

Feeling Off

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Feeling Off

by [foreveroutoflove](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya juggle an unexpected pregnancy while making a Stanley Cup run.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

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

It was nearing the end of the regular season. Ottawa had been playing valiantly earlier in the season, but with half the roster on IR or nursing injuries they could play through, their playoff run did not look hopeful.

Ten years ago, the thought of losing faith in his team's ability to persevere through this situation would have made Shane a little neurotic. However, at the elderly age of 34, Shane was battling bruised ribs, a sprained ankle, and a sore jaw from a fight with a New York center. He didn't have it in him to play through the pain anymore. Neither did Ilya. For the first time in his career, he sat out more than three games on injury reserve. His knee had been achy for some time, but this season the ache had turned into a burn that had a bit of sharpness to it. The Centaurs' physician informed Ilya he would eventually need surgery, but Ilya was reticent to end his season four months early. Plus, Shane particularly didn't want to miss out on playing nurse (sexily and clinically) for his husband.

So when Shane woke one morning after a particularly brutal home loss to Toronto, feeling like shit, he thought nothing of it. He was old and battered. Shane felt like he was being pinned to the bed. However, it wasn't his husband of four years snoring next to him. It was this extreme fatigue holding him down.

He turned his head to gaze at Ilya. There were a few gray hairs in his light brown hair. The discovery had thrown Ilya into a bit of depression—his mother never got to gray—Shane (and Galina) reminded him that he's done so much living. His mother would be proud of the life he's built. Slowly, Ilya accepted the appearance of new gray hairs.

Privately, Shane thought the gray was sexy and never missed an opportunity to tease him about it.

He reached across his pillow to brush a few strands from Ilya's face. He didn't wake, but settled a little deeper into the pillow. Shane sighed quietly and pushed himself up to get out of bed. However, upon sitting upright, he was hit with a wave of nausea.

Though his body protested, he sprang out of bed to their ensuite bathroom and promptly was reacquainted with the previous night's dinner.

"I told you I was completely sure the cabbage was safe for consumption," Ilya yawned.

He stood shirtless in the doorway, rubbing his eyes. His once chiseled abdomen was now impressively toned with a small pouch under his belly button. Shane found him aggravatingly handsome all the same.

"Remind me to trust you next time," Shane wheezed. Still bent over the toilet, he stuck out his hand. Ilya grabbed a cloth and wetted it in the sink.

Instead of handing it to Shane, he crouched down by him to wipe at his mouth. Shane looked a little clammy, and little beads of sweat decorated his forehead and neck.

“Do you think I have E. coli?”

Ilya asked. “What?”

“Do you think I am sick?”

“Obviously,” Ilya grinned as he continued to wipe Shane’s face with care. Ilya kissed his forehead. It was a tender moment before Shane pushed at his chest.

“Dick,” Shane groaned. He bent over to heave into the toilet some more.

With the moment ruined, Ilya clapped and promptly stood up. Frankly, Shane looked terrible, and Ilya felt a little bad that all he could do was tease and console him. So he left the bathroom.

After a while, he returned with Ginger Ale and a cup of ice. Shane sat with his back against the toilet bowl and his head hung down toward his chest.

“Feel better?”

“Magnificent.”

Ilya grabbed Shane by the shoulder and hoisted him to standing. He wrapped him a tight embrace. Shane sighed. How did he get so lucky? He laid his head on Ilya’s shoulder, happy to be held for a moment. Ilya swayed them a little, pressing kisses to Shane’s head.

It was in instances like these that Shane thought about how loving Ilya was. More recently, he began to think about how great a father he’d be. They had discussed it, but it always felt abstract and far away. But they’d been talking, or rather joking, more frequently about starting a family. But there never was a good time. Some part of the season would be sacrificed for being pregnant, then there was paternity leave, and they both hated to think about what they'd do for away games. Yuna and David were always an option, but there were times they played on the road for weeks. Ilya had shuddered to think of being away from their imaginary child that long.

For now, they were okay joking and imagining.

Ilya rubbed Shane's back and reached over to crack the Ginger Ale open for him. Shane looked at him skeptically.

“What?”

“Soda in the morning?” Shane smirked.

“Cmon, it’s for your tummy,” Ilya teased. He placed one hand on Shane’s belly and took a swig with the other. “Ah! See, my stomach feels amazing now.”

Ilya's hand on his stomach made his heart stir. Even after all this time, Ilya could still make Shane feel raw. He swallowed the lump in his throat and fought the burning sensation of doing so. He leaned up to peck a kiss on Ilya's lips and snatched the can from him. Ilya's lopsided grin made him forget he'd tossed his cookies no less than five minutes ago.

"Thank you. Now shoo. Go make us breakfast or something," Shane said, playfully irritated. Ilya gave him a peck on the cheek.

"Are you okay?" Ilya asked with genuine concern.

"Yes, yes. I just-" Shane was interrupted by scratching at the door. "Truly, I'm fine. I haven't been feeling well for a while, you know. I think everything is just catching up to me."

Ilya didn't seem convinced, but Anya was barking. He squinted at Shane with an amused glint in his eye, but he didn't say anything else. He gave Shane another peck on the cheek before leaving the ensuite to check on Anya.

"Anya! My little baby! Do you need a walk?" Ilya cooed. Shane listened to Ilya and Anya travel further into the house.

Shane placed a hand on his stomach where Ilya's had been. Something nagged in the back of his mind, but he put it aside. The Centaurs would most certainly not make it past the first or second round. There was probably only a month left in their season. He'll reexamine this thing, abstract and far away, once everything was settled.

Right now, he needed to brush his teeth and join his husband and dog downstairs.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first fanfic ever!!!!!! After lurking ao3 for a decade, I've decided to join the fray.

Chapter 2

Ilya was concerned. It had been a month since Shane first ran to the bathroom in the morning. Now, it was almost daily. There were days he didn't wake up to Shane hunched over a toilet, but he'd find Shane downstairs already showered and finishing a Ginger Ale. Ilya knew he was hiding these occurrences from him.

There was another issue. Shane was irritable (not in the sexy way that delighted Ilya), hungry, and tired. He was a little snippier after a loss. He was snacking...on carbs?! He was too tired for his morning runs. All things he couldn't blame on the end of the season nor the playoff run.

Instead of having a conversation about what was obviously happening, they ignored this giant elephant in their marriage. Shane was avoiding it. Ilya was, too, reluctantly. They had promised each other to always be open and honest about everything, but this felt much bigger than Ilya's depressive episodes or Shane's anxiety. So they existed in perfect marital bliss and ignored Shane changing every day.

Some of their teammates even noticed. Ilya could admit that he hadn't kept top form as the years wore on, but Shane remained the perfect athlete. Hard lines, defined muscles, and a toned ass that Ilya bounced many things on. When Troy affectionately called them doughy, old men before an afternoon skate, there was some playful ribbing back and forth about the effects of age on Ilya's part. But Shane winced and remained silent as he quickly put on his gear.

Shane wasn't doughy, but there was a soft roundness to his shoulders, arms, and chest that hadn't been there a few months ago. His waist was thicker, and he looked a little bloated most days. And that ass...Ilya wasn't complaining at all, but Shane's butt had only become more delicious.

Shane knew that Ilya could see the changes in him, too. So, Shane played dirty.

Every time Ilya tried to broach the subject of how his husband was feeling, Shane dropped his pants and turned around. What was Ilya to do other than drop to his right knee—the left one was killing him—and worship Shane's rim. Obviously, he couldn't stop there. He fucked him against the kitchen island and on the couch, and in hotel showers. When Shane was whimpering and moaning, Ilya couldn't hear himself think that they should be talking about the future instead.

Alas, Ilya was never great at denying himself Shane. So they continued to fuck and kick the ball down the road until Ilya grew tired of pretending everything was all right.

"Were you sick again this morning?" Ilya asked as he sat up in their hotel bed. They were on the road in Denver. They had won the first game in the playoff series.

Shane had just entered the room from raiding team breakfast. He had two bagels with too many toppings in one hand and a cup of coffee for Ilya in another.

Shane suspiciously stopped drinking coffee three weeks ago. When Ilya offered to pour him a cup, instead of refusing, Shane sank to his knees, gazed up at him with gorgeous dark eyes, and sucked his cock. He promptly forgot about the untouched coffee.

“Uhh...” Shane looked around the room as if looking for a way out of this conversation. His hands were full. He couldn’t strip and run to bed.

“Were you?” Ilya asked impatiently.

“I- you know- I just haven’t been-,” Shane stammered.

“You haven’t been well?”

“Yeah.”

“Then why haven’t you been the doctor or told Coach?”

“Please, we don’t have to do this now. I can still-,” Shane stopped talking. He probably sounded ridiculous to his own ears. Maybe he thought he could distract Ilya with sex until the issue was apparent.

“Shane, we have to stop this,” Ilya sighed. He rubbed his hands over his face.

“Ilya, I don’t know what you are talking about,” Shane whispered. Ilya dropped his hands and glowered at him.

“We can’t keep pretending that you’re not...” Ilya was exasperated. He gestured at Shane. He was practically glowing. His cheeks were flushed, his clothes were a little more fitted, his hair was even shinier. Ilya believed he never looked better.

He and Shane stared at each other for a long stretch of time. Neither of them wanted to say it.

If they brought it up, Shane would have to check to make sure that he wasn’t pregnant. Most likely, the test would say that he was. Then, they’d have to discuss what to do for the rest of the playoffs. Shane would be benched through the end of it. It was dangerous to continue. A knock into the board could hurt him and... Ilya hated remembering when Shane had fallen to the ice years ago. His body motionless. He felt helpless then. He would feel even more helpless now.

“Are you going to answer me?” Ilya asked. He rose out of bed to approach Shane, who had dropped eye contact with him to stare at the floor. He stood at arm's length away.

Shane made a small sniffing sound. He gazed up at Ilya through tears in his eyes.

“I’ve been irresponsible,” Shane gasped before he fell into Ilya’s embrace to cry into his chest.

Ilya’s heart broke a little. Shane wracked himself with sobs as Ilya sat them down on the end of the bed. Of course, Shane didn’t want to acknowledge he might be pregnant.

He joked about babies on skates and a sibling for Anya, but Ilya hadn't truly considered the effect it would have on their lives outside of their marriage. Shane would have to sit out the rest of the playoffs and miss most of the next season. Shane hadn't missed more than a week off the ice his entire career. They hadn't even begun to seriously discuss retirement.

Shane continued to cry for a while. Ilya just held him tightly.

"I think I might be pregnant," Shane hiccuped, red-eyed. Ilya had maneuvered him into his lap. Shane rested his head against the side of Ilya's neck. "I think I've known for a while."

"I think I have too."

"You have?"

"You're not that clever," Ilya looked down at him with his crooked smirk.

"Gee, thanks." Shane huffs.

Silence hung in the air.

"Why didn't we talk about it?" Ilya asks. He really wanted to say 'you' but fighting would only make this worst.

"Maybe I wanted to have something to hide," Shane responded snidely. Ilya jostled him a bit.

The team was expected to travel to the arena in ninety minutes for pregame warmups, and they needed to discuss what to do. There's never been a pregnant hockey player. Shane's been taking hits the entire time, but Ilya doesn't want that to continue if it doesn't have to.

"I'm serious."

Shane sighs. He closes his eyes.

"I thought I could handle it later."

Ilya's stomach sinks. Did Shane not want this child with him?

"Oh," the disappointment in his voice is apparent.

"Not like that, you dumbass," Shane knows his husband well. "I really want this baby. I do."

Shane squeezed his eyes tighter, trying to keep the tears in.

"But between the end of the season, injuries, and the rush that is our life, I didn't want to add this to our plate. I also didn't want to let the team down."

Ilya understood. This was not the best time to add a child to the mix, but there never was a right time.

"Plus, I didn't want to go through this alone while you were playing who knows where."

Ilya shifted them so he could look directly in Shane's eyes.

"I will never ever let you go through anything alone, Shane," Ilya said sternly. He hugged Shane to him and sighed. "You forgot our vows."

Shane chuckled softly. They held each other for a little while longer. Ilya's hand traveled to rest on Shane's stomach.

"What are we going to do?" Shane asked.

Ilya knew that Shane wanted to play through the end of the season, which for the Centaurs would probably be the end of this series.

But...what if they went to the Stanley Cup? That would mean another two months of playing. Two more months of hits and falls, bruised ribs and tweaked shoulders. Worst of all, they didn't know how far along Shane was. Ilya hoped he was still in the first trimester. If he was further along, he'd never forgive himself. Shane may never forgive himself.

"We make a small plan right now. First, we play this game tonight. Minimum playing time. For now, we'll tell Coach Weibe you're nursing your ankle," Ilya explained. It wasn't a lie. Shane's ankles had been bothering him for a while now, but that was neither here nor there.

"Maybe you only come out for the power play? Less defenders. Once we get back home, you are going to a doctor. Then, we make a new plan," Shane only nodded gently in agreement. It was the best Ilya could hope for.

After a while, he untangled himself from Ilya and stood back. Ilya really let himself take a look at Shane. He obviously started carrying more weight. He also looked like he was carrying the weight of the world. Looking at him in that moment, it was plain to see. Ilya had been a terrible husband and future father.

"I love you, Shane, so much."

Shane carded his hands through Ilya's hair and tugged softly. The ghost of a smile was on his lips.

"I love you," Shane responded in Russian. He leaned in to kiss Ilya. Gone was all the tension of dancing around the pregnancy. "We're going to have a baby."

"I can't wait." Ilya hummed.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

For context, it's around the beginning of May which would mean that they conceived baby Hollanov at the beginning of January. They were getting busy on New Year's Day.

Surprisingly, the Centaurs had squeezed through the first round of playoffs, knocking Denver out of contention. Shane was delighted the team was still in the running for the Stanley Cup, but deep down, it killed him that he would no longer have a hand in the team's success.

Upon returning to Ottawa, Shane and Ilya discovered he was around 16 weeks! Ilya almost fainted. Shane's ears burned red with embarrassment when the doctor asked him if he felt the usual symptoms.

Fatigue. Check. Increased Hunger. Check. Irritability. Check. Morning Sickness. Check.

"Mr. Hollander, what took you so long?" the doctor huffed with amused admonishment. Shane could only bury his head in his hands to hold back the tears.

All the fear of ignoring his painfully obvious pregnancy symptoms washed away when the doctor performed the ultrasound.

Like a light in the darkness, there was their baby: an avocado-sized fetus resting in Shane's uterus.

"All right. Everything is looking good. Two arms, two legs, and a steady heartbeat," the doctor announced. She inspected some more. "I even see the development of eyelids....we can almost tell the sex. Do you want to know when it's time?"

Shane and Ilya glanced at each other. Ilya tried to school his expression into something neutral, but Shane knew he wanted to know right away. His eyes glimmered, daring him to say yes. Shane, on the other hand, didn't mind waiting. He waited this long to find out if the baby was even there.

"Uhhh, can we check at a later appointment?" Shane asked shyly. Ilya groaned playfully. "I just want to sit with the fact we have a baby on the way!"

"Of course. I'll get you a print of the scan. Then you're all done here, gentlemen."

On the car ride back, Ilya was rattling off all the ways they needed to start preparing for their child. Shane laughed softly at his enthusiasm. He stared at the ultrasound photo, his thumb softly caressing their baby's feet.

"...but how do you feel?" Ilya ended his ramble.

"Oh, I guess the nursery should be the closest room to ours."

"No, Shane, about the baby, playoffs. I mean, we have to tell your parents, Coach, the team."

Shane sank a little deeper in his seat. "Ugh, don't remind me," he groaned. "I'm excited about this baby, but I don't know why I feel embarrassed about the whole thing."

"Probably because you're four months pregnant and you just found out."

Shane rolled his eyes, slightly amused. "I mean, yes, but I don't know..it's embarrassing that people know we...you know."

"That people know we fuck!" Ilya barked out a laugh.

"Yes, and we were obviously careless about it. Who plans to get pregnant during their playoff run?"

"We can say we thought we weren't going to make it this far."

Shane glared at Ilya. "I would rather die than say that." He never wanted the team to think for a second that he put his own desires over the mission.

Ilya grinned but kept his eyes on the road. "You can't die now. You have my baby to deliver. You can do it after."

"Fuck off."

"Shane, it is okay. We are married. We have sex. Accidents happen." Ilya placed his hand on the console and turned it up. Shane placed his hand on top of Ilya and gave a reassuring squeeze. "This is a very good accident. If it makes you feel better, we can announce the baby after the season is over."

He shouldn't want to, but maybe his hormone-confused brain would make everything feel less surreal by then.

"Sure."

In the safety of their home, Shane stood in their ensuite bathroom. He smoothed a hand over his swollen belly, gazing at himself in the mirror. He felt a mix of emotions. Anxiety, happiness, fear, frustration, excitement. *Hormones*, he reminded himself. Most of all, he felt a comfortable warmth flood his heart when he saw proof of the life he and Ilya created.

Chapter 4

Ilya forgot how fun it was to have a secret. Their lives didn't depend on it being kept, so he reveled in having one just a little. It was just him, his husband, and this beautiful, tiny new life they made together.

He felt a little guilty that Shane would have to miss the rest of the season. He promised they could wait until the season ended to tell everyone, but one person did have to know before anyone else.

Coach Wiebe looked skeptically between the two of them when they approached him before a practice. Shane hadn't given a reason beyond that it wasn't safe for him to play at the moment. Wiebe nodded slowly. Without them saying a thing, he understood why.

"Congratulations! We'll have a new Centaur for the roster. This time, we have the cap space for them," he wrapped Shane and Ilya in a brief embrace. "But you're still expected to dress out," he joked. Shane grinned.

Ilya slapped his hand down on Wiebe's shoulder. "You're taking this better than we expected."

Wiebe shrugged. "There's no other way I can react. I'm happy for you both."

Shane teared up. Ilya wrapped an arm around him, rubbing his shoulder firmly. "See, I told you it would be all right."

Shane watched their next game against Tampa from the owner's box with the 'other' injured Centaurs. He cheered on Ilya, Troy, Wyatt, Luka, Bood, and the rest of their teammates. He figured he might as well get used to the bird's-eye view of the game. He'd still be pregnant when the preseason began. *Jesus, I'll be pregnant forever*, he thought.

Ottawa was putting up a decent fight, leading Tampa 3-2 at the end of the second period. To Shane, the game looked a lot more violent than it felt on the ice. It had been years since he attended a game as a spectator. He couldn't help but wince every time Ilya was slammed against the boards by an opposing defenseman or fell to the ice.

Have I really been putting myself through that? Without thought, he rested a hand on his growing bump and took a shaky breath.

The game ended with Ottawa on top, 4-2. Shane went down to the dressing room to congratulate the guys. When he entered, Ilya was nowhere to be found—most likely in the shower. So he walked over to his own stall to wait for him. He fluffed the front of his sweatshirt a little to make sure it didn't cling to his baby bump.

Wyatt exited the shower first, a towel wrapped around his hips. He was ecstatic to see Shane. "Hollander!" Wyatt bellowed. "We missed you tonight."

"You guys did amazing without me."

"We would have beaten them 10-2 if you'd been on the ice."

"Six goals in a game? You flatter me," Shane laughed. "Nice saves though, man."

Wyatt brushed invisible dust off his shoulders. "I try."

Ilya exited the shower to see Shane and Wyatt chatting with one another.

He couldn't help but feel a combination of pride and arousal while thinking about the hidden curve of Shane's belly. He put that baby there. He wanted to protect their little secret, but he also wanted to scream from the rooftops that he was going to be a father, a papa. No one knew, but if Ilya walked over and pulled the back of Shane's sweatshirt, the physical evidence of their love would be evident.

"Hazy's a beast, as always," Ilya complimented.

"You make my job easy, Roz," Wyatt waved him off before turning to get dressed.

Ilya grinned at Shane as he hurriedly dressed and met him at his stall.

"You ready to go?" Ilya asked.

Shane nodded. "I'm starving."

"But you didn't even break a sweat."

"Shut up."

Shane bumped shoulders with him playfully as they locked hands. Ilya leaned down and kissed his temple.

They left the stadium, hand in hand.

When they were both inside the car. "What are you both in the mood for?"

Shane smoothed a hand down his stomach and patted his bump. "Hmm, I think pizza and curry."

"Which one is your choice?" Ilya teased.

"Pizza."

"So baby wants curry?" Ilya hummed. "Baby gets curry. Because I like you, I'll get you a pizza."

"God, I think I'm gonna dip the pizza in the curry," Shane sighed.

Ilya laughed. "That's creative."

“I feel like I could eat anything put in front of me.”

Ilya looked at Shane suggestively.

“Get your mind out of the gutter.”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“I know you, you didn’t have to.”

Ilya looked over at Shane. He was staring out the window, absentmindedly caressing his belly. He really should leave well enough alone.

He bit his lip before blurting out, “I hope you don’t resent the baby or me.”

“What? Does it seem like it?” Shane turned to him, shocked.

“No, it is just that- I know how much you must hate this, missing the rest of the season.”

Shane huffed and squirmed in his seat. “You say that like I’ll never play again.”

Ilya didn’t respond. Shane stared at Ilya, who kept his eyes squarely on the road.

“Look, I’ll miss the rest of this season and probably the beginning of the next. Best case scenario, I can be back after Christmas.”

“I shouldn’t have said that,” Ilya was a little disappointed in himself. He wanted Shane to continue playing. He gave him that extra motivation he couldn’t give to himself. But he also didn’t want Shane to rush back into playing, unprepared and freshly postpartum.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get there,” Shane turned to stare out the window again. “Just drive me to a pizza shop.”

“Then to an Indian restaurant?” Ilya asked, testing the water.

“I rather have Thai curry,” Shane quipped trying to contain his grin.

For the moment, Ilya would take that as a win.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the lovely comments! I was considering leaving it unfinished after the third chapter, but I have felt encouraged to continue.

Happy reading! <3

"So what? I stay at home and you get to live your life as usual!"

Shane and Ilya were in the kitchen. Breakfast was finished, dishes were put away, and Anya had been walked. It had actually been a nice morning before Ilya brought up the topic of paternity leave.

The Centaurs had one day break between games against Tampa. So, Ilya—the doting husband he is—had slowly kissed Shane, warm and rumpled, awake, gazed lovingly at him as sunlight escaped through the curtains, then made love to him.

Shane had initially huffed about wanting it rougher, but Ilya couldn't help it. Shane had been rough enough on his body. Ilya wasn't going to add to that treatment by fucking Shane through the mattress. He laid his husband on his back, repeatedly dragged his cock over his prostate, and kissed Shane through his orgasm. After a rim job to bring him to his second orgasm of the morning, Shane was out of complaints.

"That is not what I am saying. I will also miss the beginning of the season. You may need more time," Ilya was exasperated.

"Oh yes, more time to sit and take care of your child."

"Our child! You are overreact-" Ilya winced at himself. He accepted the rage in Shane's eyes.

"Don't you dare," Shane pointed at him.

Ilya threw up his hands in a surrendering fashion. "I would like you to forget I said that," he apologized.

Shane left the kitchen to pace in the living room. Anya looked up from her bed, staring at Shane as he burned a line in the rug. Ilya followed him and perched himself on the arm of their sectional.

"I'm not going to sit on my ass while you get all the glory. A 'C' might not be on my chest, but I built this team, too."

When Shane first came to the Centaurs, management cut a few stellar backups to make space for his salary. In their place, minor leaguers were called up. They were decent but in need of some development. Feeling guilty, Shane poured everything into making sure he and his teammates were in top form. Four years later, the fruits of his, Ilya's, and Coach's hard work were starting to bloom, and he couldn't even enjoy it.

"I know that! Everyone knows that! Why do you think we're squeezing our way through playoffs with half a roster?" Ilya responded.

Ottawa had a one-game advantage over Tampa in the series. If they could pull off two more wins, they'd be playing in the Conference finals.

"You helped put us in this position, sweetheart," Ilya was trying hard to win his way back into Shane's good graces. "Trust the team. We can get it done for you."

Shane was quiet. He stopped pacing and dropped his gaze to the floor in front of him. Ilya thought he was ending the conversation, but Shane mumbled.

"I want to do it myself. I feel great. I could still be out there, helping in some way," Shane crossed his arms, hugging himself. The action only made his bump more prominent as it poked out from under the hem of his t-shirt.

"You are helping," Shane looked up at Ilya. He walked over to Shane, cupping his face in his large hands. Shane instinctually leaned into the touch. "Being at the games, cheering us on."

Shane pulled Ilya's hands from his face. "That's not what I meant." Thinking about what Ilya said only made him more pissed. He stepped back from Ilya's embrace. "You know what, fuck off. I'm not a cheerleader."

Shane left the living room to escape upstairs. Ilya sighed as he heard their bedroom door slam shut.

Fucking hell, he thought. That couldn't have gone worse.

"Anya, here, girl." Anya rose and trotted over to Ilya. "Let's go for a walk."

After a healthy hour-long walk, Ilya stood in front of the bedroom door gathering the courage to knock. If he were honest, Shane scared him most days. He was a live wire, and it felt like everything Ilya did set him off.

There were times, Ilya thought Shane was lying to him about wanting the baby. Yes, they talked about names, baby clothes, and converting the closest guest room into a nursery, but Shane didn't want to give much thought to having a birthing plan, how long he'd breastfeed—if he even wanted to—or whether their baby would travel with them on the road. Ilya wouldn't be surprised if Shane tried to hide his pregnancy until the day he delivered. However, spring was ending soon, and Ilya doubted he could get away with wearing sweatshirts and hoodies beyond June.

Ilya knocked on the door. No answer. He grabbed for the door handle. It was locked. He let out a breath and knocked a little harder.

"Shane?"

"What?"

"What?!"

"Let me in."

Ilya heard Shane rise from bed and stomp towards the door.

"Why should I?"

Ilya could imagine his dark eyes narrowed and his mouth twisted into a pout.

"Because I am sorry. You are more than a cheerleader. You are an athlete, a professional one. Maybe, I haven't- I have not considered what you have given up and what you will give up to have our child."

There was a long silence. Ilya let his forehead rest against the door. "I am very excited for the next stage in our life together. More excited that I am doing no work to get us there," Ilya tried for a joke. "I only want you to be excited, too. If it helps, we can name the baby Puck."

Shane immediately opened the door. His face was tear-streaked, and his eyes were glossy and red. "You idiot," Shane stepped into Ilya's waiting embrace. "We're not naming the baby that."

Shane sniffled against Ilya's shirt and pulled back to look into his eyes. He could get lost in them if he wasn't careful. Shane stepped back and walked to sit on the bed. Ilya followed and sat beside him.

"I'm sorry I'm not excited, Ilya. I mean, I am. But...I'm having major FOMO," Shane laughed wetly. "Why can't the world stop and restart after I have this kid?"

Ilya wrapped an arm around his shoulders, pulling him against his side. Shane went easily, leaning his head on Ilya's shoulders.

"I can't even think about having this baby because I'm too busy thinking that I should still be out there, with you and the team. It's selfish, I know."

"No, no." Ilya kissed his temple.

"I have it all, or I had it all," Shane sounded resigned.

"But we will have more. A family," Ilya said softly. Shane very well couldn't argue with that. He and Ilya had dreamed of family for so long. They were so close to having it, and Shane hated himself for not being ready to have it come true.

"And if you give it time, another Stanley Cup, I believe in us," Ilya whispered into Shane's hair.

"Can you promise not to win one without me?" Shane asked in a quiet voice.

Ilya jumped up. "I can't believe you asked me to lose!" he growled playfully. He gently tackled Shane to the bed, peppering kisses all over his cheeks and neck. He hovered over Shane, careful not to put too much weight on him. "I promise."

Shane looked up at Ilya with wide eyes, unbelieving of what he heard.

"...to not retire until I win with you," Ilya laughed as Shane's face turned into amused annoyance.

"You can't do that to a pregnant person. My heart skipped a beat."

"You would hate me if I let the team down for you."

Shane blushed. "You know me too well."

"I do."

Ilya captured Shane's lips in a tender kiss.

"We'll figure it out. That is life, yes?" Ilya whispered as they parted.

Shane could only look up at his husband in adoration and nod in agreement.

Chapter 6

Shane and Ilya maintained their usual pregame routine of having lunch with Yuna and David, but they had finally decided to share their good news.

As she prepared lunch, Yuna felt something was *different*. The hockey players were more clingy than usual. Ilya was always doting on Shane, but it seemed to a higher degree that afternoon. Occasionally, she'd catch Ilya pressed against Shane's side, whispering in his ear. Shane would just nod or blush in response. Weird. It could be playoff jitters.

Once the table was set and lunch was plated, everyone sat down to eat.

"Ilya, how's your knee?" she started the conversation.

"I wish it were better, but I'll survive," Ilya answered.

"And your ankle?" Yuna turned to face Shane.

"Erm, my ankle's actually fine," he replied around the Katsu he had shoved into his mouth.

"Oh, you're playing tonight! They haven't updated the injury list." Yuna grabbed for her phone to check.

"Well, no. I'm not playing," Shane said sheepishly. Ilya grabbed Shane's hand on the table. "I'm out for the rest of the season."

"What? Why?" Yuna and David chimed back.

Ilya and Shane looked at each other. Ilya raised his eyebrows, urging Shane on.

"It wouldn't be safe for the baby," Shane said timidly.

His parents' faces turned up in confusion.

"Any?!" David asked.

Ilya barked out a loud laugh. "Shane is pregnant! We're going to be fathers!"

Yuna's eyes grew wide. Her mouth didn't know whether it wanted to smile or form an 'O.' But she looked like she won the lottery.

"Oh! Oh! Shane!" Yuna jumped up from her seat to pull Shane into a hug. "Congratulations! You'll be wonderful fathers."

David grinned and stood to join them.

"Get in here," David nodded Ilya over from his seat. He immediately sprang up and wrapped his arms around everyone.

Shane teared up. He was flooded with relief. This was real and happening. People could be excited for him and Ilya. It was the bare minimum for his parents to be happy, but he'd take this support nonetheless.

Shane laughed wetly as Yuna stepped back to examine him.

"We didn't even know you were trying," Yuna said in disbelief. Shane reddened at the prospect of ever telling his parents that he and Ilya were trying to make a baby.

She put her hands on Shane's stomach. She immediately snapped her eyes up to him, even more surprised. "Shane, you're huge!" No one could really see the bump through his hoodie, but the firm roundness of his stomach was undeniable.

"Thanks, mom," he said flatly.

"How far along are you?" David asked, placing a hand on top of Yuna's on Shane's belly.

"Please don't be upset. I'm 18 weeks."

"That's five months." Yuna's voice was grave. "You were playing two weeks ago."

Shane sat back down. Ilya placed a hand on his shoulder.

"We were both in denial about his symptoms *for a while*," he tried to assure Yuna. "We found out right after our last game against Denver. But the baby is healthy and Shane's all right. No harm, no foul."

"I assume this wasn't planned," Yuna surmised.

"Would you believe us if we said yes?" Shane responded sheepishly.

Yuna looked a little disappointed, but didn't voice it. Everyone sat back down. They ate for a little while before Yuna began an onslaught of questions.

"Have you been taking prenatal vitamins?"

"Yes, since the first appointment."

"Are you signed up for a birthing class?"

"Not yet..."

"You should get on that and look up breathing exercises in the meantime."

"...Okay."

"Have considered what kind of school you're going to send them--"

"Uh, no?" There was apparently a lot Shane hadn't considered when having a baby.

"Oh! Do you know the sex?"

“We’re waiting,” Ilya eagerly answered. Shane was grateful for him. “Everything will be settled in due time, Yuna. We’re just waiting for the season to end.”

“Okay, just don’t wait too long to start preparing.”

“Don’t worry, mom.” Shane was annoyed. At Yuna, at himself.

He should be better prepared. In any other scenario, he would have read ten baby books right now, started prenatal yoga, and bought some furniture for the nursery. Rather, the *nurseries*, since they would spend their summers at the cottage. Or maybe they wouldn’t anymore?

Are babies sensitive to changes in setting? What if their baby had little baby birthday parties they’d miss while Shane and Ilya wanted to relax in the Canadian wilderness? Could the baby even handle all the germs and dirt of the outdoors? Their baby was only four months away and he had nothing to show for it. Not even a thought towards what their life would look like after his child arrived.

The conversation drifted to the Centaur’s playoff chances. Right, a nice reminder of another change coming to his life.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Thanks for all the love! I've been thinking of other projects so this is the last chapter. It's way longer than the previous ones. I hope the ending is satisfying enough.

The sun drifted through the shutter blinds of Ilya and Shane's bedroom. The radiating pain in Ilya's knee woke him earlier than he wanted, but he was happy to stare at the man across from him as the sun rose.

Shane's lips were slightly parted as he snored quietly against the pillow. Being in the second trimester meant new symptoms, and Ilya found this one particularly cute. Ilya reached across and placed his hand on Shane's exposed belly. It was warm to the touch and firm beneath his palm. Shane was around 22 weeks along and absolutely glowing. Ilya couldn't help but feel a little prideful about how his love changed the landscape of Shane's body.

However, Ilya wished Shane were happier about the pregnancy. He had been reassured by Shane that he was excitedly baby prepping and considering asking about the sex of their child. And even though he'd come to terms with sitting out, Shane was still cagey about telling people. The only people who knew about their child were Coach Wiebe, Shane's parents, Svetlana, and Hayden...whom Ilya was reticent to take any parenting advice from. But Shane was curious about how Hayden managed hockey and parenthood, so Ilya humored him.

Shane was deathly afraid news of their little bundle of joy would leak to the media, and it would be like their outing all over again. Now that he couldn't hide his body anymore, he hid himself completely. He was only left to see the doctor and his parents. Ilya couldn't care less about the media. He and Shane were married. It shouldn't be surprising to anyone that they were starting a family.

Shane stirred and slowly opened his eyes, blinking against the morning light. His hand joined Ilya's on his bump.

"Good morning," Shane rasped.

"Good morning," Ilya repeated softly. He leaned in to pepper kisses on Shane's cheek. He eventually worked his way down his neck, past his nipples, and stopped to kiss his stomach. Shane ran a hand through Ilya's hair. A couple more strands of gray were gathered at the crown of his head. Ilya pressed his ear to Shane's stomach.

"I think I hear something," Ilya said, glancing up at Shane.

"It's probably how hungry I am," Shane huffed. Insatiable hunger replaced his morning sickness. He had been better about not thinking about how he was cramming everything he saw down his throat.

"No, there's a voice," Ilya responded. He made his voice higher-pitched. "It's me, daddy! I want to go to the game to see Papa play!"

"Wow, speaking already?" Shane was unimpressed. "They're gonna skate out of me."

Ilya gave a parting kiss to his belly before settling on the pillow next to Shane. "You don't have to watch from home."

The Centaurs had played through another month of brutal competition to make it to the conference finals. They were tied 3-3 in the series against the Admirals. Whether they won or not, it was their final game was at home.

"I know it's just that..." Shane didn't finish. He was idly playing with the chain around Ilya's neck. He ran his thumb over the cool surface of the crucifix and lowered it to rest against Ilya's chest. Shane took a steadying breath. "Tonight."

Ilya's eyes shot wide. "Really? You will-"

"Sorry, I meant you can tell the team, whoever." Shane interrupted.

Ilya wanted to be upset. It was certainly less than what he wanted but more than what he expected. Life was full of compromises.

"Of course, the team has been asking about you. No one sees you anymore," Ilya said a bit sadly.

Shane pushed himself to a sitting position. He expectantly turned his back to Ilya, who dug his knuckles into Shane's lower back. Back pain was another symptom of the added weight. Shane groaned in relief before sliding off the bed.

"I've been busy with baby stuff," he said dismissively as he headed into the bathroom. "One of us has to do it."

Ilya flopped down on the bed. Shane couldn't let Ilya forget that he was not at home, not preparing for their baby. He knew Shane wasn't trying to make Ilya feel bad, but he still felt guilty every second he was away from Shane.

"I wish I could be at the appointment today," Ilya moaned from bed. He could hear Shane chuckle from the bathroom.

"You just want to see someone else between my legs."

The idea was appealing. But Ilya shook his head and headed into the bathroom. His knee felt like pins and needles with every step he took.

“No...” Ilya wrapped his arms around Shane, his hands resting on Shane’s belly as he brushed his teeth. His shoulders bracketed Shane’s frame. “That is what you think I want.”

Shane rolled his eyes, but leaned back into Ilya’s embrace.

“I really just want to be with you,” Ilya said softly. “You know, I’ve been thinking.”

“Scary.”

“Shut up,” Ilya grinned. “I have been thinking...that I stay with you, and the baby, through your paternity care.”

Shane’s eyes caught his in the mirror. “The team can’t afford for both of us to be gone.”

Ilya huffed in annoyance. “Shane, I’m trying to make a very nice, very romantic gesture!”

“And I appreciate it, it’s just that,” Shane stopped himself. “I’m scared of what the team will think.”

Even after being on the team for five years, Shane had a one-sided, tenuous relationship with the Centaurs. The guys loved him, but Shane still acted like he was Ilya’s plus one.

“They will be happy for us,” Ilya said firmly. “Coach was happy for us! We deserve this.”

“We’ll talk about it.”

“There is nothing to discuss. If I do not want to play without you, I will not. It is simple.”

“Ilya,” Shane sounded warning.

“I love you. I love our baby. It is an easy decision.” Ilya kissed Shane’s temple. Shane looked up at him with so much love in his eyes.

“I love you too.”

They spent the rest of the morning together before Shane had to leave for the doctor. Ilya did spend a decent amount of time pleading for Shane to come to the game, but all Shane did was roll his eyes, peck Ilya on the lips, and step out the door.

—

The team was somber as they made their way back to the dressing room. Ilya honestly hoped Shane didn't even turn on the TV. Between the stinging pain in his knee and the guilt gnawing at his heart, Ilya had played a less-than-stellar game. They lost the Conference Finals to the Admirals. The team had only put up one goal in the third period to answer the Admirals’ five. It made Ilya a little sick to have to shake hands after the match. He wasn’t deserving of that kind of respect after such an undignified performance.

His thoughts began to gnaw away at him. Luca outscored him this postseason; his body was failing him, and he couldn’t seem to pull away from the darkening clouds of his mind. This

always happened when the team suffered a particularly humiliating loss.

Ilya limped into the locker room and barely noticed that there was someone sitting in his stall.

Shane wasn't wearing a hoodie or sweatshirt, but an almost form-fitting Centaurs shirt that prominently displayed the curve of his baby bump. His eyes found Ilya's as he slowly rose to greet him.

"You look like you could use a pick-me-up," Shane said gently. His eyes were shy as he glanced at Ilya.

"Shane," Ilya gasped. He rushed to Shane, ignoring the pain in his knee. He pulled him into a tight hug. His eyes watered partly due to his aching knee, and partly due to Shane's presence. He rested his face in the crutch of his husband's shoulder. "Were you here the whole time?"

"Yes, well, kinda. I came after the first period ended...I had to work up the courage," Shane stated sheepishly. "I would say good game, but, you know," Shane teased.

When Ilya raised his head, his eyes were wet. "I knew you would have something to say," Ilya chuckled. He dropped his hands to cradle Shane's belly. "Thank you for being here."

"I will always cheer you on." Shane gazed right into Ilya's eyes. His expression was sincere, and he wore a sad smile filled with regret.

Noticing the couple, Bood called over from his stall next to them. "Shane, you made it. Didn't expect to see you-" Bood stopped himself upon fully taking the couple in. "Whoa."

Ilya laughed a little wetly. "Heh, yeah. Surprise." He wrapped an arm around Shane's waist.

Bood grinned as he shook his head. "I should have known something was up."

"You know us, we're very good with secrets," Shane joined in.

"Congratulations," the other players turned to look over at the only three people in the room smiling.

Troy and Wyatt made their way over, exasperated, yet happy for Shane and Ilya.

"Harris is going to die," Troy said, giving them both hugs.

"Welcome to fatherhood, gentlemen," Wyatt said, shaking their hands before wrapping his arms around their necks and pulling them in.

The rest of the team gave their congratulations. It was subdued, yet sincere. It was a consolation prize for Ilya. Shane felt he had put him through enough.

—

"Do you think everyone was surprised?" Shane asked. He and Ilya had just walked into the house. Ilya leaned on Shane as he limped into the living room and dropped himself on the couch.

"I think they are more relieved it was not something serious," Ilya groaned as he elevated his leg. He felt like he could sleep for days. His head hit the back of the couch before he realized it. He closed his eyes just for a moment's rest.

Shane gazed down at Ilya. While he'd been in his head about the pregnancy and trying to get over the shock of leaving the ice, Ilya had shouldered the emotional labor of keeping Shane sane, leading a team, and battling against his aching body.

"Let me get you some ice." Shane raked a hand through Ilya's hair.

Before he could turn away, Ilya grabbed his arm to press a kiss to the inside of his wrist. Shane's breath hitched in his throat.

"Stay," Ilya pulled Shane down to the couch, shifting around so that Shane could lie on his chest between Ilya's legs. "Just for a while."

They sat for a while before Shane gasped and grabbed Ilya's hand, pressing it to his stomach.

"What? What is it?"

Shane felt a little guilty about disturbing him, but he didn't think Ilya would be too mad.

"Do you feel it?" Shane asked. He paused for a second. "Here." Ilya's hand cupped the bottom of Shane's stomach.

"I think you're having gas," Ilya teased, but then there was a slight flutter under his fingertips.

Shane looked over his shoulder to see Ilya's eyes grow wide before they met his.

"Is this our..."

"Yes, our little girl." Suddenly, all of Shane's apprehensions melted away. He wished he had known the fluttering movement in his womb was all he needed to push every anxiety away. He could imagine their future so clearly now.

"Girl?"

Shane winced. Shit.

"I'm sorry. I found out at the appointment today. I was going to surprise you-"

Ilya interrupted him, hooking a finger under his chin to pull Shane into a kiss.

"This is the best of surprises," Ilya whispered against his lips. "You let our little girl plan it."

Shane's heart melted.

"She takes after her papa. Too clever," Shane chuckled. God, he prayed their baby was a mini Ilya. It would probably kill him to chase after both of them, but he'd die with a smile and a heart overfilled with love.

"Hmmm," Ilya hummed, resting his chin on Shane's shoulder. He placed both hands on Shane's belly and rocked them side to side ever so slightly.

"I want to name her Yurina," Shane whispered. He turned to look back at a frozen Ilya. "For your mother."

Ilya's eyes were wide, but his face was unreadable. He just stared at Shane. He really should have led with the explanation first.

"I know how much you miss your mom, and we don't talk about her as much as we probably should, so I looked up different forms of her name. But it was just her name in different spellings until I came across this one," Shane was blabbering. Ilya remained silent. "...and it's Japanese. It means Lily. So in a way, she's named after you, too."

Ilya's face immediately crumpled. He held his head in his hands. It was the exact opposite of what Shane was expecting. Had he messed this up?

"Yurin- Yuri- Yur-" Ilya heaved between sobs. It seemed the more he tried to say it around his cries, the more it slipped away from him. He eventually gave up and collapsed into crying. Shane had never seen Ilya this emotional in their relationship.

Shane turned fully around to hug Ilya, who tightly held onto the fabric of Shane's shirt. He cried into Shane's neck for a long time. There were tears and snot in the crook of his neck and on his shirt, but Shane only encouraged Ilya to keep crying. He rubbed soothing circles on his husband's back as his sobs turned to hiccups.

Shane pulled back to look at Ilya. He looked a little childish in that moment. His perfect mouth was pulled into a cute little frown, those hazel eyes were watery and red-rimmed, and his cheek was red from where it had been pressed into his shoulder. It was everything he hoped to see looking back at him one day.

"Is that too loaded for a name?" Shane asked sheepishly.

"You are putting me through a lot of emotions tonight, Hollander," Ilya chuckled a little. He wiped his face with a hand and rested the other on Shane's cheek. "If that name were a bullet, you would have shot me in the heart."

Shane leaned into Ilya's touch. He leaned forward to share a gentle kiss. It was gentle and warm, and just what Ilya needed.

"Yurina," Ilya finally managed. He cupped Shane's belly. They shared a tender smile. "I'm excited to meet her."

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