

as you wander through this troubled world

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as you wander through this troubled world

by [justhockey](#)

Summary

Having a child is like having a second heart beating outside of your body.

You carry them, and you hold them in your arms for the very first time, and you soothe them when they cry. You protect them, and keep them safe, and you try and instil them with all the skills and attributes they need to succeed, to thrive, to be *happy*. You do that for as long as you can...as long as they will allow you. And then you let them go.

You send them out into the world, and hope with everything in you that it doesn't break them.

Notes

Title from *Lullaby* by The Chicks.

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

Having a child is like having a second heart beating outside of your body.

You carry them, and you hold them in your arms for the very first time, and you soothe them when they cry. You kiss their bruises, and read them bedtime stories, and you hide your tears on their first day of school. You raise them the best way you can - the best way you know how to. You protect them, and keep them safe, and you try and instil them with all the skills and attributes they need to succeed, to thrive, to be *happy*. You do that for as long as you can...as long as they will allow you. And then you let them go.

You send them out into the world, and hope with everything in you that it doesn't break them.

Yuna has always known Shane was special.

Not just because he was her precious, only child, but because he was *Shane*. Because when other toddlers his age were learning how to play together, Shane was lining up his toy cars or his crayons or his set of tiny plastic farm animals. Because when he was four years old and he skated for the very first time, he looked genuinely excited for maybe the first time in his life, and not a single thing has lit him up like that since.

She knew he was different when he would cry and cry and cry until she turned his socks inside out, so he couldn't feel the seams. When he would shy away from being touched, or when the only thing he ate for a month straight was buttered pasta, or - sometimes - when things got too loud, or chaotic, or busy, and Shane would just...shut down. Like he couldn't speak, like he couldn't even hear.

She knows now that it has a name, but back then he was just Shane. Her perfect little boy, who she wouldn't change for anything in the world.

But she's been worried, for a long time now, that the not knowing has been harmful to him.

She's been on the receiving end of phone calls where Shane has been confused about things; not knowing what he's done wrong when someone is frustrated with him, or - sometimes even worse - knowing that he's said something wrong but not understanding *why*. Shane certainly isn't stupid, and he isn't naive either, he just looks at the world differently. Things are so black and white for him, while most other people see in all different shades of grey.

So. It's scary, sending your kid out into the world, because no matter how well you raise them, you can't control how other people behave. But it's even scarier sending a kid like Shane out there, who's so sensitive and kind, and so terrifyingly easy to hurt. Yuna has spent a long time worrying that Shane will never find someone who simply *gets him*.

When Shane walks into their home with a sickly look of fear on his face and Ilya Rozanov traipsing in behind him, Yuna wants to claw the Russian's eyeballs out.

But then Shane utters the words, "*I'm gay*," and, "*I love him*," and her entire worldview tilts on its axis.

Yuna watches Shane follow David into the dining room, and the way Rozanov places a careful hand on Shane's lower back like he's trying to prop him up. Even more so, she watches the way Shane *lets* him. Her son, who never asks for help - who never wants anyone to see him vulnerable - allows fucking Rozanov to support him.

She doesn't comment on it as they sit, or as Shane and *Ilya* explain their history - since their rookie year? *Jesus* - or even when Shane follows her outside.

But after she's apologised, after she's held her son and wiped his tears and fed him some decent food, it's pretty hard not to say anything. Especially when Shane leans forward, resting his head on the table like he's having difficulty breathing. Or - like he used to do when he was a kid - shutting down when things get a little too overwhelming.

Because Yuna is expecting that she will need to step in, need to deal with this like she and David had learned to when Shane was only little. But.

Ilya says Shane's name softly, then he touches him even softer, and Shane doesn't flinch away from him. He doesn't shrink away from physical touch like a snail retreating back into its shell. Instead, Shane melts into Ilya. He listens to him.

"Boyfriend?" he asks, so sweetly that Yuna has to look away because it feels like she's encroaching on something private.

"I mean, yes? I think so. Probably."

Then Shane breathes deeply, and he even lets Ilya kiss him. Just once, quick and sweet, and respectful of their presence, but Yuna still can't quite believe what she's seeing.

And it's not just her own boy that she's seeing differently, either. It's Ilya, too.

The playboy of hockey, the antagonist, the guy whose chirps are as lightning fast as his hands are, is being...sweet. He's patient with Shane, and gentle, and understanding. He's touching him and talking to him like maybe he's done this before - talked him down off a ledge, or talked him through a moment of panic. There's no embarrassment, and there isn't any concern for Yuna and David either. All he has eyes for is Shane.

Ilya is good to her son, and that revelation is as startling as it is relieving.

"Since rookie season," Yuna murmurs.

"Summer before," David corrects, muttered out of the corner of his mouth.

And yeah, okay. Maybe she can see that now.

There's something in the way they move around each other, like gravity is pulling them together. Something in the way Ilya settles Shane like nothing Yuna has ever seen before. And that sparkle in her son's eyes? The one she's only ever seen that very first time he skated? It's back, brighter than ever. And it's clear now that that moment paled in comparison to *this*: the way they love each other.

“You, uh. You’re good together,” she remarks, earning a disbelieving smile from Shane.

“Yeah?” He asks, glancing between Ilya, his dad, and Yuna.

Both she and David nod their heads, and Shane smiles wide, carefree, *honest*. Something twinges painfully in her heart, because until now - until seeing that very smile on his face - she hadn’t realised just how fake the one he so often wore was. Or, not *fake* necessarily, just dimmed. Burdened. Secretive.

She hadn’t realised her son had been hiding, not just from the world but from *her*. From his parents. And she feels, not for the first time today, that she’s failed Shane.

But her guilt isn’t his burden to bear; she just has to do better from now on.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you like this before,” she admits.

“Yeah, it’s like - like you’re lighter, somehow,” David adds.

Shane glances at Ilya, whose eyes are already firmly locked on him. Ilya smiles, reaching a hand out and clearly resting it on Shane’s leg, even though it’s obstructed by the table. Then Shane smiles back, a slight hint of a blush turning his cheeks red.

“Yeah, uh, maybe,” Shane agrees.

“Is a lot to carry,” Ilya says. “A secret so big is very heavy, even for strong hockey player like Shane.”

Yuna nods in understanding. “But - but you help him to carry it.”

It’s not a question, and she doesn’t need an answer because she already knows. Maybe loving Ilya has made Shane’s life a thousand times more complicated, but it’s also made it less lonely. Even if Ilya is the only person in the world who knew about this before today, at least Shane had *someone*. At least her son wasn’t completely alone through all of this.

Ilya shrugs. “I don’t know if-“

“-yes,” Shane interrupts him. “Yes, he’s helped me to carry it. He’s helped with... everything.”

“I am very strong hockey player, too,” Ilya jokes.

They all laugh, and suddenly the moment is broken, but Yuna can’t stop stealing secret glances at her son, her little boy, the child she had been so desperately afraid of watching this world ruin.

Because he looks happier now than ever before; even more so than when he had won the cup, because there are no pretences now. No secrets weighing him down. All his masks are off, here in front of his parents and his boyfriend, and he looks like he can breathe properly for the first time in a long time.

So, finally, Yuna can breathe too.

She can send her son out into the world knowing that he has someone who would sooner burn it down, than ever let it hurt him.

And while it still feels like she has a second heart beating outside of her body, she's pretty sure it's tucked carefully beneath Ilya Rozanov's ribs now. She's pretty sure that it's being taken care of.

End Notes

i've literally never written an outsider pov before!!

i'm never going to recover from episode 6. i've been levitating since it aired and i don't ever want to come down.

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