

don't you know I'm no good for you

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/65448739) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/65448739>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid , Heated Rivalry_(TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Omega , Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics , Alpha Ilya Roznov , Omega Shane Hollander , Secret Relationship , Mutual Pining , Mating Cycles/In Heat , Angst , Rimming , Anal Sex , Mentions of Breeding
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Hollanov Omegaverse AU
Stats:	Published: 2025-05-10 Words: 6,209 Chapters: 1/1

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by [quantumoddiy](#).

Summary

Being an omega doesn't mean you can't be a professional hockey player. Shane knows that, he proves it every single time he goes out on the ice.

The only thing is, he can't quite bring himself to tell anyone.

Only one other person knows. Ilya Roznov, the picture perfect example of a hockey player and an alpha.

And the person Shane thinks he might be falling in love with.

Notes

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

Shane knew it was nothing to be ashamed of. He did.

He knew the idea that professional sports were for alphas only, that omegas just physically weren't cut out for it, was reductive bigotry disguising itself as biology. He knew he played just as well as any of his loudly alpha teammates, hell, he played better than most of them. He knew that if any young hockey player came up to him and told him they were omega themselves, he'd clasp their shoulders and tell them to be proud, that the sport needed more people like them, that they should never be ashamed of who they are. He'd tell them exactly what he'd always wanted to hear from an older player.

Shane knew that. But he really didn't know if he'd tell them about himself. And if he couldn't say it then, would he ever be able to say it?

Shane didn't know if he'd ever stop hiding his suppressants at the bottom of his bag, only ever taking them out when he was absolutely sure he was alone, standing in a hotel room that was somehow the same as all the others, despite being on the other side of the country. It took him a moment to remember what side it even was, he was so wrung out from alternate days of travel and punishing training. And everything else.

Boston, his brain helpfully provided after a few moments of fog. Shane felt his stomach lurch, first in excitement and then in guilt. Of course. He must be exhausted if he'd forgotten that, hadn't he been counting down to this game for months, ever since they got the season schedule? He wished he hadn't, of course, but there came a point where trying to lie to himself was more embarrassing than the truth.

Shane turned the little blister pack of pills over in his fingers, watching them rattle. They were nothing to be ashamed of. Half the guys on the team probably had worse stuff that stayed between them and the Voyager's doctor, stuff the NHL should really be looking into before they even started on his suppressants.

But it was these tiny blue pills that would cause a real scandal if people found out he took them. Possibly a career ending scandal, discrimination was against the law but the reality was very different, what team would openly spend millions on an omega? Shane's stats, his records, his trophies, none of it would matter. Only these pills would matter, he knew that as sure as he knew how unfair it was.

He'd known it since he was fourteen, when he'd gotten his first messy, stuttering, painful heat. He'd been curled in a ball on their bathroom floor, sobbing his heart out because he'd been so certain that he would never be a hockey player now. His mom had only let herself in once he'd choked out that it was okay, coming to kneel beside him and press a pack of tiny blue pills into his hand. She'd stroked his hair until the tears had dried up, holding him tightly against her chest even though he'd been taller than her for a year by that point. She'd told him the only reason everyone believed something was because no one had ever proven them wrong. She'd told him that his hard work, his determination, his drive would decide what would happen, not the world's opinion.

And she'd been right, as she usually was about these things. The only problem was Shane had never been brave enough to tell the world just how wrong it was. And he was starting to worry he never would be.

Shane watched his reelection's mouth twist stubbornly. It didn't matter whether he came out or not, it didn't change the fact that being an omega wasn't embarrassing. It wasn't a failure. He didn't have to be ashamed of taking his suppressants.

Except he wasn't taking them tonight. He'd known that since he first took them out of his bag, from the moment he remembered he was in Boston and who the Voyageurs were playing the next day. Before Shane remembered who would be inches away from him at the face off, mouth split in that infuriating smile that showed off his fangs, eyes dark and ready for the chase.

And yes, Shane was more than a little ashamed of that.

Not enough to see sense though. Shane sighed as he dropped the packet back into his overnight bag, moving it under a book he always brought along but never had time to read. If he was ashamed enough to do something other than this profoundly stupid cat and mouse game, he would have probably stopped years ago, shortly after it all started. He'd accepted that this was what he wanted.

It was still a terrible idea, of course. Not letting himself have a natural heat every few months, in fact that was medically recommended, at least for anyone whose career didn't depend on millions of fans assuming they were an alpha. There were plenty of brothels where Shane could go and find a perfectly nice alpha man whose name he'd never learn, get his biological needs met rigorously and enjoyably, all while knowing everyone in the place had signed an NDA and his secret was secure. He should do that. There would be plenty in Boston. He should walk out of the stadium after the game- after they were done celebrating their win, of course- and find one.

But Shane knew he wouldn't. Because he didn't want safety, he didn't want kind, functional, anonymous sex. He didn't want things to be easy.

He wanted Ilya Rozanov. Just about the worst possible alpha he could have picked.

So no, Shane wasn't embarrassed about his status. He wasn't embarrassed about the suppressants in his bag. He wasn't embarrassed to be the only omega on his team and to be hiding that fact for his own safety.

He was, however, embarrassed to find himself falling asleep in that bland, generic Boston hotel room thinking about Ilya Rozanov's eyes.

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In a weird way, being on the verge of a heat actually helped Shane's game.

They were fierce when he suppressed them for any extended period of time, roaring back, determined to get vengeance for all the ones he'd chemically skipped. But he'd been doing

this for long enough to know he wouldn't really fall until the evening, until he was far from the ice and all the eyes that were fixed on it.

Until Ilya Rozanov could catch him.

But not yet, that could wait. First Shane had to embarrass him and his team in front of their home crowd.

Right now the heat was just a jangling in his nerves, a hunger he could send straight down his stick. His heart was hammering before he even stepped on the ice, setting a rapid beat the rest of him ached to follow. He pushed off the wall to do a few laps before taking his place, loving the sudden rush in his ears that echoed the rumble of the crowd. He moved faster, he turned quicker, he felt connected to his body in a way he only got when the tide of his hormones was shifting. He felt fucking *good*.

And he wasn't the only one who'd noticed.

"Hollander."

Anyone else would hear the word, growled through bared teeth and that thick accent, and only hear the cockiness, the cool disinterest of someone who wanted a challenge but knew he wouldn't find it here. When they were younger, Shane had made the same mistake.

He knew better now. He caught the tightness at the edge of the word, the way Rozanov had to bite it off to keep himself from rolling his name across his tongue like a piece of candy. Still a cocky asshole, of course, but one who wanted him. One who was looking forward to this just as much as Shane was.

"Rozanov," he answered easily, stopping an inch in front of the Bears' captain with a smug smile on his face.

"You done showing off?" the Russian grunted, stick braced across his shoulders, almost mimicking the crucifix resting on his chest.

"Not even close," Shane let his smile unfurl into a grin.

God, looking at him was enough to make Shane worried he'd miscalculated and his heat had caught him a few hours early. Everything in him just seemed to surge towards Ilya Rozanov, an asteroid pulled towards a fiery destruction in the orbit of a burning sun.

And, just to make things worse, the bastard knew it.

The face off was a delicious kind of torture, the two of them bending until their lips were practically grazing, a strange liminal moment where they could get so close in front of thousands of eyes, somehow without fear. Suddenly, Shane's nose was filled with the smell of Rozanov- the sharp high note of cold, the low rumble of burning wood, the hum of something green. It would never stop being bitterly ironic to Shane, just how much Rozanov smelled like home to him.

If Rozanov was getting as hard as Shane was, it didn't show on his face. He just had that cool, infuriating smile like he was simply facing down his career long rival, like he'd planned out the next sixty minutes down to the second and was only focused on winning.

At least until those few seconds before the whistle blew, that pause where the only thing in the world to Shane was Rozanov eyes, when he whispered, "I like this arrangement. I get to beat you and then claim my prize."

Shane felt a shiver run through him, like Rozanov's smoky voice had slipped right into his ear and down his spine, "What does that mean when you lose? I take pity on you and let you fuck me anyway?"

Rozanov's dark eyes flashed, those fangs breached his full lips, "I *will* earn you, Hollander. Believe that."

Shane never did. Whoever won, whoever lost, Ilya would earn him ten times over.

But like hell was he admitting that, "I'll believe it when I see it, Rozanov."

The whistle shattered their moment, snapped the tension, both of them launching forward like twin arrows. Sticks cracked, shards flew and Shane held his breath.

Until he darted away the winner, letting loose a wild, triumphant laugh that soared over the roar of the crowd, fury from the home crowd and joy from the away fans. Shane barely heard it, it just melted into the noise of the blood rushing through his ears, the racing of his own heart like the game was as much a part of him as they were. He was where he belonged, doing exactly what he was made to do. Doing the one thing they all believed an omega like him could never do.

Everyone apart from Rozanov, who let out a hungry snarl and dived eagerly into the chase, like he'd been waiting for this too. He came after him with everything he had, all his speed, all his power because he knew Shane Hollander was worth it, omega or not.

Come and get me, Shane thought, unsure if it was his impending heat talking or his heart, scared to even start pulling at that tangled mess.

Not right now. Right now he had a game to win.

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Shane wouldn't put it past Rozanov to deliberately keep him waiting. Especially after the Voyageurs fought their way to a victory, by the barest of margins.

For the third time that minute, he checked the clock on the nightstand, giving a growl of frustration when it had barely moved. Thoughts were already crowded his feverish mind, jostling each other, demanding he follow them down a spiralling path. Had he given Rozanov the right room number, the right time? Was he stuck in traffic? Had one of his teammates saw him trying to slip out and suspected something?

Was he even coming?

They'd said midnight and, fair enough, it was only quarter to but Shane's body didn't care. He'd excused himself from his team's celebrations after letting himself indulge just a little in the locker room. It was hard not to enjoy the strong hands thumping his shoulder, ruffling his hair, congratulating him on his three goals and for rattling Rozanov.

It took a lot of willpower to keep his face neutral at that one.

Shane did love being part of a team, he loved wearing their colours and feeling them behind him whenever he stepped out on the ice. Even if he couldn't believe they'd still be there, once they knew about his life off it.

Which was why he'd slipped away, feeling a slight pang as the door had shut on the Voyagers' cheers, turning it into a muffled roar that felt so far away, so much harder to tell if it was joyful or furious, home or away. Shane had pushed the sudden uncertainty down, refusing to let it creep in when he'd just played some of the best hockey of his life.

He had no reason to feel ashamed. He knew that.

It was just hard to remember that here, in this hotel room that suddenly felt so much smaller, like he scraped against the walls as he tried to pace back and forth. It was so hard, with his vision swimming and his breath coming in short gasps, his whole body prickling with heat like he was being buried alive. He'd kept the lights off because his eyes were aching- his whole damn body was aching like he'd been checked by an elephant- but now he just felt lost in the darkness, longing for something familiar, something to ground him. Because right now, all he felt was the high, panicked rush of a terrible freefall.

Shane pushed his fingers through his hair, taking tight fistfuls of it. His hormones thrummed through his veins, tripping over themselves in a scramble as it hit him fully. He'd never felt so vulnerable, every raw nerve exposed. Suddenly this all seemed so stupid, putting himself through this for, what? The man the rest of the world thought he hated, so much that it was the foundation of his career?

What the hell was he doing?

The knock on the door was a shock, sharp enough to trip Shane's brain and send it sprawling on its ass. He glanced at the clock, 11:48.

He had no doubt that's who was knocking, from the smell of things he almost believed he'd open the door to the view from his cabin back home in Ottawa, the perfectly still black glass of the lake and the swaying pine trees. Though the tall, smirking Russian leaning in the doorway was almost as welcome a sight.

"You're early," Shane knew it was a stupid thing to say but it was all that came tumbling out when he opened his mouth.

Ilya's pupils flooded his eyes, his smile growing to show teeth, "Naturally. From the state of you at the game, I didn't think you'd be able to last much longer. I'm surprised to see you wearing pants and not humping the furniture."

Shane knew he couldn't physically blush any more than he already was but, under Ilya's gaze, he found a way. Mostly because he was a little surprised too.

"Get in here," he groaned, seizing the front of Ilya's Bears shirt and yanking him into the room, "I just...I thought you might make me wait on purpose, y'know?"

He wasn't sure why he confessed that, it immediately sounded childish, clingy in a way this arrangement they had absolutely couldn't make room for. But Ilya only paused, hands frozen on the hem of his shirt where he'd been about to rip it off, his smile softening a little just at the edges.

"What, because your team won? I would not do that to you, Hollander, not for such petty reasons. You win some, I win more. It is why this is fun, yes? A one sided rivalry would be boring."

Shane couldn't help smiling back, "Guess the one thing we aren't is boring."

Ilya's chuckle was so low Shane could swear he felt it in his bones, especially when the alpha closed the distance between them in a single stride. Suddenly the pulse in Shane's ears could have been the sound of Ilya's heart, his senses flooded with that scent again. Every cell in his body moaned, melted, strained towards the alpha standing an inch away. *His alpha*, his traitorous mind whispered.

It was the heat talking. It always was.

"You are far from boring, Hollander," Ilya's eyes crinkled at the edges, his amusement clear but it wasn't sharp and mocking like usual, "And I think you forget. I need this too."

Shane felt his breath catch, become something soft and longing, a noise he'd burn with embarrassment to know he'd made where someone else could hear. If he wasn't in heat. If it wasn't Ilya.

"So...will you take pity on me? May I have you?" Ilya was fully teasing him now, that sharp toothed smirk back where it belonged.

He wanted to hear Shane say it. Even with his need written across his face, filling the dark, close air of the hotel room, sparking between them with enough strength to ignite, he still wanted to hear the words.

And god damn him, Shane wanted to say them.

"Fuck me," Shane begged, voice thick, trembling with the rest of him, "I need you, I need you so bad, Ilya..."

"*Moy...*"

A silent whistle blew and they crashed together but this time, they held fast. Ilya's kisses were bruising, fierce, his huge, rough hands coming up to grasp Shane's face like he was holding him in place, just in case he tried to pull away. Not that Shane ever would, the

moment their lips touched, his body was singing, everything writhing in sheer relief. This was what he needed.

Shane whined into Ilya's mouth, giving him permission to glide his tongue across his teeth, "Please..."

"So needy," Ilya purred in approval, though he still gave him no more than his mouth, "Don't know how you let yourself get so close, how do none of those idiots smell it..."

Shane knew he was talking about his teammates, the other Voyagers. The ringing note of possessiveness in his voice had his heart thumping, so much it was hard to get the words out.

"Most of them are bonded already," Shane gasped as the back of his knees hit the bed, "And I use a scent masker. Works pretty good."

"Well it doesn't work on me," Ilya growled playfully, giving a shove and sending Shane sprawling.

Because it's for you. Shane pushed the thought away before it could properly settle, so he could pretend it had never been there at all. Just his heat talking.

Helpfully, Ilya began to undress him, short circuiting Shane's ability to think at all. It was like he was pulling away the last of his armor along with his shirt, leaving him completely vulnerable, unable to hide just how much he needed this man. His body made it loud and clear, he could feel the slick beading at his hole, running down his skin to pool on the sheets under him.

Ilya noticed it too, his eyes roving over Shane, his breaths heavy as he drew in as much of his scent as possible. He took off his shorts, both men thrilling at the sound of tearing fabric, parting his legs so he could watch the heat literally spilling out of him, too much for his body to contain. Ilya cursed softly in Russian, trailing a hand down Shane's stomach to part his cheeks, eyes as hungry as the rest of him.

Something inside him wanted to twist in shame, the part of Shane that was always afraid. But how could he?

Ilya Rozanov never hid anything. He was the best and he would tell you so. If he thought you were a dick, you would know about it. He was a shameless, cocky, arrogant bastard and saw no reason to lie because he thought every word from his mouth, every thought, was solid gold.

And right now he was looking at Shane like the word 'beautiful' had been made for him specifically. And Shane had no choice but to believe him.

"You're ready for me..." Ilya breathed, leaning in and letting his tongue flicker against Shane's hole, "Fuck, you always taste so good."

"If I'm ready, then hurry up and fuck me," Shane gasped, squirming against the sheets, feeling them stick to his skin.

Ilya's grin was a lightning flash in the dark room, "What kind of alpha do you take me for, you think I am going to invite myself in without warming you up first? I have always treated you better than that, Hollander..."

Shane had a snappish comment ready, but it became a helpless squeal as Ilya buried his face fully against him. He kept him parted with his hands, gripping so tight there would be marks in the morning, letting nothing come between his tongue, his teeth, his lips and Shane's hole. He ate him out the same way he played hockey, in a wild headlong rush, completely fearless.

Shane could only buck and cry out, surrendering utterly to Ilya's mouth. His first orgasm came hard and fast, slamming into him through the overwhelming torrent of sensation. Shane gave a strangled gasp, no time for anything else as Ilya just kept going, no pause, lapping at him like he was drinking from him.

Shane threw his legs over Ilya's broad shoulders, he tangled his fingers in his bronze curls and held fast. Anything to stop himself from breaking apart completely, from losing himself in the rush of it all and shattering into pieces. It was all so close to *too much*, a fire inside him he wasn't sure he could contain.

But Ilya was there, a solid presence, a constant, grounding pressure that kept Shane rooted in his body. His stubble scraping against Shane's cheeks, his hands kneading his ass, his ragged panting and soft, whispered Russian curses that sounded like prayers. He held Shane, kept him safe and whole and alight with pleasure.

He gave him two more blinding orgasms, one after the other, until the burning inside him became something manageable, like Ilya had wrestled it back within the boundaries of his body. Shane gulped down air, having to blink a few times before the hotel room came back into focus.

He kicked weakly at Ilya's shoulder, his voice a raw, breathy whimper, "Fuck me now? Please?"

Ilya moved up to crouch over him, a satisfied rumble under his words, "Hm? You think you're ready for me, *lyubimyy*?"

Shane bared his teeth, his own growl rising with his desperation, "Damn it, Ilya, I said please. Stop being an asshole."

"I am unconvinced," those infuriatingly broad and muscled shoulders shrugged, the ones that had knocked Shane to the boards so many times, "Tell me clearly, Hollander. What do you want?"

Shane knew what Ilya wanted him to say, he knew what he wanted to say. But, as with everything between them, the fight was half the fun.

So he whined, batting his eyelashes, arching his back, "Alpha...come on, you already know..."

"I do," Ilya pressed close, pinning Shane under his weight, skating his lips along the taut lines of his neck, "And I want to hear the great Shane Hollander, hockey's golden boy, say the words."

Shane's breath caught in his throat, like Ilya's lips had stilled it, like every atom in him was at his mercy. Suddenly he could think of nothing but those fangs, Ilya's fangs, now just the barest few inches of flesh away from his skin. Words rose up but they weren't the right ones.

Bite me.

Every nerve in Shane's body sang with it, humming the same high, desperate note. He needed Ilya's mark on him, he needed him to bite down hard and claim him. He didn't care who saw, he didn't care who knew, he needed his alpha to brand him the same way he needed air in his lungs and blood in his veins. In that moment, Shane knew for a complete and utter certainty that, without Ilya, he would simply unravel. He was sure of it.

As sure as he was that he could never have him.

"Breed me," Shane surrendered, choking out the words quickly so no other, more dangerous ones could take their place, "Breed me, alpha, I need it."

Ilya hesitated, just for the barest of seconds, like he had been hoping to hear Shane beg for something else. But it was gone so fast he couldn't really be sure, replaced by a huge, triumphant grin.

"Good boy," he purred, the words sounding positively sinful in his thick accent.

He seized Shane, yanking him down like he weighed nothing, folding him damn near in half with his knees touching his own shoulders. The feeling of Ilya's cock, thick and hard and hot, pressing against his asshole drove every other thought out of his head, wiping the slate clean so he could devote every neuron to feeling the burn and stretch of an alpha in full blown rut entering his body. He took him right down to the knot, jaw dropped, air leaving him in a rush like it was trying to make room.

"You were made for me, weren't you?" Ilya growled, "Made to take my cock."

For a second it felt like he was wrong. Shane's heat was running wild, he'd produced enough slick to soak Ilya's chin, but still taking the full length of him was a tall order. He rode the high of those few seconds where the burn was just too much, the stretch was edging so close to breaking him. But then it clicked, air filling Shane's lungs like he had just broken the surface. The pain became raw, aching pleasure, Ilya's words became fact. Of course he had been made for this purpose.

"Please," Shane whined, eyes wet, sweat breaking across his chest, "Fuck me."

"Don't worry, *lyubimyy*," Ilya drew his hips back, even that simple movement lighting Shane's nerves like touchpaper, "I will give you exactly what you need."

He did all that and more. From the first thrust of his hips, all the discomfort, all the waiting, all the complicated feelings he had about his own needs, it was all worth it. It was the same as when he played hockey, the racing heart, the flushed skin, the gasping breaths, the way his body felt so right and so his. As Ilya fucked into him with all the subtlety of a jackhammer, Shane realised he loved this, he loved the way he was made. He knew who he was, as long as he was out on the ice or in Ilya's arms.

Ilya wasn't just generous with his body, pounding into Shane and hitting his sweet spot every single time, hands locked onto his hips, balls rhythmically slapping his ass. He gave him words too, formless growls and snarls, bitten off snatches of Russian that Shane wished he could understand, strangled gasps when Shane's inner walls squeezed him.

"God, you're going to look so beautiful on my knot, Shane," he panted, somehow finding the breath to speak even with all the effort he was giving, the same way he always found some to spare for a snarky comment on the ice.

"I want it," Shane choked out, teeth clenched tight as he felt Ilya's swell catching on his rim, "I can take it, let me have it."

"Oh, I know you can take it, *lyubimyy*," there was a distinct note of pride in his voice now, "You're going to take every last drop of me, aren't you?"

"Yes, oh fuck, yes..." Shane cried, gripping his own thighs, his cock a rigid, throbbing bar lying across his stomach, "Anything, please..."

"So full of me," Ilya crooned, moving his hands to the headboard, keeping Shane leveraged on his cock alone, that knot now threatening to slip in with every thrust, "Maybe I will give you a pup? Watch you swell, get so round, exactly what your gorgeous body was made for. Can't even imagine how stunning you would look, Shane..."

Shane bit his lip, hard enough that he tasted blood. Another nerve struck, another line they weren't supposed to get this close to. They couldn't do that, they both knew it, it would ruin everything. But here, protected from reality by the darkness and Ilya's strong arms, Shane wanted it so badly that tears ran down his face, burning on his cheeks.

"Yes," he let himself gasp, giving in to it, "Yes, please, I want you to knock me up, I want to be a good omega for you."

"You are," Ilya promised, snapping his hips hard like he was proving it, "Can't believe I'm the only one who gets to see you like this, Shane, you save all of this for me, don't you?"

Shane nodded, giving a strangled noise as his own pre ran down his chest, "I can't...I'm gonna...on your knot, please, Ilya..."

"Yes," the Russian groaned like he'd been waiting to hear those words, bending and letting their mouths catch in a fierce kiss, "Together..."

That extra few inches of closeness, that final command, was all it took. Shane screamed as his body finally gave way, Ilya's knot pushing past his last defences and swelling fully. There

was nothing he could do but come, blindingly, an overwhelming rush of sensation that finally burnt him out. Ilya kept his promise, an unbelievable amount of come flooding Shane's body, spreading heat through him like ink dropped into clear water. His final roar was Shane's own name, pressed to his shoulder, rattling his bones.

Ilya collapsed on top of him, going boneless and, fuck, Shane couldn't blame him. He was more than happy to come back to himself with the warm, solid weight of Ilya pressing into him, the smell of snow and pine in his nose, that crucifix digging into his chest where it would hopefully leave an impression, a twin Shane could keep for a little while once this had to end.

Because it would have to end. They both had planes to catch the next day, surrounded by their teams who couldn't know what they'd been doing all night. They both had their own parallel lives to live, only crashing together for short fragments of time that were getting more necessary and more painful with every one.

Shane tried so hard to hold it in but he just couldn't, he was too raw, too ragged. The sob built in his chest, pressing it's way up and out no matter what he did. He couldn't stop it.

But Ilya could. He shifted, helping Shane unfurl as gently as he could without jolting the knot inside him. He held him against his chest, getting them comfortable, that low, rumbling purr giving Shane's heart something to hold on to. He began to work down Shane's leg with his free hand, the one that wasn't cradling him, working the lactic acid out of his thigh and calf.

"Thank you..." Shane risked the words, now he was less sure he'd burst into tears if he opened his mouth.

Ilya chuckled, pausing to give the bulge sitting low in Shane's belly a teasing pat, "Well, it's my fault we're stuck together for an hour or so. Least I could do was make sure you don't get a cramp because of it."

Shane tucked his face in against Ilya's shoulder so he couldn't see the relief in his eyes, "Guess you're staying a while then?"

There was still a knowing smile in Ilya's voice, maybe Shane hadn't hid well enough, "Guess so. I...I do have to leave in the morning though. Early flight to New York." He sounded almost apologetic.

"Admirals won't know what hit them," his attempt at a light tone sounded hollow, even in his own ears, "You're always on fire after we...after we do this."

Ilya squeezed him a little tighter, his body comforting him even if they couldn't let his words do it, "I am always on fire, Hollander."

Shane gave his chest a deliberately ineffectual shove, "Didn't help you tonight, did it?"

"Oh fuck off. You distracted me."

"You let yourself get distracted."

The two of them began to laugh, the tension easing now they were back on familiar ground. Shane could feel the exhaustion leaching into his body, rushing into the cracks left by his retreating heat. Suddenly he was stifling a yawn, his eyelids heavy.

Ilya didn't sound surprised, hand now stroking slow, comforting circles on his back, "Rest now, *lyubimyy*. You did good."

Shane gave a shaky little sigh, resting on Ilya's chest, "You gonna tell me what that means this time?"

"Nope," Ilya smirked, pressing his lips to Shane's silky hair.

Good. Shane hoped he never would. That way he could keep telling himself it wasn't what he thought it was, that they hadn't strayed into something very, very dangerous that was probably going to break both of their hearts.

He wanted to stay awake a little longer, keep looking at Ilya while he actually had the chance, while he didn't have to pull his eyes away in case someone noticed how he looked at the man like he was the sun itself. He was gorgeous right now, glowing with fading effort, his shining skin catching the light from the city beyond their window, etching him in soft gold. He looked like Apollo from any number of paintings and statues, with his bronze curls falling lazily in his eyes. Stunningly beautiful and, at least for now, Shane's.

He had to close his eyes before the tears built again. He let sleep pull him under, grateful to escape his own thoughts for a little while, to rest in Ilya's arms and listen to his heartbeat like they would never have to say goodbye.

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Ilya was gone when Shane woke up.

He always tried to do it like that, sneaking out once their bodies uncoupled, gathering his things quickly and slipping out sometime before dawn. He'd admitted once that it was supposed to be a kindness, not asking Shane to face that awful moment when the door clicked shut between them. He wanted it to hurt less.

Maybe it did. But it was hard to believe anything could hurt more than his eyes opening to a cold, empty bed, feeling that hollowness in his body where Ilya had been, the home he made for him where he couldn't stay.

Shane eased himself up and out of the bed, mostly because if he let himself lie there he might never do anything else. The light from outside was pale, milky, morning had arrived but few people in Boston had noticed. Shane felt a little safer knowing that, like there were less eyes on him than usual as he tried to put himself back together.

The room was such a wreck, it took him a while to notice that the shirt folded over the end of the bed wasn't his own. The moment he touched it, that scent hit his nose again and he remembered taking a fistful of it the night before.

It was Ilya's. Soaked in his scent and left for Shane, to make the morning after just a little bit easier.

He could wonder how the hell Ilya had snuck back to his own hotel room without a shirt on or how he was going to explain a piece of Bears merch in his wardrobe but right now, he didn't care. He just pulled it on and pressed his nose to it, inhaling deeply and thinking for the first time that he could make it through this morning. For a moment, Ilya's arms were around him again, even with the miles between them.

His suppressants were still resting on the edge of the sink, bright blue against the stark white snagging his attention. Shane felt a sudden stab of panic at leaving them out in the open before he remembered no one had come in apart from Ilya, who certainly wouldn't be surprised to see them.

He picked them up, shaky hands popping one out onto his palm. He swallowed it dry, watching his face in the mirror as he did it. He looked exhausted, wrung out, like he'd crack any moment under the weight of it all.

But he refused to look ashamed. Not here, not now, not with the ghost of Ilya's hands still on him and his marks tattooing his skin.

Though he was wearing a rival team's logo across his chest. Asshole.

Shane knew everyone was wrong about omegas. They were wrong about what they were capable of, where they belonged, what they were worth. He knew he had nothing to be ashamed of.

And maybe one day Shane Hollander would be brave enough to tell them all.

End Notes

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