

#GetWellSoonShane

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#GetWellSoonShane

by [minniekitten](#)

Summary

Shane has a bad case of flu.

While Shane receives much needed love from the everyone, the Internet discovers how close Ilya Rozanov and David Hollander are.

Notes

This fic was created because my boyfriend got sick and I really missed him :(

Chapter two will have the Ilya/David interaction :D

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

Chapter 1

Ilya is in the Centaurs locker room when the announcement is released, catching the NHL world by surprise on a Monday morning.

“Shane Hollander tests positive for H1N1 flu, and it is unclear when he will return.”

by Lydia Martin @ ESPN

This morning, the Centaurs management team released a statement: their player, Shane Hollander, has tested positive for H1N1 flu. He will be away from team practices and upcoming games until further notice.

This news has caused a stir in the NHL. Concern centers on Hollander's marriage to his Russian teammate, Ilya Rozanov, and fears that Rozanov might also be infected. This would leave the Centaurs without two key players at the start of the season. However, the team assures the public that neither Rozanov nor anyone else is infected. Fans are relieved by this update.

Four years ago, Hollander and Rozanov were outed as a couple by Hollander's old teammate, Hayden Pike, in a Cameo video. Now, both play for Ottawa's Centaurs, leading the team to two Stanley Cup wins. The Centaurs are the current NHL champions.

With a prognosis so tightly reserved, it is not unusual for many fans to worry about Hollander's current health state. Nowadays, the news is filled with the increasing cases of both H1N1 flu and other flu variants, with symptoms more aggressive than usual. Here in Canada, hospitals are at their limit; therefore, we advise our readers to be more careful and consult the medical recommendations.

We sincerely hope Shane Hollander has a speedy recovery and he's soon back on the ice.

Ilya reads the article slowly. It is a direct, to-the-point, and factual piece of journalism, Ilya has to admit. Although he cares little for other people's opinions and comments about his life, the media have not been kind in these last four years. Sadly, his husband has suffered more with the scrutiny and judgment. Therefore, Ilya is almost afraid when he opens the comment section. However, he is surprised by the overwhelming positive feedback, with many fans wishing a speedy recovery to his husband. His eyes prickle with unwanted tears, the sudden relief overpowering his emotions. Looking back, Ilya and Shane have overcome so much to freely express their love, and they have worked twice as hard to bring their team to where it is now. Somehow, along the way, Shane and Ilya had earned back their old respect and reputation that preceded them before they were outed. Of course, there will exist a small percentage of homophobia associated with the sport. However, slowly and surely, the mentality is changing and evolving to a more open-minded society.

The couple had never discussed their current situation, yet Ilya couldn't help but feel pride, especially in who they have grown as people and what they symbolize to the sport. Yet, what Ilya feels even more joy in is how much Shane has flourished. His husband had always been

prone to resisting change, his routine somehow getting perturbed; now, Shane has fully embraced that he is one of the faces of change in the NHL world, and to many other queer athletes from a spectrum of various sports.

Also, their Irina Foundation is breaking records year after year, generating a lot of awareness for suicide prevention, as well as a safe environment for young aspiring hockey athletes. Their participant numbers were doubling each year, and Ilya couldn't be happier to have his mother's name attached to such a beautiful cause.

Ilya closes the article, and he is immediately greeted with Shane's face. His wallpaper is a candid shot of Shane back at the cottage during a golden sunset. His husband is smiling brightly at the camera while holding their dog, Anya. What Ilya loves the most about this photo is how detailed he can see his husband's freckles. Annoyingly beautiful freckles, Ilya thinks, absently tracing Shane's cheeks.

And now his Shane is sick, and Ilya is missing him like crazy.

It all started last Friday morning. Ilya had woken up to Shane shivering by his side, his eyes tightly closed, which was unusual. His husband was known for his early-bird tendencies, always waking up early in the morning to do yoga or prepare his disgusting smoothies. That was Ilya's first warning that something was amiss.

Instinctively, Ilya called Shane's mother, worried about Shane's condition. His hands shook as he tried to grab the phone as securely as possible. "Something is wrong with Shane."

Ilya's brain completely blanked, and he just followed Yuna's orders. Firstly, she demanded that Ilya put on a mask, open the apartment's window, and pack a week's worth of clothes.

"Why pack clothes?" Ilya had asked, confused, while his mother-in-law was on speaker. Sensing something was wrong, Anya followed Ilya around the house, her big brown eyes shining with sadness.

"You are both professional athletes, Ilyusha. It is best for you to stay apart for these next few days, especially considering you will have two important games next week." Yuna had tried her best to sound as tender as possible while delivering that devastating blow.

Shocked and angry, Ilya had frozen on his tracks. "I don't want to be away from Shane." The words had come out somewhat strangled and panicky, laced with his Russian accent, overly pronounced. "You can't ask me to leave him like this."

"Oh, my sweet Ilya, you don't have to worry, I will take care of Shane." Yuna sighed on the other side of the call.

Even though Ilya knew that Yuna was right, he did not like the idea at all. "I might be infected already." He tried weakly, but in vain.

"Focus on packing your essentials and Anya's, and we are already contacting the Centaurs," Yuna answered, and Ilya could hear David's voice talking in the background. "I will be there in fifteen. See you soon, Ilyusha."

After the call ended, Ilya stared at his phone for a minute, still processing all the information. Although he knew that he needed to pack quickly, his body didn't seem to want to follow his instructions. His feet moved back to their shared bedroom, where his husband still slept, completely unaware of the chaos surrounding him. Light as a feather, Ilya approached him, afraid any sound could wake him. From his point of view, Ilya could see how damp Shane's hair was, glued to his forehead. Very carefully, Ilya caressed Shane's hair. He had never seen Shane sick before, and this reality was difficult to assimilate.

"I love you." Ilya gently murmured in Russian. "Your mom will be here soon."

True to her word, Yuna appeared fifteen minutes later, accompanied by the team doctors, just as Ilya had finished backing everything up. While the doctor examined his beloved, Yuna gave Ilya a big hug. "Everything will be okay, my darling." And Ilya never wanted a statement to be so true in his life.

Outside, David was waiting for Ilya and Anya with his characteristic kind smile. "We will have chicken parmesan for lunch." With such a simple statement, Ilya felt the tears running down his face, which he tried to quickly hide. If David had noticed them, he did not comment.

On the drive to the Hollander's, the Centaurs team chat exploded with the news as the team was called to the infirmary for testing. Everyone was understandably worried about Shane's condition, and Ilya had no update to give them. Although only Shane's test came back positive for H1N1 flu, the doctor thought it was best that all members be tested one more time on Monday morning. "This year, the flu variants are extremely aggressive." The doctor explained over the phone. "We are worried that Shane is showing signs of early pneumonia. We will stay vigilant."

And thus began Ilya's longest weekend. David and Anya tried their best to distract Ilya in all possible ways, yet nothing could ease the hollowness that lived in his chest. Even though they received constant updates from Yuna on Shane's condition, the silence from the man himself was killing Ilya painfully, and he would find himself on the brink of tears just by the mere thought of wondering how Shane was. It was almost pathetic how much he missed his husband.

However, Ilya could no longer dwell in these negative feelings much longer. His second test had come back negative, which meant Ilya was officially cleared to return to the training sessions. In two days, the Centaurs would have a game against the Winnipeg team. As captain, Ilya had the obligation to guide his team to victory; therefore, his head should focus on the prize, even if his heart would not.

"Hey, captain." Their goalie, Wyatt Hayes, enters the locker room, face dark. "How is Shane?"

"I have not talked to him directly," Ilya admits, crossing his arms over his chest. "Yuna keeps me on the loop daily, but Shane seems to spend his days sleeping."

Hayes swears, under his breath, "Man, fuck that flu. I can't imagine Hollander sleeping more than the recommended eight hours a day." Ilya laughs, internally agreeing with the goalie.

Soon, the whole team arrives at the locker room, as no one tested positive in the second round, either. The grim, worried mood persists as everyone is concerned with their teammate, as expected. The responsibility of lifting the mood should fall on Ilya's shoulders as the team's captain, yet no one anticipates it from him at the moment.

"Hello team!" Coach Wiebe enters the locker room, Harris right behind him with a smile a little too forced than usual. "I know no one is in the right headspace for this training today. Hollander's absence is indeed much present, and we are all hoping for a speedy recovery."

"Which is why I thought it might be a good idea to film a quick video for Shane to alleviate the tension," Harris explains, while he looks directly at Ilya, trying to read the captain's expression. "Just a quick message wishing him to get well soon. Even though this video would be for Shane, we would also publish on the social media accounts to tranquilize the fans, if you guys agree, of course."

After Harris finishes his little speech, the whole team looks at Ilya, waiting for his response. Knowing Shane, Ilya knew he still struggled with receiving this type of public exposure and love that Harris pretended to generate with the video. Yet, Ilya knew that Shane deserved it, and he agreed that the team needed to release some of the tension in the air. Also, Ilya would play this video for Shane in the future to see him turn red with embarrassment.

"Let's do it."

[The video opens with Harris holding a small mic. The hockey rink is empty in the background.]

Harris Drover: Hello, everyone. I am Harris Drover, the Centaur's VP of communications. As you may know, our Shane Hollander has tested positive for H1N1 flu. This year, this type of flu has very aggressive symptoms, and the team doctor has advised Shane to rest as long as his body needs to make a full recovery. (Smiles sadly to the camera) We decided to make a small video for Shane as we miss him and we wish him to return quickly! The topic of today's video is what Shane's best quality is.

[The video pans to Wyatt Hayes in full hockey gear, helmet in hand. Ilya can be seen in the background warming up.]

Wyatt Hayes: Hi, Hollz (waves at the camera). You are going to hate this video when you see it because the team will be super sappy. (Harris protests behind the camera) But you do deserve some love! (laughs) To me, Shane's best quality is how humble he is. Of course, he has the Canadian politeness and all that! With his level of talent, you would think Shane would be all cocky and asshole. On the contrary, Shane is down-to-earth and overall an amazing guy! (Wyatt puts on his helmet.) Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Zane Boodram, who looks very solemn to the camera.]

Zane Boodram: Hey, Shane. When you are better, I will cook you your favourite meal. (Moves closer to the camera with his pinkie extended.) Pinky promise!

[The video cuts to Luca Haas.]

Luca Haas: I like Shane's natural ability to teach others. He is a strict and tough teacher, truth to be said. (Laughs) But Shane always tries his best to be a quiet supporter, like a safety net. (Looks around before approaching the camera and mumbles) Also, Shane protects me from the captain's constant teasing. Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Zane Boodram again.]

Zane Boodman: (Scratches his chin) There are a lot of good qualities to our number 24. I could say his awkward politeness, but that is just his Canadian politeness.

[The video cuts to Evan Dykstra.]

Evan Dykstra: Hollz, I will try not to be so sappy like the other guys! I like how you try to be the best version of yourself every day. I admire you a lot for that! Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Zane Boodram again.]

Zane Boodman: (Still scratching his chin) I could say his stubborn determination, but it's too related to hockey, and I am trying to think more personally.

[The video cuts to Troy Barrett.]

Troy Barrett: Hi, Shane! And his best quality is his resiliency, how he never gives up, even when everything seems lost. (Troy looks meaningfully at the camera) Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Zane Boodram once again.]

Zane Boodman: I could say his punctuality, but it's still hockey-related.

[The video cuts to the three rookies skating on the rink.]

Rookies: Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Zane Boodram *once* again.]

Zane Boodman: I know! I love Shane's dry humour. It cracks me up every time. Get well soon, Shane!

[The video cuts to Coach Wiebe.]

Brandon Wiebe: Hey, kiddo (smiles like a dad to the camera). To me, Shane's best qualities are his patience and reliability. I can always count on him. Get well soon, Shane.

[The video cuts for a montage of Ilya Rozanov skating, focused, taking many shots at Wyatt Hayes. The camera moves closer to Wyatt Hayes.]

Wyatt Hayes: (breathing hard)

Harris Drover: You okay, Hayes?

Wyatt Hayes: I am fine. Rozanov just needs to vent a bit. Really get well soon, Shane. Your husband is a beast!

[The video finally cuts to Ilya Rozanov, who is staring blankly at the camera.]

Ilya Rozanov: There is no best quality in Shane, because everything about Shane is the best to me. Is what makes Shane Shane. (The lump in his throat moves) Solnysko, please get well soon.

[The video ends]

Comments:

@CentaursFan: Day after day, this team proves how they care so much for each other
#GetWellSoonShane

@Hockey8124: I am not crying, you are! #GetWellSoonShane

@russian_translation_acc: For those wondering, Ilya called Shane his sunshine.

@MrsRozanova: MY HEART MY BABY! THIS WAS BEAUTIFUL! #GetWellSoonShane

@ottawa_fan: How can you not like these guys? #GetWellSoonShane

@boodrambeard: I know the video is sweet af, but I laughed at how many times Boodram appeared trying to decide what he likes best about Shane! #GetWellSoonShane

@centaursbestteam4ever: Harris always knows what the fans want #GetWellSoonShane

@hollander_24_fanacc: Coach Wiebe is such a dad. #dadvibes #GetWellSoonShane

@cutestpotato: I cackled when Hayes said Shane would hate the video! #sotrue
#GetWellSoonShane

@bears_fan: I am not a Centaurs fan, but this team has something magical about them
#GetWellSoonShane

ZaneBoodramOfficial posted a photo.

[The photo is of Shane and Zane in full hockey gear.]

Caption: Can't wait to train with you again! #GetWellSoonShane

TroyBarrettOfficial posted a photo.

[The photo is of Shane, Ilya, Troy, and Harris on their last double date.]

Caption: Shane is one of the best players in the league, and I have massive respect for him as a player and person. #GetWellSoonShane

WyattHayesOfficial posted a photo.

[The photo is of Shane and Wyatt in full hockey gear, hugging.]

Caption: I need you to come back quickly so your husband does not kill me with his shots
#GetWellSoonShane

EvanDykstraOfficial posted a photo.

[The photo is of Shane during one practice session, smiling with his eyes closed.]

Caption: The man, Hollz #GetWellSoonShane

HaydenPike35Official posted a photo.

[The photo is Shane surrounded by Hayden's kids while Amber, the youngest, is in his arms.]

Caption: Shane is and will be forever one of my best friends. I could not ask for a better uncle for my kids. #GetWellSoonShane

RoseLandry posted a photo.

[The photo showcases Rose hugging both Shane and Ilya, Shane's cottage in the background.]

Caption: Showing love and support for my boys!! #GetWellSoonShane

JJ_Boiziau posted a photo.

[The photo shows only Shane with the biggest smile.]

Caption: Mon ami #GetWellSoonShane

Ilya stares at his phone, his social media feed filled with posts wishing Shane to get better soon. Their video had quickly gone viral, and soon the hashtag #GetWellSoonShane was trending worldwide. Ilya could not believe how much love Shane was receiving from everyone, even non-fans. It was like all the NHL world had united for the first time for a good cause. Plus, Shane did deserve all the love in the world.

With that thought in mind, Ilya opens his phone gallery, looking for a photo of his husband. He stumbles across one from the beginning of the season, where Shane is comfortable reading on their sofa with his glasses perched up on his nose. Their dog, Anya, is lying down next to him, sleeping. The simplicity of the photo is what makes Ilya love it the most. It reminds him of the quieter days, when they had the rare opportunity of lazing around, simply enjoying the company of each other.

IlyaRozanov81 posted a photo.

Caption: My better half #GetWellSoonShane

Immediately, notifications are pouring in with people commenting under his post, alternating between love for him and love for Shane.

Unexpectedly, his phone signals a call is incoming, and Ilya almost drops his phone when he spots the caller's name.

“Shane?”

From the other side, Ilya hears the softest voice. “Ilya.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

I had a lot of fun writing this chapter, hope you like it :)

“Shane?”

“Ilya.”

Shane’s illness lingers in the deep shadows beneath his eyes and the pallor of his skin. Ilya would give up anything just to sit beside him in this moment.

Although Ilya attempts to hold a blank expression, his worry is unmaskable. In response, Shane stares pitifully. “How are you, sweetheart?”

Surprised by the question, Ilya scoffs. “You are unbelievable, Shane Hollander.” He shakes his head, feigning exasperation as a teasing smile plays at his lips. “You’re the one in bed with the flu, and you’re worried about me? That’s rich.”

Shane visibly rolls his eyes, and he opens his mouth about to retort, but he is interrupted by a sudden and violent coughing fit. All humour leaves Ilya as it is replaced with cold and instant concern.

If it were possible, Ilya would have punched that fucking flu out of Shane’s body.

“Ah, my chest hurts.” Shane absently complains, rubbing his sternum. A pause. “Don’t look at me like that, Ilya.”

“You are not my boss,” Ilya sticks his tongue out, brazenly. “I almost saw you throw up a lung.”

His tone may be playful, but it’s pure deflection. Ilya had never seen Shane this sick before, and it physically pains him. In these situations, you truly realise how fragile the human being is. Ilya just wants to protect Shane at all costs.

“Don’t be a dick, I am sick.”

“Don’t you say, I did not notice it at all.” His russian accent slips in more prominently as he mocks.

“Asshole.” Shane retorts with that smile that always makes Ilya’s heart do a flip.

Ilya sighs before admitting. “I miss you.”

“I miss you too.” Shane puckers his lips to send him a kiss, to which Ilya does not blush. “Tell me what happened while I was asleep these past days.”

Ilya keeps talking, their words weaving through the hours until time feels irrelevant. Shane listens, eyes warm and attentive, his own voice little more than a whisper thanks to his sore throat. But Ilya is happy to speak for both of them, slipping easily between Russian and English as the conversation drifts on.

Speaking English is always difficult when Ilya’s emotions are too intense, too close to home. Yet, Shane does not mind as he is now versatile in both languages. So, Ilya tells Shane about how much his friends and teammates are missing him, how the internet is full of love for him, and Ilya has the pleasure of seeing a hint of blush across those freckled cheekbones.

Eventually, he hangs up. Ilya knows he has a silly smile on his face, and the tightness in his chest is a little lighter.

Tuesday afternoons are reserved for puzzle night with David Hollander. It was a tradition that started when Ilya first moved to Ottawa. Those quiet, precious moments with his father-in-law are something that Ilya has treasured deeply.

Normally, Yuna and Shane would be obsessively discussing hockey, glued to the television, while Ilya and David enjoyed some peace together. However, David had made an unusual request when Ilya had returned from his morning practice.

“Would you mind doing a QnA during our puzzle time?”

Caught off guard by the question, Ilya raises his eyebrow. “I would not, but why?”

“Well,” David drawls the word, his eyes shifting embarrassingly. “It’s weird without Yuna and Shane here. I thought if we did a livestream, maybe they would be a part of it in some way.”

Because it’s not only Ilya who is currently suffering; David is undoubtedly too. So, without a second thought, Ilya readily agrees to his father-in-law's request. “I also have seen many QnA’s videos and I always thought that they looked cool.” Ilya can’t help but laugh.

So, after posting about it on his Instagram for people to send him and David’s questions, Ilya spent the rest of the day combing through the feedback. Even though Shane and Ilya have been publicly dating for some time now, their fans still have a lot of curiosity surrounding them.

After having dinner together, Ilya and David set up the camera and the puzzle they would be doing together. “If some question makes you uncomfortable, just tell me, and we move on. No worries.” Ilya tells David, as he is centring the camera, to have both of them in frame.

David shrugs before answering, “I am not worried because I am doing this with you. I trust you, Ilyusha.”

“If Shane were here, he would warn you.” Ilya teases. “I am a menace in interviews.”

“Oh, I know, I have seen them.” David barks out a laugh, the skin around his eyes wrinkling with the action. “But I still trust you to know my boundaries, and I know you veto some questions. ”

And the meaningful look David sends him warms Ilya’s heart at such validation and reassurance. Ilya feels like he is twelve again, before he lost his mother and started wearing his persona as a protection. Yet, the Hollanders tried their best to bring love, complicity, affection, and care into Ilya’s life in small things. He would never admit how much he loved that they called him Ilyusha, how his inner child was slowly and surely healing.

After all, to be loved is to be seen, and the Hollander family members have done everything to prove that statement true over and over again.

“Well, no going back now, dear father-in-law!” Ilya throws David his signature cheeky smile before hitting the livestream button on Instagram.

IlyaRozanov81 started a live.

[Ilya and David wave at the camera, the latter with some awkwardness.]

Ilya: Welcome to the puzzle night! I am here with someone special, my dearest father-in-law, David Hollander! (Ilya imitates confetti with his hands as he points to David, who is laughing nervously.)

David: Hello.

(Awkward pause.)

David (mumbles): What do I do now?

Ilya (completely unfazed by David’s timidness): Now, you present the puzzle of today.

David (grabs the box for a 1000 puzzle-piece with mountains on the cover): I chose this simple one, since we cannot stay up too late. Don’t forget that you have a game tomorrow.

Ilya (mockingly saluting): You sound just like Shane now.

David (laughs): Oh, I didn't even ask. How do you feel about tomorrow's game?

Ilya (smiles with a cocky and dangerous edge): The team is focused on winning, especially to make our Shane proud. (Turns to the camera and clears his throat) David had the idea to do a QnA today while we complete our puzzle. And I have had a peek at the questions, and there are some interesting ones!

David (jokes): Let's hope we don't give Harris an aneurysm.

Ilya: He is probably already sweating, rethinking his life choices.

David (shakes his head, laughing): He is probably not the only one. Shane and Yuna might be too.

Ilya (winks to the camera): Oh, I hope they are watching!

David: You like chaos a bit too much.

Ilya: Lies! I am an angel, a very well-behaved angel.

David: In fact, you are well-behaved when you want, which is once every blue moon.

Ilya (hand over his chest theatrically): You wound me, David. And I don't have your son here to protect me.

David (rolls his eyes before getting serious): Just a quick update, Shane is slowly recovering, but he's following the doctor's orders to the teeth.

Ilya (snickers): If he didn't, Yuna would whoop his ass.

David (laughs): Indeed.

[In a comfortable silence, they open the puzzle box and start organising the pieces, finding the edge pieces.]

Ilya: So, let's start. The first question is for David. When did you meet Yuna?

David: We met when I was a junior at McGill. I played for the hockey team, and one day, there was this fiery freshman arguing with the coach about tactics, and pointing out our flaws so detailly that she had everyone's attention.

Ilya: That does sound like Yuna. (David laughs in agreement) And then what happened?

David: She joined the team as a strategist, and she was just brilliant and witty, and I was mesmerised by her determination. But my heart was a goner when I made her laugh for the first time.

Ilya: And you were hooked from day one. (David nods) I know the feeling very well.

David (steals a glance at Ilya before realising a breathy laugh): Shane and Yuna are very similar in the way they operate. Sometimes, I wonder if my genes contributed to anything when we made Shane.

Ilya (stares intently at David): Shane has your chin and your awkward smile. Plus, Shane is more reserved than Yuna. You two prioritise the peace and quiet and boring time.

David: I feel both insulted and complimented.

Ilya (winks): Thank you.

David: Next question?

Ilya: It is similar to the last one. When did you know that Yuna was the one?

David (pauses, clearly thinking): Quite early into the relationship. I believe it was our sixth date. We just had a simple dinner and decided to go for a walk in the park.

David (David smiles nostalgically): And we stopped by a lake. I was just appreciating the view and the feeling of Yuna's hand in mine. When I turned to look at Yuna, she was staring at our reflection in the lake. Without missing a beat, she said, "We will make cute children together." And in that moment, I knew that she was the one for me.

Ilya (laughs, throwing his head back): She was not wrong.

David: She rarely is.

Ilya: David, that is so romantic and cute shit. Does Shane know about this story?

David: Thank you, and no, he does not. I didn't even tell Yuna. At the time, I just confessed for the first time that I loved her. We got engaged by that lake, too.

Ilya: Wow, you could have known David Hollander had such a romantic side! And thank you for sharing. I feel very honoured.

David (hesitantly): Do you know how your parents met?

Ilya (nods): Yes, arranged marriage. Nothing cute nor romantic.

David: I am sorry-

Ilya (raises his hand): Don't worry, David. It does not affect me. It was their circumstance, nothing we can change. (Clears throat) Next question, since it is for me, maybe you can read it, David.

David: Ilya, will you or Shane ever tell the full story of how you and Shane got together?

Ilya: The full story? No, it is too personal for both of us. It isn't as romantic or cute as yours, David. However, Shane and I have recently discussed sharing a summarised version of it.

David (stares at the camera): Even Yuna and I are still piecing everything together. But, I am not surprised, Shane was always a quiet, serious child, too mature for his age. We always tried to create a safe and trusting environment for him, but Shane tends to live in his thoughts, unaware of the world around him.

[All the edge pieces are placed in the right spot.]

Ilya (nods): Shane has a hard time translating his thoughts into words, and understanding and identifying his feelings. And worse, he overthinks everything he says or does to the point of panicking.

David (looking down at the pieces in his hand): My sweet boy always seems to carry the world on his shoulders, as if everything is his responsibility. But you are the same, Ilyusha, which is why you two understand so well.

Ilya (deflects): I don't know what you mean.

David (laughs): Don't be cheeky with me.

Ilya: Yes, sir. (David ruffles Ilya's hair, affectionately) The next question is also for me. Could you please read it?

David: Who made the first move, Shane or Ilya? I am also curious about this one.

Ilya: It's a tricky answer.

(A pause as Ilya mulls over the question.)

Ilya: Shane and I met at the World Juniors Competition in Saskatchewan. It was Shane who first approached me to introduce himself and confessed that he admired me as a player.

David (nods): Makes sense. You were a prodigy from Russia, whilst Shane was a prodigy from Canada. You two were already being compared even back then. Even though Shane never admitted it, he was curious about you. When we first saw you train, I remember that Shane perked up, his eyes full of determination, admiration and competition.

Ilya: Talent recognises talent.

David: Always modest.

Ilya: It's true, why downplay our qualities? But, continuing the story. I was outside smoking at a forbidden place (David snickers). Of course, Shane points out that, but he does it in his nice Canadian posture. My English was still very basic, and I could barely understand what he was saying. To be honest, I was distracted by his freckles.

David: They are adorable.

Ilya (nods): And then I told him, "You will not be so nice to me after we beat you."

David (barks out a laugh): I now understand why Shane said you were kind of a dick after meeting you.

Ilya: He did? But I did beat him that time (smiles proudly). Then we started our rookie year, and we were dancing around each other, teasing and competing with one another.

David: We call it pigtailling.

Ilya (nods): Unknowingly, I was already in love. Contrary to me, I know Shane was truly annoyed with my persona.

David: You got under his skin.

Ilya (smirks): Looking back, he was confusing what he was truly feeling with annoyance. But to answer the question, I was the one who made the first move when I noticed Shane's interest in me after we filmed an ad together.

David (confused): An ad? I only remember the CCM one.

Ilya: That one. I asked to do it with Shane when they first approached me. I took it as an opportunity to tease him even more.

David (laughs): Sneaky. That's so you, though.

Ilya: That's when start meeting casually when we were in the same city. Nothing too serious. The younger generation calls it situationship. We just enjoyed each other's company. As the technology advanced, we started texting and FaceTiming, and all that.

David: Wait, were you not afraid of your conversations leaking to the press?

Ilya (laughs while shaking his head): No, we have code names for each other. Shane is saved under Jane on my phone while I am Lily on his phone.

David: Jane and Lily. Shane and Ilya. Clever.

Ilya (mocks bow): Thank you. It was my idea.

[The puzzle is half done at this point.]

David: Then you were not all that time together?

Ilya: No, we had times we stopped talking. There were times when the pressure was too suffocating. There was the rivalry, my nationality and no publicly queer players. (Ilya sighs) We could not afford to acknowledge our feelings because feelings would lead to complications and hurt.

(Another pause, as the two work together on the puzzle.)

David: Then what changed?

Ilya: As it deeply pains me to admit it was Scott Hunter. When I kissed Kip after winning the Stanley Cup, Shane and I took the opportunity to try for real. To truly give our relationship a shot.

David: And here we are. You two have come a long way.

Ilya: Indeed. (A pause) Now, the next question is for you, David. Did you suspect Shane was gay?

David: We did actually. There were girlfriends, yes, but I know my son. I could never see him completely serious with them. It was like something was missing in the chemistry. However, Yuna and I vowed to give Shane space and privacy in this regard. What I did not expect was finding out my son was gay the way I did.

(They share a look before both start laughing.)

Ilya: To Shane, it is the second-worst day of his life. He still gets mortified.

David: Could I tell the story?

Ilya: I see no problem. But maybe let me just add a bit of context on the timeline. In 2017, Shane was hit by Marlow in that game. I visited Shane in the hospital, and he invited me to spend the next summer with him in the cottage. It was the first summer I did not return to Russia, and we finally gave our relationship a go.

David: On the other hand, Shane tells us that he wants to do a silent retreat at the cottage (Ilya snickers). Then, one day, I need to grab something from the cottage, and I go, and I find my son making out, not only with a guy but with his famous rival.

Ilya (laughs): It is funny now, but it wasn't at that time.

David (pats Ilya's hair): True, but we quickly resolved everything, and as a family, we had a long-overdue conversation.

[The puzzle is finally complete.]

David: Okay, last question, because you need to rest, young man.

Ilya: Let me find a good one. Oh, this one is perfect. What was the first impression of me?

David: Hum. In my head, there are two moments: when I first heard of Ilya Rozanov, Russian hockey prodigy, and when I met Ilya Rozanov, the boyfriend. To the first one, I only had the image of a confident, sarcastic and savage on the rink. Your interviews did not help your case!

(Ilya nods.)

David: Then, I met you after the cottage incident. You two were so visibly afraid, and it broke my heart. Yet your actions spoke louder than words: you were so polite, so caring, and I could see how much you loved my son.

(David raises his hand, holding Ilya's cheek.)

David: You, better than anyone, have taught me to see beyond the outside performance. I am very grateful you entered Shane's life. And you must know I have loved you as if you were my son since day one.

(There is a pause as silent tears fall on Ilya's cheeks.)

Ilya (raspy): David, this is terrible for my reputation. (Quickly, Ilya wipes his tears) Everyone will think I've turned soft!

David: Don't worry, Ilyusha. Everyone knows how dangerous you are on the ice. Now, it's time to rest.

(David stands up and leaves the frame.)

Ilya: David, we have to say goodbye. Bye, guys!

David (still not in frame): Bye!!

IlyaRozanov81 ended the live.

Two weeks later, Shane is back on the rink, and he is ecstatic. Not only have the Centaurs just won, but Shane was named MVP. The whole room is chanting with Shane's name, and he can't stop smiling. Recovering from that annoying flu had taken longer than initially expected, the coughing fits being the worst part. However, Shane had just led the team to another victory, and there is no better way to come back.

"We won!" Shane hugs Ilya. "I missed playing so badly."

"I know, love, but you did a good job today." Ilya smiles. "Even with a weak backhand."

Shane playfully hits his husband's chest. "Asshole!"

Ilya responds by sticking out his tongue. "Because you played so good you have the opportunity to talk to the reporters."

"Fine." He plants a quick peck on Ilya's lips. "See you later."

The conference room is packed with reporters, patiently waiting for the players to appear. As soon as Shane appears, he is bombarded with questions, cameras flashing brightly.

“Shane, this was a wonderful comeback game. How do you feel?” A woman journalist in her thirties asks excitedly.

“It is great to be back, especially with a win for the team,” Shane answers politely. “I know my recovery took longer than expected. This flu was no joke, and I urge everyone to take precautions and take care of themselves.”

“Speaking of your recovery,” A male journalist in his forties intervenes, “how did it feel the wave of love sent your way?”

Genuinely, Shane smiles, “I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for the well-wishes, and it was amazing seeing everything that was posted from my friends, family and fans. I especially loved the video my teammates did. I could not help but tear up a bit at how lucky I am.”

“Your husband and father did a livestream on one of the days that completely went viral. Have you seen it?”

“I watched it live, actually,” Shane divulges to the reporter. “I adore watching my parents shower Ilya with love as he totally deserves. However, there were moments I was a bit scared what would leak out from that live.”

The reporters laugh alongside Shane. The questions quickly wrap up, and Shane finds himself back in the locker room where his teammates are getting ready to leave.

As Shane and Ilya are walking out of the Centaur’s centre, Shane grabs Ilya’s hand, kissing it. “Have I told you how much I love you?”

Ilya motions as if he is thinking, “Hum, not today, no.”

“Well, let me remind you,” Shane kisses Ilya, feeling Ilya smiling against his lips. “I love you, now and forever.”

“I love you too, now and forever,” Ilya answers back, their foreheads touching. “And I might have some ideas how you can show me.”

“Dick, don’t ruin our romantic moment.”

End Notes

Kudos and comments are appreciated! Happy new year!

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