

How Shane and Ilya Became Parents (the second time)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76378356) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76378356>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Original Children of Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander
Additional Tags:	Adoption , Family , Birth Parents , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , POV Shane Hollander , Original Character(s) , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Parenthood , Domestic Fluff , Domestic Bliss , Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Babies , Becoming Parents , Shane and Ilya become parents
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of The Centaur Family
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-25 Words: 4,241 Chapters: 1/1

How Shane and Ilya Became Parents (the second time)

by [liljenrocks](#)

Summary

The second time Shane and Ilya become parents is very different from the first.

Notes

Hi everyone! This is the second edition of Ilya and Shane's journey to parenthood. Just a couple things:

1. This is fiction. Most of things that happen in this are unrealistic and kind of idealized. Just know that when you read.
2. The Japanese and Russian phrases are courtesy of Google translate.

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

How Shane and Ilya Became Parents (the second time)

The second time Shane and Ilya become parents is very different from the first.

Maks is 6 and Nicky is 4. They're both in school and doing remarkably well. They both see a children's therapist too, more for Maks than Nicky. But life is actually a lot better than Shane ever thought it could be or really ever allowed himself to hope it would be.

They're playing in Montreal before getting a few days off. Shane (and Ilya) hate playing in Montreal. There's a lot of pain still there, some that Shane thinks won't ever go away. But the upside is that the boys will go with them and then they'll have a chance to spend the day with the Pikes.

It's when the day is finished, as they're making their way back to Ottawa in a rented car, that Maks speaks up.

"Papa?" He says in a small voice from the backseat.

"Yes, Maksim?" Ilya responds. He's driving and Shane is messing with Nicky's tablet.

"Why don't we have a sister?" Maks asks.

For a brief moment, Shane can see what Ilya is thinking. The boys actually do have a sister but it is very likely they will never know her. It's very likely she will never know them or even about them.

But Ilya is quick on his feet. "Some families do not have sisters," he answers. "Is just the way it is."

Shane knows Maks too well to know that that isn't an answer he'll accept. Maks is all facts and telling him that something is just because it is, won't fly. So he keeps his eye on the tablet and waits.

"But Arthur has three sisters," Maks retorts.

Shane hears Ilya audibly groan. "That is because Hayden Pike is a—"

"Ilya!" Shane stops him before he can say whatever insult he was going to use to describe Hayden. He turns in his seat to face the boys. "Maks, we've talked about how families are different, right?" Maks nods. "You have two dads. Some families have a dad and mom. Some families have two moms. Your friend, Haley, just has a mom, right?" Maks nods again. "We are a family of two dads and two sons, that's who we are."

Shane can see the wheels turning in his oldest son's head. He knows this conversation is not finished. "But what if I want a sister?" Maks asks.

It's quiet for a minute. Ilya asks him, "Why do you want a sister? Is it only because there are so many girl Pikes?"

"No," Maks says. "I just want one."

The conversation stops there and the family goes about their day. But the idea is stuck in Shane's head now. He can't let it go.

When they climb into bed that night and Ilya leans over to kiss him, it starts gentle but quickly becomes more fierce. And as much as Shane wants to have sex with his husband, he knows Ilya can feel that his mind is elsewhere.

Ilya pulls back from him. "What's wrong?"

Shane shakes his head. "Nothing, sorry, it's nothing."

Ilya kisses his nose. "I know you, moy lyubov." He runs his finger down his face. "Something is going through your pretty head."

Shane smiles at him. "I've just been thinking about what Maks said today in the car, about wanting a sister."

"Da, me too," Ilya sighs. "It might be nice. To have a daughter."

"Yeah," Shane says. "How would we...how do we even go about that?"

Ilya shrugs. "I'm sure we can ask the attorney." He lets out a heavy sigh. "It makes me think of Oksana." Oksana, the boys' biological half-sister in Moscow. It's Shane's turn to provide comfort and he pulls Ilya into his chest, running fingers through his curls and kissing his forehead.

"I know," Shane whispers.

"I do not want her to ever think I do not care about her. But with Alexei, I couldn't be around. Now her mother," Ilya makes a gesture with his hands. "I just don't know."

Shane sighs too. "Maybe one day, she can come here."

"Maybe," Ilya says in a way that lets Shane know it's probably a non-starter.

Ilya cuddles closer into him. "I'll call the attorney tomorrow before that thing I have for mom," Shane tells him.

Ilya sits up again. "I forgot about that. Do you want me to come? Bring the boys?"

Shane shrugs. "Yeah, I guess. I'm not really sure what to expect to be honest."

A few weeks ago, the Japanese-Canadian Cultural Center of Greater Ottawa contacted Yuna, with a request for Shane to speak at their Youth Night. He and Ilya both receive hundreds of requests from different organizations to speak or visit. Most of the time, scheduling doesn't

work or there may be problematic issues with the organization. They have to be very selective about where they choose to go. This particular organization had been near and dear to Yuna. It had been a place where her father took English classes and Yuna herself attended events to honor her Japanese heritage.

“As a teenager, I just wanted to be Canadian. But as an adult, I can appreciate what that place gave my family,” Yuna told Shane when he looked like he might say no.

This was a way for Shane to give back.

“I know the boys are not technically Japanese,” Ilya says. “But you are their Daddy and they should know that part of you.”

(When Shane asks himself why he loves Ilya, this is one of the reasons he will remind himself of.)

“Okay,” Shane says.

After that, Shane’s mind is a little clearer and he and Ilya are able to find their way back to what they started.

The next day, they dress the boys and send them to school before heading to the practice rink for team workouts. When they finish, Shane calls the attorney. The attorney tells them she will make a few phone calls, put them on a few lists. She doesn’t have any immediate answers for them but it feels like a start.

They pick the boys up from school and take them home to change out of their school uniforms and into more comfy clothing. They work together to make a quick dinner and eat before loading into the car.

“Will this be boring?” Nicky asks from the backseat.

Ilya laughs. “Don’t you know everything Daddy does is boring?”

“Haha, very funny,” Shane says.

“I don’t think you’re boring, Daddy,” Maks adds in.

Shane smiles and glances at him in the rear view mirror. “Thank you, Maks.”

Yuna meets them at the door with an elderly gentleman. “Shane, this is Mr. Mokimoto. He runs the center now.”

The man has a friendly smile and he bows a little, putting his hand out for Shane to shake. “It’s nice to meet you,” Shane says.

“And who is this with you?” Mr. Mokimoto gestures to Ilya and the kids.

“This is my husband, Ilya, and my sons, Maksim and Nikolai,” he answers.

Mr. Mokimoto shakes Ilya’s hand and then leans down to the boys. “I am happy to have you here. Are you excited to learn about being Japanese and your Otōsan’s heritage?”

Shane watches his sons light up. “Yes!” Maks says.

Mr. Mokimoto leads them to what looks a little like a basketball court with folding chairs. The chairs are full of people. Most of them are teenagers but there are a few adults, a few little kids. Shane shouldn’t be nervous but all the people make his pulse quicken.

Ilya reaches over and squeezes his hand. “Say ‘good luck’ to daddy,” Ilya tells the boys.

“Good lucky, Daddy!” Nicky says and put his hand out for a fist bump. Shane bumps his little fist and turns to Maks. He does the same thing.

Ilya leans in and kisses him quickly. “You will do great. I love you.”

“Love you too.”

Mr. Mokimoto leads him up to the podium. “Shizukani shite kudasai,” he says to quiet down the crowd. The audience starts to quiet. “I know everyone knows our speaker for tonight. Mr. Shane Hollander has broken many barriers and is an example to us all...”. The introduction goes on for a minute before he turns it over to Shane.

Shane talks about being Japanese-Canadian and ways that his mother always tried to honor that part of their heritage. He talks briefly about being openly gay but also about the struggles of being in the closet for so long. He talks about his sons. What he reiterates over and over is the importance of representation. He wants all of them, no matter what they do, to be someone that others can look up to.

When the speech is over and the family is mingling, he and Ilya have signed a few autographs, Mr. Mokimoto pulls him away. “I have someone I want to introduce you to.” There’s a teenage boy standing next to him. He can’t be older than eighteen and it makes Shane think about when he was eighteen. “This is my nephew’s son, Drew,” Mr. Mokimoto says. “He plays hockey, as well.”

“Nice to meet you, Drew,” Shane shakes the teenager’s hand.

“I’ll leave you two to it,” Mr. Mokimoto excuses himself.

Drew looks nervous. Shane’s a little used to that. Teenage hockey players can be intimidated by pros. He hopes he’s not scary though.

“What position do you play?” Shane asks, hoping to break the tension.

“Uh, center, like you,” Drew answers.

Shane smiles. “Any good?”

“I think so. I have a scholarship to play at McGill next year,” the boy says.

“That’s impressive,” Shane answers honestly. It is impressive. Neither he nor Ilya went to college. But he’s played with and against a lot of players that did. “Congratulations.”

Drew shuffles his feet as Maks come to stand by them. “Daddy, I want another cookie but Papa said I have to ask you. Can I please have another cookie?” He asks.

“Yes, but say hi to Drew here first,” Shane says. “This is my son, Maks.”

“Hi!” Maks says before running off to the cookie table.

“Your son is adopted?” Drew asks. Shane feels like it’s a question he’s asking even though he knows the answer. He and Ilya have been pretty open with the public about their journey to parenthood. They don’t discuss specifics but most people know their children are adopted and not born from surrogacy.

“He is. He and his brother, Nicky,” Shane explains.

Drew makes eye contact with him again. “Would you ever consider adopting another kid?”

It’s an odd question for a teenage stranger to ask him. “Yes, eventually.”

The teenager swallows. “Could we maybe meet someplace other than here? To talk?” There’s a part of him that is screaming that this is a bad idea. “I’m sorry, I don’t mean to scare you. I just...I can’t talk about this here. There’s a coffee place down the street.”

“Can my husband come?” Shane asks and Drew nods. Shane calls Ilya over. “Could you ask mom to take the boys home?”

“Yes. What are we doing that we won’t be taking them home?” Ilya asks. He looks the teenager over. Ilya isn’t the most trusting in the best of circumstances.

“This is Drew and he would like to talk to us about something,” Shane tells him.

Ilya pulls him closer. “He will not murder us, will he?”

“I hope not,” Shane replies. Shane turns back to the boy. “Are you good to go now? Ilya’s going to make arrangements for our boys and then we’ll be ready.”

Drew nods. “I’m going to call my girlfriend and have her meet us there.”

Ilya goes to talk to Yuna, while Shane shakes hands with Mr. Mokimoto. Drew leaves out a side door.

Shane hugs the boys and his mom. He doesn’t miss the way his mom looks at him and he just shrugs. He’ll fill her in on the details later.

“Ready?” Ilya asks. He nods and reaches for his husband’s hand as they walk out of the center.

The coffee house is definitely a teenage hangout and Shane feels a little awkward as he takes a seat at a wobbly table. “You want coffee?” Ilya asks.

“Tea, maybe?” Shane answers.

Ilya walks to the counter and orders. Shane pulls his phone out to scroll while he waits. Then the door opens. A very pregnant teenage girl walks in. Drew follows in behind her. Shane stands up, Ilya meeting the couple before they reach him. Shane hears him ask if they want anything. They answer and make their way to Shane.

“This is my girlfriend, Natalie,” Drew introduces the girl. She’s significantly shorter than Drew. Her hair is in tight curls and she has a gentle smile as Shane pulls a chair out for her.

“Thank you,” she says.

Ilya comes back with their drinks and sits next to Shane. “When are you due?” Ilya asks.

“Four weeks,” Natalie answers.

There’s a silent moment where they all take a drink. It’s an awkward silence and Shane can’t help but wonder what exactly they’re doing here.

“I wondered, well we wondered, if you might adopt our baby,” Drew says. Ilya chokes on the coffee he’s just taken a sip of and Shane rests his hand on his back. Partly to make sure he’s okay but mostly to ground himself.

There are a million thoughts going through Shane’s head. “Drew,” Shane starts. “We are honored that you would ask. But giving up a child...”

“Is big,” Ilya finishes for him.

Drew and Natalie exchange a look and Drew finally say, “I have a scholarship to play hockey. Nat’s gonna be a doctor. We just, we’re running out of time. We messed up and we weren’t careful. But we know our baby would be safe and happy with you guys.”

Shane sighs and looks at Ilya. Ilya has a look in his eyes. He knows it’s the same one he has. It’s a little bit of hope. Hope can be dangerous. “And what about your families? What would they think?” Shane asks.

Natalie laughs. “My family could give a fuck about me. I’ve been counting down the days until I could leave.”

“And you, Drew? Your uncle seemed like he would care,” Shane says.

Drew nods. "My family is complicated. I live with my grandfather. My parents both died in a car accident when I was ten. And since I was about ten, all I've wanted is to play hockey." He reaches over and grabs Natalie's hand. "I love Nat and we both love this baby. But we love this baby enough to know that we can't be what they need."

Shane can't fault him for that. It's actually a pretty mature decision on both of their parts. But Shane isn't quite sold. He remembers what's happened to other couples who were promised a baby, only for the birth parents to change their mind.

It's Ilya that speaks up. "Have you heard of open adoption?" Natalie shakes her head. "The baby would be ours. But you could still know them. We would send pictures. Let you know how they are."

"Ilya," Shane tries to stop him.

But when Ilya looks at him, there's a resolve there. "No, if they want to do this, then why shouldn't we."

Shane sighs before he looks at the couple again. He sees the hope and resolve in their eyes too. Hope can be dangerous, he reminds himself.

"There are a lot of legal things that would have to happen," Shane explains that they would need an attorney. That Shane and Ilya's attorney would have to communicate with their attorney. That even though they would maybe have a relationship with the baby, Ilya and Shane would be their parents.

"We would pay attorney fees," Ilya says.

Then Shane becomes the realistic one. "You could change your mind," he says.

"We won't," Natalie answers back.

"But you could," Shane says.

"But we won't," Drew says this time. "I've followed both of you my whole life. Mr. Hollander, I wanted to be you. I still do. And when I saw your sons tonight. And when I saw you both with them, I could tell they are so loved. You can give our baby so many things that we can't."

They are quiet again. Ilya pulls out his phone. "Give me your number. I'll call in the morning. If you still want this, we'll call our lawyer."

Drew reaches across and takes the phone. He puts his number and saves it. Then he puts Natalie's number and saves it too. Ilya takes the phone back and texts both of them so they have his number.

"And I think you should probably call us Shane and Ilya. We might end up having a long relationship with each other," Shane says.

Drew and Natalie leave pretty quickly after that. Shane finishes his tea and watches Ilya stir his coffee but never takes another drink. Neither says anything.

When they're both finished, they walk back to the car and start the drive home. Shane's driving and Ilya reaches across the console for his hand.

"It can be that simple, can it?" Ilya asks in Russian.

Shane tightens his grip on the steering wheel to push out some of his nerves. "I don't know. I want it to be. But I also don't want us to get hurt."

"But what if we don't? What if everything works out?" Ilya asks.

"I guess we'll see," Shane pulls Ilya's hand up to kiss his knuckles.

They agree not to tell anyone. Not yet. Even Yuna who has a litany of questions about where they've been and what they've been doing. Shane isn't convinced that anything will come to fruition. Why get everyone excited for something that won't happen?

They go to sleep that night. Get up the next morning. Start their routine again. When the boys are dropped off at school and they're in the car on the way to practice, Ilya calls Drew.

And Drew answers. He tells them that they are still determined to have Shane and Ilya raise their baby. Shane still isn't convinced. But he calls their attorney, who knows another attorney who will represent Drew and Natalie.

They can talk to Drew and Natalie but most of the specifics are decided by the attorneys. Drew and Natalie decide they are okay with updates on the baby throughout their life. And should the baby one day want to meet them, they would be open to it.

They find out the baby is a girl. Natalie has been seeing a doctor and would like to continue with the same doctor through the delivery.

"Do you want to be there for the birth?" Their attorney asks. They decide they will only be there if Natalie and Drew want them to be there. And they say they do.

They tell their parents, though Shane tells both of them not to get too excited just yet. They opt not to tell the boys. Because they know they won't understand if it all falls through. They pull Nicky's old crib out of storage but don't put it together yet or set it up in the guest room that would become the nursery. Because hope is dangerous.

"Good game, everyone," Ilya's giving his captain speech after they beaten St. Louis at home. They've stripped down to their compression shirts and leggings. "I want to see this again tomorrow night! And the night after that! And the night after that!"

There's a little banging on the sides of the stalls. "Hazy, five big saves!" Ilya points to the goalie. "And a hat trick for Troy!" There's louder banging this time.

Ilya continues but Shane is momentarily distracted by the buzzing of his phone above him. He would normally ignore it, should focus on Ilya's speech, but he doesn't. He looks to see their attorney's name.

"Ilya," Shane interrupts. Ilya stops talking and looks at him. He puts his hand out and takes the phone.

"Hello," Ilya says. The entire locker room is watching. Ilya nods and hums a few times. "We'll be there in thirty minutes." He hangs up and hands the phone back to Shane. "Natalie's water broke."

Shane is very aware of the eyes on them. None of them know what's going on. But they're also glued to the couple in front of them, watching like it's a TV show. "And?" Shane asks.

"She wants us there," Ilya breathes out. This time he reaches for his husband and Shane wraps his arms around him. "She wants us there."

"Someone wanna tell us what's going on?" Wyatt asks. The spell is broken and Shane and Ilya pull apart.

"Not yet," Ilya says. "But soon."

This team is their family and Shane wants them to know. But they can't tell them yet. It's not a sure thing yet. And hope can be dangerous, Shane reminds himself.

Their attorney meets them at the entrance. She tells them everything is going as planned. Drew is with Natalie. She's progressing quickly. She wants them in the delivery room if they want to be there.

Shane and Ilya make their way to the labor and delivery area of the hospital, to Room 1269. Shane knocks hesitantly and Drew opens the door to let them in.

"I'm glad you guys are here," Natalie smiles at them.

"I'm glad we are too," Shane says back.

It goes quickly. They take turns sitting with Natalie as she labors. Ilya is very good at distracting her when a contraction comes. She asks Ilya to tell her how they met. Most people know a version of the story but Ilya tells her everything. Things they haven't told anyone before. He thinks maybe Ilya thinks they owe her that.

When Shane hold her hand, she asks about the boys. "Tell me about your sons. Tell me about her brothers." He tells her that Maks is very serious but will be the most excited to be a big brother. That Maks's hero is actually Wyatt Hayes and that, even though he's only six, he's already decided he will be a goalie. He tells her that Nicky is rambunctious. He likes jokes

and making other people laugh. He likes to race them when they skate on the practice rink. Shane believes Nicky will be faster than he or Ilya ever were.

“And what about her? Where will she fit in?” Natalie asks.

“She will be whatever she wants to be. If she wants to play hockey, she will. If she wants to do ballet, she will. If she wants to be an artist, she will. Most of all, she will be loved,” Shane tells her. For the first time, he feels tears in his eyes, and, when he looks at Natalie, she has tears in her eyes too.

“That’s all I could ask for,” she says.

It’s only an hour later that they’re standing at Natalie’s head while she pushes. Shane is holding one hand while Drew holds the other. Ilya stands with his hands on Shane’s shoulders. A high-pitched cry rings out and then, there she is. They put her on Natalie’s stomach.

“Touch her,” Natalie says. “Let her know you’re here.”

And so Shane releases his grip on Natalie’s hand and places his large palm against the baby’s back. She’s squirming still and screaming still but she’s precious.

“Ona takaya krasivaya,” Ilya says. *She’s so beautiful.*

“Ona — nastoyashcheye chudo,” Shane says back. *She’s a miracle.*

They name her Natalia Himari Hollander-Rozanov. Natalia for obvious reasons, to honor the girl that was brave enough to love their daughter so much, she let her go. Himari (Japanese for sunflower) to honor her father.

“Okay, we have someone very important for you to meet,” Ilya says as he sits the boys on the sofa. He’s made them wash their hands and pulls his phone out of his pocket so he can record their reaction.

“Who?!” Maks says with a little excitement.

“You will see,” Ilya tells them.

Shane comes in then, with the baby carrier, and knows the instant the boys realize what’s happening. Their eyes go wide and Nicky starts to bounce in his seat.

“Would you like to meet your sister?” Shane asks.

“Yes!” They both say.

Shane unbuckles Natalia and gently passes her to Ilya. He scoots to sit between the two boys and holds the baby so she's laying across his legs.

"She's so small," Nicky whispers.

"She is," Ilya says. "And she will need you to help protect her."

Shane looks at Maks. He staring intently at the baby. "What do you think, Maks?"

He looks at Shane with a wide smile. "I have a sister!"

They keep Natalie and Drew apprised of Natalia. They send pictures and notes. Natalie sends them an invitation when she graduates with her undergrad. They watch Drew play a few times at McGill, then as he enters the drafts and he starts in Winnipeg.

Every year, on Natalia's birthday, Shane and Ilya each write a letter to Natalie and Drew. They fill them in on every milestone.

When Natalia turns five and Maks is 11, he adds a note to the envelope: *Thank you for my baby sister. I love her very much.*

End Notes

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