

The new abnormal, or: The Real Househusbands of Ottawa

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by [mareastralis](#)

Summary

The idea was simple: make Ilya wear a mic during practice, film it, let him be his entertaining self and get a viral post out of it. Harris should have gotten an easy win there. Instead he gets invested in his captain's latest lovers' quarrel and learns that athletes can be emotionally mature... kind of.

Notes

Okay... guys... you have to stop... your numbers too big... your swag too different... (I posted a snippet of this and got like 9K likes it was very overwhelming)

I am so beyond thankful for the reception of my fics in this fandom, I still do not comprehend it entirely, and I cannot answer everyone on twitter, but rest assured that I'm reading everything and I will answer every comment here, and every dm, even if it will take me some time

I'm so happy that my silly little fics make other people feel seen or comforted in any way, it's truly an honor. Writing is my happy place at the moment, and being able to share something positive with so many people is very healing. Thank you for all the kind words and all the motivation, you made me cry several times already, and I hope you'll do it again ❤️

With that said, let's put Ilya Rozanov in an emotional saw trap

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

“It’s unusable.”

Probably the worst thing to hear from a coworker who had spent their whole morning shooting the players’ practice, certain that it would make for a splendid video. Harris sighed and leaned back in his seat. He did not need to go home anyway.

“Give me the rushes, I’ll see what I can do.”

He sent a quick text to Troy to tell him not to wait for him and waited for the flash drive containing the latest images of the Ottawa hockey team. The idea was great, there was no reason for the result to be unusable. He skipped the beginning of the video and the whole ‘putting things in place and testing mics’ thing, only really starting to watch when Ilya got into frame. He saw his team attaching the mic to Ilya’s practice jersey and explaining the concept of the video. Okay, the sound was bad, the mic rubbing on the jersey’s fabric before it was secured, but this could easily be replaced by a caption. The concept was simple: make the captain wear a mic during practice and give the fans an inside on what it was like to be part of the team. It could be held within one frame, problem solved.

Even without that mic issue, Ilya was too distracted for it to be good, his eyes already on the ice as he nodded lazily. The camera followed him as he all but ran to the ice. Not everyone was there yet, so the players were free to skate around and warm up as they pleased. Ilya went straight towards Shane, who was kneeling on the ice, stretching thoroughly. All of that was completely normal Shane never skipping his stretches and Ilya always circling around him like a vulture while he did them.

“Lyubov moyaMy love, what do you want to eat tonight? I will cook for you.”

Probably surprising to a lot of people, but actually completely in character. Harris had come to relearn the definition of the word “whipped” around these two. He also knew a bunch of Russian pet names now.

What came as a surprise, however, was Shane’s answer.

“Whatever you want, I don’t really care.”

It was less about his words and more about his tone. Curt, cold, far from everything Harris had grown accustomed to coming from him, and especially when he spoke to his husband. They had been pretty private at first, like testing the waters around their teammates now that their relationship was more real and tangible than ever, but after a while, and as the season was just about to start, they had grown comfortable enough to be themselves around everyone at the rink. This was not their usual flirty banter. It looked more like what people had expected them to be for over a decade now.

“I can do that fish you like. Pink one. And brown rice.”

“Salmon. Sure, if you want,” Shane cut off the conversation by getting up and going back to the bench to grab his water bottle.

Leaving behind an Ilya Rozanov who looked like, and Harris knew what he was talking about, a dejected puppy. He recovered quickly enough that no one would have picked up on it if there hadn't been three different cameras pointing at him just then. He had been warned about those cameras, right?

Harris kept watching as more and more of the team got out on the ice. Ilya stayed uncharacteristically silent aside from a hello and some small talk with his teammates. That was fine, that was usable. A quiet opening, showing that not all hockey athletes were morning people, and that sometimes practice was very much like walking into the office on a Monday. Ilya stayed silent through the coach's opening speech and the first round of warm up exercises. That wasn't... great. The whole point was to hear him talk and they had chosen him specifically because he was chatty. Finally, Bood approached him while they all skated around the rink.

"You alright Roz?"

"Of course, why?" came the expected rebuttal.

"You haven't annoyed me since I got here, I'm getting worried."

"I'm giving you a break. Are you complaining?"

"Jeez, who pissed in your cereal?" came Wyatt's voice beside him.

"No one. Nothing. Everything is great."

As he said that, his eyes stayed trained on Shane's back as his husband skated, uncharacteristically, a few feet in front of him, and his teammates did not miss it.

"Trouble in paradise?" Wyatt laughed.

"No, is okay. He's just... grumpy."

"Yeah that sounds like Hollander," Bood said, sarcasm clear in his voice but it went over Ilya's head, and he just nodded along.

So, clearly, there was something wrong there, and it wasn't Harris' job to wonder, but he couldn't help it. He could try to justify it by saying those were his friends but, really, he was now invested in the drama. He watched as Ilya approached Shane again as soon as he could.

"SolnychkoSunshine, when it's my turn to make them practice, do you think I should just do the usual stuff or find more creative exercises?"

"I don't know, Ilya," Shane sighed. "You're the captain, you know how to lead this team."

It was all far from harsh, and Shane just seemed tired, but it was also far from their usual subtle flirting, and Ilya's face fell. Harris couldn't help but wince. Sure, Ilya was the captain, but Shane and he always worked together now that they could, and the mix of their distinctive styles was one of the biggest strengths of this team. Harris almost wanted to erase

that part immediately so he would be certain not to include it in the video on accident. Ilya left the matter alone and went back to mingle with the rest of the team.

The coach divided them into teams, half of them running the drills while the other half waited. Thankfully, Shane and Ilya ended up in different groups. The camera stayed on the players who were actually doing something of substance while the others leaned against the boards, but the audio was still coming from Rozanov's mic. Harris had about half a second to hope that he would comment on practice before that was crushed.

"Is not okay. He hates me," came Ilya's voice as soon as he had stopped.

"What? Who hates you?" That was Dykstra.

"Most of the league," Troy supplied, and Harris rolled his eyes at his boyfriend's joke.

"Do you mean Hollander?" Bood asked, amusement still clear in his voice despite the fact that he wasn't the one wearing a microphone.

"Yes. I asked about hockey thing and he pushed me away," Ilya started and, when no one answered, added: "He loves to talk about hockey."

"That he does," another voice snorted. That was probably Williams, one of their defensemen.

"Did something happen between you two?" Troy asked, and Harris loved him for it.

"Yes. I forgot to run the dishwasher last night, so he didn't have what he needed to make his breakfast this morning."

There was a chorus of laughter that Harris found extremely unhelpful.

"All that for a missed breakfast?" Dykstra laughed.

"It is very complex breakfast and he needs it to play his best."

Harris tried not to swoon at the way Ilya had jumped to defend his husband, but that was hard.

"Aw, Roz is discovering the joys of married life! I didn't think I'd live to see the day," Bood joked.

"No, is not the same, your wives hate you, because you suck, and Shane is obsessed with me," Ilya grumbled, and they all laughed more.

"He doesn't look that obsessed to me right now," Williams teased right before they got called onto the ice.

What followed was actually good footage, but usual practice things, as Ilya wasn't talking much, probably lost in thought. Harris was very tempted to unprofessionally skip ahead, because seeing hockey players try to be emotionally vulnerable was too endearing. Lucky for him, the same group ended up doing shootouts with Wyatt a little after that, and the

conversation resumed naturally. It was even better now because Harris had both sound and image.

“It’s normal if he’s less obsessed than he used to be, you know, you guys are married, you’re settling, it’s just what happens,” Bood started.

“Wait, what are we talking about?” Wyatt yelled from his goal line.

“Hollander hates Roz,” Williams provided unhelpfully.

“Everyone hates Roz,” Wyatt answered.

“That’s what I said!” Troy added enthusiastically as he took his shot. Wyatt stopped it and Troy groaned.

“Wait until you have kids, it will get even worse,” Dykstra said, a forlorn look on his face. “I don’t think Caitlin and I spent a single day without arguing during Susie’s first year.”

“We are fine, is nothing,” Ilya answered, but it sounded like he was saying it through his teeth.

“Hey, don’t be like that,” Troy pointed at him. “Ignoring it won’t help. You guys have to talk it out.”

Harris felt a surge of pride. Troy had come such a long way.

“Or bang it out,” Dykstra said as he took his shot, and all the others except Wyatt took their time to groan at him. Wyatt stopped the shot. “No! I’m serious! Sometimes there’s like… tension, and it helps.”

Ilya crossed his arms, looking pointedly towards nothing in the distance. “That isn’t the issue.”

“Oh c’mon, don’t be difficult, just get on your knees Rozanov,” Williams approved with a sultry voice that made several players grimace. Not all of them, but only because they were used to these kinds of things from Williams.

“No, am serious,” Ilya insisted. “Whole reason I forgot about the dishwasher is because he was on the couch reading a boring, boring book with his slutty glasses on and I had to go and-”

“Please spare us the details,” Wyatt begged, seeing that Ilya was about to start miming things.

“Maybe if you hadn’t been disappointing he could have looked past the dirty dishes,” Williams teased.

“Me? Disappointing? Impossible,” Ilya rolled his eyes.

“See, that kind of assurance makes me think that you just might be disappointing,” Dykstra jumped on the opportunity to tease his captain.

“I’m sure you know all about being disappointing,” Ilya teased back.

“Don’t worry, he doesn’t do it often enough to disappoint anyone,” Williams added, because professional athletes were just grown frat boys.

“With that being said,” Wyatt intervened, “it would be totally fine if your sex life now isn’t as exciting as when you weren’t married because, again, it’s just what happens sometimes.”

“You are all insane and useless,” Ilya groaned as he shot another puck towards Wyatt.

“Hey, we are trying to help! You’re the one who came to us!” Bood complained.

“And I just told you that sex isn’t the issue.”

“You’re too confident for it not to be,” Dykstra shook his head, laughing.

“Yeah, when’s the last time you truly made him lose his mind,” Williams added. “We’ll give you a minute to think.”

“Last night, twice,” Ilya retorted immediately, the confidence on his face making Harris want to sit a little straighter.

“Damn, and for how long had he been starving before that?” Dykstra asked. Ilya seemed to think about it, looking like he was counting. “Ha! See, that’s your issue: frequency.”

“Twelve hours,” Ilya finally answered. “We had a busy day.”

That at least made Dykstra stop teasing. “Wait what?”

“I guess frequency isn’t the issue either,” Bood laughed loudly under Ilya’s proud gaze.

“We have to make up for time we spent apart,” Ilya shrugged before taking his shot, “and my husband is very pretty.”

That made the others laugh even harder, which in turn made their coach realize that they had stopped doing any kind of hockey-related activities.

“Rozanov! Quit it with the one man show and start training your team!” he yelled from the bench.

That made Ilya grumble something under his breath, which didn’t help his teammates stop laughing. They moved on to their next exercises, which were led by Ilya. Harris tried not to be disappointed that the conversation had ended there. It shouldn’t be that entertaining to watch these grown men gossip, but he couldn’t help but be endeared. It was true, however, that the whole thing looked unusable so far, and that it was a lot of time and work down the drain.

As always, Ilya was harsh with the team. There was a reason why the Ottawa Centaurs were now battling for the top spot. Sure, Ilya’s mere presence had revived interest in the team, and he was a generational talent. But hockey was a team sport, and even the great Rozanov

couldn't win games on his own. He needed a strong team, and he had made sure to build it. Coach Wiebe always kept Ilya's drills for the end of practice, usually right before they all played a short friendly game, because he knew all his players got out of it exhausted, but also hungry for more.

Ilya pointed out all of their flaws, posture here, speed there. He knew all his players by heart, their strengths and weaknesses, and no one came out of those exercises unharmed, or without the desire to prove that they could do better. No one, except, for the very first time, Shane Hollander. Ilya did not go easy on his husband, ever. They were both actually weirdly professional about their hockey; it seemed to be the only thing more important than their marriage. But they probably never had a fight right before practice, and so Ilya sounded entirely different today.

"Haas, you can move your wrists, you won't hurt yourself! Dillion, wake up and start skating please!"

This was all great footage, his voice was stern and clear, and his commanding stance was just hot enough that Harris knew the video would do numbers. So of course he had to ruin it.

"Rech, can you at least try to go fast? Like please just try! Hollander, you're perfect don't change anything."

It went on for all of five minutes before Shane broke his line and skated towards Ilya. He looked calm enough that everything seemed normal, just a player getting a piece of advice from his captain, and he spoke low enough that everything would have been fine, if Ilya hadn't been wearing a mic.

"Can you fucking stop that and start doing your job?" he asked, voice cold enough that Harris shivered from his seat.

"What are you saying?" Ilya gestured innocently towards the rest of the team. "I am doing my job right now."

"I'm favoring my right knee, and it makes me too slow when I change direction. You're supposed to point that out and tell me that I'm not made of glass."

"But you're aware of it, I don't need to point it out," Ilya tried in a weak defense, pouting.

Shane scoffed and skated away. Wow, he was really pissed. Harris was genuinely surprised. Shane had never been anything but calm and accommodating in this team. He wasn't used to that side of him. Apparently, Ilya had known what to expect, because he just seemed a little dejected, and not at all shocked. But of course, he knew Shane better than anyone in this town, and probably in Montreal too. That was still weird to think about some days.

They finished the drills without another incident, Ilya mostly ignoring Shane and only sometimes telling him about something he did wrong. They settled for a short break and, really, Harris should have skipped ahead. However, the previous gossip group had formed again around Ilya, and he was really invested in the second part of their discussion.

“So, what are you planning to do?” Troy immediately asked Ilya while the others were still attached to their water bottles. Harris could see, even from afar, the little glint in his boyfriend’s eyes that betrayed how interested he was in the story.

“Do about what?” Rech asked, panting.

“Rozanov’s marriage is falling apart,” Williams laughed.

“No, it’s not,” Ilya glared at him.

“Oh, that’s why...” Rech gestured at Shane, sitting on the other side of the bench next to Haas.

“Is nothing,” Ilya insisted once more.

“We’re trying to teach him about marriage, and how some people just suck at it,” Dykstra joked, and Troy elbowed him in the ribs, and that’s when Harris remembered that Rech was currently going through a divorce himself. “Oh shit, sorry.”

“Eh, that’s fine. I think I did suck at it,” Rech gave him a pained smile. “Too much hockey, not enough romance.”

“But hockey is the only thing Shane loves as much as me,” Ilya said, seemingly more open to hearing advices now.

“You still need more, you need to woo him every day,” Wyatt countered.

“Otherwise, you’ll become just coworkers,” Troy winced. “Living side by side and commuting to work but not existing together outside of it.” It was something he and Harris had discussed, and he was glad to see that his boyfriend still had it in mind.

“Yeah, you had the whole secret affair thing,” Williams said, a dreamy look on his face. “Man it must have been hot! All the sneaking around and tearing at each other’s clothes because you don’t have much time...”

The idea didn’t sound that bad, when presented like that, but Harris noticed Ilya wincing, and he thought about the other side of things. Being apart for longer than you were together, not being able to walk down the streets hand in hand, not being able to walk down the streets together at all. For years. It seemed more heartbreaking than hot, all things considered. He felt both hurt and proud on behalf of his friends. Their love was already obvious to anyone who could see them interact freely, but it was undeniable when you actually stopped to think about everything they had overcome to get where they were. Harris suspected that most people didn’t do that much mental gymnastics unless they were trying to dig out dirty details.

“Ignoring most of that,” Wyatt interrupted, “it’s true that you need something different now.”

“What do you mean?” Ilya frowned, suddenly very focused. It was a little adorable.

“You have to work around your everyday life, fight the routine.”

“He means less sexy hook ups, more broken washing machines,” Bood clarified.

“It’s hard to be sexy and romantic when the dishes are piled up and the sheets can’t be cleaned,” Dykstra laughed.

“Oh god yes Shane would hate that,” Ilya commented, eyes wide, looking distraught.

“Hey, don’t panic buddy,” Wyatt patted him on the back. “Maybe it’s just that you’re always together, you know? At home, carpooling, practicing, playing, traveling... Maybe you just need to give him some space, let him cool down.”

“Keep the flame alive in small ways, not grand gestures,” Troy added, and Harris remembered how he had brought him breakfast in bed a few days ago, which made him melt a little inside.

“Find things to do on your own so neither of you suffocate,” Dykstra laughed.

“And know when to give up if it’s best for you both,” Rech grimaced.

Ilya looked deep in thought. He glanced at Shane, something unreadable on his face, a mix of confusion and longing. Seeing him now, it was impossible to reconcile this man with the terrifying legend that had been built over the years. He was kind and soft and protective of the people he loved, and whom he loved fiercely. He was nothing like the person Harris had expected, and he had only ever surprised him positively.

Wiebe called his players back on the ice for their end of practice game. Shane and Ilya were both captains of their teams and got in place for the face-off. That’s usually when they would use the few seconds they have to play fight with their sticks or challenge each other to flirt. This time, they didn’t speak, keeping their eyes on the ice. Ilya had seemed a little scared, and Harris could understand why, but he wasn’t worried at all. Shane and Ilya’s relationship was stronger than anything, and they would get through this very minor argument, he was sure of it.

The game went on as usual, and Harris sat back in his chair, assessing the situation. Okay, so... it was mostly unusable. He had wanted strong hockey players looking impressive or joking together, and he had gotten the real househusbands of Ottawa instead. This was starting to look more like a one-minute TikTok than the ten-minute YouTube video that he had envisioned, since only 5% of it had been about hockey. But damn him if it wasn’t terribly cute. These men had not been built with emotional maturity included, and he was almost impressed by how well they had handled the situation (he was also impressed by Shane and Ilya’s apparently very healthy sex life, but that wasn’t here nor there).

Ilya looked distracted when Harris’ team took off his mic on his way back to the locker room, but he didn’t question it. He was preoccupied, but it wasn’t like he hadn’t been warned about the video. Harris focused on that to feel a little less guilty about watching the rushes, because it felt like a huge invasion of privacy. It would also help him to make enough cuts so that none of this dirty laundry would be aired out. Their private life had been caught on camera way too much already. He still had to review the latest promotional pictures the team had shot, but he could do that from the privacy of his own home, with his laptop on one side and

his tired boyfriend on the other. He packed his things and left, deciding on the way that he was craving one of those Vietnamese sandwiches from the shop around the corner.

As he walked up the long hall which led towards the parking lot, he was surprised to see the door open at the end of it. And through it came none other than Ilya Rozanov himself. He was frowning. Their paths crossed in the middle of the hall.

“Hey Ilya, everything okay?”

“Yes, I’m just here to pick up Shane.”

“Oh! He had one more of those physio things, right?”

“Yes, they want to see how healthy he is. Is stupid, he is healthiest player in the whole league.”

Harris laughed. “They’re probably trying to understand how it’s possible for a human to be that healthy.”

This had the benefit of making Ilya smile softly, something warm and proud. “Yes, I better go before they try to take him down in a lab.”

“Yes, do that,” Harris laughed. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Yes, see you, tell Troy to stop being a crybaby about his knees.”

“I’ll do that, bye!”

As he pushed the door open and stepped outside, Harris forgot all about Ilya and Shane’s lovers spat, because they would obviously fix it before the sun was up tomorrow. Now, he would worry about Troy’s knees, because what was that even about?

Ilya felt almost guilty to cut the conversation short. Almost. It was nothing against Harris but 1. he didn’t have any dogs with him, so that was one less reason to stay, and 2. Shane didn’t know that Ilya would pick him up and he didn’t want to risk missing him. Shane should have known, because it was a given, or because they should have talked about it on the way over in the morning. But they hadn’t, because they hadn’t talked about anything, because Shane had barely tolerated being in the same car as Ilya. He probably didn’t want Ilya to pick him up either, just to get a few more minutes alone, but Ilya was tired of the sinking pit in his stomach, and he wanted to fix it.

He had just been a little annoyed at first. It was just a breakfast, and Shane had gotten really mad, really fast. But he had figured they would move on by the time they were in the car. Shane hadn’t, and Ilya had learned how grumpy he was when he was hungry. Then, Shane had pushed him away on every occasion, before, during, and after practice, saying that Ilya

didn't need to stay with him for lunch since he didn't have any plans at the rink in the afternoon.

Ilya had gone home, alone, and he had hated every second of it. Everything his teammates had told him had replayed in his mind over and over again while he ate the saddest lunch of his married life. Before that conversation, he hadn't thought about any of it. He stupidly believed that the ring on his finger was the symbol of a happy ending, that everything would be right in the world from then on, because Shane and he had each other, and no one could come between that. No one, except maybe Ilya himself, and his inability to be a good enough husband for Shane.

But he knew now, and he could do better. He had a plan, and it started with a couple of vegan high-protein low-calories cookies that Shane really loved, along with the fruitiest smoothie Ottawa had to offer, from a place that Shane had wanted to try for a while, but which was really out of their way and so they had never taken the time to go. Ilya had gone out of his way a lot that afternoon. He was on his way to the locker room when Shane walked out of it. Shoulders hunched, hood and headphones on, Ilya could tell how tired he was. If he knew his husband, and he did, Shane was also hungry. His head hanging low, he almost collided into Ilya and looked up at the last second, clearly surprised. He took his headphones out.

"Hey? What's going on?" he asked.

"Nothing. I just came to bring you back home."

"Oh," Shane frowned uncharacteristically, and something twisted in Ilya's stomach. "You didn't have to, I would have called a cab."

He was tired of this. He had grown more and more anxious as time went by, his brain betraying him and imagining all the worst cases scenarios. It had been exhausting, and right now Ilya wanted the comfort of having his husband in his arms.

What if he stays mad?

He couldn't ask for it just yet, however.

What if he doesn't like this new version of us?

They started walking together side by side, Ilya's hands too occupied to reach out, but Shane had kept his in his pockets anyway.

What if he's been mad for a while and this was his last straw?

They reached the door and Shane held it open for Ilya to follow. That was probably a good sign. Ilya could still fix it.

What if he realized he can do better?

The answer to all of those was easy. Ilya would beg for one more chance. He couldn't imagine a life without Shane anymore.

Shane noticed then that Ilya's hands were full.

"What's all this?" he asked as the door fell close behind them.

Ilya handed him both the smoothie and the cookie bag. "Is for you, in case you were hungry."

"Oh!" Shane exclaimed, checking the logo on the bag and probably guessing what it was. He eyed both hungrily. "We're making dinner once we're home though."

"No, it's done already, but you can have some of the smoothie as appetizer, and cookies for dessert, yes?"

"You made dinner already?" Shane seemed surprised.

"Yes. And I took care of the dishes and tidied the living room and did the jersey laundry from this morning." He kept his eyes trained on the ground as he spoke, so he was surprised to hear Shane chuckle shyly. He looked up immediately. Shane's face was a lot softer now, a small smile playing on his lips. Ilya's heart spun on itself, as it often did when Shane smiled.

"You really didn't have to do all that," Shane shook his head, but he did take the smoothie. Taking his first sip, he closed his eyes, breathing in deeply and some of the tension left his shoulders.

"I did," Ilya answered, his tone serious. "I don't want you to leave me."

"What?" Shane giggled nervously. "Is this about this morning? I wouldn't leave you over a *smoothie*, Ilya."

He looked puzzled and amused, and Ilya needed him to understand that the matter was serious, and that Ilya was aware of the efforts he needed to make.

"Not just a smoothie, it's the whole... thing." Ilya hated how words still escaped him after so long. He hated that they were still standing in the parking lot, and how vulnerable he felt, but he knew Shane wouldn't leave it alone now.

"What thing?" he looked worried.

"I talked with the others, this morning. They say marriage is much harder than hook ups, and I have to work harder to be better for you," he tried to summarize the main points.

"Ilya," Shane started slowly, a determined look on his face, and Ilya knew there was no escape anymore. "You are perfect for me. What are you talking about?"

"The dishwasher, and us yelling at each other, and keeping romance alive when you have dirty dishes!" His nerves made it harder to explain correctly. Shane tilted his head to the side, and Ilya could tell that he got it anyway.

"They don't know what they're talking about though. The desperate hook ups were hot, yeah, but they made us very miserable very fast. Agony, remember?" he stopped and held eye contact long enough that Ilya understood that it wasn't rhetorical. He nodded. Of course he

remembered. There had been a lot of stress, a lot of tears, and never enough slow mornings with Shane in his arms. "And we yelled at each other a lot back then too," he pointed out with a playful smile. "But even fighting with you is hot, we're okay."

Ilya moved until his back hit the wall. Might as well make himself comfortable here. He closed his eyes and lifted his head towards the sky, breathing in the cold air. He needed to speak his mind before he lost what little courage he possessed. "But what if it gets not hot? Us, the whole marriage thing. What if I'm not good at it? What if normal isn't for us?"

"Was anything about last night not hot?" he heard Shane say, a little closer than he had expected.

The previous night had been really hot, there was no point arguing about it. There was something about a domestic Shane cozying up with his teacup under the blanket Ilya had gifted him so he'd never get cold when he stayed up reading that made Ilya feel so soft and warm and horny that he just had to ruin the picture immediately. There was also something about Shane's glasses that made Ilya want to make him look ruined, and so he had. Thoroughly.

"I'm talking about this morning," he said, bringing himself back to Earth.

Shane's locked jaw, Ilya's sarcasm as a defense which made everything worse, snippy comments through gritted teeth, the silent ride over, and everything that had followed.

"I was tired, I was stressed, it happens," he sighed. "It will happen again, to me and to you, that's just what life is sometimes."

Ilya hummed, unconvinced. He didn't want that. He didn't want to piss off Shane because "that's life", he didn't want to live with the fear that peace could always be broken and that maybe one day their relationship would be mostly fights until Shane would walk away because "that's just life". He felt Shane come to lean on the wall beside him.

"Look at me," Shane asked gently, Ilya obeyed, of course. There was no point in hiding his shining eyes, Shane already knew. "I agree that we are in a new version of this relationship," he started, taking Ilya's free hand in his, "but for years all I wanted was to be with you more often. I missed you more than I saw you, it would take so many dirty dishes for me to regret that time."

Ilya could hear the pain in his voice. Agony. It had tainted everything else, for years. As usual, Shane was right.

"What about dirty bedsheets?" he tried to alleviate the mood, a weak smile breaking through his fears.

Shane pretended to think for a second. "I think I'm almost used to them now."

Ilya wanted to bury his face in Shane's neck, but he wanted to lay everything down first, hoping that his husband would help him carry the burden of his fears. "But we are also coworkers now, we're always together, so you have to say when you get tired of me."

Shane's eyebrow shot up. "Do you get tired of me?"

Ilya frowned, offended. "No. Never, but it's not the same. You have to tell me if it happens, is all."

Shane's eyes softened. He dropped Ilya's hand to bring his to his cheek, caressing it as he came to leave gentle kisses on the other side of his face. Ilya's eyes almost fluttered shut with relief, but he wanted to keep looking at his husband. Shane pulled back so he could look at Ilya in the eyes.

"I don't want you to leave me alone, not now, not ever. I would tie our souls together if I could, Ilyusha."

Ilya felt his cheeks heat up and his eyes well up again, both at the words and at the name Shane rarely used, because it made Ilya melt a little too much. He stopped resisting and fell against his husband, who welcomed him easily. He breathed him in, arms locked around him like he would try to never let go. Shane put an arm around his shoulders and a hand in his hair, holding him close in the safest place on Earth. Ilya let himself breathe in and out long enough to stop feeling like his heart was about to jump out of his chest.

"We can always try," he said, voice muffled by Shane's hoodie.

Shane giggled and put a hand back on Ilya's face to guide him into a kiss, then another, then another, until Shane was pinned against the wall and Ilya's stomach was exploding with butterflies, or whatever the saying was.

"It's a little pathetic how much I don't want to be away from you," Shane whispered as he nuzzled Ilya's cheek.

"I think is okay because I am the same," Ilya smiled.

"Maybe tomorrow we just don't make plans and stay home all day, just you and me."

"Yes please, let's see how dirty we can make those bedsheets before you go crazy," Ilya laughed, feeling much lighter than he had all day.

"And then we'll change them and do the rest of our chores together," Shane wiggled his eyebrows playfully. Ilya kissed him again.

"I hate how much I love that idea, what have you done to me Hollander?"

"That's just married life, Rozanov."

Come along with our captain for practice! 🏏

Rozanov fist bumps the players on the bench and around the rink one by one.

“Good morning, good morning, nice hair, good morning...”

Some players stretch, others go around the rink, Rozanov stays silent while Haas describes his latest video game.

Wiebe makes a short speech in the background. Young and LaPointe keep trying to trip each other until Rozanov comes to stand between them.

The team runs their drills, colorful text and arrows explaining each exercise to the viewers.

Barrett groans as he misses his shot, Hayes wiggles in a sort of celebratory dance. Rozanov shoots and scores, Hayes too busy laughing to care about it.

“Rozanov! Quit it with the one man show and start training your team!” Wiebe’s voice comes up from afar.

“Is not a one man show, Dykstra started it,” he grumbles but skates away.

The team runs drills under Rozanov’s watchful eyes, and flowery comments. “Haas, you can move your wrists, you won’t hurt yourself! Dillion, wake up and start skating please! Rech, can you at least try to go fast? Like please just try! Hollander, you’re perfect don’t change anything.”

Hollander and Rozanov meet for the face-off, focused and quiet. Rozanov wins the puck. Everyone gets their time to shine during the short game, goals and saves and backchecks highlighted in the video.

Team Hollander wins 🎉 Go Centaurs!

[@wolfandchimera](#) ofc team hollander wins have you seen my goat

[@sushiwriter](#) “hollander ur perfect don’t change” walk him like a dog ig

[@seariarly](#) he just reaaaally wants shane to look his way my boy is whipped

[@jukoist](#) oh so ilya is also acting like an annoying kid with his teammates good to know lmao

[@cl0pin](#) how much swearing did they have to cut from this you think

[@ok555](#) how many dick jokes for it to be barely over a minute for three hours of practice 🤔

[@inexplicablymine](#) Ilya x Calvin Klein collab when???

[@kurtstiel](#) bruh hollander looks tired roz get over there and take care of that boy

End Notes

All users at the end are some of my writer friends and if I were you I'd try clicking on those names for a surprise <3

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!