

Fancy Meeting You

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Fancy Meeting You

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Summary

A detailed look at Shane and Ilya's perspectives of seeing each other for the first time, as well as Ilya's perspective of their first interaction in the classroom. Spoilers: they're utterly enamoured by one another but are too afraid to admit it.

This is a one-shot based on my original [it's always been you](#). I highly recommend reading it first (at least up until the second chapter) to understand the context of this work.

Notes

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

September 2014

Shane hated this classroom. It was his very first time in it and he already hated it. The entire building emanated with this musty smell, the lights were too white and bright, the tabletops were all a little bit grimy, and the walls seemed to make everyone's voices bounce straight into his ears. It was suffocating. The worst part about it was that he was going to be in here for three days a week for the entire semester while suffering through an English class.

Shane got writing. It was simple to him—he could read in between the lines, write structured essays, and express his own ideas. He had years of A+'s from his high school English classes to prove it. But there was no way to fight around a first-year writing requirement. So Shane was just going to have to muster up the strength to power through this course in this godawful classroom.

Taking a deep breath and straightening out his posture, Shane tried to relax. The room was making him grumpier than he needed to be. He then wiped away the eraser shavings from his desk with his sleeve and neatly organized his brand new notebook and pencil case on the table. Shane also printed out the syllabus for the course and had it ready in front of him. He knew that they were going to just cover the syllabus in class today—that's what the syllabus outlined—but he still wanted to make sure that he was ready to take notes for anything that happened.

Somehow, the loud classroom got even louder with chatter and laughs. Shane wanted to bury his head in his arms to shield himself from this sensory overload. In the doorway, stood three guys, clearly all athletes, who were the source of the sounds. If Shane had to guess, they were probably athletes for some kind of contact sport, like football or hockey. They were all tall and broad-shouldered. The leftmost man had a shaggy mop of brown hair and a nose that had clearly been broken several times over. The man in the middle had short black hair that was nearly a buzzcut and two deep dimples on either side of his mouth. On the right stood a man who was several inches taller than them with golden brown curls and the most striking hazel eyes that Shane had ever seen. There was a mole on his cheek that seemed to accentuate his cheekbones.

Shane forcefully cleared his throat and twirled his pencil in his hand. He shouldn't be staring at people like this—it was rude. He cursed himself for sitting at the front of the class, right where the entrance of the class was.

"Bro, Rozanov, that's hilarious," the guy in the middle said while pushing the guy on the right.

Even though Shane was no longer looking at them, busying himself with writing his name on the corner of his syllabus, Shane could feel eyes on him. He just hoped that the eyes on him didn't belong to a very specific person. Just thinking about it made Shane's face embarrassingly warm. This was not like him at all. He had never blushed over a guy like this before—it was so juvenile.

"Yes, am very funny," Rozanov replied.

God, he was Russian and his voice was unbelievably deep. Shane did not need to know that. At all.

Shane bit the inside of his cheek, hoping the sharp pain would distract his mind. If he could, he would burry his very warm face in his hands, but he couldn't do that—he couldn't show the entire class that he was bothered by some guys in the room. Being gay was already some shameful secret that Shane carried with him—he didn't want to out himself on the first day of class. His sexuality was nobody's business. Certainly not Rozanov's business.

As they walked past Shane's desk, Shane couldn't help but catch the rich smell of coffee that lingered in their trail. Shane had never been more grateful for his suppressors and their sense-dulling side effects.

But now they were finally out of his sight, Shane could finally just focus on this class. Except, it wasn't as easy as he thought it'd be. While Professor Hwang talked about class expectations and assignments, Shane's mind kept wandering back to how he had a gross overreaction to some boy that he was going to see for the rest of the semester. Ever afterwards, when Shane was back in the comfort of his dorm room, he brain was plagued with the image of hazel eyes and sandy curls. It was disturbing how much Shane thought of him.

In a moment of weakness, Shane searched him up. If he was an athlete, it would be easy to find him, as the school always proudly posted its roster of athletes on its website. Shane googled "McGill Redbirds Rozanov" and was quickly led to the Redbirds' hockey page where the picture for Ilya Rozanov (#81) sat near the top. His hair was a little bit shorter but still had the same amount of texture and his gaze was much softer. Shane quickly closed his laptop once he realized that he was looking for too long. Why did he need to notice that Rozanov's gaze was softer? Why was he even paying attention to that in the first place?

After Shane's shameful search, he couldn't stop hearing about this infamous Ilya Rozanov around campus. Apparently, Ilya Rozanov had been specially recruited by McGill and had a very strong chance of joining the NHL after graduating. Knowing that immediately dampened whatever Shane had going on for Ilya. Hockey players were up to no good. Proving his point, Ilya often came to class late with his rowdy crew. They would come barrelling in several minutes after class started and would continue to talk as if Professor Hwang wasn't lecturing. Well, it was more so his friends who were obnoxious, not so much Ilya. Still, Shane had to group them together as they played for the same team. A star centre like Ilya Rozanov probably wasn't that much different from all of the players that Shane knew.

Around campus, Ilya also had been quite popular with the female population, as Shane often heard women in the halls discussing Ilya's looks or performance on and off the ice. It was also abundantly clear to Shane that Ilya had developed a reputation of being a ladies man just by the sheer number of women who swarmed around him during class. Some of the women weren't even in their English class—they came just so they could get a chance to talk to Ilya. That alone fixed Shane's problem: he didn't need to be crushing on a straight man or any man for that matter at all. Shane was just here to study and get his degree so he could become a doctor one day.

Taking all of that into consideration, Shane decided that his reaction on the first day of class was entirely unwarranted and therefore not worth dwelling over. There was no way that he would fall for likes of Ilya Rozanov.

Ilya liked Canada just fine. Canada was better than Russia in all the ways that mattered to him. He was still trying to get used to speaking and reading English all the time, which proved to be more of a challenge than he anticipated. It was just his luck that he had to take an English class for university writing for his very first semester, where grammar and complete comprehension was very necessary and he could easily get marks docked off for writing “is about X” instead of “it is about X.” Stupid English speakers and their unnecessarily complicated language. And that didn’t even include the fact that so many people in Montreal spoke French too, which made Ilya even more confused. His head almost exploded on one of his first days here because he kept on hearing people say “*Il y a*” over and over again everywhere he went—of course his name had to sound almost the same as the words for “there is” in French.

Naturally, Ilya felt quite nervous to go to his English class. Luckily for him, some of his teammates were in the same class with him so he could hide behind their collective brawn together. As it turned out, North Americans had a stereotype that athletes aren’t very smart. Ilya, however, was going to make sure that he did well in this course—he didn’t want to prove his father right and he had a scholarship to maintain. He was just happy that he had an excuse to play dumb if his brain ever failed him.

As Ilya walked into the classroom with his teammates Wilson and LeBlanc, talking about something that Ilya had long lost track of, Ilya’s eyes landed on possibly the most beautiful man that he had ever seen before. He had straight black hair that covered his forehead, strong and straight features, and a splattering of freckles over his face. Once he saw those freckles, Ilya just couldn’t get enough of them. Even though the man wore a loose hoodie, Ilya could tell that he had a strong, athletic body underneath just based off his shoulder width and hands. Ilya subconsciously licked his lips as his eyes trailed down to the beautiful man’s rosy lips.

It wasn’t like Ilya to find a man so attractive like this. He knew he was bisexual and he knew it was safe to be himself in Canada, but this overt attraction was new to him. Really, the only other man he’d been with before was Sasha, his childhood coach’s son. But that was because they were both curious and had secrets that they needed to take to the grave in Russia. Ilya wouldn’t really say that he was ever attracted to Sasha, especially not like this.

“Bro, Rozanov, that’s hilarious,” Wilson laughed while shoving Ilya’s arm.

Ilya wasn’t sure what he said was considered hilarious. He wasn’t sure if he had even talked in the past few minutes because he was so captivated. Still, Ilya pried his eyes away and tried to engage in conversation.

“Yes, am very funny,” Ilya replied, making both teammates laugh.

Something odd about Canadians that Ilya found out is that they found self-awareness and confidence either very funny or irritating. It was really a mixed bag that he didn't quite understand yet. Ilya always knew he was a confident person that could rub people the wrong way—that behaviour transcended through languages and cultures—but he was surprised that people found him as funny as they did here.

Ilya's eyes drifted back to the man who sat in front of him. Ilya couldn't help but notice how his cheeks were slightly pink as he wrote his name down on his printed syllabus. Of course his handwriting was as pretty as he was. Ilya squinted and read that the man's name was Shane Hollander. He then noticed how Hollander had all of his belongings neatly organized on his desk. It was extremely endearing to Ilya.

Eventually, the three of them found their seats at the back of the class. Throughout the entire lecture, Ilya didn't bother to pay attention to the professor. They were just going through the syllabus so he could easily review it after practice later to see what he should prepare for. Instead, Ilya just watched Hollander, who was conveniently sat right in front of the professor, as he diligently took notes. Hollander would squint every time he had to look down at the syllabus and read through specific lines, eyebrows furrowing while doing so.

For the entirety of class, Ilya couldn't help but think that this semester was going to be even more torturous than once thought.

October 2014

Ilya was running late for his English class. Coach Johnson had made Ilya stay behind after their morning practice to talk about his performance. He mainly complemented Ilya for his hard work but also stressed that Ilya needed to bond with the team more—it seemed like he wasn't reading the rest of the team's body language well enough. Ilya agreed that he would work on it and promised that he wouldn't let the team down. Coach Johnson said that Ilya wasn't letting the team down as is, but Ilya thought that if his father were here he would vehemently disagree.

By the time Ilya entered the classroom, everyone was rearranging themselves into smaller groups. They were probably doing the activity that Professor Hwang had them prepare for last class. Ilya took one of the only seats that was empty, which just so happened to be right beside Hollander, who grumpily held up his pointer finger from his crossed arms. Ilya thought he looked cute while grumpy, like a little kitten.

“Mr. Rozanov, how nice of you to join us,” Professor Hwang said. “Since Mr. Hollander hasn't been paired up yet, why don't the two of you do the exercise together. I trust that both of you are prepared?”

Hollander mumbled, “yes ma'am.”

Ilya had prepared for the exercise and he was ready to participate. However, he wasn't sure if he was ready for the rest of class as he didn't understand the entire novel—he thought there was probably lots that he missed since he didn't understand some of the language in there. Because of practice and his other courses, Ilya hadn't had the chance to define them or reread the book yet. Maybe he could squeeze in some time later this week to do that.

"We're supposed to talk about our favourite childhood meals," Hollander said.

Ilya could hear him loud and clear but he couldn't get over how displeased Hollander looked to be working with him. His eyebrows were knit together and his lips were pouty. It was adorable.

"What?" Ilya bit his lower lip to hide his amusement.

"We're supposed to talk about our favourite childhood meals," he repeated. He looked a little more annoyed this time.

"Ah so he has a voice." Ilya let himself smile this time.

Hollander quickly turned to his notebook, where he already had answers and notes written out. Without reading any of it, Shane sighed and said, "I'm half Japanese so the dish I chose is oyakodon."

"So that's what you are: Japanese," Ilya somehow blurted out.

"Half," the kitten said underneath his breath. "It's a rice dish made with chicken, eggs, and onions. My mom used to make it for me all the time when I played."

Hollander's voice got progressively quieter as he spoke but Ilya didn't think too much about it. Ilya only wondered what Hollander could have played before.

"What about you, Mr. Rozanov?" Hollander asked.

Ilya loved the way that his name sounded coming from Hollander's mouth, especially since he said it with the exact fierceness of a kitten. It made him more pleased than he'd like to admit.

"*Ah so the kitten bites,*" Ilya muttered to himself. "I like Russian piroshkis. My mother always had them ready when I was done with hockey. Tastes like my home."

Ilya hoped to rip off the bandaid with his answer. He didn't want to talk or think about his childhood or his mother anymore than that. Thankfully, Hollander didn't ask anymore questions and turned away from Ilya.

As silence settled, they noticed Professor Hwang's stern gaze on them. Class participation was an alarming portion of this class's grade, so Ilya needed to come up with something—anything to discuss.

"You said you played," he said.

Hollander nodded, his brown eyes looking directly past Ilya.

“Well, what did you play?”

Slowly, a pink blush grew on Hollander’s face. Did Ilya ask something too personal, or was the thing Hollander played too embarrassing to play?

“Oh um... hockey,” Hollander replied shyly.

That wasn’t what Ilya had expected at all, but it made sense. Hollander seemed like he was built for hockey, though it was strange that Ilya had never seen him around the ice.

“And your position?” Ilya asked.

“Centre.”

“Only the best play that position.” Ilya winked, causing Hollander to blush deeper. He was so easy to tease, Ilya didn’t know what to do with himself.

“You do not play anymore?” Ilya continued.

“No,” Hollander immediately replied, firmly.

Ilya was only partly thankful that Hollander no longer played hockey. The image of Hollander gliding on the ice in hockey gear was just a little bit too much for Ilya to handle. But, he was still curious to see what Hollander could have been like on the ice. Hollander would have been a strong centre with a body like that.

“That’s too bad,” Ilya said before making a fart noise with his mouth. “Maybe in different world we could have played together, though you could not be centre. Only me.”

Hollander rolled his brown eyes, though he did not look as irritated as he was a few seconds ago. Ilya wanted to know what was going on in his mind. Maybe Hollander was one of those boring Canadians who found his confidence a little funny.

Ilya only knew one thing from this conversation: he didn’t want it to stop. Even though he was still nervous about his English skills—borderline embarrassed at times—Ilya wasn’t above embarrassing himself to get a cute guy’s attention. Svetlana said that girls and boys liked people who tried, so Ilya was going to try.

“Can I ask question?” Ilya asked, a little nervous about what Hollander might say.

Almost soundlessly, Hollander hummed in agreement.

Ilya pulled out the book they were assigned from his bag and flipped through until he found the word that he was the most confused by. “What does this word mean? Compatible? The book says ‘because we are no longer compatible.’”

“It means that people or things can work well together. So, in the book, it means that she and Ethan are not good together as girlfriend and boyfriend,” Hollander answered earnestly. He

looked more and more relaxed as he talked.

Ilya immediately wrote down Hollander's response in his book to help him remember the definition. "Thank you."

It made Ilya very happy that Hollander hadn't laughed at his English skills. Even though many people were very understanding about Ilya's background, there were still people who occasionally thought that his gaps of knowledge of the English language were laughable and a topic open for teasing it. It didn't bother Ilya as much as it annoyed him.

Looking at Hollander, who was now fidgeting with his pencil with much less annoyance, Ilya decided that he liked him.

End Notes

My headcannon is that Ilya exclusively calls Shane "Hollander" for a while because Ilya is used to calling people by their surnames from hockey. He only starts calling Shane by his first name after Shane explicitly requests him to.

[They're paired up for another in-class activity, which Ilya loves but Shane is still begrudgingly starting to accept Ilya as a nice person.]

Ilya: "Hollander, why do you always close your eyes like that when you read?"

Shane: "I do not. What you're referring to is called squinting, and I do not do that."

Ilya: "Yes, you do."

Shane: "It's Shane, by the way."

Ilya: "Okay, 'it's Shane.' You squint when you read."

Shane: "Fuck off, asshole."

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