

You Come to Me Wild and Wired

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You Come to Me Wild and Wired

by [Skaboom](#)

Summary

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"I could have been half way to Ottawa by now," Shane said with a gentle smile as he took a step back, allowing Ilya to enter the stairwell.

"And yet here you are," Ilya said.

"And yet here I am," Shane replied softly. "Is that for me?" He nodded his head at the gift.

"Maybe." Ilya shrugged. "If you are good."

"Such an asshole."

"Mmm, maybe, but you are still here."

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On December 23rd after a heated game against Montreal, Ilya shows up at Shane's house with a Christmas gift that will change the trajectory of their relationship, possibly forever.

Notes

Christmas fluff is NOT usually my thing, but a friend asked me to write something fluffy that would not hurt her, so we have this! I hope you like it! There are going to be three chapters total, each one will be posted on the corresponding day! (At least in my time zone).

Title from The Best by Tina Turner!

Chapter 1: December 23rd

Boston's last game before Christmas was in Montreal, so when Ilya Rozanov showed up at the back entrance to Shane's apartment bundled up in a winter coat, scarf, and beanie with a wrapped package under his arm, Shane was only half surprised.

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"And yet here you are," Ilya said.

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"Such an asshole."

"Mmm, maybe, but you are still here."

"It's *my* apartment," Shane argued as they walked up the stairs.

"You let me in."

"Well, I couldn't very well leave you outside," Shane reasoned. "The neighbors might see."

"Always so worried about what the neighbors might think," Ilya said, shaking his head as he set down the wrapped gift.

"Yeah, well-" Shane turned to face Ilya, stopping short.

Ilya, still in his jacket and beanie, was smirking at Shane, holding a sprig of mistletoe above his head.

"Is freezing out there," Ilya said softly. "Warm me up?"

Shane couldn't deny how appealing Ilya looked, all bundled up, holding the kissing bough. There was something playful about it that Shane rarely allowed into his own life. Ilya could be so endearing, even after a loss, and Shane found that charming. When Montreal lost he was always in a mood, even if he got to see Ilya.

Shane sighed, shaking his head, but still moving closer to Ilya. He took the other man's face in his hands and kissed him, letting his own body press up against Ilya's winter coat. As they kissed, Ilya tucked the sprig of mistletoe behind Shane's ear and pulled off his jacket, tossing it aside as Shane's hands pulled off his beanie.

"Hang it up," Shane whispered into Ilya's mouth. "Don't just leave it on the floor."

“Hollander, you are serious? I am kissing you and all you think about is my jacket is not hung up?” Ilya couldn’t help but chuckle, gazing adoringly at Shane.

“It’ll bother me.”

“Okay.” Ilya kissed Shane’s nose and stepped aside. He removed his shoes and set them by the door, then, looking very pointedly at Shane, he tucked his hat into the pocket of his coat, and hung up his jacket and scarf. “There, you are happy now?”

“Mhmm.” Shane nodded.

“You are insufferable.”

“Maybe.” Shane shrugged. “But you’re still here.”

Having his own words so playfully thrown back at him earned a soft huff of laughter from Ilya, and he moved quickly to Shane, resting his hands on Shane’s thighs and lifting him. As they kissed, Shane wrapped his legs around Ilya’s waist, allowing himself to be carried to the bedroom.

Ilya dropped Shane on the mattress and Shane propped himself up on his elbows, watching as Ilya undressed, and to Shane’s surprise, folded his clothes.

“So you do not get bothered.” Ilya’s tone wasn’t teasing, though, and there was a sweetness to it that made Shane feel very seen.

Something in Shane’s chest felt weirdly at ease watching Ilya set his clothes aside, and he let out a surprise gasp followed by a laugh, as Ilya pounced, naked, on top of him. Ilya tugged at Shane’s hoodie and pulled off his sweats so that all Shane was wearing was the mistletoe behind his ear.

“What’s gotten into you?” Shane asked, watching in surprise as Ilya stood, this time folding *Shane’s* clothes and setting them aside.

“Mmm, Christmas spirit?” Ilya shrugged.

“Come here.” Shane spread his legs, making room for Ilya to slot himself between them.

Ilya leaned down, kissing Shane on the lips before reaching up, grabbing the mistletoe from behind his ear. He trailed the plant down Shane’s body, kissing everywhere it made contact with skin.

Eventually, he tossed the mistletoe aside, wrapping one arm around Shane’s thigh and reaching up to grip Shane’s chest with the other as he took Shane into his mouth.

Shane arched his back, hands fisting the bedsheets as though he had never felt Ilya’s mouth on him before. He didn’t understand how, after all this time, it was still so *good*.

“Jesus Christ, Rozanov,” Shane gasped.

Ilya popped his head up, smirking at Shane.

“Well, is almost his birthday, yes?”

“Yes.” Shane laughed, fully laughed, and grabbed Ilya, pulling him up to kiss the other man.

Before Ilya, sex had been stressful, a constant worry that he was doing things wrong, or that necessary parts wouldn't function. At first, with Ilya, it had still been stressful. Shane had still been learning what he wanted, what he liked, worrying that he would underperform, but Ilya had never given him anything but praise, and now?

Now Ilya was making him *laugh* in bed, and Shane was just...happy.

As Shane kissed Ilya, he reached down, stroking the other man gently, trying to get Ilya up to speed with where he was, not wanting to let go of the other man's lips.

It had been weeks since Shane had last seen Ilya, and it would be quite some time before he saw him again. He wanted to make the most of this time together.

When they finished, Ilya pulling out of Shane with a playful smack to his ass, Shane flopping against the mattress satisfied and spent, he finally spoke again.

“How long do we have?”

“Already you want to go again? Hollander, you are insatiable,” Ilya teased, kissing Shane on his cheek, his jaw, then finally his lips.

“Shut up, forget I asked.”

“No, is fine,” Ilya said, lying back on the bed and pulling Shane with him. “I have however long. The team has scattered for the holiday, I have no one at the hotel to keep tabs, I could even stay all night,” Ilya said casually, stroking Shane's hair as Shane rested his head on Ilya's chest. “I have nowhere to be.”

Shane paused, trying to think through how to react to that. Isn't that what he had wanted? For Ilya to stay?

“Okay,” Shane said, trying to mimic the casual tone Ilya had used...though he didn't feel casual about this at all.

Shane wanted to fall asleep in Ilya's arms. He wanted to wake *up* in Ilya's arms.

“Okay,” Ilya agreed with a nod. He tipped his head down, pressing a gentle kiss to the top of Shane's head. “Come on. We can shower and *then* you can open your present.”

“Oh yeah? I was good enough?” Shane slowly rolled off of Ilya, getting to his feet.

“It was close call,” Ilya teased. “But I will let you have it this time.”

Shane laughed, offering a hand to help Ilya up only to push him back down on the bed.

“Oh, now you have really done it.” Ilya was grinning as he launched himself from the bed. He grabbed a laughing Shane around his middle and threw him over his shoulder, carrying him to the bathroom like a prize - and wasn't he?

Once they were showered, they changed the sheets and Shane pulled his sweats back on, hooking Ilya up with a pair of his plaid sleep pants so that he wouldn't have to hang out in his jeans.

“Alright, come on. Present,” Ilya said, picking up the package he had brought and carrying it over to the sofa, handing it to Shane.

“Oh it's heavy,” Shane said in surprise.

“Do not get too excited,” Ilya said with a shrug. “Is small gift.”

Shane reached for the paper, carefully undoing the tape and removing it so the gift wrap could be used again.

“Oh my god, Hollander, we will be here until next year, just rip it!” Ilya groaned, though it was clear that any frustration in his tone was fabricated.

“Fuck you,” Shane said with a soft laugh, continuing his careful process. “Wait...” he pulled back the shiny paper to reveal a case of Canada Dry Cranberry.

“I figure, what do you get for man who has everything? Then I saw this in store, and-oof.”

Ilya fell backwards as Shane tackled him into the sofa, kissing him hard.

“Thank you,” Shane said, gazing down at Ilya, unable to keep the adoration out of his gaze. “I love it.”

“Relax, Hollander, is just ginger ale,” Ilya said, gently brushing his finger tips over Shane's bare arms.

But they both knew it wasn't *just* ginger ale. They both knew that it meant that Ilya really saw Shane, really understood him. He didn't need a fancy watch, or a designer shirt, he just wanted something that he liked, something that showed him that Ilya was thinking about him.

This gift, as silly as it may be, told Shane that Ilya cared about him and he couldn't deny how alive that made him feel.

“Come to Ottawa,” Shane blurted out.

“What?”

“Come with me to Ottawa tomorrow,” Shane breathed. “I'm driving over in the morning to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas with my parents and...I want you to come with me.”

“You want me to come with you,” Ilya repeated. “Home. To your parents house. For Christmas.”

“Yes,” Shane said softly.

“Your parents will find out about us.”

“They can keep a secret,” Shane said, trying to shrug it off, though his heart was pounding so hard he was all but certain Ilya could hear it.

“Your mother hates me,” Ilya pointed out.

“True,” Shane said with a slight smile. “But I’m sure she can put that aside for a couple of days. No one should be alone at Christmas.”

“I never said I would be alone,” Ilya retorted.

“So you have plans?” Shane challenged.

“I...no.” Ilya shook his head.

“So come to Ottawa. I want to wake up with you on Christmas morning.”

“Okay.” Ilya smiled, leaning up, kissing Shane softly.

“Okay?”

“Okay.”

Shane climbed off of Ilya, rolling up the wrapping paper and stowing it in a closet before placing the case of ginger ale in the refrigerator.

“You can have your present on Christmas,” Shane teased.

“Mmm, you got me a present?” Ilya waggled his eyebrows.

“Yes.” Shane flushed. “And you can have it on *Christmas*,” Shane said sternly.

“Is it a sexy present?”

“Get your mind out of the gutter, Rozanov,” Shane teased.

“That is not ‘no,’” Ilya pushed.

“No, it’s not a sexy present, but maybe if you’re good,” Shane teased. “There will be a sexy side present.”

“I can be so good,” Ilya teased, nipping playfully at Shane’s shoulder.

“Oh yeah?” Shane turned in Ilya’s arms, the other man boxing him up against the counter.

“Mhmmm.” Ilya nodded. “I will say ‘Thank you for having me, Mr. Hollander.’” Ilya kissed Shane’s left cheek. “‘House is lovely, Mrs. Hollander.’” He kissed Shane’s right cheek.

““Your son is beautiful...” he lifted Shane onto the counter, moving between his legs to kiss him.

Shane returned the kiss, long and slow, running his hands through Ilya’s curls.

Without having to rush against a clock, they stayed there in Shane’s kitchen, exchanging slow, languid kisses until Shane yawned into Ilya’s mouth.

“Okay, bed time for you,” Ilya said with a laugh, lifting Shane off the counter and carrying him to the bedroom.

Shane didn’t protest, but he did yawn again as Ilya laid him down on the fresh sheets, crawling in after him and turning out the light.

Shane kissed Ilya, smiling against his lips for a moment before Ilya turned him so that Shane’s back was pressed flush against Ilya’s warm, muscled chest.

“Ilya...” Shane whined.

“Nope,” Ilya teased, pulling Shane close to him. “Is bedtime.”

“Mmm.” Shane stifled a yawn, knowing that Ilya was right. It had been a long day and he *was* tired. Besides, this wasn’t the same as it had been in the past. If he fell asleep now, he wouldn’t be wasting precious time with Ilya. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Hollander,” Ilya replied, pressing a gentle kiss to Shane’s shoulder. He snuggled in, resting his chin on Shane, and, with strong arms wrapped around his beautiful man, fell asleep.

Chapter 2: December 24th

It was still very much dark outside when Shane's alarm went off, but he reached over, turned it off, and moved to get out of bed.

"Nooo," Ilya whined, arms wrapped around Shane's midsection, pulling him back.

"We have to get up," Shane said with a soft chuckle. "We have to drive to Ottawa, and before that, you have to go to your hotel and get your things."

"Too many words for-" Ilya paused. "What time *is* it?"

"6 AM."

"Good *god* Hollander." Ilya yanked harder, pulling Shane back against him. "Is day off!"

"That's why it's not 5 AM," Shane explained softly, though he made no real move to fight Ilya's grip on him.

"You are psychopath," Ilya declared.

"I like to get the most out of my time." Shane leaned in, punctuating his statement with a kiss.

Ilya closed his eyes, returning the kiss, his grip on Shane easing as he ran his hands down the other man's side.

"Get up!" Shane laughed as he wriggled out of Ilya's grip and off of the bed. "You still have to go get your stuff, it's a two hour drive, and I told my parents I'd be there by 9."

"And then will, I assume, bar you entrance if you are late?" Ilya asked sarcastically, sitting up and rubbing bleary eyes.

"Yes," Shane teased. He tossed Ilya a soft Reebok hoodie. "You can sleep in the car."

It took the better part of an hour for Shane to get ready and pull everything together, during which time Ilya went back to his hotel and brought his things back to Shane's.

They pulled out of Shane's garage at 6:52.

Ilya was asleep before they reached the end of the block.

Shane was grateful for the alone time during the drive. It allowed him space to think about what he was going to tell his parents, but every time he started to feel nervous about it, he glanced over at Ilya, out cold with his head resting on Shane's bunched-up hoodie, and it all felt very, very worth it.

When they were about ten minutes out, Shane reached out, shaking Ilya awake.

“Hey, we’re gonna be there soon,” Shane said softly.

“Right.” Ilya straightened, pulling the sun visor down and using the mirror to fix his curls. He wiped the slight bit of post-nap drool from his mouth, and turned to look at Shane. “What if they hate me?”

“Oh, don’t worry,” Shane said. “They do.”

“Shut up, Hollander.”

“They’re gonna love you,” Shane said. “Just...show them *you* and it’ll be just fine.”

“Okay.” Ilya gulped and Shane reached over, squeezing Ilya’s thigh.

Shane wasn’t sure that he had ever seen Ilya nervous before, but just this once, it didn’t seem like something to poke at.

Shane parked, and they gathered their travel bags and the large bag of perfectly wrapped gifts Shane had brought, and headed to the front door.

“Shane, merry-” Yuna stopped short as Shane and Ilya entered the house. “Ilya Rozanov, this is a surprise.”

David came to a halt right beside Yuna, looking equally surprised, though he said nothing.

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Hollander,” Ilya said nervously, shrugging off his jacket.

Shane bit his lip, setting down the large bag of gifts and slipping his hand into Ilya’s, giving it a gentle squeeze before looking up at his parents.

“*Oh.*” Yuna’s gaze softened. “David, take his coat!” She swatted at her husband.

“Right, sorry. Welcome, Mr. Rozanov,” David said, reaching out his hand for Ilya’s jacket.

“Thank you for having me,” Ilya said, gripping Shane’s hand, perhaps a little too tight. “Your home is lovely.”

“We’re happy to have you,” David said, clapping Ilya on the shoulder as he took his coat. “Will I be needing to make up the guest bed?” He looked at their joined hands, smiling knowingly.

“Uh, no,” Shane said softly. “I think we’ll be good.”

“Okay, why don’t you two go get settled and then Shane, I need you to come into town with me for a few last minute things,” Yuna said matter-of-factly.

“Of course.” Shane nodded.

“Ilya, you any good in the kitchen?” David asked.

“Enough,” Ilya shrugged.

“Great. You can help me prep for dinner tomorrow while they’re gone.”

“Yes, sir.” Ilya nodded.

“Call me David, please.”

“Mr. Hollander. David. Sir.” Ilya’s cheeks flushed red, and Shane gave his hand a gentle squeeze.

It was adorable seeing Ilya all shaken up like this.

“Come on. Let’s get settled.”

Shane’s room was immaculate. The double bed was perfectly made, complete with hospital corners on the sheets. The walls were covered with shelves, most of which held trophies and medals from Shane’s many accomplishments, but some books, and even the occasional knickknack here and there.

The whole thing was *very* Shane Hollander, and Ilya loved it.

Shane set down his travel bag and put his arms around Ilya, pulling him close, kissing him softly. Ilya hugged Shane, leaning against him.

“I don’t want you to go,” Ilya whispered. “Or you could take me with you! I am afraid your father will murder me.”

“What is it with you and thinking the Hollanders want you dead?”

“Well,” Ilya shrugged. “I antagonize you every chance I get.”

“Fair point,” Shane admitted with a soft laugh. “But he’s not going to murder you. He’ll ask you some questions, probably, but mostly, he’ll probably just make you decorate cookies.”

“I do not know how to decorate cookies.”

“You’ll be fine.” Shane kissed Ilya’s forehead, then his nose, then his lips. “I doubt we’ll be gone long, mom always gets a little frantic about Christmas, she wants it to be perfect. She probably just forgot a few things and is taking advantage of that to ask *me* questions about *you*. Of the two of us, you definitely got saddled with the less frightening parent.”

“True,” Ilya said with a nod. Everyone who paid any attention knew that Yuna was the Hollander who would *actually* be the one most likely to murder him...or anyone else. “They seemed...so okay with this,” Ilya gestured between the two of them. “Like right away.”

“Yeah,” Shane bit his lip. “I don’t...I’m not out to them, but I’m guessing based on that reaction, they aren’t...all that surprised. Surprised that it’s you, maybe, but...” Shane trailed off, shrugging.

“Oh?” Ilya tilted his head to the side. “That *what* is me?”

“Shut up, you know what.”

“I want you to say it,” Ilya said, shoving his hands in the back pockets of Shane’s jeans, yanking the other man closer to him. “Come on, say it, before you leave me with your terrifying father.”

“Nice try,” Shane said. “He’s not terrifying.”

“Then say it because I want to hear it and you like making me happy.”

Well, that was different.

“Okay.” Shane flushed. “That it’s...you I brought home. That you’re my...I don’t know.” It was a hookup, or it had been until Ilya had agreed to come to Ottawa with him for Christmas, and now? Now, honestly, Shane didn’t know what it was.

“Your sexy Russian stallion,” Ilya filled in for him.

“Yes, exactly,” Shane said with a soft chuckle, glad for the out. “They’re probably *very* surprised that you’re my sexy Russian stallion. Now go help my father in the kitchen, I’ll be back soon. He won’t murder you.”

“So.” Yuna looked straight ahead at the road as she drove, but she didn’t need to be looking at her son for Shane to know that she was speaking directly to him. “Ilya Rozanov?”

“I...yeah, kinda, I guess,” Shane rubbed the back of his neck.

“Kinda, you guess?” Yuna asked. “You brought him home for Christmas.”

“He was going to be alone,” Shane admitted. “And I...I don’t know. I like him. I don’t really know what we are yet and I’m hoping you and dad can give us the space to figure it out, but I really want him here for this. I don’t like the idea of him being all by himself, and...I *do* like the idea of him being here. With us. With me.”

“Does he make you happy?” Yuna asked.

“Yeah,” Shane nodded.

“Well, he certainly doesn’t get in the way of your hockey, you never play harder than when you play against Boston,” she said with a shrug. “So if you’re happy and he’s happy, then I have no problem setting a place for one more at the table.” She paused. “Well, I have no problem telling *you* to set another place at the table.”

“Thank you,” Shane said with a soft smile. “I didn’t know how you would react, but I

knew...I knew you would be kind.”

“I’ll only take a shot if he takes one first,” she said with a smile. “And even then, only about hockey.”

“I don’t think he will. He’s so nervous, I’ve never seen him like that.”

“Yeah, well, he clearly likes you,” Yuna said. “And you are very close with your parents, so what your father and I think of him probably matters a great deal to him.”

Shane sat with that as his mother drove, letting it really sink in. Ilya was nervous, not because he thought Yuna and David would be cruel to him, but because he really wanted them to not just tolerate him, but like him.

“For what it’s worth,” Shane said finally. “It matters a lot to me that you like him, too.”

“I won’t lie, honey, you’ve somehow found the most complicated person possible to do this with, but...I don’t think I’ve seen a smile like that on your face maybe ever, and if Ilya Rozanov is the person that brings it about, well, then we will figure out how to make this work.”

“Thanks, mom.” Shane knew that having his mother on his side would make everything easier.

“Of course. You’re my baby. I want you to be happy.” She parked the car in the shopping center lot. “Now come on, we have some shopping to do.”

“What are we doing here?” Shane asked. He had been expecting the grocery store.

“We have a guest for Christmas and no gifts for him? Unacceptable. Come on. You’re going to help me pick out a couple of things for him.” She paused. “And pay for them. You’re the hockey star.”

Shane didn’t have to say anything, he just launched himself at his mother, hugging her tight.

“So, you and my son, huh?” David asked once he had put Ilya to work stirring a sauce on the stove that would, as David told it, be ruined if it wasn’t constantly tended to.

“Yes, si-David.” Ilya nodded.

“How long’s that been going on?”

“Is hard to say,” Ilya admitted. “Awhile.” He paused. “Long enough that I know is real.”

“Well damn,” David said. “I can’t lie, I never expected him to bring *you* home. A guy, sure, maybe, but you? Never saw that one coming.”

"That makes two of us, sir," Ilya said with a soft chuckle. "But...I want to be here, I really do. I want to spend this holiday with him," he paused. "With all of you."

"Well hey, I guess that's what really matters, right? So long as you're where you wanna be?"

"Yes," Ilya said slowly. "It was...this or nothing, so." He paused, freezing. "No, I did not mean it like that, I mean...I was going to be alone, and Shane inviting me saved me from that."

"Hey, relax," David said with a gentle smile. "I don't bite. It's my wife you have to worry about there."

"Oh, okay." Ilya gulped. "I really am glad to be here."

"Well, we're glad to have you," he said.

David's phone buzzed and he wiped his hands before checking his text. He scoffed, turning back to Ilya.

"Yuna," he said, gesturing to his phone. "I'm supposed to ask what your intentions are with our son."

"My...intentions?" Ilya asked. He knew the word, but in this context, not so much.

"Yeah, like, uh..." David rubbed the back of his neck. "Like what do you want with him, but less...harsh?"

"Oh." Ilya nodded. "I want..." he paused, not sure how to answer this question. He wanted everything that Shane would give him, but they hadn't had that conversation yet. He didn't know if Shane wanted the same thing, he didn't know how he was supposed to handle this.

Ilya was crazy about Shane, but telling his father that before he had the chance to tell it to Shane seemed wrong.

"I want to be with him," Ilya said carefully. "I want to be good to him and I want him to be good to me, and..." he shrugged. "I want us to both be happy."

It was a careful answer, but it was the right one. Still, the question got him thinking. This had all been such a whirlwind, agreeing to come here, to meet Shane's parents in this capacity, and he wasn't quite sure how to navigate it.

He really, *really* wished that Shane would come back.

When Shane and Yuna returned, Shane helped his mother bring in the bags before making a

beeline to the kitchen.

"Oh good," he said, resting a hand over his heart melodramatically. "You're still alive."

"Yes, well," Ilya said, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, leaving behind a streak of flour. "Your father has kept me very busy."

"You didn't tell me he was a whiz in the kitchen!" David said with a grin.

"I...didn't know," Shane admitted, head tilted to the side. "Sorry to do this, but I need to borrow your sous chef."

David grumbled, but didn't stop Shane from taking Ilya's hand and practically pulling him to his bedroom. He shut the door and smiled up at him.

"Whiz in the kitchen, huh?"

"I can cook." Ilya shrugged. "You know this, I have cooked for you."

"You made me *one* tuna melt, one time," Shane pointed out.

"And it was best tuna melt you ever had, no?"

Well, Shane couldn't argue with that.

"Also, you ran away before I had chance to make you breakfast, so...really, you not knowing this is on you."

"Fuck you," Shane said fondly.

"With your parents home? You are sure?"

Shane reached out, swatting at Ilya before leaning in, kissing him softly.

"You have flour in your hair," Shane said as he pulled back.

"Your father was teaching me how to make fresh pasta."

"Oh, yeah, he's really good at that," Shane admitted. "About the only time I'll eat pasta."

"Well, you have to eat this pasta, because I made it," Ilya said.

"I will." Shane kissed him again.

"But also please do not leave me alone with either of your parents for so long again."

"Oh no," Shane winced. "What did he say to you?"

"He asked me what my intentions were."

"I will kill him," Shane said. "He's a dead man."

"No, it was..." Ilya shrugged. "Beautiful. To see how much he loves you, how much he just...wants you to be happy. He just wants to make sure that making you happy is important for me." Ilya paused. "It is, Shane. Making you happy is important for me."

"Oh." Shane melted a little at Ilya's words, but also at the clear pain in his face.

Ilya didn't have that. He didn't have the sort of family that just wanted him to be happy, the sort of family that would want to know someone's intentions with him unless it was a direct threat to their financial benefit, and he had no parents left at all, regardless.

"Making you happy is a priority for me, too," Shane admitted. "It's...part of why I wanted you here. I wanted you to be happy at Christmas, and maybe kinda selfishly, I wanted you to be happy because you were with me."

"I am." Ilya leaned down, kissing Shane. "I am happy to be here with you."

"Even with my parents being weird to you?"

"*Epecially* with your parents being weird to me," Ilya teased.

"So," Shane looked at Ilya, waggling his eyebrows. "What *are* your intentions with me?"

Ilya grinned and tackled Shane onto the bed, pinning him down by his wrists, and waggling his eyebrows at him.

"Terrible, filthy, evil intentions," he teased. "That, alas, will have to wait, because *those* intentions, I think your parents do not need to know about."

"No, probably not," Shane agreed. "They think I'm a good boy."

"Ahhh, yes, them and the rest of world. Shane Hollander, golden boy." He leaned in, whispering in his ear. "If only world knew how much more beautiful you are when you're begging for me."

"Fuck." Shane gasped. "I will kill you."

"No." Ilya smiled, shaking his head. "You will kiss me."

"That'll have to do," Shane agreed, leaning up and doing just that, wrestling one wrist free to tangle his fingers in Ilya's curls.

Maybe they couldn't do the horrible, filthy things Ilya had in his mind, but that didn't mean they couldn't make out, long and slow, something they had never really had the *time* to do before.

By the time they pulled apart, Shane's lips were swollen and Ilya felt dizzy. They had shared only a few kisses in their history that had not been either a precursor, an aftermath, or a direct occurrence of sex, but this? This was different. This was intimate in a way that Ilya wasn't sure he had ever had before and that Shane had had all too often when trying to put *off* having sex with women he knew that he couldn't perform properly for.

"Wow," Ilya breathed softly, gazing down at Shane in awe. "If I had known you would kiss me like this, I would have crashed Hollander Family Christmas years ago."

Shane, however, just smiled and kissed him again softly before wriggling out from underneath him.

"Come on," he said. "We usually watch movies on Christmas Eve."

Ilya, honestly still feeling a little dazed and dizzy, followed Shane to the TV room. David gave everyone warm mugs of hot chocolate and they all settled in.

Ilya, not sure what to do, tucked himself into one of the corners of the couch, not wanting to take up more space than necessary in this family that had their balances, their traditions. Shane surprised him, however, by cuddling up into him, the both of them squished onto the same cushion and a half of the couch as Shane pulled a blanket over them.

Without thinking, Ilya dropped a gentle kiss to the top of Shane's head as he put an arm around him. The happy little sigh that it elicited from Shane made a lot of scary things suddenly seem very worth it.

David and Yuna said nothing, but as David turned on the first movie, they exchanged a knowing glance.

Their son was either in love, or well on his way, and seeing him cuddled up, so comfortable with someone else, was causing a lot of things to slot into place for them. They had known Shane his entire life, of course, but he made more sense to them now. Seeing him with Ilya somehow explained so much that they had simply been missing.

The sun went down while the movies played, and at some point, still tired from a late night/early morning combo, Shane and Ilya both fell asleep, tucked safely under the soft blanket, warm from the hot chocolate, lulled by the sounds of the cheerful Christmas movies.

David and Yuna let them sleep until dinner time.

"Hey," Yuna gently shook her son. "It's time to eat, then we'll do Christmas Eve gifts, and then you two can go to bed, I'm sure you've had a long day."

"Mmm." Shane nodded, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. "We'll be right in, okay?"

"Okay." Yuna nodded, taking her leave, going to help her husband lay the table.

"Hey," Shane whispered into Ilya's ear, kissing him softly on the cheek. "It's dinner time."

"Why are you always waking me up?" Ilya complained, tightening his grip on Shane. "Am comfortable. I want to stay here with you."

"We have to go eat," Shane said with a huff of laughter, though...he got it. He liked this, he wanted to stay in Ilya's arms. "If we keep napping, we won't be able to sleep tonight."

"Good. I will stay awake and finally catch Santa in the act," Ilya teased.

"Menace," Shane teased, pushing himself off of Ilya. "Come on. I bet you're hungry."

"Always hungry," Ilya admitted, allowing Shane to take his hand and pull him up off the couch. "That was nice," he admitted as they walked, albeit slowly, towards the dining room. "Napping with you on the couch."

"Yeah." Shane nudged Ilya. "It was."

Shane barely spoke during dinner. David and Yuna took turns asking Ilya questions about himself, and Ilya did his best to answer thoughtfully and carefully while Shane observed.

Honestly, he loved this. He could see his parents investing in Ilya, getting to know him because he was important to Shane, and Shane was important to them. This had always been his safe space, his family had always been his bright spot, a place he could go to feel comfortable when everything else felt like too much. Ilya had become a safe space for Shane in a different way. He had allowed Shane to explore himself, find depths that he had never been able to unlock before. Shane had worried about bringing Ilya here, worried that crashing those two safe spaces together might cause his life to implode, but the more time he spent here with Ilya, the more it felt like Ilya just...belonged.

"Shane, sweetheart," Yuna looked over at her son as they ate dessert. "Are you alright? You've barely said a word."

"Yeah." Shane nodded, reaching one hand down and finding Ilya's. "I'm just...listening. I'm happy."

"Me, too," Ilya said quickly, wanting Shane to know how much this meant to him.

Ilya's family didn't ask questions like this. They didn't want to know how he was doing or what he enjoyed doing outside of hockey. They didn't ask if he liked Boston or what kind of music he liked best, they just wanted to bleed him dry, and for a long while now, it felt like they had been getting close.

The Hollanders, though? They were filling him back up, and that warmth, that love, it almost made him ill, seeing what Shane had, what Ilya *hadn't*, but he pushed that back.

Maybe, if things went well, he could have, this too.

He wanted to.

He wanted Shane Hollander, and everything that came with him.

"I will do dishes." Ilya hopped up, clearing the last of the plates and making a beeline for the kitchen that he had already spent several hours in today.

"I'll help." Shane quickly followed him.

"Thank you boys!" Yuna called.

"Hey," Shane stopped Ilya the second he caught up to him in the kitchen, kissing him hard.

"What was that for?" Ilya asked as they pulled away.

"I don't..." Shane shrugged. "I don't know. I just really liked that."

"Liked what? The dinner? I did not make most of it."

"No. Well yes, but...you and my parents. They love you." Shane was almost amazed. "24 hours ago, they were sure they hated you, and now? Now they love you."

"Yes, well, they are lovely people," Ilya said, trying to fight the heat rising in his cheeks. "You want to know a secret?" Ilya asked.

"Mmm." Shane nodded.

"I think maybe I love them, too."

Shane didn't even try to hide his wide grin. He had asked Ilya here on a whim, a surge of feelings driven by a case of holiday flavored ginger ale, and now?

Now things were starting to feel possible that never had before.

"You wash, I'll dry," Shane said, grabbing a dish towel.

"Sir, yes sir," Ilya said with a playful salute.

It felt so natural, the two of them standing side by side cleaning the dishes, getting distracted only briefly when Ilya splashed Shane with warm, soapy water, leading to a brief makeout session.

"Okay, all done," Shane said, setting the last dish, sparkling and dry, in the cabinet.

"Now what?" Ilya asked. "We go to bed?"

"Not quite. Now, Christmas Eve gifts."

"Right. Okay." Ilya shrugged, following Shane to the family room where David and Yuna were relaxing by the Christmas tree with glasses of wine.

"Alright, as Hollander family tradition dictates, everyone gets to open one gift on Christmas eve," David explained.

"And it's always pajamas," Shane whispered to Ilya. "Act surprised."

Ilya was about to ask why *he* would have to act surprised when a wrapped package was tossed into his lap, nearly identical to the one David dropped on Shane's.

"This...is for me?" Ilya asked, his eyes wide.

"Yup." Shane grinned, gazing down at the gift Yuna had wrapped once they had returned from shopping.

"Everyone gets something," Yuna said. "Go on, open it."

"You...want me to go first?" Ilya asked.

"You're the guest," David nodded.

"Okay." Ilya moved to open the gift, then remembered the way that Shane had unwrapped the ginger ale and he slowed down, being more careful with the paper, more mindful, in case Yuna wanted to save it.

"Oh no," she groaned. "He's like Shane! You can just tear it."

"Yes!" Ilya laughed. "So slow! It took him four hours to open one gift last night!" Ilya beamed, tearing the paper back to reveal a pair of soft, flannel, red and green checked sleep pants with a shirt reading *I Might As Well Sleep Under the Tree, We All Know I'm a Gift*.

"Do you like it?" Shane asked hopefully. "I helped pick it out."

"Yes, I love it," Ilya said, trying to keep some of the emotion out of his voice, because this was silly, really, it was just a cheap novelty pajama set, and yet he couldn't remember the last time he had received a gift that he had liked *this* much. "Thank you very much."

Shane watched the way Ilya's jaw tensed, and he pressed his leg against his on the couch.

"Okay, you next, Shane," David said.

"Oh no, these are terrible!" Shane laughed as he opened a matching set of flannel pajama pants and button up pajama top covered in a pattern of candy canes and reindeer.

"That's the idea," David teased.

"You will look so handsome tonight." Ilya nudged him. "So cute, in your matching pajamas."

"*Stop.*" Shane kicked him lightly, but that did very little to disguise how giddy he felt.

He wanted to go to bed in these stupid Christmas pajamas with Ilya, he wanted Ilya to make fun of how atrocious they were and then kiss him anyways. He wanted...all of this.

Shane's parents opened their pajamas, more sensible and less novelty, as usual, and as Ilya stifled a yawn, everyone said goodnight.

"I cannot believe you got me these," Ilya admitted, changing into his new pajamas in Shane's bedroom. "Is this what you were doing when you were out? Buying me pajamas?"

"We had to get other stuff, too," Shane said with a shrug, buttoning the flannel top of his own new pajamas.

"Oh my god, Hollander," Ilya snorted with laughter. "You look ridiculous."

"Shut up," Shane flushed.

"No, I love it," Ilya said quickly. "You look so cute. Come here." He pulled Shane close, kissing him softly. "You are not silly so often," he said. "I like this side of you."

"Yeah," Shane gulped. "I...I like this side of me, too."

Ilya just watched Shane for a moment, seeing a young man who had always been so guarded, so tense, even when he was buck naked in Ilya's bed, be completely open. Shane looked happy and relaxed, something that Ilya had never seen before, and god, he wanted more.

"We should get some rest, we have a big day tomorrow," Shane added.

"Ah, yes." Ilya crawled into bed, pulling Shane against him. "Big day of making your family fall in love with me so they will invite me back next year, so I can get more silly pajamas."

"Exactly," Shane said, closing his eyes as he cuddled into Ilya. A smile curled his lips as Ilya's arm went around him, his hand sliding between the two of the buttons on Shane's top, resting against his warm skin.

Did Ilya know how right he had it? Did he know that that was *exactly* what Shane wanted?

For Ilya to come back here next year, to hold him, like this, for as many nights as they could get away with. He wanted to see more of Ilya with his parents, joking with his father, conspiring with his mother, he didn't care if they ganged up on him.

He just wanted Ilya here, wanted Ilya's arms around him as they closed their eyes, and he didn't want to put a time limit on any of this.

For once in his adult life, Shane Hollander didn't set an alarm.

Chapter 3: December 25th

Chapter Notes

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

Even without the alarm, Shane woke first. Behind the window curtain, the world was still dark and the house was quiet, leading him to believe that he was the only one awake.

This wasn't uncommon. Even when he had been younger and still living at home, he had been an early riser, often the first awake, followed shortly by his mother.

Usually, Shane got right out of bed and began his routine, but while they had shifted during the night, Ilya's arm was still slung over him and Shane had no desire at all to leave this bed yet.

He turned his head, gazing at Ilya. His t-shirt had twisted in the night, revealing a strip of skin between the waistband of his pajama pants and the hem of his t-shirt that Shane wanted to lick. Instead, he settled back into Ilya's chest, pressing a soft kiss to the arm resting around his own torso.

Ilya stirred, but did not wake, and Shane smiled, resting his head back on the pillow, allowing himself to really feel this moment. He had never woken up in someone's arms like this before. Yesterday, in fact, had been the first time ever, and he had pulled himself out of bed practically the moment he woke up. Sure, he'd held women in his arms, but this was different. He loved the feeling of Ilya curled around him and he was in no rush to move.

Hell, maybe he would just stay here forever.

Shane didn't wake Ilya. Instead, he rested, snuggled up against him, watching as the sun began to rise, indicated by pale light coming in through the window. He heard his parents start to move around the house, probably wondering why he wasn't up yet, but if they were curious, they didn't ask.

Usually when Shane stayed in bed late, he grew restless, like he was wasting his time, but right now he was completely relaxed. He could feel the soft rise and fall of Ilya's chest against his back, the warmth of the other man's breath against his neck, and it calmed him so completely that, when Ilya finally woke, pulling back slightly, *Shane* was the one to whine.

"What time is it?" Ilya asked, yawning as he stretched himself into a sitting position.

"Just after nine."

"Whoa, so late for you," Ilya teased. "Why did you not wake me up?"

"No need," Shane said, sitting up, resting his back against the headboard and looking over at Ilya. "Seemed like you needed the sleep."

"How long have you been awake?"

"I don't know."

"Liar," Ilya teased, reaching out and squeezing Shane's chest over his pajama top.

"Fine, fine." Shane smiled. "Maybe since 6:30?"

"Wow." Ilya looked at him. "You must have been going crazy."

"Not at all." Shane leaned in, kissing Ilya softly, not at all caring about morning breath. "But we should get up, Christmas morning and all."

"Right, right. Just -" Ilya reached out, pulling Shane back in for one more kiss. "Okay. Now we can get up."

Feet were shoved into slippers, Ilya's borrowed from Shane, and they padded out to the living room, unsurprised to find Shane's parents sitting by the tree holding steaming mugs.

"There's coffee in the kitchen," Yuna said, jerking her head back there. "Get what you need, and we can get started?"

"Thanks, mom." Shane walked over, kissing her on the cheek before taking Ilya's hand, leading him to the kitchen.

"You know what's crazy?" Shane asked as he grabbed two mugs out of the cabinet. "I think I've kissed every single mole on your body...but I have no idea how you take your coffee."

"With so much milk and sugar you will barely know it was ever coffee," Ilya admitted.

"Of course." Shane laughed, filling both mugs - his own almost to the top, Ilya's 2/3 of the way. He added just a splash of milk to his, but filled Ilya's the rest of the way with milk before handing him the sugar bowl. "Go to town."

"So generous." Ilya leaned in, sneaking a quick kiss to the other man's cheek.

"God, I don't know how you drink that," Shane said, wincing as Ilya added copious amounts of sugar to his mug.

"No more sugar than your precious ginger ale," Ilya shrugged.

"That's different."

"Oh?" Ilya asked. "It is?"

Shane reached over, grabbing a ginger cookie from a plate on the counter and shoving it into Ilya's mouth to shut him up.

Ilya gobbled up the cookie, washing it down with a sip of his coffee. "Ahh, perfect," he teased.

"Come on." Shane took Ilya's free hand, tugging him to the living room. "Merry Christmas mom, dad," Shane said, settling into the couch with Ilya by his side.

"Yes, Merry Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Hollander," Ilya said with a smile. "And you too, Shane."

"Merry Christmas, boys," David said with a slight chuckle.

Ilya relaxed into the couch, taking another sip of coffee while he looked around the room. There were photos of Shane everywhere, as a little kid, an awkward teenager, the handsome adult Ilya knew now...There were photos with his parents, photos without, and it was just so warm, so loving.

The tree was decorated perfectly and each of the gifts piled beneath it were wrapped with just as much care - that must be a Hollander thing.

"Alright, who's Santa Clause this year?" David asked, pulling out a bright red and fluffy white Santa hat.

"I did it last year," Shane said, raising his hands in a placating fashion.

"Mm, I think it's my turn," Yuna said, taking the hat from her husband and jamming it on her head.

"What does this mean?" Ilya whispered to Shane.

"Oh, whoever wears the Santa hat hands out the presents," Shane said.

"Ahh." Ilya sat back, taking another sip of his coffee. He was excited to see what sorts of gifts the Hollanders got for each other.

He was *not* expecting a large, soft gift to be placed in front of him as Yuna made her rounds.

"Don't get too excited," Yuna said to Ilya with a wink. "It's nothing much."

But it was too late. The fact that he had shown up yesterday unannounced, and yet there were gifts for him under the Hollander's tree? He felt a squeezing in his chest as he took the package, barely able to focus as gifts were handed to Shane and David as well.

Ilya watched as Shane opened a very nice, cranberry red button up shirt that, frankly, Ilya was eager to take off of him. Yuna opened a gorgeous pair of earrings from her husband, and David opened a stunning Rolex watch from Shane.

"Okay, go on, your turn," Shane said with a gentle smile, nudging him.

"That one's from me and David," Yuna explained.

"Yeah, I'm as curious as you are," Shane said, not able to connect the gift in Ilya's lap to any of those that he and his mother had purchased the day prior.

"Okay..." Ilya opened the gift, letting out a loud groan as he pulled out a Montreal Metros #24 *Shane Hollander* jersey. "Oh no, this is terrible!" Ilya laughed. A joke gift.

His family would never give so silly a gift.

Yuna clapped her hands in delight.

"I'm sorry, I just had to," she said. "We have a bunch lying around, you know, just in case, and I simple couldn't resist."

"Mom..." Shane flushed, the blush highlighting his freckles. "Ilya, you don't have to keep that."

"No, no, today is Hollander Christmas," Ilya said, making a show of taking the jersey and pulling it on over his t-shirt. "There. At least I still have the C on my chest."

"Oh my god." Shane rolled his eyes.

Ilya leaned in, whispering in Shane's ear, so low that David and Yuna would not be able to hear it.

"And now I can be inside of you all day long."

"Ilya!" Shane reached out, swatting at him, certain that his face was turning bright red.

"Everyone looks good in Metros colors," Yuna said with a smile.

"You laugh now," Ilya said. "Next year, Raiders jerseys for all of you."

"Next year, huh?" Shane asked, tilting his head to the side, a big stupid smile in place on his face.

"Well," Ilya shrugged. "If you will have me."

"I'd like that," Shane said softly.

"Even if it comes with Raiders gear?"

"Even if it comes with Raiders gear."

"Okay, next round," David said, perhaps a little louder than necessary.

Shane and Ilya snapped out of the hold they had had on each other, both suddenly very aware that there were two other people in the room.

Ilya was shocked to find a gift in his lap every round - nice things that Shane and Yuna had picked out for him, a warm sweater, a nice candle, a pair of slippers that Ilya instantly subbed out for the ones he had borrowed.

"Okay, Ilya...this one is from Shane," Yuna said, handing Ilya a large, heavy box.

"Did you get me bricks?" Ilya asked with a laugh, turning to Shane. "Did he get me bricks?"

"I don't know," Yuna said. "That's...one he brought with him."

Ilya looked at it, registering, as she said it, that the wrapping paper was identical to the gifts that Shane had carried with him from Montreal.

So *this* was the gift that Shane had told Ilya he had for him the other night, the one that he had told Ilya he would have to wait to open.

"Ah, I see. Is definitely bricks then," Ilya decided.

"Just open it," Shane said, trying to hide his nerves as he watched Ilya tear at the tape on the packaging.

Ilya opened the box, pulling out a couple of books.

Russian language text books.

"Shane," Ilya turned to him. "You have hit your head again? You have another concussion? Old one worse than we thought?"

"What? No!"

"I already speak Russian, Hollander," Ilya said with a snort.

"Well, yes, no, I know, they're...for me."

"Oh, I see," Ilya laughed. "You got me gift for you for Christmas?"

"Well," Shane flushed. "I just...I wanted to be able to meet you where you're at sometimes. You know, when...when you're too tired for English, or...it seems too hard. I wanted to be able to understand you, instead of you always having to do the work to understand me."

"Oh." The goofy, teasing grin disappeared instantly from Ilya's face. "You...are going to learn Russian?"

"I'm gonna try," Shane shrugged. "I downloaded an app and everything."

Ilya knew Shane. If Shane tried, he would succeed. Russian was a difficult language, but Shane had a determination in him that Ilya had rarely seen.

He set the books down on the floor and launched himself at Shane, pulling himself into a tight hug.

"Thank you," he whispered in Shane's ear, and then, in Russian, "*You have no idea what this means to me,*" because some things, he wasn't quite ready for Shane to understand yet.

"Well," Shane chuckled. "I haven't started yet."

"I know." Ilya kissed him on the cheek. "You will understand later."

"Okay. So you like it?"

"I love it."

Ilya leaned back on the couch, putting his arm around Shane, pulling the other man close to him. Shane rested his head on Ilya's shoulder, looking at his parents, the knowing look in his mother's eyes.

The four of them sat around, joking, fawning over the gifts and finishing their coffee, before David finally stood. "Alright, Chef Rozanov, Christmas Breakfast beckons."

"Yes, sir," Ilya said, saluting and getting up, following David to the kitchen to help get breakfast on the table.

Shane moved to follow, but Yuna grabbed his hand. "Not so fast, mister. You can help me clean up here."

"Mom..."

"Your father doesn't bite," she said. "Ilya will be fine. In fact...he seems more than fine."

"Yeah..." Shane sighed. "I think...I don't know. I think he's happy here."

"I think so, too." She stopped folding the paper in her hands and looked at her son. "And I think you're in love with him."

"What?" Shane's eyes widened.

"You're going to learn Russian, sweetie?"

"Well yeah, he called me once, after his father died and it was...I couldn't understand him, and English was too hard, and I just...couldn't be there for him the way he needed me, and I don't want that to ever happen again."

"You're kind of proving my point, sweetheart, so thanks for that, you know how I love being

right."

"Fuck." Shane raked a hand through his hair.

"Oh." She paused. "Am I telling you something you didn't know?"

"No," Shane sighed. "Just...something I hadn't accepted."

"Well learn to accept it, hon, because there is a very handsome, albeit very volatile Russian center in the kitchen wearing *your* jersey right now, and making googly eyes at you non-stop. If you two are in love..."

"I don't know how he feels," Shane said quickly.

"Shane..."

"He hasn't said it," Shane corrected. "And neither have I."

Except Ilya *had* said it. Shane just hadn't understood.

"I'll figure it out, mom," he said. "But...yeah. I don't think Ilya's going anywhere. So."

"He's welcome here anytime," Yuna promised.

"Thank you for understanding. It'll be good for just to have people we can trust in this."

"I'm glad you know that you can trust me and your father," she paused. "Even if it took you a long time."

"It's complicated. I...it wasn't a big deal for a long time. Or it was, but it wasn't...*this*."

"I understand." Yuna kissed the top of Shane's head. "Alright, stop glancing at the kitchen and go be with your man."

"Thank you."

After all, they didn't have much more time in this bubble. Tomorrow morning they would drive back to Montreal early, Shane would go to practice and Ilya would go back to Boston.

It would be weeks before they would be together again.

Ilya was standing at the stove over a large pan of bacon when Shane entered.

"Oh, he put you on bacon duty, huh?" Shane wrapped his arms around Ilya from behind, resting his head on Ilya's shoulder.

"I know my way around bacon," Ilya shrugged. "Plus, I am hoping will get grease stain on awful Hollander jersey," he teased.

“I thought you liked being inside me,” Shane whispered.

“Not as much as the real thing,” Ilya promised.

“Fair.” Shane nuzzled into Ilya’s neck. “You liked your presents?”

“Very much. You all did not have to get me anything, let alone so many things.”

“We wanted to.”

“This is where you and your mother went yesterday? Not just to get pajamas?”

“Yeah. It’s why you couldn’t come.”

“I see.” Ilya turned his head, giving Shane a quick kiss. “You will really learn Russian?”

“I’m gonna try,” Shane said again.

“You are Shane Hollander. I suspect you will succeed.”

Shane presses a kiss to Ilya’s cheek before going to help lay the table.

Breakfast was loud, even with just four people, and Ilya seemed so much more comfortable than he had even just the night before. His hand rested on Shane’s knee under the table, and Shane was surprised by how normal and right it all felt.

Even though he had cooked, Ilya still insisted on cleaning up after the meal, and soon the four of them were sat around the dining table working on a 4,000 piece puzzle Yuna had given David.

“No! Start with the corners, what are you *doing*?” Shane said in horror as Ilya connected two random pieces.

“What? They fit!”

“But...corners, then edges, then-”

Ilya shut Shane up by kissing him. It was a soft, chaste kiss, but it got the job done.

“The pieces fit together, Hollander. Does not matter where in puzzle they go.”

“Technically, he’s right,” David pointed out, raising his hands placatingly moments later as both Shane and Yuna shot him deadly glares.

“So specific,” Ilya teased, kissing Shane on the cheek before setting his two connected pieces at the edge of the table for later and helping Shane sift through the box for corner and edge pieces.

With the puzzle about a quarter of the way completed, David and Yuna announced their intention to take a Christmas walk, just the two of them, and while Shane was certain it was merely a move to give him and Ilya some alone time, he was grateful for it.

The second the door closed, Ilya grabbed Shane, kissing him hard and lifting him off the ground. Shane's legs wrapped around Ilya's waist as he allowed himself to be carried to his bedroom.

"Leave the jersey on," Shane breathed, looking up at Ilya.

"What?" Ilya's face screwed up in a truly hilarious look of shock.

"Oh my god, I'm kidding, you should see your face," Shane laughed, leaning back on the bed, open, warm, and beautiful.

"Fuck, Hollander," Ilya laughed, removing the jersey and his shirt. "You are so beautiful."

"Then come here and show me." Shane wrapped his legs around Ilya again, using the grip to pull Ilya onto the bed on top of him.

They were quick, neither sure how long they had, and both well aware that they needed to be finished and cleaned up before David and Yuna got back. Maybe Shane's parents had a good idea of what was going on in their absence, but they didn't need to see it.

"Christmas is - was - not like this with my family," Ilya explained as they got dressed.

"What, no hot sex with your arch rival?"

"Well, that too," Ilya chuckled. "But...warm, inviting. Always felt like competition and once I got signed, it was just phone calls about how the gifts I sent back were not nice enough, not plentiful enough, expensive enough, even though I know Alexei just sold them probably."

"Well," Shane said. "You can always come back here. I mean, my parents said - I mean," Shane paused. "*I would like it if you came back here.*"

Ilya hooked a finger through Shane's belt loop, pulling the other man close. "I would like this, too." He kissed Shane softly."

The rest of the day was filled with games, puzzles, and a Christmas dinner that left all four of them overly full.

David and Yuna eventually retired for the night, leaving Shane and Ilya by the fire. Both were folded up on the sofa, facing each other, arms over the back of the couch, fingers intertwined.

"This has been really nice," Shane said, his fingers gently playing with Ilya's.

"It has." Ilya paused. "I am...a little sad, I must admit, to go back to Boston tomorrow."

"Me too. I mean, for Montreal. The real world."

"What...will happen?" Ilya asked cautiously.

"I don't know," Shane admitted.

"I..." Ilya gazed into Shane's dark eyes with his own; something sad lacing his expression. "I do not think I want to put lid back on my heart."

"No?" Shane asked.

"No." Ilya shook his head. "I like better who I am with you than who I am without you."

Shane squeezed Ilya's hand, leaning in, kissing him.

"Me, too," Shane confessed as he pulled back. "I wish this could be easier. It won't be, but..." he shrugged. "Maybe we just make small changes. Talk on the phone more, stay... stay the night when we're in the same place..."

"You will not run away again?" Ilya asked cautiously.

"No." Shane shook his head. "I won't run away again. I don't think I can, not after this."

"After Christmas?"

"Yeah. Seeing you with my family, spending real time with you, it's like you said, I don't want to put the lid back on my heart. I don't know if I could even if I did want to."

"This is nice to hear," Ilya said, something relaxing inside of him. "I think I have been in love with you a very long time, Shane Hollander."

Shane needed a minute.

They had been dancing around each other like this for years, and Shane had spent a lot of that time very much in denial about how strongly he felt for Ilya. Now, he was certain that Ilya had spent that time doing more or less the same.

"Yeah, I...think I've been in love with you for a long time, too," Shane admitted, his voice quiet, wanting to make sure that those words, at least the first time he said them, were just for the two of them.

Ilya reached out, placing a hand on Shane's cheek. He drew the other man towards him, kissing deeply, drawing Shane towards him. Shane returned the kiss eagerly, pulling Ilya down on top of him as he lay back on the couch.

"Your parents?" Ilya asked softly.

"They're asleep," Shane shrugged. "We're just kissing."

Ilya didn't need more than that. Instead, he lowered himself back down, kissing Shane until he was fairly sure that, if he kept doing it, they might never stop.

"I don't want to go to bed," Shane admitted. "I want more time with you, I want more of this."

“I know, me too.” Ilya gently carded a hand through Shane’s dark hair. It was growing out a little, and he liked it. “But the good news is...sounds like we will have more of this.”

“Yeah.” Shane nodded. “Just sucks that it has to be so spread out. I know it’s only been like, two days, but I’ve sort of gotten used to having you here, having you in my life, having you with my family. I’m afraid that going back to my apartment in Montreal is going to feel extra lonely now.”

“You want me to send you Ilya Rozanov cardboard cutout?” Ilya teased. “They have them, you know.”

“I’m sure they do.” Shane chuckled, kissing Ilya again softly. “But no, that might be a bit of a give away. I’ll just have to hold on to what we do have and enjoy every moment that we’re able to spend together.”

“It will be worth it,” Ilya said with a nod. “I don’t know when, I don’t know how long, but one day, we will not have to hide this, not if we do not want to.” Of course, that would probably be after they were done playing, but they had been keeping this secret for almost ten years. Really, in the grand scheme of things, what was another ten?

If he got to love Shane Hollander, and Shane loved him back, Ilya could definitely wait another decade.

“Come on,” Ilya said, forcing himself to get up off of Shane. “I want to hold you one more night before we have to go back to real world.”

“Okay.” Shane couldn’t argue against that, and he took the hand that Ilya offered to help him up, allowing himself to be led back to his own bedroom.

They got ready for bed and crawled in under the sheets, sharing a soft kiss as Ilya lay back, pulling Shane down onto his chest.

“I really like your parents,” Ilya said. “They are very warm. I see now, why you always thought family was such a good thing. I did not understand before,” he said. “I understand now.”

“I’m sorry,” Shane said softly, nuzzling against Ilya’s chest. “That you didn’t understand before, that you didn’t have this, and I know it’s not the same, but they’ll be there for you, too, Ilya, not just me. That’s the good thing about being an only child,” he said. “They have a lot of attention to give. I’m sure they’re just dying to lavish you with some of it.”

“I...would really like that,” Ilya admitted.

“Good. I’ll tell them to take about 50% off of me, and focus on you,” Shane teased.

“Whoa, whoa, maybe not 50%, let’s not get crazy, but...yes. If they are willing to give me attention, I would like to have it.”

“You’ll have it. From them, from me...” Shane tipped his head up, kissing Ilya’s chin. “I love you, Ilya. I’m glad that I can say that now, even if it’s just between the two of us.

“I am glad, too.” Ilya closed his eyes, holding Shane close against him. “Goodnight, Shane. I love you, Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, Ilya.”

Shane had had a lot of good Christmases, Ilya...not so many, but as they fell asleep in each other’s arms, both were certain that this was, by far, the best one yet. Maybe they had to return to the real world the next day, but everything had changed over the course of this holiday, and now they had a future to look forward together, as complicated as it may be.

Perhaps it was a Christmas miracle.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading, and Merry Christmas!

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