angel, can't you see?

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by beartrap (osmanthusmoon)

Summary

Shane and Ilya's daughter loses her first junior hockey game. Well versed in the experience of high expectations and difficult losses, they guide her through it.

Notes

└┈➤ title from: angel by first aid kit

to commemorate the premiere of the series, i present: domestic fluff and supportive fathers hollanov. watching eps 1&2 had me tense af, but it was so satisfying to see these characters come to life.

notes:
- this takes place a while after the long game, in which hollanov are in their forties and probably retired.
- the names for their kids were hastily chosen, if anyone has better suggestions lmk.
- how they obtained such kids are up to the reader; could be mpreg, adoption, or spontaneously, i did not elaborate

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane winced to himself as he watched his daughter shove her duffel bag into the backseat of the car, trying to find the words that could possibly make her feel better at the moment, but coming up short.

He watched with a heavy heart as she avoided his gaze, face scrunched up as she attempted to keep the frustrated tears at bay.

"Honey—" he tried, but his attempt at comfort was met with her downcast eyes as she ignored him, rushing herself into the backseat of the car and closing the door shut with a hard slam.

Shane looked helplessly from the door of the backseat to his husband, at a loss for what to do. Ilya merely shook his head, mouthing, *give her time* as he himself walked to the other side of the car. Their son, who was still strapped to Ilya's chest, was blissfully unaware of his sister's mood, and played with his father's thick beard as he was lowered into his car seat.

The ride home was silent, completely unexpected from the outcome that both Shane and Ilya had hoped following Alina's first official junior hockey game. Shane and Ilya had prepared for a victory celebration, and had even bought a cake for the occasion (a decision that Shane was sorely regretting at the moment). Tonight was supposed to be a good night.

For some reason, he'd never actually considered the idea that her team might lose the game, and he wished that he knew what to say to make the sting of the loss not burn as much. He'd watched her practice for weeks with her teammates, watched her confidence build as she honed in her skills. They had been so certain— *she* had been so certain— that her team would win.

But no matter how good she had gotten, and no matter what advantage she had from her parents' careers, she was still a fifteen year old girl; one that was prone to mistakes, anger, and heartbreak.

Shane wished that he could tell her that this game didn't mean much, or that she would no doubt win the next one, but he knew that wouldn't have been true. It was an important game for Alina, even if it was just junior hockey. It was her first real game, the first real opportunity to prove herself to her team, to her parents, and to herself. And Shane knew that this was a loss that would be difficult to stomach, perhaps just as difficult as it was for him to lose the first draft pick to Ilya, back when his career was just starting and he had felt like he was on top of the world.

Their son, Alan, babbled to himself, and Shane could see from the rear view mirror as Alina pulled her hood over her face, shoulders shaking. Her brother reached out to her in curiosity, but she didn't respond even to him.

Shane had never been very good at comforting other people— his words didn't come out right, and when they did, they sounded awkward even to his own ears. Especially when it came to losing important games, since if he couldn't handle his emotions in such a situation, how could he guide his daughter through the same thing?

Parenthood had only made his own inadequacies clearer to him, but before he could beat himself up about it too much, he felt a large hand lay atop his own. He looked up to his side and Ilya gave him a small smile. Shane felt bad, They were supposed to be comforting their daughter, not Shane. He was the adult, not a child that needed their insecurity to be tended to. But another part of him was a bit relieved. Parenthood was difficult for Shane, but he wasn't doing it alone. He had Ilya, and in more ways than one, they were a team. Ilya was a great father, and where Shane's shortcomings began, Ilya's expertise made sure that their mistakes wouldn't pull them under.

Shane gave a weak smile back, and parked in the driveway of Ilya's Ottawa house that had become their family home. As soon as he had unlocked the doors to the car, Alina was unbuckling her seatbelt and running into the house, no doubt to hole away in her room.

Though she looked more like Shane, she was much like Ilya in that aspect: always wanting to be seen as strong, and hiding the vulnerability away until she was able to break down away from prying eyes. After they had lost, her team and the other parents had wanted to go out for a conciliatory dinner to celebrate their first game regardless of victory or loss, but Alina had staunchly refused. Shane knew that she was barely holding on to her tears for her friends, who saw her as their best player, but while they saw someone who had tried her best, Shane knew that Alina saw someone who had failed.

Shane and Ilya sat for a moment, watching her hunched back as she left the door open behind her, and it seemed that the sigh they let out was collective.

"She was so confident this morning, too." Shane sighed again, eyes sad.

"*We* were so confident."

Ilya nodded in agreement.

"I mean, what do we even say? We were the ones that have been hyping her up, I don't want this to crush her resolve. She's so much more than today's play."

"She knows that," Ilya responded.

"She just needs some time to process. Take Alan and put him down for his nap, I will talk to her."

The surety in Ilya's voice calmed Shane down some. If anyone could get through to their daughter, it would be Ilya. That was one of the things that Shane loved the most about him—that underneath that hulking frame and intimidating presence, Ilya was a soft man who did anything to keep his loved ones happy.

Shane leaned forward to give him a kiss, feeling the bristling sensation of his beard against his own clean shaven jaw.

"We should really hide that cake," Shane implored, resting his forehead against Ilya's.

Ilya shook his head, laughing wryly.

"Just scrape the words off of the top. We can keep the cake, she will want it later."

"If you're sure."

"I am."

Ilya's daughter was much like his Shane: an impressive overachiever, and an impossible overthinker.

After he, Shane and Alan had entered the house, Ilya had waited a good half an hour before he made a beeline for Alina's room. He'd given her time to get all of her feelings out, but if she was anything like Shane (and she very much was, even if his husband said that she was more like Ilya), she would need someone to keep the negative thoughts from consuming her.

He knocked on her door once, and waited for a response. Nothing, but he could hear the faint sound of sniffling from within the room.

He knocked again. Again, no response.

He gave one last knock before speaking to her through the door.

"Sweetheart? Is Papa. I am coming in."

When there was no objection, he pushed the door open to find Alina curled up at the foot of her bed, with her knees up to her face and her head bowed between them. A little bark came from the gap between her legs, and Ilya saw Anya's familiar snout appear from where she was cuddled up with Alina. Good, at least she was not completely alone with her thoughts.

Ilya sat across from his daughter, waiting for her to broach the subject so that he knew what was on her mind. He clicked his tongue towards Anya, and urged her towards him. She came out from within Alina's legs, and tilted her head up for Ilya to pat. She was getting on in the years, and had a lot more white fur on her face than when he first got her, but Anya was still as loving as ever.

As Ilya pet Anya, he took a cursory look around the room. It looked like a tornado had whirled through it, with all of Alina's belongings strewn throughout the space in what must have been a cathartic but destructive release of negative feelings. Ilya couldn't exactly blame her, since back in the day his own anger would be taken out on the ice, on the nearest opponent that had goaded him following a loss.

It took another few minutes before Alina finally raised her head, and Ilya's heart ached at the sight of her. She looked so much like Shane, with the array of freckles smattered across her face and with dark eyes that couldn't quite hide their emotions. Her curly black hair had been ripped out of it's ponytail, and now hung damp and frizzy in her face. Her entire face was red from crying, and when her eyes met with Ilya's and inevitably filled up with tears again, he didn't waste a moment before gathering her into his arms, cradling her as if she were still a baby.

It seemed as though the half hour hadn't been quiet enough, because as soon as Ilya hugged her against him, Alina began to cry again, this time more openly.

"I-I'm sorry, Papa. I failed." She sobbed against his chest, and Anya gave a confused yip at the sight.

Ilya shook his head, then when he remembered that she couldn't see him, he comforted her through words that she hoped she'd understand.

"Not fail. You did not work this hard to 'fail,' you gave your best. Nobody can guess how a game turns out, and even though your opposing team was strong, you were strong too."

She made a noise of disagreement.

"I should have made that pass to Cathy instead of keeping the puck. Coach was yelling at me to but I thought I could handle it. If I had just passed it—"

"If that is what you think you need to improve, Dad and I will practice with you. Don't focus too much on wanting to change the past, acknowledge your weakness and improve on it for the next game."

Her tears had dried some, and Ilya reached out to brush the hair out of her face. She was pouting, and didn't seem quiet convinced by his words.

"I let everyone down. You, dad. Coach. My teammates probably think I'm selfish."

"They don't think that you are selfish. They are probably just as sad as you are. And Dad and I are not disappointed. We are proud." Ilya said with conviction, and she made a face at that.

"But I lost."

"How good of a player you are is not erased by one loss. I have seen you work hard. So has Dad, Coach, and your friends. You are more than the game, whether you win or lose."

"That's easy for you to say. You've won a Stanley Cup, and so has Dad."

Ilya snorted at that.

"You do not think Papa has lost any games? Just look up the statistics of my first few years with the Centaurs."

She seemed to forget her tears for a moment, and leveled Ilya with an unimpressed look that reminded him so much of his husband. He almost laughted aloud.

"That's different. You can make yourself not care about those losses, you've got so many more achievements in comparison. I don't."

"Those losses did matter to me, but I did not let them define my career."

Ilya thought back to when he was still a rookie, and his countless losses to Shane. He though about how he had lost that crucial game in Sochi. It had crushed him, and his father's incessant criticism hadn't made things easier. At the time, he had felt as though he had failed his mother with that loss, but in the end, it had only driven him to work harder and win the Stanley Cup for her.

Alina nodded in understanding as he told her about the experience, and by that point, her eyes had dried up. She rubbed them tiredly, and he pressed a kiss to her forehead.

"I know you are putting a lot of pressure on yourself to impress everybody. I understand a little, my papa also had high expectations. But you need to remind yourself: you are playing hockey because you like it, not because your fathers are Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov."

"I am playing hockey for myself. I love it. But I also feel like everybody is expecting me to be as good as you and Dad. I want to live up to my name, but I just feel like a dud after today."

Ilya had feared that such was the case— as confident and optimistic as his daughter was, she was still a child following in the footsteps of her superstar parents. They were big shoes to fill, much too big for a fifteen year old who had barely started her career. He knew that if Shane knew about this, his heart would break. For as much pressure as Ilya had been under, Shane had been under just as much, and Ilya knew that the thought of their daughter experiencing even a fraction of the stress he had, would hurt him.

But he'd tell Shane in time, since they were a team. For now, he did his best to reassure his daughter, who had turned around in his arms to play with Anya.

"You are Alina Hollander-Rozanova. You already live up to your name, and I am sure that by the time you play professionally, you will surpass it."

"You really think so?"

"I do not doubt."

"Thanks, Papa."

She had finally stopped sniffling, and Ilya let her go to retrive a napkin from the box that rested on her desk.

He made a big show of looking around the room, lightening the mood.

"Redecorating, I see."

Alina let out a hoarse laugh.

"No, no. Really, I love what you have done with the place. Lots of… personality."

"Haha. Very funny. Don't worry, I'll clean it up."

"I will help you, to finish it quick. Dad will have a heart attack if he sees." He raised his eyebrows and wiggled them in mock worry, and a matching smile grew on his face as Alina laughed again. Yes, she really was a lot like his Shane.

The talk had gone better than Shane expected. Ilya had emerged from their daughter's room with both Alina and Anya in tow, and though Alina's face was puffy and eyes were still swollen, the atmosphere was completely different from the one she had come home with. Shane gave him a questioning look as Alina sat at the dinner table, to which Ilya responded with a wink.

Shane's unease dissipated, and he waited till Ilya joined him in the kitchen before asking any questions. His husband made his way over to the sink, preparing their plates and utensils.

"How is she taking it?"

"Not well, but that is to be expected. I told her about Sochi, and she felt a bit better. Will still be upset, but she will overcome."

Shane could have kissed him silly if he weren't holding a hot baking dish full of food. Though they usually steered towards more healthy options for the kids' sake, Shane had wanted to indulge a bit to celebrate Alina's game, and had made her favorite chicken parmesan.

"You are the best."

"At hockey? Yes, I know."

The self-absorbed response made Shane roll his eyes, and he watched as Ilya carried their washed plates to the dinner table.

Ilya stage-whispered before he left,

"After dinner, we bring out the cake. She will be happy."

Soon he followed Ilya out of the kitchen, just in time for the doorbell to ring. It was Shane's parents, coming to congratulate their granddaughter on her first game. Shane had texted them about the situation after they'd come home, and had invited them over knowing that if Ilya had not been able to get through to Alina, their daughter couldn't possibly be upset for too long in the presence of Yuna Hollander.

Ilya opened the door for Shane's parents, and his mother hadn't done so much as give Shane a greeting before she was hugging her granddaughter, gushing about the game she had played and how much she reminded her of Shane.

Yuna's energy was infectious, and Alina's tentative smile had widened as she talked with her grandmother. The last of Shane's worry melted away, and he ushered everybody to the table.

Dinner was a pleasant affair, and Alina was in brighter spirits than earlier. She ate two helpings of the chicken parmesan, no doubt famished after the game and all of that crying, and conversed with Yuna and David as she usually did.

After everyone had eaten, Ilya went back into the kitchen to bring out the cake. Shane had done his best to scoop out the icing words *'1st WIN,'* but had decided to leave the *CONGRATULATIONS* intact. He watched Alina's face carefully as she saw the cake, worried that they had made the wrong decision.

At first, there was a flicker in her eyes, but then she looked from Ilya to Shane, to her grandparents, to her little brother reaching for the cake eagerly from his highchair. The furrow in her brow smoothed out, and she gave everyone a wide, giddy smile, one that Shane found himself reciprocating effortlessly.

He got out of his seat and hugged her tight.

"I know today didn't turn out perfect, but you did amazing. I am so proud of you." He kissed the top of her head, and she squeezed him tighter.

"I know. Thanks for cheering me on, Dad. I love you."

Shane felt heat prick behind his eyes, but he tamped it down as Ilya began cutting the cake. Alina scraped a bit of frosting from the side and wagged it in front of Alan's face, watching as he attempted to grab her finger and stuff it into his own mouth. Ilya's booming laugh followed.

"I love you too. Always."

End Notes

did not expect to get flashed by connors fat ass in ep 1 but i can't say that i'm complaining.

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