you worked for and who your parents are. Everything I could absorb about you online that I could find out without asking you has lived in my mind for years.*

For a moment the call is silent, until Ilya starts pulling off his shirt and says suggestively, “so...”

Shane shakes his head and says, “goodbye, *Lily*.” He hangs up the call and closes his computer. Not even twenty seconds go by before he gets a text.

Lily: I guess I’ll just do this without you

Shane throws his phone across the bed and decides a cold shower will be a great way to waste his day away.

1. July 2019

Despite what he leads Shane to believe, Ilya was nervous all day.

It's the first day of the Irina Foundation's hockey camps and all Ilya wants is to do something good in his mother's name. This foundation is so important to him for so many different reasons: he's able to let his mother live on through his work, it allows him to spend time with adorable children who just want to learn how to play hockey, and of course it solidified his cover story for his friendship with Shane. Hell, it allowed him to publicly be within five feet of Shane outside of a professional game. Ilya would take any excuse to be with Shane even if it meant spending it with other talented hockey players. And Hayden Pike too. Oh, and the children!

They had just wrapped up for the day and all Ilya wants to do at this very moment is hold Shane in his arms. He loves bothering Shane, especially in front of people, but he didn't feel like putting on a show today. He just wanted to be real and affectionate with his boyfriend while they taught a bunch of small children the basic rules of hockey (even though there was a good chance some of them didn't even know how to ice skate before today).

He wants to find Shane as the children's guardians begin to pick them up. Ilya thinks to himself: *where would I be if I was Shane?* Most likely, he would be in the bathroom trying to decompress from the day, yet only managing to stare at his reflection. He would most likely be ensuring himself that every part of him looked like as good of a role model as possible for the kids. Ilya didn't want to break his heart by telling him that a hair out of place would have no effect on these kids, even if it showed through his helmet.

Shane scrutinized his own appearance so much that Ilya believed he would be able to draw himself from memory. Of course if it were up to Ilya, he would stare at Shane every second of every day for the rest of his life. He would memorize Shane's freckles and the pattern they were mapped in across his face like constellations. He would count Shane's eyelashes one by one and trace the outline of his lips until his hands couldn't move anymore. Wait, Ilya can just do that later tonight. Sometimes he genuinely forgets that he isn't spending every waking moment pining after Shane. They are *together*. They love each other. There truly can't be anything to stress him out on this day because he has everything he's ever wanted.

He enters the men's restroom to find his dear boyfriend adjusting his gear over and over again. Ilya can't help but smile thinking about how they're wearing matching uniforms for these camps. Ilya walks over to the stall doors and peeks beneath each one to ensure that the bathroom is unoccupied other than Shane. Once he is satisfied with the vacancy, Ilya turns to Shane and simply hugs him.

"Thank you," he says, "for all of this."

Shane's smile can be heard in his voice, "me? We both did this, Ilya."

Ilya pulls away and ghosts the back of his hand against Shane's cheek, "but you wanted to name it after my mother. You and your mother worked out all the... little things to make it run like a business."

"Logistics?" Shane clarifies.

"Yes. And everything is going right and we spent time together in front of people. I didn't even have to humiliate you in front of a big crowd today!" Ilya mocks.

"Oh please," Shane says, pushing Ilya away playfully, "I can still humiliate *you* in front of a bunch of seven year olds!"

"But *you* are so easy to humiliate! Everything embarrasses you!"

"Not everything," Shane says as he pulls Ilya back towards him.

"No?" Ilya questions playfully. Shane shakes his head and pulls Ilya in for a kiss. It starts slow and meaningful, full of reassurance and peace. Everything they can't bring themselves to say out loud in this bathroom. Their movements soon become urgent, and they're holding onto one another like lifejackets on a sinking raft. Ilya doesn't even hear the bathroom door swing open, but Shane registers it. He pulls himself away from Ilya long enough to see a terrified Ryan Price standing in the doorway. Shane looks at Ilya and his immediate response is to shove him away in an attempt to put on the best performance he possibly can under duress.

“Don’t bring competition into this! We are here to support the children!” Shane yells robotically at Ilya. Ilya looks confused until he spots Price’s reflection in the mirror behind Shane. His eyes widen and he snaps into character.

“But competition makes better players!” Ilya says slightly more convincingly than Shane. He shoves Shane’s left shoulder, and Shane barely moves. Ilya looks wildly at Shane and is motioning for him to do literally anything aggressive to play along. All Shane can think to do is slap Ilya across the face, but he does so in the most pathetic, half-hearted way.

Ilya can’t help the unimpressed “really?” fall from his mouth.

The couple hear a mumbled “Jesus Christ” and turn just in time to see Ryan Price slip out of the bathroom.

Shane and Ilya stand in silence for what feels like an eternity before Hayden opens the bathroom door and calls out, “the last kids just got picked up! Let’s huddle up for a team meeting! Even you, Rozanov!” He seems to be oblivious to the fact that both Ilya and Shane jumped at his sudden intrusion, but at least his interruption shook them from their stupor.

“Do you think we should...” Shane trailed off, still shell-shocked.

Ilya, slightly shaken, wraps his arm around Shane’s shoulder and reassures him, “after the meeting. Who knows? Maybe Hayden will have a heart attack and Price will forget about it.”

“Maybe we can convince him that there was a gas leak and he hallucinated us kissing.”

“Give me a second, I am trying to think of a way to blame this on Scott Hunter.”

“I’m sure you’ll find a way.”

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