

A Want and a Need

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A Want and a Need

by [Kethra](#)

Summary

Ilya heads to the cottage early for his second summer there only to end up sick. Since Shane can't be there he calls in reinforcements.

Notes

This fic is brought to you courtesy of The Long Game scene of Ilya wrapped in a blanket, eating ice cream on the Hollander's couch. Along with me wanting more of Ilya interacting with Shane's parents.

Chapter 1: Main Story

Chapter 2: Yuna's POV

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

Chapter 1

June 2018

It was nearly dark when Ilya finally pulled up to the cottage. He should have been there hours ago but his flight had been delayed in Boston for what had an eternity. He'd also needed to stop for groceries before heading out to the lake.

After turning off the car Ilya sat for a long moment unmoving. His limbs felt unusually heavy and most of his body ached. He was exhausted after a long day and had been sitting for far too long. With a heavy sigh he forced himself out of the car. Everything would be better once he was in bed.

The cottage was completely dark as Ilya approached. Shane had already come out to open it for the summer but had needed to leave that morning for Toronto.

It felt strange being out there alone but Ilya hadn't wanted to wait. With the season well over there was nothing keeping him in Boston. He wasn't sure when but the city had stopped feeling like home. Maybe it never really had and was just closer than what he'd had in Russia.

Going had been the right choice. Just seeing the cottage had already settled something in him.

The spare key was exactly where Shane had said it would be. Once inside Ilya dumped everything onto the kitchen before shooting off a quick text saying that he'd arrived. Unsurprisingly his phone started ringing just a few minutes later.

"You made it there alright?" Shane asked immediately.

"Da, was fine. Just," Ilya groaned stretching out his stiff back, "long day. Annoying."

"No problems getting a rental car?"

Ilya couldn't help but roll his eyes. Shane had suggested multiple times that his parents pick Ilya up and drive him out to the cottage. But that had sounded... awkward.

Yuna and David were great but Ilya had only met them a few times the previous summer. And never without Shane there. The idea of being alone with them made something uneasy twist in his gut.

Besides it seemed far too early to be asking them for favors. The last thing he wanted was for them to think he expected them to do things for him.

Ilya made an affirmative noise into the phone as he resumed putting groceries away. "You would approve. It is very practical, very boring."

On the other end of the phone Shane made a noise somewhere between annoyed and amused. But Ilya felt deeply confident that he was getting a smile. Suddenly he wanted nothing more than to see that smile.

“Can I see you?”

“Yeah, of course. Just a second.”

A moment later he got the request to switch to video. Sure enough there was Shane smiling back at him.

Behind him was a bland hotel room. He was somewhere in Toronto to do film for an ad campaign and do a photo shoot. Otherwise he would have already been there at the cottage with Ilya.

He must have just showered because his hair was still damp but neatly combed and his face was slightly flushed. Add the glasses he was wearing and the man looked truly adorable.

But then the smile quickly fell away.

“Are you feeling okay?”

“Yes. Why?” Ilya asked, confused by the sudden change.

“You don’t look good. Not like that,” Shane said, cutting Ilya off before he could properly object. “Like you’re sick.”

Ilya scoffed instantly. He didn’t get sick beyond very minor colds. Not since he was a child.

But then he caught a glimpse of himself in the dark kitchen window. Grudgingly he had to admit that he didn’t look great. His face was unusually pale and there were bags forming under his eyes.

“I am just tired,” he insisted. “Like I said, long day.”

Shane scowled at him, clearly not believing it. But then he just sighed. “Fine, get some rest. I’ll call you in the morning before I head to the shoot.”

To check and see if he was right, Ilya thought with a little bitterness. But logically he knew that wasn’t right and shoved the feeling away. He’d been learning that Shane only really fussed about things when he cared. It was even nice sometimes. Though it was taking Ilya some getting used to.

It had been a long time since someone worried about him for his sake and not just the sake of what they wanted from him.

“Fine, fine. Goodnight,” he muttered then quickly added, “I love you.”

That got the smile back onto Shane’s face. “Love you too.”

When the expected phone call woke Ilya the next morning he had to admit that maybe Shane had been right.

“Ilya...” Shane said when he got a look at his boyfriend.

“Say nothing,” Ilya groaned into his pillow.

After a silent moment he managed to sit himself up. Which he immediately regretted as his stomach seemed to roll in protest. He barely managed to keep himself from gagging. Once the sensation finally settled he let out another groan.

“Ilya,” Shane said again.

Reluctantly, Ilya opened his eyes to look at the screen. Concern was pressed deeply into Shane’s face. Ilya hated seeing him worried.

“It is just, what do you call it? A bug? I will be fine,” he tried to sound assuring.

“What symptoms do you have?”

“What are you a doctor now?” Ilya snapped.

He’s meant the words to be teasing but they had come out far sharper. Enough so that he winced hearing it.

“Sorry,” Ilya amended immediately. “My stomach is upset and I... ache. But I will be okay. Don’t worry, please.”

Judging by the look Shane was giving him that wasn’t going to happen. Whatever he have said was cut off though by a knocking on Shane’s end. Faintly, Ilya could hear someone talking but not what they were saying.

“Shit, I have to go. Just, rest, lots of fluids, take care of yourself. Please.”

“I will. Go,” Ilya urged.

When the call ended Ilya flopped back on to the bed. A huge mistake apparently because his stomach again tried to rebel against him.

“Fuck,” he muttered into the empty room.

Eventually he managed to shuffle to the bathroom and then out to the kitchen in order to get some water. It felt like heave to drink. At least until it hit his stomach which began to churn miserably. With an irritated huff he abandoned the glass and started to head back towards the bedroom.

He only made it as far as the living room. Vearing off towards towards the couch when his legs started to grow weak. Collapsed on the section he let out an frustrated growl. He wasn’t

used to feeling this terrible and it was only getting worse.

Despite all the time spent traveling and around other people he never caught more than a cold. In fact he been this ill since he was a child.

A sudden lump formed in his throat and Ilya had to blink away tears as an unwanted memory slammed into him.

Sick and alone in his father's house. Curled up on the bathroom floor barely able to move.

His father had been gone, either to work or out looking for a new wife. Andrei had all but vanished in the months following their mother's death. Meaning most days Ilya was left to fend for himself. Something he had typically preferred. However, that day he had prayed for anyone to come and find him.

He'd even cried for his mother. Too feverish and exhausted to recall that she was gone.

Eventually it was the woman who had been hired to clean the house that found him. Who got him to a hospital where he spent two days. His father only arriving to take him home and to berate him for causing a fuss.

Ilya shook the memory off as best he could. It had been a long time ago and he wasn't a child anymore. He had lived on his own for nearly a decade and could take care of himself.

It would be fine.

At some point he must have fallen asleep on the couch. With a grimace Ilya had to peel his face off of the fake leather before he could sit up. Despite only being in a pair of sleep pants and a t-shirt he had started sweating in his sleep.

The motion of sitting up also sent the room spinning and a flare of aching pain through his body. Only once all the overwhelming sensations fade did Ilya notice what had likely woken him in the first place.

Yuna Hollander was by the front door. Shopping bags in hand and a duffel bag slung over her shoulder.

"Mrs. Hollander? Why are you here?"

Ilya's words slurred together as they tumbled out. Combined with his accent they probably sounded like nonsense.

Confused he watched Shane's mother set all her things down and hurry towards him. When she was close enough she reach for his face. Ilya flinched back before he could understand what was going on.

"Just checking how warm you are?" she explained carefully.

Again, slower, she reached for him. This time he held perfectly still, feeling foolish for having reacted like he had. Her fingers dragged across his forehead pushing some hair out of the way. When the back of her hand pressed against his skin Ilya's eyes fluttered shut. Her touch felt mercifully cool and he leaned into it without thinking.

"You are certainly running a fever. Have you had anything to eat or drink?"

Just the mention of food sent a faint wave of nausea through him. Slowly he shook his head. "Had some water. Food sounds awful."

"Oh, you really are sick if you don't want to eat," she teased.

Despite his misery Ilya couldn't help but smile. "Shocking, I know.

"I brought soup. We'll try just the broth and see how that sits." She moved her hand and gently patted his cheek. "But I'll get you something to drink first."

"You don't have to..." Ilya started to protest.

But Yuna had already turned and was walking away. Likely ignoring him instead arguing with him. Something that Shane did from time to time when he thought Ilya was being ridiculous.

Only then did it occur to him that Shane had to be the one to contact Yuna. How else could she have known he was there and sick?

Shane had called or texted his mother to tell her that Ilya was too sick to take care of himself. Then she had left whatever she had been doing and driven hours out to the cottage.

Embarrassment clawed up from Ilya's chest. He didn't want anyone seeing him like this. Least of all Shane's parents.

Despite the fact that they had kind of hated him for several years Ilya had, at least somewhat, won them over. All it took was a few dinners, a short Christmas visit, and loving their son. Ilya didn't need to ruin that by showing weakness and being a burden on them.

A plastic bottle being pressed into his hand cut off his train of thought.

"Small sips," Yuna instructed before heading back to the kitchen.

Ilya obeyed the order. She had given him some kind of sports drink that didn't really taste like anything. Though maybe that was for the best. At least it didn't seem to bother his stomach.

He made it about half through the bottle when Yuna returned. This time with a steaming bowl. Which actually smelled really good.

"Let it cool first. If it stays down we can try something more solid later."

"Thank you," Ilya told her.

While he couldn't exactly place the flavor the soup was delicious. Unfortunately, his body did not agree.

Halfway through the bowl a wave of nausea surged through him. Ilya managed to set the bowl down but when he went to stand his legs refused to lift him. He went to try again but then a small garbage can appeared in front of him.

Gratefully he took it. Barely having time to bend over it before the heaving started.

A hand pressed lightly against his back and began to rub circles. Yuna had sat down next to him, Ilya realized with another rush of embarrassment. She shouldn't have to see him being so weak and disgusting.

When the first wave of passed he lifted his head gasping a bit for air. Yuna was saying something to him but he couldn't quite catch it.

It occurred to him that he could ask her to go. At least to give him some space. But he couldn't bring himself to do it. Just the thought made something in his chest wither with terror.

He knew he was being needy, pathetic. It was just that he didn't know how to stop without making things worse. In that moment he couldn't stand the idea of being left alone.

By the time the retching finally stopped there were tears slipping down his face as a small, miserable whine slipped out of him. Ilya could practically see his father sneering at him. Knowing how repulsed the man would be by him.

When he wiped his eyes and looked Yuna though, Ilya was met with something thing completely different. Her face was filled with concern but she was also giving him a comforting smile.

"I'll get you some tissues. Give your mouth a rinse, alright?"

Her hand left his back and Ilya mourned the loss. She did give his leg a gentle pat before getting up though.

Ilya did as he'd been told. Glad to have at least some of the awful taste out of his mouth. When Yuna returned she gave him a little space to clean up before she cleared everything away.

"Do you want to move to the bedroom?"

He shook his head slowly. Sure he wanted to but his legs weren't up to the task of actually getting him anywhere.

"Legs are to weak," he explained.

Yuna frowned looking even more worried. "Alright, we'll make you comfortable out here then. David is coming up after work. I'll have him pick up some medication on the way. That should help."

“No,” Ilya croaked, “you should not. Is too much a...”

Even after years living in America, English was still difficult for him on a good day. In that moment it felt impossible to find the words he wanted to say. That he didn’t want to be a burden. That he had done nothing to deserve these peoples kindness.

“Ilya,” Yuna took his hand giving it a squeeze. “We’re happy to come out here. Besides no should be alone when their sick. Especially this sick.”

Tears sprung to Ilya’s eyes before he could stop himself.

“Oh, sweetheart,” Yuna gasped softly.

“Sorry,” he said quickly, “am being stupid.”

And he was. It was stupid and weak and childish to be acting like he was.

Another tissue is pressed into his free hand and Ilya swiped at his eyes before they spill over.

“You, Ilya Rozanov, are not stupid. You’re just overwhelmed and there’s nothing wrong with that.”

Yuna’s voice is some how both stern and incredibly gentle. While Ilya wasn’t exactly sure how that was possible he could appreciate it. There was a finality to her statements that made them feel like they must be true. Ilya even nodded to show he agreed, even if he didn’t exactly. Which then earned him another fond smile.

“I’m going to get some pillows and blankets. Then we’ll get you comfortable, alright?”

Eventually a stack of pillows and blankets were deposited on the couch. It took both of them and more effort than Ilya cared to admit but eventually he was settled comfortably. His head tucked into the bend of the L.

No longer trying to hold himself upright most of the tension and at least some of the ache left his body. A deep sigh escaped him as he let his head sink into the pillow.

To his surprise Yuna settled near him on the other side of the couch. “Do you mind if I turn on the TV.”

“Is fine,” Ilya mumbled already half asleep.

Unsurprisingly she found something that was talking about hockey. Ilya smiled just a little to himself. In his few interactions with the Hollanders it had become clear where Shane’s hockey obsession. In fact Yuna may have been even more of a hockey fanatic than her son.

Ilya let the show fade into background noise. Drifting closer to sleep until the sound of his own name grabbed his attention.

“Now what are they saying?”

“Just speculating on who you’ll sign with. Being terribly obvious with their guesses though.”

She gave Ilya a knowing look and he couldn’t help but smile back. “I have seen no one get it right, yet.”

“It’ll be a shock that’s for sure,” Yuna chuckled. “I’ve known for almost a year and can barely believe it.”

Disbelief had been the common reaction from the small number of people who knew. Ilya’s old agent had thought he’d lost his mind. Farah had been much more supportive when Ilya switched to her but still clearly confused by his choice.

In just a few weeks he would sign with the Centaurs and then many more people would be just as shocked and confused. Also very angry. When it had become clear he wasn’t staying with Boston fan had become upset. Ilya figure they would be furious once they found out where he was going.

“Many people will be upset. Will think I am disloyal.”

“Probably,” Yuna hummed, “but the fans here are going to be thrilled. I’m sure you’ll bring in plenty of new ones too.”

In time maybe. Ilya didn’t have any illusions about what it meant to join such a struggling team. The first season and maybe more was going to be rough. But even knowing that Ilya couldn’t help but smile.

“Whatever happens, is worth it.”

Yuna gave him a long look before her face softened. “You’re actually very sweet aren’t you?”

“Shh, don’t tell, is a secret.”

That really got Yuna laughing and she patted his arm, swearing it would stay between them.

The conversation died out after that. When sleep finally pulled Ilya under he was still smiling just a little.

Someone was trying to wake him.

“Ilya,” a deep voice rumbled.

He tried to open his eyes but they felt too heavy.

“Ilya!” the voice turned harsh, angry.

Father, Ilya’s mind supplied, he’ angry with me.

He forced his eyes open. Knowing that if he didn't respond quickly it would only make things worse.

A blurry figure stood over him. Ilya flinched away hard, sending sparks of pain through his body. Had his already been punished for something?

"Hey, hey," the figure crouched down slowly. "It's alright."

Not his father then. Father is dead, he remembered like a slap.

Ilya blinked several times letting his eyes start to focus. He found David Hollander looking back at him. Clearly worried.

"Sorry, Ilya. Didn't mean to yell but you weren't waking up. Had us a little scared."

"We need to take your temperature," Yuna said stepping into view. "Then we have some medication for you to take."

The words mostly made sense but it was hard to focus. Still after a moment it was clear they were waiting for him to respond. Ilya just nodded at them. Whatever got this over with fastest was fine. He desperately wanted to go back to sleep.

Something cool pressed into his ear and then beeped. He watched sleepily as the David and Yuna looked at the device she was holding.

"That's pretty high," David muttered. "He might need a hospital."

"No hospitals," Ilya grumbled. "I hate hospitals."

The couple looked up with clear confusion. "What was that?"

After a moment Ilya realized he had spoken in Russian. "No hospital," he said again.

Yuna gave him a sad smile and reached out, touching his forehead and gently brushing some of his hair away. Her cool touch felt like heaven.

"We'll try the medication first. But if you can't keep them down or get worse we may have to take you."

Ilya let out another groan but couldn't form the words, in Russian or English, to argue.

With some help from David he was able to sit up long enough to take a few pills. Yuna had him take a few sips of water before he laid back down. No sooner did his hand touch the pillow than Ilya was falling fast asleep.

"We'll be right here if you need us," was the last thing he heard.

The living room was light again the next time Ilya remembered waking. He shifted and stretched a little, feeling as if he hadn't moved for days. It still hurt to move but wasn't painful like it had been.

At the far end of the sectional David sat, intently reading a book. Ilya wondered how long had the man been there? Had someone stayed up with him for however long it was he'd been sleeping?

"Good morning," Ilya eventually greeted.

"Good morning," David replied, visibly brightening. "How are you feeling?"

Ilya considered the question. "Less awful. Slightly"

That got a laugh out of David. "Good to hear. The fever dropped over night. When Yuna checked about an hour ago it was pretty close to normal."

So they had been staying with him while he slept, checking on him. Ilya had to swallow around a lump in his throat before saying anything. "Ah, good," was still all he managed to get out.

"Do you feel like trying to eat something?"

To his surprise Ilya found that he really did.

The morning slipped into afternoon with Ilya sleeping on and off through it. He even managed to eat and drink without throwing up again.

Much to his embarrassment Ilya did need David's help getting to the bathroom. At least after that they were at least able to get him to bedroom. Which was massive improvement over the couch. Even if the bed was far too empty.

That night David and Yuna ate dinner in the bedroom with him. Despite the fact that Ilya insisted he was strong enough to make it too the kitchen.

The three of them sat around chatting even after they finished eating. About that time Ilya was struck by just how easy it was to being in their company.

Even though they didn't really know him the Hollanders included him without a second thought. They even left room in the conversation for when he struggled to find the right words.

"You know once you've moved we'd be happy to show you around Ottawa," Yuna casually offered.

"Oh, that would be nice," Ilya replied trying to be polite.

He knew he wouldn't take them up on the offer. It really was nice of them but he wasn't going to start bothering them even if they were close.

"Yuna will want to see whatever place you end up getting. She'll have plenty of decorating ideas for you."

Yuna made an offended sound but then smiled. "I really would like to see it. I'll try not to bother you too much about the decor."

"We'll have to have you over for dinner once and a while too," David continued. "I can make chicken parmesan. You liked that last time right?"

Ilya blinked looking between the two of them not sure what was happening. Why would they have remembered something like that? Especially when it had happened nearly a year ago.

Eventually he had to respond so he gave a slow nod. "Yes, it was delicious."

David beamed while his wife gave him a look that Ilya couldn't figure out.

"Here give me your phone," Yuna said reaching out. "I'll give you our numbers so you can text or call us if you need anything. Or even if you just get bored."

David laughed as Yuna added their contacts. "Hopefully you won't mind a pair of empty nesters in your life."

While he didn't fully understand the meaning he got the idea. For some reason they wanted to spend time with him. Even if Shane wouldn't always be there.

Maybe he shouldn't have gotten so excited before anything actually happened but he couldn't stop the warmth that was starting bloom in his chest. Surprisingly he found that he didn't want to stop it.

"I would not mind at all," Ilya said smiling back at them.

After sleeping most of the day Ilya struggled to sleep that night. His mind was too restless to really doze off but his body was too tired to get up and do anything.

Once dinner was over he'd finally texted Shane but hadn't gotten a response. A fact that he tried not to be bothered by. Most likely his boyfriend was fast asleep in Toronto before leaving early in the morning.

What he wanted even more than Shane though was a damn shower. He felt disgusting but didn't trust his leg to hold him up long enough to take one. It was a problem he was staring at the dark ceiling trying to solve when he heard the bedroom door click.

The door slowly opened and Ilya managed to sit up just in time to see Shane's head poke it.

"Hey," he whispered.

“Shane, what are... You not supposed to...”

Grinning Shane slipped into the room. “I caught an earlier flight and drove right out. You weren’t texting and Mom was being really vague. I was worried you might be dying.”

He moved across the room dropping his bag as he went. When he reached Ilya’s side of the bed he leaned in for a kiss.

“No,” Ilya stopped him even if it was painful. “I am gross right now.”

“Don’t care. I missed you.”

Shane pressed a gentle kiss to Ilya’s lips that sent an entirely new ache through the Russian. When they pulled apart both of them were smiling.

“Missed you too,” Ilya quietly admitted.

“Do you forgive me for sigging my parents on you? I know they can be a lot sometimes but I was worried.”

“It was not so bad. Like you have said, they are the best.”

As usual he lacked the English to say everything he wanted to. To explain how much it meant that Shane’s parents dropped everything to come look after someone they barely knew. How kind they had been. That even if Ilya didn’t understand why the Hollanders seemed genuinely excited he was moving to Ottawa. And for some reason they wanted to spend time with him.

Ilya had hoped that he would be welcomed into the family as Shane’s boyfriend. But for them to want him was more than he could have imagined.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” Shane was leaning in again.

His thumb trailed along Ilya’s cheek bone leaving a wet streak. Tears, Ilya realized.

“Nothing,” Ilya insisted. “Things have just been, a lot.”

A sad but understanding fell over Shane’s face. He stroked Ilya’s cheek again before pressing a soft kiss into his curls.

“Let me get changed and we can get some sleep.”

“You do not need to sleep here,” Ilya insisted. “I really am gross.”

To his relief for once Shane didn’t listen. He just rolled his eyes and turned away to undress. At least Ilya got a great view of him changing. Though he mourned the fact he lacked the energy to do more than just watch.

“It is a tragedy,” Ilya complained when Shane finally climbed into bed.

“What is?”

“Finally have you in a bed for first time in weeks and can do nothing about it.”

Shane just laughed. “Even if you could my parents are right across the hall.”

“Eh, we would not be too loud. If you could keep quite for once.”

Disgust twisted Shane’s face and it was Ilya’s turn to laugh. Shane didn’t acknowledge the comment any further. Instead he settled into bed tugging Ilya against him. When Shane’s arms wrapped around him Ilya immediately melted into the embrace. Burying his face against Shane’s chest.

“You’ll be better soon and we’ll have plenty of time.”

Most of the summer Ilya reminded himself. He let himself sink into that reassurance. Into the warmth of Shane’s body against his and the deep sense that this was home.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Yuna's POV of the main story.

Life was full of many strange turns, often taking you where you least expected. Yuna Hollander was no stranger to that fact. But that didn't mean she wasn't still occasionally caught off guard by just how bizarre things sometimes got.

For a while she had been sure the oddest thing to happen would be watching Shane compete in the Olympics. Not in a surprising way, she knew how skilled her son was, but that hadn't made it any less surreal. But then Shane had turned up the previous summer with Ilya Rozanov of all people in tow. Informing his parents that not only was he gay but had been seeing the Russian in secret, *for years*.

After the initial shock, disbelief, and then concern Yuna had largely been thrilled. At first she was simply happy that Shane had found someone. Both she and David were aware that their son struggled to form close connections with people. It was why she had been a bit pushy about things with Rose Landry. Though she felt a foolish about it now.

Granted there was still the Rozanov of it all.

Yuna wasn't sure if Shane could have bought home anyone more unexpected. The arrogant, loud mouth Russian seemed so unlike her son that Yuna couldn't picture them being together. At least at first. Once she had really seen them together it had become clear how much they cared for each other. The way they looked at one another and how quickly Ilya jumped to reassure Shane. Helping prevent what would have likely been a panic attack.

Even though she still didn't fully understand it there was no doubt how much they loved each other. And she'd sworn that first day she would do everything in her power to support the both of them. To the point that nearly a year later, when Shane called her half panicked because Ilya was alone at the cottage and sick, Yuna hadn't hesitated to head straight there.

Which was how she ended up watch the giant Russian sleep fitfully on her son's couch.

It was hard to tell what to make of the whole situation. Ilya was very sick, likely the flu or something along those lines, and seemed to still be in the getting worse portion of it. It wasn't too concerning yet but Yuna's mind was already planning.

She'd already sent David a list of things to pick up on his way there. Medications that would likely help the symptoms and a thermometer to know how bad the fever actually was being

the priorities. Worst case scenarios were also playing out in her mind. For example. what would happen if they need a hospital?

Being the mother of an athlete, especially a hockey player, she was no stranger to emergency rooms. But they'd only once ended up there for an illness. Shane had only been four when he'd developed pneumonia and needed to be rushed to the hospital in the middle of the night. The memory of her son struggling to breath, hooked up to an IV and oxygen, looking so small in that hospital bed, haunted Yuna even plus twenty years later.

Things had all been fine in the end but the idea of having to take someone else just as sick in was bringing that all back. It didn't help that if they had to take Ilya things would be much more complicated. Complications she was trying to work out when her phone dinged.

She smiled at yet another message from her son. He'd been texting for updates sporadically. Which was likely when he got a chance during the filming or photo shoot he was doing.

How are things?

His messages had all been generic. Maybe Shane was worried someone might catch a glimpse of his phone. As always Yuna felt a very particular sadness, bordering on grief, when she was reminded just how careful and secretive both of the boys needed to be.

Good, she responded, he's resting.

In fairness to her son she was also being very unspecific. If Shane knew just how sick Ilya was he would just worry even more. Even though he'd done all he could for the moment. Later, once Ilya was getting better, Yuna would be sure to tell Shane he'd done the best thing by calling her.

Thinking of Ilya alone at the house, weak as he currently was, made her feel almost ill. She's meant it when she'd told him that no one should be alone when they were sick. Not that she'd expected the comment to make him tear up. All she'd wanted was for him to know that looking after him was no trouble. His reaction, several of his reactions frankly, weren't sitting well with her.

Outside of the basics there was very little that she knew about his life outside of hockey. Admittedly she had done some research after Shane had properly introduced them. Not that it told her much beyond basic facts. He'd grown up mostly in Moscow. His mother had died in some sort of accident when he was young, his father had passed more recently. There was a brother but not much information about him. There was a lot to find about the various women he'd been seen with but nothing that ever seemed serious. No obvious personal connections.

If he and Shane weren't together and he'd been in Boston still when he got sick, who would he have asked for help? Would he even ask someone for help? It seemed more likely he was used to looking after himself. His surprise and confusion about her and David being there and helping him made her wonder if he wasn't used to help being offered. At least not for things like this.

Old memories bubbled up from Shane's childhood. There had been so many people, both other children and adults, who had little to no interest in him outside of hockey. It never seemed to bother him since that was always his top priority. Yuna though, had been left heart broken knowing so few people cared about him beyond his ability to play the sport. She couldn't help but wonder if things had been similar for Ilya.

But things were different now. Shane had made good friends. She and David had met J.J., Hayden and his family, along with other players from the Voyagers. All of whom seemed to really care for Shane. Hopefully Ilya also had good friends. At the very least he had Shane and now that he was going to be in Ottawa he would have Yuna and David too.

As the afternoon wore on Ilya slept like the dead. Never even stirring when Yuna touched his forehead to check his temperature. Which she was certain had been climbing. It was a relief when she finally saw David drive up.

"How's he doing?" David asked after pressing a quick kiss to Yuna's cheek.

"Worse," she admitted. "But he's been sleeping at least."

They both moved quietly into the kitchen so Yuna could unpack the shopping bag her husband had brought. Across the kitchen island David chuckled to himself.

"What?" Yuna asked glancing up at him.

"Didn't think we'd be taking care of a sick kid again. Not until we were grandparents at least."

"Ilya's hardly a kid. He turned twenty-seven two weeks ago."

David smirked. "You know his birthday?"

"Shane mentioned it when we were talking the other day. Though we should have added it to the calendar already."

None of Shane's previous relationships had lasted long enough for them to worry about things like that. This time it was clearly different.

The smirk didn't leave David's face and Yuna didn't much feel like dealing with whatever he was thinking. "Go wake him up. I'll bring this stuff out."

"Yes, ma'am."

As he left Yuna checked to make sure the thermometer worked before gathering up the medication and another drink. Out in the living room she heard David talking low. When she stepped out David met her eyes over the couch. Worry clear on his face.

"Ilya," he called a little louder, "I need you to wake up."

As he reached down, likely to try and shake Ilya awake, Yuna moved faster to get to them.

“Ilya!” David’s voice took a sharper almost panicked tone.

Yuna felt her stomach plummet as she came around the couch. Terrified she’d underestimated just how sick Ilya was.

Mercifully Ilya’s eyes opened. Only for them to go wide with alarm as he flinched back away from David. Yuna froze for a moment surprised but the reaction. Ilya said something that Yuna wasn’t close enough to hear.

“Hey, hey, it’s alright.” David said calmly. “Sorry, Ilya. Didn’t mean to scare you but you weren’t waking up. Had us a little scared.”

He’d crouched down likely to seem less imposing. Though it had to be hard on his knees. When he glanced at her, Yuna started moving again.

“We need to take your temperature. Then we have some medication for you to take.”

Having learned her lesson for the first time and didn’t just reach for him without permission. The last thing they needed was to scare him again. Ilya blinked slowly up at them for a moment before he gave a small nod.

Neither of them were happy with what the reading came out as. They shared a worried look before David spoke.

“That’s pretty high. He might need a hospital.”

By then Ilya must have been more alert because he immediately said something in response to that. Though it was in Russian.

“What was that?” Yuna asked.

“No hospital,” he said.

There was no mistaking the worry on his face. In that moment Yuna desperately wanted to wrap him in a hug and reassure him that everything would be fine. But she didn’t know him that well yet or what he was comfortable with. So instead she smiled at him and carefully brushed away the curls that had stuck to his forehead. At least she knew he’d been alright with before.

It seemed to help. He leaned into the touch just as he had earlier that day and his expression softened. Yuna couldn’t deny the way it made her heart swell. Still even though it pained her a little she needed to be honest with him.

“We’ll try some medication first. But if you can’t keep them down or get worse we may have to take you.”

Ilya groaned with displeasure but didn’t argue.

“Come on, big guy,” David chuckled. “Let’s sit you up so it’s easier to take this stuff.”

It took some help but Ilya managed to take everything along with a few drinks. They laid him back down and he was drifting off almost instantly.

“Well be right here if you need us,” Yuna assured him whether he could hear her or not.

Had it been Shane or David laying there she would have kissed their forehead or temple. For Ilya she instead fussed over the blanket to make sure he was covered and then ran hand over the crown of his head before letting him be.

When she returned to the kitchen she found David tapping at his phone. Yuna watched him as she started to clean up. Only to see the focused look on his face suddenly darken.

“David, what?”

He looked up at her with a strange mixture of anger and something else. “When I woke Ilya up he jerked away. Like he thought I might hurt him.”

Yuna gave him a slow nod. When she’d tried to touch him earlier without warning he’d flinched away. So in retrospect his response to David wasn’t that surprising. She had tried to brush it off as them just startling him but there had been a brief flash of fear both times on his face that worried her.

“He said something, in Russian. I was curious so I was trying to look it up. And, I don’t know maybe I’m wrong but...”

Stopping what she was doing Yuna moved closer to David as he rambled. When she looked at his phone she read.

Otets (Ahtyets)- formal word for father.

“I could be wrong,” he repeated.

David didn’t sound like he believed what he said and neither did Yuna. Instead of responding to that Yuna simply said, “His father passed away last year.”

“Ah,” was all David said, though it sounded as if he meant, good.

Both of them stayed quite for a while. Making themselves busy around the kitchen while clearly thinking deeply.

“We should make sure he has our numbers,” Yuna eventually said. “Just in case. Maybe have him over for dinner or something. Once Shane leaves for training he won’t know anyone here.”

David stopped whatever he was doing and moved to stand behind her. Wrapping his arms around her he pulled her back against his chest. “You’ve already adopted him haven’t you?”

“Yes, so you better get on board.”

All David did was laugh and squeeze her tight.

They took shifts over night sitting up with Ilya. Once his fever started to decline it was probably unnecessary but Yuna hated the idea of him waking up alone.

It was a huge relief to watch him recover over the next day. And even though he slept a good part of the time there were plenty of chances for them to chat. Not about anything in particular but it was nice to get to know Ilya as he finally seemed to relax around them.

With the fever gone there were no more instances of them scaring him. It seemed under normal circumstances whatever caused those reaction was less of an issue. Though Yuna doubted she would forget about it any time soon and swore to be careful with him.

During dinner it broke her heart all over again when Ilya seemed so confused and surprised by there offer to spend time with him. But Yuna told herself that with time he'd understand he was already part of the family. She would make sure of it.

Yuna was fast asleep in one of the guest rooms when the bed moving woke her.

“What?” she grumbled.

“Someone’s here,” David said as he shuffled across the room.

When he pulled back the curtain the room was dimmly lit by the motion sensor light from outside. David made an amused sound before letting the curtain fall back in place. Then he shuffled back to bed.

“Our son is here.”

From the bed side table Yuna’s phone told her it was nearly three in the morning. She was not the least bit surprised.

“He must have caught an earlier flight.”

“Of course he did,” David sighed. “Well that means when should probably head out first thing. Give them some alone time.”

Under the covers Yuna swatted playfully at him but she agreed. The boys should have as much time together as they could before Ilya became busy with switching teams and moving.

It struck her again how wildly unfair the whole situation was. There was no doubt left in her how much Shane and Ilya loved each other. Something as beautiful as that shouldn’t have to be hidden. If she let herself she could rage for days at all the forces in the world that aligned against their happiness. But she chose to focus on what was in her control.

One day things would be better for her boys. Until then she and David would love and support them the best that they could.

End Notes

Thanks for reading!!!

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