

### 30 for 30: Heated Rivalry to Hidden Romance

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# 30 for 30: Heated Rivalry to Hidden Romance

by [BiblioLunatic](#)

## Summary

"...fans were interested in me and Ilya like they're interested in a housefire. They weren't drawn to the warmth, they were drawn to the destruction."

Ten years after the scandal that shocked the hockey world, Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov sit down for their first interviews since retirement. They're finally going on the record for an account of the biggest rivalry in hockey and the unprecedented love that unfolded over the seasons.

or: Shane and Ilya get to redo the documentary about their rivalry. This time they don't have to lie.

## Notes

\*had only read HR & TLG when I wrote this.

\*formatted as the transcript to a documentary (until the final part)\*

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

**Rozanov, you've gone on record about your relationship with Shane Hollander a lot over the years since he left Montreal.**

**Ilya Rozanov:** Yes.

**Why have you chosen to comment when Hollander never has?**

He is his own man, has his own mind. We are doing this now so that he can say what he would like. Now that hockey is done.

**That's right, you both retired this year. What was that decision like?**

Ah. I was still very good. Could play more years. But Shane was tired. So (*Rozanov shrugged*) maybe now he will stop asking me to drink vegetable smoothie every day.

**Your schedule must be quite different now. How do you fill your days?**

Not drinking smoothies ever. Working out. Phone with family. Playing with children. Some work for Irinia Foundation. Game Changers meetings online. (*Rozanov pursed his lips and bounced his head from shoulder to shoulder*) Stare at my Cups. Look at my MVPs-- which is more than Shane-- but he is short, so three is a lot of MVPs for hockey player so short.

**Alright. You mentioned your family there. The news of this romance must have been unsettling for them given Russia's deep cultural issues with homosexuality. Tell us about how your family took it when the news broke.**

Eh, no. Not calls with my family. Our family. Shane and mine. Yuna Hollander, David Hollander, some friends from long time ago. Friends are family too.

**Yes, friends often feel like family but I mean that we know so little about your family compared to how much we know about the Hollanders. I imagine that you have more time to see your family in Russia now, how has that been?**

You have heard me speak about them before now?

**No, but fans would love to know-**

There is a reason for that. I have niece who comes to Canada in summer. That is it from Russia. Russia... doesn't like idea of me. They did when I was not myself but now that I am myself (*Rozanov blows raspberry with tongue*). So all I have left in Russia is my niece.

**Understood. So your niece, your brother Alexei's daughter, is the only one you keep in contact with from your life in Russia before the MHL?**

And Svetlana. You spoke to Svetlana. That's it.

**Shane Hollander:** It's Russia's loss not his. They just stopped all association with him when the video came out and we released our statement. The most accomplished and talented player that they had in decades and-

**Rozanov** (*shouting from the other room, off-camera*): More than decades! Ever! (*blows another raspberry*) Russia.

**Hollander:** They didn't deserve him. (*Hollander is shaking his head and smiling down at his clasped hands in his lap*) He has people who love him for more than the trophies now.

**Rozanov** (*from other room*): Trophies still nice!

**Hollander** (*turns in his chair to shout off camera*): Whose interview is this? (*Rozanov rushes in behind Hollander and wraps arms around his neck, planting kisses along his face and hair as Hollander shoves him away*) Get out of here. Korzina!

**What did you just say?**

It's an inside joke. It means laundry basket.

**You're already bilingual. How difficult did you find it to learn Russian?**

It's harder than French was. I was a child when I learned though, so it was easier.

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**Ilya Rozanov:** His Russian is not good. Surprising. Thought it would be good but really eh, just enough that kids understand him.

**Your children speak Russian?**

Of course! Their father is Russian. Their Russian is perfect, French is perfect, English is boring but perfect. Makes sense, because they are... (*Rozanov snaps his fingers and points to Yuna Hollander, who standing off camera tapping away on her phone*)

**Yuna Hollander:** Perfect!

Yes, they are. (*Rozanov smiles more broadly than anyone in the room could recall ever seeing in his years of on-camera interviews*)

**Your kids. Tell us about how that has-**

Ah. I have already said too much. Shane says no talking about the kids. I will show photos to you though.

**Yuna:** Off the record!

Yes off record. They are not the famous controversial hockey stars, that is me. (*Rozanov winks*)

*\*From interview with Shane Hollander\**

**Our viewers are interested in the off-ice details of the last 10 years. We saw so much unfold in the immediate wake of the video that revealed your relationship. But after your wedding, you seemed to put the lid on your life in the public eye.**

Is there a question there?

**Throughout your very public relationship with Rose Landry, you did several interviews and appearances. The fans were incredibly invested then and were just as interested with Rozanov. So why less press?**

I never really wanted any of the press then either, but you can't date a movie star and not be photographed. So besides the obvious that we didn't ask to be outed? What came with my relationship with Rose and my relationship with Ilya were different kinds of interest. Fans rooted for me and Rose. And of course they did, Rose is one of the most talented and kind people I know. She's a huge part of our life and a really key person in my coming to terms with being gay. But fans were interested in me and Ilya like they're interested in a housefire. They weren't drawn to the warmth, they were drawn to the destruction. It was a morbid curiosity, it felt like a clown show. *(Hollander looked at where his mother still stood. She mimed an exaggerated deep breath that Shane copied before continuing.)*

Basically, not everyone was accepting of our relationship and that was harder on me than it was on Ilya. He could stomach the criticism a little more easily than I could. He kind of thrives on dirty looks and negative comments. And that never bothered me when the comments and looks were about hockey. Because I was good at hockey and they couldn't really take that away from me.

**“Good at hockey” is quite an understatement from someone with four Cups, three MVPs, and a Rookie of the Year Award.**

Ilya has more MVPs. *(The corner of Hollander's lips tip up, smiling at the thought of his husband)* But anyways I didn't want to come out and have every detail of my life splashed over the media. I just didn't want to hide. I wanted to build a life somewhere in between. And I didn't want to wait for retirement to do it, but that was the plan.

**So you did expect that your relationship would be met with backlash?**

Like I said, I was used to sneers from rival fans. It made sense when fans of other teams hated me. I was good and I was coming to destroy them. But them hating me for just minding my own business and loving who I loved, that felt more different than I anticipated and that was hard to cope with.

**Yuna** *(clearing her throat off camera)*: I'd like to review the cut of this before it is viewed wide.

Mom! Go find dad or something?

**Yuna**: He's with the kids.

Mom!

**Yuna:** Fine I'll leave. Ilya let me stay though! *(Yuna points to a line on the sheet in the interviewer's hands)* Don't forget to ask him that one. He'll answer now.

**Shane:** She's a bit of a control freak.

**I have heard the same about you over the years.**

*(Hollander plays with the band on his finger)* What did she say I would finally answer?

**What did leaving Montreal on such bad terms really mean to you? You mention the backlash from fans. But what about the Metros themselves.**

*(There was a pause. And footsteps in the background that let us know Rozanov wasn't far out of our frame)*

I gave them so much. Three cups. More than a decade. Years of pretending to be someone I wasn't. No. No, that was for *hockey* not Montreal. But there was still a place for me in hockey after we came out. Just not with the Metros. They all turned on me. The fans, the organization, the coaches, most of the team, it felt like none of it was even worth anything.

**But not all of the team turned on you. Tell us about those surviving friendships.**

I have a few. And I think you're planning to interview them too, right? Yeah, well they know how I feel. It's the friendships that didn't survive that I want to finally comment on. Set the record straight.

**Go ahead then.**

I understand they were hurt by my lying. Even after I came out as gay to the team, I didn't tell them about Ilya and it hurt the guys that considered us friends. I got that. I did not understand the accusation that I cheated. Which I never did. And the sentiment that being with him made me somehow a different person than who they had shared a locker room with all those years- someone with no integrity *(Hollander shook his head, eyes back into his lap)*. I never heard from most of them again, off the ice of course. Heard plenty from them on the ice. *(Hollander huffed a single laugh)* The Metros front office apologized a few years ago though. When the Centaurs knocked them out of playoffs.

**I bet that felt good.**

No, not really. While I am beyond proud to have retired from Ottawa-- my hometown-- on a team that supported me, next to the man I have spent my entire adult life loving... I wanted to be a Metro my whole life. My mom was publicly obsessed. So even if Ottawa is where my jersey will hang and it's the arena where I'll take my kids as they *hopefully* fall in love with the sport that I gave so much of my life to... it never felt good to be hated by a team that I only ever loved.

*\*From interview with Hayden Pike\**

Fuck the Metros.

**(Jackie Pike off screen):** HAYDEN! That is off the record.

On the record! Fuck the Metros! I stayed another two years after they raked Shane over the coals. And then I got hurt and they cut me in the offseason. No one from the organization even called me, they just informed my agent. I bounced around a couple Canadian teams for a few years after so, I gave vague non-answers when anyone asked about Shane and Ilya. But now that I'm washed up too, lemme be clear. Fuck the Metros, they can keep their commemorative jersey and Dynasty Team Anniversary Celebration Party. Fuck. Them.

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**Ilya Rozanov:** For once, I agree with Pike. Fuck the Metros.

**So the hate for the team carried over when you left Boston?**

I did not hate them before.

**Are you sure? That isn't what it seemed like.**

Well also seemed like I hated Shane and that was not true so...

**Fair point. But you hate them now?**

Yes. They were never good enough to hate before and still not but I hate them for how they treated Shane *(Rozanov curled his lip in a snarl)*

**Hot take. But I have to point out that though you say they were not good enough before- they knocked you out of playoffs and went on to win the championship twice while you were with Boston.**

No that was Shane, not the Metros. Shane was *that* good and they have been nothing to worry about since he left *(Rozanov mimes spitting on the floor)*

**You heard it here folks, Ilya Rozanov hates the Montreal Metros.**

Not first they hear this. I can tell you a first! I will tell you which players I hate too. If you want.

**Yuna Hollander** *(from out of frame):* No!

But mommmmmmmmm. *(Rozanov whined and stomped his foot before smiling at the voice off camera)* Fine. I will not.

**Okay don't name names. But tell us about what lead up to your coming out.**

Would need to go farther back. It was years of Shane and me in secret. But I realized I loved him sooner than maybe I was willing to tell him and have him hear. Was too much on the line. My career. My home. I. *(Rozanov looked over the Yuna Hollander who placed her hand*

*on her heart. He took a deep breath and rolled his shoulders)* What if we came out together and then one day he didn't want to be with me anymore? It was not easy to be that in love. With a man. A man you played hockey against. It was too much to risk for both of us. Shane is obsessed with hockey and there was no gay men in MHL then. So it was secret. And yes, it was miserable to lie about. But I had Shane. We were in it together and there is not much I would not have done for him. Still. When the video was posted... fine I will say it, I am happy Hayden Pike is so stupid that he sent that video. It wasn't our choice anymore. Yes, it was terrible for a while right after. But now I have everything. Am rich, very handsome, very famous, very in love. *(Rozanov shrugs, winks)* Would do it all again.

*\*From interview with Scott Hunter\**

**Scott Hunter, glad to have you here to talk about the biggest gay hockey scandal in MHL history.**

**Scott Hunter:** Gay hockey. What's gay hockey?

**Come on, you know that there was a time before gay men in the league and a time after. Not subtly ushered in by your Cup win declaration of love for your now-husband. Some even call you the gay godfather of hockey.**

No one calls me that.

**Oh they do.**

Rozanov probably started it, if they do.

**Are you friends with Ilya Rozanov now?**

I respect him. Rozanov will call me old or something but he begrudgingly grew on me. Man, I hated playing that guy.

**But you're openly friends with Shane Hollander?**

Hard guy not to like off the ice. Very nice. Very Canadian. One of the first guys to reach out when I came out. But now with some context, that email reads totally different.

**Why did you do it?**

Easy. Winning the Cup was supposed to be the best moment of my life. I chased it for years and years and it just felt like it meant nothing when I looked around and he wasn't there. Everyone had their family and I was tired of keeping myself back from having that too. I won a Cup and I wanted him there with me.

**Are you glad you came out for other men in the league? To be able to usher in this age of friendlier times for gay men?**

Friendlier in some ways, not in all ways. It's something we're working on. And listen I came out for me. For my husband. To stand in the sunshine. Not to be the gay godfather of gay

hockey or whatever. But yeah to hear it helped kids like Shane eventually. Yeah fuck yeah I'm glad. I thought I'd lose everything. And that's just not what happened.

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**What did Scott Hunter coming out mean for you?**

**Shane Hollander:** Everything

**Ilya Rozanov:** Like I would be able to breathe one day maybe. Was different. His thing and our thing. But is not so different.

**Hollander:** It was still a man who played hockey and loved another man. And then people knew and he could *still* play hockey. It felt-

**Rozanov:** Felt like maybe we could have something like that. Hunter was old and not good at hockey but he was brave to do that.

**Hollander:** He is not that much older than us.

**Rozanov:** When you fought him, you said he was forty-five and should go home.

**Hollander:** Well it was just a chirp.

**Rozanov:** Very boring. Was bad chirp.

**Hollander:** It was not.

**Rozanov:** It was. Because he *is* old and should have gone home. Was not chirp, was good advice.

**Hollander:** Really? While we talk about the incredible impact that this man had on our lives as a pioneer of gay athletes.

**Rozanov:** I am *bisexual* athlete. But also yes, this is what you call old people. The pioneers.

*(Shane shook his head but smiled when Ilya took his hand and winked.)*

**Rozanov:** We didn't get nice moment choosing to tell the world who we loved. But if Hunter hadn't done it first, maybe I would have given up. I loved Shane, but it felt impossible until then. I was jealous a little. Seeing him take what he wanted made me want to. But even if it took a long time after that for us, it was because Scott Hunter was brave enough to stop hiding who he loved. After I saw that it was possible, there was no one else but Shane for me.

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**Scott Hunter:** Rozanov said that? Wow. Marriage has made him soft.

**We'll tell him you said that.**

Don't let me know what he says back.

**Svetlana, you're a childhood friend of Ilya's but your father was the goaltender for the legendary Soviet team. Surrounded by Russian hockey greats, must be a nice place for a self-proclaimed hockey enthusiast.**

I am surrounded by all kinds of hockey greats! Russian hockey greats, Canadian hockey greats, Finnish hockey greats. At the last Olympics, my son was not sure who he was to cheer for-- Canada for his godfather or Finland for his father and uncle. A lot of hockey players in my life.

**That's right you are married to an MHL player as well. How is it going from hockey scholar to hockey WAG as they say?**

No offense to the other wives and partners. I am not some bored housewife. I sell a lot of very nice cars to very rich people. Yes, many hockey players and that connection helped. But I was businesswoman before WAG. And I am hockey fan before even that. I do like being mother most but it's not the whole of who I am.

**Well stated. How has parenthood changed your friendship with Ilya?**

My husband was traded from Raiders to Metros a few years ago and I was glad to be close to Ilya again. Our sons are similar age, just a year apart. So we'll find a way to get them on the same juniors team when we leave Montreal.

—

**Ilya Rozanov:** Fuck the Metros.

—

**Your best friend openly hates your husband's team. How does that affect your friendship?**

**Svetlana:** It does not bother my husband that he says that. It was cruel the way Montreal treated Shane. Stupid too because he is such an incredible player. Best player they have ever had. *(Svetlana looks directly into the camera)* Sorry moya lyubov. *(and looks back to the interviewer)* All because he's with Ilya? *(Svetlana sucks her teeth slashing her hand in front of her face)* They should have made their choices based on what Hollander did for hockey and their team. Which was a lot. My husband knows this. And he was not on the team with Shane. No one on the Metros now was on Metros then. But still Montreal is very hard on Shane. Hockey holds grudges.

**Hollander told us that the Metros organization apologized to him. Should that be enough to absolve them of their error in judgement?**

Ack. They made a phone call. No public statement, nothing. It was just to get him to their Dynasty Celebration-- I told him this. Oh and before he is eligible for Hall of Fame! They want to be mentioned in that speech, so they apologize when they don't mean it. Shane's too

nice. He will give them their recognition even when they do not deserve it. *(Sventlana mimes spitting at the floor)*

**Is your husband going to get in trouble for these comments?**

My husband is a very good, very big defenseman. They will not burn a bridge there by holding him to what his feisty, independent, hockey legacy wife says. Too bad for them that he loves me so much. Like Ilya loves Shane-- not much you can say to a man who loves you like that.

**Did you know about him and Hollander all along?**

Ilya is very smart, but how much he loved Shane made him very stupid. Maybe because he didn't need to hide as much in front of me. *(Svetlana shrugs)* He knew that I would always love him. But I figured out pretty quickly who Jane was. I knew this about Ilya, that it wasn't just women he liked. Him being with men never really mattered any more than him being with other women. So I liked to talk about how good Hollander was, which was simple because Shane Hollander is amazing to watch on the ice. Anyone who knows hockey will tell you. But any time I talked about Hollander's hands... Russians don't blush but Ilya would not like to talk about it; he had not much to say about Shane Hollander. Which is unlike Ilya. *(Svetlana leans forward and theatrically whispers behind her hand)* Also one time he left his phone open and was not very hard to figure out who Jane was. Just had to look at a calendar one time.

It is same way Pike found out yes?

**We will have to ask Mr. Pike.**

It was same way I am pretty sure. But I knew Ilya longer so I figured it out sooner. Take that Hayden Pike. *(Svetlana points directly at camera)* You high stucked my husband twice, but I knew about your best friend sleeping with my best friend first.

—

**Hayden Pike:** Yeah Svetlana is really competitive about who is the better friend. She doesn't like that I'm not as obsessed with Rozanov as she is with Shane.

—

**Svetlana:** I am not obsessed with Shane! Okay yes what is not to like about Shane Hollander but what is not to like about Ilya Rozanov? Eh?

—

**Ilya Rozanov:** Hayden wasn't even first to know Shane was gay. That was Rose. He is like third best friend. Pike should give up like he did on hockey.

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**Hayden Pike:** You see? You see why I think Shane could have done better?

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**Shane Hollander:** I could not have done better.

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**Ilya Rozanov:** Shane probably could have done better if he had not been ruined by how amazing I am at everything.

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**Shane Hollander:** I did not want to do better!! I only ever wanted Ilya.

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**Svetlana:** And you will show them all these interviews? Will they see this?

**Yes, we'll show them next time we see them if you want.**

Okay then I want them to see this. *(Svetlana talks directly into the camera, as if talking directly to her friends)* Nobody deserved a happy ending as much as you two. The hockey fans didn't have right to all parts of your life, who you built it with, or when you started building it. Only what you gave to them on the ice. But no one, not in Montreal, not in Moscow, could keep you from each other. And I'm so happy that what scared you into hiding it from us didn't keep you from loving each other. I love you. Your godson loves you. Hockey loves you and the history of hockey will remember you for more than your talent and Cups and awards; it will remember you for sharing this story, for sharing it with us.

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The week before the documentary airs, Ilya receives an email from the reporter who conducted their interviews. They formed a respectful relationship with him over the three interviews amounting to ten hours together, but Ilya wasn't sure what he could possibly be reaching out about now. Shane and Ilya asked not to see the final cut before air, instead trusting Yuna to give the go ahead. They planned to watch it alone together when it went live.

Calling for Shane to grab his glasses and come to the kitchen, Ilya sat down and pulled in the leather chair at the bar top in their Ottawa home. They originally planned to retire to the cottage, but with two school-aged children, the seclusion was more burden than benefit. So they spent summers at the cottage and the remaining parts of the year at the home Ilya purchased when he moved to Canada. They talked about the possibility of moving to a bigger place, maybe with a little more space since they had doubled the number of people living there than when he bought it... But they could never sell the home where they got married and started their real life together.

Ilya opened up the laptop, Shane reaching around and typing in the password that his husband consistently misremembered, “The email just said that they had some additional footage they wanted us to have.”

Shane rubbed the back of his neck, “If it was good enough to send us but not good enough to use, it must have fallen outside of the approved scope.”

Ilya shrugged and opened the email, leaning to the side so that Shane could read over his shoulder. But Ilya knew that he couldn’t read the screen because he *hadn’t* grabbed his glasses. He smirked waiting for Shane to admit it himself.

“Will you just read it already? I can practically hear you thinking of a joke to make right now.”

Ilya smiled, stifling the joke that he did in fact have ready.

*Shane and Ilya,*

*We didn’t realize a camera had started rolling but I just couldn’t delete this. This clip was something I wish I had of my mother.*

*Thanks for everything. I really think this Final Cut is great. So does she.*

Ilya presses play on the video.

In the frame, Yuna Hollander stands tapping away on her phone as the production crew assembles lights in Ilya and Shane’s living room.

“Are we sure that this is better than the trophy room? Have you seen the trophy room?”

“A few too many reflective surfaces in the trophy room. It would be harder to control.” A lighting tech said.

“Probably too on the nose as well.” Yuna chuckled.

The tech held up their hands as if in a joking surrender, “That is above my pay grade. I’m just here to make them look good.”

“Oh that’s not hard. They’re so handsome.”

The lighting tech smiled past the slipped insult, they knew she didn’t mean to dismiss the importance of their job, “Trust me bad lighting can make very beautiful people look quite grotesque.”

“Well I better let you work then.”

Just then, a boy of about 5 comes screaming into the room followed quickly by a toddling girl with curls like Ilya’s. He circles around a chair, quickly changing direction as the girl loses balance, her little feet getting caught in a cord. The boy dives to get his arms under her and break the fall.

Yuna's eyes go wide as she watches it all take place. The cord jerks a tall light and the tech grabs it before it crashes to the floor. As the room steadies, Yuna frozen in place, the little girl hops up and stares at her grandmother, lips pulled between her teeth. The boy is still on the ground, propped on his elbows now, his face a grimace as his grandmother's gaze swings his way.

"Good save, Misha."

"Sorry Baaba, I forgot we weren't supposed to come in here." He admits.

"Where is Grandpa?"

"Eating our dust!!!" The little girl yells.

"I'm right here. Just can't quite get up to a full sprint as fast as they can." David said as he walked through the room.

Yuna shakes her head at her husband's huffing, "I've got them. Go get a drink of water David, my god."

David slashes his hand in front of his face and leaves the room, shouting over his shoulder "Come find me when she's done with you, kiddos!"

"What are the lights for?" the girl asks.

Yuna crouches down to the girl's level, "You know how Daddy and Papa are super special?"

The girl nods.

"Well the lights are here for their work."

"For babka Irina's stuff?" The boy asks.

Yuna smiles thinking of the work they've done for mental health awareness through the Irina Foundation. The millions of dollars and hundreds of programs that they have sponsored. She was endlessly proud of the incredible careers her boys had, but the work they had done off the ice made a real difference to so many.

"You're too smart for a 5 year old. We're gonna have to take away some of that brain." Yuna makes a claw with her hand and scrunches it on top of the boy's straight black hair.

He squirms and wiggles out as the girl peels laughter.

"Yes, but more the hockey stuff." Yuna says.

The boy straightened and scrunched his face, "Dad and Papa don't play hockey anymore. They said that they were done leaving! That we didn't have to have so many sleepovers!"

"Oh no! I like all our sleepovers! No more sleepovers?" The girl gets teary eyes.

Yuna wrapped them both in a hug, “Shhhhhh no no. No, they’re done leaving. But we can have sleepovers whenever you want. Why do you think Baaba and grandpa have their own room here? Because we cannot stay awayyyyyyy.” They dissolve into tickles and giggles until the girl shouts to stop.

“Okay! Go find grandpa in the kitchen and do not come back in here. I don’t want you to knock over the very big expensive lights they brought in to make Papa look even more handsome.”

They take off in a blur of ruffled hair and rumpled clothes.

“They are sweet.” the lighting tech says, righting the rigging that was taken down in the whirlwind of childhood.

“You have kids?” Yuna asks, hoping the chaos would be understood by the forgiving experience of a parent.

“Just one. About the girl’s age.”

“Alina.” Yuna huffs a laugh.

“They’re a handful.” The tech jokes.

“Shane was a pretty easy kid but I thought my entire heart was taken up by how much I loved him. For 20 something years. And then we met Ilya.” Her soft smile spread into a wide joyous expression. She nodded her head in three shallow bobs, as if her smile said it all, and as Ilya watched the video, he could feel that it did.

Her eyes crinkled in the corners and her smile relaxed as she rolled her eyes, “Now there was a handful. But the best kind, I’ll tell ya. When Shane brought Ilya to the cottage and we got to know him, I found space in my heart that I didn’t know was there. He is just the greatest thing that ever happened to us.” Yuna wiped away tears.

She looked around the room where they stood, taking in the numerous family photos and hand-drawn artwork lovingly framed behind museum-quality lighting, “He gave Shane a whole life that his father and I weren’t ever sure he’d have.”

The tech walked around the light post and grabbed a box of tissues from the shelf, handing it over to Yuna with a wink.

“Anyway, both times they brought home one of those whirlwinds you just saw, there was always more room.” She tapped her chest, “They just make everything better. Every single thing about Ilya and Shane that I love, and everything that drives me nuts, right there in miniature. And god, being a parent is great but being their grandmother. Phew.”

The lighting tech smiled and nodded.

“Look at me giving an interview like you’re not in the middle of something! Let me get out of your-“ then the video cuts off.

Ilya looked at Shane who was standing behind him at the kitchen counter watching over his shoulder with tears in his eyes. Ilya wiped at his own cheeks before dragging a thumb across the tearstained freckles he loved so dearly.

“She’s a good mother, no wonder you came out so good too.” Ilya smiled with sad weak eyes, unable to push past the grief of missing his own mother.

Shane put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed hearing the emotion fill his voice, “You are her favorite son. She wore your jersey to games, not mine.”

Ilya pulled him onto his lap, “Well I was better at hockey there at the end.”

Shane playfully dragged his hand down Ilya’s face and Ilya nipped at his fingers, “You were not.”

“Eh, I don’t know if you remember that I got MVP when we won the cup so,” Ilya shrugged and Shane pulled him into an embrace.

His chin resting on his husband’s shoulder, Shane tentatively asked, “Did you want to keep playing?”

Ilya stroked Shane’s hair, turning his head to clip the shell of his ear with a kiss, “I didn’t want to leave our kids anymore. They’re the best trophies.”

Shane pulled back, planting his palms on Ilya’s chest, “Scott Hunter is right, you’ve gone soft.”

“Oh this is soft eh?” Ilya lifted up his shirt to reveal the hard planes of his stomach.

“Not where I thought you were going with that.”

“We are watching sweet video of our babies and their grandmother, don’t be pervert.”

Shane smacked the backs of his fingers onto Ilya's stomach and Ilya pulled his husband into a kiss. It was playful and unhurried in a way that he had taken for granted the last ten years. Remembering back to those rushed encounters and stolen kisses, Ilya couldn't imagine having to hide all the love he had now. In his mind, that thought quickly grew into a sad and fearful thing-- lingering worry from a life that he had not been forced to endure. Shane felt the playful nips turn to tentative pecks and knew Ilya was fighting back the shuttering heartache that he, even in the warmth of the vibrant love that surrounded them, couldn't quite banish.

Shane deepened the kiss, reassuring the love of his life that he was still here with him. That even when those unwelcome voices threatened to force Ilya down a dark path, Shane would be there to guide him back into the sunlight. Ilya matched his intensity, the feel of Shane's lips bringing him out of his thoughts with the realization that there was now nothing holding either of the back-- the slate was clean and the record had been set straight. Ilya would always love hockey for all it gave to him over the years. But the awards, the money, the accomplishments, meant absolutely nothing the moment this man told him that he loved him

too. And for the rest of his life, he would be grateful to the sport that pitted him against his favorite rival.

## End Notes

Beta: Scorpio Overlord

I know you want me to say you're my Ilya. But you're my Rose. My Hayden. My Svetlana. My Elena. You know where the bodies are buried and you'd convince the police they do not exist just for me. We will be lobotomized together.

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