

On a Summer Night in the Winter Palace

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/38982489) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/38982489>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Hayden Pike , Rose Landry , Svetlana Vetrova , Grigori Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Royalty , Enemies to Lovers , Discussions of mental health and suicide that are canon typical , Secret Relationship , Ilya has a lot of feelings
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-05-14 Words: 5,032 Chapters: 1/1

On a Summer Night in the Winter Palace

by [DracoWillHearAboutThis](#)

Summary

Shane had dreaded going to St. Petersburg for King Grigori's birthday - mainly because of Prince Ilya and his tendency to drive Shane up the walls.

He did not expect that night at the Winter Palace his night at the Winter Palace to change his perception not only of Ilya, but of himself, too.

Notes

Hello, Game Changer fandom! I've been all in my head about Ilya and Shane since I read The Long Game and my stressful real-life obligations as of late have given me a bit of a writer's block for my other ongoing stories. So I thought I'd try to write something short for this fandom to manoeuvre myself out of it! I hope you'll enjoy it :)

PLEASE NOTE: This is set in a fictional world where Canada and Russia are monarchies. There are parallels to history and society as they are in real life, but they are supposed to be fictional and therefore completely different, for obvious reasons. I don't want this fic to be in any way problematic or offensive because of the current political climate. If you feel like it could be strange for you, please proceed carefully.

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

Shane was not going to look at the dance floor.

He was not even sure what they were doing here. Surely, as they had other places to be right now. They were the Canadian Royal Family, for fuck's sake. There were charities to take care of or hospitals to visit.

Instead, his parents had *insisted* on their joint attendance at the Russian court for King Grigori's birthday. It was a bloody farce. Russian and Canadian relations weren't *that* tight.

Well, maybe there were other reasons Shane had been so opposed to coming, Shane reflected as his eyes strayed, quite against his will, to where Prince Ilya was dancing with the Spanish heiress to the throne. Or maybe, just *one* reason in particular.

Shane and Ilya had never seen eye to eye. They were the same age and the media had naturally pitched them against each other from day one. Which Shane thought was a little unfair. Shane tried everything he could to be what the public expected of their royal heir: He was dependable, educated, charitable notably free of scandals. He worked hard on his public persona and he took the legacy of his family very seriously.

Ilya, on the other hand, couldn't care less. It seemed like every week, the public reported on him with another woman on his arm or leaving a club drunk or high. It was no secret amongst royal circles that he'd only made university because the King had donated a whole new research institution. He couldn't be any more different from Shane if he tried.

He was smug, arrogant and insufferable. Every time Shane was forced to talk to him, he wanted to punch his stupid grin off his face - and God knew Shane was no violent person.

No one infuriated him like Ilya Rozanov.

Right now, Ilya's smirk was directed at Isabel, the Spanish Heiress. She was a year younger than them and even from a distance, Shane could hear her delighted laugh. Shane wanted to throw his full glass of champagne at them, but restrained himself.

He only tore his eyes away from the dance floor when the French president addressed him. He hoped his smile was convincing and that the other man didn't notice the way his fingers were still clenched around his glass of champagne.

"I'm surprised you haven't asked me for a dance."

Shane grabbed the edge of the sink. Ilya's voice was smooth even with the sharp edges of his accent. He grinned at Shane through the bathroom mirror, some of his golden-brown locks falling into his face.

"I'd rather die," Shane bit out.

"Just saying," Ilya shrugged. "You keep looking, yes? Seems like you want to."

“You wish,” Shane snorted.

Ilya hummed and before Shane knew what was happening, he had stepped up to press against his back.

Ilya was slightly taller than him, so he could still easily meet Shane’s gaze in the mirror. His body was warm against Shane’s even through their suits. Shane’s heart stopped.

“Maybe I do,” he said softly, unusually intense.

Shane tried to find a retort, but couldn’t come up with one. He knew this had to be a joke; just another one of Ilya Rozanov’s pranks. Because he never took anything seriously, did he?

But before he could find his voice, the door opened and Ilya hastily stepped back. He disappeared into an empty stall without another word, leaving Shane’s mind and pulse racing.

Shane quickly dove for the door, ignoring the Chinese diplomats who’d burst in on them. Outside, he quickly found another glass of champagne and downed it in one.

“Whoa, easy there!” Hayden said. “You don’t usually drink so much!”

Shane sighed, taking a steadying breath. Hayden Pike, as the son of the Canadian Prime Minister, was one of the few real friends he had.

“I just want this night to be over,” he muttered.

“Rozanov?” he asked knowingly. “I will deck him if you ask me. I don’t care about my Dad’s approval ratings. I can always say he was insulting our Prince.”

That made Shane smile. “Thanks,” he said. “I might come back to that.”

Shane really shouldn’t have had that much to drink. He didn’t usually - he was very aware of his public duties - but Ilya had just thrown him off course so much tonight that he’d broken his own rules. Now, he was swaying to the music with Rose Landry, First Daughter of the United States, and the room was spinning.

It was even more humiliating because he actually *liked* Rose. Girls didn’t often catch Shane’s interest, but Rose was funny and easy to be around. Plus, a renewal of the North American Alliance would surely benefit Canada. Shane’s parents had always promised him he could marry for love, but he *did* have to think about his position, he knew that. He couldn’t just marry *anyone*.

But currently, he couldn’t focus on anything Rose was telling him because if they didn’t stop spinning, he might be sick on her.

“Would you excuse me for a moment?” Shane cut her off mid-sentence. “I need some fresh air.”

“Of course,” she said immediately. “Are you unwell? You look a bit pale. Do you need me to come with you?”

“I’m fine,” he assured her. “I just need some air, I think.”

He pushed his way through the crowd and onto the balcony.

The Russian palace looked out over St. Petersburg at night. It was fresh now that the sun was gone, but still nice enough since it was an August night. Shane held onto the railing and breathed deeply, waiting for the world to stop spinning.

“You really are a... what is the word? Cannot drink?”

Shane opened his eyes and looked to his right. Ilya was standing on the other side of the balcony, smoking.

“Lightweight?” he supplied.

“Yes,” he nodded with a small smile. “That.”

“I don’t usually drink much,” Shane said defensively.

“Then why did you drink tonight?” Ilya asked.

Shane didn’t answer. He wouldn’t give the other man the satisfaction.

Ilya put out his cigarette and approached Shane, his smile still so infuriatingly self-assured.

“Do I make you nervous, Hollander?”

Shane glared at him. “You infuriate me,” he returned. “Nothing more, nothing less.”

Ilya hummed, his smile growing. “That is better than nothing, yes?”

“Why do you enjoy riling me up so much?” he grumbled.

“Because you’re so easy to tease,” Ilya chuckled, leaning onto the railing next to him. “It’s fun.”

“That’s all you think about, right?” Shane rolled his eyes. “Fun.”

“You should try it sometime,” Ilya shrugged. “You might be less tense.”

“I have fun!” Shane glared. “I have *loads* of fun!”

“Oh, really?” Ilya said placatingly. “With your best friend Hayden Pike?”

“Hayden is also fun!”

“I’m sure.”

“He is.”

“I believe you.”

“You’re a dick, Rozanov.”

“Lèse-majesté.”

“Fuck you.”

Ilya laughed then, deep and full. Shane was stunned by it for a moment.

“You’re something else, Shane Hollander,” he grinned. “I like you.”

“You... do?” Shane asked suspiciously.

“Yeah,” Ilya nodded, smiling at him in a way that was almost soft. “Now, do you need a glass of water? You look green.”

Shane blinked, frowning. Part of him was still looking for the catch, but the other part really craved to take the olive branch.

“A glass of water would be great, actually,” he admitted.

“Come with me,” Ilya said, stepping away from the railing and leading him towards a door on the very end of the balcony. “Short cut to the kitchens.”

“I’m not sure we should -” Shane began.

“I thought you were fun?” Ilya grinned, throwing him a teasing look over his shoulder. He only laughed when Shane glared at him. “Come on, it’s just a glass of water. You will be back in ten minutes to play good Canadian Prince, yes?”

Reluctantly, Shane nodded.

Half an hour later, he was still down in the kitchens, nursing his water and watching Ilya eat cookies. The weird thing was, Shane didn’t actually feel like going back upstairs, even though he knew he should.

It was cosy, sitting here in the kitchen with the Russian Prince talking about nothing in particular while the staff worked around them.

The staff was clearly used to Ilya’s presence. They talked to him fondly in Russian and occasionally offered him or Shane drinks or sweets.

“You know,” Shane confessed. “At home, I’ll occasionally ask the staff to go out and get me Poutine from a store. I know it’s greasy and horrible for you but I’ll just randomly get a craving.”

“So you *are* fun,” Ilya grinned. “Or at least, half-fun. You’d be more fun if you went and got it yourself.”

“I can’t give my family such a headache,” Shane laughed. “They’d freak!”

“You love your family,” Ilya smiled. “You’re a good son.”

“I try,” Shane frowned, then considered his words. “You don’t?”

Ilya shrugged. “I loved my mother,” he said. “But she is gone.”

Shane knew Queen Irina had died when Ilya had been twelve years old. Shane had seen pictures of the funeral parade on TV.

“My father is a horrible man,” Ilya said eventually. “A horrible father, a horrible king. And my brother is on the way to be just like him.”

Shane blinked, staring at him. He’d had his opinions about the Russian Royal Family, but for Ilya to say it that bluntly still shocked him.

“Don’t pretend you don’t know,” Ilya rolled his eyes. “Our people are not happy. A lot of people go to prison for being who they are.”

That, Shane knew as well. Russia got terrible marks in terms of freedom of speech, racism and rights for LGBTQ+ citizens by all human rights organisations, but since it was such a powerful nation, it was not nearly discussed enough.

“So you’d change things?” Shane asked. “If it was up to you?”

“It will never be up to me, Hollander,” Ilya rolled his eyes. “I’m second-born. Andrei will be King next, not me.” He sighed, staring off into space. “I am expected to marry well and have many kids. Nothing else.”

Shane frowned. “I’m sorry,” he said. “That sucks.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, meeting his eyes again. “It does.” After a moment of silence, he added: “I love my country, but sometimes I want to escape, yes? Go somewhere where none of it matters.”

“I can understand that,” Shane nodded.

Ilya smiled and offered him a cookie. Shane shook his head.

“I’ll throw up if I eat that,” he said.

Ilya chuckled and ate the cookie himself.

Shane did not end up returning to the party. Ilya accompanied him through side corridors into the direction of the entrance parlour so he could catch the car back to their accommodations.

“I enjoyed tonight,” Ilya said as they walked down the empty halls, their shoulders brushing.

“So did I,” Shane said, his voice only laced in slight surprise. “Despite the nausea.”

Ilya chuckled and stopped quite suddenly. He slipped his phone from his pocket, unlocked it and handed it to Shane.

“Give me your number,” he said. “Let’s do something before you go home.”

Shane blinked. Part of him still felt like this was a trap - he didn’t usually give out his private number - but looking at Ilya’s open smile, he decided to just go for it. After he finished typing, he handed the phone back. Ilya smiled, saving the number and pocketing his phone.

“I’ll call you,” he promised.

“Okay,” Shane nodded, wondering what he got himself into.

The next day, he found himself in a corner of the Imperial gardens, one that was decidedly not open to the public, munching away with the Russian Prince on Russian Street food.

Shane had agonised over this for half of the night. This was a bad, bad idea. He *knew* Ilya Rozanov. Ilya Rozanov had a reputation. Nothing good could come of this.

But the Ilya Rozanov that Shane knew and the one that was currently eating Pirozhki with him was decidedly not the same person, and it caused a system failure in Shane’s brain.

“You have to try these,” Ilya said, indicating another plate. “Those were my Mum’s favourites! They’re with mushrooms?”

Shane tried one and let out a delighted sound.

“Right,” Ilya beamed.

“She had good taste,” Shane nodded.

“The best,” Ilya smiled, though a little sadly.

“I’m sorry,” Shane said softly.

Ilya was silent for a long moment. Then he said: “This life was not for her. Also, my father was not an easy man to live with.”

Shane looked at him for a long moment. There had been rumours that the Queen had been depressed but King Grigori had always denied them. According to him, his wife had died of cancer.

“It wasn’t cancer, was it?” Shane asked quietly.

“No,” Ilya shook his head. He hesitated before elaborating: “She was... so sad. Until she couldn’t fight anymore.”

“I’m sorry, Ilya.”

“I found her.”

Shane’s breath caught. He didn’t know what to say. His whole being hurt for him. Ilya had been *twelve*.

When Ilya looked up at him, his eyes were shining with tears. “I don’t want you to think she was weak,” he said. “She was bright and beautiful and -”

“I don’t think that,” Shane whispered, reaching out to cover Ilya’s hand with his.

Ilya looked at Shane’s hand for a long moment so Shane pulled it away but Ilya held onto it, keeping it in place with his other hand.

“I just...” Shane said after a moment, trying to find the right words. “I hope that you won’t let your father destroy you the way he did her. I know it’s hard for you, but I hope you can find happiness.”

Ilya stared at him, tears still hanging on his eyelids.

“You are...” Ilya started but didn’t finish. And then, he leaned in until his lips pressed against Shane’s, ever so softly.

Shane couldn’t move at first, though his heart was racing, knowing something that he didn’t. And then, his eyes fell closed and he let himself melt into the kiss.

Ilya’s lips were surprisingly gentle. He’d always thought Ilya would kiss roughly, but right now, he was kissing Shane like he thought Shane was someone precious. It made his breath stutter and his skin heat.

Ilya’s hand came up to brush Shane’s cheek, and it felt so good and yet broke Shane out of his reverie.

What was he doing? He couldn’t kiss the Russian Prince.

Ilya had told him, only the previous night, in no uncertain terms, what was expected of him: marry a respectable girl, have kids. Shane didn’t fit in there. So he had no business kissing Shane like he was falling in love with him.

Shane needed to get out of there. Now.

He broke away, stumbling to his feet. Ilya blinked his eyes open, staring at him with something akin to fear.

Shane wanted to reassure him, but he wanted to get away more.

“Shane,” Ilya started. “Please -”

“I need to leave,” Shane said. “I’m sorry.”

Ilya did not stop him when he fled as if assassins were at his heels.

Ilya texted him later that night. It was only two words.

‘I’m sorry.’

Shane did not answer, and he returned to Canada with his parents the next morning.

Three weeks later, Shane was the one to call Ilya, against his better judgement - but he was *furious*. Furious with Ilya, with himself, but above all, with Ilya.

Who did Ilya fucking Rozanov think he was? After years of tormenting Shane, how dare he befriend Shane in a strange twenty-four-hour interval and then end up *kissing him*, making him question his whole identity because kissing someone had *never* felt like this and what the bloody hell did that mean, and now even when he met with Rose, all he could think about was that stupid Russian Prince. To the point where Rose had straight-out asked him where - or who - his head was at.

That wasn’t even the worst part though. Questioning his sexuality was uncomfortable, but maybe overdue - because girls *had* never really done it for him, and though he liked Rose well enough, he didn’t exactly want to take her to bed. Even developing inconvenient feelings for a certain Russian Prince was not really the problem.

The problem was that Ilya had made it perfectly clear that things between them could never go anywhere, and he had *still* kissed Shane and started an avalanche inside of him, and for that, Shane was *seething*.

So when Ilya finally picked up the phone, he ignored the way his name sounded vulnerable off Ilya’s tongue. He started to tear into him.

“What were you *thinking?!* ” Shane hissed.

“Shane -” Ilya tried to cut him, but Ilya did not let him.

“You made your situation perfectly clear. You need to marry a respectable *woman*. I know you have a reputation, but still, toying with my emotions like that after I thought you were opening up to me - that was low, Rozanov, even for you.”

“I wasn’t toying with you,” Ilya said, his voice quiet but clear.

“I thought you enjoyed teasing me?” Shane mocked. “Wasn’t this part of your game? Or did you just want a good lay before -”

“It was not like that,” Ilya interrupted him, his voice hard. “I would not do that with you.”

“Why?” Shane demanded. “Everyone knows you sleep around. Why would I be different?”

Ilya was silent for a long moment. Then he said, in a voice full of resignation: “Because I’ve loved you since we were fourteen, Shane Hollander.”

Shane blinked, momentarily speechless. “What?” he whispered.

“Maybe longer,” Ilya sighed. “I don’t know. I understood at fourteen.”

“I -” Shane began, then stopped, unsure how to continue. “But -” he held in again, gulping. “You never really talked to me!” he burst out. “You just mocked me all the time!”

“I *teased* you,” Ilya corrected. “Is different. I liked how you got worked up.”

“So you were pulling my tail?”

“Your what?” Ilya asked, sounding confused.

“You know, like kids do,” Shane supplied. “Annoying each other when they like each other.”

“Oh,” Ilya said. “Yeah, maybe. I didn’t know how to talk to you, but you always reacted to teasing. It became... what do you say, a habit?”

“Yeah, that’s right,” Shane breathed, processing. “I see.”

“I meant everything I said and did that night, and day,” Ilya continued, seeming eager to get that point across. “Was not a lie, Shane.”

Shane’s heart was fluttering against his ribcage. “So,” he breathed, “what am I supposed to do with that now? It changes nothing, right? About the situation with your father?”

Again, Ilya didn’t answer right away. Then, he let out a shaky breath and said: “If it was for you, Shane... I would defy him.”

Shane gulped. “But - how, I mean - would you even get away with it?”

“I’d probably have to abdicate,” Ilya said calmly. “I might have to leave Russia. But I’d do it.”

Shane’s head was spinning. “You can’t do that after one kiss!” he called.

“Wasn’t just one kiss for me,” he reminded him.

“Still,” Shane shook his head. “It’s too quick. Too drastic.”

“Then what?” Ilya asked.

“Maybe...” Shane began, gnawing at his lip. “Maybe we could see each other in secret, for a while? Just until we’re both sure it’s going to stick and this is the right path to go.”

Ilya hummed. “How long?”

“A year, at least?” Shane guessed. “I mean, God, Ilya, we’re twenty!”

“Doesn’t stop the media from speculating about you marrying Rose Landry,” Ilya scoffed, sounding annoyed.

“That’s different,” Shane frowned, but how it was, he could not explain.

“Yeah, she’s a girl,” Ilya snapped.

“No,” Shane shook his head. “With her... I guess it always felt abstract, so it never scared me? You, on the other hand...” Shane trailed off, but Ilya seemed to understand.

“It feels real,” he said.

“Yes,” Shane breathed.

“A year,” he said. “And then we’ll talk about this again.”

“A year,” Shane agreed. Secretly, he wondered if they’d even make it this long, but Ilya seemed to have no doubt in his mind.

“I am coming to Ottawa next week,” Ilya announced. “I need to see you.”

“Can you just get away like that?” Shane asked, eyes wide.

“I wil make it work,” Ilya promised. “Need to see you.”

A week later, Ilya was welcomed as a guest at the Canadian palace. His parents had raised their eyebrows when Shane had explained that he and Ilya had become friends on their trip to Russia, but they had agreed to let him stay. Shane had figured it was the best cover; a friendship would be a more plausible explanation than what they were actually doing.

As soon as they were behind closed doors, though, Ilya pulled Shane into his arms just holding him. Shane was surprised at first but melted against his chest, breathing in his scent. Ilya’s lips found his temple, brushing the skin there softly.

“I’ve wanted this for so long,” he whispered.

Shane looked up at him and Ilya let his thumb travel over his cheek - tracing his freckles, Shane realised after a moment. His eyes were so soft that they made Shane’s knees weak.

“Kiss me,” he breathed, barely audible, but Ilya caught it.

Their second kiss was less hesitant than the first, more sure and passionate. Shane knew, rationally, that Ilya had kissed many people, but he knew with every fibre of his being from the way he was kissed now that this was special to Ilya; he felt precious, and heady.

Shane was not a virgin, though he would not say he was experienced. His previous sex life with women had been limited, clumsy and strangely unsatisfying. Ilya, though, took him apart piece by piece that night, only to reassemble him in the most perfect way, leaving him boneless and mindblown.

He held Shane all night, and Shane forgot to go back to his own room, too comfortable in his arms.

Keeping up a secret long-distance relationship was hard. With their positions being what they were, their schedules were busy, so they didn't have as much time to see each other as they wanted. They talked every day, but phones could hardly make up for actual contact.

After a couple of months of this torturous back and forth, they decided to clue in friends - both for emotional support, and for help.

Hayden was not impressed, at first, but like the friend he was, he had Shane's back, even if it came with a constant questioning of Shane's taste in men.

Rose, who had more or less figured it out herself after she had seen Shane and Ilya interact at a party, was simply thrilled for them and offering up their house in Michigan.

Svetlana, one of Ilya's closest friends and the daughter of a Russian multi-millionaire, seemed to be extremely pleased to hear that Ilya had finally gotten over himself and confessed his feeling to Shane and was ready to support their escape from King Grigori's grasp in any way possible. Soon, Shane found himself jetted away to private islands in private jets under the name 'Vetrova'. Shane wanted to protest, but Ilya had laughed and said Svetlana had more money than she knew what to do with and was always looking for charitable projects.

"We're not exactly a charitable project," Shane had argued.

"Agree to disagree," Ilya had grinned.

There were a couple of close calls with the press. They had been spotted together a lot recently, but for now, everyone seemed convinced they'd just taken up a fast friendship. Some news outlets speculated about Shane's good influence on Ilya, since his scandals seemed to have stopped for the most part - there were always some fake headlines, but none true, and even with those, they had to concede that he had become rather boring.

"Like you," Ilya had teased Shane when he had brought it up, which had made him roll his eyes.

"You don't think they'll figure it out?" Shane had asked worriedly.

“They might think I have a girlfriend,” Ilya shrugged, frowning. “Honestly, it would be a relief *if* they figured it out. Then we wouldn’t have to hide anymore.”

Ilya kept saying these things and Shane thought he was only half-joking.

After nine months of hiding, Ilya suddenly turned up at the Ottawa palace, without prior announcement. He looked rough, like he hadn’t slept, but strangely determined.

“I had a fight with my father,” he told Shane as soon as they were in the privacy of his quarters. “He wanted to push forward a marriage with a Swedish Duchess. I refused and it escalated from there.”

“I’m sorry,” Shane breathed, taking Ilya’s hand.

“I told him,” he said, finally meeting Shane’s eyes.

“About you?” Shane asked, confused.

“About *us*, ” Ilya clarified. “I’m sorry. I know we wanted to wait, but I just couldn’t hold it in.”

Shane couldn’t breathe. “What did he say?” he whispered.

“That he wouldn’t allow it,” Ilya scoffed. “Like I knew he would.”

“And what did you -”

“I told him he could either accept it or fuck off, because you’re it for me. If he forbids me to marry you, I will leave and he will have one heir less. Then, I packed my things and left.”

Shane blinked, unsure what to say. Ilya squeezed his hand.

“We always knew this was coming,” he reminded Shane tiredly.

“Yes,” he nodded, taking a deep breath. “Sorry. I just wasn’t prepared.”

“I didn’t mean to surprise you,” Ilya sighed. “I just couldn’t -”

“I know,” Shane cut him off, moving closer to him. “Come here.”

Ilya fell into his arms. He was trembling slightly, and Shane gently carded his fingers through Ilya’s curls.

“I think my Mum would be happy,” Ilya whispered, his voice brittle like cracked ice. “To know that I’m out of there.” He paused, then he added: “She always liked you, you know. She thought you were so sweet and polite. It drove me insane when I was younger. Now I think she wanted me to grow close to you. She would have loved this.”

Shane blinked back tears. He barely remembered Queen Irina, apart from a few interactions before her death, but he remembered her kind smiles.

“I’m sure she would have been,” he agreed.

Shane’s parents were staring at him as if Shane had told him he was abdicating to join a rock band.

Shane couldn’t blame them, exactly. If he had been them, he wouldn’t have predicted this, either. But here he was, side by side with Ilya Rozanov, who was about to abdicate for him, asking for their blessing to make him his official suitor.

“Since... when has this been going on?” Queen Yuna asked carefully.

“Nine months,” Shane said. “We wanted to see whether it was serious before we came to you.”

“I knew it was serious,” Ilya smirked. “But Shane is paranoid.”

That made King David smile, for some reason.

“What about your father, Ilya?” Shane’s mother asked. “You said you were going to abdicate, so -”

“He is against the relationship,” Ilya sighed. “But I don’t care. I love Shane.”

“We’ll have to talk to him,” Shane’s father breathed. “Make sure this doesn’t affect Canadian-Russian relationships.”

“We will,” his wife agreed.

“I’m sorry,” Shane tried. “I didn’t mean to -”

But his father was holding up a hand, smiling. “We always said you could marry whoever you wanted,” he said. “And we meant it. Sure, this is not ideal, but it will be manageable. Your happiness is what counts, Shane. Let us worry about diplomatic relationships for a bit and enjoy being in love.”

Shane smiled and Ilya squeezed his hand. “Okay. Thank you. You guys are the best.”

They smiled back.

“Stop making me laugh!” Shane hissed, trying to keep a straight face as the royal photographer took more photos of them. He could feel Ilya trembling from held-back laughter next to him.

Shane could already tell that the portraits for the announcement of their relationship would be a disaster. How could he have expected anything else?

“Can you give us a moment?” he asked the photographer before turning to Ilya. “Can you be serious for one moment?! It’s just a couple of photos!”

“Is your fault!” Ilya laughed. “Your face gets all cute when you’re serious. Makes me laugh.”

“You are impossible,” Shane shook his head, but he couldn’t help but smile. “I don’t know why I put up with you.”

“Because I’m charming,” Ilya said knowledgeably. “And I make your life less boring.”

“My life is not boring!” Shane called. He noticed suddenly that the photographer was still taking photos of them. He turned back to him, alarmed. “I said we needed a minute!”

“It’s okay,” he smiled. “I think I have everything I need.”

The picture they used ended up being a candid of them smiling at each other. It quickly ended up being the most reposted photo on social media.

“Rose says we look adorable,” Ilya informed him, looking up from his phone.

“Since when do you have Rose’s number?” Shane frowned.

“For months,” he waved Shane off. “Need someone to gossip about you, yes?”

“You are horrible, I’m breaking up with you.”

“No, you are not,” Ilya smirked, rolling on top of him and pressing him into the pillows. “You will marry me. You see.”

“I will?” Shane asked, smiling.

“Yes,” Ilya said. “In that big ugly church -”

“It’s not ugly!” Shane laughed. “It’s a famous Canadian monument, you dickhead!”

“You Canadians don’t know how to build churches. Is ugly. Anyway, you will marry me in big ceremony in big church, and give me back a title so I can laugh at my father.”

“That’s not how this works, Ilya,” Shane smiled.

“It is,” he nodded confidently. “Now stop arguing and kiss me.”

Shane was smiling as their lips brushed together, his mind clinging to a wedding in a big, totally not ugly church and the man on top of him officially becoming his.

They had time, though. They had all the time in the world.

End Notes

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