Between Friends

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/76551636.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV), Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander's Figure Skater Friend
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Mutual Pining, Friendship AU, Humor, Developing Relationship, Not Beta Read, may continue this, Enemies to Friends to Lovers, Friends With Benefits, Social Media
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-27 Words: 2,938 Chapters: 1/1

Between Friends

by ItsSoLine

Summary

When Shane and Ilya meet at a club between the 2011 All Stars Game, and Ilya teases Shane by calling him "his good friend Shane Hollander," suddenly Shane gets an idea... Things may be easier if they were seen as friends instead of bitter rivals.

What if Shane and Ilya become public friends years before canon.

Notes

So yeah, I guess I am officially out of my fanfic retirement. Who knew a hockey show would drag me out of it. Here's that frienship AU I was talking about in my other series. I might add more chapters to this, so feel free to subscribe, but we'll see.

Joe was just meant to be a throwaway character here, but I'm kinda obsessed about the idea of Shane having an out gay best friend and how that would change his relationship with Ilya. I might do a different fic to explore that, but if I expand this, we'll see more of Joe! I have a lot of fanfic ideas but not a lot of time, so I'll see what I can do for the rest of the winter break. I've read so many fics for this ship, and I have some dream ideas that I might have to write myself at this point lol.

See the end of the work for more notes

2011 - All-Star Game - Nashville

Shane Hollander found himself seated at a table in a corner of a club, nursing a shitty beer, watching his friend looking like he was having the time of his life on the dance floor. Shane had arrived in Nashville a few days before the All Stars Game. His friend Joe was in town for a figure skating competition and had planned to stay longer to watch Shane's game. Shane decided to surprise him and come early to watch him skate. He should have known that he would be dragged out afterwards to party with the other figure skaters. It was crowded. Nashville was a busy enough town already, but with everything going on, there were several high profile people in the area. If Shane were someone else, he might enjoy this. But instead, he was waiting for enough time to pass that it would be polite enough to call it a night.

He twiddled with his phone, but no one was texting him. He wondered for a moment if he could slip away now. But then he heard a glass clink against his table, and he was startled. He looked up, and his jaw dropped.

"What the fuck are you doing here, Rozanov?"

Ilya Rozanov was sliding into the booth across from him. Shane stared at him in his flashy, patterned, loose button-up shirt that had been unbuttoned enough to be borderline indecent. His usual cross was hanging from his neck, Shane's eyes glanced over it as he admired the man's toned chest. After a few long seconds, he forced himself to look away, but he just knew Rozanov was smirking at him.

"Flew in early. I wanted to see Nashville, heard it was fun. It's good to explore America, yes? Lived here for long enough."

"I suppose." Shane nodded, making an effort not to look at Rozanov's face. He was afraid the man would see the desire he had for him written all over it. He forced away thoughts of the last time they were together.

"What about you? I was looking for something exciting tonight, was surprised to see Mr. Boring Shane Hollander hiding away in the corner."

That accent would be his undoing. Shane finally met his eye, and his nerves intensified when he saw that the Russian was staring intently, as if he wanted to hear what Shane had to say. As if it were important.

Shane took a deep breath. "My friend has a figure skating competition. I thought I would come and support as they're coming to the game this weekend."

"Ah, I heard about that. Hollander, you're holding. You have sexy figure skating friends. Which one is she?" He looked out into the crowd. Shane followed his gaze, coincidentally, one of Joe's female figure skating friends noticed them looking and waved. Shane waved back, and Rozanov followed suit with a flirty smile that made Shane want to stomp on his foot.

“Ah. Did not know brunettes were your type.” His smile had dropped, and he had this unreadable look on his face.

“Fuck you. That’s not my friend. My friend’s name is Joe. Kate is his friend who he dragged me out with.”

Rozanov frowned deeper. “Joe? Which one is he?”

Shane didn’t know why he was humoring the asshole. He turned to find Joe was the life of the party, dancing between some random group he had found with a wide smile on his face. He could dance just as well as he skated. There was one man who was standing awfully close to him as he dance, they were almost touching, and he was staring at Joe in wonder. Shane smiled. *Good for him.* For a moment, he felt a spark of sourness. Jealousy, he supposed. Joe was unapologetic about being his true self. Shane wished he could be.

“The one in the practically see through shirt.” Shane chuckled, remembering when Joe made him try it on before they left. Shane wondered what Rozanov would say if he saw him in that.

Rozanov relaxed slightly after seeing Joe. “Ah. He looks like he’s having a good time. Why don’t you join him? Your friends are not so boring, I see.”

“Not my scene. And I wouldn’t want to ruin his fun. But you should go dance. What are you even doing here? This— You shouldn’t be sitting here, anyone could see.” Shane began to feel panicked. He had already been recognized a few times. If they were unlucky, someone had already taken a picture of them, too. Then there would be questions. *What are Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander doing hanging out a few days before the All Stars Game?*

“We can’t—”

“Shush.”

Shane couldn’t believe that Rozanov had the audacity to shush him. Maybe Shane should lean across the table and punch him. That would be a better scandal for the news. And it would probably be safer for both their careers. They might not even get suspended, so the league could play into the rivalry at the game over the weekend.

“I’m serious, Rozanov. What are we going to say if this gets out?”

“Relax, it’s dark and loud in here. Even if someone saw us, they don’t know you’ve been undressing me with your eyes since you saw me. And what? We can’t have friends? I came to Nashville early and ran into my good friend Shane Hollander. What’s the problem?”

“But we’re not friends.”

“You think I let just anyone put my dick in their mouth?” He said quietly with a smirk.

“Fuck off. And you do. You’re kind of a slut.” Shane bit back. He didn’t know he had that in him. But Rozanov brought out the best and worst in him.

To his surprise, Rozanov threw his head back and just laughed. Like it was the funniest thing in the world. “Yes, but most people do not see my dick more than once. So I think we are friends, yes?”

Shane stared at him. Him friends with Ilya Rozanov. To the rest of the world, it seemed absurd, but… for all he strived to beat the other man, he held no hatred for him as the media assumed. He laughed, thinking what the media would say if they did find out about this, and he and Rozanov claimed to be friends. It was hilarious. He could see the reactions now.

“What’s funny, Mr. Comedian?”

Shane laughed even harder. If the beer he was holding wasn’t almost full, he would have wondered if he was somehow drunk. But no, his sober mind was laughing at Ilya Rozanov like he was the funniest person in the world. Ilya was funny. Shane usually tried to not laugh at his jokes, especially on the ice. But they weren’t on the ice now. And this was almost nice. An idea that Shane knew he should shut down immediately came to mind. But… what if? Shane never went into hard situations with a plan and a few backups. But this was a now or never conversation. He did not think he and Rozanov would get a moment to sit down and talk again soon. If anything, they would fall into bed together, and once they had finished, they would separate without saying anything serious.

Shane took a deep breath.

“What if we were friends?”

Rozanov blinked at him. “Did you not hear what I just said?”

“No. I’m serious. I love beating you more than anything, and that’s not going to change, but I’m tired of the way the media tries to paint us. We don’t actually hate each other,” he said before lowering his voice. “Like you said, you don’t let just anybody, you know.” Shane shrugged. “And it would be easier to… if people wouldn’t make a big deal if they saw us together.”

Rozanov stared at him for a long time. Shane thought that the man was likely trying to figure out how to insult him and his idea in English. Shane’s heart dropped. He had been hopeful to keep up the lighthearted mood. And he was serious.

Shane didn’t have a lot of friends. His life had been so consumed by hockey since he was a child that he didn’t have much time to make friends. Joe was his closest, and for a long time, he was his only friend. They had formed a tight bond during moments exchanged on ice. They both were very serious about their respective sports and had bumped into each other enough when trying to sneak extra time on the ice. But now Joe trained in America, and Shane hardly saw him. But they had grown up together and knew so much about each other. The distance wouldn’t change that. They still had weekly phone calls.

Now that he was with Montreal, he had a few people he was close with. Hayden had basically strong armed him into being best friends. And it was nice. Shane had someone to talk to life outside of hockey with— although he spent a lot of time talking about hockey. But he couldn’t be honest with Hayden. Ilya knew his worst secret. They were in the same boat.

Well almost. Ilya clearly wasn't as indifferent about women as Shane was. But he kept coming back to Shane. That meant something. And Shane couldn't even find it in himself to try to like women as he had in high school.

Shane was so lonely. It was difficult to be such a fast rising star. Sometimes, he wondered if Rozanov felt the same. Shane wondered if he understood. The man had moved countries after all. Shane at least had his family. But the longer the Russian stared, the more Shane's stomach began to turn.

Shane was foolish to think that Rozanov would just agree.

"It was stupid—" he started, but the Rozanov finally spoke, interrupting him.

"No, is good idea. Could be fun. Hmm, if we're to be friends. You have to party with me." He said with a mischievous smile. "Ever taken a shot?"

Shane didn't expect the night to take him over to the bar, throwing down a vodka shot next to Ilya Rozanov. Shane quickly downed his chaser, coughing while Rozanov didn't react.

"Nashville has shitty vodka here, too." He shook his head. "But you did not need the juice."

"Fuck off, Rozanov." Shane rolled his eyes. But he felt warm, not just because of the alcohol. He truly hadn't expected Rozanov to agree to his proposal. He wasn't regretting it yet. Even though he had seen a few women try to be sneaky about taking their pictures as they approached the bar. Rozanov had seen them too and actually waved them over to take selfies with them. *The egomaniac.* Shane went along with the pictures anyway. He secretly hoped they would post them so he could save the pictures to his phone. Rozanov's goofy smile as they stood between the women was cute.

They had made small talk for a while. Rozanov let him explain how they had run into each other here coincidentally. The women were nice enough, but he wouldn't be surprised if his exact words were published in some tabloid tomorrow morning. Shane and Rozanov had bought them drinks and chatted before they left for another club.

"The media will think we are picking women up together now. I am bad influence," Rozanov had joked before ordering the shots.

"Well, people have been telling me that I needed to let loose," Shane shrugged. Joe was one of them. His friend had noticed the two of them at the bar a while ago and kept sending Shane looks. Shane avoided the man's gaze. He had never told Joe anything about Ilya, but he would know something was going on.

Shane should have known that Joe wouldn't leave it alone. The man found them at the bar.

"Shane! You did a shot without me?" He looked at Rozanov, sizing him up. "How did you manage that?"

Ilya shrugged. "I am very convincing."

“Well, good for you! Joe Wellings,” he stuck out his hand. Shane was suddenly brought back to the first time he met Rozanov. But the Russian did not make a snide remark here, he just stuck out his hand and politely shook Joe’s hand.

“Ilya Rozanov. I hear you are to thank for forcing Hollander out of his hotel room. He is usually boring.”

Joe laughed and nodded. Shane glared at him. “Come on. You can’t gang up on me like this.”

“Why not. We are all friends. Da?”

The look Joe gave Shane warned him that they would be talking about this later. “Well, any friend of Shane is a friend of mine. You two have to come dance with the group!”

Shane wasn’t a dancing person, but Rozanov looked at Shane expectantly, so Shane followed him.

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Ilya Rozanov was bored. Coming to America to play hockey was meant to give him some freedom from the pressure he had in Russia. It had. Even though he received phone calls from his asshole brother demanding money much too often, and half berating half dazed phone calls from his father. He threw himself into hockey. Into being the best player possible. He made nice with his teammates and even liked some of them. He partied with them when they won. And he found someone to fuck when he wanted.

But it was all so boring. He had always liked a bit of excitement in his life. He liked to live his life on the edge. It was why he hooked up with Sasha back in Russia. It was why he bought expensive fast cars.

It was why he became obsessed with Shane Hollander the second that he laid eyes on the man. He had known back then, outside the arena, that he going to fuck Shane. And that if he had his way, it would happen more than once.

The boy— as he was back then— had been already so responsive and flustered from their conversations. Ilya had wanted to see him be red all over.

Ilya had done his magic and had already gotten Hollander hooked off his mouth alone. He had known when the Canadian had blown his load so quickly that they would meet up again. That Ilya would get to fuck him.

The All Stars Game, would be perfect. The league was pitting them against each other, of course. They were the captains of opposing teams. Ilya was excited to beat him, then take him back to his hotel and fuck him. A part of him wondered what it would be like to play on the same team.

Ilya didn’t have a game or practice in the days leading up to the All Stars Game, so he decided to buy an early flight to explore Nashville. He heard from Cliff Marlow that it was a

good party city. It wasn't uncommon that a few players arrived early for these things.

He just hadn't expected to run into Shane Hollander of all people. It wasn't strange that the man was here early. But he should be sightseeing or doing other boring things instead of being in a club. Though he was sitting in the corner looking like he wanted to be anywhere but here, which made sense.

Ilya's excitement about his extra few days in Nashville doubled as he began to approach Hollander. He was going to tease the man a bit and then invite him over to his hotel for the night. Perhaps Hollander would let Ilya fuck him now. He would have a few days to recover before the game… If not, Ilya could get creative. He was thrown off his game when the conversation shifted from his flirtations to something serious.

Hollander wanted to be friends? Ilya hadn't hated the sound of that. Svetlana was his only friend. In both Russia and America. Ilya didn't have time to make friends. He had to be the best. He had to be better. His father's voice was in his ear when the self doubt creeped in.

Hollander was right. It would be easier to sneak around if they were friends. As much as Ilya liked to live on the edge, no one could find out about his desire for men. It would doom his career and his life in Russia.

And Ilya had known from the start that Shane Hollander just might get him in trouble. Someone might realize something… he couldn't afford that. Yet he didn't want to stay away. He couldn't stay away. Ilya would be able to even if he tried. It was a bad habit. But he knew well enough about bad habits.

"You're not supposed to smoke here."

Ilya wasn't sure if Hollander just wanted to play up a friendship for the media, but he thought about being able to approach Hollander in public and tease him off the ice without him freaking out. He thought about actually talking to him. He thought about...

What was a little affection between friends? He wondered. He and Hollander must be fuck buddies already, as the Americans called it. Friends with benefits was a much more refined phrase.

He couldn't let his friends be as boring as Hollander was right now sitting in the corner of a crowded nightclub. Before Hollander could regret his decision, he accepted the offer.

He had a feeling that this was the fun he had been looking for all along. He couldn't wait until All Star Weekend. Perhaps Shane Hollander was not so boring.

End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! :)

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