

A love that sticks

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A love that sticks

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Summary

Hayden comes to visit and learns the truth about them, much to Ilya's amusement.

They puzzle some more.

Notes

Hellooo everyone, I am happy to announce that this has a part two and that two more Hollanov fics are in the works!

“What the hell is Pike sending you? The vibrations don’t stop.” Ilya is cuddling with Shane on the couch, watching a highlight video of the past season together, but the other’s phone simply won’t stop fucking vibrating.

Shane shrugs. “Maybe he is sending me an update about his kids as well. You know he loves them.”

He gets up to check his phone, leaving Ilya on the couch by himself. With a groan, Ilya complains, “Stupid Pike with his stupid 10 children. Does he not know what condom is? If he did, I could have great fun with boyfriend but nooo, he has to be annoying.”

With his eyes never leaving his boyfriend, Ilya watches Shane’s expression grow horrified. He sits up as the seriousness sets in. “What... Hollander, talk to me.”

“I... might have sent him a photo where you’re in it. He is... threatening to call the police because he thinks you might have kidnapped me, I don’t know.”

That draws a chuckle out of Ilya, getting up to hug Shane from behind. “He really suspected nothing? You are better actor than I thought.” He places a small kiss on Shane’s neck before placing his head on the other’s shoulder, looking into his phone.

“What do I do, Ilya?! *This* is my real nightmare. What if he hates me? What if he tells the team? The entire fucking world?”

In hopes of calming him down, Ilya starts caressing Shane’s tummy. “Hollander, Pike is your best friend, yes? Has he ever been homophobic?”

“Of course, he is my best friend and no... not that I know of...” Shane does seem to relax a bit.

“Then stop your panic attack. It is all fine. You tell him truth and say not to tell. Done.”

That conjures a small smile on Shane’s face. “You make it sound so easy.”

“You just make it hard,” he replies with a grin before smacking his boyfriend’s ass.

“Ilya...”

He turns Shane around in his arms. “What, Hollander, hm? You can’t change that Pike is suspicious, you will probably tell him because I know you and you would actually like him to know, yes?”

Nodding, Shane looks up at Ilya with his beautiful brown eyes. Ilya loves looking into them.

“I... he will be judgmental?”

“Well, I am, too.”

Amused, his boyfriend doesn't grace him with a reply and instead looks down at his phone again. "He wants to come over?"

Ilya chuckles. "Let him. He'll see how much I love you." Provocatively, he lets his hands glide down the other's back to his ass.

The corners of his mouth twitching, Shane looks back up and replies softly, "I love you, too."

He types something, probably giving Pike an answer. "Wait, he is coming here?! I need to clean." Shane steps away from Ilya, looking around frantically. "We should vacuum and better mop the floors too and clean the kitchen and we should change the bed sheets and-"

"Hollander! Breathe! You start vacuuming while I wipe the kitchen?" Ilya suggests. If Shane thinks, they have to clean then yeah sure, he will help. But for that, Shane has to calm down first. It doesn't help either of them if he is panicking.

"No, you vacuum and I clean the kitchen."

"Hollander, you don't trust me to clean kitchen?" He tries to act offended but he can't fully fight off the amusement.

"Not really, Rozanov."

Shane's expression is blank when he gives his reply but Ilya simply grins and kisses his cheek before searching for the vacuum cleaner.

Together, they start cleaning. Ilya can hear his boyfriend's frantic cleaning whenever he turns the vacuum off but he lets him be. He knows that Shane needs the control. As soon as he is done with vacuuming the ground floor, he moves on to mopping the tiles.

Shane is still in the kitchen when he finishes with the other rooms so he hugs him once more, murmuring, "I think that is spotless, Hollander. Let's move on to different spot."

He can feel the tension seeping from Shane's body, making him smile slightly.

"I'm sorry, Ilya. I'm... I must be so annoying and boring and all that you call me right now."

Placing another soft kiss on his cheek, Ilya hums. "Mhm yes but I like boring. More importantly, I like *you*. So is okay, I understand." He kisses his cheek again, making Shane smile earnestly.

"But kitchen is clean now, yes? What did you say about bedroom?" Once more, Ilya's hands find Shane's hips, drawing small circles on his hip bone. "Maybe we can have some fun before Pike? Takes at least hour for him, no?"

"We need to keep cleaning! There is still so much to do. We *have* to change the sheets and clean up the bedroom, I'm sure your socks are all over the floor again. And the living room shelves! I have to dust!"

"Pike has allergy?"

“No...”

“Then no dust. We go upstairs, clean up bedroom and then go outside, some hockey will do you good, Hollander. Maybe losing will make your head think of different thing.”

Gently, Ilya takes his boyfriend’s hand and throws the cloth in the sink. He leads him upstairs and together they clean up as Ilya hums a few songs.

“I clean with you because it is important to you but I do not want Pike entering our bedroom.”

His words make Shane stop in his tracks. “Our?”

Grinning, Ilya goes up to him. “Yes, *our* bedroom. Or do you not agree, Hollander?”

His boyfriend turns towards him and puts his arms around his neck. “No, I love it. I share my entire life with you, Ilya, so of course this is our bedroom, our cottage, nothing I have isn’t yours as well.”

Smiling, Ilya leans down and presses a soft kiss onto Shane’s lips, but apparently that wasn’t enough for the other. He gets pulled into a deep kiss he happily indulges in.

They kiss and kiss, falling onto the bed together without stopping. Ilya will never grow tired of this. No matter how often they kiss, how often they have sex, it doesn't get any less intense or passionate.

Shane is simply his perfect counterpart, his perfect match. He loves him so much, he knows there will never be anyone that could come even close.

At some point, Shane must have realised that he is supposed to be panicking, at least according to his nervous system. “The bed! I just arranged the pillows.”

“Hollander, did you forget my request? No showing Pike this.” Ilya tries to kiss him again but is only pushed off. Rude.

“Oh, yes, right. We should... clean the entrance.”

“Already done. Or do you want to arrange shoes by colour?” Ilya regrets the sentence immediately after seeing the look in Shane’s eyes. Of course he wants to order them by colour, you fucking dumbass.

He lets out a deep groan, receiving a slap to the side from Shane.

“Fuck you, you said it.”

“Yes and I regret it very much.”

Shane rolls onto his stomach, looking up at him. “So you do want me to be less boring?”

“Never, Hollander. Now move your cute ass downstairs to sort shoes. I get the hockey things. I want to beat your ass in different way than this,” he says as he smacks his boyfriend’s ass. Really, it’s his fault for having such a great ass.

They do as he said and meet 5 minutes later in the garden, battling each other in field hockey, decidedly slower than they would on the ice. But to Ilya, it doesn’t change much. He still enjoys beating Shane—or seeing his happy face when he scores.

Their hockey game ends as they hear a car pulling up. Realisation dawns on Shane and he quickly wipes the dirt off his shorts before pulling Ilya to the front of his cottage.

To annoy Pike, Ilya sets up his resting bitch face that every slavic person has and stares at him like he is his prey.

“Hayden, it’s so nice to see you!” Shane smiles earnestly at him, but Pike can’t really return the favour, too busy staring down Ilya.

Satisfaction thrums through Ilya’s veins. Oh how he loves making Pike feel unsettled, it truly will be his highlight of the entire interaction: Getting to make Pike feel uncomfortable in his own skin simply through his presence.

Ilya nods at him in acknowledgement and moves back into the house, Shane and Hayden following him in a stilted silence. Ilya knows it's because of him. Those two don't usually seem to be quiet around each other.

Shane is trying his best to be a good host. He motions to the important rooms before leading them into the kitchen.

Because he loves him and because he wants him to be less nervous, Ilya tries to put on a smile and asks Hayden, “You want ginger ale or coke? Otherwise there's water, I guess.”

“Ehm I’ll take a coke then...” Hayden looks at him like he just proposed to him. Grinning to himself, Ilya grabs two cokes and one ginger ale and opens the cans before handing them to everyone.

They take a seat at Shane’s kitchen table and Hayden simply looks at them expectantly.

“Can someone please explain why the fuck Ilya Rozanov is at Shane Hollander’s cottage and it looks like he is right at home?”

Chuckling, Ilya brings his can of coke to his mouth but doesn't reply. He can see how that irks Hayden, still he doesn't reply. Instead he puts his free hand on his boyfriend’s tense thigh and squeezes it gently.

“Ehm, I invited him here, Hayden.”

Shane’s reply only makes him look more confused.

“*Da*, it's nice here so I am here. Better than Russia.”

Shaking his head, Hayden takes a sip from his can, looking between them, unbelieving he is really in a room with them.

“That doesn’t explain why the fuck you are getting along?”

Ilya and Shane exchange a look, smiling softly.

“Well, you see, we were never really rivals, you know? Or I guess we are but we don't hate each other. It's... the rivalry is only on the ice,” Shane tries to explain.

Ilya is thoroughly amused by the fact that Shane apparently wants to break the news of them dating gently. If it were up to him, he would have kissed his boyfriend as Hayden was pulling up to the cottage but Ilya knows Shane wouldn't have liked that.

“And when playing video games or soccer or any other game. Hollander and I like competition.”

Hayden tilts his head in acknowledgment and throws them an examining look.

“Yeah that doesn't surprise me much. But... you always insult each other! The amount of times I've heard Shane call you an asshole! It's literally not possible to count that. How...”

They both shrug in sync, making them laugh.

“We’re actually quite similar. It's... been a fun few years. Throwing insults at each other is just how we are, what we do.” Shane smiles at Ilya as he says it and Ilya can't hold back the smile either.

He loves their dynamic. With Shane he doesn't have to try to be polite or perfect. He can just be himself with all the vulgar language and annoyance he can muster.

He guesses that it's similar for the other.

“When you say a few years... what do you mean by that?”

“Oh we've been friendly since before Rookie season, honestly.”

‘Friendly’ is one way to say it.

“Rookie Season?? Didn't you literally watch the other snatch the trophy away from you?”

Pike has a point, Ilya hates admitting that. But he has never really felt any real disdain towards Shane about him winning against him. Hockey has always meant a lot more to Shane than it has to him and despite liking to win, Ilya has never been bitter about losing against the other. At least with him, Ilya knows it's a deserved win.

As much as he likes making fun of Shane's skill, Ilya knows he is the best player in the league right now. And he still has a bright future in front of him. A future he hopefully gets to be part of.

“Keep friend close but enemy closer, *da*?”

That coaxes out a laugh out of both of them but for much different reasons. Pike is laughing in a ‘How the fuck is this my reality’ way while Shane’s laugh is an ‘enemies—yeah sure’ laugh.

If it wasn’t for fuckass Hayden Pike, Ilya would kiss Shane so hard right now. He loves him, loves teasing about the rivalry because it is simply such a funny narrative for them. To everyone there are rivals while in truth, after every game they sneak off to kiss and fuck.

Well, in the future, they would even spend more time together. Ilya can’t fucking wait.

“Of course you’ve learned those words in English, I’m not even surprised anymore... So, this is the real reason you went to visit Shane in the hospital? And actually looked like you cared during the incident?”

Ilya looks at Shane, silently asking if he can reveal their relationship, because no, he cared because he loved him, he was restless and fucking terrified because he didn’t know if the man he loved would be okay.

A slight nod is all he needs from Shane before grabbing his hand and putting them laced together on the table.

Pike is watching the movement attentively, confusion is mirrored on his face, eyebrows scrunched together like he is trying to solve a complicated math problem.

“I was at the hospital because I was scared of losing Shane.” It actually takes him a lot of effort to talk openly about this but the steady presence of his boyfriend at his side gives him the strength. “Shane is most important person in my life.”

“Wait what?”

“We’re together, Hayden,” Shane adds softly, his voice timid. Ilya knows how much Pike means to Shane, knows he has been kind of his rock through all of this, even if he didn’t know about anything that was happening.

“I’m sorry, I think I’m hallucinating. Did you just say you are together?!”

This reaction is exactly what Ilya was hoping for. The exasperation, the unwillingness to accept it as reality. Instead of replying, he lifts their interlocked hands to his mouth and places a soft kiss on the back of Shane’s hand.

He grins, pure joy thrumming through his veins. “Tsk, do you not believe your best friend?” To Shane, he says, “See I told you, bad taste in friends. Only me was good choice.”

“You were never a *friend*, Ilya,” he retorts as he leans against him, keeping his eyes on Pike.

“I can’t fucking believe this. My friend is fucking dating Ilya fucking Rozanov.”

Grinning, Ilya takes another sip from his coke. “You can leave out dating and the sentence would still be right.”

“What... OH ew!” Pike exclaims, putting his hands over his ears.

Instantly, Ilya’s face drops. “Are you homophobic, Pike?” He asks, a dangerous undertone having appeared in his voice.

“God, no, of course not. I’m... Rozanov-phobic.”

Shane has been quietly watching their exchange. Some tension has been relieved by Pike’s statement but Ilya can see that he is still on edge.

“Hayden, Ilya is not a bad person, he is... great actually. Sweet and caring.” When Shane looks up at Ilya, his brown, warm eyes filled with so much love, he no longer holds himself back and places a soft kiss on his boyfriend’s lips.

“I... I believe you, Shane, it’s just... a hard pill to swallow. I think if it was literally anyone else, it would have been easier to believe. He has been a straight up *asshole* to all of us.” Hayden keeps looking between them but the look isn’t one of disdain. There is curiosity mixed into the bewilderedness that is still ghosting on his face.

“I know how to treat lovers right, Pike.” He receives another disgusted look that elates him to no end.

“Rozanov, I told you not to use that word.” His boyfriend is trying to sound annoyed but he can’t hide the hint of affection in his voice.

“I love you, you love me, so we’re lovers. Just because you always think of Sex does not mean *everyone* does.”

“That is literally the only way it is used here, for affairs or people that casually hook up.”

“English sucks.”

To that Shane only shrugs, so Ilya sees it as a win.

Hayden takes a big sip from his can before decidedly setting it onto the table with a loud clank. They both turn their heads towards him. For a short second, Ilya had forgotten he was there and it was the best part of his visit yet.

“I- I need you to know that I support you, Shane. I might not understand your choice but seeing him talk about you so easily, seeing you so happy and in love... I’d be a fool and a fucking bad best friend if I didn’t show you my support.” He pauses shortly, taking a deep breath before continuing.

“I have always wanted for you to find someone that loves you the way you are. I knew it was something you needed. I thought it would be Lily but... I suppose this works, too. Even if I really do not understand it.”

Ilya rolls his eyes and then lets out a quiet sigh. He knows that this is how every single person will react. He is the asshole while Shane is too perfect for him. It's not black and white like that, he knows, but there is some truth to it. Shane choosing him is going to make everything harder for him.

Shane and him wouldn't be accepted like Scott and his little smoothie boyfriend are. The animosity between their teams and fans, Ilya's perfectly curated fuckboy, no-care attitude and the fact that Shane is being held to much higher standards than anyone else in the league. They're all obstacles they will have to face if- no, when the world gets to know about them.

"Does... anyone know?" Hayden asks carefully.

Shane nods slightly. "My parents know... Rose knows I'm gay but not that it's Ilya..."

"Svetlana kind of knows, too. I think she knows it's Shane but I never told her." He receives a curious look from his boyfriend to which Ilya only shrugs. "She is smart and I am not that good at hiding my feelings from her."

Pike nods in acknowledgement. "And now me. I hope you know I would never tell anyone without your permission."

With a smile, Shane nods, "I know that, Hayden. I have... been wanting to tell you all about this—us—but I was... scared. The picture really was an accident, yet I don't really regret it. I'm glad you know."

It is Hayden who moves first. He gets up and walks around the table while at the same time Shane stands up as well. Hayden pulls him into a bonecrushing hug and for the first—and probably only time—Ilya is glad that Hayden is here.

As he steps out of the hug, Pike asks sheepishly, "Do you think I can tell Jackie? I don't usually keep secrets from her and she can be discreet."

Shane turns to look at Ilya who simply stares back. To him, it doesn't matter that much. One Pike is bad enough but he doubts the second Pike would make it any worse.

"I don't want to cause problems in your marriage... Of course you can tell her. I'd actually love to visit soon, see the kids again." People pleaser Shane Hollander is back. Ilya needs to change that.

Hayden smiles, thankful. "You're welcome at my house anytime. And I guess you can bring Rozanov, Jackie will probably ask to meet him anyway."

Nodding, Shane replies, "We'll see what we can do."

"Also, I'm really sorry for disturbing your peace, guys. I was just... freaked out to see you two together, I thought something was seriously wrong. I can leave so you can puzzle in peace."

He better leave is what Ilya thinks at first but then he gets a Realisation. "But you've had such a long drive. Just stay and puzzle with us, Shane has collection."

“How did you- Actually, never mind, it's a great idea! You two can get to know each other better and maybe leave some animosity behind,” Shane adds to Ilya’s idea. Ilya wants to kiss him for supporting this, he desperately wants to watch Pike get annoyed at a puzzle.

“Oh eh I guess why not. But I'm going to warn you, I puzzle a lot with my kids.”

Grinning, Ilya gets up. “So we can pick hard one, perfect. Hollander, go choose, I put on music.”

Shane gets up and throws him a confused look before placing a kiss on his cheek and walking to the storage room where he has all his puzzle, leaving him and Pike alone in the room.

“You better not tell a single soul about Hollander and me or I show you what other things I can do with a stick, understood? Ah, excluding your wife, of course.”

Pike only leans back in his chair, smirking. “That's the Rozanov I know. I already promised Shane I wouldn't tell anyone and I mean it. I know what it can mean for his career, I would *never* put that in jeopardy.”

Ilya might not know what ‘jeopardy’ means but he understands everything else so he nods, content with the result. “Well, let's move to the dining room, the lighting for puzzling there is better. At least, that's what Shane says.”

On the way there, Ilya puts on some great music, humming along, hopefully annoying Pike.

“You seem really at home here.”

“Mhm yes, I've been here for a few days already. It's great, getting to have Shane—mostly—for myself for once.” He gives Pike a side-eye but truthfully he isn't *that* mad about his presence.

“Oh, it must have been hard for you two during the season. It's hard to meet up with such a distance, only for our games against each other.”

Ilya only nods in response. He doesn't really want to talk with Pike about something personal like that.

“Hollander! How hard can it be to pick puzzle? It's not career changing choice!” He yells, knowing the cottage has thin enough walls for Shane to probably be able to hear him.

Not even 15 seconds later, Shane walks into the room with a puzzle box and a second smaller box in his arms. “You don't have to yell. And do you think you could be patient for one time in your life?”

“Mhm no, I’d rather not,” Ilya retorts, slapping Shane’s ass as he walks past him.

Smiling fondly, Shane rolls his eyes and takes a seat next to him, placing the two boxes onto the table. “So this is an Ottawa puzzle, it’s definitely harder than the one we did with the cats. And I brought puzzle bowls for sorting!”

He unpacks everything and Ilya can't help but think how much of a nerd his boyfriend is. It's cute.

"Hollander, those bowls are shaped like puzzle piece." They really are. Dark blue puzzle pieces, 6 of them in the exact same form, he wouldn't even classify them as bowls.

"Do you have a problem with that, Rozanov?"

"It's just so-" he starts.

"Boring?" How dare he assume what Ilya was about to say?

"I was going to say nerdy but yes, boring, too. Press has field day when they ask about your hobby and I tell them this."

Shane doesn't let this deter him from his goal, he dumps the pieces onto the table and starts turning them around.

"How do we sort, Mr. boring genius?" Ilya is not getting into that fight about sorting pieces again. He loves irritating Shane but not like that, he does not want to argue about that again.

"Aww someone has been paying attention." He receives a kiss on the cheek before Shane starts explaining in great detail how he wants them to divide the pieces. Ilya gets to watch Hayden's look grow more and more baffled. Seems like puzzling with them is very different than it is with his kids.

Silently, they sort through the pieces and Ilya has to admit it is a relaxing task. Looking through the pieces, trying to judge which pot Shane would sort them through. Usually, he likes to pick out the border pieces because they're the easiest to sort but when the pieces are obvious, he sorts them, too.

Whenever there's a piece he can't assign to a bowl, he silently passes them to Shane who eyes them critically before placing them in a bowl. It's...nice, peaceful. He's never done boring activities like this, but he really does not mind them with his boyfriend by his side.

Hayden isn't on the same wavelength as them when it comes to puzzling. He often gets reprimanded about the way he sorts pieces, similar to Ilya the first time he puzzled with Shane.

"Hayden, that is not how I explained it! Take that fucking piece out of there!"

"My god, you are very serious about this."

Smug about this interaction, Ilya grins and leans over to Shane, "this is still bush, yes?"

It makes Shane smile, proud of teaching Ilya his sorting strategy. "Yes, exactly. Since we do that before the houses."

Playfully, Ilya sticks out his tongue at Pike who shows him the middle finger in response.

“Guys, behave.”

“Hollander, I didn’t even do anything!” He puts on an over the top pout, looking innocently at Shane.

“Don’t even try, Rozanov, I know you too well.”

Letting out a ‘hmpf’, Ilya slightly turns away from his boyfriend but continues sorting.

In the corner of his eye, he can see Shane leaning towards him, placing a kiss on his cheek before going back to sorting. Ilya can’t suppress the smile that’s creeping up. He loves teasing and joking around with Shane, he truly has the sweetest boyfriend.

When nearly all pieces are sorted, Ilya grabs the border pieces and starts putting them together.

“Hey, start sharing the easy pieces, Rozanov.”

“Should have been faster, Pike. Your enemy doesn’t let you have the puck either just because you asked nicely.” Proud of his retort, he continues puzzling.

Mumbling under his breath, Pike starts with the bush after asking Shane with which bowl he should start.

“Can you at least start with the green border tiles so I’ll have a start? Please?”

“Ah of course, I’m considerate like that.”

Shane turns to him, a wide grin on his face. “Wow, considerate, your vocabulary is getting so good, Rozanov.”

“Shut up, Hollander,” he says without any bite. They exchange fond smiles and continue their activity.

“I can’t believe that this is you two flirting.”

“Oh, you don’t want to see us *actually* flirting, Pike. Your bestie Hollander is dirrtyy.” Ilya grins provocatively.

“Ilya!” Shane’s cheeks are bright red, looking downright adorable when embarrassed. Ilya pulls him closer and kisses him softly.

Pike only sighs. “Please I do not want any details.”

“Your loss, Pike. Now is the only time I would grace you with answer.”

Well, he would answer if he knew it was something that would unsettle Pike even more. Which is probably true for any question he could ask about their relationship.

“I am wondering one thing: How long has this been going on? You two seem so... in sync, so domestic. It doesn't feel like it's new.”

“Oh since before rookie season,” Ilya casually answers. It's true, they met before and their moments started then.

“Ilya. We agreed on rookie season.” Shane's tone has an edge to it, like a warning. But Ilya wouldn't be Ilya if he didn't ignore it.

“No, pretty sure I remember it was before.”

“Ilya.” It's definitely a warning but Ilya will not be called a liar. And he wants to horrify Pike.

“What, Hollander, I only say truth.” He casually leans back in his chair as he replies, crossing his arms in front of his chest.

It seems like it took Pike some time to realise what Ilya has told him. “Wait, wait, guys! Rookie season?? Shane, what about Rose? And Lily?”

Shane and Ilya share a look. His boyfriend seems to be unsure what to tell Pike. But Ilya really does not care what Pike knows so he simply shrugs and motions Shane to go on and answer the question.

“We... were on a break when I was with Rose and she ehm only made me realise that I am very deeply gay.”

It makes Ilya chuckle. Figuring that out was hard for Shane so he is glad that he can talk about it in such a comfortable way now. Telling Ilya and telling his parents must have lifted the mental load a bit.

“Okay... But wait, if you're gay and not bi, what about Lily?? You literally texted her before your game against Boston, I bet you were planning on meeting her after the game too! I was even stressing about being able to contact her if you didn't wake up soon. She must have been so worried. Did she ever come to visit?” Pike is obviously concerned for the ‘woman’ he has never met. Perhaps he is a nice guy but just not to Ilya.

To Ilya, this is hilarious. Seeing Pike worry about him without knowing it's him.

“Yes, Hayden, Lily visited me in the hospital. Because... ehm, Lily is Ilya. Or well, Ilya is Lily.”

All the colour leaves Hayden Pike's face. “I'm sorry, what?!”

“Surprise.” Ilya only grins at him, very happy with the reaction he got.

Shane is not as amused as Ilya but there is a small smile ghosting his lips. “It was Ilya's idea, to put in female names so people wouldn't get suspicious. So yeah, Ilya is Lily and in Ilya's phone I'm Jane.”

“That is... actually kind of genius but I still can't believe you two have been texting all these years. I seriously had to watch Shane blush and giggle over Ilya Rozanov's text. Hm. If you had led with that, I would have understood it better earlier, to be honest.”

Hayden appears much more comfortable with them now, which does not make much sense to Ilya.

“Are you telling me you find it easier to accept because I am Lily?”

“Yes. It didn't make much sense to me because every interaction between the two looked like rivalry to me. But now, it makes sense. I have watched Shane be in love with his situationship for what feels like years, it being you actually explains so fucking much.”

Hayden takes a small moment, probably thinking about what he knows about 'Lily'. “I can't believe I encouraged Shane to be honest about his feelings to fuckass Ilya Rozanov and wished for him to turn the situationship into a real relationship but... honestly now I understand the struggle there more, too. You two are risking a lot by being together.”

Nodding, Shane agrees. “We would have to give up a lot if this ever comes out. But, before you ask, yes, he is worth it. And he is in it as much as I am.”

Ilya smiles widely at his boyfriend. The whole feelings thing was rough for them, Ilya is so happy when he hears how well Shane understands both of their feelings now. He leans over to gently kiss his boyfriend. “It's us against the world, любимый.”

He receives a wide smile before they all go back to puzzling. If he had to guess, Ilya would say Hayden needs to process all the revelations he has heard today. Puzzling is great for that, you can think while mindlessly trying out pieces or you can focus fully on the puzzle, effectively silencing your brain. He would never admit it but he is starting to get Shane's love for it.

Between the three of them, they work pretty quickly. Soon enough only small heaps of tiles are left, of which Ilya sneaks one into his pocket. He tries not to look suspicious and keeps puzzling alongside the other two, wondering when someone will notice.

Safe to say it didn't take long.

“Where the fuck is that tile? I tried every single piece with three noses but none of them fit!” Ilya is so lucky it hit Shane but honestly Hayden would just move on while Shane definitely does not do that. He searches for a tile as long as it takes to find it.

Grinning menacingly, Ilya stands up and pulls the piece out of his pocket, knowing Shane's eyes are on him.

Realisation dawns on his boyfriend's face but as soon as he reaches out for the tile, Ilya dashes off, running away with Shane following him.

“Asshole! Give me my tile back, Rozanov!”

He can hear the other behind him, trying to figure out in which room he ran.

Ilya peeks through the slightly open door and when Shane looks into another room, he makes a run for it, going back downstairs. “You will have to catch me first, Hollander!”

This time, instead of running through the rooms, he opens the door to the garden. That move has slowed him down so Shane is on his heels, catching up to him and grabbing him from behind, trying to restrict his arm so he can take the tile from his hand.

Damn is he strong.

But Ilya, still grinning, only holds his closed fist with the tile up so Shane can’t reach it while holding him in place.

“Rozanov, give me the fucking piece!”

“Why should I? What do I get in return, Hollander, hm?”

Ilya knows that Shane is rolling his eyes right now, even if he can’t see him.

“I’ll give you whatever you want, just give me the damn piece.”

“Whatever I want? A dangerous thing but okay, you said it.” He hands Shane the piece who quickly plucks it from his hand and dashes back inside.

Hayden—who ended up in the door frame, watching them—was nearly knocked back in the process. “I think I really get it now. You are good for him.”

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