the come up, the blow up

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by subcorax

Summary

> Scott’s not really surprised to spot Ilya Rozanov backstage, getting lightly swarmed by a crowd of sound techs and hair and makeup crew. Even on the rare year that neither of them were getting any awards, the League always tried to get either him or Hollander, and preferably both, presenting something. And since Hollander was still out for the count and recovering up in Ottawa, that left Rozanov, standing awkwardly while a harried-looking woman straightened his bow-tie.

Or: Scott Hunter's not really sure what's happening right now.

Notes

> ilya in ep 6: "i talked to scott hunter after the awards"
> me: "okay elaborate on that"
>
> quick brainworm shat out at the airport while waiting for my delayed flight. back to regularly scheduled wagfic soon, i have ideas

See the end of the work for more notes

Scott's not really surprised to spot Ilya Rozanov backstage, getting lightly swarmed by a crowd of sound techs and hair and makeup crew. Even on the rare year that neither of them were getting any awards, the League always tried to get either him or Hollander, and preferably both, presenting *something.* And since Hollander was still out for the count and recovering up in Ottawa, that left Rozanov, standing awkwardly while a harried-looking woman straightened his bow-tie.

Scott leans back against the wall, snorting softly. One of the perks of being an old fuck is that he's become a pro at dodging the stage crew at events like this. Keep quiet, find a corner that's out of view from the door to the fire escape where they're all going out to take their smoke breaks, and Scott's got a near-100% success rate of not being manhandled, spritzed, and re-powdered until right before they actually shove him out on stage.

He scrolls idly through his phone for a while, half an ear on the audio being piped in from the stage, listening for his tee-up. He's distracted enough that he almost doesn't notice the movement out of the corner of his eye, and it takes him longer than it ought to before he fully processes that Rozanov's walking directly towards him.

Scott feels his throat go tight.

Okay.

What does he actually know about Ilya Rozanov?

Not a whole lot, truth told. He's not sure if anyone does. They've spoken plenty, but mostly during games, Captain to Captain, or mediating with the ref. Scott's told Rozanov to get his boys in line when they're playing dirty, with even odds on whether Rozanov listens to him or just laughs in his face. Sometimes *Rozanov* plays dirty, but more often than not, he's good enough that he doesn't need to. He's a notorious asshole, decent brawler, no stranger to the penalty box. What Scott can't remember, at this exact moment, is whether he's ever heard Rozanov throwing around *cocksucker* during a game.

He forces himself to take a breath, and tells himself the same shit that's been on loop in his head since the finals:

It's okay. Your team has been good. The League has been good. The fans have been good. He won't be the first asshole, and he won't be the last, but you can take whatever shit he gives you, because the rest of them are good. You've got Kip waiting at home. You've got Kip.

"Hunter," Rozanov says stiffly.

"Rozanov," Scott returns. Rozanov's got his hands in his suit pockets, and makes no motion to offer one to shake, so Scott doesn't either.

Eventually, Rozanov says, "Congratulations on the Cup."

Ah, Scott thinks. *This kind of conversation.* Good sportsmanship, good PR. Not the kind of shit Rozanov had ever bothered with, historically, but maybe he's got a new publicist who's

trying to rehab his image.

“Thanks,” Scott says, mostly on autopilot, because he’s been having this conversation with about a million people since the game. “All the guys worked their asses off for it. I’m proud of them.”

Rozanov nods, barely seeming to hear the words. For a long while, it seems as though he’s not going to say anything else, just try to stare holes into the wall beside Scott’s head. Scott grasps for the first neutral ground he can think of. “This your last event of the season?”

Rozanov blinks at him, nonplussed. “Yes,” he manages, after a pause. “Some team things in Boston, but is just…” he waves his hand dismissively. “Paperwork. I am done after this.”

Scott nods. He’s got a few more press circuit obligations after tonight, but he’s made sure they’re all local. Once he flies back to New York in the morning, he’s not planning on leaving for a while. Out of vague curiosity, he asks, “You go back to Russia in the summer, right?”

Rozanov makes a noncommittal, distant sound. “Usually. Not this year.”

Right. Rozanov’s father.

Scott just nods again. He doesn’t offer his condolences; figures the guy’s heard it enough, by this point, and Scott knows from experience that it starts to feel empty after a point, just a cruel reminder that gets thrown into every single fucking conversation.

Abruptly, Rozanov takes a breath, focusing on Scott again. “After your win…”

The tension that had slowly started to bleed out of Scott’s spine returns in full force, and he swallows a wave of nausea.

You can take him in a fight. You’ve taken *him in a fight. He’d be stupid to start shit off the ice. Worst-case, he says some awful shit, and you’ve heard it all by now. You can take this. You’ve got Kip.*

Rozanov’s jaw works. He scrubs a hand hard across his mouth. Eventually: “Was good. That you did that.”

Ah.

Huh.

Scott officially isn’t sure what conversation they’re having anymore. Rozanov stares at him, somewhere between constipated and terrified.

“Thanks,” Scott replies slowly.

Rozanov just nods. He glances around the room in apparent curiosity. "Is he here? Your boy.”

“Uh, no,” Scott says, shrugging. “Invited, obviously, but I didn’t want to throw him in the deep end of… all of this by bringing him as a plus-one. It’s a lot.”

That gets him a raised eyebrow from Rozanov, and Scott distinctly recognizes that little *I’m about to be a prick* look he gets in his eyes when he’s got a chirp. Sure enough: “Kissing this poor man on live television was *shallow end?* Thought you were supposed to be boring.”

Scott huffs a laugh, gets a wry, lopsided little smirk from Rozanov in return, and he ought to leave it there, extract himself from the whole conversation and count himself lucky that he made it out unscathed. Unfortunately, Rozanov’s managed to trip up on the thought Scott’s been having for weeks now, the one he’s been carefully massaging into something palatable with his media team, but here and now, it spills out of him, sharp and unpolished.

“It shouldn’t have been a spectacle. It was - it was the best moment of my life, and I wanted to share it with the man I loved, same as every other guy on the team. It wasn’t fair to him, that it ended up being what it was.”

Rozanov’s quiet, for a moment. Finally, softly, he says, “No. Was not fair. For you, either. But now you have done it, and maybe this will change things.”

“I hope so,” Scott tells him. “I really fucking do.”

Rozanov shakes his head sharply. “It will. Already has. It has - it changes things for *me.”*

Something about the look on Rozanov’s face, the way his jaw’s clenched, the wide, urgent look he’s got in his eyes - makes it finally sink in for Scott, what Rozanov’s actually telling him.

“Oh, fuck,” Scott says faintly. This is, admittedly, not his finest moment, but he’s not sure how the fuck *else* he’s supposed to react to something like this.

Rozanov’s eyes narrow. “Don’t,” he warns. He doesn’t need to elaborate; Scott hears what he’s saying. *Don’t make this a thing. Don’t ask me any questions. Don’t tell anyone about this.*

Still reeling, Scott nods. “No, yeah. Of course not, I-”

“Hunter,” Rozanov snaps.

Scott blinks. Takes a breath.

You’re okay. Everyone’s been good. You’ve got Kip. And Rozanov is-

Thing is, he remembers Rozanov’s rookie year. The press had been fucking obsessed with him, to the point that Scott was being asked about him in post-games when the Admirals hadn’t played Boston in months. Kid had been eighteen years old and fucking invincible, skating like a demon and talking shit because he had the skills to back it up.

It’d be boring for the press to talk about it, and Scott knows Rozanov will never admit it, but the guy mellowed out over the years. Got more mature, the longer he wore the C. He’s a good

fucking Captain, takes care of his boys, cares about the game, even if he still checks like a freight train and chirps like he's trying to get his teeth kicked in.

And Rozanov is terrified. He's been terrified the whole time. Scott knows, because *Scott's* been terrified, and now that he knows what to look for, it's like looking in a mirror, and he's watched this fucking kid grow up.

Scott doesn't say anything else, because Rozanov's got that look on his face that usually ends with him in the penalty box and one of Scott's guys getting acquainted with a dentist. He just nods, shifts to bump their shoulders together. Guy to guy. Captain to Captain.

Rozanov presses back, and walks away.

Scott's barely got time to get his bearings before he's got Vaughn's arm around his shoulder. He's supposed to be out in the audience with the rest of the team, but Scott's never known Vaughn to be deterred by a Do Not Enter sign, and wouldn't expect him to start now.

"The fuck did Rozanov want?" he asks, leaning in close. "Was getting ready to mount a rescue if he didn't back off soon."

Scott shakes his head, still a little dazed. "Nothing. Just saying congrats on the win."

Vaughn's eyebrows raise. "Really," he says flatly. "That's it?"

Scott shrugs under his arm. "That's it."

That gets him a frown from Vaughn, his expression sobering. He keeps one hand on Scott's shoulder, gripping firmly, but circles to face him, ducking to meet his eyes. "Scotty, you'd tell me if he was being a fucking prick, yeah? Me and Huff will kick his ass right now."

That gets a short, startled laugh out of Scott. The insane thing is, Vaughn *means* it. And Scott keeps thinking, when the guys say shit like this, when they mean it, he keeps thinking, *Jesus, could I have had this the whole time? What the fuck was I waiting for?*

It's not really a kindness to himself to think that, he knows, because realistically he *couldn't* have had this, not the way it had shaken out. If he hadn't had his history, his records, his squeaky-clean All-American reputation. If he hadn't had the trust of the League, the rapport with his team, if he hadn't just cinched them the fucking Cup. Any time before now, he wouldn't have been afforded as much grace as he had been by the world at large.

He still finds himself grieving all the time he's lost.

He forces a smile, reaching out to clap Vaughn on the arm. "Nah, Vaughny, it's alright. Roz is fine."

"Alright," Vaughn agrees, clearly doubtful, but mercifully drops the subject. "You ready to make your big inspirational speech, Cap?"

Scott grins, rolling his eyes. Vaughn holds an invisible microphone up to his face, and Scott dryly says, "Hockey good. Boyfriend good. Trophy good. Tired old hockey man wants to go

to bed now. Thank you. Goodnight."

"Wow," Vaughn says, golf clapping. "I think that might just beat the legendary *'just put the puck in the fucking net'* pep talk of 2013."

"It wasn't *that* bad."

"It was. It truly was."

Kip 💙

Jun 28 at 8:17 PM

I love you too. So fucking much. I'm so proud of you.
Call me when you're back at the hotel?

Call Ended
2:38:05

?

Sleep well, I love you. See you tomorrow. x

Jun 29 at 3:02 AM

Why the fuck did Ilya Rozanov just follow me on instagram?

End Notes

if u saw this posted with the bad formatting no you didn't

@subcorax on tumblr as usual

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