

hold your hand through plastic now

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by [shaneshole \(MuddieBuddies\)](#)

Summary

Male carriers are a rare breed in North America. With only .005% of the male population having the recessive gene. In Canada there are a couple hundred male pregnancies documented each year with only half of them carrying to full term.

Shane Hollander was one of the .005%. He just didn't know it.

or;

the angsty Shane Hollander mpreg fic

Notes

hello so hollanov has taken over my life. All I can think of is impregnating shane hollander. Fic is mostly written so I should be updating a few chapters this week.

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

Chapter 1

Male carriers are a rare breed in North America. With only .005% of the male population having the recessive gene. In Canada there are a couple hundred male pregnancies documented each year with only half of them carrying to full term.

Shane Hollander was one of the .005%. He just didn't know it.

His parents had never found it necessary to get him tested for it, especially when he was older. He'd had many girlfriends—well a few but still they had no reason to believe it was ever going to be an issue and by the time Shane met Ilya the thought hadn't crossed his mind. And if he was honest they'd used condoms most of the time and from what he remembered in his health class was even males carriers still only had a 10% of conceiving after unprotected sex since they didn't have regular menstrual cycles like women.

A man's cycle only lasts one day and there wasn't the typical uterine shedding so Shane never noticed. And Ilya hadn't either. So they continued to fuck raw on occasion. One specific occasion.

On June 17th, 2025 the Ottawa Centaurs won their second Stanley Cup.

And Ilya and Shane had quite the celebration. The whole night honestly was homoerotic for them basically foreplay. They had played such a great game. It was close too and they even went into overtime. Thankfully Shane made the assist to Ilya who scored the game winning goal and of course they crashed into each other.

Their lips found each other like the puck found the back of the net. It wasn't a sloppy make out or anything but it was more than a quick peck. It didn't last too long however because they were soon bombarded by the rest of their team.

And the rest of the night was a blur more or less. Shane really only remembers drinking lots of champagne and of course vodka. Usually Shane didn't drink but when you win the Stanley

Cup it just happens—drinks or shots are usually shoved in your face so of course they get drunk.

And they did—drink that is. They also partied until they made it back to their hotel room and this part Shane does remember because it's where Ilya took him apart. Completely and thoroughly fucked him. It was very much reciprocated.

June 2025

“I'm fucking a Stanley Cup winner.” Ilya said between hard thrusts and panting.

Shane scoffed, “I already have three cups under my belt before this—”

“Yeah but none with me.” Ilya's cock was ruthless fucking in and out of him while Shane was fucked into the hotel mattress. Face down, ass up in the air. Ilya's hands gripping into his hips using him like a fleshlight. “This is best one.”

Shane loved this. Being stuffed and filled and used by his husband. God he still couldn't get over the fact they were married and both Ottawa Centaurs and just won their first Stanley Cup together.

“Fuck—” Shane murmured as his hole was fluttering around Ilya's cock. The position he was in didn't really allow him to touch his own aching dick but he really didn't mind it right now because he could feel the intense heat that was his prostate being worked over as Ilya's cockhead caught on it with each grind of his hips. The pleasure began to ceremoniously build and he was completely gone for it.

There was a heat in his gut that could only come from him coming untouched. It wasn't something that he could achieve often but the vigor with which Ilya was fucking him mixed with the adrenaline from their win was enough to let him feel everything. The small pin pricks as his body inched closer to the edge of release. It was never a quick buildup, it wasn't needy and desperate but more of a slow and syrupy kind of one. Yes he needed it but he also thoroughly enjoyed the feeling and relaxed into it. Feeling Ilya's cock twitch inside him making them both a little weak in the knees.

“Ohhh—that’s it Hollander, come on my cock. You’re so close.” Ilya cooed. It wasn’t filthy or dirty the way Ilya spoke to him, despite the last name drop. It was full of love, praise and adoration. Encouraging him.

“You—first…” Shane said breathlessly.

“No. You. Is my reward for winning goal.”

“Okay and what about my assist.” Ilya pulled his body in and started to move at a much slower pace. Teasing Shane. Ilya knew his body in and out and that this calculated rhythm was putting more pressure on his prostate that would tip him over the edge. Soon.

“Fuck you.”

“I am.”

Ilya groaned.

“Same time.” Shane suggested knowing that making it a challenge instead of a competition would be enough to convince Ilya.

“Mhm”

Then Shane felt the warm sensations beginning to flood his body. And he was rendered almost speechless as he continued to babble ‘ah’s’ and ‘oh’s’ with each new thrust.

“How about I let you score this time and I will assist.”

Shane wanted to object—to pull back or flip them over, to take the control, wrap his legs around Ilya forcing him to come in his ass but there were two problems with that. One, Shane was too far gone and nothing was going to stop him from reaching the finish line now and two, Ilya's firm grip on him was keeping him perfectly locked into place.

“Ah—fuck.” Shane gasped in Ilya's ear.

His body teetered closer to the release and now he was at the precipice. It wasn't a quick finish but a more drawn out one as each wave of his orgasm lit through his body and with each zap a little bit of cum dribbled out of his slit and onto his chest pooling on the sheet below.

“Ilya—” Shane rasped.

“I know moy lyubimyy.” Ilya's own climax was right there as well. Ilya continued to pick up speed chasing his own release—milking Shane for every last drop of cum he'd had stored in his balls until he was spent and blissed out bordering on overstimulation. But he loved it. The grunts and coos that spilled from Ilya's lips as he finished. The twitch of his cock in his hole. The warm rush of cum flooding his insides. Dripping down the backs of his thighs. Nothing compared to this feeling except maybe being on the ice.

Once Ilya has finished and pulled out. He swiped his tongue against the back of Shane's legs and his abused hole. Slurping up any of the forlorn cum.

“Mm” Ilya hummed.

Once Shane was finally licked and sucked clean despite whatever cum lingered inside him. Ilya lay on his back and Shane cuddled up on his chest.

“I bet we are the first to do that.” Ilya muttered.

“Do what?”

“Fuck.”

“Umm—I’m sure other winners have fucked after their Stanley Cup win.”

“Sure.” He paused and pulled Shane in to look at him directly in his warm eyes. “-but not as husbands *and* teammates.”

Shane’s heart pounded against his ribcage. And Ilya leaned in, capturing Shane’s lips in a tender and loving kiss.

When he pulled back Shane just smiled. “Okay you’re right but can we also be the second? I really wanna win again next year too.”

Ilya chuckled. “I expect it and no coming untouched till we win again.”

Shane gasped.

“You wouldn’t.”

Ilya responded by smirking and rubbing a thumb over his lips. “Guess you will find out, Hollander. Better start practicing if you want to get game winning goal next year.”

“Fuck you.”

“Tomorrow. Sleep now superstar.” Shane grinned.

Ilya kissed his temple then rolled back onto his pillow.

They were both spent and ready to succumb to the exhaustion.

“Ya tebya lyublyu.”

“I love you always.” Ilya replied and gathered Shane’s bruised knuckles, pressing a soft kiss to them before sleep finally took over.

July 2025

It was late July and the Irina Foundation was in their second week of hockey camp. The first week in Ottawa was smooth sailing. Only a few cuts and scrapes and one minor injury but that was his own husband’s doing. And he wasn’t even on the ice. Ilya had Shane pressed against a shelf in the equipment room after all the kids had left. Yuna was still in the office and some of the other coaches had lingered but Ilya grabbed Shane’s hand and dragged him inside claiming that it was ‘so sexy the way he took charge today’ and that’s how they ended up frothing against a shelf before it tipped over.

Despite Shane being the one pressed against the metal. Ilya managed to take the brunt of the fallen rack protecting Shane and lifting it off both of them.

“Shane! Ilya! Is everything okay? I heard a noise—” Yuna stormed in just as Ilya was pushing the shelf off of them. Equipment scattered everywhere. “...oh my.”

Shane’s cheeks flushed pink. He was pretty sure with the way they were positioned it was extremely apparent what they had been doing in here.

Yuna didn’t care or decided to not address it however because she had already crossed the room helping clear a path.

She held out her hand and Ilya had made sure Shane had grabbed up onto it first removing himself from the chaos while Ilya waited for him to give the signal that he was okay. Shane gave a quick nod and thumbs up. Ilya nodded back then attempted to free himself from the mess.

“Ah—”

“Ilya.” Yuna asked in response to Ilya’s whimper. “Are you okay?”

“Mm fine.” Ilya tried to stand but only managed to move upward slightly before falling back down hissing and wincing as he went.

“Ilya.” Shane met him and helped pull him out. “Where does it hurt?”

“Nowhere.”

Yuna gave Ilya a disapproving look but followed it up with a more gentle worried one. “Ilya sweetie, just tell us where it hurts and we can help.”

“Doesn’t.” Ilya muttered through gritted teeth. Shane was still holding him up for support.

“Mom, I got this, don't worry, just go finish the paperwork and we'll meet you at the car.” Shane and Ilya had plans to eat dinner with the Hollanders that evening. David had cooked Ilya’s favorite—chicken parmesan.

“Okay...” Yuna said hesitantly, backing out of the room but keeping her eyes locked on Ilya before she paused in the doorway. “Twenty minutes tops.” Yuna said glaring at them. “Or I’m calling the paramedics myself.”

Shane waved her off. “Yep.” Yuna left the room. Shane waited till the echoes of her footsteps were no longer audible before speaking to his husband.

He helped Ilya perch on a nearby piece of equipment.

Ilya groaned as he went down.

“Oh...moy erm..poor...rebenok.” Shane leaned down and kissed his hands. “You don’t have to pretend with me, and act like it doesn't hurt.”

Ilya rested his head on Shane’s shoulder. He let out a deep exhale.

“Shane—”

“I’m right here. Tell me what hurts?”

Ilya paused, “My knee.” he whispered then closed his eyes and sunk even deeper into Shane’s shoulder.

Ilya had been having knee problems ever since he took a rogue puck a few years back. He didn’t get immediate treatment so unfortunately it meant that even despite the encouragement to do physical therapy the damage had already been done so now when he had a flare up he usually would get an injection and play through it but every once and awhile it would bother him and no injection of any amount of medication helped. So of course the falling debris and shelf had hit the most sensitive spot on Ilya’s body.

“Ilya—” Shane bent forward and down, this time kneeling in between Ilya’s legs placing a soft kiss on his clothed knee.

“Is fine. I swear.”

Shane pressed into it with his thumb.

Ilya winced.

Shane shot him a look. “Mhm. Fine, you say?”

“Yes. Could an injured man do this?” Ilya quickly stood and reached down to scoop Shane up in his arms but failed miserably. Then sunk back to the floor. Tail between his legs.

“I’m calling the team doctor tomorrow.”

“But—”

“No arguments.”

“Fine. But I’m gonna jerk you off later tonight.”

A shiver went down Shane’s spine and his fingertips tingled.

“As long as you don’t do it with your knee.”

“That is silly. You cannot jerk someone off with your knee.”

“Is that a challenge, Rozanov?” Shane smirked.

“Are you always this horny, Hollander?” And with that Ilya carefully got up and left the room.

“C’mon moya gryaznaya gubka.” Ilya teased.

Shane rolled his eyes. Did Ilya just call him a dirty dish sponge? He wasn’t sure if that was rude or endearing.

Ilya had already exited the room with a subtle limp when Shane started to stand up but immediately had to grab the wall for support. He felt dizzy. Lightheaded. Maybe even a little nauseous.

Shane sunk back down to the floor still holding onto the wall. He needed a minute. It was fine. Surely he just had gotten up too quickly. Plus they did work pretty hard today on the ice with the kids and all he had was a small portion of kale and salmon for lunch so maybe he just needed something hearty like the chicken parm from his dad. Then he’d feel better.

After a minute or so he started to slowly raise up again this time with more ease and less restriction. The dizziness and lightheadedness lingered in the back of his mind but he seemed more than fine now. His stomach did still feel a bit uneasy though.

Shane swallowed it down and made his way back to the main area of the arena. Everyone like he suspected had left. He checked the office and found his mom still working on that paperwork then headed for Ilya’s SUV. They carpooled that day and picked Yuna up so they could all meet back for dinner at the Hollander residence.

Ilya was sitting inside of the car. Listening to his favorite divorced dad rock playlist. Shane couldn’t help but smile as he lip-synced along. God he loved this man.

He felt a bump on his shoulder. It was his mom. “Look at him. So happy.”

She pulled him down and kissed the top of his head. “He’s a good one. I’m glad you have each other.”

Shane smiled while staring at his husband. “Yeah me too.”

Yuna started to walk toward the car. She turned for a second. “Also please keep your *husband shenanigans* at your own homes please.

Shane turned scarlet.

“Sorry mom.” Shane winced.

Yuna was already turned back around waving him off.

Ilya pulled up to the Hollander residence and the trio made their way inside but as soon as Yuna opened the door Shane felt his stomach lurch as the air from the house wafted around his nostrils. And before he knew it he was hurling into the bushes.

“Woah.” Ilya shouted but quickly he pivoted from shock to helping hold back his hair.

“Oh Shane, baby.” His mom’s voice pricked his ears as Shane continued to get sick in her bushes.

His mouth felt gross so he spit the rest of it’s contents into the shrub before pulling back up.

“What’s going on out here?” David spoke. Then paused when he saw Shane bent over the hedge. “Oh. Is he okay?”

Shane was still wavering over the greenery but at least he wasn’t throwing up anymore. They all stared at him. Ilya grabbed his shoulder and helped him inside.

“Let’s sit him down.” Yuna said and pointed at the couch.

“I’ll grab some ginger ale.” His father’s voice already echoed as he was headed toward the kitchen.

“Baby. Look at me.” Shane looked at Ilya. He still felt sick despite staring into the eyes of his gorgeous husband.

Ilya grabbed his face. Shane nodded. “What do you need?”

“Bathroom—” he barely managed before he full-on sprinted to his family’s guest washroom.

Ilya was hot on his tail. Yuna and David were behind him.

He hurled into the toilet.

Ilya once again held his hair and rubbed his back. “Is alright. Let it out.”

After another two rounds Shane finally was able to remove his head from the porcelain bowl and slouch against the tub.

“Sweetheart.” He heard his mom speak. “Should we get you to an urgent care?”

Shane shook his head. “No.”

“Are you sure?” Ilya asked.

“Yes.”

Shane was actually feeling a lot better now that he had emptied his stomach. The smell still lingered though so what he really needed was some fresh air, and the ginger ale in his dad’s hand and to go lay down in his own bed.

“Drink.” Ilya said as David handed him the cup with a straw, helping him drink the carbonated beverage.

He took slow sips. After a few gulps he attempted to stand.

“Wait.” They all barked out.

“No, I’m fine. I think I just need some fresh air.”

“Let me help.” Ilya helped him up and walked him out the front door.

Shane breathed in the cool air and sat on the porch swing. The cool summer breeze was definitely helping. He still couldn’t believe that salmon from earlier caused all this. Shane always made sure he sourced his salmon from reputable places but surely something must’ve gone wrong.

Ilya eventually joined him.

“Hi.”

“Hey.”

“Feel better?”

“Much.”

“What’s that?” Shane nodded in the direction of the Tupperware container in his hand.

“Oh. David gave me food to take home.”

“Oh.” he paused at the realization. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. Is alright. Let’s go home.”

Ilya helped him into the car. His parents waved from the door as they drove off.

He felt terrible. Ilya loved family nights and he was taking that from him by getting sick. Hopefully his food poisoning would end quickly though. They had another long day of camp tomorrow and he could not miss it.

September 2025

“Baby you have to wake up.”

“Five more minutes.” Shane sighed into the pillow.

“You said that five minutes ago.” Ilya said in a sweet tone. Then traced his thumb over his face and down his cheek before leaning down to press a kiss on his lips. “Is first day of training camp.”

Shane groaned. Mostly because he was tired but also Ilya kissed him without either of them brushing their teeth. Shane couldn't care too much though because he'd never been so exhausted before in his life. It was a bone-chilling exhaustion like he could feel it deep within and no matter how much sleep he got he was still so goddamn tired all the time. He'd hoped maybe it would just go away by the time training camp started but alas it did not and now here he was for the first time in his life dreading to start the season.

Even before when a season started and he had to leave behind his domestic cottage life with Ilya for several months he was still excited about the hockey aspect of it but right now his body could only focus on the physical depletion he's been feeling as of late.

Ilya pulled the blanket back.

"Hey!" Shane yelped.

"Tough love."

Shane grabbed the second duvet and threw himself under it. Gripping onto it tight.

"No. We cannot be late."

Shane whined then gave Ilya his signature Shane Hollander pout.

Ilya just rolled his eyes. Then sat down next to Shane. He put his hand on his forehead.

"Hm—"

"What?" Shane said as he peaked out from under the cover.

“No fever.”

“I’m not sick.”

“Are you sure?”

“Uh yeah.” Actually he wasn’t. He had been tired but that’s probably just from eating like shit in the off season. Ilya was a terrible influence on him and now being out meant they could go on dates in public and that meant Ilya was wine-ing and dining him at all the best places. Shane may have been indulging in lots of savory dishes. And dessert on occasion.

“Then you must be dying. That’s the only explanation why the Shane Hollander does not want to play hockey.” Ilya threw his hand over his forehead and made a dramatic face for his next declaration. “I am too young to be a widow but maybe I can call up Svetlana to comfort me in my grief.”

“Over my dead body.”

“Well yes. Right on the grave. That is plan.”

“Ilya!” He hopped out of bed.

“Ha! I knew that would work. You are so easy when you are jealous.”

Shane crossed his arms and rolled his eyes as he headed for the bathroom to get ready.

Ilya followed behind him.

“So if not dying then why are you trying to skip training camp.”

“I’m not. Just tired I guess.”

“Hm—”

“What?” Shane’s tone came out a bit more annoyed than he’d meant it too.

“Nothing.” Then he mumbled under his breath, “Just that I must have gave it to you good last night if you are *so* tired.”

“What was that?”

“Like I said. Nothing.”

Ilya left the bathroom. Shane figured to make them both coffee and probably a quick—hopefully nutritious—breakfast.

Shane stood in front of the mirror staring at his reflection. He certainly did not feel his best today. Sure he was thirty-four years old and not a spring chicken but he still was in good shape and ate decently well. Shane figured he’d still have a few years left of hockey in him but maybe he was wrong. Maybe this was his last season.

He tugged on his face attempting to smooth out the wrinkle lines. Shane had a great skincare routine but nothing would stop mother nature and father time. Then he focused closer on his hair and saw a few grey ones. He’d known they were there. Ilya had pointed them out before. Called him an old man even—teasingly of course and Ilya said he looked like a DILF. Shane questioned where he’d learned but apparently Harris was the culprit. Shane didn’t think he could be a DILF since he was technically not checking off the ‘D’ part of the acronym even if Ilya said they were both proud dog daddies to Anya. In the end he decided he was not upset by the grey hair and wanted to embrace his new found DILF look.

He turned on the sink, cupped his hands gathering some water from the spout and splashed the icy cold water on his face. He followed it up with his normal skin routine, got dressed and then headed for the kitchen to find Ilya.

If this was his last season then he needed to shake this feeling and really put in the work. Shane wanted to go out with a bang. Maybe win another cup. Plus the Olympics were in February and the NHL was finally allowed to play again. This year Ilya was eligible to play for their country as well thanks to their marriage a few years back he applied for citizenship. Shane looked forward to getting the gold this time.

Ilya was pouring coffee in travel cups when Shane bounced in and kissed his cheek. Showing off that he was *better* now. He wasn't but Ilya didn't need to know that. Shane could act. Rose gave him a masterclass on it once. He even learned a trick to cry on demand. Hopefully that wouldn't been necessary today but it was nice to keep in his back pocket. For now he needed to appear *not sick*.

It shouldn't be too hard.

"Good morning, moya lyubov." Shane said as he pulled off Ilya's face.

Ilya eyed him suspiciously as he handed him the cup.

"I am keeping my eye on you today, Hollander."

Shane grabbed two containers of his overnight oats from the fridge and spoons before heading for the garage but not before he could respond to Ilya.

"Well of course you will because I will be out skating you all day at training camp. You'll be seeing my butt and eating my dust, Rozanov."

Ilya smirked. "What if I just eat your ass instead." Licking his lips and winking as he followed Shane to the car. Juggling their coffee, the keys and both of their bags.

“I don’t think our teammates or Coach Wiebe would appreciate seeing that on center ice.”

“And why not?” Ilya put the bags in the trunk while Shane got into the passenger seat.

“Umm I mean it’s kind of...*intimate*.”

“Their loss.” Ilya got into the driver's seat and started the engine. “Harris will be sad.”

“Harris is in a committed relationship. I don't think he cares about seeing you eat me out.”

“I meant for the social media stuff.”

“You want Harris to use a pornographic video of us to promote the Centaurs?”

“Think about the likes.” He started to pull out of the driveway. “Is what the fans want.”

“Huh?”

“Haven’t you seen the comment section on the Centaurs’ posts?”

“No...”

“Oh well they are shitting us.”

“You mean shipping?”

“Yes that.”

“But we’re already together so they don’t really need to *ship* us.”

“Tell that to our fans.”

Ilya drove them to the arena—their normal commute. Stopping at the lights. Looking in his mirrors all while

holding a conversation with Shane.

“I don’t understand. What are they asking?”

“I have seen comments that we start an OnlyFans...”

Shane spit out the little coffee he had just taken a sip of.

“I’m sorry, *what?*”

“They want to pay us to watch us have sex.” Ilya said it matter-of-factly.

“Yeah I got that.”

“Okay.”

“We’re not doing that by the way.”

Ilya blew a raspberry at him.

“So boring, Hollander. No fun.”

October 2025

It was the season opener and they were on the final leg of the third period. They also happened to be on a power play.

Shane had been exhausted the whole game. No scratch that the whole week. He may have pushed himself too hard in the gym and on the ice but right now it was the first game of the season and right off last year's win. They were playing against the Nashville Vultures at home.

A respectable team for sure but they should not be tied with them 2-2 right now. They should be winning.

There were thirty seconds left on the power play and already three shots on goal. All missed.

A defenseman passed it to Barrett who then passed it to Ilya who then had to pass back to Barrett and then finally Shane saw it. His opening.

Barrett had .2 seconds to decide but still Shane got into place. Barrett passed back to Ilya and he set up the shot but then at the last second he did a fake out and passed it back to Barrett before finally handing it off to Shane where he was angled just right to make the shot in the last few seconds of the power play.

Shane saw the puck glide on the ice. He settled it then quickly moved into position with his stick to hit it before the other team could react. Shane pulled his stick back then used all his available strength left to sink it into the back of the net. A flawless execution.

He heard the buzzer of the goal alarm and the loud boom of the fans in the arena. Loud cheers from his teammates but then suddenly it all became muffled.

Shane thought at that moment he might pass out because now he was swaying back and forth. Ilya and Barrett were already on him. Celebrating the goal. The adrenaline kept him going. Kept him standing.

The game resumed and with only less than a minute left on the clock and a 3-2 lead all they had to do was keep the puck as far away from Hayes as they could. And hey if they scored again then that would only solidify their win.

The Vultures had been giving it their all and getting extremely aggressive with each pass the Centaurs did between each other. Most players rushed them and slammed them hard against the boards. Not a completely uncommon thing in hockey but it felt a bit more intense than normal maybe but not terribly so. They wanted to score. To go into overtime but the Centaurs didn't want that so they pushed back. Harder. Especially Ilya.

There was one player. Zach Winters who was out for blood. He first pushed into Haas earlier in the game. Getting himself a penalty and the Centaurs their first power play allowing Haas to score the first goal of the game.

By the second period Winters had attempted to hold Barrett while attempting a shot on goal. How he managed to get himself out of that penalty Shane was unsure but regardless these things continued to piss Ilya off so much so that in the third period he made sure to give Winters a nice little surprise and tripped him so he'd fall flat on his face in front of everyone.

Now Ilya did get in the box for this one and the Vultures ended up scoring on the power play so in the end Winters couldn't be too mad.

At least that's what Shane thought.

It was the last thirty seconds and the Vultures were pushing hard...*literally*. Shane had received a pass from one of the defensemen and he was about to pass it to Bood when all of a sudden he was rushed and slammed *hard* against the boards.

His whole body was in agony. Winters was a large guy and Shane felt his fury when he was pushed against the rinks walls. And just like that Shane had lost the puck. It was passed to one of the Vulture's defensemen.

Fuck.

Winters then pressed into him one more time. "You should thank your *boyfriend* for this." Then Zach punched him right in the face. "They should've kicked you both out of the league. Disgusting." He then spit in Shane's face barely missing his skin instead it splattered across the clear plastic visor of his helmet.

The buzzer sounded.

The game was over.

And Shane was in an insurmountable amount of pain. Then he heard the faint noise of familiarity. "Shane!"

But before he could see who it was, everything went dark.

Chapter 2: chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Shane finds out some shocking news that is not perceived well by everyone.

Chapter Notes

thanks to everyone who subscribed, liked, commented or read the first chapter. I appreciate you all so much.

As I said in the summary this fic is going to get angsty so we have a little angst here in this chapter.

TW: talks of abortion & miscarriage.

(side note: I think the Cens admin team is a little ooc in this fic but I needed a bad guy so...)

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

“Ilya, I said I’m fine.” Shane griped.

‘Stop being stubborn. Let me take care of you.’

Ilya adjusted the pillow on his bed and then three more times “*just in case*” he’d said.

“This isn’t my first time getting hit on the ice, you know.”

“Yes—” Ilya paused and grabbed a water bottle with a straw. “sip.” Shane groaned before giving in and took a sip. “But this is your first time...” Ilya paused.

“First time, what?”

“Uh—falling asleep on the ice.”

“I did not fall asleep on the ice. I think you mean passed out.”

“Yes that. You scared everyone. You scared me.”

“Ilya-” Shane grabbed his hand. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to scare you.”

“Why are you sorry? It was that dumb prick Winter’s fault. The game was basically over and you hadn’t done anything to him to start a fight.” Ilya clearly seemed mad but Shane hadn’t told him about the comments he’d hurled at him. Shane didn’t want to hide it from his husband but he knew Ilya would overreact and do something stupid at their next game against the Vultures so instead he just *forgot* to mention it. It’s not like he lied to Ilya just *missed* details right before he passed out.

“Yeah, what was his problem?”

“Bastard. I will show him next time not to mess with Centaurs.”

“Just promise you’ll show him with your hockey skills and not your fists.”

“Why not both?”

“Ilya-”

“Shane.” He mocked back. “Fighting is allowed in hockey, *remember*? How hard did you hit your head?”

Shane ignored him.

“I can’t believe I have to sit out the next game. I am not even injured.”

“Is not why you are benched.” Ilya gave him a pointed look.

Shane rolled his eyes.

“I know I know, if the blood work comes back before the game they can clear me but I still don’t like the thought of being benched already so early in the season.”

“Eh. Is not like you are our star player.” Ilya teased.

Shane scoffed. “Fuck you. Who’s check is bigger, huh?”

“So what means nothing. Besides, who’s dick is bigger?”

“What does that have to do with your hockey skills?”

“It doesn’t but I like seeing your pretty face turn pink when I bring it up.”

And he was right. Shane’s face was hot. He was flustered thinking about Ilya’s cock.

“Mhm.”

Shane was lounging around their house in a pair of sweats when he got the call. He was still benched pending his bloodwork so Ilya had been at team practice. It was just him and Anya lounging.

“Coach?” Shane answered the phone.

“Shane...umm hey so your blood work came back.” Shane froze. His breathing almost stopped. All he could hear was the beat of his heart.

Then there was a pause.

“Okay...and?”

“I can’t really explain what’s going on over the phone.” Oh my god. Was he dying? Wait? Why would his coach be calling about this and not the team doctor.

“I don’t understand...am I still benched.”

“Afraid so. Probably for a while. I’m sorry.” What the actual fuck was going on?

“Coach—”

“They want you here as soon as possible. How soon can you be here?”

“Uhh—like an hour I guess, maybe sooner depending on traffic...coach, what’s going on?”

“I can’t get into it but you’re meeting with the director and the GM will be there via video call. I am going to be there too. Unsure of who else, probably team doctors.

“Coach?”

“Hollander, I really can't get into it right now...” There was a pause. “I’m sorry.”

“No I know that just can you not mention it yet to Ilya. I don’t want him distracted for the rest of practice.”

“I won’t. Do you not want him at the meeting?”

Shane knew that Ilya would want to be there especially if they were gonna tell him he had cancer or some life threatening illness but he didn’t want to do that in front of everyone. So maybe it was for the best that he waited till after the meeting then told him in private.

“Do you think he should be?”

“Erm... as the captain maybe but as *your* husband. That’s your decision. I will keep him in the dark if that’s what *you* want but if he finds out I’m not lying to him son.”

“I understand. Thanks Coach. I’ll be there soon.” And with that Shane hung up the call. Staring a hole into the nearby wall for a few moments trying to process the conversation.

Shane grabbed a quick shower and tried to eat something but he couldn’t settle himself down enough too. His stomach was also in knots. Could he really be dying? Why else would the administration staff want to meet with him to discuss his bloodwork? God he really wanted Ilya to be there with him but he didn’t know how he would take it. Ilya has already lost both of his parents if Shane left him too, he was scared of what Ilya might do.

Shane drove to the arena. And made his way to the administrative offices. He checked find my friends and saw Ilya was still here. They weren't allowed their phones during practice so Shane shot a quick text to Ilya to let him know where he was and to meet him after practice outside the offices. Hopefully that wouldn't freak him out. And then they could talk about whatever was going on with him.

When Shane made his way through the arena. He glanced over at the ice. They were doing a scrimmage. Shane loved watching Ilya play. He looked so happy and ethereal on the ice. Shane just hoped whatever was going on wouldn't crush his spirits. Ilya had already been through so much. Ilya deserved happiness.

"Shane!" A voice called out. It was his coach.

"Coach..." He moved away from the ice and together he and Coach Wiebe approached the door.

"Are you ready?" His coach asked. Hand on the door ready to enter.

"As I'll ever be."

"I support you no matter what, okay?"

"Alright" Shane thought that was a bit odd but at this point his nerves were too high to overthink it.

Coach Wiebe opened the door to the conference room and he noticed several people sitting around the large mahogany table. His head doctor was there. Other important admins. His coach. And most importantly the director in person as well as on video call the GM. This really was serious.

He gulped then wiped his sweaty palms on his pants. Shane hated this.

There was something off-putting about all of these people here in one room all wanting to speak with him about some lab results. And the tension was uncomfortable to say the least.

“Ah Mr. Hollander, thanks for meeting us so swiftly.” The GM said over the intercom speaker located in the center of the table.

“Uh—yeah, of course. Not sure I had much of a choice though.” He chuckled slightly hoping to lighten the mood.

No one else laughed. Instead it was an eerie silence instead. So quiet you could hear everything. Shane worried they could hear his heart beat thumping in his chest.

“Right. Mr. Hollander—”

“Call me Shane please.” He smiled nervously.

“Mr. Hollander I am going to give the floor to our head physician to talk first then we will *all* discuss the next steps. *Together.*”

Next steps for what? Was he needing extensive treatment? God it must be cancer or something huge to cause this much of a ruckus.

“Alright.”

“Mr. Holl—Shane.” He nodded thankfully at the name correction. Shane hated when they used his surname like that. It felt like he was in trouble. “When your blood was drawn for panels. All the routine things were tested. It was a normal procedure but one of your levels was extremely elevated. Your HCG came back high.”

Fuck

That couldn't be good. It sounds bad, really bad. Maybe fatal.

He didn't want to die. He would fight. Take whatever treatment he needed to. Shane wouldn't leave Ilya.

"Whatever it is, I can fight it, please say it's not terminal." A tear collected in the corner of his eye.

The doctor looked at him puzzled. Shane looked around the room and they all wore confused or concerned expressions on their faces.

"Guys it's fine I can take it just give it to me straight." Shane's eyes filled with tears. He was begging for someone to tell him.

"Um—Shane, do you know what HCG is?" His team physician asked.

Well he didn't know the exact medical jargon but he assumed it was like white blood cells or some shit. It's not like they taught this in high school. And if they did then Shane must have missed it. He was preoccupied with hockey pretty much his whole life. His grades were never bad. Shane wasn't a bad student. A's and B's were his average but he got the occasional C as well. But none of that mattered right now because he was sick and about to upend his and Ilya's entire life. Oh god. And his parents too. They would be devastated if they had to bury Shane. Now he really felt the tears well up.

Shane did his best to shake those feelings. Wiping the wetness surrounding his eyes.

"Uh—hypothetically let's say I don't, can you explain it to me." Shane said clearly embarrassed that everyone else seemed to know but him.

"HCG stands for human chorionic gonadotropin."

Was that supposed to clear everything up?

“Is that like something to do with the liver?” Shane furrowed his brow.

“No.” The head physician paused. Blinked his eyes slowly, took in a deep breath then exhaled. “Shane, are you aware you’re a carrier?”

“A carrier?” he questioned.

It sounded somewhat familiar but he couldn’t quite place the terminology.

“Yes, like a man who has the genetic trait to become pregnant and carry a child.”

Oh right, yes he’d heard of that before.

Wait.

She said he was a carrier. Why would that be relevant unless...

“I’m pregnant?”

The room went silent. The thumping in his chest got louder. Blood pumping in his ears.

“Yes. Mr. Hollander.” The GM broke the silence as his words filled the room from the intercom’s speaker. Everyone turned to look at the large screen showcasing the GM’s face. And it was not an amused one

Shane was currently shutting down himself. There was no way he was pregnant.

“But no that’s not—I’m not..no it’s not possible.” He was struggling to wrap his head around this.

“Son.” His coach put a hand on his shoulder.

“Shane I know this is coming to you as a shock right now but to be quite frank we all thought maybe you knew and weren’t hiding it but clearly that’s not the case.”

There was no way he would’ve hid it from everyone. He was surprised they all thought that. “What? No, if I had known I wouldn’t have played at all. Oh my God.” What if he’d hurt his baby? He got pushed really hard on the ice the other day. He passed out.

Fuck. He was starting to take shallow breaths. His stomach was in knots again. There was a baby inside him. Shane rested a hand on his abdomen. Fuck. He wasn’t sure when he started crying but he felt a couple of wet hot tears on his cheeks.

“Shane, hey it’s okay we’re here for you.” Coach Wiebe put a hand on his shoulder.

Shane tried his best to blink back the tears. He also tried swallowing the ginormous lump in his throat but it felt tight and his mouth dry all of a sudden.

“Mr. Hollander.” The GM interrupted. “I know this is a lot of information for you but right now our focus for *this* meeting is your hockey career. Not your personal life.”

Fuck. Of course! He wouldn’t be able to hockey probably ever again, definitely not this season.

And he still had to tell Ilya. Were they even ready for a kid right now? They had talked about it before but maybe later down the line in retirement plus there was the team to think about. The Cens couldn't afford to lose them both.

The director finally chimed in. "Exactly we need to figure out a course of action for moving forward. We are in uncharted waters here I'm afraid."

Shane's head was still spinning. How could they possibly expect him to think about his future right now when all he could do was replay the last game on repeat. Him getting slammed into the board. The baby was there. Did they feel it like he had?

"Well I have heard the rumors of another player back in '03 but from what I heard he got *the problem* taken care of pretty immediately and his team went on to win the Cup that year." The GM harped but Shane could only focus on the way he said "the problem".

Take care of the problem. Like an abortion.

No. Absolutely not.

Shane was pro-choice of course but that meant *this* was his choice and not anyone else's to make especially not the administrations

"Yes I was thinking the same. He could have the procedure done this week and maybe be able to play as early as the next game." The director suggested to the GM as if Shane wasn't sitting right there in the very room. Speaking on behalf of Shane.

The GM nodded in agreement.

Shane couldn't breathe. His chest felt tight. How could they talk so casually about this and how could they think it was alright to make these decisions for him. He couldn't do this right now. Shane needed to leave. Be anywhere but this room. This hot, stuffy room. He clawed at the collar on his neck. His words got caught in his throat.

He needed Ilya. Now.

“Have you seen Coach Wiebe?” Ilya asked his goalie, Hayes.

“Uhh–yeah I think he said he had a meeting with the admin this afternoon.”

“Oh.”

A meeting during practice that was odd for his coach. But not completely unheard of.

Ilya would adapt. With Coach Wiebe gone the coaching team was a staff member down which meant less eyes on him. Hopefully he could check his phone without being caught or reprimanded.

Ilya sneakily made his way to his phone on the bench where he kept it hidden. He usually didn't keep his phone there. Typically it was stored in his locker during practice but with Shane at home he wanted to have it close just in case.

There were notifications from Shane. Some texts that implied he was here. At the Arena.

Now Ilya was worried.

Shane was here at the arena near the admin offices and Wiebe was in a meeting with administration according to Hayes, which could only mean that Shane was in the meeting. Probably the topic of the meeting.

Why would he be called in unless— Ilya paused. All the color drained from his face. Shane's blood tests probably came back. But that still didn't explain the reason for the meeting. If everything was fine then he would've just come to practice as normal.

So something was wrong.

Ilya threw off his skates and took off his pads at lightning speed before taking off.

“Hey where are you going?” Haas shouted.

“Cover for me. Emergency.” Ilya yelled back.

Ilya didn't stay long enough to see Luca's reaction. He was too focused on getting to where Shane was.

Ilya sprinted down the arena. His strides were long and he probably would look stupid to anyone who saw him running by but right now he didn't care. His only focus was on finding his husband.

Shane looked over at his Coach whose face seemed irritated.

“You—you want me to get an abortion?” Shane said shakily. His hands trembled.

“Obviously, Mr. Hollander. It’s a liability for you to play in your condition and the team needs you.”

“Now wait a minute.” Coach Wiebe interrupted.

Shane could hardly register what was being said now. The noises of the room rang in his ear like he’d just been shot.

This was a lot of information to take in. Finding out he was a carrier. That he was pregnant. That the admins wanted him to terminate his pregnancy.

Shane needed an escape.

So he stood up and walked toward the door.

“Mr. Hollander, please sit back down. We have not finished this discussion.”

Shane panted between breaths, “Need-a-minute.” And waved them off as he headed for the door.

He was about to have a full on panic attack.

The door swung open and he poured into the hallway.

“Shane!”

Shane hardly registered what was happening until he was crashing into Ilya’s chest.

Sobbing.

“I-I’m so-so s-sorry—I d-didn’t k-know.” Shane said sheepishly.

Ilya rubbed his back and soothed.

“Hey. Is okay. I am here baby.” Ilya coed into his ear, soothing him.

Shane wailed into his chest. And Ilya continued to hold him, comforting him.

After a moment of crying in his husband's chest. He sniffled then wiped his eyes and runny nose on his sleeve and looked up at the angel holding him.

“Ilya—” His voice was a low whisper. And Ilya’s face was painted with worry. Oh god. He must’ve thought Shane was dying or something. He needed to clear the air and tell him. This isn’t how he pictured it but it had to be now.

“Yes love.” Ilya’s soft voice cracked and almost made Shane full on sob again. “Are you hurt?” Sick? Tell me. Whatever it is, we are in this together. Teammates. Partners. Family.”

“I-I’m pregnant.”

Ilya’s heart was racing. As soon as the words left Shane’s lips and pierced his ear drums. He was shocked. There was no scenario in his head where he expected Shane to say those words. They had talked about having kids after they retired but through adoption or surrogacy never

through Shane. He never mentioned he was a carrier so the thought of Shane carrying his child didn't even cross his mind.

Well rarely it had but more in a dream scenario or a kink in the bedroom. But not even in his wildest fantasies did he think it was remotely possible. Male carriers were rare and usually people disclosed it to their sexual partners. There was no way Shane would have hid this from. He must've not known.

When Ilya first started fucking men even though he usually was not the bottom he still went and got tested. He was not a carrier. Honestly he figured Shane would have done the same but now that he is thinking about it. Shane was a closeted gay man in the NHL for many years deeply repressing his feelings. So it's likely he didn't think to check and maybe he assumed his parents would have opted for testing at birth. His definitely didn't but he figured the Hollanders would have. Then again this was a long time ago and maybe it wasn't as common to test in the early 90's.

Regardless of all of that.

There he was holding his beautiful, *pregnant* husband. Wow. Ilya was looking down at his tear stained cheeks full of worry and anxiety, Ilya needed Shane to know where he stood and that everything was going to be okay.

"Shane, moy lyubov'. You are perfect. You are beautiful. I am in love with you and this child. Our child."

Shane sniffled. "So you are not mad at me?"

"Why? Did someone else get you pregnant? Was it Hayden?" Ilya was clearly joking but Shane may not have been in the mood for jokes right now the way his face scrunched at the questions. "I tease. Of course I am not mad sweetheart. Why would I be? This is good news?" Ilya said it more like a question. Hoping Shane would respond.

"Yeah?" Shane questioned back.

“Yes. Very.”

Ilya pulled him in closer. Embracing him even tighter.

The weight of the moment finally settling in.

Shane was pregnant with his baby and nothing had ever been better than that. Despite his Stanley Cup wins and even his wedding day to Shane. Knowing that their love created something so miraculous made him the happiest he'd ever been.

“Shane!” His coach called, peaking out of the conference room. “Oh. Ilya...”

“He knows.” Shane said between snuffles.

“Good. That’s good. He can join us.”

“I’m sorry I needed a minute.” Shane wiped his eyes on Ilya’s sleeve that he offered and left his husband’s warm embrace.

“That’s quite alright. I just wanted you to know I talked to them. Explained this is your choice and not theirs. They didn’t like that but they want to continue the conversation.”

“Choice?” Ilya looked to Shane, a bit confused.

Shane played with the hem of his shirt and looked at the floor.

“Yeah, the GM and director want me to get an—an...” He almost couldn’t bring himself to say it. Nothing was wrong with getting an abortion. Heck he knew quite a few people who had gotten them. Including his close friend Rose. But that’s not what he wanted and he definitely didn’t want to be told that he had to get one from someone other than medical professionals.

“A what?” Ilya still stared at him.

“Abortion.” He said making no eye contact.

“Like as...ending the pregnancy?”

Shane nodded.

“Is that what you want?” Ilya asked softly, holding his hand.

He shook his head.

“Fuck them. Is bullshit. This is your choice. Not theirs.” Ilya let go of Shane and marched to where the coach was standing just outside the room.

“Ilya—” Shane said but it was too late. He had already pushed past their coach and entered the room. “...wait.”

But it was too late. Ilya had already bullied his way inside. Shane barely made it through the door before Ilya released his fury.

“Mr. Rozanov, I must admit you are not my favorite person right now.” The GM spoke up.

“And you are not mine.” Ilya scowled.

“Ilya...” His coach touched his arm trying to calm him down.

“Well you did get my star player pregnant.”

“And here I thought I was your star player.” He smiled fakely.

“Now you might be—*by default.*”

“I do not wish to talk hockey with you right now. I want to talk about my husband and what you told him.”

“What are you implying Mr. Rozanov?”

“Like you don’t know.” He spat.

Shane felt the tension in the room and all he could was just watch the verbal tennis match between his husband and the GM. It made his stomach drop.

“Ilya...” He tried again..

Ilya ignored him.

“Mr. Rozanov, I merely suggested to Mr. Hollander said that he should simply take care of this *situation* so he can continue playing. Do you not want to win games this year?”

Shane could see it in Ilya's face. He was enraged. He reached out and touched his shoulder. Trying to calm him. "Baby..." he whispered.

"Is not a situation. Is a child. My child." Ilya paused. Looked back at Shane then the non-existent bump. "And we will still win."

"Okay, maybe we should put a pin in this conversation for now until we are all less heated." Coach Wiebe spoke up.

Shane nodded.

The rest of the room silently agreed.

Then the team physician spoke up. "Shane should also see an OB and get an ultrasound done. So far our only confirmation is his elevated HCG and progesterone from his bloodwork."

"Then he will get scans." Ilya said firmly. "Now."

"Umm--no that's not how it works. He needs to find an OBGYN who will take him as a patient and confirm the pregnancy."

"Shane Hollander is the best player in this fucking league. He can get an ultra-- whatever you said, now." Shane blushed a little. Ilya would never say he was the greatest in the league not if he was in that same league so either he was being over dramatic or he really did think that. Regardless of the truth it made his heart melt either way. Ilya loved him with his whole heart.

"There's a clinic in Montreal that specializes in male pregnancy but that's quite a far drive and I don't think they do walk-ins."

Ilya had already pulled out his phone.

“What are you doing?”

“I call them. Get appointment. For today.”

“I don’t think that’s how—”

“Hello.” He spoke into the phone. “My day is good. Yours?” He paused again. “That’s good to hear.” Another pause. “Yes. My name is Ilya Rozanov. I am calling to get an appointment for my husband.”

The room was quiet. The GM had left the conference call and the director was no longer paying attention.

“Yes. The hockey player.” He paused. “Shane Hollander.” Pause. “Great. See you then. Bye.”

Shane, Coach Wiebe and the doctor stood there dumbfounded.

“Did you just—” Dr. Salazar spoke.

“Yes.”

“How?”

“The girl was a Voyageur fan. Had a Shane poster on her wall.”

“Oh.” Shane spoke.

“We have to go. Now. Long drive.”

“Okay.” Shane nodded.

Ilya drove the whole way. Shane sat in the passenger seat with a pit feeling in his stomach. They were on their way to this special clinic and he would get to see his baby soon. It was scary. He didn't even know he could get pregnant let alone how long had he even been pregnant for.

The thoughts consumed him. When exactly did they conceive? It's not like Ilya and him didn't fuck like rabbits and they did go raw most of the time so it truly could be from anytime. There was that time about a month ago where Ilya bent him over the kitchen island because Shane was wearing his “*fuck me pants*” according to Ilya or when Shane had found Ilya in bed early one night and may have seduced him. He'd never admit it but yeah sometimes he'd put on a little extra charm to get laid.

Then there was the worry and the anxiety. Shane hadn't been careful about health. He'd played hockey. Taken hits. Like last week. Could he have somehow hurt his baby? God it was an awful feeling. There was also the anxiety of hockey in itself. Would he ever be able to play again? He'd be out for at least a season and in his age coming back especially being a free agent probably wasn't likely. Shane wasn't ready to retire. Not yet. He did want this baby though. It was Ilya's which meant they would be perfect.

More thoughts kept pouring in. How would he tell his parents? Surely they'd be happy but this was a huge shock. Would they be disappointed he didn't wait till retirement? Upset he couldn't play this season. Then there was the idea that he was a carrier in the first place. Did his parents know and forget to tell him? Surely not.

Wash. Rinse. Repeat for the whole car ride. They were 30 minutes out and Ilya had one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding Shane's hand over the gear shift.

“You think loud.”

“What?”

“Your thoughts. I can hear them.”

Obviously Ilya couldn't actually hear Shane's thoughts even though sometimes Shane felt like he could. Ilya was the only person who could read him.

“Mm.” He hummed.

“Shane.” Ilya squeezed his hand in support. “Talk to me.”

“I’m scared.”

“Moya lyubov', everything will work out.” Ilya smiled at him as they approached a red light.

“How can you be so sure?”

“Because it’s us.” Ilya paused. “And with us. Always works out.”

Shane didn’t know what he did to deserve Ilya’s love. And he also didn’t know how Ilya could be so confident that it would all be fine. Just because their relationship worked out even though they got outed and almost lost their NHL careers for it they did really have it all. But now it wasn’t going to work like that when they were outed.

Shane can’t play this time.

And their baby could already be hurt because of his own carelessness.

Shane's head dropped to his chest. His voice came out low and hoarse and ashamed. "But—" He started with tears in eyes and staggered breaths. "-what if they are...or I—I don't know, hurt them—It would be my fault. I should've noticed." Shane broke out in full tears.

Damn these hormones were killing him. Shane pulled his hand away from Ilya's and kept it in his lap where he kept his gaze. Shame felt the guilt washing over him. If something was wrong with his and Ilya's baby it was his fault.

"Hey. You can't think like that. Besides, we don't know anything. Ultrasong first."

"Ultrasound." Shane corrected

"Yes that." Ilya took his hand and put it on Shane's chin. Moving his gaze to meet his while waiting for the light to change at the intersection. "Look. You did nothing wrong."

Shane took in a deep inhale.

"I saw the signs too."

Then exhale.

"You got sick at your parents. And at home. And you were tired. A lot."

"Ilya—"

"No. This is on me as much as it is on you." Ilya was firm but loving. "I could have been more careful. But I don't regret it. Not for a second moy zontik."

Shane let out a small giggle. Only Ilya Rozanov would say something so sweet and comforting then follow it up by calling him an umbrella.

“Thanks...also an umbrella?”

“Good job.” Ilya responded in Russian. A phrase Shane knew all too well. It even made him blush a little thinking of the position he was in the last time he heard it.

They pulled up to the clinic.

“Ready?” Ilya held out a hand.

Shane took it. “As I ever will be.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm on twt [shaneshole](#)

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Ilya and Shane find out how far along Shane really is. They also find out the sex of the baby and finally get to tell loved one on their own terms.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is basically all fluff as a reward but don't worry more angst is coming.
insert gif of fly rubbing hands together (I didn't feel like coding this.)

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

So here's the thing. Shane and him were well known hockey players and they were in Montreal—hockey ran deep there and Shane had given that city three cups before tripgate that is and people either hated him with a passion or wanted to hug him for his legacy and bravery. There was no in-between. So if they were seen walking into an OBGYN office. People would most *definitely* talk. And Ilya did not want their business all over the internet. Sure eventually it would happen but not right if he had anything to do about it.

Ilya had called the front desk and arranged them to sneak in the back. But just in case they both wore inconspicuous ball caps and sunglasses they had kept in the car for instances like this when they didn't wanna be spotted.

Jessica—the receptionist he spoke with on the phone—met them at the back door and led them into an exam room where they waited to be seen.

First a nurse came in and had Shane pee in a cup then took his vitals. Next a phlebotomist drew some blood and took labs. Finally they were joined by an ultrasound technician and the gynecologist.

“Mr. Hollander, it is a pleasure.” The doctor extended his hand for a shake.

Shane met his palm, “Of course. Dr.-”

“Dr. LeBlanc. And it’s good to meet you as well Mr. Rozanov. I must say Shane I was a big fan well until you left us for Ottawa but I tell my wife that at least you still represent Canada and not the country to the south of us.” Shane smiled awkwardly. “Yeah sorry about that...”

“Don’t be. I understand. My wife moved here from the states for me so I get it. The things you do for love.” Then he nudged Shane.

Shane smiled at Ilya with so much adoration. “Yeah.” Ilya grinned back at him.

Dr. LeBlanc clapped his hands together. “Alright! Let’s get started.” he looked down at the chart. “So we’re unsure of the conception date? Is that right Mr. Hollander.”

Ilya noticed Shane’s face turn pink. “Please call me Shane, and yes that is correct...we’re erm—not sure—like when it happened...” Shane’s gaze met the floor. Ilya knew how shy his husband was when it came to sex so Ilya put his hand on his shoulder to calm him and show that he was here and there was nothing uncomfortable with what they did or how this baby was created.

The doctor was clearly more comfortable with this topic. Clearly he was an OB for god’s sake. It was little his profession to talk about pregnancy and sex. Dr. LeBlanc smiled and flicked his hand gesturing to Shane. “That’s normal, especially with couples. So no fret. I am gonna have Janine here take a look.”

Janine started to set up the mobile ultrasound machine. “Lift up your shirt for me sweetheart.”

Shane obliged. Ilya watched as the woman poured what he thought was lube on Shane’s stomach but he kept his thoughts to himself. Shane was already going through enough and Ilya was perceptive enough to know when was a good time for his antics.

“Oh. I wasn’t expecting it to be warm.” Shane said surprised.

The tech smiled brightly. “Yeah we got these new warmers on our cart a couple years back. Clients love it.”

“Yeah it’s nice.” Shane gave a half grin back to her.

Ilya could tell he was nervous. He talked more when he was nervous. It was cute.

“Okay. Now I’m gonna put this on your stomach. I’m gonna look at the screen here for your baby.” Janine placed the transducer on his belly. The screen went from nothingness to what looked like a whole other planet. Ilya had seen ultrasounds before. He’d had them done to him but it was weirder somehow seeing the inside of his husband’s body.

Ilya grabbed Shane’s hand and they all watched the screen as the tech moved the probe around his bare abdomen.

Despite the multiple ultrasounds he’d gotten over the years he still had no idea what he was looking at. He peaked over to Shane who had his head cocked to the side. Puzzled.

“Ah—there we go.” The tech seemed to have found what she was looking for. “Wow.”

Then he saw it on the screen. Ilya could make out the features. He saw a head. A body. Tiny little feet. Hands.

He’d half expected to see a tiny little alien looking thing but this was bigger than he expected. Ilya took one glance at his husband's stomach and maybe he did notice that there was a small bump but Shane still had abs so if anything it was more his abs were protruding out slightly more.

Ilya heard Shane's voice. "Is that the baby?" The tech nodded.

Dr. LeBlanc confirmed. "Yes it is. Janine, how far along do we think he is?"

"Yep. Already on it." Ilya watched the screen in awe as the baby slowly moved around like Jello then looking back at Shane's abdomen curiously. Ilya still couldn't believe what was inside him. That he put that inside of him. A baby. Their baby.

The technician was moving around on the screen apparently measuring the baby's size.

"Based on these measurements. I would guess Shane here is anywhere from 16-18 weeks but specifically the baby is measuring at seventeen weeks and four days. Perfectly healthy."

Shane and Ilya both let out collective sighs of relief and Ilya kissed his forehead.

Janine moved her probe around some more. Snapped several photos then spoke again.

"Are you guys interested in finding out the sex today?"

Ilya truly hadn't cared about that. It didn't even cross his mind once since he found out. Well to be fair he'd only known about the whole thing for a few hours but now that they were being asked he realized it didn't matter to him. The baby seemed healthy. That was all that mattered.

He still looked to Shane who seemed to be a bit interested. "Should we?" Shane asked sheepishly.

"Whatever you want babe." Ilya squeezed his hand.

“Um—yeah that’s fine.” Shane responded.

Ilya could tell Shane was just glad to see that despite not knowing of the baby’s existence for a couple of months that they were doing well. Ilya even wiped away a tear from his husband’s face. A relieved one.

Janine then moved her wand around to get a clear look at what was in front of her. “Looks like a baby girl.” She said enthusiastically.

A girl.

Not that Ilya would have minded either way but something about knowing he was having a daughter made him feel warm inside. He’d met Hayden’s kids. Three girls and a boy and truly he loved them all but he did very much enjoy his time with the Pikes’ daughter and was more than thrilled to have one of his own.

The doctor smiled at them both. Ilya beamed back. Then he looked at Shane who was grinning all the same.

Ilya couldn’t resist it anymore. He grabbed Shane’s face. And kissed him right on the mouth. It was rushed and just a smooch but he was so full of love and joy that he just couldn’t contain himself.

Janine removed the probe then helped wipe off Shane’s stomach.

“I am texting you the images to the number on file when you filled out the check-in paperwork.”

Ilya had done the paperwork of course so he just put down his number in a hurry. He grabbed his phone and immediately got the text notification.

“Well my work here is done. Congrats you guys.” Janine smiled and wheeled her cart out of the room.

“Thank you.” They both murmured.

“Alright let’s get down to business.” Dr. Leblanc spoke clapping his hands together.

Ilya watched Shane tug his shirt down. A bit saddened that it was gone. He did however stare at the ultrasound picture on his phone to remind him of what was just beneath the surface.

“Shane, I know you are seventeen or so weeks along which is about halfway but I still would like you to start taking prenatal vitamins every day. I will also be giving you this list of foods, beverages and medications to avoid.” He handed Shane the paper but Ilya took it quickly.

“I will hold onto this.” Ilya put it in his shirt pocket and patted it.

Shane smiled at him.

“Great. Well I know that this was not a close venue for you guys so you probably won’t want to come back to this location but don’t fret. I have a good friend who actually works at a clinic in Ottawa that I am going to refer you to. Just make sure you call right away. They will want to see you in a couple weeks for your anatomy scan and you will need to discuss hospital arrangements and birth plans with them sooner rather than later. Here.” The doctor handed Ilya a business card. “Dr. Lawry is the best. We did clinicals together. Highly recommend.”

“Thanks.” Ilya offered as he tucked the card away with the pamphlet.

“Well unless you have any questions for me that’s really all I have for you guys.”

“Um—” Shane started like he was going to speak but then stopped. “Nevermind.”

“What is it?” Ilya looked at him with concern.

Shane waved his hand nonchalantly. “Nothing just hockey stuff.” He said sheepishly.

“Ah I see. I would not recommend you play this season. But it’s likely you can play next if you so choose.”

“Oh no I figured as much I guess I am just worried because I did play a bit unknowing and actually took a pretty bad hit.” Ilya winced remembering the hit Shane had taken from Winter. God he would make sure next game he’d played against them that he got a nice little present back for that.

“I saw that game.” Dr. Leblanc offered up a sympathetic smile. “As far as hockey goes I’ve seen worse but it doesn’t appear at the moment to affect anything. I would talk to your next OB about it though if it still concerns you. They can monitor you more regularly there and check for brain development. Your twenty week anatomy scan will also be extremely thorough so you will know more then. Sometimes you won’t know the full picture till the little one is born though. We can only see so much in-utero.”

Shane’s face fell.

Ilya touched his shoulder in support. He could tell his husband was plagued with guilt and worry. “It will be alright.” He offered.

“Listen to your husband.” Dr. Leblanc winked at Ilya while he removed his gloves and washed his hands. “Things seemed just fine today. She was moving in there a lot. You have made her a safe home in there.” Dr. LeBlanc dried his hands then pointed at Shane’s abdomen.

Ilya grabbed Shane’s hand again, squeezing it gently. “See. Told you. Nothing wrong.”

Shane offered up a half grin.

“Well it was great meeting you both. Good luck and I’ll be secretly rooting for the Centaurs this season.” He winked again this time at both of them.

Ilya shook his hand. “Thank you.” Shane waved “ Thanks.” As he was halfway out the door. The soft click was heard. Shane looked toward Ilya. Ilya pulled him into a hug.

No words exchanged, just silent soothing from Ilya as he smoothed his hand over back and caressed his head. Shane leaned into it.

A few moments later they were interrupted by a nurse who came by to help them leave the providers officer incognito.

Ilya opened the door for Shane and he sank into the passenger seat. His hand resting on his bump. He let out a long exhale. Their baby seemed to be okay. Shane felt a tiny bit of relief.

Ilya reached over the dash and kissed his temple and moved his hand to touch Shane’s face.

“We are having a baby.” Shane let out a small, soft chirp.

Ilya moved his hand south, resting it over Shane’s on his abdomen. “Yes we are.” Ilya said softly.

They sat in a comforting silence for a few moments then Ilya smiled at him. “Hungry?”

“Yes.” Shane said excitedly. “Starved. Your baby already takes after you.”

Ilya gave him a pointed look. “Oh yeah. What does moya printsessa want?”

Shane felt a tingle under his skin at the Russian words. He was familiar with them but hadn’t heard them come from Ilya’s mouth before. “Are you talking to me or her?”

“Both.” Ilya smirked and glanced down at Shane’s body.

Shane’s face flushed pink. He liked the idea of being Ilya’s princess but he knew once the baby was here she would definitely win that title and he wasn’t even a little bit upset by that. Ilya was going to be such a great dad. He already was a great husband, father to Anya and captain to the Cens.

Ilya’s eyes went dark. “You like when I call you moya printsessa?” He teased in a flirty tone.

“Fuck you.” Shane said softly with no bite.

“Later.” Shane rolled his eyes. “So what does the little princess want to eat?”

Ugh. This was so embarrassing and Ilya was going to give him so much shit for it but he couldn’t stop thinking about it since they got into the car and Ilya mentioned food.

He parted his lips. Turned away and spoke softly. Muffled even. “McDonalds.”

“I’m sorry. Speak up. Could not hear you.” There was a glint of teasing in his voice.

“You heard me.”

“No. Did not. Say again. Tell me what you want.”

“What the baby wants.” Shane corrected.

Ilya blinked his eyes. “Ah—yes the baby. What she wants, right.”

“McDonalds.”

“I’m sorry. Still can’t hear you.” Ilya tapped on his ear.

“McDonalds you dick.”

“Mhm.”

“Shut up and drive will ya.”

“Alright if you say so.” Ilya started the car then shifted into gear but still had his foot on the break since the car was not moving. “Wow. I see it now. Shane Hollander eats Big Mac all over twitter.”

“Fuck off. And I actually wanted chicken Nuggets, fries and—oh fuck I need one of those crispy cokes.”

Ilya laughed while shaking his head. “Tsk tsk. So unhealthy Hollander.”

Shane was now getting irritated. “I will literally walk there if you do not start driving.”

“You know the chicken is not real meat right?”

Shane groaned. “Please do not remind me.”

“Okay. To the golden arches we go. So both of my princesses can eat.”

Ilya made a point to order Shane more food than what he asked for. He got him twenty nuggets, a large instead of a small fry, a large coke *and* a chocolate milkshake. Shane hadn’t asked for that one but Ilya just knew what *his* child would be craving.

And he was right.

On the drive home. Shane ate the whole meal sucking down the coke and the milkshake before nodding off on the way home. Ilya was happy to see Shane less anxious. Ilya felt a sense of pride and accomplishment seeing Shane like this. Satiated, resting and carrying his child.

That’s why he kept sneaking glances at him every so often on the drive—smiling to himself each time.

Once home. Shane awoke a bit dazed.

“Ilya—”

“You fell asleep.”

“It was the chicken nuggets.”

“I told you not chicken.”

“Yeah, I’m regretting my choices. I feel gross. I think I wanna eat healthier the rest of the pregnancy.”

“I support your choice.” Ilya said, opening Shane’s door.

“Good.” Ilya offered his hand to help him out. Shane reluctantly accepted it. Ilya was surprised not even a grumble about how he was pregnant, not useless but it had been a long day for both of them.

“But if the baby wants ice cream she will get it.” Ilya called out as Shane headed to the washroom.

Shane rolled his eyes at him before closing the bathroom door.

“Fine. If I have a craving I will let you know.” Shane spoke loudly through the wooden door.

Ilya smiled to himself.

It was a little later in the evening. Shane was snuggled up to Ilya on their couch—Any a lying at their feet—they were watching some random Netflix show that he was hardly paying

attention to since his eyes felt heavy and he'd been nodding off.

Ilya was carding one of his hands through Shane's hair with the other resting on his stomach. He felt at peace. Until he didn't

"What is wrong?" His husband paused the show.

Ilya must've picked up on his tenseness. He did have a habit of clenching when he was anxious.

"Nothing."

Ilya furrowed his brow. "I call bullshit."

"Ugh fine—I'm just nervous I guess." Shane played with the hem of Ilya's shirt. "So much happened today. I still can't believe I'm pregnant. And it's almost half-way over. There is so much to do. And I have to tell my parents. We need diapers. A car seat. I have to call the OB. Plus we have to baby proof—" Shane rambled one.

"Shhh—Is fine. One thing at a time moya lyubov'." Ilya smoothed a hand over his face to calm him. "What is first? Most important. Go." Ilya kissed his forehead.

"Uhh—well I guess, telling my parents. I feel bad the admin team knew before them." Shane groaned.

Ilya interjected. "Fuck them." Throwing out his middle finger in the air.

"Yeah I am still not happy with how they handled that and we really do need to schedule another meeting about my future on the Cen's. What if they don't sign me next year or—"

Ilya kissed him.

It was soft and slow then turned more heated. Ilya's tongue licked the inside of his mouth. His hand caressed the back of his neck. Shane started to move in tandem then trailed his hand from Ilya's neck to his chest and met him at his waistband where Ilya's rigid cock pushed against the seams. This was usually a normal progression for them but Ilya swatted his hand away and pulled back. Shane was left confused since Ilya started this.

"Hey." Shane rasped.

"Sorry you were talking...nonsense. Had to shut you up the only way I know would work."

"It wasn't *nonsense*. I'm legitimately worried about my career." Shane crossed his arms. Ilya couldn't understand because he wasn't the one who was pregnant and missing a whole season as he approached retirement age.

Ilya shifted his position so he was sitting up straighter and looking down at him. "You are Shane Hollander. Second greatest player in the league..." Shane shook his head. "...it will be fine. You will play again."

"And what if I don't?"

"You will still be Shane Hollander. Second greatest--"

"Yeah--yeah I know... I just wanted to retire on my own terms." Ilya pulled him close.

"And you will." Their foreheads touched for a moment. "Next thing. Your parents."

Shane nodded and settled back into his husband's chest. "Yes we should tell them sooner rather than later."

Anya snuggled back in between their legs.

Ilya had a game later that week. Which means he had a flight tomorrow. So tonight at dinner they were gonna tell his parents about the pregnancy.

Thankfully no one had leaked it. Even though ESPN had reported on the fact that Shane was going to be on IR indefinitely and no one seemed to know why. The speculations consisted of a plethora of different guesses. From illness to injuries. One even guessed he was gonna pursue his acting career after Rose got him a guest star role in the last movie she produced. It was a hockey romance and both he and Ilya made a little cameo since they apparently paved the way for other hockey player couples to come out or give love a chance.

Ilya ate the whole thing up. He loved it all. Hair and makeup. Being in the spotlight. And especially craft services. If Ilya was missing on set that's where he usually was. Stuffing his face with some local pastries.

Fortunately all the rumors were incorrect and no offense to Rose but acting was not something he would quit hockey for. The film was shot in Vancouver so at least they didn't have to go to L.A.

His parents called when they heard the news from ESPN about his IR. He apologized profusely to them for not telling them about it sooner and then they planned a dinner tonight so he could tell them. He tried to calm their worries that he wasn't sick or injured and he'd explain it all over their meal but Yuna and David were still unconvinced something wasn't wrong.

"Ilya! How is my favorite son?" Shane smiled and Ilya kissed her cheek. His mother moved onto him next pulling him into a warm embrace. "Shane." Her voice filled with concern.

"Everything's okay, Mom. I'm fine. Really." She waggled her eyebrows. "I swear I will explain it all soon." He pushed himself inside. Following Ilya who had already disappeared. Probably to the kitchen. "Where's dad?"

"Ilya!" David's shout echoed through the house.

"Nevermind." Him and his Mom both chuckled. "I'm glad you both love him as much as I do."

"He's a great guy and I love how happy he makes you." Yuna said. Shane's cheeks pinked.

No matter how many times his parents told him just how much they loved Ilya he still got flutters hearing them talk about him.

Dinner was filled with lots of conversation, laughter and overall merriment. Ilya lived for these dinners. Growing up he never had a family like this. Yes they ate dinner but usually his dad wasn't present and his mom wasn't there mentally either. She was usually quiet and reserved so the table wasn't filled with the same kind of noise. His mother loved him. He knew that. She loved his brother too but her own battles were weighed down on her heavily and unfortunately she succumbed to her own mental anguish.

Most days he'd wished she was still around. He could see it clearly. Sitting in one of these empty chairs around the Hollander table. Chatting with Yuna about how proud they were of their sons and all their accomplishments. Or making small talk with David. Exchanging recipes and gardening tips.

Then there was Shane. Irina would have loved Shane and Shane would have loved her back. Ilya doesn't know how he knows for certain but he just does.

His mind wandered a bit and he couldn't help but picture Irina holding him and Shane's baby. Cooing and smiling while bouncing her up and down on her lap. Cheering her on.

His mother would kiss the top of her head, giving her so much love. She would've been the best Grandma or at least tied with Yuna.

"So can we finally address the elephant in the room?" Yuna spoke, breaking Ilya from his day dream. He grabbed Shane's hand and squeezed it under the table.

"Yeah. Shane, whatever it is, you can tell us. Are you okay?"

"Umm—" Shane trembled. "Well—uh you see...I— will be sitting out this season...because—" Shane paused. His nerves seemed to be getting the best of him.

"He is pregnant." Ilya blurted out plainly.

Shane shot him a look. "Hey. I was gonna say it."

"You were taking too long."

"Well you kinda ruined my moment."

"Well at the rate you were going the baby would have been here already when you finally said it."

They continued to bicker until Yuna finally chimed in.

“Shane. Is it true?” Ilya turned to face Yuna.

“Yeah...it is.”

Ilya watched as Yuna’s eyes started to water. Then she bounced up out of her chair and hugged Shane. “Oh Shane. I am so happy for you guys.”

David was also up and hugging Ilya now.

Then they swapped hugs before finally sitting back down.

“I didn’t even know you were a carrier. Oh David, we never tested him. I didn’t—”

“It’s okay mom. Really. It may have come as a shock but we’re happy about this.”

“Very.” Ilya beamed.

“We’re gonna be grandparents.” David said, looking at Yuna smiling at each other.

Ilya felt eternally grateful that his daughter would have this kind of love in their life.

Shane was glad his parents took the news well. They were a bit surprised he was so far along but they also loved the ultrasounds and we’re gonna print them out for the fridge. He laughed at that.

Ilya and his dad were somewhere in the backyard drinking beer and talking about something lighthearted probably and he was in the kitchen with his mom cleaning up.

“So how are you feeling?”

“I’m okay.”

“You’re sad about hockey aren’t you?”

“I mean a little but I should be happy. I’m having a baby with my best friend. It feels like a miracle so I shouldn’t be upset.”

“It’s okay to want both things. You can feel sad that you can’t play this season but also happy that you are expanding your family. You want this right?”

“Yeah mom I do.” He looked to the patio from the kitchen window and saw his husband and dad laughing. Shane looked forward to the same scene next year except Ilya holding their baby in his arms. “I just feel sad because I wanted to win back-to-back titles. Then I feel guilty for feeling sad and then I worry I will resent my own daughter and she will hate me and I—”

Yuna grabbed his arm. “Hey...shh it’s okay. You don’t have to feel guilty about this and I know this isn’t ideal timing but there’s always next season.”

“Is there? What if they don’t let me play? What if the centaurs don’t sign me. What if I don’t want to play anymore and spend time with my daughter—”

Oh.

Is that something he wanted?

Hockey had been his whole life. Then he met Ilya and hockey was still so fucking important to him but Ilya's presence in his life changed that. Falling in love with someone, making a family and being an all star hockey player could go hand-in-hand. Plenty of guys on the team had partners and kids.

So why couldn't he.

"Shane honey...do you *wanna* retire?"

"Um—I don't know...I wasn't thinking about it honestly like at all, at least not by my own choice. Everything has felt forced but I could see myself leaving the sport I guess. I mean I still want to play but a quiet life with my daughter sounds like a good trade off." Yuna hugged him then whispered.

"You don't have to decide now."

Shane knew Yuna was right but he only had a few months left to decide what he wanted. The pregnancy was already half over. Soon the season would be over too and he will have given birth then he will have to heal before he can officially even think about playing again.

Chapter End Notes

Also thanks btw for everyone liking and commenting so far. Each new comment gives me motivation to pick up my damn pen and write more so just keep that in mind.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Shane and Ilya finally tell their friends and teammates the exciting news.

Chapter Notes

okay so I know I promised angst and it is still coming but this chapter is some more fluff and smut...until it isn't.

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

Ilya hadn't meant to tell Troy about the pregnancy but just like Ilya. Troy was perceptive. It was their bi-monthly double date dinner and this time it was Ilya and Shane's turn to host. Ilya cooked. They ate dinner and then after sat around the couch catching up and drinking wine and beer.

Ilya and Shane figured not drinking wouldn't be a dead giveaway since Shane hardly drank anyway but apparently he'd excused himself to the bathroom one too many times and that was enough for Troy to keep shooting Ilya looks during the whole evening.

Their friendship had blossomed over the last few years and Ilya would even admit that Troy was essentially his best friend which meant they had become close. Too close.

It was the kind of closeness that went past the normal teammates type. Ilya really should've expected this if he was honest. So when Shane got up to show Harris this new book he'd been reading in their study. Troy made his move.

Nodding to Ilya as he got up and walked to the Hollander-Rozanov trophy room with his beer in hand. Ilya followed.

"So..." Troy started.

“What Barrett?”

“Oh nothing. Just thinking.”

Ilya grinned. “Now we are in trouble.”

“Mm—cute.”

Ilya watched Troy tread around the room. Admiring the many awards and trophies Shane and Ilya had received over the years. Then Troy stopped at a photo of their recent Stanley Cup win. “This was a great day.”

“Yes it was.” Ilya still wasn’t sure where Troy was going with this conversation but he had his guesses.

“For me it was the best.” Troy lifted up his hand. Showing off the shiny golf metal ring on his finger.

“Ah yes. A cup and a ring.”

Troy nodded. “Besides the actual wedding day next summer I don’t think anything will ever top this day.”

Ilya wagged his eyebrows. “Da.”

“So what about you?”

“What do you mean?”

“The best day you ever had was this right here?” Troy touched the picture of Shane and Ilya holding the cup over their head sharing a kiss. A photo that had been shared by millions of people. It even made the cover of quite a few magazines and was included in the TIME person of the year issue.

“Is high on the list. Yes.”

“But your wedding was probably higher.”

Ilya would’ve given anything up for Shane. That included hockey so yeah the day they got married was more important to him than any game or win he’d ever had. However there was something that he was sure would top everything. His baby girl was due in just under five months. He was almost certain the feeling of holding her for the first time would be the best feeling in the world.

“Da.” Ilya nodded. “Barrett, where are you going with this?”

Troy smiled widely.

Ilya sighed. “Ugh. You know, don't you?”

“I had my suspicions but really you just confirmed it so thanks buddy.” Troy strode across the room and pulled Ilya into a friendly embrace. “Congrats. You’re going to be a great dad.” Ilya had been extremely nervous about fatherhood. That he might end up like his father or worse suffer the same demise as his mother and leave his child behind like he was left. But for some reason Troy’s words to him were powerful. Spoken with conviction like Ilya was fulfilling a prophecy Troy had just set and now it sealed his fate. “Both of you.”

Ilya could feel the tears well up in his eyes.

Just as he was about to pull away he heard the loud shrill of noise coming from behind him.

“Ilya! You told him.” It was Shane.

“Sorry.” Troy whispered in his ear before they untangled.

Ilya turned around to see his husband's arms crossed. Harris standing beside him confused.

“What. He guessed. Is not my fault. Yours really for being so...” Ilya stopped. For one he couldn't think of the word and two, his husband was wearing his angry kitten face.

Troy joined Harris's side and kissed his cheek. “What is going on?” Ilya heard Harris ask Troy.

Ilya gave Shane a look like he was asking for permission or maybe forgiveness. He really wasn't sure.

Shane groaned and uncrossed his arms. “Ugh fine. Tell him.”

Ilya walked towards Shane and put a hand on his stomach. “Surprise. We are pregnant.”

Harris stood still for a second. Then once he'd realized what was happening he was bouncing up and down with glee. Leaping towards both of them and pulling both of them into a conjoined hug. Ilya could hear Troy's laughter.

“This is so exciting you guys! A Cen's baby!” Harris squealed after letting both of them go. He raced back toward Troy who welcomed him with open arms and eyes wide and full of hope and Ilya knew that look.

Ilya tried hard to hold back his grin but a muffled chuckle may have slipped.

“Rozanov!” Troy shot him a look.

He shot his hands up in defense.

“I am innocent.”

Troy looked back to Harris. “Let’s get married first babe.”

Ilya looked over and saw Shane too holding back a smile.

“Oh my god Troy!” Harris swatted his fiancé's chest. “I did not mean now just hopefully someday.”

Shane chimed in. “Trust me you should wait. The morning sickness is no joke plus the first year of marriage is so much fun.” Shane smirked over at him.

“Oh my god. Stop. I do not want to have a baby right now. Plus I am not even a carrier.” Harris admitted.

“Me either.” Troy added.

“Damn I really wanted to get you pregnant.” Harris teased.

Troy blushed.

Ilya was laughing so hard doubled over. Shane was glaring at him trying to get him to stop.

“Alright, that's enough beer for you tonight.” Troy grabbed his glass. “Let’s get out of their hair.”

They all exited the trophy room and each said their goodnights which included more congratulations on the pregnancy.

Once the door was shut. Ilya turned to see Shane standing there in the foyer with his arms crossed.

“I hope you know this means I am telling Rose *and* Hayden.”

Ilya marched over to Shane and dropped to his knees. Lifting up his hoodie slightly to reveal the small bump. He kissed it sweetly. “Of course.” Another kiss to his stomach then he looked up. “Hayden will be jealous he was not the one to get you pregnant.”

Shane huffed. “How did you even know about that?”

Ilya froze then rose up slowly.

“Know what, Hollander?” Furrowing his brow.

“Oh my god nothing.” Shane stomped his foot. “I am going to bed.”

Shane tried to march off but Ilya grabbed him and growled. “Mm not without me.”

“Ilya-”

He trailed kisses on his neck as he carried Shane to their bedroom.

Just as he reached the doorway and found himself at the foot of the bed with Shane ‘s cock rigid against his thigh he spoke again. “We are not done with this talk. I want to know more about what Hayden said about getting you pregnant.” Ilya said into his ear.

Shane huffed out a low grumble. “Oh my god please just fuck me already.”

“Yes.” Then he carefully sprawled him out on the bed. Shane took off his hoodie while Ilya worked off his pants and underwear. Ilya pulled off his own shirt and pushed his pants down to his ankles before kneeling in front of the bed. Pulling Shane all the way to the edge so his legs were resting on Ilya’s shoulder and his pelvic region was on full display.

Ilya’s mouth was pressing light kisses up his thighs and his hands were grabbing onto Shane’s chest. “I cannot wait for these to fill with milk.” Shane groaned and his dick twitched against Ilya’s palm. “I will suck you dry.”

Shane just nodded and whimpered along as Ilya continued to speak.

Fuck Ilya had never thought about how hot it would be to have his husbands breast filled with milk but now that he was thinking about it. It was a huge turn on. Ilya started to stroke his own cock slightly while his other hand stayed on Shane.

“Mm—do you think I can get you pregnant while pregnant?” He said just before wrapping a hand around Shane’s hard cock and using his tongue to swipe across his opening.

“Fuck” Shane whined. “I don’t know but maybe you should try.”

Ilya’s lips curled into a wicked grin before he pressed his tongue into his husband's hole.

“Oh god. Ilya. Yes.”

Ilya continued to work his husband open with his tongue and used his hands to continue to slowly jerk him. Shane’s hands wrapped in his curls. Winding them around his fingers and pushing on Ilya’s head to go deeper. And he did. “Fuck. Ah—right there. Don’t stop.”

One of his fingers finally nudged its way inside while he continued to lick and drench Shane’s hole with his saliva. Pushing it past the tight muscle to rub gently at Shane’s prostate.

Shane’s words became slurred. The only sounds were moans and whines of pleasure as Ilya took him apart. Just the way Ilya liked him. Submissive and pliable. It felt like the only way to get Shane to relax and turn off his brain is when Ilya fucked or sucked him. And right now with all the stress they were going through. Ilya was determined to make sure that Shane’s brain was melted by the end of this session.

Ilya reached for the half used bottle of lube that was under the bed next to him on the floor and skillfully opened it with one hand. The other hand was still inside his husband. He used his free hand to squirt some of the viscous liquid onto his cock. Tossing the bottle back under the bed for another time like this.

“You ready for me sweetheart.” Ilya pulled out of Shane. Shane’s response was a desperate whimper. “Is okay moya lyubov’ I will stuff you with my cock.”

Shane’s whole body reacted to that. Ilya even saw the small dribble of precome leak from his slit. He swiped his thumb across it and then sucked on it making sure Shane watched. “Fuck II—” But before Shane could finish his sentence Ilya pushed into him.

It was the best feeling in the world. Being inside his husband. God he loved how perfect they fit together. It was cheesy but he truly felt like they were puzzle pieces that were destined to go together.

And Shane was gripping so tight onto Ilya's hips and moving his body in conjunction with Ilya's thrusting that Ilya had already felt close but wanted Shane to come first.

"Jesus Christ-" Shane yelled as Ilya changed his rhythm and helped arch Shane up so now he was getting a better angle to graze Shane's sweet spot with each thrust.

Ilya felt the effects of his transition as well and started to feel the familiar fluttering in his guy of an impending climax. "Shit Hollander." Ilya roared. "So good for me."

Shane squeezed his eyes shut. A tell tale sign he was nearing the edge. Ilya continued to piston into him. Shane tensed into it. Wrapping his legs tighter around Ilya's waist.

"Ah-not gonna last." Shane muttered. "M'gonna come."

Ilya reached out and cupped Shane's balls. They were tight. Shane was close. "Oh god." Shane squirmed under Ilya.

His hands continue to fondle his husband's balls while he continues his fluid motions. Changing up every open in a while to make Shane's release waver even more.

And then he realized he found the perfect rhythm because Shane's whole body went limp. And Ilya watched everything Shane did so he knew that was it.

"Yes." Shane cried. Ilya moved his hands from Shane's balls to and grabbed his dick to work Shane through his orgasm. He was an expert of knowing the ins and outs of Shane's body because if on queue cum spurted out of Shane and splatters on Ilya's stomach and dripped down onto Shane's.

Ilya's cock was firmly pressed inside his husband when he came so Shane's hole clenched around him creating an almost vacuum sucking him in right as Ilya was on the edge. And so he couldn't hold back. Filling Shane with his seed. Hoping that he would impregnate him again. Even if it was biologically impossible.

Ilya leaned forward and kissed his husband's chest and then his shoulder then his forehead. They were both panting and out of breath.

“Fuck Ilya that was—” Shane was at a loss for words.

“Shh—relax into it. No talking.”

Shane’s eyes stayed closed and his lips curled into a sweet smile.

Ilya pulled out of Shane then went to the bathroom. Washing the cum off himself quickly and wetting a towel with warm water for Shane so he could clean him up before he fell asleep. Shane hated the messy part of sex and Ilya was always more than glad to clean up whether he used a towel or his tongue Shane never seemed to mind.

When he came back to the room. Shane was lightly snoring. Ilya smiled to himself in the ensuite bathroom doorway looking at the rise and falls of his husband's chest and the small curve of Shane’s stomach carrying their baby girl.

“Moya krasivyy sem'ya.”

Then he cleaned up Shane. Helped put on a fresh pair of briefs and some pajama bottoms before cuddling into the bed with him.

A few moments later Anya snuck in and curled up at Shane’s side right near his abdomen. Ilya smiled and petted her. “You already love your baby sister so much. Don't you?” He said to her in Russian.

Then he drifted off to sleep with beautiful images of his future daughter in his head.

The days had been excruciatingly long. Shane felt trapped in his own home while Ilya was either at practice or on the road for games. His mom visited often and he texted or called Rose or Hayden most days. He told them both the baby news. They were both happy for him. Rose was excited to be an honorary aunt and Hayden offered fatherly advice after he questioned Shane's sanity to procreate with the "leagues biggest asshole" mostly in jest. Despite keeping constant communication with friends and family. It still wasn't rough and he was feeling stir crazy.

Luckily he was able to secure an appointment for his anatomy scan with the OB's office Dr. LeBlanc recommended but with Ilya's impossible hockey schedule there was no way he was going to be able to make the appointment.

Shane and Ilya hadn't told the rest of the team yet but Ilya informed Shane that there were whispers from players. Ilya only told Troy and Harris and obviously their coach already knew. Everyone else just had guesses. Shane wanted to tell them all he really did but he was worried they would be pissed at him like the last time he kept a personal thing about his life from his team it was a nightmare and he never gained the trust back of his teammates, the team, the whole freaking city well besides with J.J and Hayden of course.

So Shane and Ilya decided at the next practice they would just tell them. Together

Another problem was the general public and the media. Everyone talked. Shane wasn't online much but he was sent multiple articles, podcasts, even TV news segments on his 'mysterious' disappearance.

Luckily he still hadn't popped yet so he could hide his bump by wearing Ilya's larger clothing. Concealing himself when he left the house. Most people around them respected their privacy and it's not like paparazzi hung out in Ottawa so his secret was safe for now. God he hated keeping secrets. He'd lived in the closet for so many years and a majority of his

relationship to the man he loved was behind closed doors so having to hide again and lie made him feel awful. Like a caged bird.

SHANE: On my Way!

Shane knew Ilya was busy with practice so he wouldn't be able to check his phone but he was currently driving to the arena. They decided today was the day.

They had also planned ahead and had a local café cater some boxed lunches as a way of buttering up the Cen's for the shocking news.

Shane pulled up to the arena's parking garage and watched the tail end of practice. Ilya saw him and waved. Shane smiled back.

Once finished. Shane sat in the locker room. Waiting anxiously.

A few people said hi. Asked how he was doing. Ilya finally greeted him with a chaste kiss. Some of their teammates gave them shit making kissy noises or 'ew' sounds.

Shane felt his whole body tense. Ilya grabbed his hand as he stood up on the bench.

"So..." He fidgeted with his sleeve. "-I know a lot of you guys have been probably wondering why I haven't been playing and won't be for the foreseen future." He whispered that last part.

The team had all eyes on him.

He hated it.

Shane tried not to stare into them directly as he glanced over the sea of hockey players and then his eyes landed just below him on Ilya's. They were gleaming with pride adornment. Ilya smiled widely at him and gestured for him to continue.

Despite how embarrassing it was to admit you were pregnant because you let your husband *and captain* hit it raw most nights. The happiness in Ilya's eyes for their unborn baby made this feel a little bit easier. He released the breath he was holding.

"I am— no—erm..." Shane grabbed Ilya's shoulder. "We are pregnant."

Shane's eyes squeezed shut for a moment like he was expecting a punch but nothing came. He opened them and his teammates' expressions were a mixture of confusion and hesitation.

"Hello." Ilya started. "Did you not hear my husband? We are having baby."

That seemed to do the trick. Shane thinks maybe they were all just in shock. It was a lot to take in. Heck Shane had been surprised himself when he first found out in that cold conference room.

Not soon after Ilya spoke did their teammates start to approach them. Ilya helped him off the bench. And then they were being flocked.

Troy hugged Ilya first even though he's already known. While Wyatt had reached out for Shane. More of the team shook their hands or hugged them offering them their congratulations.

Once the whole team got their chance to give well wishes and grab their catered lunch. It was just the two of them in the locker room as Haas finally was the last one to leave.

Shane let out a hefty sigh of relief.

Ilya grabbed him and pulled him into his chest.

“Eugh...you’re so sweaty.” Shane pulled back.

Ilya moved in closer to him, rubbing his sweaty chest all over him. Then Ilya puckered his lips going in for the big kiss.

Shane put out his hand so Ilya’s lips met his palm.

“Shower first. Kiss later. And at home.”

Ilya huffed out a frustrated groan then winked and licked Shane’s hand.

“Was that supposed to deter me or seduce me?”

“Deter...?” Ilya started to take off his shirt.

“Like gross me out or push me away.” Shane explained while Ilya continued to strip down to his briefs.

“No chance Hollander. You are stuck with me.” Ilya teased and grabbed him. Moving him closer so their lips almost touched.

Shane almost gave in that time but before Ilya reached his lips. Shane took a step back.

“Not here.” Ilya rolled his eyes at Shane's reluctance.

“What is the point of having my husband on the team if I cannot kiss him whenever I want.”

Shane scoffed. “I thought the point of having me hear is so we can win cups and be closer together.”

Ilya waved him off. “Yes that is nice perk but my true plan was to kiss with you whenever I want.” And just like that Ilya stepped forward and peppered his face with kisses.

Shane laughed. “Ilya stop.” in a playful tone. If Shane really wanted him to stop he would’ve but he was so charmed by his asshole husband how could he deny him these loving kisses. And secretly he loved them too even if they were technically at their place of employment.

When Ilya was finally done kissing him all over he pulled his clean shirt over his head leaving Shane a little dizzy and befuddled. “That went well. Let’s go home.

Ilya put his hand out for Shane to grab it.

They intertwined them and left the arena together.

Shane had finally hit the twenty week mark and he couldn’t be more excited. Ilya was leaving later that day for a conference in the southwest but he made sure to still shower him, Anya and their unborn daughter with lots of love and affection the days leading up to his departure.

Shane woke up to Ilya between his thighs eating him out. They had both agreed early on in their relationship that they enjoyed waking up to blowjobs, or being rimmed. It was a hell of a way to start your morning.

Ilya licked, slurped and tongue fucked his hole till he came with a shout.

“Fuck.” Shane muttered as his hole clenched around Ilya’s tongue and cum pooled around the base of cock dribbling into his neatly trimmed pubic hair.

Shane leaned back into the pillow. Leaning into his high. Ilya crawled back up and kissed his chest then his face. “Mm.” Shane’s hand traveled to Ilya’s bulge but Ilya swatted him away. “Nope. Today is about you.” Ilya said before planting another kiss on Shane’s body. “And you moye solnyshko.” Then Ilya dipped down and kissed the small bump.

Shane loved when Ilya spoke Russian to their daughter.

It made him warm and giddy and so full of love.

While relishing in his husband’s warm presses on his belly. He felt it.

A flutter.

Shane jerked.

Ilya froze.

“Shane? Are you okay?”

Yeah he was fine...nothing wrong but that was an odd sensation he’d felt. Maybe it was just gas.

Then Ilya moved back over his belly and spoke more Russian to Shane's stomach.

And there it was again. Another flutter.

This one was more noticeable.

"Oh." Shane muttered and grabbed his stomach.

"What is it?" Ilya sounded worried.

"I-I think she's moving in there?" Ilya gave him a pointed look.

"Well. Yes."

Shane huffed, "No I mean I know she *moves* in there but like I felt it." Ilya's face filled with curiosity. "Y'know like for the first time."

Ilya's expression shifted from mock to pure joy. Then he peppered kisses all over Shane's face.

"Oh." Kiss. "My." Kiss. "God." Kiss.

He worked his way back down and spoke to the bump again this time in English.

"Hello little one. I am your papa." Ilya cooed.

Shane melted. He could sit in this bed like this for hours. Feeling the little flickers in his belly. And the way his husband spoke with so much love and fondness toward their baby

sped up the small thumps in his chest as it pounded against his rib cage.

But at some point they would have to get up. Move about their day. Ilya would be on a plane to Utah or Nevada later that night he couldn't remember. It didn't matter where though because it only mattered that he would be gone for almost two weeks.

Neither of them were thrilled to be apart for so long in the pregnancy but they knew this would be the reality.

Between the two of them Ilya was more upset about not being able to be there for the anatomy scan but it just wasn't possible with the schedule and he really needed to do the scan between twenty and twenty-two weeks and Ilya *had* to play every game. The Centaurs were already down their star center forward so the whole team was working overtime.

"I am quitting." Ilya announced.

Shane rolled his eyes.

"You say that every time you have an away game."

"And I will say it again for the next." Ilya leaned forward and pressed another kiss on his temple before slithering out of the bed.

Ilya padded to the bedroom door and opened it. Anya came running in. Sprinting to Shane's side. Anya had been clingy with Shane for the past few weeks. It was like she'd known that her sister was in there.

"What am I? Chopped liver?" Ilya spoke with mock anger.

Shane let Anya snuggle up to him. He'd given in after her incessant requests to get close to his bump had worked.

“To be fair. She probably would love you more if you were actually chopped liver.”

Ilya glared at him then called for Anya. “Come girl. Time to potty.”

Anya barked then jumped back down and followed Ilya as he left the room.

Shane laid back and smiled to himself. Feeling the warmth of many different kind of flutters inside him.

Ilya has only been gone for forty-eight hours and Shane was losing his mind. Yes he was used to spending weeks or months apart from each other but that was before they were outed and married.

At least he had Anya. And his mother.

His mom was coming over the following day to take him to his anatomy in place of Ilya.

But for now he would watch the Cen's game. Shane was grateful that he played for a team in his hometown. He was proud of the work the team had done to make a name for themselves. It was great seeing his hometown proud of him and his husband's team.

Anya and him were snuggled up on the couch watching Ilya's game against the Las Vegas Bronze Warriors. It was just the beginning of the first period and Ottawa was on a power play.

His team was working hard on the ice passing the puck back and forth from each player. Haas to Barrett to the defensemen Chouinard and then to Ilya.

Ilya passed back to Barrett and they were coming in hot on the net.

“Come on!” Shane shouted. Stirring Anya awake.

And then Troy made a pass back to Ilya instead of making a shot on goal himself. Not giving the poor Las Vegas goalie enough time to pivot to Ilya’s position.

Shane watched it glide smoothly to his husband.

“Take the shot!” He shouted at the same time Ilya’s stick hit the puck and launched toward the net, flying past the goalie’s head and sinking right into the back of the net.

Shane jumped up shouting and whooping. Anya had been alert and barking alongside Shane as they watched the Centaurs celebrate their goal.

The Centaurs didn’t score again for that period but Hayes did a stellar job at making sure Vegas didn’t score either.

Once the second period ended. Shane found himself craving a salty snack so he made his way to the kitchen and right to the fridge. He opened it and looked around for something to satisfy his craving. Anya had followed. So he gave her a cheese cube. Then back to searching for his own treat. Goddamn he really screwed himself by trying to maintain a healthy diet during pregnancy because now he didn’t have any *good* snacks in the house and of course he’d begged Ilya to hide his so he wouldn’t be tempted.

Which just gave him the best idea. He needed to find Ilya’s secret snack stash. Surely Ilya had some salty chips filled with lots of saturated fats somewhere around here.

Shane searched high and low in the kitchen. Looking in all the cupboards and the pantry but alas nothing. He took a quick detour to the garage to their second fridge and overstock pantry

items.

Basically it was just a cabinet above the drink fridge. He reached up and opened the door and found that just behind a stack of canned goods was a bag of ketchup chips.

Jackpot.

Shane abhorred ketchup chips. Normally. He had never cared for the Canadian favorite but Shane still remembered the day Ilya discovered them in the grocery store.

“Shane. Look. They put ketchup in chips here. I love this country.” Ilya squealed.

Shane rolled his eyes. “Ilya no, those are so disgusting.”

Ilya huffed then threw them in the cart. “I will decide for myself, Hollander.”

“Whatever. It’s your funeral.”

And thankfully he did buy them because Ilya kept them tucked away as a guilty pleasure and Shane—now that he’d discovered them his mouth salivated for them. Clearly it wasn’t him wanting them but Ilya’s baby inside him that did.

Maybe bad taste was genetic.

Shane reached up; having to get up on his tippy toes slightly despite him being just under six foot, he moved the cans aside to grab the aforementioned bag of chips. They were thankfully unopened.

But when he had them gripped in between his hands and was lowering down he felt a small trickle pool in his briefs.

That's odd.

Anya was at his feet. Wagging her tail waiting patiently to go back inside.

Shane dismissed it as maybe just bladder incontinence then opened the door letting both him and Anya back inside.

The game was back on. And Shane wanted to sit down and watch his team win against Vegas.

But just as he was about to sit down he felt more liquid dribble out of him. This time he couldn't ignore it. So while the Cen's game continued he would go investigate in the bathroom. Shane knew that sometimes bladder incontinence was normal in pregnancy but he'd figure that was later when he and the baby were much bigger.

Shane decided to close Anya out. As much as he loved her companionship he was an anxious mess and needed no distractions.

He pulled down his pants and there *was* a wet spot on his briefs but it was very clearly not pee.

Shane wiped himself dry, washed his hands then called his mom.

"Shane! Hey! Are you watching this game? I can't believe the penalty they just gave your husband." Yuna started. Shane wanted to care about the game but right now his brain was running at a million miles a minute.

“Mom...” Shane’s tone was laced with worry. His mom picked up on it immediately. Quickly shifting the conversation.

“Shane. Honey. What’s wrong?”

Shane rambled. “I don’t know. I was watching the game and then got a craving for a snack and I was in the garage getting some of Ilya’s nasty ketchup chips that for some reason his baby wanted, and then I was wet and I tried to go to the bathroom and Anya was there and I—” Shane was breathing heavily. Bordering on a panic attack.

“Woah. Shane, calm down. Take a breath sweetie.” His mom’s words came out but he barely heard them. It felt like he was under water. He could hear the mumbles of his mom speaking through the phone. He could hear the shrill barks from Anya from outside the bathroom door.. And faintly he could hear the announcers talking about the game on the TV.

“Can you hear me hun?” His mother asked calmly.

There was no response.

“Okay, I am getting in my car now. I will be there in fifteen minutes. I will stay on the phone. Can you sit on the couch for me?”

Shane heard her but couldn’t respond. He was still breathing hard and rocking back and forth.

“Come on Shane. Just a singular word so I know you are okay?”

Shane finally heard his mom’s words and comprehended what she was saying.

“Yeah—I...” Shane started then stopped. He looked in the mirror. Calmed down his breathing then opened the door. “-will wait for you.”

“That’s good.”

Anya followed him to the couch and put her head in his lap. Absentmindedly he petted her while holding the phone to his ear listening to the sounds of his mom’s car as she got in, started it and drove to his location.

“It’s okay, honey. I am still here with you. I will be there in ten minutes.” Her voice was soothing.

Shane stared at the TV but he didn’t watch it. His eyes focused on Ilya as he skated down the ice and then his hand settled on his belly.

The flutters weren’t there anymore.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading my loves. <3

also try not to hate me too much for my sins against the hollander-rozanov's :)

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Ilya and Shane are faced with hard circumstances and thousands of miles apart.

Chapter Notes

so...sorry to leave you on a cliffhanger I was having a rough week mentally but tonight it's heated rivalry and I didn't want to leave yall hanging too much.

it's a shorter chapter but i'll work on uploading the next one this weekend.

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

His mom arrived about halfway through the third period of the Centaurs game and wasted no time driving him to the nearest ER.

Shane stayed silent the whole drive. His mom tried talking to him a few times but eventually gave up. She must've realized Shane was not in a position to talk about what was happening.

His thoughts raced in his head. There was so much worry and anxiety flooding his system that it felt like his mind went into overdrive. He was dissociating to keep sane

Hands messing with the hem of his shirt. Eyes locked on the lines on the road.

Trying desperately to keep the bad thoughts far away. The ones telling him that his daughter isn't alive. That it was his fault.

Everything was his fault.

Shane didn't even realize when they'd made it to the hospital. He vaguely remembers his mom talking to the man at the check in desk and being directed to the labor and delivery unit.

The labor and delivery unit.

That couldn't be right. He wasn't giving birth. Not yet.

Shane had only been twenty weeks. Viability was twenty-two. He learned that in his pregnancy research spiral.

Unless everyone already knew his daughter's fate.

One singular tear ran down his face.

He wanted his husband. No, he needed Ilya.

It was the back end of the third period and the Centaurs were up by two goals. Ilya and his team had played a great game despite missing one of their star players. Ilya had managed to score two goals. One went to Hass and the other Barrett. He couldn't ask for a better team.

The Bronze Warriors were a respectful team and played a good game as well. Ilya quite enjoyed the competition but also had fun. It had been an eventful game. He'd been penalized

twice already but that hadn't stopped the momentum the other players had.

It was the last five minutes of the period and they were up 4-2 against the Vegas team. Ilya had been playing like he always did. Amazing. He'd hoped that Shane was at home cozied up on the couch watching with Anya snuggled up next to him resting her head on Shane's belly where his daughter resided. That thought pushed him even harder most games knowing his husband was sacrificing his body to grow their baby girl.

Yes of course he missed having Shane on his team for many reasons but knowing his husband and daughter were safe at home made his heart swell.

"Roz!" Hayes yelled at him. It was enough to pull him back to reality. Shit. He was still playing his game. Shane somehow managed to distract him more when he was far away then when he was right next to him on the ice.

Ilya got his focus back and was watching the puck move from player to player. It was with the Warriors till Bood managed to intercept it on a pass. Bood then passed up to Barrett and then around the back of the net.

Ilya was ready to receive and hopefully shoot but just as the puck hit his stick one of the larger defenders in the league—Aaron Locke—slammed him into the boards with an intense ferocity.

And usually Ilya wouldn't bat an eye but he heard a pop sound and felt a snap in his knee—the one that has been giving him trouble ever since a puck hit him there all those years ago.

Ilya shouted, "Fuck" and slowly sunk down to the ice. Aaron looked concerned.

"Shit man. Are you okay?" Ilya heard the whistle and slowly everyone was closing in around him. Troy pushed Aaron out of the way. "Roz, you good?"

"No." He said curtly.

Coach Wiebe had already made his way to the ice. “Rozanov? Where are you hurt?” Ilya clutched his knee.

“Fuck” He muttered. “not the knee again.” His coach huffed empathetically.

The medics now were on their way. Assessing Ilya before getting him on a stretcher and carrying him off the ice and out of the arena.

Ilya’s mind was reeling. So many thoughts going through his head. Pain coursing through his body. The EMT’s were doing their best but right now he was distracted by what this all meant. Would he ever play hockey again? Was this it for him? Would his daughter be disappointed in him?

All he wanted right now was his husband. He needed Shane.

Ilya was admitted to the hospital and had already done several scans and imaging. Being moved from room to room was exhausting and he was in pain. Thankfully he was on some heavy pain meds now and was in his own private room waiting for an orthopedic doctor to confirm his worst fears.

God he’d wished he had his phone on him. But it was back in his bag in his assigned locker at the Vegas arena. He wanted to hear Shane’s voice so bad. Also surely Shane had been watching and saw it happen he was probably worried sick.

He hated this.

After what felt like an eternity a knock was at his door.

The door swung open revealing a shorter female doctor with black hair and amber eyes. She was short in stature and petite. A little young too, Ilya thought maybe not old enough to even be a doctor but she had a warm smile and greeted him politely.

Ilya wasn't a bad guy. He was in a lot of pain—mentally and physically—so if he was snippy with her it was just because he was going through it.

She looked down at the chart on her tablet, “Mr. Rozanov.” The doctor started. “I’m Dr. Green.”

“Hello.” He said flatly.

“So I will just jump right into it.” Dr. Green directed his attention to the tablet in her hands. His scans were present on the screen. “So here we have your left knee. You see this right here?” She pointed to this blob in the scan. He couldn't make it out honestly. He was a hockey player not a medical professional.

“Da.”

“Well that is your ACL. And unfortunately this is a complete tear in other words a grade three sprain. You will require surgery and about nine to twelve months to heal properly including physical therapy before returning to sports.” She said it so casually, like the words she was saying weren't a point blank shot right to Ilya's chest.

Everything his team had worked for what he worked for could possibly be gone.

Just like that.

One hit.

“No.” The word rolled off his tongue firmly.

Dr. Green’s face twisted in confusion.

“I’m sorry.”

“I–no this is not real.” Ilya was angry. “You are liar.”

“I am very much not lying. I understand this is difficult to hear–”

“You do not. I am Ilya fucking Rozanov. Captain of the Ottawa Centaurs. I do not tear my ACL and sit out for seasons.”

“Listen Ilya–” She started to get closer to him and her tone shifted as well. It was one of pity.

Ilya didn’t do pity.

“I need another doctor.” Ilya shouted not at her just in general.

“I–” She stumbled. “I’m the only orthopedic surgeon here tonight.” He was making her nervous. God he didn’t mean to be such an asshole.

“Call my team doctors. I need to talk to someone–anyone else. Not you.” He was lashing out badly. This wasn’t like him. He kept his fury on the ice not in poorly lit hospital rooms to doctors just doing their job.

The door flung open.

“Ilya—” It was Coach Wiebe.

“Coach—” Ilya spoke, his voice well above a whisper. “I need her to leave.”

Coach Wiebe looked at the young doctor puzzled. Her face was stoic like she wasn’t affected by Ilya’s snarling.

“Um—what’s going on?” The coach's voice was cautious when he looked at both of them.

Dr. Green spoke first—firmly and confidently, “Mr. Rozanov here has torn his ACL in his left knee. A complete tear—a grade three sprain and will require surgery, physical therapy and nine to twelve months of rest to properly heal.”

Ilya wanted to cry. He could feel his face get hot hearing it all over again but he suppressed the urge and pushed it back down.

“Oh my.” Wiebe’s voice was clearly filled with concern probably for Ilya but maybe also for his team’s season. His coach moved forward resting a hand on his shoulder. “Well son. I’m really sorry about this.”

There was a pause. Like they were taking a movement of silence. It hung heavy in the air.

After a minute Coach Wiebe spoke up.”I should probably loop in our team doctors. Let me go make some calls and I will be right back.”

Dr. Green already had managed to sneak out. Ilya hadn’t even noticed till Coach Wiebe left and he realized he was completely and utterly alone.

Specifically in his thoughts.

Which was never a good place to be for Ilya Rozanov.

“Okay, so there’s the heartbeat. Looks like the little one is still going strong.” The tech advised.

Shane felt a bit of relief. Like a small weight had been lifted off his shoulder.

The tech turned off the machine and wiped off his stomach.

“The doctor will be in to speak with you shortly.” Then the tech grabbed the ultrasound machine and rolled it away and out of the room. Nothing else said.

Shane looked up at his mom. She was wiping a tear from his cheek and still holding his hand.

“Mom I—” He wanted to break down.

“I know sweetie but you saw it. She was moving around in there. We just need to wait to see what doctors say before we worry too much.”

Shane leaned into his mom.

“Yeah...” he sniffled. “-we should call Ilya. I bet the game is over by—”

“Knock. Knock.” A tall, broad man walked in. He was clearly the doctor with the way he was dressed. “Ahh—” He paused to look at the chart. “Mr. Hollander.” He paused again then looked up. “Shane? Like the hockey player.”

Shane nodded and shifted in his bed uncomfortably which caused another bout of fluid to leave his body. “Uh—yeah.”

“Oh wow. I had no idea—just wow—congrats! I’m Dr. Cherie.” She extended out her hand looking to find his in a shake. He obliged.

“Erm—thanks.” Shane said awkwardly.

“Right. So let's chat. I saw your ultrasound and the nurses did check the fluid and it looks like you have something called preterm premature rupture of membranes.” Shane had no idea what any of those words meant but none of them sound good. He squeezed his mom's hand tighter, clinging onto every word the doctor said. “I know that probably sounds like a lot but let me explain. Basically it's when your waters break prematurely due to a rupture or tear in your amniotic sac.” Yuna tightened her grip around Shane's hand. And a lump formed in his throat. This explanation still didn't ease his anxiety. “Or for short PPROM.”

“Okay—and what does that mean for Shane and his baby?” Yuna asked inquisitively.

The doctor sighed. Never a good sign. “Well Shane is twenty weeks and four days pregnant and unfortunately viability for our hospital is twenty-two weeks.”

“Yes. I am aware.” Shane said matter-of-factly.

“Well right now we are going to have you admitted. It doesn’t look like you are in preterm labor at the moment which is good but we will keep you monitored here in the hospital until you deliver.”

Shane felt like he had just taken a puck to the gut.

He finally understood what she was saying. His waters broke early. He was going to be in the hospital until delivery. That was several months.

Shane started to panic. His breaths were coming in shallow.

“Hey Shane. Look at me. Deep breaths okay?” His mom stared into his eyes and held his hands as he tried to get more air through. Gasping. “Slower.” He took in a large inhale. “Good.”

“I know this sounds scary Shane and I am not going to sugar coat it. This is not ideal. You are a male carrier on top of an already geriatric pregnancy so ruptured membranes puts you at a high risk of infection and pre-term labor. Our team will connect with your OB but for now being here is the safest place for you and your baby. The goal is to keep your baby in there for as long as possible. So we will administer antibiotics for infection, monitor you and your baby daily and you will continue to take prenatal along with other vitamins for healthy fetal development.”

Shane was still in shock. He could hear the doctor's words but couldn’t process them anymore. Hopefully his mom caught it all and could fill him in but right now his brain could only focus on what he could have done differently. If he would’ve caught this pregnancy sooner and not played hockey maybe this wouldn't have happened.

A voice finally pierced through all the static. “Shane?” It was his mom. “Did you hear what Dr. Cherie said?”

He nodded. Which wasn't a complete lie. He had heard the gist about being admitted and the preterm stuff but anything after that was a blur.

"I know this is a lot to hear and truly I am sorry but our medical staff is going to do our absolute best to keep your baby inside you as long as possible. It could be weeks or months from now. Regardless, your baby will need to be checked out by NICU as soon as you deliver and most likely will spend some time there."

Shane wanted to cry again. Not only was he worried about his baby being born prematurely but having to spend possibly weeks or months in the NICU but also his whole pregnancy was just taken from him. He'd found out so late and then this hospital stay meant that he only had a few comfortable weeks at home with Ilya and Anya before. Now he was going to be imprisoned in this hospital. He wouldn't be able to go to any of Ilya's games. No late night cravings. And worse of all not sleeping in his bed with Ilya. There would be no sleepy cuddles and late mornings where Ilya made him breakfast and Anya snuggled against his bump. He also wouldn't get to finish his nursery. Obviously they had time and the bigger worry was the health of his daughter but there were so many intrusive thoughts flooding his mind right now. It felt like he might drown.

The doctor left and nurses came into the room to start monitoring his baby for a stress test. They also ran an IV for antibiotics.

Luckily his mom helped him through all of this.

Ilya was waiting in his room for Coach Wiebe to come back and his mind was full. Full of thoughts. He felt like a failure. Like he wasn't good enough and now this injury would define his whole career. He needed to book a session with his therapist—Galina—immediately. It had been a while since their last meeting. He had come such a long way with his depression but that didn't mean he was cured. Depression always loomed in the back of his mind. It was as if it was a sleeper agent. One day he would be totally and completely fine but then out of nowhere he would feel the negative thoughts creep back in overtaking him.

Just before his brain went in to fight or flight moment, his coach came back in.

Ilya watched closely. He'd always been perceptive and something was definitely off.

“Coach?” He questioned, watching carefully as the man’s lips didn’t curl and the way his brows furrowed. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” Wiebe said quickly and nervously.

Ilya knew something was wrong. It was all over his coach's face and body language.

“What did the team doctors say?” Ilya inquired.

“Just that they want to get you back to Ottawa first before scheduling your surgery in the following weeks.” Of course he would want that. He needed to be home. Be with Shane, be with his family.

‘Ah—when is that?’

“Umm—doctors wanna keep you here overnight then you’ll be discharged in the morning and fly out as soon as possible. When you get back home you’ll do an assessment with our team doctors.”

Something was still wrong and Ilya needed to figure out for his own mental sanity what it was. So he would probe his coach for more information.

“What about the team?”

Ilya figured he was stressed about the team.

“What do you mean?”

“We lost Hollander and now me. We are top scorers.”

“I know son and I won’t lie this will hurt us but it’s early on. We can recover. Gonna pull up some AHL players I have good feelings about. But you do not need to worry about any of that. You need to focus on you and your healing. And you need to focus on your family.” Coach Wiebe didn’t say names but he knew his coach meant Shane, and their baby.

So if it wasn’t the team he was hiding then why was he so nervous and fidgeting his thumbs together.

Ilya gave a half smile. It’s all he could give at this time.

“Ilya—is there anything else I can do for you?”

“Have you reached Shane?” Ilya watched as Coach Wiebe’s face dropped. “Coach?” Ah there it was the reason he’d been uncomfortable.

“Ilya—” Coach Wiebe started.

Ilya couldn’t breathe. If something happened to Shane or his baby he would never forgive himself. He should've retired. His family was more important than hockey.

“Is Shane okay? Is the baby okay?” Ilya’s voice was panicked.

Coach Wiebe answered, “I don’t know...we couldn't reach him.” Then his coach pulled something out of pocket. It was Ilya’s phone. “Here.”

Ilya grabbed the phone. He frantically put in Shane’s contact hitting the call button. Several rings then straight to voicemail. He did this a few more times. Then checked his find my friends app and Shane’s phone was showing at their home.

Panic started to rise however in Ilya’s chest. Sure it was possible he was showering or fell asleep but if Shane was at home and presumably watching the game then he would've seen Ilya’s injury. He would've been worried. He would’ve called or texted.

God is it possible Shane left in a hurry. Hopped on a plane. Leaving his phone behind. Ilya hoped not. He didn’t want his husband on a plane while pregnant and alone and with no phone. He was pretty damn famous. It wasn’t safe.

Ilya rang his phone again and heard the voice of his husband on the voicemail box...again.

He wanted to throw the phone across the room but then he got one more idea.

Ilya hovered over Yuna’s contact—Shane’s mother.

It rang.

Once.

Twice.

And just on the third ring. He heard it.

“Ilya—” It was Yuna’s calming voice.

Chapter End Notes

i hope yall don't hate me too much

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Shane finds out about Ilya; Ilya finds out about Shane.

Chapter Notes

holy shit. episode 5 amiright?

well here's some more pain to get you through the week.

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

Shane was sitting up in his bed staring at the wall in front of him. Completely dissociating. The nurses had set up his monitors and IVs then left to tend to other patients. Everything had been so chaotic and disorienting. He'd wish he would've grabbed his phone before he left. Not so much for distraction but he really wanted to hear Ilya's voice.

Currently his mom was grabbing food in the hospital cafeteria. When she was back Shane would have her call Ilya. Surely his game was long over by now.

Shane decided to turn on the TV for distraction or on the off-chance ESPN was covering the Cen's post game or something.

The TV came to life and Shane managed to guide his way to ESPN where he was immediately met with a clip of his team's game except it wasn't what he'd expected. Not a highlight reel of a good goal or great save but no it was his husband—Ilya—being checked against the board then hitting the ice—clutching his knee. Followed by a clip of him being taken out on a stretcher.

Oh. My. God.

Ilya was hurt.

And Shane had no idea. He felt his breathing begin to pick up but in short, shallow gasps. His husband was hurt. He was in the hospital. Shane had no idea if he was okay or not.

Then he turned up the volume, maybe there was something from the broadcasters since they were talking now.

Shane tried to listen to the words coming out of the anchor's mouths but nothing was really said, only that he was transported to the hospital with a knee injury and that the Centaurs still won the game.

Fuck.

His panic attack had sent his heart rate off the chart. He could hear the beeps coming in more fervently.

Nurses came in. Checking on him.

There was no way he could explain what had happened but they took one look at the TV and saw the replays of the games. One of the nurses figured it out. He turned off the television. "Hey, I know you are stressed right now and worried about him but you need to try and calm down for your baby. We do not want you going into preterm labor right now. Okay. Can you try breathing with me?" Shane listened to the nurse as he held his hand and counted down breaths.

Other nurses worked around him. Checking on the monitors from his own devices and the ones hooked up to his belly.

"Shhh—it's okay." The nurse soothed him. Shane needed to reach Ilya or his coach or anyone.

His breathing came back to normal and so did his heart rate.

After a few minutes of breath work. His mom was back.

"Oh baby. His mother stepped closer and replaced the nurse. Soothing him.

"He's hurt." The nurses left now that he had calmed down and his mother was there.

Yuna's expression was quizzical. "Who is hurt?"

"On the-the t-tv it-t showed-d I-Ilya at the-the game. They took-k him to the h-hospital." His voice was strained and came out in slow spurts between gasps.

"Shhh—hey lets just call him. I'm sure everything is fine." Yuna grabbed her phone.

Shane watched as she pulled up the phone app and saw that he was already in her recent call log. She was about to click on his name when an incoming call came.

Ilya's contact photo of him and Shane standing in front of the mantle two Christmas' ago flashed brightly across the screen.

Ilya was calling Yuna.

She quickly accepted.

"Ilya—"

“Have you talked to Shane?” Ilya’s voice poured out of the speaker distraught. Desperate.

Shane grabbed it out of his mom’s hands.

“Ilya...oh my god. I was so worried. I saw on ESPN you were hurt—and I...oh my god.” His voice was turning more into a whimper. He was a garbled mess trying to hold back tears. “I thought—”

“No—no-shhh—I am here. I am okay...”

Ilya’s tone didn’t match the words he was saying. He didn’t sound okay.

Shane bit the inside of his cheek hard before speaking again.

His mom slowly stepped out of the room to give them privacy. Shane silently offered his gratitude. He needed to speak with his husband alone right now.

“You don’t sound okay?” Shane said wearily.

There was silence on the other line for a moment then he heard Ilya huff out a sigh.

“Sweetheart...” Fuck. Ilya reserved that pet name for when things were serious. “I do not have good news.”

Shane’s heart sank. His throat got tight. He could feel the acceleration of his heart rate chirp up again.

Instead of responding he waited. Waited for Ilya to offer up his next sentence.

“Is my knee.” Was all he said but Shane knew. Maybe not specifics but he knew Ilya’s season and maybe career was over.

Shane was conflicted. On one hand he was terrified of everything that was happening to him and their baby but on the other Ilya needed support. Maybe he should wait to tell him. But they didn’t lie to each other. So he needed to rip off the band-aid when the money presented itself in the conversation.

“Moya lyubov’...” He started softly.

Shane heard Ilya’s shaky breaths into the speaker. “Is my ACL. It tore. Need surgery...” Ilya broke. His next words came out like a whisper. Clearly devastated. “A year long to...uh—”

Shane finished his sentence. “...recover.” No response from Ilya but he could still almost hear his head nod as he held the phone against his cheek.

Then came the muffled cries. This was breaking his heart. He needed to comfort him but how was he supposed to do that when he too needed support and comfort. How in the hell was he supposed to add to his husband’s suffering by admitting that he was also in the hospital and that his water broke and their baby might die and even if she does make it she will have a long road ahead. Spending her first months of life in the NICU. It wouldn’t change his love

for her but it would make things challenging. It would break his heart to see her live in plastic.

“Are you flying home soon?” Shane asked.

“Da.”

“Good. I need you. We need you.”

Ilya had been reclined into the hospital bed. But completely sat up when he heard the exhaustion and desperation in Shane’s voice. He had been so distracted with his own injury that he forgot the reason for the initial call. Shane hadn’t been answering his phone and he was with Yuna.

Why didn’t Shane answer but Yuna did? Was he not at home? Did something happen? His mind swirled with the possibilities. Flooded with dread and worry. And here he was bed ridden while the love of his life was out there needing him. His child. Needed him.

“Shane—” Ilya started. He heard the heavy breathing in the speaker and small gasps from Shane like he’d been suppressing his emotions. Like maybe he’d been crying or was about to. Ilya wanted to take all his pain away. “What is wrong?”

Then the damn burst. He heard the sobs. It broke his heart.

“I-am-so-sorry...” he said between cries. “It’s-all-my-fault.” He sniffled.

And Ilya feared the worst. Shane must’ve lost the baby. Their daughter.

God everything was so fucked up. But he kept in his tears because right now because he needed to be there for Shane. His pain wasn’t a priority. His family was.

“Sweetheart.” Ilya started and he couldn’t help but hear the uncontrollable wails coming from his husband. “Take a minute. Breath...for me.”

The garbled noises Shane once was making started to fade off. “Okay. Good. Can you talk about it?” Ilya was worried Shane wouldn’t be able to bring himself to say the words but wanted to make sure he’d say them if he was ready.

“I-I was watching,” He sniffled. “-the-the game...and I was-s grabbing a-snack from-above the garage fridge—when...” Shane paused. Ilya wanted to hold his hand. Grab him. Comfort him. Anything. But he couldn’t. He was lain up in a hospital bed. Useless.

“Take your time. I am not going anywhere.” Except to Ottawa as soon as possible he thought.

Another long pause but then he started again. “I found your ketchup chip stash and when I reached up to grab it I felt—something. Wetness like I was leaking. I went to the bathroom and called my mom. She took me to the ER and they took me to labor and delivery...” Ilya’s hands were shaking. Oh god. Shane must have been terrified. All alone. He should’ve been there with him. Took him to the hospital himself. He was already a terrible father just like his own. Never present.

“Oh baby...” Ilya needed to get out of here. Maybe he could sign something or maybe he could just walk out. Rip this goddamn IV out of his arm. Get on the earliest plane. Heck he’d walk if he had too. “Do you want to continue?”

Shane didn’t say anything. Ilya assumed he nodded because he kept going.

“The doctor said my water broke...”

Ilya didn’t know a ton about pregnancy besides what Shane had been telling him in his extensive research but he did know water breaking was usually a thing when you are about to give birth so surely with this news and Shane’s tone it had to be bad. Shane must’ve lost their baby and Ilya wasn’t even there to help Shane through it or say goodbye.

Ilya moved the phone away from his face and tried to blink away the tears in his eyes.

“...and they said I have PPRM.” Now that was definitely not something Ilya knew anything about.

“PPR—I am sorry but I do not know what this means.”

“I will never forget.” Shane’s voice cracked. He sounded so defeated. Ilya wanted to hold him. “Preterm Premature Rupture of Membranes.” Shane said clinically like he’d been reading off some medical chart Ilya didn’t understand.

Now Ilya was absolutely lost but whatever it was it had to be bad. He didn’t recognize any of the English words. “That does not sound good.”

“It’s not. Basically the amniotic sac—where the baby grows—is broken and there is a high risk for infection and preterm labor and a plethora of other health complications. They admitted me. I have to stay here for the remainder of pregnancy. I could be here for weeks or even months. They don’t know but I will be here for the unforeseen future and heavily monitored.”

Ilya had never been great with medical terminology even in his native tongue so half of what Shane said he didn’t fully understand but it sounded like he was still pregnant. Their baby was still alive and inside of Shane. He hadn’t given birth yet. They hadn’t lost their baby. Ilya let out a huge sigh of relief then held the phone to his chest. And grabbed his cross pendant. With his free hand he brought it to his lips. Kissed it then mouth then said “thanks mama” in Russian. He’s not sure he believed she actually had anything to do with this miracle but something in him still felt like it was a possibility. Maybe she was a guardian angel for her granddaughter.

Ilya still needed to hear the words. He needed confirmation. “Shane. Are you telling me our daughter is alive and you are still pregnant?” Ilya held in a breath waiting. He was pretty positive he was right but he needed to hear the words come out of Shane's mouth and through his speaker.

Ilya heard another crack in Shane's voice. “Yes. Did—did you think—” Shane couldn't even bring himself to finish the sentence. His voice muddled with worry.

“ohh, slava bogu” Ilya cried out. “I thought—it does not matter. You and baby are okay. Everything is okay.” He grabbed his pendent again.

“Ilya—” Shane sounded defeated. “It's not though. You are injured and I am hospital bound and our baby isn't at viability yet. If I go into labor tonight there is zero chance she makes it. And even if she stays in for a few more weeks or months her journey will be long and hard. She will live the beginning of her days in a plastic container. A tube breathing for her. Food being fed from a tube...” Shane stopped. “...a tube...” He repeated softly, Shane was breathing into the phone again. Heavy. Panting. Ilya could hear loud chirps likely from the hospital machines. Shane's heart rate was elevated.

“Hey. Listen. Sorry I know is serious. I know you are scared. Relax for me. Listen to the sound of my voice and my words.” Ilya heard the beeps from the machine start to level out again. “Good.”

Ilya exhaled. Held the phone to his ear. “I am not sure 100% of everything you just said but our daughter is a fighter. Because her dads are fighters, winners. We fought like hell for everything. Our jobs. Our relationship. Our career. And her.”

“I—” Shane paused. “I-I'm scared.”

“I know moya lyubov'.” Ilya spoke softly, “I am too.”

Shane hardly slept that first night in the hospital. Luckily his dad was able to go to his house and pack a bag for him. Grabbed his phone. Some clothes, toiletries. Other necessities and brought them with him. Both of his parents had to leave shortly after his dad joined since visiting hours were over.

Which just left Shane and his baby. Alone. Well not completely, the nurses were checking on him frequently. And his phone had missed messages from his friends with their love and support of Ilya and his injuries. Shane didn't respond. He just didn't have it in him

Ilya was in a whole other country. In his own hospital bed. He should be there with him. Shane should've been at the game. He doesn't regret carrying their child but if he hadn't been pregnant he'd have been at the game...maybe he could've stopped it.

Obviously he knew that wasn't true. Getting shoved against the boards was just the name of the game. Hockey was literally a contact sport and getting hurt while playing the sport that allowed physical fighting was extremely common. They say being a partner to a hockey player is harder than the sport itself but Shane was a special breed of WAG. One that not only watched from the stands but from the ice. So he couldn't just step back and close his eyes when Ilya was getting into with someone. And as for their relationship they were more than just partners, they were teammates. They had each other's backs on and off the ice.

So not being there was fucking with him badly.

The following morning after a very restless slumber filled with worry, dread, anxiety, nightmares and sporadic checks from the medical staff. It was visiting hours again.

His parents came back and informed him that Ilya had a flight that morning and would be back in Ottawa later that evening. Ilya would be at home again. Shane wouldn't.

The wait felt agonizing. All he wanted was his husband here. At his bedside. Holding his hand. Kissing his belly. Telling him everything would be alright or his version of it. He needed it.

Nothing helped distract him. Because when he wasn't thinking of Ilya he was thinking of his baby. Or his team. Basically everything that had once been his source of happiness that aided in his relief when anxious now became the primary cause of it.

Throughout the day he was checked thoroughly. Non-stress tests for the baby. Where he was hooked up to a machine that would monitor the baby's heart rate and fetal movement. Basically torture because it was an hour of worrying that he would fail the test and then they'd do an ultrasound and give him the bad news.

There was also the medication he was on. Antibiotics through an IV. He hated needles and needle-adjacent things. So this was making him squeamish anytime he thought about the catheter inside his vein. Or the pinch from when they were inserted it.

Late afternoon his OB came and checked on him.

They discussed everything he'd already known from the other doctors and they talked about birth plans and back up plans. NICU stay. Hospital care. After hospital care. Post-partum stuff too. It was hard to discuss when all he could hear was worse case scenario after worse case scenario. Yes they mentioned the best ones too but those still came with a multitude of concerns as well.

Night time had finally came. Still no Ilya. Visiting hours were almost over.

His dad was doing some light reading, while his mother was grabbing some more coffee from downstairs. Shane mostly twiddled his thumbs in between naps. Nothing much else to do. TV made him anxious. Anything on his phone was a nightmare. Texts from friends and teammates and all forms of social media which he intended to stay far away from. His parents

brought him books and magazines from his personal collection but his brain was still not in the right state to enjoy his hobby.

Instead he watched the clock.

Ilya spent the whole next day traveling. Once he was discharged he had to take an uber to the airport followed by a long flight to Chicago then a three hour layover in the airport followed by another flight to Ottawa. With the time change he was worried he wouldn't make it to the hospital before late that evening.

And as for traveling he was bound to a crutch. Unfortunately the team needed the whole medical staff so no one could escort him back home but he was grateful his favorite member of the media team had been traveling with them for this conference and gracefully offered to help out. Sure he was on the Centaur's payroll but Ilya was sure Harris would've done it even if hadn't been.

They were on their final flight to Ottawa. Thankfully they got to fly business class on this one but he was still seated close enough to Harris that conversation could be had easily and well Ilya wasn't really in much of a talking mood. However he was a nervous wreck. He hadn't even noticed his not injured leg was shaking like a dog in the rain.

"Ilya? Are you okay?" Harris asked. Hand resting on his thigh. Momentarily stopping his trembling.

Ilya turned from staring out the window to face Harris. Harris had known about the pregnancy and obviously Ilya's injuries but he had not mentioned the baby or Shane yet. It wasn't that he couldn't trust Harris. But Harris would tell Troy and again he knew Troy was trustworthy with secrets but he had still been nervous to say anything especially since he hasn't even talked to Shane about it yet or seen him in person for that matter. That and talking about it made it even more real. Which meant he would have to address his own thoughts and fears for the remainder of this flight. Well more so than he already had been.

"Yes. Just thinking. That is all." Ilya responded curtly.

Harris narrowed his eyes and furrowed his brow. Clearly not believing his explanation whatsoever. If Ilya considered himself perceptive. He definitely categorize Harris into that same category. "Alright. I won't force you to talk but I am here if you need to. For what it's worth I am really sorry about you—erm knee." Harris paused. "This isn't fair to you. And the team will miss you greatly. And not just for your beast like skills on the ice. You're the best captain this team has ever had. I can see it. And Troy tells me all the time how much he admires you."

Ilya loved his team. Loved his teammates. Loved everything about being a Centaur. He'd never expected too. Ilya knew back when he joined the team. He was doing it for love. For Shane. To be near him. Near his new family. But somehow he managed to find even more family instead. And then made his own. It was all surreal. Now it felt like in one fail swoop it was all being torn away. Just like when he was a kid and he found his mom's lifeless body.

He hadn't even noticed the tear that managed to well up in the corner of his eye but Harris did. Harris riffled through his bag and offered him a tissue.

And then without really meaning to the words just kind fell out of his mouth.

"Is the baby. And Shane. Something is wrong." His voice cracked. Ilya wiped his eyes on the soft paper.

Harris' face flooded with concern and Ilya could tell he had so many questions but was clearly apprehensive to ask them. So Ilya decided to just tell him.

"Shane is in the hospital. His..." Ilya paused trying to remember what Shane had told him. "The water..." Fuck translating everything in his head had already been hard but when he was emotional the struggle was even greater. It was like he didn't have the strength or words to express his feelings right now.

Luckily Harris helped him find the right words. "His water broke, early?" Harris asked cautiously.

Ilya nodded.

Harris reached out to him for a bit of an awkward side hug despite them both being buckled and in their airplane seats.

It was nice. Ilya welcomed the comfort he hadn't had much yet. Coach Wiebe offered some but it was not the same as Harris. His embrace was soothing. Harris reminded him of a teddy bear or a safety blanket like he had as a child. He radiated warmth and protection. Troy was a lucky man, he thought. But Ilya was luckier. He had Shane. Even though right he now felt his luck was running out. Like they were in overtime in a playoff game. Ilya needed to score a goal real fucking bad to keep them playing. Instead it felt like he had been penalized and was in the box.

After a few silent moments. Harris pulled back. Offering him another tissue.

Then he wanted to finally address the elephant in the plane.

Ilya could see him carefully try to approach the subject. Choosing the words he was about to say. Ilya knew Harris was good at that stuff. He always managed to smooth things over in the social media world with a simple tweet or post.

"Ilya, did you and Shane lose—" Harris paused. Like he was worried that even uttering the words would manifest it. Ilya graciously stopped him. Mostly because he didn't want to hear those words leave anyone's mouth but also to save Harris.

Ilya's voice was shaky, "No."

Harris let out a breath he had been holding. "Not yet." said frankly.

"You can't think like that." Harris' tone was sincere.

And Harris was right. He'd told Shane that same thing earlier. He was being hypocritical but in his fucked up mind he didn't deserve the same respect. Ilya wasn't allowed to have good things...long term that's. He didn't deserve them. Shane did though. He deserved the whole world and Ilya was set on giving it to him no matter the consequences.

Ilya huffed out a breath. Not bitterly just that he needed this conversation to be over. He turned his head back to facing the window and tried to dissociate the best he could. Then they hit a bout of turbulence. Ilya still hadn't gotten used to it despite flying many times a year. He was always brought back to the time he almost met his demise in a similar craft. And for a brief second he pondered what it would've been like if it would've crashed. Taken his life. It had been something he'd had minor thoughts about before but right now he thought what if this plane crashed and took him with it.

But he shook that thought away quickly. For one Shane needed him and two Harris was on the plane. As well as the other lives of people around him. They had families too. Loved ones. Ones they would want to get home too.

Passively wishing death upon himself was one thing but to random strangers and Harris well that wasn't something he could stomach.

After the plane landed. Harris helped him get his luggage and grabbed them an uber to Shane's hospital. It was a forty-five minute drive filled with cheery conversation between the driver and Harris. Ilya hadn't participated. Once there. Harris helped Shane out of the car and handed him his crutch and set his bag on the curb.

Harris insisted on coming in with him. But Ilya refused. It was late. They both just traveled. He told him to grab an Uber home and rest. Give Chiron a kiss for him.

Ilya grabbed his bag with his free hand and used the other to hobble through the door.

Once inside. He grabbed his phone. Attempting to call Shane. No answer.

He approached the desk but before he made it he heard his name.

"Ilya." It was Yuna. God she looked so worried and outright exhausted. Ilya felt terrible.

Yuna hugged him. Ilya wanted to embrace her back but with the crutch it proved to be more difficult so he did his best to wrap the stick around her.

They pulled apart and stared at each other for a moment taking it all in.

"How is he?" Ilya said at the same time Yuna muttered. "How are you doing?"

“I do not matter. How is Shane? And the baby?”

“Oh hun. No you matter so much. We are just as concerned with your health as we are with Shane’s and our grand-daughter because you are also our son. WE love you. I need you to know that. You are important in this family.” Ilya wanted to break down right there on the spot. He wanted to finally burst into tears and just let years of heavy feelings that have weighed him down pour out of him. The words Yuna had just said made him feel grateful to have her as a mother in his life. He reached out and touched his pendent. Ilya’s mom would be just as grateful he was certain.

“I have been better. I need to see him. That will help.”

“Yeah of course. Visiting hours are almost over. Let's get you to his room.” Ilya moved slowly on his crutch and Yuna insisted on grabbing his baggage following Yuna as she headed down the white sterile hallways. He hated hospitals, they were so bleak and full of coldness. He hated them more now knowing Shane’s new residence would be here.

As they approached the room. He felt this pang in his stomach. Seeing Shane in a hospital bed wasn’t easy for him. It didn’t matter if he’d seen him here before. He hated it. Knowing Shane was hurt and he couldn’t do a damn thing.

Yuna opened the door.

Ilya’s eyes locked on Shane’s.

Chapter End Notes

so we're going to the cottage this week...

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Ilya and Shane may finally be reunited but their problems only continue to worsen.

Chapter Notes

THE COTTAGE!!!! HOLY FUCK!!!

I NEED SEASON TWO LIKE YESTERDAY!

also sorry for the delay. I have just been really busy with work, holidays and hollanov-maxxing for episode 6!

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

“Ilya...” Shane’s voice was low and desperate.

He watched carefully as his husband hobbled in the room on his crutch. Shane wanted to cry for him. This couldn’t be easy for Ilya. It was hard for Shane to look out. Seeing the person he loved so very much hurt in this way. Especially knowing it would keep him from playing hockey. And ultimately make his life more difficult.

Shane hardly noticed that his parents had both stepped out of the room to offer them privacy as Ilya threw his crutch down and flung himself toward the hospital bed Shane was lying in. Wrapping his arms around him. Ilya had a perfect balance of gentleness and warmth.

And Shane couldn’t help it. The tears and noises began to spill out of him uncontrollably as he sobbed into Ilya’s chest.

Ilya rubbed his back lovingly and cooed. “Shh—I am here now. I got you.”

It was quite a few minutes that they held onto each other like that before Ilya and him pulled apart despite neither one of them wanting to let go.

Ilya sat on the chair next to the bed and grabbed Shane's hand. Kissing his knuckles as tears still prickled at his face. And with great sentiment Ilya put his hand on Shane's belly before reaching over and placing a soft tender kiss to the raised abdomen and whispered something in Russian.

Shane semi-translated it. Ilya was basically telling her how he was here now and that she was safe and he definitely heard him call her Ilya's favorite pet name—princess. That made Shane preen.

Soon after Shane watched as Ilya succumbed to his exhaustion and fell asleep in the chair, his head next to Shane's stomach on the bed. It could not have been comfortable but Shane was glad he was resting. He was positive Ilya hadn't much since the game and he had just traveled all day to be there for him. Ilya deserved this.

His parents came back for a brief moment and said their goodbyes and goodnights before leaving the hospital. Shane was extremely grateful for them. They had helped out so much already and he knew they would continue. They also had taken in Anya while Shane was hospitalized. Ilya would want to see her soon but for right now he needed sleep. They both did.

Eventually a nurse came in to check on Shane *well* after visiting hours to advise of the shift change and check in on him when she saw Ilya. This nurse took pity on them. She must've recognized them both. And had probably heard about Ilya's injury and then there was the whole PPROM thing. She let him sleep and stay the night. She did come in and conduct the nightly monitoring without distancing Ilya too much. Shane was grateful. The tests went smoother with Ilya by his side even if he was unconscious.

And thankfully he hadn't woken up during because Shane and the baby very much enjoyed the comfort he provided being there with so much tranquility.

The next morning Ilya woke up in a daze. His face was lying in a pile of drool. Suddenly he remembered where he was. The hospital. Ilya darts his head up and sees a soft, sleeping Shane.

Shane looked peaceful. Well as peaceful as someone who had taken up residence in a hospital could be. Ilya looks around and sees that the sun is peaking in through the blinds. Had he slept here all night. What happened to visiting hours?

Ilya scrambled to find a clock. It was on the wall.

The time read **7:34am**.

Ilya attempted to stand up but then felt a shooting pain in his knee. Fuck. The pain medication had mostly worn off. Ilya needed something. Tylenol or Ibuprofen. But he had none despite being in the hospital. There was also the fact that his pain was not the most pressing matter at this very moment. Shane and their baby was the larger concern for him so he would suck it up. Swallow down the pain and be there to support Shane.

Once he was finally more awake the urge to relieve his bladder was overwhelming. So he stumbled over to the restroom on his injured leg to relieve himself.

Looking in the mirror he almost didn't recognize himself. His hair was dirty and face was oily. He desperately needed a shower. Although he slept the whole night his eyes were puffy and swollen from the crying and the blue-purple bags that adorned his face under them were prominent.

Ilya felt like he was a shell of himself.

Everything had been so fucked up. And Ilya felt powerless to it all like there was nothing he could do to fix anything. Shane was lying in a hospital bed. Their baby was in crisis. And he had the nerve to get himself hurt playing hockey. Something he built his life on sure but this

life. The one he built with Shane was so much more important and he felt so out of control of it all.

Ilya splashed some cold water in his face. Letting it drip down for a moment, watching it into the sink. Another deep breath then careened out of the bathroom back to his chair at Shane's bedside.

Shane was still sleeping. Ilya felt his stomach grumble. He wasn't sure when the last time he even ate. His last flight had a dinner service but he'd only picked at it still too nervous about his family to eat. That was over twelve hours ago. Apparently the nausea was finally gone and now his body needed nourishment. He wasn't sure how he was going to get it. While pondering on his hunger pains a loud knock jolted him.

It swung open. "Good Morning, Mr. Rozanov." A nurse greeted him sweetly as he settled into his oversized bedside chair.

Shane started to stir awake.

"Sorry Shane but we have to do another non-stress test, take your vitals and switch out your IV bag."

Shane looked groggy. As his eyes slowly fluttered open. Shane too had the blue-purple pigmentation under his eyes matching his own. "What time is it?" Shane's voice was low and hoarse as he yawned into the question. Ilya wanted to cuddle up next to him. Kissing his head and smoothing back his silky hair. Telling him how much he loved him and that everything would be alright. Ilya was also surprised the nurse seemed chill about him staying the night. Visiting hours had ended hours ago. And she didn't even bat an eye when she saw him. She actually did the opposite. She addressed him. Said his name. Apparently the staff was familiar. Maybe she'd heard about his injury. Maybe they took pity on the couple. On one hand he loved that they cared, on the other he didn't need anyone's pity.

Ilya did his best to help Shane sit up despite the pain in his own body. The nurse took Shane's vitals and changed his IV bag before setting him up on the monitors.

A fabric stretchy like band was wrapped around his slightly protruding stomach where two colored discs were placed on his skin. Baby blue and baby pink. Then the machine whirled to life as the nurse turned it on.

The room immediately echoed with noise. A light thumping rhythm played. It was loud and echoing. The nurse turned it down. "Sorry about that." She laughed it off. Shane waved her off but Ilya wasn't sorry about it at all. He enjoyed the loud booming from the machine because he knew what it was immediately. It was his daughter's heartbeat. It was the most beautiful music he'd ever heard. Ilya settled back into his chair and snaked his hand to find Shane's fist. He pulled himself a tad forward as he lifted Shane's hands to his lips kissing the digits. Looking up he saw Shane's lips curl into a soft smile. One only reserved for Ilya. In the background he could still hear the now still beats of Shane's and his daughter's heartbeats mixed together.

Everything was suddenly okay again. The circumstances may have been a nightmare but being here, with Shane listening to the perfect chirps of their girl's heart music. Proving to everyone she was alive. That she was here and fighting and not going anywhere.

And neither was Ilya.

The nurse left them after a few beats.

Shane still had the monitors on. They kept them on him for a bit to track movements within the hour. If there were enough movements within the timeframes deemed safe then they would mark it as a pass and remove the device until the next time they performed the test.

Shane had hardly noticed the nurse sneak out because he was too entranced by his surroundings. For one. Ilya was lovingly kissing his hand and looking at him like he hung the fucking moon. And two, well Shane could feel the small flutters in his tummy matching the sounds coming from the machines he was hooked up too.

“Ya tebya lyublyu.” Ilya whispered between tender kisses, “vse budet khorosho.”

Everything will be alright, he agreed with Ilya. Despite all the anxiety from the past twenty four hours. Ilya managed to take most of it away by just simply being here next to him.

The daze wore off when Shane heard the loud rumble coming from Ilya’s direction.

“Ilya—when was the last time you ate?” Shane’s tone was more worried sounding then harsh as he asked his husband the question.

“Does not matter.” Ilya dismissed him.

Shane groaned, he didn’t want Ilya to ignore his own needs just because he was lying in a hospital bed. “It does matter. You need to eat.”

Ilya huffed out a sigh. And another rumble filled the room. “Okay. I am not saying you are right but I...should eat.”

Shane smiled and rolled his eyes slightly. “Mhm—there’s a cafeteria downstairs. They also have room service but I think that’s more for patients and it takes *forever*.”

“No worry. I will go get something for both of us.” Ilya pushed himself up and out of his seat wincing as he did.

Shane frowned. “Ilya—”

Ilya waved his hand, “No is fine. I just need to take some...”

“Ibuprofen.” Shane finished.

“Yes that. I think I saw a drugstore next door. I will drop in. Grab some.” Shane thought it seemed silly that he would have to get his medication from a drugstore when they were in a hospital but Shane and him both knew they wouldn’t give him any since he was not a patient.

“Are you sure I could ask my parents to bring some?” He chirped but Ilya had already grabbed his crutch and was heading toward the door. Shane hated that Ilya was hurt. He hated that he couldn’t support him. That was Shane’s job as his husband. A vow he made to him when they got married. Heck a vow he’d made to him silently years before they exchanged rings. Shane loved Ilya. Ilya had already been through so much hurt in his life. This wasn’t fair to him. It was all Shane’s fault for putting him through this. If he’d just—been smarter. Noticed the signs. Maybe gotten tested years ago or maybe he shouldn’t have let Ilya fuck him raw at all. They should’ve always used protection. Or maybe it was his body’s fault. He’d snuck a few snacks here and there when he craved them. It didn’t matter because no matter which angle Shane looked at it. He came to one conclusion. It was his fault.

Everything.

The baby’s conception. His water breaking early. Letting down his team. His city. His family. Ilya getting hurt. If he’d have been there maybe Ilya would’ve been less distracted. Maybe he wouldn’t have been on the ice at all. Ilya had been pushing himself without Shane there. Picking up the slack from losing Shane as a center.

“No, is alright. I still have one working knee.” Ilya joked. No malice behind it just trying to keep the vibes positive. Shane knew though on the inside Ilya could not be handling this as well as he was on the outside. “I need fresh air anyway.” Ilya attempted a half smile. And Shane knew there was no way he wasn’t drowning in his thoughts. Ilya was keeping face for Shane. Tried to appear as if it was all fine and dandy but Shane knew it was an act. A way to convince him that he was okay. Ilya had been a good actor when it came to his own feelings. Years of battling mental health internally and Shane had no idea.

And just like before Shane believed it too for a moment there but once the heavy door clicked shut the panic came back. Suddenly the room seemed one-hundred times smaller. The air was staler. It was cold. Everything felt stiff. And somehow the natural lighting disappeared and

was replaced by only the ugly blinking fluorescent ones above him reminding him of where he was.

Shane calmed down a bit when he felt and heard his daughter again. His hand settled on his stomach. "I'm so sorry my princess." Shane's voice was shaky. A small tear padded down his cheek and onto his pajamas.

Ilya still wasn't used to these damn crutches. He was hobbling around trying to find his way through this large hospital looking for an exit. He'd hoped not to draw attention to himself but it was hard when you were a six-foot something NHL player. And a well-known one in this city.

Ilya was used to being stared at. Mostly from cashiers or passer-bys and it was always them trying to recall where they knew him from or that they did know him and were debating on whether they should ask for a selfie or not.

The looks he was getting walking down the hallways of this hospital was different. They were looks of pity. He hated them. He didn't want people to pity him. Ilya had figured it was because of the crutch or they'd seen the news about his injury or even watched the game but when he finally made his journey to the drugstore he'd realized it was more than that.

Something else was going on. He just didn't know what.

Ilya purchased some ibuprofen, a Gatorade and a lighter. Ilya had stopped smoking for the most part and would never smoke around their daughter but at this moment he needed one badly. So he asked the cashier for a carton of his go to brand, she smiled at him as she helped him check out but even her demeanor seemed off.

Ilya made his way back to the hospital. Grabbed a coffee and bagel from a small kiosk outside. Ilya demolished the bagel and sipped the warm caffeinated beverage. Standing

outside. Thankfully he'd dressed warmly enough. A heavy jacket, pants, boots and black toque.

Perching against a random wall between the hospital and the parking garage, he grabbed the lighter and a cig and took a hit. Letting the familiar smoke fill his lungs. God this was so bad and he would feel guilty about this later but right now this stupid death stick was relieving him of some anxiety from his past two days.

It helped him not dwell on how fucked his life was sometimes. How fucking unfair it was. Every time Ilya Rozanov tried to keep something good in his life. It was almost always ripped away from him. His mom. His coming out. For a while he thought Shane was going to be another one of the things taken from him. If it hadn't been for Scott Hunter's very public kiss after his cup win then maybe he would've lost Shane too. Never worked up the courage or put in the effort to maintain their relationship. Keeping it hidden for all those years and now of course once he'd finally had it all. The family he always wanted. The love and support from his team. A spouse. A kid. It was all hanging in the balance.

Ilya took another drag. Let the warm smoke billow within him then exhaled it all like a weight off his chest.

Fuck.

And he didn't feel better like he'd hoped.

Ilya flicked the cigarette on the ground.

Stomped on it. Twisting it into the concrete.

Then picked it up and tossed it in a nearby waste bin along with the carton he'd just bought.

Never again.

Ilya walked back into the hospital on his crutch this time searching for the cafeteria. The looks followed him as before. It still felt eerily out of place.

But he brushed off the thought when he found the café. Ilya grabbed Shane some more healthy breakfast items he'd figure Shane would like and ordered some hash browns for himself.

Luckily they'd given it to him in a togo container and a bag so he could manage to bring it with him while also balancing his weight on a crutch.

As he made his way back to Shane's room at the labor and delivery ward he passed a waiting room. Most people were in a trans state probably waiting on news for a loved one. A few were watching the TV with eyes wide.

There was a TV playing ESPN and out of the corner of his eye he saw himself on the screen which wouldn't be too odd but it was specifically a picture of him from yesterday getting out of the car just outside the hospital.

The volume was down but the headline is what shocked him.

ILYA ROZANOV SPOTTED IN LABOR AND DELIVERY: BABY DADDY?

Ilya's jaw dropped. He couldn't believe another one of their moments in the spotlight. Their private life is all over the news. He was seething but also heartbroken. This was hardly sports related news. The only thing he was seemingly grateful for was that Shane's name didn't appear anywhere on the reporting that he could see. If they were speculating anything it didn't show up and the television had been muted.

He decided that even though it was a bad idea to grab his phone and google his name. The similar headlines popped up and then he googled Shane's and nothing about the pregnancy popped up. All rumors spoke that possibly Ilya cheated on Shane which he was not happy

about but those were just gossip and hearsay. He was glad Shane wasn't mentioned as being pregnant or that their baby was in distress.

Ilya didn't think Shane could take anymore stress right now. He was surprised that with people knowing Shane was out for the season for a mysterious reason that people didn't put two and two together but he assumed it was most likely homophobia or the fact that the idea a male carrier playing hockey in the major league right under their noses was unfathomable to them even consider. That felt more misogynistic. Honestly he didn't have a word for it just that people were shitty and hateful and spiteful and bigoted. In this moment maybe he was a tad grateful for that. Otherwise Shane's pregnancy would've been everywhere.

This was all so fucked up.

Shane waited for Ilya to get back. Opting to read a parenting book while he did. Shane was determined to make sure that he knew everything there was to possibly know about parenting before giving birth even now with all the uncertainty around his delivery.

After about an hour of reading Shane found it odd that Ilya still wasn't back yet. So he reached for his phone and saw that there were several notifications. Quite a few texts but also missed calls from both of his parents.

That was odd.

He immediately dialed back his mom who answered on the first ring.

"Shane!" Her voice was filled with concern. His body was filled with chills. "Mom?" He responded back with a bit of a confused but also disparity to his tone at the way she said his name.

There was a pause.

“I’m so sorry sweetheart.”

Okay now he was really worried. Did something happen to his dad? Or Ilya? His chest tightened. His breathing shallowed. Surely this wasn’t good for either him or the baby but his mom sounded like someone had died. God he couldn’t do this right now. He couldn’t take any more bad news.

Then before he could respond to his mom the door burst open and in came Ilya hopping in.

“Shane.” His mom’s voice came through the phone but he couldn’t focus on it because Ilya was standing in front of him. Limping to him.

“Shane.” This time that was Ilya’s voice calling his name. Reaching out to touch him. To hold him. To ground him.

Ilya grabbed the phone. “I got him Yuna.”

Shane couldn’t be sure what just happened but he was sure that his mom understood and disconnected the line.

For a minute they sat there tangled up in each other. Ilya kissing his forehead and rubbing his back. He’d almost forgot why he’d panicked in the first place because as soon as he saw Ilya and knew his heart was still beating he just felt instant relief wash over him.

“Ilya–” He whispered softly between hiccups.

Ilya shushed him. “What happened?” Shane finally managed to get out.

Then Ilya pulled back with a look of confusion painted across his face.

“You don’t know?”

“Know what?” Shane pleaded.

“I just—” Ilya paused and looked him in the eye. Shane could see the caution in them like he was hesitant to say. “I do not understand why you are crying moya lyubov'.”

And honestly Shane didn’t know either, mostly relieved he guessed because he assumed someone died and to be honest he still didn’t know 100% if someone hadn’t.

“Is my dad okay?” He choked out.

Even more confusion lit up Ilya’s face.

“David?”

“Yeah. My mom called and she sounded more worried than she said she was sorry. I—I-” He paused. His voice cracked. “I thought you— nevermind it doesn’t matter because you are here now and alive.” Shane touched his face for confirmation. “...but now I can only conclude it must’ve been my dad.” His face dropped at the realization.

Ilya held him again. “No sweetheart.” Shane let Ilya caress his cheek. “David is okay.”

This time Shane pulled back confused. “Then what’s going on?”

Ilya grabbed his hand and brought his knuckles up to kiss them before letting them go. Then Ilya grabbed the remote on the bedside table and turned on the television hanging on the

wall.

Shane didn't think now was a good time for TV. "Ilya what are you—" Then he saw it as Ilya slipped to sports center. There was a picture of Ilya on the screen in front of the hospital.

"An anonymous source from social media said they saw Rozanov as he entered the hospital building frantically heading straight to labor and delivery...fans online are speculating that there may be a new baby Rozanov with an undisclosed baby mama and we all know Ilya Rozanov has been known to be a notorious playboy well before Shane Hollander made him an honest man."

"Well apparently not Jim. Looks like Shane might need a good divorce attorney."

"I can send him mine, Bob." The newscasters chuckled together in unison.

Ilya turned off the TV. Shane was speechless. How could they report on something like this and say these things about Ilya. Also why would they assume Ilya cheated on him and that Shane couldn't be the pregnant one. It's not that pregnant men didn't exist, yes they were rare but to completely ignore that possibility seemed bigoted and close minded.

And fuck if the media knew about this then that meant the secret was out. And since Shane was out for the season it wouldn't take the general public long to realize what happened to Shane. Surely speculations on twitter were happening. Newscasters were most likely being ignorant due to network television but he knew that people online like twitter, reddit and tik tok would clock them so fast.

They could never keep anything to themselves. This was something he knew they would face forever but this was too important because it wasn't just his and Ilya's life being disrupted it was their daughters. She didn't ask for any of this. She was innocent to it all. And that's when the guilt crept in.

They should have been more careful because bringing a child into this world was already so fucked up with today's social climate but now more than ever with them being in the spotlight. She was going to resent them. Growing up hating that she was born into a life

where people would treat her differently because she had two dads that also happened to be really famous hockey players and were married. That's if she even lived.

Fuck. No. He couldn't think like that right now.

Shane didn't even notice the tear running down his face until Ilya's thumb pressed against his skin wiping it away.

"It's not fair." His voice broke.

Ilya offered a half grin. "No. Moy kotik. Is not fair."

His voice was gentle and tender. Ilya combed his fingers through the strands of Shane's hair. Shane rested his head against Ilya's chest. Soaking in all the comfort he could get because their lives were about to get real messy.

Chapter End Notes

I swear I will finish this fic especially not that HR is over I have more time to write :)))

again thanks for reading and comments/kudos means shane gets an orgasm :)))

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Ilya finally has his surgery. And he is visited by multiple teammates wanting to help. Shane settles into the routine of staying in a hospital full time. They are separated but both struggling with similar things.

Chapter Notes

hi sorry this chapter took so long I have just been like feeling off since the show ended then I had a mental health episode.

ALSO HEAVY TW for SUICIDAL IDEATION and DEPRESSION (updated the tags) but if this will at all trigger you I highly recommend skipping the chapter or maybe the fic because I do plan on diving into Ilya's depression and how he is affected mentally from all of this.

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

A few weeks had passed since the news broke that Ilya had been seen at the hospital. Close friends and teammates reached out to check in. They told most of them about Shane and the baby's medical condition. Their agent called and helped the best she could to douse the flames but the internet was like an uncontrollable wildfire. Not much you could do but just contain it and hope it didn't spread too far before it died down. Which it did. Eventually they became old news.

They opted out of making a statement at the current moment and luckily talked to the head of the hospital and confirmed no leaks would come from their staff due to the PIPEDA.

Ilya hardly left Shane's side except when Shane's parents forced him to and then he was very good at keeping incognito heading to their house. Thankfully David and Yuna agreed to watch Anya so Ilya would usually just run to their home, shower and change, sleep and eat then spend time with Anya before going back.

Shane and baby girl continued to do well. No new changes. Antibiotics were finished and it was not just a waiting game. They were doing everything they could to let the baby cook. She

was officially past viability per hospital standards so they had a tiny bit of relief that at least the chances of her survival went up immensely with each passing week.

This week however Ilya was not ready for. He had surgery scheduled and weeks long recovery and healing then months of physical therapy. It meant things were only going to get trickier.

Thankfully he would be having the surgery in the same hospital with the ortho surgeons his team's doctors picked out but it would be way far away from his husband and they would not be able to see each other after the surgery which was killing him. Shane promised to Facetime him and Yuna and David would visit as well. His teammates also promised to come.

The day finally came and went. The surgery was a success and he was back at home the same day. Shane's parents helped him home and set him up for his recovery.

Lots of his friends and teammates visited and helped when they could. His physical therapy had already started as well.

It had been harder than he imagined. Working to first reduce the swelling then there was trying work on getting the range of motion back. It was exhausting. He hadn't realized how intense this would be. It was like working out but more difficult because the things his body once could do no longer could.

Thankfully he spent most nights with someone. Either Yuna or David would come and help or a mix of different teammates. Troy and Harris always came together and brought Chiron which cheered him up. Wyatt would come visit as well and usually read to him. Others came in groups or pairs like Dykstra and Boodram. Luca visited too with a few of the guys and Ilya enjoyed seeing what new drawings he would make.

Every night though before he went to bed he and Shane facetimed. This part he was most grateful for even if he was in agony not being able to touch Shane.

The physical therapist and his team's medical staff didn't want him to leave his house; they were trying to get him rested and healed as soon as possible. It wasn't until Shane was twenty-eight weeks that Ilya could go see him.

Ilya had two more weeks to go before he could come visit Shane again unless Shane went into labor then he would say fuck the protocols and be there in a heartbeat.

Thankfully Shane was still pregnant and their daughter was getting bigger each week. They would Facetime him in for ultrasounds and any big milestones. He was grateful for that but at night when the iPad went dark Ilya would lie in bed and self loathe.

Ilya hadn't felt this lonely since Shane and him were on opposite teams. Somehow this was worse though. Each day passed and he felt himself slipping further and further into himself. Ilya thought maybe he should try to book appointments with Galina again but he just couldn't do it. He didn't have the strength to heal his physical body as well as his mental health.

Plus he had to be strong for Shane. So everyday when they called he turned on his best happy face and listened to Shane talk about his day.

Sleep did finally come that night even if the nightmares kept him up. Ilya was used to nightmares. Hours of restless sleep dreaming about his mother. Sometimes they were good but others were reliving that day he found her over and over again. The nightmares he had now consisted of Shane mostly.

It wasn't always the same dream either. Sometimes it was Ilya getting the call that Shane went into Labor and Ilya couldn't get there in time, getting stuck in traffic or like he couldn't walk due to his injury.

Other times it was a call of somber news from the medical staff. That neither Shane nor the baby made it and those absolutely destroyed him. He would wake up in a cold sweat. Wanting to roll over and hold Shane but he couldn't and then freak out before he realized Shane was still in the hospital. Ilya would resist the urge to call or text him but it was tempting instead he'd lie awake overthinking every possible bad scenario.

Other nightmares he had consisted of hockey related things whether it be Shane's injury a couple of years ago but with a twist of Shane being visually pregnant and Ilya couldn't move a muscle.

Tonight was no different.

Ilya spent the whole night in agony tossing and turning from multiple dreams with different horrifying outcomes of Shane.

The next morning. Troy came to visit.

No Harris.

Ilya thought that was odd.

"You look like shit Roz." Troy greeted him at the door.

"You are mean without your nice boyfriend." Ilya sneered.

Troy pushed past Ilya, heading straight for the fridge and grabbing a Coke. Ilya liked that Troy was comfortable in his home. He'd become one of Ilya's closest friends, something rare for him. Svetlana was the only other person, besides his husband, he'd ever been this close to.

"Why are you here, Barrett?" Troy asked, pulling out a chair for Ilya. Ilya sat.

Ilya usually didn't mind the company, but today he was running on little sleep and was extremely on edge.

Troy took a sip from the can and leaned back against the counter. Then with a completely calm voice, he said, "I'm getting traded."

Shane woke up that morning to loud noises. It was a nurse who had come in to start his first monitoring session of the day. This had become a normal start to his daily routine.

“Good morning sleepyhead.” She smiled at him.

Shane smiled back then allowed her to put on his monitors so they could track the baby's movements and heartbeat.

She also checked his IV bag, and did his vitals before leaving. After she left he ordered breakfast. An egg white omelet with spinach and a side of cherry tomatoes and probiotic yogurt.

The breakfast took about 45 minutes but he demolished it as soon as it came. Unfortunately he was still hungry so he grabbed a bran muffin his mom had left for him in a basket.

After an hour of monitoring the nurse came back in and they confirmed her numbers looked good. Shane sat back and picked up one of his parenting books.

Time passed slowly in the hospital. Shane had spent years in solitude but never quite like this. He always had either his parents or his team then there was Ilya.

Ilya had shown Shane that partnership was one of his favorite things. Shane loved being around Ilya and vice versa. Once they officially got together being apart was difficult especially when they played on opposite teams. He'd still managed to see Ilya at their shared hockey games for an hour or two but this was torture. Being pregnant and hormonal and not being able to touch the one person who brought you peace was making him insane.

He hadn't meant to get this way but most days he'd cry thinking about it all. This wasn't fair. Shane shouldn't be here. He should be at their home or their cottage spending his pregnancy with his husband. Soaking in all the good times. Ilya rubbing his feet or getting him a late night craving of some dumb concoction his pregnant brain came up with.

They should be painting the nursery and thinking about names instead Ilya and him spent most days texting or calling from different locations. They weren't even that far from each other. The hospital was fifteen minutes from their home.

It was only about ten fifteen when Shane finally put down the book and grabbed his phone. His fingers hovered over Ilya's contact. Shane didn't want to bother him especially if someone was there or he had physical therapy but he really just needed to hear the sound of his husband's voice to ground him.

Before he could press the call button.

The screen lit up with a picture of Ilya laying on the dock at their summer cottage sleeping.

Shane swiped to answer the call.

“Ilya? I was just about to call you.”

“Shane I need you to tell Barrett he is not getting traded.”

Shane heard a familiar voice come through the speaker.

“Hi Shane.” It was Troy.

“Hey Troy.” Shane paused. “So what is this I hear about you getting traded?”

Troy started to speak, “Yeah so I—” But was abruptly cut off by Shane’s loud husband.

“Barrett showed up talking all kinds of non—” Ilya stammered.

Shane picked up on his missing word, “Nonsense?” Finishing for him.

“Yes. That. Nonsense. Says is getting traded.”

“He is right here.” Troy said with mild irritation. “And I can speak for myself.” Ilya scoffed.

“Not when you say silly things.” Ilya argued.

“Okay. Okay. Enough. What is going on?” Ilya started to speak. “No, not you from Troy please.” Ilya huffed into the speaker.

“I think they are going to trade me.” Troy said sheepishly.

Shane felt a flutter in his belly. His baby girl was awake. “Why do you think that Troy?”

Troy sighed. “Isn’t it obvious? We lost both of our centers and the guys they pulled up from AHL are good but not you guys. They need at least one center with more experience.”

“So why does this mean they will trade you for it?”

“Because I am the best player on the team right now besides Hazy but they won’t get rid of our goalie. Remember they got me for way cheap because Toronto didn’t want me anymore. I am worth more than anyone else at the moment. They could use me as a pawn to get what they want.”

Honestly Shane thought about what Troy was saying and he made good points. The Cens could get a good center for a trade like Barrett but Shane had a better idea.

“Can I put you on hold for one second?”

Shane couldn’t see their faces but he could hear the confused “sure...” from Troy’s mouth. He scrolled through his contacts and dialed out.

“Hello, Shane. Is everything alright with you and the baby?”

“Hi. Yes everything is okay Coach, sorry for calling you out of the blue. I just need to talk to you about something.

“What the hell is your husband doing?” Barrett asked him. Ilya just shrugged his shoulders.

Ilya honestly wasn't entirely sure. He just wanted some moral support here and now Shane was *doing things*.

“Okay, I'm back and I'm bringing someone into the call.”

“Umm—okay. Who?” Barrett asked into the speaker phone Ilya had laid on the table. Ilya wondered what his husband had up his sleeve.

“Hi boys.” It was their coach.

“Coach.” Barrett stammered.

“Hi Coach.” Ilya greeted him with delight, now slowly understanding Shane's plans.

“So Shane tells me that Barrett here thinks he can play center.”

Oh. Ilya realizes he did not understand his husband's plan.

“Uh—I—no I didn't—” Troy was stumbling over his words. Ilya decided to give him a little help.

“Yes. Barrett was telling me he wants to be superstar center like me.”

“And me.” Shane chirped up.

“Da, but mostly me.” Ilya grinned.

“I—” Troy started again. He was fidgeting with the hem of his shirt.

“I think that is a great idea. Shane filled me in on his thoughts. We have Barrett as starting center on the first line. We get Dillon on your right and LaPointe on your left then on the second line. Our new AHL center with Haas on right and Boyle on left.”

Wow. Ilya thought it sounded like a great plan. Shane had such a high hockey IQ. Ilya had always known he was smart and strategic when it came to the sport. Shane would make a great coach if he ever wanted to do that.

“Wow—um—wow. I don't know what to say.”

Ilya clapped him on the back. “Yes. Say yes. You will be Cen's new superstar.”

“Troy you can do this. Just maybe you need some practice playing center.” Shane added.

“I can do this.” Troy said a bit wearily.

“That’s right. We will talk about it later today at practice and don’t worry Barrett I will talk to admin but I don’t think anyone had any intentions of trading you.”

And then Coach Wiebe disconnected.

“Wow.” Was all Troy could mutter.

“You’re welcome.” Ilya heard Shane’s grin in his voice. “Alright well now that that’s settled. I will let you get back to it. Ilya call me later. Love you.”

“Ya tebya lyublyu.”

The following weeks Ilya kept up with the Centaurs' games and watched as Troy shone. They were winning again. It started out as small wins 2-1 & 1-0 but started to gradually increase to 3-0 and 4-1. Ilya was glad he could cheer on his team through this. They were doing so well. It made him beam with pride. The team he helped build was able to win without him.

It stung a tiny bit knowing that he was not needed and that they could do it on their own. Without him or without Shane. Maybe after his surgery he should retire. Clearly his team didn’t need him any longer.

Ilya had figured he would play hockey until he no longer could. It was always a risk to get on the ice; he knew that injuries were inevitable. Sure other players had ACL tears and came back and surely he could too but he was getting older. And he was about to become a father.

Something he had already failed at. Nothing was done around the house. He hadn’t baby-proofed or painted the nursery. They hadn’t even bought many baby things not yet anyway. Obviously they had both been a bit preoccupied with Shane in the hospital and Ilya recovering but still Ilya felt such immense guilt and every time he walked past the nursery he felt this unmistakable feeling in his gut that if he sat with for too long it would spark a depressive episode. Spiralling from maybe that room would stay empty. Shane would lose the baby. That he would come home without their daughter in his arms. The room would stay closed forever so if Ilya were to set anything up he would hate himself for it because it made him have so many different types of emotions or feelings of worry, shame, even guilt. It was enough to keep him away but that only made him feel worse since he was proving to everyone that he could not be a good father.

It wasn’t completely his fault. It was in his blood. Rozanov men were not capable of being good dads. His own father showed him time and time again and then he saw it with his own brother. Alexei wasn’t awful to his daughter but he also was not good at the whole father thing. Otherwise he wouldn’t have gotten himself into the situations he did for needing Ilya’s money. This is why Ilya set his niece up with a trust fund. Something his brother would never get to touch.

All these thoughts swired in his head as he was doing his physical therapy. His physical therapist worked with him as they moved through the daily directional of exercises. God he hates doing this.

At the tail end of their session there was a knock at the door.

It was Wyatt.

“Hazy?” Ilya questioned as he opened the door. “What are you doing here?”

Wyatt stepped into the house. Then waved to the physical therapist who was packing up and leaving.

“What? A friend and fellow teammate can’t visit his captain.” Wyatt shrugged.

Ilya had a revolving door of people since the surgery but they always announced themselves.

“Yes. But maybe he should text first.”

Wyatt laughed then put his arm around Ilya’s shoulder. “I brought food.” Wyatt held up a brown paper bag with the signature golden arches. How did Ilya not see it before?

“Hm—I will allow it.” Ilya snatched the bag from him. They headed to his kitchen.

Wyatt pulled out a chair for Ilya. He sat down then ripped open the bag to find the sacred McGriddle.

Ilya was demolishing it. “Pass me my biscuit.” Wyatt asked from across the table.

Ilya paused. “Is not all for me?”

Wyatt stretched his arm across the table and pulled the bag toward him. “Fuck off Roz.” Wyatt grabbed his biscuit. Then tossed the sack back.

They ate in silence for a bit until the goalie started up a conversation. “So...how is everything?”

Ilya was on his second sandwich. Answering in between bites. Mouth full of food. “Shane is good. Baby is healthy. Is thirty weeks almost.”

Wyatt squinted at him. “I’m glad Shane and the baby are doing well. I actually talked to Holzy yesterday. I came here to ask about you?”

Ugh. If there was one thing Ilya hated doing. It was showing his emotions to people. What did Wyatt expect? Him to come here. With McDonalds breakfast as a bribe to figure out if Ilya was going to kill himself or not.

Oh.

Oh.

Was he?

Is that where Ilya was right now? Ilya had never let himself think that way before. Not after his mother had—

No. He can't do this right now. Ilya wasn't suicidal. Sure he'd been depressed lately because of extenuating circumstances but he hadn't wanted to end his life. Had he?

Ilya took in a deep breath.

"I am fine." It came out more flat than he wanted.

Wyatt furrowed his brow. "Well tell that to your face Rozanov."

Fuck.

Ilya didn't want to have this conversation right now.

"No really."

Wyatt reached over and put his hand on Ilya's arm.

"You don't have to pretend like you're okay Ilya. I know this has to be hard on you. You're doing what you do best. It's why you're a good captain. You carry the weight of the whole team on your back. You lead and protect us from everything but Ilya you can't do that here. You aren't Shane's captain right now. You are his husband. A father."

Ilya turned his head. He could not let Wyatt see the tears forming in his eyes. He quickly wiped them on his sleeve.

"Ilya. You can tell me anything you know that, right?"

See the thing was. Ilya knew Wyatt would never judge him. They had gotten along well since he joined the team. And Wyatt knew of what he spoke. He was a husband and an amazing uncle. A great captain—interim captain—now that Ilya and Shane were out. Wyatt had taken over.

Ilya nodded. Then spoke softly.

"I'm scared."

Wyatt gave a small chuckle.

"Is not funny."

"No it's not."

Now Ilya was confused why would Wyatt come here and coerce him to share his biggest fears and anxieties. Crack him wide open so he was raw and vulnerable like therapy then laugh at him.

Ilya huffed. "It's not funny. I laughed because becoming a father is scary. Yeah?" Ilya nodded. "And for you it's ten times scarier. Your situation is unfortunate but Shane is so strong. You know this?" Ilya nodded again. Shane was the strongest person he knew. If anyone could make it out from all of this it was him. Ilya was weak though. "It's okay to be afraid of Ilya. It's okay to ask for help. We want to help you. The whole team."

Ilya knew his team was amazing. That they would help him if he asked but Ilya was never good at asking for things. "I can't."

"That's okay. You don't have to." Wyatt squeezed his hand. "Why don't you just start with telling me something."

"Like what?"

"Um, I don't know. What are you most afraid of?"

Losing Shane. Losing the baby. God what did Wyatt want him to say. Obviously those were everyone's worry to lose their loved ones.

Ilya just stared at him.

"Alright besides the obvious."

Ilya inhaled then exhaled. "I'm scared that I am already a terrible dad."

"Ilya—"

"No is true. Rozanov men are bad fathers."

Wyatt laughed again. Rude. "You are bad at this."

He was still giggling. "I'm sorry."

"Very bad." He started to get up and out of his seat.

"Ilya wait sit back down. I will stop laughing I promise." Ilya followed Wyatt's direction and sat back into his seat. "Fine."

"I laughed because it's absolutely crazy to think you would be a bad father."

Why was Wyatt so sure? It's not like he had done it before.

"Why not?"

Wyatt smiled big but held back his laugh. Ilya could tell. "Because you're such a great father." Ilya scoffed. Dismissing him. "I'm serious. There are so many examples. First we could start with Anya. I have never seen a better dog dad than you. She had the best care of any pet or person that I know." Ilya hummed in agreement. Anya was a well-loved pooch. "And then theirs the team. You're a great captain. You've been a captain for us for years then before that I heard about how you treated your teammates in Boston. Everyone who has ever

played under you has always had great things to say about your well balanced kindness and firmness. Those are great qualities in a parent.” Ilya had never considered how being a captain was similar to fatherhood but now that he is thinking about it. It was not untrue. Ilya mentored rookies before. Helped them with their skills but also treated them with love and compassion and at times when he had to he would get firm and keep them in line. That’s supposedly what a parent would do. He was also extremely overprotective of his team. In a way he would be to his family. “I have also seen you in action at your hockey camps. The way you are with the kids. You’re gentle and fun. Plus I have heard stories about you and Hayden’s kids. I know you are their favorite uncle.” Wyatt winked and Ilya smiled. But being kind to other people's kids was different than parenting your own.

“Yeah. I guess all of that is true. But—” He paused.

“But what?”

“How can I be a good dad when I haven’t even done the things I am supposed to.”

“Like what?”

He stood and gestured to the house. Wyatt shot him a confused expression.

“Words. Ilya. Words.”

“The house. Is not baby...*safe*?”

“You mean baby-proofed. Well that’s easy. She won’t be able to walk for another year. You have time.”

“Okay. Fine. But I have not set up her room yet. Is not painted. No furniture. I was going to paint it—” Ilya choked out a small sob.

“Hey it’s okay. She won’t know the difference if her room is painted or not and she won’t even sleep in there for a few months anyway. She will be in a bassinet at you and Shane’s bedside waking you up at all hours of the night.” Wyatt grinned. A hint of mischief in his tone. “Trust me my sister and her wife didn’t sleep the first year with my nephew. So you won’t either.”

Ilya’s lips curled into a half smile.

“What else?”

“I miss Shane. I miss waking up with him. I miss holding him and kissing and—” He half expected Wyatt to fake get sick with him being mushy but he didn’t. He just smiled and nodded.

“Well we can fix that.”

“Huh? But I cannot leave. Not yet. I am not cleared.”

“And since when does Ilya Rozanov follow rules?” Wyatt quirked an eyebrow at him then stood up. Fishing his keys from of his pocket. “C’mon. I am driving.”

Shane had woken up that morning like any other day by a nurse moving about his room prepping things. It had become the standard to have one of his nurses come in early to check his vitals, do his monitoring or change his IV.

This morning it was the same routine. Shane thrived on routine though. He was used to this life. Which meant he also ordered his normal breakfast and waited for it to show up.

Shane had spent the remainder of the morning eating his breakfast and reading one of his books.

His mom had promised to stop by later so he was looking forward to that. And surely like on routine Ilya would FaceTime him. Shane was almost thirty weeks along which he was grateful for making it so far without delivering but not being able to be there for Ilya during this time was incredibly challenging. He lived for their daily calls and hoped he didn’t deliver before Ilya could come and visit again.

It was nearing eleven am when he heard a knock at the door. Shane assumed it was a nurse or maybe a doctor. But there at the door as it was pushed open was a complete shock to see his team's goalie—Wyatt Hayes pushing his large husband in a wheelchair.

“Ilya?” Shane didn’t understand. Ilya had been told he needed to rest and stay at home. No hospital visits until the team physicians approved. “What are you doing here?”

Wyatt pushed him next to the bed. Ilya slightly raised himself up, holding onto his chair and the bed for support. Clearly trying to not put too much weight on his leg. Ilya kissed him. It wasn’t a quick peck but a longer, more chaste kiss. Not erotic—there wasn’t any tongue but it was Ilya using Shane’s lips as a lifeline. Holding onto Shane like he would disappear if he didn’t kiss him with such fervor.

“I’m just gonna uh—” Shane remembered that Wyatt was standing there.

Ilya pulled back. “Hazy. Wait.”

Wyatt was halfway out the door.

“Thank you.”

“Of course. I’m gonna go run some errands but I’ll be back to get you when visiting hours are over.” Ilya nodded. Shane mouthed to him “thank you”.

And with that Wyatt was gone.

Ilya was back to sitting down in his chair. Holding onto Shane's hand. His head lay against Shane's belly. "I can't believe you're here."

"I missed you both so much." Ilya kissed his stomach. "You have grown, I missed it all." Ilya frowned and then sighed.

"Baby it's okay. You were resting and healing." Ilya turned his head to face Shane's gaze.

"I should be here."

Shane carded his hands through Ilya's curls.

"I know." Ilya closed his eyes. "But you really shouldn't be here. You know you're not supposed to be leaving the house. You're supposed to be resting and getting better. Are you keeping up with your physical therapy?"

Ilya groaned. "Da. Of course."

"Good."

Ilya started talking to his stomach. "Moya printsessa. Your papa is here. I am sorry I was gone so long."

Shane wanted to comfort him. Tell him that it was okay that he understood that their daughter would understand but this conversation wasn't for him.

Ilya already loved their child so much. And Shane was so grateful to give him this gift. Shane had never felt like he was going to be a great father. Sure he would be good. Give them love and follow the parenting techniques advised but the connecting part scared him. Ilya would be the fun and playful parent and Shane knew he'd have a hard time with that. Shane had seen it before at their camps. Shane had a hard time connecting with the kids when it came so naturally to Ilya.

As he watched his husband though right now. Having a full blown conversation with their baby despite her not even being able to hear it warmed him. It also relieved his anxieties. They would be good parents. This kid would be no she was already so loved.

Unfortunately visiting hours came to an end. Ilya spent the whole day attached to Shane. Giving him love and comfort. Both of them. In all honesty he could probably get away with staying longer but he had early PT the following morning and they'd already went against the team's recommendations so it was for the best when Wyatt called and said he was there ready to pick him up.

Ilya placed one final kiss to Shane's bump. "Goodbye moya malyshka."

Then he kissed Shane. Sweet and tender lasting longer than a minute.

Wyatt cleared his throat. “You ready cap?”

“No.” Ilya grabbed Shane’s hand.

“Ilya you have to go. We will be okay.” Shane settled his hand on stomach.

“Okay.” Ilya kissed Shane’s foreheads and ran a thumb across his freckles. “Ya tebya lyublyu.”

Shane smiled brightly then repeated the phrase back.

Wyatt had driven Ilya back to his home. He insisted on helping Ilya inside. Ilya could walk small distances. The only reason for the wheelchair earlier is because of how big the hospital was. Now that he was home he was more than capable of getting around just in small bursts. He made sure not to over-exert himself but still he didn’t need help.

“Hazy. I can walk, yes.” Ilya groaned as Wyatt opened his door then offered his arm for assistance.

“I know. I know but I just want to make sure you get inside okay.”

Was Wyatt also this overbearing?

“Fine.”

Wyatt walked Ilya inside. Ilya still refused his assistance though. Wyatt did however open his front door. Ilya and him moved inside.

Something felt odd though. Like Wyatt was being weird.

Ilya set his wallet and keys down then went to the fridge to grab a drink half expecting Wyatt to just leave but instead he lingered.

At first Ilya thought maybe he was just being overbearing again but then he really looked at his teammate and he had this peculiar smile.

“Hazy what is it? You have stupid grin on your face.”

And somehow Wyatt’s grin got even bigger and stupider. He even giggled.

“Is something going to jump at me?” Ilya looked around suspiciously. “There better be no clowns hiding anywhere.”

Wyatt shook. “Ilya why would I purposely try to scare you with a clown. Not after last time.”

Ilya shuttered at the thought of *the incident*.

“I don’t know. You are being very...” He paused. “..weird.”

“Okay well I can promise you there are no clowns or anything scary.”

“Good. Then what?”

“Oh my god just follow me.” Wyatt grabbed Ilya’s hand and pulled him down the hallway.

They stopped in front of the nursery.

“Yes?”

Then Wyatt pushed open the door. Ilya’s jaw dropped.

Chapter End Notes

I will be taking a short break as I have a planned holiday coming up next week. :)))

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Shane and Ilya have a virtual baby shower.

Chapter Notes

HIIII sorry I was gone so long. I have a nice long vacation but I am back and ready to finish this fic!!

“Ilya?” Shane’s voice cut through the static. “What’s wrong?” he asked, reacting to his husband’s soft greeting.

There was a quick sniffle. “Nothing, moya lyubov’. I am happy.” Shane sighed with relief.

“My god. You scared me, Ilya.” Shane caressed his swollen belly. Their daughter was moving inside him. She was not quite kicking, but Shane felt a rolling sensation. With each touch of his hand, little sections of his belly protruded. It was calming and soothed him.

“Sorry. Just—” Ilya paused. Shane heard the shift in his breath. Shane was certain he had been crying, which Ilya did not often do. “...happy.” Shane could hear the way Ilya grinned in his response.

Ilya then FaceTimed Shane. Shane picked up immediately and switched on the camera. It was positioned on Ilya's face. Shane saw the tears pricking in the corners of his eyes. Ilya's curls messily fell into his forehead. His lips curved into a slight smile. Ilya looked soft and beautiful, like a Greek god. Shane focused so much on Ilya that he almost missed noticing the background. Ilya was standing in a room Shane didn't recognize.

“Where are you?” Shane asked.

Ilya's smile widened.

Then he saw and heard the shakiness in Ilya's words as he spoke. "The nursery."

Shane cocked his head, trying to get a better look, but he didn't remember the olive green walls and floral decals adorning them. "You know, room for baby."

"I know what a nursery is, Ilya. Did you do this?"

Ilya's smile got even brighter. He shook his head. "No." Ilya then panned the camera around to show the room. It was adorable. The room captured the cozy, cottage-core aesthetic Shane had envisioned on his Pinterest board. It was exactly what he and Ilya wanted before everything went to shit. Shane had only talked to Ilya and Rose about it.

"How did...who did?" Shane stammered. "Why?"

"The team." Ilya choked out. "And their partners." As Ilya spoke, Shane began to wipe his eyes; they were no longer dry. "Hazy," Ilya added, with a smile. "Fucking bastard." Ilya wiped his cheek. "He talked to the team."

"I-"

"And they came here when I was at hospital with you."

Ilya panned the camera around the room some more, giving Shane the full tour. It was so incredible. Shane still couldn't believe it was real that the team would come together like this to help. He loved the Cens; they'd always been supportive, but this was next level.

Shane felt his lips wobble. More tears started to fall down his cheek.

“I know, moye solnyshko,” Ilya, too, was clearly overwhelmed with the surprise. Shane wished he could be there to hug him. Clearly, Ilya had been going through it too, and yet he still came to the hospital to comfort Shane all day, and now this. Shane felt it was his turn to be there for him.

“I wish I were there with you.”

Ilya smiled at him through the phone.

“I know. Me too.”

“I still can’t believe this. We are so lucky to have such an amazing team, Ilya.”

“Yes.” Ilya sniffled again. “I love you.” Shane felt a twinge in his belly. It was a kick. “Both of you.”

Shane smiled as he felt even more kicks against his insides.

“Yes. Me too. I love you and our family so much.”

Another couple of weeks passed. Ilya had been cleared by his doctor to leave the house. He kept a low profile, only visiting Shane or taking Anya for short walks around the neighborhood to keep the media away. Still, he visited Shane as much as possible between physical therapy and training. Ilya was determined to stay healthy and keep his muscle mass. Usually, Shane worried more about physical upkeep. This time, Ilya ensured he’d make a strong comeback next season.

Ilya also spent many hours prepping their house for a baby, with his teammates and their partners. Even Svetlana visited around the same time as Rose. Ilya was grateful to host them both, even though they seemed friendlier with each other. Ilya tried asking Svetlana about it one day, when Rose visited Shane alone at the hospital but she brushed it off. Ilya dropped it since he was just glad she visited. Together with the Cens, Hayden & Jackie, and Yuna & David, they planned a baby shower for Shane.

It was going to be at their house, and Shane would join virtually while Ilya opened the gifts, that was the plan at least. They had kept Shane in the dark. Opting for it to be a surprise.

The day finally came for the shower. Ilya had been told by literally everyone not to help at all. First, Rose yelled at him for trying to decorate, then Yuna forced him to sit down when he was trying to move the chairs. Finally, Svetlana made him take a nap while they finished working, so he could “rest,” but Ilya was pretty sure they just wanted him out of the way.

Ilya ended up actually napping by accident until he was woken up by the sound of his father-in-law jostling him awake. Ilya rubbed the sleep from his eyes. “David?”

“I was told to come wake you since there’s only thirty minutes left till the party. You might wanna take a quick shower and get changed.” Ilya nodded.

David waved his hand, then slipped out.

Ilya cleaned up and got dressed before making his way to the crowded party.

The whole Cens team and their families were there. His coach came. Some staff members even joined them. Shane’s parents were obviously there with Rose and Sveta to host the party, along with the Pikes. All their lovely children came to hug Ilya, followed by Jackie. Even Hayden shook his hand. “Rozanov.” Ilya nodded. “Pike.” Hayden nodded back. “Montreal is having a bad season, yes?”

Hayden huffed, “Fuck off, Rozanov.” Ilya giggled. Jackie shot Hayden a look. “What? He started it.” Jackie rolled her eyes and shook her head. “God, you two. I need a beer.”

And just like that, Centaur’s defensemen—Nick Chouinard—was putting a can in her hand. “Thank fuck.” Jackie sighed out a breath of relief, then pressed the tab, opening the drink and taking a big gulp. “Let me know if you need something...stronger,” Ilya whispered into her ear as he moved past both of them to talk to others. The twins ran past Ilya and almost knocked Jackie’s beer out of her hand. Ilya looked behind him at Jackie. “I might take you up on that offer soon.” Ilya chuckled, then nodded before moving on to other partygoers.

After fifteen to twenty minutes of mingling, Yuna climbed onto the fireplace stone to make an announcement. Rose and Svetlana stood beside her. “Can I get everyone’s attention?” Yuna called out. Her voice cut through the loud room. Ilya looked around. Only half the room stopped chattering. Many people continued their conversations.

“Shut up and listen. Now!” Svetlana yelled loudly, capturing everyone’s attention. The room fell silent instantly. She nodded to Yuna, giving her the floor. Ilya flashed Svetlana a grin, but she looked at Rose instead, who also smiled at her. Ilya noticed this shift in focus. Today was about Shane, though, so he let it go but pocketed it for later.

“Thank you,” Yuna said to Svetlana, then continued. “I just want to make a few announcements. First, thank you all for coming. We are glad you could be here today to celebrate my son’s in welcoming their daughter. As most of you know, there have been many complications with the pregnancy, so Shane will join us virtually in about twenty minutes via Rose. She’ll leave in a few minutes to join Shane at the hospital and video-call him. For now, eat, drink, and mingle. In about thirty minutes, this lovely father-to-be—” Yuna pointed at him. Ilya winked and waved at the crowd. “—will open presents with Shane. Thank you for coming. Please enjoy.”

Ilya watched as David helped Yuna down, then spoke with Rose, Svetlana, and him about the game plan. Hayden had now joined them as he was going to help coordinate the phone call with Shane. Rose would call Hayden, then Hayden would basically be the one to move him around the room. Svetlana would hand presents to Ilya and Hayden would make sure Shane could see the process. Then Yuna would write down all the names for thank-you cards, and David was in charge of collecting trash. Svetlana would also oversee everything to ensure it ran smoothly, and then they would play some baby shower games hosted by Yuna. This whole concept was so foreign to Ilya. He had never done anything like this back in Russia and there were definitely no opportunities when he was in the States. In Canada, there had

been some opportunities, but when Cassie and Bood had their baby, they just had a small gathering for the team where they brought diapers in exchange for beer. Ilya didn't understand why anyone would want to exchange diapers for shitty beer. Vodka, sure, but beer made no sense, plus he didn't need the alcohol he would've brought them hundreds of diapers he did not care.

In the end, if it made Shane happy or his family, then so was he, so he'd sit and open all the fun baby presents and play the silly little games. Maybe even have some fun himself.

Shane had woken up from his nap to a lovely visit from his friend Rose. She had been staying at his house for a few days in between filming. It was amazing of her to take time out of her busy schedule to come visit him. He felt so grateful.

"Hi, Rose." He waved. She walked over—kissed his cheek, then sat next to him.

Shane had known she was coming today. They planned on it but she was also really odd. Rose kept looking at her phone anytime it buzzed. During their conversations, she kept looking around the room and avoiding eye contact. Shane briefly saw her security guard in the hallway. Shane couldn't help but wonder if something was going on, like maybe she had a stalker or something bad had happened. He started to worry.

Shane was about to bring it up in their conversation when her phone rang. She picked it up immediately. Standing up while doing so. Rose seemed a bit on edge when she said "Hello."

Rose moved over closer to the window.

Shane knew he shouldn't eavesdrop but she was being so weird and he genuinely worried about her safety.

“I made it to the hospital.”

She nodded along to the person on the other end.

“Yeah.”

Shane felt the knot in his stomach grow.

If Rose was in danger, why wouldn't she just tell him.

“Is everyone in place?” A pause. “Okay. Good.”

Another pause, presumably the person on the other line was talking.

“Yeah, I'm ready.”

Rose walked back over, still on the phone. Shane was biting his nails subconsciously.

“Yeah, give me one sec.” Rose took the phone from her ear and put it on mute. That's when he saw the number. It was a Montreal area code and the last 4 looked familiar.

“Is everything okay? Are you okay?” His heartbeat started to quicken.

“Oh, Shane. I'm so sorry. No, everything is fine with me. Maybe in retrospect, a surprise party was not a good idea.” She put her hand over her mouth quickly like she'd made a mistake in what she said.

A what?

Who was having a party? Rose? It definitely wasn't her birthday. Or his. So what could she mean?

"What are you talking about?"

Rose gave a little smirk, then the phone lit up with a FaceTime request. She clicked accept, then angled it toward Shane's face. "Rose, what are you—"

Before he could finish. Hayden's face appears on Rose's phone. Now he was really confused. And in the background were a bunch of people he knew, including his parents, his team, and Ilya.

"Surprise!" The cheers boomed out through Rose's iPhone speaker.

Shane was taken aback. He couldn't believe it. His friends and family were throwing him a virtual surprise baby shower.

Shane grinned. Rose grabbed his hand and squeezed. "Did you?"

She smiled back. "Not just me. It was a group effort." Shane looked back at the screen.

Hayden moved around the room. "Hey, man!" Jackie came to his side. "Happy baby shower!" She yelled. Hayden moved around the room. Shane greeted everyone as they moved. Shane hadn't even noticed he was crying until he saw his reflection in the corner of the screen. He wiped his eyes with his hand. Rose handed him a tissue.

Finally, the phone was passed to a spot by the fireplace where Ilya was sitting—Svetlana at his side—with a stack of presents, smiling widely. Shane felt so overwhelmingly happy. They truly didn't need anyone to buy them anything. They had money, and despite all the hospital

bills, they would be more than well off but it was the gesture of it all. The idea of him not having a shower wasn't about the gifts but the idea of people he loved coming to shower love and support by showing their daughter how many people she had in her corner was something he'd wanted.

"Ilya—" Shane started.

"Moya lyubov'!" Ilya grabbed the phone from Hayden—a bit aggressively—but Shane would worry about that later. "Welcome to your baby shower party thing," Ilya said excitedly before whispering to the phone. "I still do not understand why is called that. I have not seen a shower."

Shane shook his head and chuckled.

"It's because we are *showering* Shane and the baby with gifts." Hayden scoffed from behind the phone, clearly making fun of Ilya.

"You would know, yes? You have like a hundred children." Hayden scoffed. "Poor Jackie." Shane heard the muffled laughter coming from off-screen, most likely Jackie herself.

"Okay. Enough. Let's open some presents and play some games." Jackie spoke.

Shane smiled. He couldn't believe this was real life.

After several presents and "*aw's*" later, Ilya's hands were tired. Ilya very much enjoyed seeing all the baby stuff. And was surprised to find there were so many hockey baby items. His favorites, though, had to be the custom Hollander and Rozanov Centaurs jerseys from their coach and his wife, or the crocheted Centaurs baby blanket from Zane and Cassie. Ilya was also surprised to see so many items for postpartum. He had no idea how much Shane needed after the baby was born. Jackie brought several things of her favorite Nipple butter. Ilya had no idea why that was important, but Jackie apparently swore by it, and Shane apparently had read about it on an online forum, so he was stoked to be stocked up.

Some other notable gifts were hockey-themed baby items, including toys, onesies, books, and bibs. There were also lots of diapers. TONS of clothes. Outfits and shoes that Ilya found extremely adorable. And the amount of plushies was insane. Ilya had planned on making sure his kid was going to be the best dressed but a lot of these outfits were eccentric and not really what he had in mind but he figured no matter what gender their child had been they would most likely have been into the vibrant colors and glitter and accessories. They had gotten lots of bows and hats too, some really cute toques. Then there were these little rags, apparently called burp clothes that people kept saying you could never have enough of.

Troy and Harris had brought a little basket of items. Ilya was sure Harris made it because it had these cutesy stuffies. One was a hockey puck with eyes and legs, and the other was an apple with eyes and legs; apparently, they were called Jellycats. Ilya had never heard of them before, but thought it was funny how they literally embodied Troy and Harris. There were other baby items in the basket, like pacifiers and bottles. They also included some books and a cute blanket, but most notably a doggy sweater for Anya that said: **BIG SISTER.**

Ilya loved it. Shane didn't seem as enthused.

Rose had bought Shane so many things. Ilya knew she had money too but they could have definitely bought all of these things themselves. There was a fancy pram, car-seat, baby carrier, and it looked like some designer baby clothes. Shane thanked her with a hug in person. Ilya nodded in agreement.

Even Svetlana brought a gift. Ilya had been confused about how she got involved in this anyway, considering baby showers were not a thing in Russia and giving baby things before delivery was considered bad luck, but she gave Ilya some baby books in Russian, a few onesies, and then the most beautiful thing Ilya had ever seen. It was a box that held a golden spoon and a small crucifix pendant, similar to the one Ilya's mother wore, now hanging from his neck.

Usually, these were reserved for a child's baptism or their first tooth—a very traditional godparent gift, but Ilya knew that Svetlana wouldn't be able to come around as much as she liked with work schedules and their hockey schedules, so it made sense to give it to them now.

Hayden had moved the phone closer to the box so Shane could see it. “Wow. Svetlana. Wow...It’s—”

“Beautiful.” Ilya finished, before pulling her in for a hug. Then kissed her cheek. He then whispered ‘thank you’ in Russian in her ear. She grabbed his hand. Smiling and saying a version of ‘you’re welcome’ in Russian back.

Finally, Yuna and David had the last gift.

There were two things.

One. A baby book.

Simple but sweet for them to document their baby’s life.

Under the book, though, was something soft. Ilya touched and then examined it. He wasn’t quite sure what he was looking at but it appeared to be a blanket made of old shirts and jerseys.

“Oh my god.” Ilya heard Shane mutter through the phone. “Mom. Dad. I—”

Then he saw it. They were hockey teams. He recognized Montreal first, then he noticed the Centaurs before finally seeing a Boston jersey with his name stitched on the back. There were several teams he didn’t recognize.

“It’s a quilt for your daughter with every team you and Shane have ever been a part of—well, at least the ones we could find. Some of yours were tricky Ilya and we didn’t get them all but luckily Svetlana helped us track down some of the ones from your youth.”

Ilya’s gaze shifted over to Svetlana, who was grinning. Ilya couldn’t believe it. His hands were still touching the fabric. He looked up and saw Yuna and David. They were smiling

brightly as well.

“Thank you both. For everything.” Ilya heard Shane’s voice cut through the phone's speaker. It brought him back for a minute. He looked down at the picture and saw his tear-stained cheeks.

Ilya cleared his throat. All of a sudden, he was at a loss for words, which never happened. The way Shane’s family accepted him into their family as their own. They continuously showed him, time and time again, that he still had a family. Despite both of his parents being gone and his brother being fully out of his life, he had people who cared about him. It was almost too overwhelming.

Yuna moved forward, wiping a tear from his cheeks, and hugged him. “You don’t have to say anything,” Yuna whispered. “We are so happy to have you in our family. You are going to be such a great dad, just like you are a husband to our son.”

Ilya had been told that by others but there was something different about hearing it from Yuna. She had become a mother-like figure to him over these years. It was as if Irina had somehow given her blessing to him that it was okay to accept motherly love even if she wasn’t there anymore.

Thinking about her most days was hard but Yuna made it easier. Knowing that he was loved him like a son. It didn’t erase Irina’s memory from his life but in a way, enhanced it. Every hug or show of support made him recall his childhood. Ilya knew if she was alive that she would be here with him. Right by his side. In a way, it felt like she was. Yuna pulled back. Ilya touched his pendant.

Yuna smiled. David then hugged him too. A quicker one but still sweet.

Finally, Ilya looked back at the blanket one more time, admiring it. Then, he went to the screen to see his husband. Beaming with joy.

After that, they played some very strange games.

They even tried to get Ilya to eat baby food, claiming it would be 'fun'. At first, he agreed to the competition to see who could guess the flavor first. It was Ilya, Dykstra and Hayden. But Ilya refused and instead watched as Pike and Dykstra ate nasty cold mush from a jar, then laughed at them both.

Another game was baby trivia, and Ilya was shocked to learn that babies did not have kneecaps. And of course Shane won the trivia game and gloated about it. Ilya would never hear the end of this win.

The final game was matching baby pictures to the person. They had people bring in baby photos and you had to guess which one belonged to which guest. This one was quite fun and gave him good chirping material.

The long day of festivities finally ended. The guests went home, while a few stayed back to help clean up. Ilya was instructed to rest on the couch, however and not help at all. Which was for the best because his knee was starting to hurt.

Rose came back to the house and Ilya opted to FaceTime with Shane while everyone cleaned up.

“How are you feeling?” Ilya asked.

Shane smiled—eyes closed, leaning back into his pillow. “Good.” Ilya loved the soft, dreamy look on his face. Ilya wished he could reach out and touch his beautiful freckles. “Was it everything you dreamed of?”

“The party?”

“Da.”

Shane opened his eyes. “Yes. Thank you.”

Ilya waved him off. “I had nothing to do with it. Was everyone else.”

Shane yawned.

“You should sleep.”

Shane shook his head. “But I wanna talk to you.”

“You are growing a human inside you. Sleep.”

Shane gave in. “Okay. Fine.”

“I love you. Goodnight.”

“M’love ya...*night*.” Shane said all sleepily, dozing off.

Ilya disconnected the call.

Ilya was also getting pretty tired. He waited for everyone to leave before attempting to sleep.

Even Rose and Svetlana had flights to catch, so he said his goodbyes and retired to his room.

It truly had been a great day, long yes, but really good.

Lying in bed alone now made him sad. Shane should've been at the party. Celebrating in person. Not in some sad hospital room. Ilya should be there with him now. There was no way he was going to manage going to the hospital this late at night now. Ilya still couldn't even drive a car and it was way past visiting hours.

Instead, he spent the next few hours tossing and turning restlessly until he fell asleep.

Piercing screams filled his ears. It was Shane. Ilya tried to open his eyes, but he couldn't. They were glued shut.

"Ilya. Please. It hurts. Everything hurts." Shane cried out.

Ilya tried harder to open his eyes. To see Shane. To touch him. Help him, but he still couldn't.

"No. No. I need Ilya." Shane pleaded.

Ilya still couldn't move. It was like he was paralyzed. He tried every last muscle in his body to move but nothing seemed to work.

"He's not coming." That was Yuna's voice. Ilya had never heard her voice sound so cold before.

"No. He's coming. He promised he'd be here." Shane's voice sounded desperate.

"I am coming," Is what Ilya wanted to say. Scream, but his lips wouldn't move, just like the rest of his body.

“You really think Ilya would be here?” David’s voice this time. It was filled with malice and mockery. Something Ilya had never encountered before with his father-in-law. “He’s a piece of shit just like his father and brother. Of course, he wouldn’t show.”

“No is not true.” Ilya tried again. “I am here.” He managed to shout this time, but no response.

“It’s time to deliver this baby.” Ilya heard their doctor say.

“No. I’m not ready.” Shane yelled. “Not without my husband. He will be here.”

Ilya tried to open his eyes again. This time he was successful.

He managed to see Shane but he wasn’t in the hospital bed anymore. This room was dark and cold. Very ominous. It send chills up Ilya's spine. Made the hair on his arm and back of his neck stand tall.

Ilya tried to get closer to Shane but he wasn’t in the same room no he was in a room with a window. He could only see Shane and his parents and the doctor. They couldn’t see him or he him banging on the glass because no one moved.

“Shane! I am here!” Ilya screamed at the top of his lungs.

Ilya watched Shane. He was fully gowned in scrubs from head to toe. So were his parents and the doctor. There was a curtain blocking off his pelvic area. Ilya saw the doctor hold up a shiny piece of metal. It was a scalpel.

“Okay, I will make the first cut now.”

“No!” Shane pleaded. “Not yet. Ilya!” A final desperate plea left his lips.

Ilya turned around frantically. Looking for another way out. He saw a door. He tried to open it, but it was locked. “Shane! I am coming, moya lyuboimmuy.”

Then Ilya charged the door shoulder-first, trying to knock it down. It didn’t budge.

Again.

Nothing.

Again.

Fuck.

It wasn’t working.

Then there was a blood-curdling scream.

Ilya turned quickly. “Shane!”

Shane’s face was pale.

His parents’ faces were somber.

The doctor shook their head. The room went dark.

“No,” Ilya whispered, dropping to his knees.

Then he heard a loud ringing noise.

Ilya opened his eyes. He was back in his bed. Dripping in sweat.

His phone rang on the nightstand.

Ilya picked it up. “Hello.” His voice boomed into the speaker.

“I’m on my way. Be ready in five.” It was Yuna.

“What?” Ilya wasn’t sure if this was real or a dream. Or if what he witnessed a few minutes ago was real. It all felt kinda real, though. “Why?”

“Shane is in labor.”

Fuck.

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Shane goes into labor.

Chapter Notes

TW: Please note this chapter depicts suicide; if that is something that will trigger you, I do not recommend you read the chapter.

Another thing to note is that I am not a medical professional, so there may be inaccuracies in the medical jargon, treatment and just in general medical talk. Please do not use my comments to tell me I got medical stuff wrong unless you are kindly helping me fix it.

Sorry for the delay. I do have a full-time job, so I work on each chapter when I can. I hope that we only have a few more chapters to go before wrapping up.

Also, I promise there will be a happy ending. I am not into ambiguous sad endings or hurt/comfort.

Please note the chapter is heavy on topics for mental illness, talks of suicide and death. So just be aware.

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

Shane had woken up in the middle of the night to an intense pain in his side. It was piercing. Then it felt like he was cramping.

Fuck.

Shane hit the nurse button. Then all his monitors started to go off simultaneously. It was still dark outside. Shane briefly glanced at the clock and noticed it was almost three am.

Quickly, nurses poured into his room.

“I think I am in labor.”

The nurses jumped in quickly. Attaching a monitor to Shane’s belly. Immediately looking for a heartbeat. He was genuinely terrified right now. What if they couldn’t find the heartbeat? What if it was too late? And he had no one here with him. Not his parents. Not Ilya.

“Someone call my mom, please.” Shane knew his mom would pick up right away and get to Ilya, since he still couldn’t drive and it was the middle of the night, making catching an Uber unlikely.

Shane had planned for this. He’d written his mom’s number on the whiteboard the nurses used for Shane’s updates. So right next to his daily vitals and head nurse was:

YUNA HOLLANDER: 613-555-0130.

Shane couldn’t confirm whether someone had called his mom amid all the chaos.

“The baby is in decels. It’s dropped to sixty bpm. We need to move him now. I need everyone over here helping.” A nurse was commanding the rest of the room. And just like that, they all descended upon him. Gripping onto the sheets below him, moving back and forth.

Shane didn’t know what any of these words meant but by their collective tones, something clearly was wrong with his baby. God, he was so scared.

“Did anyone page the OB yet? We need to get Shane to an OR!” Shane heard the head nurse direct their team. “What’s going on?” Shane managed between shaky breaths but no one responded. They continued to move him around.

“It’s not coming back up.” He heard one of the nurses utter.

“Okay, keep trying. We will start to prep him for the OR and a c-section.”

Shane had always known a c-section was highly probable, being a male carrier with PPROM, but nothing could have prepared him for how scary those words were, and the situation was when he was actually in it. The hardest thing about this pregnancy was never being able to plan fully, which, from what he heard, is just how it goes being pregnant and having kids anyway but still deep down he thought he could plan it all out. SO he read multiple books. Read online forums, discussed a birth plan with OB in hopes that things would go according to plan and not be a total dumpster fire in the middle of the night. Ilya and his mom had always been a part of that plan. Ilya would hold his hand while he pushed, kissing his sweaty temple, telling him how proud he was of him and that he could do this. His mom was supposed to hold his other hand, say motivational things, and make sure the birth playlist was on, but now none of that was happening. Instead, he was being thrown around his bed in distress while nurses moved around him. His bed was now being wheeled out of the room.

It wasn't supposed to happen like this.

They moved Shane quickly through long hallways and double doors. Till finally they reached the room. He'd seen the OR's before, but this was still scary. They helped prep him and his OB was now there.

“Shane.”

“Dr. Lawry, what's going on?”

“Your baby's heart rate dropped, and your body is in active labor. We need to perform an emergency c-section to get her out.”

“But what about my husband and my mom? They aren't here.”

“I'm sorry, Shane, but we need to get her out now. We don't have time.”

“What about the epidural we talked about?” She shook her head. The anesthesiologist moved forward to put the mask over his face. “We have to put you fully under.”

No. He wanted to be awake. TO see his baby, but he also understood this seemed to be a dire situation and he trusted his doctor and the team to make the right decisions to save his baby’s life. It was now for sure she would be going straight to the NICU if she didn’t need immediate intervention with surgery.

Shane tried to fight the anesthesia. He tried hard, but the room was starting to get hazy. The noises were starting to become muffled. Before, he couldn’t hear anything at all. Then his eyelids felt heavy, but he wasn’t tired. Then all of a sudden he was. He didn’t remember when he closed his eyes, but now everything was dark.

Yuna drove with ferocity. If Ilya hadn’t been so hopped up on adrenaline, he might have actually been scared and he used to drive sports cars. Thankfully, there was hardly anyone else on the road, but Ilya was impressed at both the speed and precision Yuna had when driving. Yet she also seemed calm and collected, showing absolutely no trace of unease. God, she was a powerhouse. Ilya would hate to ever be on her bad side.

Surely in the past, he had been before she knew about him and Shane and Ilya weren’t convinced that Yuna didn’t have a voodoo doll of him she stuck pins in before games against Montreal.

They made it to the hospital in record time. Ilya opened the door and attempted to get out quickly despite the pain in his knee. Yuna was already at his side, helping him out as they quickly shuffled through the doors.

Yuna talked to the staff, actually, more like the staff, to figure out where Shane was.

They didn't seem to have an answer other than that he was in the operating room and that they would have to wait for an update from the operating staff.

Ilya wanted to be in the room. He needed to be there for Shane. Shane was scared and alone, and Ilya was helpless.

"Why can't I just go in?" Ilya demanded. Yuna grabbed him quickly and held him back. "Ilya..." She started. The admin person cut in. "It was an emergency c-section, and right now no one is allowed into the room with him."

"But that is my husband and my baby in there." Yuna had his arm.

"Mr. Rozanov, I am so sorry you are going through this, but I need you to step back. Take a deep breath and let our medical team handle this. Okay?"

This wasn't Ilya; he didn't get mad like this, not anymore. Fuck he was so scared. They had such a great day. Things had been looking up. Ilya was getting stronger, Shane was still pregnant but now it was so up in the air. Ilya had no idea what happened. What caused the sudden labor?

Yuna had finally convinced him to move away from the desk. Ilya still refused to sit. Instead, he paced a hole in the floor. Waiting for some answers.

After what felt like hours of agony in waiting, Ilya saw a woman head-to-toe in scrubs. Ilya didn't have any explanation, but he just knew it was Shane's doctor.

Ilya—still running on pure adrenaline—pushed forward to her.

They made eye contact.

“Mr. Rozanov.” She knew who he was. Ilya, despite being an NHL star, was also a desperate man who spent countless nights in the hospital, so it was a loss if she knew of him only through whispers from other staff or because of his hockey. He didn’t care right now. He just wanted to know about Shane and his daughter.

Ilya didn’t even have to say anything; his eyes said it all.

“Shane was rushed to the operating room for an emergency c-section due to a placental abruption. We were able to remove your daughter, but there was a lot of blood loss, which resulted in a postpartum hemorrhage. We’re currently keeping him in a medically induced coma and monitoring him but it appears that he caught an infection. We have labs sent off to confirm but right now, how the body needs to rest. In the operating room, we did a blood transfusion to help recoup the blood loss.”

Ilya hadn’t understood everything the doctor just told him, but he did understand that Shane was in critical condition. His body didn’t know how to react. He wasn’t even sure how to form words anymore. And the thought of trying to translate Russian to English in his head made him nauseous.

Yuna touched his shoulder. “What about their daughter? Where is she?” Yuna asked the surgeon.

Ilya had wanted to ask that question, but was grateful that Yuna had done it for him because, as much as he was worried for Shane, which he was. He was also concerned with his daughter's health.

“Please.” That was all Ilya could manage. Hoping they would hear his plea.

“She’s in the NICU. Now, because of the placental abruption, her heart rate did drop to dangerous levels known as decels.”

“What does that mean?” Yuna asked again. Squeezing Ilya’s arm.

“It just means her heart rate was not high enough for proper blood flow to her body, including her lungs and brain.” Ilya froze. “But they were able to get her delivered immediately via cesarean and taken to NICU. She wasn’t breathing on her own, but thankfully didn’t need a ventilator.”

Ilya wished, in this moment, that he didn’t have to translate in his head, because it was too hard and too confusing to understand what the doctor was saying about his daughter.

“Is she alive?” Ilya choked out. That’s all he needed to know in that moment. Confirmation.

The doctor nodded. “Yes. Of course, right now she’s in our NICU under their care. We don’t yet know the long-term effects the delivery has had on her. It’s possible there will be neurological, pulmonary, or even cardiac damage from this, but right now she’s alive, and her heart’s beating, so that’s definitely a win. I can have one of the nurses take you to see her if you’d like?”

Ilya looked at Yuna. Almost as if he was looking for permission.

“Ilya, go! I’ll go be with Shane.” Yuna claimed.

Ilya nodded, barely holding it together. Ilya wanted—no, needed to see Shane, but his heart was torn. It felt like they both needed him right now. Choosing wasn’t easy, but Ilya was a husband and a father, and he wanted to be better than his. So he didn’t hesitate to go be with his daughter. Shane would’ve done the same and encouraged him to be with her. He’s certain.

Shane felt cold.

Not just his body but his insides too, like he was trapped in a freezer or Antarctica. There was a tingling sensation in his extremities. His fingers and toes buzzed with this icy chillness.

Shane's eyelids were heavy, but despite that, he blinked them open slowly.

To his surprise, everything was dark. But not like at night when the lights were off. Because he looked down and could still see his hands and toes. So, no it wasn't 'dark' but more like pitch black. Like he was in a void.

Quickly, he twisted his body around, looking for any signs of life. Nothing.

Then he clawed at his stomach, and it was flat. There was no bump. Shane scoured his brain to remember what had happened. All his brain could conjure was waking up in a frenzy and nurses pouring into his room. Something about active labor and decelerated heart rate.

Then he was ushered away.

Shane had a half-recollection of being put under, but then his mind went blank. The abundance of worried questions flooded his mind.

Did he die? Did his daughter? Is this the afterlife?

God, he hoped not. Shane hadn't even gotten to meet his child. Shane started to cry. Not fits of rage but just soft tears descending down his cheeks. He was gone. Just like that.

As he stood in the void, he felt something prick his shoulder. It frightened him.

Shane turned fast to see whatever creature was here to take him away.

It was just a woman.

“Fuck.” He let out a relieved breath.

Wait, he recognized her. And she was definitely not just any woman.

“Shane?” The mysterious woman asked. “Is it really you?”

Shane wagged his eyebrows. Then nodded slowly. Carefully. Afraid that any sudden movements would somehow make him or the woman in front of him disappear.

She was about his age. About his height, maybe just under—a curvy build—not quite thin but also not plus-sized. Very average. Medium-length, dirty blonde hair with a slight wave to it. Her eyebrows were dark and thick, and just beneath them her eyes were hazel. An exact match to his husband's.

The woman pulled him in for a hug. “Thank you.” She repeated over and over again. It was very clearly English but with a thick Russian accent.

After a minute, she pulled back. Shane just stared at her. Still in shock.

Words weren't coming to him. He had so much he wanted to say, but alas, his lips wouldn't move. She laughed. “You named a charity after me, yes?”

That was the first confirmation that the woman standing with him in this vastness was exactly who he thought it was.

Shane nodded. “Irina?”

Irina smiled brightly—it was lopsided and lazy just like Ilya's. Shane couldn't believe how much he looked like her.

“Da.”

“You speak English?”

Irina giggled again. Waved her hand. “No. Is your brain translating for you.”

His brain? Where were they?

“I assume so, at least considering I have been speaking Russian this whole time and so have you.” Shane did know a decent amount of Russian, but was definitely not doing it intentionally right now.

“Unless you are speaking Russian, then hats off because it is very impressive.”

Shane shook his head. “Uh—no—I mean yes, I know some. I have been working on it over the years for Ilya, and we've conversed a few times, but I am by no means fluent.”

Irina smiled again. “You learned Russian for him?”

Shane looked at her with confusion because it was so obvious. Shane would do anything for Ilya and learning his native tongue was the bare minimum. It was only fair. Ilya learned English and even picked up a small amount of French.

Irina shed one singular tear. “You love him, yes?”

It wasn't really a question, more like a confirmation. Irina knew that Shane loved Ilya. Shane just nodded slightly. His lip twitched.

"Good. I am glad he has you."

"Had." He corrected her.

"Shane, you are not dead." Irina's voice was stern.

"I'm not?"

She laughed. "No. Not yet, at least."

Oh.

OH!

Wait...

"Yet?"

"Da." She responded.

"So..."

"I am sorry, I cannot explain it to you."

“O-kay?”

“I am sorry, Shane, but that is not why I am here.”

Where is here? He wondered. And if he wasn't dead, then how was Ilya's mother here? She'd been gone for over two decades.

“I don't understand—” Before he could finish his thought, Irina snapped her fingers.

Shane's eyes pushed open, and they were no longer surrounded by blackness. His eyes shifted around, and he was in a room. One very unfamiliar to him. Frantically, he moved around. Looking for Irina.

“Irina?” He paused. “Are you still there?”

No response.

“Irina, c'mon, where am I? What happened?”

Shane moved around. From room to room. It was clear he was in a house or apartment of some kind. It was daytime, he could tell by the way the light peeked through the curtained windows. He'd started in what he assumed was a den or living room, then moved to presumably a dining room, then a kitchen.

“Mama!”

Shane stopped in his tracks. He wasn't alone. But it wasn't Irina despite the Russian accent. It was a child.

“Mama!” The shout got closer to him, then the door to the kitchen flung open and a child, not quite a teenager, burst through. Shane stared at him, bracing himself for scaring the shit out of this kid, but the kid hadn't even stopped or noticed him. “Mama!” He continued. Then, he moved through the kitchen and went right through Shane like he was an apparition.

Shane was confused, but the kid went through the door he had just come through. Shane hesitated for a moment, then followed him. The same path he had just taken. The kid was still shouting for his mother.

Finally making it back to his starting point. Shane followed the kid through another door, one he hadn't seen in his first initial inspection.

Shane again continued to follow him. Listening to his calls for his mother. Shane wasn't dumb. He knew the accent. It was clearly Russian. The kid also called out Russian phrases. Shane caught a few words like “where are you?” and “are you home?”.

Shane tried to keep up, but the kid was fast. Shane managed to follow him down a long hallway or maybe a corridor. Until he finally reached a door. The child burst in. He was hot on his tail when he heard a new version of the child's shouts.

“Mama net!” Shane's whole body went rigid. A chill ran up his spine. The sound was so laced with confusion and sadness.

Shane burst through the door. “Mama...pozhaluysta!” Shane stopped in his tracks. “...prosnut'sya...mama.” The sight in front of him was heartbreaking. The boy was full-on sobbing, clutching onto his unconscious mother.

Shane finally realized where he was. The orange bottle, sitting on the nightstand. Empty.

The woman lying on the bed. It was Irina. He knew that for certain.

Which meant the boy, who was grabbing onto her in agony, was his husband—Ilya, just as a pre-teen though.

Shane moved forward, wanting to offer him comfort. To help him, but before he could reach him. Everything was black again. It didn't matter; Shane would never forget the look on Ilya's face begging his mom to wake up. To not leave him.

"I'm sorry."

Fuck. Shane jumped.

Irina was standing there. "I couldn't watch that one with you. It's too much—" She started, then turned her gaze away from Shane, looking down to the floor, trying not to meet his stare.

"Was that—" Irina nodded, "My death? Yes." Her tone was somber.

Shane moved forward. Reaching for her. "Irina..." She put up her hand up to stop him, then used the other to wipe away a tear. "Don't. I am fine."

"Why did you show me that?"

Irina swallowed a lump in her throat and then parted her lips. Shane watched carefully. "I needed you to see it. I am sure he has told you about it. I know what I did was selfish, and it hurt, but at the time, I was so sad and thought I was helping him. Andrei too. They were better off without me." Her lip quivered.

"You know that's not true, right?" Shane said, offering his support.

She shook her head. "Is not. Look, he did just fine without me."

Shane scoffed. “That’s not fair. Yes, he made his dreams come true, but I watched him the whole time. It wasn’t easy for him. You have to know that.”

Irina stared at him. Her expression was blank.

“Does not matter anymore.”

“Then why show it to me at all?” Shane’s voice sounded angry, but he wasn’t, not at Irina at least. The universe may be, but never at her.

“Because you needed to see it for yourself. My Ilyushka has already lost so much, you can’t leave him too...” Shane didn’t understand. He would never leave Ilya, not intentionally, that is. If he died well, then that wasn’t his fault, but Irina was right. Hadn’t Ilya suffered enough?

Before Shane could utter a response. Irina snapped her fingers together again. “Wait...I—” His eyelids flung open again. This time, Irina was standing next to him when they arrived. The room was blurry, but it quickly came into focus. Shane looked around. “Where are we?” Irina flashed him a toothy grin, then nodded in a certain direction. “The present.”

His head snapped to see a scene unfold in front of him.

It was his husband standing over an isolette—a special bassinet for NICU babies that was transparent, meant to help shield babies from the outside elements. Shane moved a tad bit closer to get a better look. There she was. Lying there. Her CPAP machine was hooked up to her face. Assisting her breathing. There were tubes and wires braided and woven around her small frame. Shane couldn’t believe how small she was.

“Is that—” Shane looked to Irina.

She smiled and nodded.

“Wow.”

“Amazing, yes?” Irina said.

Ilya’s hand was inside, holding onto hers. Staring lovingly at her, but Shane also noticed how frightened he looked, too.

“Do you want to hold her?” A nurse asked. “There are lots of benefits for preemies to get skin-to-skin from their parents.” Ilya looked up at her—still absolutely terrified, but Shane could also see his desperation. Ilya wanted to hold her, but something was holding him back.

The nurse had definitely picked up on it. “You don’t have to, but I promise you will not break her, and I will be here to monitor.”

“Is not that.”

The nurse gave him a questioning look. “Okay. Tell me then. I am a great listener.”

“My husband should be the one to hold her first.”

Shane appreciated this gesture so much, but he also wanted Ilya to be there for her. She was going to need it, especially if Shane didn’t come back.

The nurse reached out and touched the hand resting on the top of the isolette.

“Mr. Rozanov—”

“Ilya.” He corrected.

She smiled. “Ilya—she is your daughter, and she needs you right now. I know you think your husband deserves to hold her first, and well, you’re not wrong. He probably does, but right now you must think about her and her needs.”

“Is she scared?” Ilya’s eyes filled with tears.

This broke Shane’s heart. Irina’s too. Shane took his eyes off them for one second to see hers, and the way she was looking at her son and granddaughter broke him.

“Maybe.” The nurse answered. “Honestly, I do not know, but what I do know is that you are her father just as much as your husband is. It’s okay to acknowledge that. You may not have carried her, but I know you supported and loved her the whole time.”

“I will hold her.”

Shane smiled. This was the right decision.

Ilya moved to the chair the nurse directed him to. Then she moved the isolette over, wheeling it in his direction. “Shirt.” She reminded him.

Ilya removed his shirt. Shane, for the first time, looked at his shirtless husband and didn’t feel aroused like he normally would, but instead he felt an insurmountable wave of adoration for him wash over his body.

This was his family.

Ilya’s body trembled slightly as the nurse removed the cover of the bassinet and picked up their daughter carefully with gloved hands and set her down on Ilya’s bare chest on the opposite side of his bear tattoo.

Shane preened.

Ilya let out a squeak. “So small.” Irina laughed. Shane looked at her. She was deadlocked at this moment. Smiling so beautifully. Shane grabbed her hand and squeezed it. “I should be there.” Irina choked out. Shane didn’t have the heart to say it, but he thought that he should, too.

“What do I do?” Ilya looked at the nurse, awkwardly moving his hands.

“Talk to her.” She smiled.

Ilya moved his arms and held her bottom with one hand and her head with another. Trying to avoid her wires and tubes. “Malyshka...” He started. Then he spoke to her in Russian.

Shane only got bits and pieces of his statement, but Irina caught the whole thing, and she was now tearing up and grinning ear-to-ear.

Ilya finished up. “Ya tebya lyublyu.” A Russian phrase Shane would never forget.

The nurse smiled at them. Shane couldn’t help but also curve his own lips. That’s when he tasted the saltiness from rogue tears that must’ve escaped his eyes, witnessing this scene.

Then everything faded to black again.

This time, his hand held onto Irina’s. They were back in the void.

“I want to go back,” Shane yelled. Not really to anyone specifically, just in general. “Please.” He cried out. “I need to be with my family.” Shane started to shake uncontrollably. “It’s not fair. Not fair.” He sobbed. His legs were finally giving out. Irina caught him.

“I know, my love.” Irina held him as they sank to what he could only assume was the floor. It was still just black nothingness. Irina petted his head. “I’m scared.” Shane croaked. “Yes, but you are brave. So brave.”

“They need me. I need them.” Shane cried. “I have to—no, I need—” Shane was gasping for air.

“Shh,” Irina soothed. “You need to breathe love.”

“I don’t wanna go. I don’t wanna leave them.” Shane’s voice rasped. “Please.” He cried. Tears now fully fill his eyes. Completely obstructing his vision. He closed his eyes and leaned into Irina’s shoulder. Her comfort felt much like Ilya’s. They even hugged the same, he thought.

She continued to run her fingers through his hair while her other hand ran flat down the curve of his back. “You don’t have to.”

“But—” And then Irina snapped the hand that was in his hair.

They appeared in the room. It had medical supplies. It had to be a hospital. Shane stood up with the help of Irina. “Where are we?” He wiped away his tears. The room came into focus once he cleared his vision. There was a window of sorts. It reminded him of a two-way mirror in an interrogation room from those criminal shows his mom always watched.

Shane shuffled forward. He peered through the window and saw his family gathered around a hospital bed. His mom. His dad. Holding onto each other on one side, he saw his husband. His body covered most of the bed. Shane only saw his back. Until he turned to look at someone.

Shane turned his head toward a person in a white coat. Presumably a doctor. “Are you guys ready?” The doctor moved in closer to the bed.

Ilya's body twisted, revealing to him two things.

One. He was holding a baby. She had to be their daughter, but she was a lot older than the preemie baby Shane had just seen. This baby was at least six months old. She could fully hold her head up, but was leaning against Ilya's shoulder.

"No. I am not ready." Ilya said with shaky breath.

Two. The person in the bed was him. Shane. He was lying there on a ventilator.

Shane felt his heart drop. There was a pit in his stomach.

They were going to unplug him. Shane had been on life support for who knows how long, and they were going to let him go.

Shane banged on the window.

"No! Don't! I am still here." He cried.

Irina put a hand on his shoulder.

"They cannot hear you love."

Shane whipped his head around to her. "I don't wanna die." Irina's expression was sympathetic, but she didn't respond.

His head moved back when he heard his mom talking.

“Ilya—I know...” Yuna choked out. David held her closer. She cleared her throat. “I know this is hard, but we talked about this. He wouldn’t want to live like this. And the doctors all say—”

“I know what they say, but—”

David spoke up. “Son. We have to let him go.”

Shane wanted to scream. The shout. To plead that he was still alive, but it wouldn’t work.

“Okay,” Ilya responded.

Then Shane watched as both of his parents moved closer to the bed. His mom looks exhausted and underweight. Clearly, she had been a wreck these past few months. His dad looked similarly, but wore a stoic expression, as if he had already made his peace with the situation.

His dad grabbed his hand. Squeezed it and said, “I love you, Shane.” Shane’s mouth opened, letting out an uncontrolled shrill. Then his mom bent down and kissed his temple. A tear fell and landed on Shane’s cheek. She wiped it away after she moved back.

“Goodbye, Shane. I-love-you-so-much...” She said between choked-out breaths.

Finally, Ilya moved forward. He laid his daughter on Shane’s chest. Then he kissed Shane’s cheek. Then his temple. Then his head.

Ilya pulled his daughter back up. Handed her to Yuna.

Then Shane watched as Ilya sat on the bed. Grabbed Shane’s hand. Kissed the back of it. “Ya tebya lyublyu.” He repeated over and over again until he finally sat back up. Set his hand down on the bed. Got up and nodded at the doctor.

“It’s time.”

Shane looked toward Irina. “You have to do something.”

“I can’t, Shane.”

“Please.”

“I’m sorry. I have to go now.”

“What? No! You can’t leave—”

Irina moved forward. Hugged him.

Shane wanted to reject it, but he couldn’t. Then Irina whispered in his ear.

“Tell him how proud I am of him. That I love him. That I love her. Thank you, Shane, for loving him. Thank you.” She cried, then Shane felt her body disappear from his. Like she turned to dust in his arms. All of a sudden, he was holding onto nothing.

Shane snapped his head back to the window.

The doctor had already removed his ventilator.

“No...” Shane whispered to himself.

Then he waited with them until his heart rate monitor flatlined.

The last thing he saw was the look on Ilya's face. It was the same one he saw on that little boy—Ilya's younger self from before—holding onto his mother's lifeless body just before everything went black again.

Chapter End Notes

sorry.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Ilya is pushed to his limits as a new parent while Shane is still unconscious.

Chapter Notes

Sorry chat for taking so long to upload and for it being a short chapter, work has been crazy and I have had whiplash with hrtwt lately. I promise I will upload next chapter sooner and longer.

Ilya felt a shooting pain in his knee. That's what woke him that morning. It had been a week since the birth of his daughter, which meant a week of Ilya sleeping on a cot in Shane's hospital room. A week without physical therapy. Ilya didn't care, though. He couldn't care. Hockey didn't matter. His health didn't matter. Nothing mattered anymore. Except that the two halves of his heart were currently fighting for their lives in different hospital rooms, and he felt like he was being ripped in two.

Ilya split his time evenly between them both. Spending hours holding, talking, and singing to his baby girl, with her lying on his bare chest. And when he wasn't with her, he was at Shane's bedside, reading to him mostly. Telling him how much he loved him.

Eating hadn't been a priority for him. He'd lost weight. Lost muscle for sure. And if it wasn't for Yuna force-feeding him. He truly may have starved. Yuna popped open the door. "Enough." She said sternly. "I have arranged for you to see your physical therapist here at the hospital."

"But—"

"No. Ilya—" She paused and sat down next to him at Shane's bedside. "He would not want you to live like this."

Ilya sighed.

“Shane would want you to take care of yourself to heal so you can go back to hockey.”

Ilya’s gut twisted. “No hockey.” He said bluntly. Ilya would never step foot on the ice again if Shane never woke up or something happened to his daughter. And honestly, he still might not if they do. Retirement seemed inevitable for both of them at this point.

“I will do physical therapy.”

Yuna smiled.

“I need to get better, stronger for her.”

“Are you going to visit her?”

“Da. When is therapy?”

“Three.”

“Where?”

“Meet me here. I’ve arranged a room with the hospital.”

Ilya nodded his head and then headed to the NICU.

“Ilya!”

“How is our girl doing today, Sarah?” Ilya asked the NICU nurse.

Sarah smiled brightly, “Oh, she is just a gem.” Ilya paused by her isolette and reached his hand in to touch hers. “Her oxygen trials are going well. The doctors are probably going to remove her CPAP any day now.”

Ilya wasn’t surprised at all that she was advancing quickly. She was a Hollander after all, and if there was one thing he knew about Hollanders was their ability to progress faster than others around them. Shane was amazing at anything he did, but it was more than just natural—which he did have—but it was about the effort he put in. Shane’s best trait was his work ethic. Something that seemed to be passed on to their daughter.

“Yes, she is a—” He paused, trying to remember the word. “Ah—overachiever.”

Sarah smiled at them. “That she is.”

Ilya spent the rest of their time together either holding her for their skin-to-skin session or telling her stories. They usually consisted of the PG versions of him and Shane. Sometimes he would even include the few happy childhood stories he had or ones of his mother.

Ilya felt a tingle in his knee when he got up from the chair. His body would not let him forget his injury, no matter how hard he tried to ignore it.

Maybe Yuna was right in setting him up with more physical therapy. He needed to get stronger to be a better father.

Later that day, he met Yuna back at Shane's room, where she escorted him to the private room to do his therapy. It was a good session. Lots of stretching and exercise were well needed. Soon, he knew he would have to have access to a gym again because dumbbells and resistance bands could only get him so far in his healing journey.

It was now evening. Which meant it was time to sit at Shane's bedside and watch him for hours until he let himself succumb to sleep, very restless sleep.

Another week came and went.

Nothing much changed besides the fact that his daughter was able to breathe on her own. Shane's condition was still the same. Ilya continued to live in the hospital, but Yuna and David forced him to come to their place to shower and eat. David made Ilya his favorite foods, and he even had Anya at his side, but it didn't matter. Ilya was drowning.

In what?

Well, grief mostly. Uncertainty was eating him alive inside and out.

Ilya had no idea if Shane would wake up. The infection had done damage to his organs, and they had no idea what kind of toll had been taken on his brain, either.

Then there was his daughter—who for the most part, was showing signs of growth. After the initial weight loss that was in the normal range after birth. This week she gained weight. The whole NICU staff celebrated with him.

It was a small victory, but one that deserves praise.

This week, his friends and teammates tried reaching out. They hadn't told anyone about the birth yet, mostly because of how traumatic it had all been, and Ilya wasn't exactly glued to his phone nor in a position to want to share the news with anyone, but his phone and Shane's had been blowing up. Ilya didn't check it much. He read the occasional text or voicemail but he never dared to go online. Ilya wasn't strong enough to see what people were saying.

Ilya did feel slightly guilty not checking in on his team, but playoffs were coming up and he knew they needed focus. That's why Ilya had Yuna tell only certain people. Coach Wiebe, of course, who would relay the messages to some of the team, then there were the people in his and Shane's life, like Rose, Svetlana or the Pikes that Yuna helped keep up to date on the situation.

And before he knew it, another week passed by just like that. Ilya was running on autopilot. Barely sleeping. Doing his physical therapy. Visiting his baby. Sitting with Shane. Occasionally, showering or eating at the Hollanders.

By the end of the week, they were celebrating his daughter getting her feeding tubes removed, and he was going to help give her her first bottle. It went well, so she was now officially being bottle-fed and breathing on her own. She still needed to get up her weight. She was born at just under three pounds. After her first initial drop in weight after being born then caught up. She now sits at just around four and a half pounds. Growing every day.

Despite her stellar performance in growth, she still couldn't regulate her own body temperature well. Due to precautions as well, they were going to keep her at least two more weeks before starting their tests to see if she was ready to be at an in-home environment.

Shane's room was filled with flowers, cards, gift baskets, balloons, etc. Once the team had all been made aware of the birth. Yuna insisted on keeping most of them there, but Ilya felt anxious having them there. It served as a reminder of it all. As if having Shane lying unconscious in a bed didn't already do that enough. Ilya knew there were good intentions behind all the gifts, but the wallowing in misery was beginning to take its toll.

A month had come and gone.

Ilya stood. Staring down at his husband. This wasn't how anything was supposed to go. How was he even supposed to continue on. Ilya hadn't even had the heart to name their daughter. It felt like something they should do together. It all felt wrong.

That afternoon with Yuna and David in the room, Shane's doctor wanted to talk about options.

“You want us to give up on him?” Ilya shouted.

Yuna stepped in between him and the doctor. “Sweetie.”

“That’s not what I am saying. I am just advising you of the current situation and what your options are.”

“No,” Ilya said plainly. He was not going to unplug Shane. He would not let him go. They had waited so long for this life together. It was not their time.

“Ilya honey—” Yuna touched his shoulder, “We have to start considering the alternatives.” Of course, leave it to Yuna to be the level-headed one here. Ilya didn’t know how she could be so nonchalant about her child. Ilya hadn’t been a parent long, but he would do anything for his child.

“How can you not care?” Ilya’s voice cut through the air.

Yuna’s face twisted. David shook his head.

“Ilya—” David started, but Yuna put her hand up, gesturing for him to stop. She parted her lips. “Sweetheart, you are my son too and I know you are hurting right now, and maybe it doesn’t look like it, but I am too. Shane is my baby. I grew him inside me. I birthed him. Watched him grow up. I spent years loving him and watching him achieve his dreams. I watched him fall in love.” Ilya listened to his mother-in-law speak, feeling a bit guilty for the words he said in high emotion. “This isn’t easy for me—” Yuna’s voice cracked. It was the first time since Shane gave birth that Ilya had watched her falter. Ilya can’t believe he didn’t see it until now. How composed she had been. Which made her strong. The strongest person ever, because Ilya had been hanging on just barely, and now here he was being pissed off at the one person who’d been keeping him whole.

Ilya moved forward and hugged her. “I’m sorry.” His voice was soft. They held onto each other.

Finally, after a few brief moments of swaying back and forth and hugging. Yuna pulled back. She wiped the one tear away from her eye. They all three looked back over to the doctor, allowing them to speak. They discussed Shane's current condition and that they should consider all the choices they had in front of them.

Ilya dissociated from most of the conversation. Opting to let Yuna and David tell him later. Right now, he needed to be anywhere but here.

Ilya sat in the NICU feeding his daughter a bottle. She was perfection. The way her little eyes fluttered open and shut in between sleep while finishing up her bottle made him melt.

"Mr. Rozanov?" Ilya's head flitted up. It was his daughter's PEDS doctor. "Your daughter passed all her tests this week."

Ilya's eyebrow arched. "Okay. Is good?"

She smiled. "Very. She's ready to leave. To go home."

Ilya felt his chest tighten and his pulse begin to race. He couldn't do this right now. Yes, it was a miracle she had passed all her tests and that she was completely ready to leave, but Ilya wasn't. How was he going to leave the hospital with this baby? Shane and his baby, but without Shane. The answer was. He couldn't.

"But Shane."

“Ilya—I know this is tough, but she needs you right now. We have done everything we can for her. It’s time she goes home.” She paused. Ilya looked down at her sleeping soundly in his arms. “With you.”

A singular tear formed in his duct.

Logically, Ilya knew the doctor was right, but how could he do this by himself? Shane was supposed to be the good parent. He was raised right. He had two loving parents who were still alive. Shane read the books. Prepared himself. Ilya had done nothing. He would be useless to her. Ilya wasn’t even strong enough to give her a name.

“Tomorrow morning.”

Ilya nodded.

The doctor left.

The next day was difficult.

His daughter was being discharged. Shane wasn’t, though.

Yuna and David helped Ilya. First, they did her carseat test, and she passed, which meant she was free to leave.

They drove them both back to Shane and Ilya's place. Anya was already there waiting for them both. She sniffed the new baby but looked almost sad, looking up at Ilya.

Ilya shook his head. Set the carseat down and patted Anya's head. "He's not here." Anya whimpered. Ilya held onto her.

Thankfully, with all the baby shower gifts and some wonderful friends and family. Everything was set up for them to stay there.

Yuna stayed the first night, which was way rougher than Ilya expected. Babies needed to be fed every two to three hours. Which meant Ilya had to be up with her every single time.

His mother-in-law helped with the feeds and changes, but mostly Ilya took charge. It was his job as a parent.

A whole week went by. Yuna helped a lot, but he insisted she go home and take a night off. She tried to reject, but Ilya wouldn't have it. She had already done so much for them.

So for the first night, Ilya did everything alone. Except he wasn't alone. He had her. His baby and together they were gonna figure this out.

It was a long fucking night.

She ended up fussing most of the night. Ilya rocked her for hours. He finally had her settled around four am and managed to sleep till she woke up again around six am.

When he woke up for his early morning feed, he smelled fresh-brewed coffee and something appetizing coming from his kitchen. Ilya grabbed his daughter, stumbled through the house, and found Troy and Harris in his kitchen.

Harris was standing over the stove making what appeared to be eggs, bacon, and pancakes while Troy was standing over the sink handwashing all the bottles and baby items he and Yuna used last night. The two were lightly chatting.

“Good morning.” Ilya interrupted, grabbing a pre-made formula bottle from the fridge and putting it in the warmer with one hand while holding his baby in the other.

Harris paused, then turned around. “Oh my God, Ilya—she is perfect.” Harris cooed. Abandoning the stove.

Troy had turned on his heels and watched.

“What are you two doing here?”

“Well, I was doing dishes till you rudely interrupted me with your cute baby.”

Ilya rolled his eyes. “So you think I am cute, yes?”

“Now, when did I say that?” Barrett furrowed his brow.

Harris had taken her from Ilya’s hand to hold her. Rocking her back and forth.

“My daughter looks like me. If she is cute, then I am cute.”

“Half you—and honestly, she looks more like Shane.” Troy quipped.

Harris laughed, “Yeah, sorry—Roz, she does look more like Shane.”

“Okay. So you think my husband is cute, yes?”

Troy did a facepalm. Harris chuckled.

“I’m going back to my dishes now.” Troy sighed in defeat.

The time for the bottle went off. Ilya took her back from Harris, “Oh shit, my eggs.” Harris turned back around to the stove.

Ilya shook his head, “Moy malyshka, tvoi dyadi takiye smeshnyye.”

After her bottle feeding, Ilya changed her diaper and got her dressed in a cute Cen’s onesie and had breakfast with Troy and Harris.

“So Ilya—what is her name anyway?” Harris asked casually between bites.

Ilya flinched. Then he looked down at the sleeping baby in his arms. Ilya knew he should’ve already given her a name. Surely he needed to apply for her birth certificate. They tried several times at the hospital to get him to fill out the paperwork, but he refused every time. It didn’t feel right without Shane. They hadn’t really discussed it much. A few times occasionally but had never settled on anything.

“Um....” Ilya started.

Harris noticed his quick shift in tone and quickly dropped the question. “How is your leg doing?”

Ilya looked down at his knee. Honestly, his therapy had been going well. Ilya still had a physical therapist coming almost every day. Ilya even had a doctor’s appointment coming up with his ortho and they were going to do a check-in. Ilya also had some scans scheduled to check on the injury. Yuna had planned on watching her granddaughter during that time.

“Is going...”

There was a brief, awkward silence.

“How is the team?” Ilya asked.

Troy stiffened. “What?” Ilya questioned.

“Nothing.” Harris shot Troy a look.

“What are you two not telling me?”

Troy sighed. “We really did try.”

Ilya didn’t understand why Troy was acting like this. Did something happen? Then Ilya thought about what time it was, and fuck, he couldn’t believe he’d forgotten it was almost playoffs. In his defense, he’d been preoccupied and really ignoring any hockey things.

“Is okay. My fault, really.”

“Well, next year when we have you and—” Troy stopped himself. Ilya was pretty sure he heard a stomp under the table. He looked at Harris who was acting non-chalant but Ilya realized what was going on.

Troy was going to say when he and Shane were back next season but Shane wasn’t going to be back next season and honestly, neither was he, most likely.

Ilya sucked in a sharp breath. “I think I’m going to try to sleep for a bit while she is, but thank you both for coming over and making breakfast.”

Harris reached out and touched his shoulder. “We are here for you. For all of you.”

“Thank you.”

The pair said their final goodbyes before taking their leave.

Ilya tried napping after putting his daughter down in her bassinet, but he couldn't sleep. His brain was awake and his thoughts were an endless back and forth thinking about everything and nothing all at once until he was distracted by the cries of his baby.

“Shh—mylshka—tvoy papa zdes'.” Ilya soothed her, picking her up and cradling her in his arms. “S toboy vse budet khorosho.” Ilya paused and touched her cheek as she started to settle again. Running the pads of his finger under her eyes. Ilya wondered if she'd have freckles like Shane, or his eyes or hair. Right now, she was mostly bald, besides a few wisps of dark hair, and her eyes were mostly grey. Ilya knew these were most likely not her permanent feature, but Harris was right. She did look like Shane.

Ilya almost broke down right there. Staring into her eyes. Thinking about her growing up without him. She would never get to know his smile or his laugh. The way he is so awkward or easy to rile. He imagines it now. Their teenage daughter was ragebaiting Shane just like he would do. Or the way they would take her on the ice for the first time. Would she like hockey or skating? Or would she resent it as much as he would?

Sure, hockey is what brought them together. Without it, they would've never met, he is certain of that. Ilya was from Russia, and Shane was from Canada. Their paths were unlikely to cross without the sport, so maybe he should appreciate it for that. Teach his daughter how to skate.

Ilya may heal and skate again, but without Shane, he couldn't play again. If there was no Shane, then there was no world in which he could do it again, but she would still come to know it. He wouldn't keep it from her. His family—the Centaurs—would never let him go. He was a Centaur for life at this point. They would want to be there for his daughter, and he knew she would bring joy to them just like Shane had to him and to the Cens and the hockey world.

As long as Shane's daughter existed in this world, then his memory could live on through her. He imagined it now. A miniature Shane but also had the charm and charisma as him. The way she would aim to be the best at everything she did, which would include making people smile or laugh, because that's what she would be.

"Moy malyshka, ya tebya lyublyu." Ilya paused to kiss her forehead. "Tebya lyubyat vse." Another kiss to her cheek this time. Then it hit him. Her name. Shane and he had discussed a few possible options. Shane really wanted to give her a Russian first name to honor Ilya, but Ilya didn't care about that. He remembers some of the ones Shane mentioned, but one stuck out to him.

Ilya never really understood the importance of meaning behind names, but Shane seemed to find them interesting.

"What about Milena?" Shane asked Ilya casually.

"Is cute. A few girls in school had that name."

"You never—erm...ya know with a girl named—"

Ilya laughed. "Oh, so this is trick?"

Shane threw a pillow at him. "No. I just don't want our daughter to share a name with someone you've...."

"Fucked."

"Ew. Do you have to say it like that while we are discussing baby names?"

“No, I have not had a lover with that name. Hmm...there was a Mia, Maria— ah, and Mika, but no Milena. Is cute name.”

“It means ‘people’s love or joy’.” Shane declared.

“Oh, there was this guy in Vegas club—Milo. Great head. Horrible Breath.”

“I hate you.”

Ilya puckered his lips together and made the little kissy noise to match.

Shane flipped him off.

Ilya got closer to kissing Shane’s lips. “Your head is better. And breath. Terrible backshot though.”

“I want a divorce.” Shane quipped. Clearly joking.

Ilya kissed his bare chest. “Is not what you want.”

“No, I want you. I want this family.”

Ilya preened and then kissed Shane’s bump.

“You already have it, moy lyubimyy.”

“Milena Jane Hollander-Rozanova.”

That was their daughter's name.

“Irina!” Shane yelled into the void. “This isn’t funny anymore.” Shane’s legs were moving as if he were running, but it felt as if he had gone nowhere. “Come back.” Shane moved his head around as if she would just appear behind him again. “I don’t want to die.” He pleaded. Then, once he realized she was gone. He stopped in place. “I don’t wanna die.” He repeated, this time in a raspy whisper. “Please.” He fell to his knees. He could feel the tears welling up in his eyes. “I’ll do anything.”

Shane felt hopeless. Trapped.

Was this it? His eternal resting place. It sucked. There was no life here. No hope. No joy. No life.

Soon his body slumped over. He was cradling his legs and on his side in the fetal position. Memories of his life flashed through his mind.

The time he was five and fell hard on the ice. Looking up to his parents, who worried but he got up.

Then there was the time he was twelve and his junior team had just won their first championship game. He scored the winning goal. They all dogpiled on him.

Then his first real major loss against Russia, but instead of anger and defeat, he remembers a lopsided smile and wisps of blonde curls.

Then there's draft day. His parents are smiling at him, but all he can think about is him.

More and more memories swirl around in his head. Ilya's first Stanley Cup. The way he looked so soft. Then he wins. Followed by a montage of their many years together sneaking around.

Shane's on one knee in the living room surrounded by a million flameless candles, then poof, he's standing in front of his almost husband at their backyard wedding.

The time they won the cup together. Kissing Ilya in front of the world.

Finding out he was pregnant.

And the moments before everything fell apart.

Then new pictures pierce his brain, ones he knows haven't happened yet.

Shane sees his mom standing at his front door holding a baby. Ilya holds him steady as Shane meets his mother and cradles the small child in his hand.

Then fast forward to a little girl with brown eyes, freckles, and curly dirty blonde hair. Running in the snow. "Daddy!" She screams. "Papa has a snowball." She hides behind Shane's legs. Ilya appears from behind the treeline. Snowball in hand. He throws it, landing right on Shane's face. "You're dead," Shane shouts, then scoops up some snow and packs it into a snug ball. Pelting it right at Ilya. The child behind him cheers him on. Shane misses. Ilya shakes his head. "Weak backhand," Shane chases him down. Jumping on top of him. They fight for dominance in the snow. Laughing as they do.

The picture fades. Shane sees another montage of what appears to be milestones of this child's life. A graduation. A wedding. Standing on a podium accepting a gold medal. Then everything goes blank.

Shane's trembling.

He feels impossibly cold.

This is it, he thinks.

His final moments.

Then he feels a tingling sensation in his fingers. Almost like little zaps of electricity. He flexed the muscles in his hand, extending his fingers out from the fisted shape they were tucked into. Then he slowly gets the jittery feeling through his arms, legs, and torso.

Something is happening.

There's a sudden flash of light.

"Irina?" He shouts. Did she come back for him? All of a sudden, the darkness of the void is flooded with bright lights. It's blinding. Shane can't keep his eyes open. He starts to gasp for air. His heart is thumping loudly against his ribcage. It feels similar to the panic attacks he's gotten in the past. He can hear the blood pumping inside.

A loud boom echoes around him.

His eyes flutter open again, but he's blinded again. His throat feels dry. Shane can't take in any breaths anymore. It's almost as if something is blocking his airway.

God, this really is it. The end of Shane Hollander.

Ilya is in the middle of nighttime feed when he hears his phone go off. His hands are preoccupied with Milena. Holding her in one arm and feeding her with the other. Ilya maneuvers so he can feed one hand, then grabs the phone. It's the hospital.

Ilya sucks in a breath.

It's the call that's either going to destroy him or save him.

"Hello." His voice is hoarse. He sounds groggy.

And before Ilya knows it. He's handing Milena off to Svetlana—who was staying with him this week. Then turning on his car and driving to the hospital. Calling Yuna's line.

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

The end is near for Shane, Ilya and Milena.

Chapter Notes

hello, sorry this took so long. I was fighting demons and work was killer but I think this is the end of the road. Maybe one day I will make a part 2 but for now it feels finished.

thanks everyone who waited patiently for this chapter and cheered me on. I love you all.

“Hollander!” “Hollander!” “Hollander!” “Hollander!” “Hollander!” “Hollander!”

Shane heard his name reverberating through the arena. His eyes fluttered open, but the lights were harsh and bright. He was on the ice. The crowd was chanting his name, but when he looked around, he couldn’t see any faces, just outlines of people in the stands.

His hands were steadily gripped around his stick.

“Hollander!” A familiar voice roared in his ears. Everything has been moving in slow motion up until this point. “Take the shot!” It was J.J., his former teammate, passing him the puck. “C’mon, man.” Another voice pierced his ears. He looked to his right. It was Hayden. His best friend and former teammate as well. He looked at his uniform. Why was he in Montreal gear? He played for Ottawa now. Not Montreal.

“What?” Then the puck was at his stick. None of this felt like hockey. Everything moved so slowly. Where was the other team?

Shane waved away the thought and then looked toward the goal. It was guarded by an ambiguous goalie with an unidentified uniform. In other words, Shane had no idea who they were playing. He knew he needed to shoot the puck into the net. It was a straightforward shot, but his body was betraying him and not moving.

“Hollander, what are you doing?” Another voice joined the mix. He turned around and was shocked to see an Admiral's jersey.

What was Scott Hunter doing here? Were they playing New York?

“You’re making us look bad.” It was Scott again. How was Shane making him look bad? He didn’t play for New York. “You’re supposed to be a role model.”

Fuck. He was. His mom always told him that. But now Shane was failing. It was his responsibility to be the best; to behave otherwise, kids like him would never get the chance. Then there was the being gay thing. Now he was one of the few faces for queer hockey players. If he didn’t perform well enough, then it would be his fault. Everything would be his fault.

“You’re disgusting. I hope you miss.” Shane felt wetness hit the side of his face. He had immediately went for it. Then he turned his head. It was spit. Someone spat on him. It was Winters. “You don’t belong here. Neither does your boyfriend.” Winter’s barked.

Shane’s cheeks heated. He was seething. It was one thing to talk about him, but not about his husband, but before he could reach him, the goalie started yelling at him.

“I knew you couldn’t do it.” Shane looked back at the net, except now, instead of a random goalie, it was a man in a suit. His hair was slicked back and appeared greasy. His face was taunt and stoic, but there was also a hint of suave in the way he carried himself. It made Shane uneasy. “There’s no room in this league for your kind.” The way Roger Crowell spoke made his whole body tingle. His blood boiled. His hair stood tall.

Shane wanted to shoot the puck right at his stupid mouth. Knock all of his teeth out.

Suddenly, though, players were moving in closer to him. Boxing him in, saying all the things that triggered him over and over again. “We all know you didn’t trip. You let him win.” That jab hit hard. “You disgust me.” Another hit. “Why would anyone want to look up to you?” He heard a scoff. The crowd began to get larger. More words were being said. Jab after jab.

Then he fell to the ice. Bodies hovering over him. The crowd was booing in the distance. The lights somehow got brighter. He squeezed his eyes shut.

“Shane!” An angelic voice cut through them all. “Shane.” He knew that voice. “Shane.”

“Ilya,” Shane whispered, allowing his eyes to flutter open. “Ilya.”

Ilya arrived at the hospital in record time. Yuna and David were probably only a few minutes behind him.

“I’m here for Shane Hollander,” Ilya said frantically and out of breath to the person behind the desk. They looked at their computer. Ilya was tapping his foot in anticipation. His fingers were playing with the fabric on his coat. “I got a call.” He said quickly. “They said he—” But before he could finish, he was cut off.

“Mr. Rozanov?” Ilya’s head spun around quickly; It was one of Shane’s many doctors.

“What happened? Is he—”

“Yes. He is awake, but we did have to give him a mild sedative to calm him down.” Ilya flinched. Shane probably woke up alone and scared. Ilya should’ve been there to calm him down, but he had a duty as a father to be there for Milena right now. Shane would understand.

“Can I see him?” Ilya asked sheepishly.

“Of course. They were already able to remove his intubation tube, and neurology already did a full workup and cleared him of any memory loss. He’s coherent but still extremely groggy. He was asking for you, though when the nurses found him awake, so just be there for him. We will keep him for monitoring a little while longer to make sure he’s okay enough to go home, but all infections are clear.”

Ilya was following the doctor as they were speaking the entire way to the ICU. The doctor stood in front of the door. Gesturing to Ilya to go in.

“If you need anything, just press the nurse call button. Try not overwhelm him,” Ilya nodded, then peeked inside.

Shane was sleeping. This time, there was no tube, just a singular IV. He looked small and fragile but also peaceful. Ilya sat next to his bed. Grabbed his hand and kissed his knuckles. Then leaned forward on his good leg and leaned in and kissed his temple.

Shane purred. “Mmm—”

Ilya took the pad of his thumb and ran it across his face. “Moy kotenok,” Ilya started. Shane attempted to curl his lips into a smile. “I thought I lost—” Ilya started, but then stopped. The tears welled in his eyes, blurring his vision. He cleared his throat. “Does not matter. You are awake now.”

Shane’s smile disappeared. He tried to open his eyes, and when he did, Ilya saw the look he would never forget. His husband gazed into his eyes with a mix of love, anxiety, fear, and joy all at the same time. His beautiful, warm eyes stared into Ilya’s.

Then Shane parted his lips. Ilya tried stopping him. “Shh—rest moy lyubimyy.”

Shane shook his head. “Ya...tebya...lyublyu...” Shane said in between shaky breaths and a trembling lip.

“Baby. I love you so much,” Ilya responded, kissing Shane’s face all over, then resting his head on his chest.

Then suddenly Shane’s face twisted. In worry, his hands frantically moving to his now almost flattened stomach.

“She’s okay, sweetheart, she fought so hard.” Shane looked up at Ilya. “She’s waiting for you at home.”

Shane closed his eyes and grabbed Ilya’s hand. The tears moved down his face in relief.

“I’m so proud of you.” More tears spilled. “You did such a good job, sweetheart. Milena is beautiful just like her dad.”

Shane’s lips wobbled. “Milena?” Ilya flashed him a grin and nodded.

“Da.”

Shane made a whimper. And curved his lips into a bright smile. “It’s perfect.” He said softly.

“Yes, she is.”

Shane closed his eyes again, letting out a small squeak. “Thank you.”

“Is all you, moya lyubov',” Ilya preened, swiping at Shane’s tears.

The door opened, and in poured his parents. Shane almost started crying again. They reached him quickly. His mom throws herself on him. “Shane, my baby.” She was crying. Oh god, how long had he been out? He really put everyone through it. “Son, we’re glad you’re okay.” His dad nodded and touched his leg. Since his mom was still hugging him. “We were both so worried.”

“I-I s-so s-sorr-y-y.” He muttered.

They all gave him confused expressions.

“Hey. You do not have to be sorry, baby. We were just worried about you.” His mom spoke first, then Ilya squeezed his hand. “Is not your fault, *solnyshko*.”

“T-Thank you.” Shane knew how much they had to have endured or done for him and his daughter if she was already out of the hospital and at home with Ilya. And sure, his parents and friends were helping.

“Shane, you do not need to thank any of us. We are your family, it is what we do.” His dad uttered.

They continued to converse for a bit until the drowsiness started to take over. “I-I am very tired.” Shane could feel his eyelids start to get heavy.

Ilya kissed his forehead. "Sleep, moya lyubov'. We will be here when you wake up." Shane smiled, then let himself be taken by his exhaustion.

A week passed with many tests and examinations to make sure Shane was in good enough shape to go home. After thorough evaluations, he was finally going to be discharged today.

It had been a week filled with love and friendship. Ilya and his mom took turns at home with Milena, and Shane got to FaceTime with her multiple times. She had already gotten so big, which made Shane sad that he missed so much of her life already.

And then a lot of friends visited or called him to send their love. A lot of his teammates especially came. He unfortunately learned they did not make it past the first round of the playoffs this year, but they all seemed more glad that Shane was alive and well, and they didn't seem in bad spirits at all.

His coach even stopped by with his wife and they chatted for a bit. He really did love his team. After his terrible outing experience and how his old team responded, he was lucky to have become apart fo a family who cared. Shane also found out that management had emailed him apologizing and sending their well wishes to him and his daughter. It honestly seemed performative to Shane, and he hoped that he would never have to interact with them again.

"You ready, sweetheart?" Ilya asked him softly.

They had pulled up to their house. Ilya was cleared to drive again, but Shane still felt guilty considering his husband's recovery. Ilya assured him that he had been putting in the work to get stronger for his family. That was a direct quote.

There he was sitting in the passenger seat of his husband's car in the driveway of their home. He hadn't been there in months. He was feeling extremely overwhelmed and couldn't move.

Just stared at the large house. His home. His and Ilya's home. Anya's home. And now Milena's home. Their family's home.

Shane had a daughter.

One that he hadn't met yet. Not in person anyway. Something about this frightened him. He was still so weak how could he ever be strong enough to care for her now?

"Shane?" Ilya asked.

"Sorry. I—I'm—"

"Is okay to be scared. I was scared of bringing her home. I am still scared every time I hold her. Is scary being her papa, but is also amazing. I love it. I love her. You love her."

I do. So much it kills me that I wasn't there for her when she needed me most." Shane started to weep in his hands.

"Sweetheart, no, don't do this to yourself. You were healing. Getting stronger for her everyday. Yes, she needs you, but she had us. All of us. Her family was there for her while you got better. We needed you to get better, Shane. She needed it. And now she is going to be so happy her daddy is here too. Trust me." Ilya was holding him over the center console as best as he could, consoling him.

"What if I am not good enough? What if I mess everything up?"

"You will make mistakes, yes. Is part of being a father, but it's okay to mess up. I promise she will be okay. I have already made lots of mistakes. If I tell you some will that make you feel better, solnyshko?" Ilya pulled back a little, looking at Shane's face.

Shane flashed a small grin through his tears. “I don’t think so. It would just make me more worried, but I appreciate it. I aopporaciaet you Ilya.”

Just then, Shane looked out the windshield and saw his mom standing there at the door with a little bundle in her hands. It was his daughter. Milena.

“Your daughter is waiting for you daddy,” Ilya said while tucking a piece of hair behind Shane’s ear and kissing his forehead. “Go meet her.” Ilya nudged.

Shane opened the door. Ilya had gotten out and offered to help him despite his own injury. Shane dismissed him and then moved forward, meeting up with his mom. Ilya is right behind him and his dad is behind her.

“Mom?” Shane asked. She then revealed the sleeping baby wrapped in her arms.

“Here you go, baby.” Yuna handed off Milena to him.

Shane half expected it to be awkward. He’d held babies before, like Hayden’s, and wasn’t a natural, but this was different. This was his kid. The one he grew inside him. The one he delivered. The one he kept safe as long as he could.

“Hi Milena.” He said softly. Swaying her in his arms.

Her eyes fluttered open. It was the first time he’d seen them. She’d always been feeding or asleep during FaceTimes. Shane hadn’t given much thought to what his daughter’s eyes would look like besides in the glimpses he’d seen in his comatose dream.

They are almost like honey. A very warm brown. Shane was sure they would darken over time, but they were so beautiful to look at. Ilya put a hand on Shane’s shoulder.

“Pretty. Like her father.” Shane’s cheeks heated.

Shane nodded, then looked at Ilya. “And her papa.”

The first night with her was harder than he expected. Shane couldn't sleep; he spent most of the night watching her chest rise and fall. Shane had been anxious that if he looked away for even a second, she would stop breathing. His being up all night meant that he did all her feeds and diaper changes and let Ilya rest. Something Ilya would have definitely argued with him on since he had just gotten out of a coma and was recovering. Ilya would say he needed the rest, but Shane couldn't rest nor relax right now. Not when he missed so much of his daughter's life already. Not when the thought of her slipping away into the darkness of night, helplessly, when he could be there for her.

It was about five am when he was making a bottle for her. Milena was freshly changed, and he was now feeding her. Shane had been a little disappointed that he wasn't able to chest feed. When he woke up, the lactation specialist worked with him to pump and try to stimulate milk production, but he was already at a disadvantage because of his gender, and being in the coma for over a month hadn't helped. The entire week he was at the hospital, he dry-pumped every day, hoping he could produce enough to feed Milena, but he never got more than a few ounces. Shane grew frustrated with the process but refused to give up. So he continued to pump and pump every three hours. It was starting to become extremely painful. So his doctors recommended he stop. Shane hadn't wanted to stop, but after a long talk with Ilya, they agreed that Milena had already been on formula for a month, and it was more than okay that she was formula-fed.

Fed is best. That was what everyone told him when the parental guilt set in.

As his back rested against the back of the couch, watching her suckle on the bottle in front of her, the exhaustion he felt overrode any guilt he had previously felt.

Shane burped her a couple of times during the feed, then again once she finished the bottle.

Shane set the bottle on the coffee table, then put Milena on his chest. Rubbing her back in circular motions. Milena fell back asleep after burping. And somewhere in between all of that, Shane must've succumbed to his own fatigue and drifted off.

Ilya's eyes fluttered open. For the first time in a long time, he woke up to the birds chirping outside and the sun in his eyes. It was peaceful. Relaxing. Until it wasn't.

When he realized he was alone in the bed. And Milena wasn't in her bedside bassinet.

Ilya's heart began to race. He jumped out of bed. Glancing at the clock. It was six-thirty in the morning. Shane was nowhere to be found in their bedroom or en-suite bathroom, so he headed toward the living room.

When he got there, his heart melted at the sight before him.

Shane was sleeping in a reclined position with a passed-out Milena pressed to his upper-chest and nudged against his shoulder.

Ilya grabbed his phone from his pocket and snapped a picture.

Sure, there was a safety issue sleeping with a baby, but Ilya also knew Shane hadn't been sleeping well at all since his return. So he carefully grabbed Milena from Shane's chest. Grabbed a swaddle, wrapped her tightly, and put her in her bassinet in their room. He came back and draped a blanket over him, then proceeded to make coffee and breakfast. Letting Shane sleep as long as he needed.

Which was a while.

So long in fact, Milena was ready for her eight am feed, which Ilya did. Then did a small wake window before she dozed off again for her morning nap.

While Milena napped, Ilya sat on the armchair across from Shane. Opting to listen to his snores while Ilya caught up on answering some texts and emails.

It was about thirty or so minutes until Shane startled awake.

Ilya saw it before he heard it. Shane's breathing increased. His hands were searching for their daughter. Ilya could tell he was panicking. So he jumped up and joined Shane on the couch.

Shane's eyes flung open.

"Oh my god. Where is she—she was just—I swear. I only fell asleep for a second." In between labored breaths.

Ilya grabbed Shane's hands and brought them to his chest. "Shane. Milena is fine. She is in our room sleeping."

"What time is it?"

"Almost eleven," Ilya admitted.

"Ilya—I-I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to fall asleep. I was just so tired and I—"

Ilya soothed him. "Shh-shh— It's okay, Shane. I got her. She is okay. You are okay."

Shane started to break down crying. "No, it's not okay."

Ilya's heart broke hearing that. "I know moy lyubimyy, is okay to not be okay, yes?"

Tears started to fall and hit Ilya's chest as he held Shane.

"No. You don't understand. I can't do this."

"Shane—"

"I'm not sleeping, Ilya."

Ilya held him close. He knew this entire thing was hard for him, but he wasn't sleeping well, and Ilya figured he'd at least slept some.

"What do you mean?"

"I can't fall asleep at night. I—" Shane paused, then looked into his eyes. Begging for Ilya to understand without having to say it out loud. And he did.

"You are scared, yes?"

Shane nodded in agreement.

"Is scary, Shane. I know." Shane looked at him with so much fear and worry in his eyes. "But you have to sleep, sweetheart. For her. She needs you well rested."

Shane's head dropped. Ilya grabbed at his chin and tilted it back up to meet his gaze.

“Tell me what you are afraid of, kotik?”

Shane sucked in a breath before he started speaking.

“I don’t know everything, I guess.” Ilya nodded in understanding.

“Yes is all terrifying. Let’s start with your biggest fear.”

Shane’s breathing started to even out. “What if she stops breathing and I don’t catch it in time, and I wake up and it’s too late and she’s—” Shane’s lip wobbled as he spoke.

“Shh—Is okay. I got you.” Ilya held him closer. “That is scary moya lyoobov' but it won’t happen.”

Shane scoffed. “You don’t know that. It happens all the time.”

“Not to Milena, she is smart. She will not forget to breathe.”

“Ilya, that’s not—” Ilya grabbed his phone.

“What are you doing?” Shane questioned.

“Their. Done.”

“What did you just do?”

“I ordered one of those fancy baby things that track breathing and shit.”

Shane was taken aback. “Oh. I had forgotten about those.”

“Yes, we will put it on her at night so you can sleep. If anything happens, your phone will go crazy.”

Shane finally smiled. Exhaled a large breath he’d been holding in.

“Thanks, babe.”

"Of course." Just then, a faint cry could be heard. Milena was awake.

Shane jumped out of Ilya’s embrace. “I got her.”

Ilya argued. “No. I do. You will go eat a quick breakfast, then tuck yourself in for a nap. I don’t want to hear any arguments.” Shane nodded.

Milena’s cries got louder. “Okay. Good. Now go. I have her.”

Shane obeyed, and Ilya headed toward their room.

“Moy malyshka, ty prosnulsya.” Ilya picked her up. Bouncing her up and down. “Shhh...ne volnuysya, papa zdes'.”

Papa will always be here.

Six months later

It was a chaotic morning in the Hollander-Rozanov household.

Milena was in her high chair. Eating—well, mostly playing with her food. They had taken the baby-led weaning approach and given solids to Milena as early as four months.

It was going well. Of course, it was mostly soft foods since she had only just started cutting teeth, but they were still small and hardly there. But she let everyone know they were coming. With constant cries of pain in the middle of the night and random small low-grade fevers.

Shane listened to Ilya speak to their daughter in Russian almost every day. Ilya was determined she learn it. Shane understood and also benefited from this since he had been learning Russian for quite some time now. Right now, he caught a few words Ilya said to her.

Something about eating her food, or she would not be strong like papa, and would end up small and with a weak backhand like daddy.

Shane rolled his eyes. Then came and kissed Milena's head and Ilya's while he finished putting on his tie.

"Are you going to get ready soon?" Shane crossed his arms.

Ilya sighed. "Yes. Dad." He whined. "Is not like they can start without us."

"Ilya—" Shane started, then Milena threw her eggs at his face. Shane put his hand over his mouth, trying to not laugh. "Malyshka," Ilya spoke firmly.

Shane watched carefully to see what Ilya would do.

“Terrible aim. You missed the real target. Then Ilya grabbed the eggs and tossed them in Shane’s direction.

Shane dodged it just in time. “Rozanov!” Shane yelled in frustration just like old times.

Anya was already in the kitchen eating all the scraps that had been thrown by Milena, so she was just excited for more food.

Milena snickered. Ilya responded. “What?”

“Just go get ready, please. I will handle Milena’s outfit.”

Ilya stood up and pressed a kiss to Shane’s cheek. “Okay.” As he left the room, he shouted. “I picked out her clothes last night. They are on her dresser.”

Shane cleared Milena’s high chair, then cleaned her off before picking her up and out of the seat. “Good morning, Milena. You are so cute. Did you know that?” Shane kissed her cheek. Milena giggled and flashed her one small toothy grin.

Milena was the cutest baby in the whole world. At least according to him and Ilya.

Her hair was coming in nicely. She had dark brown hair, but instead of his signature straight hair it was wispy and slightly wavy. A few curls here and there. And her eyes were mostly Shane’s. Maybe a little lighter, but to be expected until she had more pigment from melanin. Then there was her face. Mostly took after Shane, but she had her papa’s lopsided grin for sure.

“Okay, let’s see what Papa picked out for you to wear today,” Shane said in the voice he only reserved for his daughter and Anya.

It was a Centaur's onesie with a pair of red polka dot leggings and, of course, a big bow that one of the WAGS made for them. Ilya had become obsessed with joining the WAGS for their craft days. Usually, they would meet up for wine and gossip while making various craft items. That's how Shane ended up with endless bows and lots of potholders.

After dressing Milena in head-to-toe Centaur's color, he met Ilya in the garage.

“Ah! Moya printsessa.” Ilya cooed and grabbed Milena. Blowing a raspberry on her stomach. “So pretty.”

Ilya buckled her in to her seat. Shane slipped into the driver's seat. Shane preferred to drive. He liked being in control, especially when Milena was in the car. Obviously, he trusted Ilya to drive her, but when he was in the car, he preferred to drive.

It was something he was working on with his therapist. The post-partum anxiety had been difficult to manage, but Ilya and his mom had encouraged him to start seeing someone and taking medication. It had been helping, but Shane really missed playing hockey. For some reason, that was also something that helped calm him. Yes, he was learning to cope without, but he was always certain he wanted to go back.

They arrived at the arena.

“You ready?” Ilya looked to Shane.

“Yes. Are you?”

Ilya smiled.

“Da.”

“Are you sure this is what you want?”

Ilya smiled then squeezed Shane’s hand before looking back at a napping Milena in the backseat. “Very much.”

“Okay, let’s do it then.”

They had met up with Farah and Harris in his office.

“Okay. Ilya, this is your statement. In both Russian and English.” Farah handed him a card. “And Shane, here is yours.”

Ilya watched Shane reach out and grab it.

“Okay, Shane, you will speak first.” Farah started, “And I have already prepped the media on approved questions.” Harris stated. “And will be there to field anything unwanted.”

Shane nodded. “Thank you both so much.”

They smiled and nodded.

“Then, once all questions for Shane have been answered. Ilya, you will give your statement, and the same goes for you.”

Yuna opened the door with a fussy Milena in her arms.

“Um, guys.” They both whipped their heads around. Ilya got there first.

“Malyshka. Papa is here.” He grabbed her from his mother-in-law and cuddled her. She immediately stopped crying.

“Looks like she just wanted her papa,” Yuna spoke softly.

“Yes. She is very smart girl.”

Ilya looked over to Farah, Shane, and Harris. All shaking their heads.

“No.” Shane started.

“But she needs me.”

“What if she starts screaming in the middle of the press conference?” Shane countered.

Ilya waved his hand. “Good, maybe she can scare off the bad ones.”

“Fine,” Shane said in his baby voice. Approaching his daughter, “Milena can stay. You are such a good girl and won’t scream at all, will you?” Shane gave her a big, sloppy cheek kiss. “Mom, will you be on standby just in case?”

“Of course.”

Harris looked down at his phone that had just pinged, “They are ready for us.”

Ilya looked to Shane and nodded. Then Shane grabbed his free hand, and they all walked toward the press room.

There was quite a large crowd when they entered the room. The lights almost blinded Ilya. He was used to the press, but it had been so long since the last time. Ilya blocked Milena's eyes from all the chaos. Lots of journalists and cameras were already on them.

Not surprisingly, Milena didn't seem bothered by it all and just smiled brightly. Ilya bounced her around as they sat down.

The room was buzzy with reporters and journalists. All speaking and talking over each other.

Farah stepped in. "Attention. We are going to hear a statement from Shane, then questions, and finally a statement from Ilya, also followed by questions. Understood?"

Ilya noticed a lot of nodding heads in the crowd. Milena continued to look around curiously at her surroundings. Ilya bumped her up and down on his knee.

Then Shane began to speak.

Ilya watched carefully as his husband talked about his return to hockey and that he would be joining the Cens for the remainder of their season.

A decision Shane had made, and Ilya supported. Ilya could see how much Shane missed it and wanted to go back, so after lots of discussions about logistics, they came to an agreement that worked out for them perfectly.

After Shane's statement, followed by a lot of questions mostly related and appropriate, but a few slipped in unannounced, Farah or Harris shut them down quick.

Then came Ilya's turn. He looked down at his card, then tossed it to the side. It was a boring statement. He would just wing it.

"So as you all know. I was injured last year." The crowd nodded in agreement. "I had surgery and recovered." Ilya loved keeping the media on their toes.

"But this has nothing to do with that. I am officially retiring."

The crowd gasped, followed by lots of chatter and questions.

"Okay. Okay. Shut up." Ilya looked over to Shane, who was shaking his head. Glanced over at Farah and Harris, who were giving him the same disappointed look. Then he looked at Milena, who smiled up at him. He knew he was making the right decision

"As you know. My husband gave birth to our daughter earlier this year. I am so proud of him. I love Milena more than anything. And being her father is my greatest joy."

"More than winning the cup?" A journalist shouted.

"Yes. Stupid question." Ilya retorted. "As I was saying. I will not play this season for the Cens or any other team in the NHL."

People seemed genuinely surprised.

"But do not worry. I will be the best WAG on the team." The crowd laughed.

“Okay. Questions.” Shane grabbed his hand and smiled at him and Milena.

Milena chirped when she caught her Daddy’s eye. Ilya handed her over to Shane.

She continued to babble into the microphone. Ilya beamed with pride. He loved the family they created.

Ottawa 2026 Game 6 Stanley Cup Finals

Ilya had always thought that being on the ice was the best way to be in an arena, but he was wrong. Sitting amongst the crowd with his in-laws and baby girl, watching the team, he helped build with his husband, win the Stanley Cup, without him was far superior.

The team had worked their asses off this season. Shane was welcomed back with open arms; however, Shane denied the captain's spot. They left it with Wyatt, and Shane was the alternate. Honestly, Shane still acted like the captain most of the time. He really couldn’t help it. He did the same thing before when Ilya was captain. Ilya had never minded, and neither did the alternate at the time—Bood.

It was the final minutes of game 6 in the series. The Cens had already won three games, and they were up three-zero in this final game against Colorado.

The Frostbite was quite the team this year, but the Cens were better. Which is why they were about to bring the cup back to Ottawa. Colorado exchanged their goalie in the last few minutes so it wouldn’t be a complete shutout, but in the end, Haas ended up scoring a goal on an empty net.

The crowd was electric.

Ilya very much enjoyed watching from this perspective. Milena especially loved it.

She was perched on Ilya's lap, wearing noise-cancelling protective headphones and dressed snugly in an Ottawa Centaurs body suit. Matching toque and mittens.

"Dada!" Milena mumbled. Milena was just over one, so her vocabulary wasn't that advanced; she really only knew a handful of words. "Go..." Milena paused. Looked at Ilya and pointed to the ice. "Dada."

"Molodets, malyshka moy!" Ilya praised. "Daddy's team is winning."

Ilya was happily bouncing his leg with Milena up and down. He was wearing a Cens jersey, of course, except it was his Hollander one, not his own. Ilya and family sat amongst the other families and loved ones of the players, as they all waited for the final buzzer to roar. Declaring the Cens as the winner.

It was the final few seconds.

The Centaurs won. Ilya watched as they crowded around each other. Celebrating the win. He'd loved that feeling, but he loved watching his husband win more. The shift from being on the ice to sitting in the stands wasn't all that difficult. He had more time with his daughter, and he got to cheer on his husband and team. Sure, the time away from Shane during the season was difficult, but they'd done it before, back when they lived in different countries. The other hard thing was watching from the crowd, seeing his husband take hits. It had never bothered him before. Yeah, he didn't like it when Shane had been seriously injured back in 2017, but it became harder after Ilya almost lost Shane after he gave birth to their daughter.

Seeing Shane in the hospital for months. Then weeks unconscious changed Ilya's perspective on a lot of things. Ilya was happy Shane got his career back, but also terrified that something would happen anytime he stepped on the ice. And not just for himself but for Milena. Ilya knew firsthand what it was like to lose a parent young, and he didn't want the same for Milena.

Regardless of his own anxieties. Shane played well. After his stint in the hospital. Shane had been determined to get back to the ice. He put in the work, and it showed.

And there he was, standing next to his team. Hoisting the cup over his head. For the fifth time in his career.

Ilya was up on his feet. Following the trail of the other loved ones down to the ice. Milena in tow.

Once he touched the ice. Shane had already passed the cup and was now skating towards them. Kissing Milena's cheek first, then sharing an intimate kiss with Ilya.

“Congratulations, moy lyubimyy.”

PDA still made Shane uncomfortable most days, but on a day like today, no one else mattered. After their shared kiss, Shane hugged his parents, then grabbed Mila and skated her over to his team.

Ilya watched mesmerized as Shane showed her off. Ilya looked around at his team on the ice and was grateful to see them celebrating as well. Troy was kissing and hugging Harris. Hazy had his wife, Lisa, wrapped around his side as he cheered. Bood was holding his daughter and conversing with his wife, Casey. Several other team members were either talking with others or celebrating with family of their own.

Even Luca seemed a little close to the Theo—the Cen's beaver mascot. Ilya noted it and would pester him about it later.

Right now, he is focused on the dazzling man in front of him. And his miniature him on his hip as he celebrates. She is beaming. Smiling brightly.

The team is mid-celebration when they are instructed to take a team picture.

Shane ushers Ilya over to grab Milena, but is quickly thwarted by Wyatt as he grabs her, “No, she’s an honorary Centaur and should be front and center for this picture.” Mumbled agreements from the other members came in. He sits Milena up straight in the cup. Milena is certainly too large to fit fully, so Shane latches on tightly to keep her balanced as they snap the picture.

Ilya beams with pride.

Several years later

The incessant banging on her door is what filled her ears as she reluctantly woke up. She groans and then moves to leave her comfy position on the bed.

Settling her feet on the ground. She slips on her robe and heads for her front door. Her hand twists the knob, and there, standing before her in the morning sun, is her dad in athletic wear.

“Do you know what time it is?” Her face says it all, surely.

“Not too early to start warming up.” He says with too much cheer in his voice.

Another groan escapes her lips, but then she shuts the door in her father's face and pads back to her bedroom to get dressed. By the time she finishes, her dad is in the kitchen making her one of his signature smoothies.

Her father hands her the breakfast drink, and she hesitantly chugs it down. It wasn't awful, but the protein powder always made it taste chalky, no matter how much fruit was added.

They ran side by side for about four miles before coming back to her place. The sun is now almost completely in the sky. Her breathing was a bit shallow. It's not like she was out of shape, but she had been taking a break since winning her last competition.

Her body gives out, and she falls onto her couch. "Milena, if you want to retire, you know I'd support you, right?"

Milena cracks a smile. Her dad may push her hard, but he has never pushed her past her own limits. Here's the thing: if there was one person in the entire world who understood the pressure she was under, it was her dad. Well, both of them, actually, but specifically her dad, even though papa was usually the more relaxed one.

The thing was, Milena didn't want to quit skating. She was in her prime. Milena had just come back from achieving greatness, and she didn't want to stop, not really. Sure, there were times when she wondered what it would be like to be a normal person, but the feeling of being out there on the ice heavily outweighed that fact.

"What's this retirement I hear..." Milena jumped, clutching her chest.

"Papa, you scared the fuck out of me. Where did you...how did you?" Her other dad entered the living room. Eating what appeared to be a pastry of some sort.

Dad shook his head at his husband. "Your dad dragged me along. I was in the car napping when you started your run. Then I went to the store while you two were exercising and stocked your fridge for you. You're welcome, by the way."

Milena jumped up from the couch and met her father's arm. Embraced him, then kissed his cheek. "Spasibo, papa."

He kissed her head, “Vso dlya moyego малышка.” Milena smiled. She loved her dad’s more than anything in the world. They’d always been so supportive of her choices. Except that time she tried to sneak out for a party at fourteen. She’d never seen her papa so angry before in his life when he flicked on the light switch and stood there in his robe, with a disapproving look. Thankfully, Dad calmed him down, and she only got two weeks of being grounded instead of until she was eighteen, like her father wanted.

“Retirement?” He quirked his brow.

Milena let out a small laugh, “Of course not. Do you even know me?”

Now it was her papa’s turn to grin. Her other father watched from the couch. She noticed he was smiling too. “One of us has to win Olympic gold for the family. And you two are dinosaurs.”

“I have five Stanley Cups...” Dad added, looking a bit offended.

“Is that what I said?” Milena retorted.

“Yeah. You only have a silver medal.” Papa mocked his husband.

“Yeah, two! And at least I have a medal.”

“Our goalie was injured,” Papa yelled.

“Semantics.”

“Alright enough. Claws away. Can you guys just let me have this one?”

“Of course, baby.” Her dad kissed her head. “You will get that gold medal, and in two years, I can see it now, you standing on the podium in New York City at the 2046 Winter Olympics with the gold hanging around your neck.”

Milena rolled her eyes. “Obviously, but I gotta beat Josie first.”

“She has weak ankles.”

“Ilya!”

“What... Is true. I have seen her skate. She has nothing on our perfect Lena.”

“Okay, but you don’t have to say it out loud.”

Papa waved his hand off. “Anyway. I thought you and Josie were...*close* now.” Her dad asked.

“Ew dad stop please. No, it’s not like that...”

“Shane, she does not want to talk about sex with you.”

“Oh my god.”

“What... Is normal. You are both consenting adults. I support.”

“First of all, I am not talking about my...” She squirmed. “You know. With either of you. And second, she’s been my rival since we were juniors.”

Her parents exchanged knowing looks.

“Stop. I can see you both, you know that right?”

“Lena, what your Papa is saying is that it's okay to love who you wanna love.”

Milena laughed, “Love. Who said anything about love? Besides, I came out to you guys when I was thirteen. I’m aware of how accepting my two gay dads are.”

“Not gay.” Her father added.

“Yes, Papa I know you are bi, and dad is *super* gay.”

“Hey!”

“Is true, sweetheart.” Her father caressed her dad’s cheek and then kissed it. “Whatever.”

“Look at us. A big happy gay family. We put the LGB in LGBT.”

Milena cringed, then parted her lips to speak.

“Actually. I did want to talk to you about something.” She looked down to the floor and messed with the hem of her jacket.

Both of her dads looked at her with concerned looks.

“Wait, no I am fine. This isn’t... I’m not hurt or sick or anything. Sorry, it’s just...”

Her dad grabbed her and guided her to the couch. “Lena, why don’t you sit down?”

“Solnyshko, you can tell us anything, you know that, yes?” Her papa kneeled down next to her.

She nodded. “Guys, I swear it’s not this serious. No one is dying. I just—there’s this thing I wanted to bring up.”

Both of her parents were silently watching and waiting for her to continue.

She squeezed her eyes shut, then parted her lips, “I’m not a lesbian.” It felt a bit like a relief.

There was silence. Which was unexpected. So she opened her eyes and saw both of her parents smiling back at her.

“That’s okay, sweetheart. We love you no matter what.” Her dad said, nicely holding her hand.

Her papa was grinning brightly, “Ha! You’re outnumbered now.” Her father pointed at her other dad. “Ilya, stop.”

“What, now we have two businesses in the family?” He gloated.

“Actually papa I am not bisexual.”

“Oh, you’re straight.” Her father didn’t seem dissapointment but his excitement for her being possibly bi like him was no longer there.

“God no.”

Both of her fathers laughed.

“Okay, but just so you know, if you were, that would be okay. We don’t care who you date or don’t date, we just want you to be happy however that looks for you.”

“Thanks dad.” Milena hugged her dad.

“Wait, so if you’re not a lesbian, or bi...or—” Papa cringed. “Straight. What—um...are—”

Dad slapped his husband’s arm. “Ilya, she doesn’t have to—”

“No, it’s okay. I can try to explain it dad. See, the thing is, yes, I did always know I liked girls, and well, I still do, but um... You remember my friend Charlotte, right?”

They both nodded. “Well, she now uses he/they pronouns, and I have always had a crush on them, and now that they’re Charlie, that hasn’t changed for me. I still find them—erm, um, attractive. So like I don’t know where that leaves me, but I can’t be a lesbian, right?”

God, this conversation felt so awkward. She’d been able to talk to her dads about anything. Even when she got her first period, she told them, and it was fine. Well, besides the fact that Papa tried to throw her a period party, and then her dad asked what size her vagina was so he could get the right tampon and pad size for her.

At least they always tried to understand things from her perspective. And obviously, her skating was always easy for them to understand; even when she switched from hockey to figure, they supported her 100%.

“I just think I like people for people and not about what gender they present. It doesn’t matter to me.”

Finally, after what felt like an hour but was probably only a few seconds, her dad opened his mouth. “Lena, honey, you don’t have to explain yourself to us. And you also don’t have to make a decision or label yourself..”

Then papa interrupted, “So what you like people, that just means you are a lover of all.”

“God, Ilya, what did we say about that word?”

“I did not mean it like that, Shane.”

“Guys.”

They paused bickering and looked back at her. “We’re talking about me now.”

“Sorry.” They said in unison.

“But I don’t know what to tell people.”

“You can tell them to fuck off.” Milena looked to her dad for him to scold Papa.

“Actually, I agree with Papa here.”

“Wow.”

“I am wise. Even your dad thinks so.”

“Okay, let’s not go that far, but yes, Lena, you don’t have to tell anyone anything. You don’t owe anyone an explanation. You are you, and everyone else can fuck off.”

“Okay, but what if I wanna date someone?”

“Then you can explain if you want, and someone who really cares about you, they will support you.”

Ultimately, she knew her dads were right, but this whole concept made her feel different. Like, why couldn’t she just put herself in a little box like everybody else?

“Kotyonok, is okay to not know the answer or how to feel but to me and your dad it does not matter, and we will support you however we can, yes?”

She nodded.

“Ya lyublyu vas, rebyata.”

“And we love you more.” They both kissed her cheek at the same time.

“Gross.”

They both chuckled.

“Okay, back to business, let’s focus on me winning gold in 2046.”

End Notes

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