what's in a name?

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what's in a name?

by dowhile

Summary

Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov have got it all. Well, almost.

They just don't have a name for their newborn daughter. Yet.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

On the coffee table spread before them were dozens of parenting books, all bought by Ilya's neurotic (and he meant that lovingly) husband. Ilya's finger stopped on a name.

"Rose," suggested Ilya slyly.

Shane turned and looked at him with narrowed eyes.

"You're such *an asshole," said Shane, batting his hand away and closing the book.*

"Is good name!"

Shane rolled his eyes. "Imagine that."

Shane turned to speak to his imaginary child, taking on a lighter, sing-songy voice that delighted Ilya. "Hey sweetie, so actually, you were named after Daddy's ex-girlfriend."

Ilya laughed. Shane turned back to his husband.

"By your own rules: Svetlana," countered Shane.

"Wonderful! Is another good name! Good, strong, Russian name."

"You are so fucking annoying," said Shane playfully, grabbing Ilya's shirt and pulling him closer.

The books were swiftly abandoned.

–

The name suggestions were endless. They had six more months before their baby girl would arrive, and they were no closer to an answer. Every woman's name, every flower, every word that sounded nice now became fair game.

"Daphne?" suggested Ilya, reading the newscaster's name from the TV.

Shane shook his head. "Too… Mystery Gang," he said.

Ilya looked over from his treadmill at Shane with an expression of pure confusion.

"What is 'Mystery Gang'? That is English nonsense, no?"

Shane laughed and refused to explain, soaking up Ilya's bewilderment.

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“Ah. I see. So Velma. Would be ‘too Mystery Gang’?”

“Exactly,” said Shane. “You’re learning!”

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“Emma?”

“No. Sophia?”

“Nah. Charlotte? Or Lily? Jane?”

It was Ilya’s turn to roll his eyes.

–

“Irina?” Shane suggested.

They were at the kitchen island, reading through stories of the latest draft, when the thought had popped into Shane’s head. It seemed such an obvious choice now that he’d thought of it.

Ilya glanced down at the ground with that faraway look. He shook his head. In his mind, Russian words swimming in his head with no English counterpart.

“We don’t have to—”

“No, it is just…” began Ilya. “The Irina Foundation. That was our first baby.”

Shane smiled softly. “Yeah, well, I think this baby might be a bit different.”

“My mother, she—she was her own person. I could not—” Ilya began, his voice unsteady.

“Have your daughter carry that legacy?” Shane finished.

Ilya looked up slowly, meeting Shane’s eyes with a sad smile.

“Yes,” he agreed. And then again, quieter, more distant: “Yes. I could not.”

–

“We’re five days out and we don’t have a name,” said Shane, looking up from his book. In bed next to him, Ilya seemed very interested in watching Shane read his book than reading the one on his own bedside table.

“Inspiration will strike,” Ilya said, seemingly unconcerned.

“She’ll need a name!”

“I have it. Unnamed Child. *Nice ring to it, no?”*

Shane buried his face in his book and sighed heavily.

“No. I finally have it.”

Shane knew not to take this too seriously, but maybe, he thought, just maybe—

“Ilya Jr.”

Shane threw his book at Ilya.

—

Despite the years of red tape, of the millions of documents they had signed and the hours of interviews they’d done, the first time Shane and Ilya had held their little girl it felt like an accident.

The new fathers were in their mid-thirties and still had the impression they shouldn’t be trusted with a newborn. And yet, still she was here, with black hair and chubby cheeks, and Shane felt so suddenly the feeling he would do anything for her he needed to sit down.

“Mariya,” said Ilya softly, his hands gripping Shane’s arms lightly, looking at his daughter from over his husband’s shoulder. “Mari. Nickname.”

That name…Shane remembered that name. Mari.

“That was my—”

“Grandmother’s name, yes?” said Ilya with a crooked smile. “I asked Yuna for advice. We were… getting desperate.”

Shane smiled, looking up for just a moment from his new child to look at Ilya. Just perfect, all around.

“*Mari*. Is Japanese. But also, *Mariya*—Russian. It is perfect.”

The baby stirred for a moment before relaxing, and Ilya felt his heart melt. This little girl was clearly learning very quickly she was safe in her Daddy’s arms.

Shane looked back at the child in his hands and had to agree: her name was Mariya. Mari.

“Yeah,” Shane said, softly. “It’s perfect.”

Chapter End Notes

Shane's grandma was never mentioned in anything, but don't let that spoil my fun! :)

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> hadn't strictly intended this to be a 2 chapter fic, but I was able to grab some stuff out of The Long Game I really wanted to include. thanks for reading!

Shane filled out the birth certificate.

First Name: Mariya

He looked over at Ilya.

“This poor girl is never going to be able to spell her own name,” he said.

Ilya’s smile quirked up.

“Well, you wouldn’t let her have just one last name,” said Ilya.

“No,” said Shane, correcting the record, “*You* said it couldn’t just be Rozanova.”

Ilya sighed, then shrugged. “I want my daughter to have my husband’s last name, too.” He put his hands up in mock offense. “Sue me.”

Shane shook his head and laughed.

“You’re going to have to check my spelling on this,” he said, scrawling out the word *Ilyinichna*.

That had been the only thing decided long ago.

-

“Can we agree on the middle name at least?” Shane said, throwing his head back in exhaustion. He’d scanned every baby book, every baby website, every book he’d ever owned for something, anything.

“You do know what I’m going to say, right?” Shane said, watching Ilya jerk himself awake from his side of the bed. It was nearly midnight, and even Shane’s anxiety wasn’t enough to keep him awake at this hour.

“No,” said Ilya seriously, looking slightly confused.

“Your patronymic," said Shane.

Ilya leaned his head back on the headboard and crossed his arms, closing his eyes as he grinned at the ceiling.

"Oh, right," he said. "I forgot you were Russian historian and linguist. PhD from University of Wikipedia."

"That's Dr. Hollander, to you."

Ilya raised his head and glanced at a blushing Shane through one opened eye.

"Well, Dr. *Hollander, as you know, we Russians… we are so…" said Ilya, trying to find the right word in English.*

"Annoying?" Shane finished for him. "Irritating? Dickish, maybe?"

Ilya brushed him off with a hand wave.

"Vain. Conceited," Ilya finally said.

Shane snorted. "On that, we can certainly agree."

"Here, child. Your second name—it will not be anything interesting. That will be after your father. Don't you ever forget it."

Shane watched Ilya's face turn, his expression darkening slightly. Shane felt his heart drop at the thought of reopening an old wound, and reached quickly for Ilya's hand. Ilya blinked, then looked at him.

"Well, I like it," said Shane. "I like it because it's your name."

Ilyinichna.

Ilya blinked. The thought of having his own kids was almost too much. The thought of them bearing his name, of Shane wanting that… how absurd it all was. A dream. He was petrified at the thought he'd wake up from it soon.

"Maybe next one can have yours," said Ilya.

Shane looked taken aback. "'Next one'?*"*

Ilya ignored this line of questioning.

"Ilya Jr Sheynovich Hollander-Rozanov," said Ilya, satisfied.

"So 'the next one' will be a boy, huh?" said Shane, picking up on the ending change.

"Well, like I said before, Ilya Jr is gender neutral," he said. "Perfect for any kid."

It was the stupid jokes like these that made Shane struggle to keep from laughing.

"Didn't you tell me once Hollander-Rozanov sounded worse?"

*Ilya sighed. "*Da*, but… Hollander-Rozanova sounds better. So trend must continue."*

This man, thought Shane, was exhausting. He loved him. But still.

Ilya had his head still upturned but glanced over at Shane with a growing smile. He liked being difficult. He liked… exasperating Shane, in more ways than one.

"And if they wanted to change their name later?"

"Not a problem. I do not care, in the end, what their name is," said Ilya nonchalantly. "Only thing my children need to do."

"What's that?"

"Learn to skate. Playing ice hockey—negotiable. Skating? It is a must. They will finally beat you at fastest skater competition. Only thing I want."

-

Shane stared at his handwriting on the form.

Mariya Ilyinichna Hollander-Rozanova

Shane watched his husband smile at their newborn and knew Ilya was in an entirely different world. Absolutely glowing.

He looked at the paper. Well, he sure hoped he spelled that right.

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