Wish that you were here

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Wish that you were here

by pinkamour1588

Summary

"I miss her," Ilya said after a while, his voice barely above a whisper.

"I know." Shane kissed the top of his head.

Or

Ilya struggles as he remembers his mom on her birthday.

Notes

I got sucked down the rabbit hole of the Game Changers universe the day before Heated Rivalry premiered and have been wanting to write a fic in this universe since then. After all the feelings of the last episode last night, I wrote this in the span of about 6 hours...then spent an hour trying to come up with a title. And of course, I had to make my first fic in the fandom be something where I'm exploring someone's emotional pain and suffering.

Title is from the song by the same name by Florence + The Machine

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane blinked slowly as he looked down at Ilya, still half asleep with his head on Shane's chest. After glancing at the clock, he sighed and nudged his husband, who groaned and shifted closer.

"Ilya, we have to get up," he said, nudging him again.

"No. Sleep," Ilya mumbled and curled his arm over Shane's stomach tightly.

"Practice is at ten and it's almost a quarter after nine."

"We will skip practice today."

"Wiebe said this one is mandatory."

"Yes."

"Then we need to go." He tried to push Ilya off only for Ilya to tighten his hold. "Ilya…"

"Five more minutes."

Shane rolled his eyes and sighed, "Fine."

Ilya gave a small, pleased smile as he let out his own content sigh.

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Ilya seemed off throughout practice, in the locker room, and the team meeting that followed. Even when Harris brought in the new team puppy, Shane could see the way Ilya's smile didn't quite reach his eyes. In the car on the way home, Ilya just hummed in response to everything Shane said. As soon as Shane pulled the car into the garage, Ilya was moving to get out.

"Hey," Shane said softly, grabbing onto Ilya's forearm. "What's going on with you?"

Ilya shook his head and pulled away. Shane frowned as he watched Ilya head inside. He sat back in his seat, letting out a heavy sigh before getting out of the car and getting their practice bags from the backseat. He dropped the bags in the laundry room then went off in search of his husband to find him in the kitchen, muttering to himself in Russian as he started dinner.

"*Blyat*!" Ilya yelled, closing the fridge door harder than necessary and leaning his forehead against it.

Shane stared at him bewildered as Ilya resumed muttering to himself and turned back to the counter, rubbing a hand over his face. Most of his muttering was too quiet for Shane to make out or piece together to translate. At least it was until Ilya said something causing Shane's eyes to dart to the calendar on the wall and his chest to ache.

"*Prosti, mama*," Ilya whispered, pressing his thumb and forefinger to the inner corners of his eyes.
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"Ilya…" Shane stepped closer and rested a hand on Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya froze then dropped his hand, blinking back tears. "I…I forget meat. Is still in freezer."

"I can run to the store and buy more. It's not like we won't ever use the chuck roast in the freezer."

He shook his head and forced a smile. "No, I will cook something else."

"No, you won't. We're having borscht. That is what we planned. I should've made sure the meat was defrosting before we went to bed last night. I said I would get it out." Shane squeezed Ilya's shoulder. "I'll be right back."

Before Ilya could protest, Shane kissed his cheek and walked away.

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Shane returned an hour later to find Ilya laying on the living room floor, playing with Anya. He quickly tucked the small cake he bought into a part of the pantry he knew Ilya wouldn't pay a second glance. By the time he turned around, Ilya was already walking back into the kitchen and quietly getting back to work making dinner. Shane hesitated before giving a sad smile and heading upstairs to change into something more comfortable than his jeans then down to the living room to read on the sofa.

Every now and then, Shane looked up from his book and towards the kitchen, giving Ilya a smile whenever he looked in Shane's direction. Shane only recieved slightly pained smiles in return. While the soup simmered, Ilya settled back on the living room floor with Anya.

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After a quieter than usual dinner, Shane sent Ilya off to relax while he cleaned up. He watched as Ilya went from sitting and watching the movie he hadn't finished the night before to laying across the sofa with Anya curled up next to him and focusing his attention on petting her head. Shane got the cake out from the pantry and set it on the counter before joining Ilya in the living room. Instead of nudging Ilya to move so he could sit on the couch, Shane pushed the coffee table back a few inches and sat half pressed against the couch, eye level with Ilya. He smiled softly as he pressed a kiss to Ilya's cheek then stroked his thumb over the sharp stubble covering his jaw.

"Hey," Ilya whispered.

"Hey." Shane kissed the crease forming between Ilya's eyebrows.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"No." He shook his head then patted the space next to him Anya had just moved from in favor of the sound of her automatic feeder. "Come."

Shane moved to wedge himself onto the couch with Ilya, letting himself be rearranged until he was on his back with Ilya draped halfway over him, head resting on Shane's chest. Ilya

fidgeted absentmindedly with the hem of Shane's shirt before sliding his hand underneath to rest against bare skin. Shane stroked Ilya's back for a bit, slowly feeling some of the tension ease.

"I miss her," Ilya said after a while, his voice barely above a whisper.

"I know." Shane kissed the top of his head.

"She loved her birthday. My father thought it was…" Ilya gestured as if he was trying to summon the word from thin air. "Crazy."

Shane hummed softly, encouraging Ilya to continue.

"I think she was…" He swallowed the lump forming in his throat. "She was proud to live another year. Even her last, she had been so sad but that day she was happy. Smiling."

Shane brushed the curls that were falling into Ilya's face off his forehead as they fell back into silence. The only sounds were the credits on the movie and the occasional soft sniff from Ilya fighting back his tears.

"I've told you about the next week, yes?" Ilya asked after a few minutes.

"Yeah, a bit. You told me she seemed happy and at ease, and a little about that day."

Ilya nodded, the crease between his eyebrows forming again. "She was. I thought she was better maybe. I knew she took pills. I thought they started working. I guess they worked too well."

Shane shifted to wrap one arm around Ilya's back securely and cradled the back of Ilya's head in his free hand, pressing his lips to the top of his head. He knew what was coming next as Ilya's eyes squeezed shut.

Twelve year old Ilya coming home from hockey practice, dropping his gear and going in search of his mom to tell her how he'd scored three goals during practice. Twelve year old Ilya poking his head into his mom's bedroom, since the door was already half open. Twelve year old Ilya thinking his mom had fallen asleep reading when he saw one arm hanging over the side of the bed and a book on the floor. Twelve year old Ilya calling to her as he approached, then trying to shake her awake to find her skin cold and grey.

"I'm here," Shane murmured into Ilya's hair as tears began to soak through his shirt. "I've gotcha."

Ilya pressed his face into Shane's shirt, as if he was trying to hide the quiet sobs that shook his body. Shane held him tighter and occasionally whispered soft reassurances he knew Ilya paid no attention to. Even when Ilya's sobs slowed and he began to pull back, Shane reluctantly letting him, he didn't stop murmuring. At least, he didn't until he realized Ilya wiped away his own tears and looked up at Shane.

"Thirty-four," Ilya said, fighting back the fresh wave of tears.

"Thirty-four?"

"She…" He laid his head back on Shane's chest.

Shane stared down at him confused for a moment before it sank in. They'd had a similar conversation back in June around Ilya's thirty-fifth birthday. The day Ilya was hit with how he'd lived longer than his mom. Shane wished in the last four months he'd come up with something he could say to make Ilya feel better about it, but he still came up empty. So, he focused on holding Ilya close and hoped that was enough as the room drifted into silence. Shane closed his eyes and stroked Ilya's back, feeling his husband settle against him once more. He was just starting to doze off when he felt a cold wet nose against his cheek then Anya trying to jump up onto the sofa. Before Shane could open his eyes, Anya had determined the best place to jump was onto his legs, landing dangerously close to his groin.

"Fuck, really, Anya?" Shane looked down at her then at Ilya at the sound of a small huff, unsure if the sound was the sign of more tears or of laughter.

"She wanted to join," Ilya said with a small smile, reaching down to scratch her behind the ear.

Shane just let out a hum as Anya looked back at him, appearing rather pleased with herself. He rolled his eyes and bit back his usual comment about her on the furniture. It was useless anyway. Instead he said, "By the way, I bought a cake when I was out. I hope it's the right one."

Ilya nodded.

"We can cut it when you're ready."

"Okay."

"She would've been proud of you. And I think she would've loved your borscht."

Ilya hummed then shook his head. "Proud of me, yes. Loved my cooking? I'm not so sure."

"I love your cooking."

"Yes, because I don't overcook my fried eggs."

"Fuck you. I was going to be nice and make us breakfast poutine on Saturday."

"You can as long as I cook the eggs."

Shane narrowed his eyes at Ilya before saying, "Deal."

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They settled in bed a few hours later, Shane tucked into Ilya's side and Ilya absentmindedly twisting his fingers through Shane's shower damp hair. He could feel as Shane's body grew more relaxed beside him as he dozed off. A part of Ilya would have liked to join him in sleep
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and forget the ache the day had brought and the knowledge of another day darkened by the memory of his mom's last days. The other part of him wanted to stay awake and feel the knot in his chest loosen with each stroke of his fingers through Shane's dark hair and the quiet snores his husband let out. Shane let out a soft huff in his sleep and shifted, tightening the arm draped over Ilya with a smile. The band on his left ring finger pressed into Ilya's side. Ilya smiled down at him then settled back and closed his eyes.

And between the wind outside, the dishwasher downstairs, the rustling from Anya resettling at the end of the bed, and Shane's snoring, Ilya swore he could hear a familiar voice murmuring, *"Ya tebya lyublyu, Ilyushenka."*

End Notes

If you aren't like me and translate things while you read...

Blyat = Fuck
Prosti, mama = I'm sorry, mama
"Ya tebya lyublyu, Ilyushenka." = "I love you, Ilyushenka"
Ilyushenka is a diminutive of Ilya that google said is very affectionate and one a mom would use.

If I got any of the Russian wrong, blame google translate. I tried.

Thank you to T, Natalia, Katya, Fern, Ishie, and Brittany for all your encouragement and feed back to my yapping in the last 6 hours about this fic.

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