

A Meeting of Flowers

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A Meeting of Flowers

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Summary

Shane is hurt on the ice before he and Ilya have had a chance to make up. Ilya can't handle just waiting around for news, but doesn't think through who he might run into by racing to be by Shane's side.

Notes

This takes place at the beginning of episode 5. Rose leaves the bed and tells Shane they should get dinner later that week. Before that dinner can happen, Shane gets injured on the ice.

Ilya: *Are you okay?*

Shane wasn't answering his phone.

It was expected, at first. Of course he wasn't answering after that hit; Ilya knew better than that. Shane was carted off to a hospital and probably had tests and procedures keeping him busy. Not to mention his phone would've been left in the locker room at least until the game was over and a teammate could get his stuff to him in the hospital.

So Ilya forced himself to wait before he messaged once again.

Ilya: *How bad is it?*

But that went ignored as well.

Ilya: *Tell me you are okay and we can go back to silence.*

Ilya: *Shane*

Ilya: *Sorry, Hollander.*

Ilya: *Please.*

Ilya: *I am sorry about before. Is okay if you do not forgive me.*

Ilya: *I will leave you alone forever after you answer.*

Ilya: *I need to know what is wrong. How bad is it, Hollander?*

Nothing. He paced around his home for four hours, waiting for just a glimmer of hope. He kept refreshing news and sport websites for any update, but none of them said anything beyond which hospital Shane had been taken to.

Ilya stopped dead when he realized that was really the only information he needed. Wasn't it? He packed a bag and jumped in his fastest car, speeding through the five hour drive in less than four.

It wasn't until he reached the information desk in the hospital that he realized all the flaws in his plan. For one, it was nearly 5 AM; visiting hours didn't begin until 6. For another, he wasn't even supposed to be in the same country as Shane today, let alone attempting to visit him. What excuse could he come up with to explain his presence? What would people say?

But no one asked. When the time came for him to finally see his...Shane, the nurse directing him cocked an eyebrow, but didn't say a word about who he was or why he was here. Ilya decided he'd send the nurse's station some wonderful presents if his appearance here didn't get leaked to the news.

Ilya entered the room, breathing in deeply as his eyes settled on Shane. He was sleeping still, head lolled to the side, but that didn't hide the bruising across his nose and around his eyes. His arm was in a sling – was it broken? What else was wrong? The thin hospital blanket hid most of his body from Ilya's probing eyes.

He carried a small vase of lilies that he'd bought in the hospital gift shop to the window sill and then approached the bed quietly, not wanting to startle Shane awake. Gently, Ilya ran the back of a finger across his cheek, and whispered, "Sha—" He shook his head, annoyed he'd nearly repeated the mistake that sent Shane away in the first place. "Hollander."

The door opened and Ilya jerked his hand back, leaning surreptitiously away so it didn't seem like he'd been standing so close.

"Oh! I didn't expect anyone else to be here yet." Rose Landry closed the door behind her before carrying a vase of roses to the sill. She paused, looking at something out the window before shaking her head and putting her flowers down next to his. She looked up at Ilya then, eyes going wide as she took in who was actually in the room with her. She glanced at Shane and then back to Ilya again. "Ilya Rozanov? What...are you doing here?"

Ilya remained silent, probably for too long as he considered what he could get away with. "I was in town. Thought I would stop by." He couldn't believe he hadn't considered this. Of course Shane's *girlfriend* would be here, taking care of the man in her life. What had he been thinking?

"Oh. Well, that was nice of you..." Her brow furrowed, trying to make sense of what he'd said. Ilya knew from interviews (because he couldn't help but read articles about the happy couple) that Rose was a hockey fan. It was likely she remembered that Ilya and his team had been here playing a game just days ago. There was no reason he should be in town right *now*.

"Yes, I'm very nice," Ilya couldn't help but answer, his usual smirk jumping into place where it belonged. Ilya was thankful for muscle memory; with the motionless form below him, Ilya was far from feeling like smiling.

Rose chuckled, and nodded. "I'm sure you are." She walked around the opposite side of the bed and swiped some hair out of Shane's eyes.

"I was stopping by for just a minute. I will leave you now to be with him."

"Oh, no, don't go!" Rose said, a hand reaching toward him. Ilya stopped, only a step away from where he started. "I can only stay for a little bit myself—I've got a shoot to get to. You could stay! So he's not alone?"

She looked worriedly down at her boyfriend and Ilya allowed himself to shuffle back towards his position at Shane's side. "Do you know what exactly is wrong with him?" Ilya asked conversationally. He wouldn't allow his eagerness for the answer to give them away. As if there *were* a them to give away.

"Concussion and a fractured collarbone. He's out for All-Stars but might be okay in time for part of the playoffs. It could've been worse."

Ilya nodded, breathing slightly easier. “Hmm, no. Montreal won’t make it through first round without him. He is done for the season. But yes, he is lucky this is all.” Ilya wanted to reach out for Shane’s hand to wake him up, tell him some sarcastic joke, and have Shane scoff and call him an asshole like usual. Like everything was right with the world.

But Rose was watching him now, head tilted, so Ilya maintained his distance.

“Is good this happened while you are filming,” Ilya said, needing to fill the silence and distract her from whatever she was seeing in him. “So you could be here for him.”

She smiled gently, finally looking down again, but only for a moment. “I’m glad I could be here too. Shane needs more friends in his life.”

“Does not hurt to have girlfriend too.”

“Yes but...I think friend is a better title here.”

Ilya jerked his gaze up to her, not even realizing he’d dropped it to watch Shane’s chest rise and fall. “You are not dating?”

Rose bit her lip, considering. “We are. But we had plans to get dinner tonight—cancelled now, obviously—and I was planning to...”

“Break up with him?” Ilya was outraged on Shane’s behalf; who was this person to think *Shane* wasn’t good enough for her? But a weight left his chest as well, thinking Shane might give *him* the time of day again if this actress was out of the way.

“Redefine our relationship. Shane is wonderful,” Ilya nodded unconsciously, halting when her eyes tracked the movement, “but I don’t think I’m quite his...type. I thought we could be friends instead.”

Ilya cocked an eyebrow. “Yes because beautiful and famous and successful is a type no one wants. Awful for you to have tricked him into this.”

Rose laughed and looked back down, smiling despite the bruises marring Shane’s perfect skin. “Well, I’ll take the compliment but that’s not quite the type I meant.”

“What then?”

“That’s something I really need to talk to *him* about first.” Ilya nodded his understanding, ready to let it go, but Rose continued. “Besides, I think he’s interested in someone else.”

Ilya froze. How was Shane suddenly finding an interest in so many people? For years now they’d been meeting up and Shane had never seemed even close to dating anyone. Why now? Was it really because Ilya had messed up? Was Shane truly done with him then?

Belatedly, Ilya hummed in curiosity. “Someone was blowing his phone up last night.” Rose’s eyes flicked past Ilya for a moment, returning slowly.

“Probably teammates, checking on their captain.” Ilya said it definitively, willing his own messages to have gone unnoticed.

“Yes, of course they were.” Ilya released the breath he’d been holding. “But there was another too. Lily.”

“Well, is no wonder Hollander has many worried people around him. He is good person. Does not mean he is interested in them.” He hoped it was a lie, but at the same time, the words came so easily. They’d kept this secret for so long, it was second nature to him. Sure, usually he was having to lie about *Jane* when people noticed him texting her, but this was par for the course. Their secret wasn’t going to come out now, because of Ilya. Shane really would never forgive him for that.

“He really is a good person,” Rose agreed, back to smiling softly. “But there’s more. When I told him last night that Lily had messaged he got this big grin on his face. And then he started telling me to reply but kept stumbling over his words. I know the drugs in his system played a big part but...there was something more. I don’t know if he was nervous about something or hiding something or...hiding *someone*. But he ended up just saying nevermind, that he would reply himself when he could.”

“Hollander would not cheat on you, if that is what you are thinking. You agreed he is good, yes?”

“Oh, no! I didn’t mean that. I don’t think he would cheat either. But I also don’t want to put him in the position to turn down what could be a good thing when he and I are better as friends. Lily is,” she was looking behind Ilya again and he had to keep himself from turning around, “a good person too, I think. From their texts it sounded like maybe they had a fight or disagreement with Shane, but they were willing to apologize, and they were willing to set aside whatever dispute to make sure Shane was alright. Anyone who puts Shane first like that is okay with me.”

Ilya, who was Lily, didn’t know what to say. He didn’t know Rose or how close she was with Shane. He didn’t know if her approval would matter to him and therefore if Ilya should care about it at all.

And as Ilya, who was not Lily but *was* Shane’s rival, he was also at a loss for words. He was supposed to have nothing to do with this relationship drama.

He was saved from coming up with anything when a nurse walked in. She was cheerful and chatted with Rose while she moved around the room, checking Shane’s chart and jotting down some notes. She glanced at her watch before announcing he needed to take some more meds and asking Rose if she would gently wake him.

Ilya shrunk back against the wall, staying out of the way of the person who could best take care of Shane. He considered leaving before Shane had a chance to notice him, saving Shane the annoyance of Ilya’s presence and saving his own heart from Shane’s rejection. But, selfishly, Ilya needed to see Shane open his eyes and speak and act like the Shane he knew. He needed to see for himself that Shane was alright. It was why he’d come all this way, after all.

“Rose?” Shane groaned as he came to, his good hand coming up to clutch at his head. His eyes were tight squints in the admittedly dim light of the room.

The nurse asked him a few questions about his symptoms before handing over a glass of water and some pills for him to take. She warned him they would probably make him loopy again, ‘like last night.’ Rose had mentioned the drugs he’d taken too, and Ilya really wished he could see Shane in that state, just for a moment.

The nurse left and Shane closed his eyes, resting back against his pillows.

They opened again when Rose began speaking. “I wish I could stay, Shane, but I’ve got to get to work. Your parents should be here in, oh, about half an hour? But there’s someone else here to keep you company in the meantime.”

Shane’s brow furrowed, slowly turning his head to take in his surroundings. When his eyes landed on Ilya he blinked several times, trying to clear away what he couldn’t actually be seeing. “Ilya?” The question came on a whoosh of breath, the relief clear as day to Ilya. And he had used Ilya’s first name, of all things. For the first time in months, the tightness in his chest seemed to pull back entirely.

Shane’s eyes began to water, but Rose spoke up, pulling them out of their little bubble and stopping Shane from actually crying. “I brought you some flowers too since the view out the window isn’t the best, but he beat me to it.”

Ilya stepped aside so Shane could see the indicated flowers, and used the chance to move closer. Shane glanced at the window, a smile tugging at his lips, before locking eyes back on Ilya.

“They don’t need me as long today so I’ll be back in the afternoon, alright?” Rose leaned down and gently kissed Shane’s cheek.

Shane managed to pull away from their staring contest. “Sounds good, I’ll see you then. Thanks for coming by again.”

“Of course, Shane. Bye, Ilya. The lilies were a great choice.” She said it with a playful smirk as she closed the door behind her, but Ilya was frozen at her words.

The *flowers!* The ones he had chosen in hopes that Shane would know who they were from if they didn’t have a chance to talk. *That* was what she’d kept looking at behind Ilya. *That* was what she’d been examining when she first came in. The reason she’d brought up *Lily* messaging Shane. And Ilya didn’t know how he’d missed it, but Rose never once referred to Lily as female.

She knew.

“I can’t believe you’re here.” Shane’s quiet voice pulled Ilya out of his head. He sounded shy, reserved. They had a lot that needed to be said between them but it wasn’t what either of them needed right now. Shane was going to be okay, and that was everything.

“Of course. Had to tell you I was going for fastest skater this year at All-Stars. Can not believe you’re missing it again. You must be very afraid of everyone seeing how slow you are.”

The corner of Shane’s mouth quirked up as he huffed a laugh.

Ilya fought not to smile. This was normal, good. The problem of Rose *knowing* or a nurse leaking his appearance here felt inconsequential in the face of Shane’s laughter.

Ilya dragged a chair over to the bed, collapsing into it from exhaustion and relief. He had half an hour to spend with the only thing that mattered to him. He wouldn’t waste a second of that with worries.

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