

And that night I was happy.

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by [thesumofentropy](#)

Summary

Shane swallows the lump in his throat. “We need your help.”

Yuna sounds slightly concerned, her voice tinny through the phone. “Is everything alright? Should we drive over?”

“Yeah, um—we have a, uh. A—”

“A baby,” Ilya finishes. “You are a grandmother now. Surprise.”

“Sorry, did you—” Yuna pauses. They can hear David faintly in the background. “You mean, like, a baby animal? A puppy?”

“A wishbaby,” Shane croaks. There’s silence on the other end of the line.

“Surprise,” Ilya says again.

Shane and Ilya win the Stanley Cup. They weren’t exactly planning to also win a baby.

Notes

SPOILERS AHEAD!

Ring in the new year with a Hollanov wishbaby fic! Heated Rivalry single-handedly got me through the last month of 2025 so I was bound to write about it at some point. Then I read *The Long Game* (so sweet) and decided they needed a kid, obviously. I got a little invested while writing, which you may be able to tell from the word count.

This starts out at the first playoffs following the epilogue of *The Long Game*, which I think would be in 2022. If you haven’t read TLG, the main things you need to know for this fic are that Shane and Ilya are married, they play for the Ottawa Centaurs together, and they are out to the world about their relationship. Shane’s disordered eating and Ilya’s mental health struggles are also briefly mentioned. Multiple characters from the later books in the series are referenced, but I tried to keep them pretty clear.

Otherwise, the title is from “When I Heard at the Close of the Day” by Walt Whitman, which you can read [here](#). I hope you enjoy!

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

Shane's ears ring with both adrenaline and the sheer sound of the crowd in the arena. He just sank the game winning puck in the Stanley Cup Finals for the team of his hometown, the Ottawa Centaurs. A team that, two years ago, never would have dreamed of making it to the playoffs. A team that's genuine and accepting. A team he didn't know he needed before he joined them at the beginning of the season. A team that has become his family.

His entire team floods the ice, embracing him and each other. The home crowd at Ottawa is causing such a racket that he's sort of afraid they might bring the whole ceiling down. A ceiling that, while currently bare, will boast a Stanley Cup Champions banner come November. Shane's pretty sure he's crying, a little.

Troy, their left wing, wraps an arm around his neck. "Fucking beautiful hands!"

From his other side, he gets a shake to his arm. It's Ilya, of course. Smiling a beautiful, radiant smile that stops Shane's world for a moment. It always does. "Fuck yes, Hollander."

He's so pressed between bodies that he can hardly move, but he manages to get a hand out and press it to Ilya's face. "Nice assist."

Ilya has been starting right wing for the past two games since Bood got laid out in Game 4. Thankfully he's going to be okay, just a tweaked shoulder. But Shane can't explain how nice it is being on a line with his husband. To know precisely where his linemate will be and what his next move will be because they are just that in sync, that ingrained in each other.

"Only for you I play wing," Ilya shouts, grinning. "Only for you I get assists."

Shane just rolls his eyes. The effect is lessened by the perpetual smile on his face.

He's still smiling after the on-ice celebrations and the media interviews, when he's covered in sticky champagne in the locker room. It's the first time he's won a Stanley Cup without being the captain, without being the one to hoist it, but he finds that seeing Ilya hold it above his head feels like it always had when Ilya had played for Boston. He feels proud. And a little bit horny.

Ilya passes the cup off to Luca, who looks like he's still in shock, and takes Shane up into his arms instead. He lifts Shane a couple of inches off of the ground and shakes him.

"Put me down, fucker," Shane laughs, trying to wiggle out of his hold.

"No," Ilya threatens, but sets him down. Ilya folds his arms around him tightly, pressing his sweaty forehead into the curve of Shane's neck. It makes Shane want to kiss him—a real kiss, more than the short, celebratory one they shared on the ice. Their relationship is still sometimes a sore spot for hockey fans and the league, so they try to keep their personal lives and hockey lives separate when they can. But they just won the *Stanley Cup*, for fuck's sake, and now they're in the locker room...

Shane grasps the back of Ilya's neck and pulls him into a kiss. Shane would have called it searing if they both weren't smiling into it. But it's... passionate. Yeah, that's a good word.

The guys must think so, too, because after a few seconds they start getting whistles and hollers.

“Listen, listen,” Ilya says to the room when he breaks their kiss. Shane’s sort of afraid of what he’s going to say—Ilya always says the craziest shit when he’s in a mood like this. “Everyone say thank you to Hollander—” cheers go up around the room, and Shane shakes his head— “for getting the final goal against Denver. It is because he is 31 now, old man, and he doesn’t have time for overtime.”

Shane smacks his chest as the room around them dissolves into laughter and taunts. “Your 31st birthday is tomorrow, asshole.”

Ilya grins, cheeky. “But I will be a hot 31.”

“You’re saying I’m not a hot 31,” Shane says incredulously.

“I think you’re a hot 31,” Harris pipes up. He’s got his phone out, probably taking pictures or filming a video for the team’s social media—which isn’t *technically* his job anymore, but he has a vested interest. Shane hopes they cut out the audio.

Ilya pats Shane on the head. “You are the hottest 31. Behind me.”

Shane ignores him and grabs a glass of champagne, downing it in one go.

“I like the way you think, Hollander,” their goalie, Wyatt, says. He grabs a flute in each hand, clinks them, then hands one to Shane while he downs the other, already walking off. Oh, what the hell. Shane downs that one, too.

He feels Ilya’s hands on his hips. “You are trying to get drunk?”

“It’s just champagne.”

“Do not pretend you are not a lightweight, Mr. Ginger Ale.”

“Let me celebrate our win.”

Ilya laughs. “I like that.” He puts his mouth next to Shane’s ear, so he can whisper into it. “Our win. Our... *cup*.”

Shane shivers. *Fucking hell, Ilya*. A quick glance around the room tells him that no one is paying attention to them, at least. They’re mostly focused on the cup, which Tanner and one of the younger guys are holding. “How do you make everything sound so raunchy,” he complains quietly.

“It is a special skill,” Ilya admits.

“Well, save it for later.” The last thing he needs is to pop a boner in the locker room with all kinds of cameras in the vicinity. Shane spins around and crosses his arms over his chest.

“What’s the plan for the night?”

“Monk’s?” Ilya asks the room. They cheer. “Then for you and me and Harris and Troy, Tony’s.” Tony’s is a gay bar that they frequent. When Shane can be bothered to go out to bars, at least.

“We’ll be out late.”

Ilya raises his eyebrows. “You just won the Stanley Cup. You will be celebrating all night.”

“*All* night?”

Ilya’s grin turns wicked. “And into the morning, too.” He leans down and whispers in Shane’s ear again. “Until you beg me to stop worshipping your body for that pretty goal.”

Shane shoves him away, cheeks already pinkening up beneath his freckles. “Fuck you.”

Ilya laughs as Shane stalks off to the showers.

After a couple of hours celebrating with the team at Monk’s, the four of them—plus Luca, which Shane can’t decide if he’s surprised about or not—head to Tony’s.

When they walk in, they get some cheers from the patrons. A couple of the TVs are tuned into ESPN, showing a highlight reel from the Final. Since four queer hockey players frequent this bar so often, they’ve been able to convert some poor gay souls into Centaurs fans. But obviously so far it’s working out for them. The burly man behind the bar, Oscar, gives them a friendly wave.

They get a couple of pitchers, but they also keep being brought other random drinks courtesy of the patrons. Shane’s trying to keep track of drinks and match them with his water intake, but he’s not sure he’s doing the best job—he’s firmly in tipsy territory. Ilya does not agree.

“You are *drunk*, Hollander,” Ilya teases, squeezing the back of his neck. He’s got an arm draped over the back of the booth. Shane is pressed firmly against Ilya’s left side. “It’s okay. I plan to be drunk for the next three days.”

“You set such a good example, captain,” Troy says dryly.

“The parade’s tomorrow. You can’t be drunk for the *parade*.”

“Who says that?” Ilya asks Shane, raising an eyebrow at him.

“Coach. The league. *Me*.”

“Mm, okay,” Ilya agrees. “I will let you be the drunk one instead.”

“*Ilya*.” Shane starts drinking more water, anyway.

Oscar comes over to their table again. Instead of a whole tray this time, though, it's just one drink that he delivers straight to Luca, who looks kind of gobsmacked. "Bay breeze courtesy of the gentleman on the end," Oscar says and returns to the bar.

Their whole table crane their necks to get a look at this guy, who's staring intently at the TV behind the bar. He has short dark hair and a dark beard and glasses. He looks to be about Shane and Ilya's age, maybe a little older.

Harris whistles. "He's cute."

"He's too old for Haas," Shane complains. Luca was just a rookie last year. Practically a baby. Shane has to remind himself that his thing with Ilya had been going on in *their* rookie season. Or, rather, the summer before.

"Haasy likes older," Ilya assures him. "He likes me."

Luca's face flushes and he sputters. Shane tries to come to the kid's aid. "You think everyone likes you. You're the vainest person I know."

"Maybe he just saw that neat goal you scored earlier and wanted to congratulate you," Troy offers. Shane likes Troy, even though at first he thought he might not. He's actually pretty thoughtful of others, which just shows that Shane should stop judging books by their covers and all that.

Luca seems to relax a little until Harris laughs. "Uh, no. He definitely thinks you're cute."

Troy elbows his boyfriend.

Luca's eyebrows crease. "Should I go thank him?"

Shane remembers how J.J. would always try to play matchmaker, after Shane told him he was gay but before he knew about Ilya, and what an uncomfortable spot that put him in. He doesn't know if Luca is queer—Ilya claims he can sense it, but Shane isn't so sure—and doesn't know if he is seeing anyone, but he sure as hell isn't going to pry into the kid's private life. "Ilya will drink it. He'll drink anything."

"Make up your mind, Shane," Ilya says. Shane glances at his face. Ilya's eyes are shining. Shane wants to kiss him. "Do you want me drunk or not?"

"Not drunk," he says, meaning it. He lifts his glass of water to his mouth and takes a drink. Ilya's eyes flit over him, from his eyes to his lips to his throat. Then Ilya presses his thumb into the curve of Shane's shoulder as his tongue flicks out to wet his bottom lip. It feels like a promise.

Shane has to break eye contact before it becomes too much. Luca has wrapped his fingers around his glass, like he's worried one of them is actually going to take it. "No, it's alright. I'll, um—I'll drink it."

Well. Problem solved. Shane relaxes back into Ilya a little, still sipping his water. He listens to the conversation for a while, contributing when needed, but mostly he just likes the feeling

of being out casually with Ilya, like they're any regular couple. He likes how they don't have to think about how far apart they're sitting from one another, or how it might look if their fingers brush. They just... are.

Eventually, though, Shane gets up. "Going to the bathroom," he tells Ilya.

"Are you still drunk?" Ilya wags his eyebrows and stretches out a hand. "Need my help?"

Shane bats his hand away. "I'm fine, asshole." He's much more sober than he was earlier—now he just feels warm and kind of happy. Though that could be left over from winning the cup.

Shane goes to the bathroom at the back of the bar. Another reason why Shane likes this bar: the bathroom is always pretty clean. When he comes back out of the stall, Ilya is leaning against the counter, holding an unlit cigarette between his teeth.

"You can't smoke in here," Shane says. He starts washing his hands, Ilya in his personal space, then glares up at him. "What the fuck am I even saying? You're not supposed to be smoking, period." With wet hands, he plucks the cigarette from Ilya's lips and drops it in the waste basket.

Ilya groans. "You are so boring, Hollander. Drunk cigarettes make life worth living."

"Oh, but your husband doesn't. Cool."

"So tetchy," Ilya says. Shane wonders where he learned *that* word. Shane dries his hands with paper towels at the same time Ilya comes up behind him, trapping him against the counter. "You need to get laid."

"Probably." Shane meets Ilya's eyes in the mirror.

"What, your husband doesn't take care of you?"

"He's just been—" Shane grinds his ass back into Ilya's crotch, just enough to feel his hardening cock through his jeans—"busy lately. And so have I."

Ilya, in turn, presses his hips forward. His eyes are dark as he tucks a piece of Shane's hair behind his ear. "And now we are both free."

Shane bites his lip. "You want to go?" The bathroom is empty now, but they won't be that lucky for much longer. And Shane's fucking *dying*. If he's being completely honest, he's been dying for it since Ilya's assist earlier.

Ilya spans his hand out over Shane's abdomen. "I want you now."

God, if only. "No..."

"It would be so easy, Hollander. We go into the stall, I cover your mouth—" he fits his free hand snugly over Shane's mouth—"and stroke your cock until you come."

Behind Ilya's hand, Shane moans. He scrabbles at Ilya's fingers, ripping them from his mouth. "Ilya," he pleads, looking deep into his husband's eyes. "Take me home. *Please*."

After a few moments of consideration, Ilya groans and turns away. "I will order the Uber," he says, already tapping away at his phone.

They were able to escape their teammates with only a few knowing glances. Harris and Troy are going to make sure that Luca gets home safe, so they don't have to worry about him. Now the only thing that Shane has to worry about is getting mauled by Ilya as he tries to unlock the front door.

He had held Ilya off in the Uber by telling him to respond to the hundreds of congratulations messages sitting in his phone. Shane had done the same—he had thanked Hayden and J.J., the only Metros he still talks to today, and Rose, who couldn't come to the Final since she's filming in Europe.

Ilya's already got the first two buttons of his shirt undone as they burst through the door. Shane barely has enough time to slip his shoes off before Ilya slams the door closed and has Shane pressed against it. Then Ilya kisses him with an urgency that makes his head spin.

"Fuck," Shane pants against his mouth, Ilya's tongue tracing his bottom lip. Ilya has grabbed hold of Shane's thigh, forcing Shane to wrap his leg around Ilya's hip. "Bed, Ilya."

Ilya grunts and then lifts Shane's other leg, so Ilya's fully holding Shane up. Then, without any obvious effort, Ilya carries him towards their bedroom. It's so hot that Shane has to bury his face in Ilya's shoulder to muffle his whimper.

"Shh, sweetheart," Ilya says. "I have you."

Shane *knows* Ilya has him; that's part of the problem. Or, a problem that isn't even a problem in the first place. "Need you to fuck me," he murmurs, as they cross the threshold of their bedroom.

"Can you even stay awake that long?"

"You're an asshole," Shane says, as Ilya drops him on the bed. Shane's fingers immediately go to his shirt buttons, undoing the rest of them. Ilya, standing between his legs, smooths his hands from Shane's stomach, over his ribcage, and to his pecs.

"So beautiful."

Ilya saying sweet things to him shouldn't have as much of an effect on him after all this time, and yet. Shane raises up and throws his shirt off somewhere behind him. "Now you," he begs.

Ilya slowly unbuttons his stupid purple silk shirt. It falls off of his shoulders like water, settling in a pool at his feet. He grabs Shane's chin. "This is what you wanted?"

"Yes, fuck. I need—" Ilya's thumb slides past his lips, stopping his speech. Which is completely fucking fine. Shane loves having something in his mouth; it quiets something in his brain.

"You are so good, Shane," Ilya tells him as he hollows his cheeks around Ilya's thumb. With his other hand, Ilya undoes the button and zipper on Shane's pants. He sticks his fingers inside Shane's underwear, draws out the head of his cock. "Already wet," Ilya murmurs, running the pad of his thumb over the head.

Shane cries out around Ilya's thumb and then pulls off. "Can you hurry up?"

"Mm," Ilya says, like he's thinking about it. He lets go of Shane and takes his time unbuttoning his tight black jeans. Shane doesn't envy him—they are probably very uncomfortable with a boner. Then Ilya sticks his thumbs in his waistband and pulls, yanking down his pants and underwear all in one go.

When Shane leans forward to take his cock into his mouth, Ilya pushes him back by the chest. Shane frowns at him and Ilya laughs. "Why are you so impatient?"

Shane glares. "I've been worked up all night."

"Is that another way of saying hard?" Ilya asks as he puts his hand back on Shane's cock. They're frustratingly light touches.

"Yes, asshole."

Ilya laughs and pushes Shane back down onto the mattress. He yanks off Shane's pants, then his underwear. Then, almost tenderly, he grips Shane's calves and pulls his socks off of his feet. He looks at Shane as he does one more pass over Shane's cock. "On your hands and knees."

Shane moves to the middle of the bed, doing as Ilya asked, while Ilya gets the lube out of their nightstand. He probably shouldn't be so obedient—he thinks it goes to Ilya's head. But it also, embarrassingly, makes him feel good. He likes explicit directions, he likes rules, and most of all he likes following them.

He spreads his legs as Ilya comes up behind him—he's rewarded with a slick hand on his cock. It feels so *good*. Shane can't help the plea for more that falls from his lips.

"What would the world say if they knew Shane Hollander was so slutty?" Ilya says. His slick thumb circles Shane's hole. "Good thing this ass is just for me, yes?"

Shane practically writhes on the bed as Ilya fingers him. Ilya tries to still him, but it's kind of moot. It's just all so much for Shane, since they've been busy with the playoffs and haven't had the time to really take each other apart in weeks.

When Ilya finally pushes inside him, Shane can hardly think. "*Ilya*," he cries out.

“I have got you, sweetheart. You take me so well.”

Ilya sets an even, slow pace that only stokes the embers inside of Shane. It’s absolutely fucking hot, but Shane needs more. He tells Ilya so.

“But I want you like this,” Ilya says into his ear, his voice as soft as velvet. The only sign he’s affected is the hitch in his breath.

“I need to come,” Shane pants, his forehead dropping down to the mattress. Ilya’s body, completely draped over him, rumbles with laughter.

“Then come.”

“I *can*’t.” They both know what Shane’s asking, even if he won’t voice it—Shane wants a hand on his cock, whether it’s his own or Ilya’s, but he won’t do it without permission.

“Don’t lie,” Ilya says. His next few thrusts brush Shane’s prostate beautifully, leaving him a shaking mess in Ilya’s arms. He kisses Shane’s neck. “Okay?” he murmurs.

“Yes, but—” Tears threaten to well up in Shane’s eyes. “I need you, Ilya.”

“Fuck, Shane,” Ilya groans. His thrusts come faster, like he’s losing his grip on control. “Touch yourself.”

“Thank you,” he gasps. Shane worms a hand beneath himself to grab ahold of his cock. He’s so fucking close he’s shaking.

“Such a good boy for me,” Ilya purrs.

Shane comes. Lightning flashes behind his eyes as Ilya lets loose a string of Russian curses. “You want it?”

Shane tries to nod, though he’s not sure if he manages. He feels like he’s *still* coming.

Ilya groans, says “I love you, *fuck*,” and comes inside him.

Once the sheets are changed and they’re cleaned up, they lie in bed together in the dark. They talk about the game, a little, but mostly the season as a whole. How great it is that they get to play and live together all year round. There are still people who disapprove, of course, but it’s hard to believe that they kept the best thing in their lives a secret for 10 years because of them.

“Fuck other people,” Ilya says. Shane thinks that about covers it.

“I’m proud of us. We’ve come a long way.”

Ilya kisses his head. “Yes. And now we have a cup together, so.”

“True,” Shane agrees. A thought strikes him. “Hey, have you ever thought about the fact that I’ll always have more Stanley Cups than you?”

Ilya scoffs. “What? You are dreaming, Hollander.”

“I mean... considering I have five and you have four, and we’re going to play on the same team until we retire... how do *you* think the math works out?”

“Fuck,” Ilya says with a laugh, as if it’s the first time he thought about it. “I will have to get traded to somewhere good for one season. Maybe Buffalo.”

Shane laughs. “Fuck off. Then I’ll be up two.”

Ilya pulls him into his chest, squeezing him tightly before loosening his grip to something more comfortable. “Then I guess I will just have to beat you in scoring every year, like I have for the past two years...”

“Asshole,” Shane grumbles. Ilya kisses the top of his head. Lying there curled up with Ilya makes Shane’s brain go quiet in ways that it’s never able to anywhere else. His stresses and fears aren’t gone, exactly, but Ilya dulls them.

But there’s still one more thought bouncing around his brain. “What’d you wish for,” Shane asks sleepily into Ilya’s chest, “when you lifted the cup?”

Ilya rubs his shoulder thoughtfully. “A long and happy life with you. And eight more cups.”

Shane smiles. “Eight. That’s ambitious.”

“Really? I think it is manageable.”

“Shut up,” Shane says softly, his eyes already drifting shut.

“Mm. I love you.” Ilya cards a gentle hand through his hair.

“I love you,” Shane responds in Russian. He’s getting better all the time.

They go to the cottage a few days later, after all the team festivities are done and they have *thoroughly* celebrated Ilya’s birthday. It’s nice to be back by the lake. Shane loves the crisp early summer air, the calls of the loons, how Ilya looks post-playoff stress, like there’s no place he’d rather be than lying in a hammock with Shane.

They get to the cottage late in the afternoon, and they get started on dinner—lemon butter pasta—almost right away. Shane’s been trying to be better about letting himself have the

things he wants. He's gotten better about food, trying to see it as fuel and not as punishment. It's still hard for him during the season—food is something he can control, especially when he's not scoring—but here there's less pressure. He even splits an overly-processed danish with Ilya for dessert and doesn't really feel bad about it afterward.

After that they take some fishing poles out to the dock and fish while the sun goes down. They don't catch anything, because they're bad fishermen. Shane blames it on their dog, Anya, who keeps barking at fireflies floating by. Ilya blames their bait.

"Maybe we need real worms," Ilya suggests.

"Sure. But why use real worms when you can use fake worms?"

Ilya laughs and nudges Shane with his foot. "You are afraid of worms? I did not know this about you."

"I'm not *afraid*." He takes one look at Ilya and scowls. "Shut the fuck up. They're just a little gross. I was a kid who played hockey, not a kid who played in the dirt."

Ilya smiles, completely amused. Shane can't help but smile back. That is until Ilya says, "I'm going to put worms in our bed."

Shane gets up from the dock. "I am going to divorce you."

"Over worms?"

Shane walks quickly back towards the cottage, Ilya and the dog following on his heels. "Maybe I'll ask for a trade. Maybe I'll ask them to trade *you*."

"They will not trade me, I am captain," Ilya points out.

Ilya apologizes (eventually) and swears he won't put worms in the bed. They take a shower together, where Ilya makes Shane rut against his abs until he comes all over them and Shane drops to his knees to return the favor, and then they get in bed. It's a little early, but they're still recovering from the playoffs. They won the fucking cup. They're allowed to be lazy.

Before they fall asleep, Shane and Ilya talk about what they want to do around the cottage. They have a free schedule for the next two weeks until the start of their summer camp, which means the possibilities are basically endless. They could make a fancy dinner, maybe swim. Do yoga on the dock. Pretend to watch a movie and make out instead. Ride Jet Skis. Ilya says he wants to try a s'more, and Shane calls him a lying bitch because he *knows* Ilya has had a s'more before. Have sex, of course. Ilya wants to have him over the kitchen table before the end of the week and Shane is only too happy to oblige.

Only none of that happens—or, at least, not the way they'd imagined it.

Because the next morning there's a baby on their porch.

“Ilya.” Ilya groans in his sleep. “*Ilya*, for Christ’s sake. There’s a baby outside.”

“What kind of baby?”

Shane laughs. He feels kind of hysterical. “The regular kind?”

Ilya peeks an eye halfway open. “Why are you crazy?”

“*Ilya*. Come on.”

He drags Ilya up. He follows Shane semi-reluctantly, still sleep dazed, mumbling about coffee. Shane watches Ilya’s face as he takes it all in—the open front door, the wicker bassinet, the tiny sleeping baby swaddled up inside. “Oh,” he says, brow furrowing. “Maybe this is my fault?”

Shane, kneeling beside the bassinet, looks up at him. “What could you possibly mean by that?”

“It’s our, uh—?” Ilya struggles for the right word. “Wishbaby?”

“You wished on the Stanley Cup for a fucking baby?” Shane is glad he’s (mostly) sitting down. He takes another look at the baby, their dark curly hair and pale skin. If he thinks about it too long, the baby is a perfect mix of himself and Ilya. “You told me you wished for a long and happy life with me. How does a baby fit into that?”

“I *did* wish for a long and happy life with you. But I think the cup knows things I don’t say... like maybe I saw Bood’s baby on the ice and got distracted, or, um—confused?” Then Ilya crosses his arms and stares up at the ceiling. “Or maybe it is because I think you want a family with me. Maybe it’s just because I love you so much.”

Fuck, he’s screwing this up. “I love you. I love you, Ilya, more than anything.” Shane stands up and goes to Ilya, who still looks like he can’t quite believe his eyes. His lip trembles, and Shane cups his face with his hands. “Of course I want a family with you. And I want this baby. Our... wishbaby. I’m just—” Shane swallows, feeling choked. “It’s scary, right?”

Ilya nods under his hands. “So scary.”

They both look down at their baby, sleeping peacefully in the bassinet. No care in the world. Perfectly innocent. “What the hell do we do?”

Ilya considers for a moment. “Call your mom? She will know what to do, probably.”

Shane nods and pulls his phone out of the pocket of the shorts he slept in. He puts it on speaker. Yuna picks up on the first ring. “Good morning, Shane.”

“Hey, Mom.”

“Good morning, Yuna.”

“Hi, Ilya. What are you boys up to this morning?”

Shane swallows. “Well, we need your help.”

Yuna sounds slightly concerned. “Is everything alright? Should we drive over?”

“Yeah, um—we have a, uh. A—”

“A baby,” Ilya finishes. “You are a grandmother now. Surprise.”

“Sorry, did you—” Yuna pauses. They can hear David faintly in the background. “You mean, like, a baby animal? A puppy?”

“A wishbaby,” Shane croaks. There’s silence on the other end of the line.

“Surprise,” Ilya says again.

“You know, I thought this might happen eventually,” Yuna says. She and David got to the cottage an hour ago. They got the bassinet (with the baby) inside the house, and now they’re all sitting at the kitchen table, making a list of all of the baby-related things they’re going to need. “Stanley Cup magic is strong magic.”

“Nice of you to warn us,” Shane mutters.

“Like *that* would have mattered.”

“Isn’t the Stanley Cup how Scott Hunter and his husband got their baby last year?” David asks.

“Fuck,” Ilya says. “Hunter beat us *again*. We hate him. Don’t we, baby?”

Shane rolls his eyes. He admires their daughter, lying snugly in the crook of Ilya’s arm, his hand braced on her bottom. She woke up after they had hung up with Yuna, confused sniffing turning into a screeching wail.

Shane hadn’t known what to do, but picking her up seemed to be the right place to start. She was red in the face, obviously angry, and it was almost funny to Shane—after all, what did a baby have to be so mad about?

Yuna got there and gave both of them a crash course in how to hold a baby—their necks are apparently very delicate—how to make a bottle, and how to change a diaper. Thankfully, their wishbaby had come with a cardboard box with basic necessities—a can of formula, a pack of bottles, a bag of diapers, and a couple of onesies. Enough to get them through the day. Hopefully.

Also in the box was a manila envelope of papers and forms, things they would have to fill out and send to the government. Ilya had shuffled through them as Shane was standing on the porch with the crying baby in his arms.

“Look,” Ilya said and pointed to the ‘F’ on the form. “She’s a girl.”

Shane had just blinked. He looked down at their daughter. “Yeah, I guess so.”

“Girls can play hockey, Shane.”

(Shane hadn’t dignified that with a response.)

He’s still trying to wrap his mind around everything, though. He wracks his brain, trying to dredge up anything he knows about babies. “What about a crib?” Shane looks at his mom. “We’ll need that, right?”

“Actually, no,” she says. “Or, not yet. She can sleep in your room, in the bassinet, for the first few months.”

Okay, easy. After that they look online at strollers and car seats. There are so many that they let Yuna choose. Ilya’s only request is that they’re “black and red for Ottawa.”

“Have you told anyone?” Yuna asks as she writes *burp cloths* on the list.

Ilya and Shane look at each other. “No.”

“Are you *going* to?”

“I mean we should probably tell the team, right? And our friends?” God knows what happened the last time Shane wasn’t honest with his team and friends. Hopefully it will be different this time—not everybody likes Ilya Rozanov, but everybody likes babies, right?

“Yes,” Ilya says, looking down at their baby. “But she does not even have a name. They will ask.”

“You don’t have to have it figured out right away,” David says. “I mean, it took us a full two days to name Shane.”

“*And* we had the full nine months to think about it,” Yuna points out.

Shane wishes that they had the nine months to think about this and prepare, but he knows what Ilya will say if he voices that thought. *No time is enough time for you to worry, Hollander.*

(He’s probably right, but. Whatever.)

Yuna and David take off to the store, leaving the three of them—Shane, Ilya, and their baby—in the house alone. It’s quiet, and when Shane goes to grab them drinks from the fridge, he sees it’s not even noon yet. He feels like he’s lived several lives in only a couple of hours.

“I love you,” he says to Ilya, when he sits his Coke on the table in front of him.

Ilya smiles at him. “And I love you.” He looks down at the baby. “You want to hold her?”

“Yeah.” Ilya shuffles her carefully, so as not to wake her. He supports her neck and back as she gets settled in Shane’s arms. She doesn’t wake, but her nose twitches. They both watch, their breaths held, as she sighs and relaxes.

Shane marvels at how small and soft she is. The size of her fingers and toes are practically incomprehensible. She has a lot of hair for a baby, too, dark and curly. Big cheeks, long eyelashes. She’s undeniably alien-like, as all newborns seem to be, but Shane doesn’t think he’s been so attached to something in his life.

“She has big ears,” Ilya says softly. “Like a mouse.”

“Don’t be rude,” Shane says. “She gets it from me.” There are baby pictures of Shane all over his parents’ house with his big ears. He will admit it took him a while to grow into them. But they’re perfect on her.

“Me? Be rude? Never.”

Shane shoots him a look. Then he says, “Hey.”

Ilya sips his Coke, eyebrow raised. “Hi, Shane. And Mouse.”

“Ilya. You cannot call our daughter a *mouse*. Especially since it’s because *you think her ears are big*.”

“Why not? I will not tell her this. It is a you-and-me secret. And it is a cute nickname.”

“Hmm,” Shane grumbles. “You distracted me. I was going to ask if you really hadn’t thought about names.”

“I have known her the same amount of time as you. Have *you* thought of any?”

“Oh, not really.”

Ilya eyes him. “Liar. Tell me.”

“I thought maybe we could name her Irina. After your mom.” Shane looks down at the baby, then at Ilya, who’s biting on his cheek. “Would that make you too sad?”

Ilya says *fuck* in Russian and lays his head down on the table. Shane plunges his free hand into his curls, massaging his scalp. He can tell Ilya’s crying. “I don’t know,” he manages, muffled by the table and his tears.

“You can say no,” Shane reminds him gently. One of Ilya’s hands comes up to cover Shane’s momentarily, until Ilya sits up. Then he holds Shane’s hand in his lap.

They sit quietly for a while, watching each other and their daughter. “I think it would make me sad,” Ilya says finally, his voice more even. “But it would also make me happy. And I think it would make her happy, too.”

“Okay,” Shane says. He squeezes his husband’s hand. “So, yes?”

“Yes.” He looks at their baby as he whispers, “Irina.” Then he looks at Shane and laughs, a little. “But she needs a regular middle name. Not Russian.”

“It’d be your name, right?”

“Yes. Ilyinichna.”

“I figured you’d like that.”

Ilya hums. “She will have my last name, hopefully. Both of our last names. That is enough. I want her to be separate from me like I will never be separate from my father.”

“The difference is that you’ll be better than him,” Shane says. Ilya manages a smile. “You will, Ilya.”

“Thank you, sweetheart.” Ilya squeezes Shane’s hand this time. Then he laughs, loud and abruptly, and Irina sighs about it. “I know her middle name. You will like it.”

“Why do I not like the sound of that?”

They tell their agent, and then their team, about their baby later that day. There’s a lot of congratulations in the chat, and most of the guys (more likely their wives) offer to bring food out to them. It’s... really sweet.

Shane sends a selfie of himself, Ilya, and Irina—with the simple caption *Irina Jane Hollander-Rozanov, our Stanley Cup wishbaby*—to his friends outside of the team. They all have wildly differing responses.

There’s J.J., of course: *HOLLANDER!!! A cup baby... you legend.*

And Rose: *SHANE. Oh my God. How is she so cute??? I’m so happy for you! How are you feeling about everything?*

And of course Hayden: *Welcome to the club. You finally let Rozanov knock you up, huh?*

“If only,” Ilya sighs dramatically while looking over Shane’s shoulder.

Shane pushes him away. “Quit. Go help my mom with dinner.”

“Mean. Kiss first.”

Shane tilts his head up to receive a kiss from Ilya. He just fed Irina and now she’s asleep on his chest, so he tries not to jostle her. “What did Svetlana say?”

Ilya rolls his eyes and calls over his shoulder, as he walks back to the kitchen, “She called me an asshole. As if I *knew!*”

“I am glad one of us has parents,” Ilya says to him that night, after they’ve gotten into bed. They just laid Irina down in her bassinet, a few feet from their bed, and have the lamp down low so they can watch her. “We would not know what to do otherwise.”

Shane pulls him closer and kisses the back of his neck.

They said they’d take turns, but they both ended up waking up every three hours that night to feed Irina. And the times in between, when she fussed and cried. The next morning, when Shane is so tired that he feels hungover, he nearly weeps at the fact that his dad has made breakfast for them. Eggs and bacon and toast—it smells delicious. Ilya is still sleeping, his arm dangling off the bed so he could keep a hand on Irina’s bassinet. Shane didn’t have the heart to disturb him, but he’ll make sure he gets to eat when he does get up.

“Long night?” David asks.

Shane nods. He fixes himself a plate and pours a cup of coffee, then sits at the bar next to his dad. “I’m glad you both stayed.”

Yuna had been very helpful through the night. He and Ilya were incredibly grateful for his mom and her seemingly infinite knowledge on infants.

“Of course. Your mom will be back soon. She just went home to shower and change clothes.”

“You guys really don’t have to do all of this.”

David laughs. “You have a newborn, son. We’re not leaving you alone.”

Shane hadn’t really thought about that part. As strange as it was for himself and Ilya to go from not-parents one day to parents the next, the same thing happened to Yuna and David but as grandparents.

“You probably won’t be alone for a while,” David says next. “You’re going to have a steady stream of visitors for *weeks*.”

“Just to visit Irina?” Shane asks, with more than a little alarm. “She’s so tiny. Is that safe?”

“It’s summer, so there shouldn’t be a lot of sickness going around. And if people wash their hands and use hand sanitizer, she should be fine. Talk to Ilya about it and see what he thinks.”

Shane almost scoffs. Yeah, he’ll ask Ilya, the resident expert on germs. Speak of the devil, Ilya comes out from their bedroom with his hands stretched out over his head, yawning. He’s shirtless, and Shane takes a moment to admire him.

“Sleep well?” He asks as Ilya shuffles into the kitchen, eyes half-closed.

“Haha. You are so funny.” But he still gives Shane a little kiss anyway. Then he piles a plate up with bacon and eggs and starts shoveling food into his mouth while he’s still standing at the counter.

“Irina’s okay?” Shane asks.

“Yes, still sleeping. Maybe she’ll wake up soon. I left the door open so we could hear,” Ilya says with his mouth full. “It’s your turn to feed her.”

“I can do it,” David offers.

“Yes,” he and Ilya say at the same time. David laughs.

He watches Ilya break off a piece of bacon and drop it, discretely, to Anya. Shane narrows his eyes. “I told you you need to stop doing that. It’s bad for her.”

“I did not do anything,” Ilya said, raising his brows. “You are a liar.”

Their dog crunches loudly on the piece of bacon, which causes the both of them to burst out laughing. Then from their bedroom, Irina starts crying.

Shane jumps up from his seat, but his dad puts a hand on his shoulder. “Eat. I’ll get her.” Shane can’t help the way his shoulders sag from relief.

Which he immediately feels guilty about. Ilya must be able to see it on his face, because as soon as David leaves the room he abandons his food to wrap his arms around Shane. “It’s okay,” he murmurs against Shane’s forehead. “A baby is a lot of work. They are here to help.”

“She’s great,” Shane protests weakly.

“Of course. She is ours,” Ilya says easily. “But she also cries all night.”

“All night,” Shane admits with a groan.

“It will be better, soon,” Ilya says. “I am guessing, but I think that is what I’m supposed to say.”

Shane laughs. “That’s very comforting, Ilya. Thank you.”

Ilya kisses him once more before returning to his plate. “This is what I’m here for.”

It makes Shane smile. While Ilya’s mostly being an idiot, there is some truth to that statement. As Shane’s husband, it *is* Ilya’s goal to ease his fears and comfort him, a job that he takes very seriously.

He eats and watches Ilya eat before he says, “People want to come see Irina.”

“Who?”

“Guys on the team. Hayden.” Shane sighs. “Basically everyone in the world, once they find out.”

“Hmm,” Ilya says. He takes a sip of coffee. “This bothers you?”

“I don’t know, it’s just... she’s so little. I bet her immune system isn’t that strong. I don’t want her to get sick.”

“You want me to tell them to fuck off?” Ilya asks seriously. “I will tell them to fuck off.”

“Maybe just for the week,” Shane hedges. “I want everyone to be able to see her, I just...”

“Want to protect her.”

“Yeah.”

“I know,” Ilya says. “It’s because you are a good dad.”

“I haven’t even really *done* anything yet.” He hasn’t had much time to think about the actual *parenting* side of all of this yet. The last 24 hours have felt more like keeping their child alive than shaping her for the future. Maybe it all counts. Shane doesn’t know.

“You’re good because you try your best. Always,” Ilya reminds him. “We will learn the rest as it comes.”

“Yeah. I guess we will.”

Yuna and David stay for the next week before they go back to their own cottage. For the week afterward they still come over every night for dinner, but the days themselves are quieter without them. When Irina isn’t crying, of course.

But she's good for now, freshly fed and burped, sleeping in her bouncer, which Ilya is rocking with his foot that is hanging off the couch. He's half-watching the TV, volume turned low on ESPN, and half-nodding off—but really, who can blame him. Shane is sitting on the other side of the sectional, his feet in Ilya's lap. He's reading a parenting book on his e-reader. "Hey, did you know that babies don't develop a circadian rhythm until they're two to four months old?"

"Hmm?" Ilya's eyes drift to Shane. "What's that?"

"It's what makes you want to sleep when it's dark outside," Shane tells him. "Makes sense, huh?"

Ilya snorts and he looks down at Irina. "Perfect sense. She is very confused right now. She sleeps best during the day. Like a vampire." He smiles. "Cute vampire, though."

Such a cute vampire, Shane agrees. He likes how she scrunches up into a little ball when anyone picks her up. They've had a few visitors over the past week—mostly guys from the team who stay in Ottawa over the summer, but also the Pikes. Shane practically doused everyone in hand sanitizer before they could hold Irina, and she's still not sick, so Shane believes he was right to do so.

The visitors have also brought a lot of food. Like, *way* too much—everything from soups to pastas to casseroles that Shane, unlike Ilya, is a little wary of eating. Part of why Yuna and David have been coming over in the evenings is so they can try to make a dent in all of the food.

Shane pokes Ilya in the stomach with his toe and says, "What should we eat tonight? I think there's lasagna or that chicken and rice soup..."

"I want to eat you."

Shane gives him a flat look and swings his feet off of the couch, intending to check the fridge. But Ilya catches him by the wrist. "Stay," he says simply.

Shane almost argues with him, saying that it's time to start heating up dinner. But the way Ilya's looking at him...

Shane slides into Ilya's lap, straddling him, being careful not to jostle the baby. Ilya's hands settle on his hips, like that's the place they're meant to be. Shane's eyes rove over Ilya's face, searching. "How are you?"

"Now that you're here, I'm great." Ilya leans up and kisses him softly. Shane pushes back, over Ilya, until Ilya's pressed back into the couch cushions. Ilya nips his lip as he pulls away. "You really are so sexy in your glasses, husband."

Shane strokes over Ilya's cheekbone with his thumb. "Ilya," he says, soft but firm, "how are you really doing?"

Ilya huffs, like he wasn't expecting Shane to actually press him about his feelings about everything from the last two weeks. He closes his eyes and thinks before he responds. Shane has realized that it's easier for Ilya to express himself if he doesn't have to look at him. "No sleep is making me crazy, I think. But I'm not so bad. Maybe. I don't know."

"Have you been taking your medicine?" Shane asks.

"My happy pills, you mean?" Ilya gives him a small smile, eyes still closed. Shane strokes the lines at the corners of his eyes. "Yes. I am very good."

"You are."

"Mm." Ilya pulls Shane close and kisses him again. "I don't have another appointment until August but I think I will call my therapist," he says to Shane's jaw.

"I think that's a good idea. A lot of things have changed recently."

"Really? I had not noticed."

Shane winds his fingers in Ilya's hair and kisses him to shut him up. It's pretty effective, as strategies go. He feels like he hasn't *really* gotten to kiss Ilya since Irina arrived, so he takes his time. Both of them have facial hair growing back in—reminiscent of their playoff beards—because they haven't had the time to keep it up. There are some days where they can hardly manage a shower.

Before long Ilya moves away from his mouth, kissing his chin and various places along his jaw.

"You know," Shane says, "you know that you can—*ah*—talk to me about whatever?"

Ilya nips again at the spot that made him moan. "Yes, I know."

"I know you have a therapist, but you can talk to me, too. I have fears too, about all of this. Maybe we can help each other."

Ilya pulls back to look at him. "I talk to you more than anyone, do you know that?" Shane nods. "Other people are difficult but for you, it's like—" Ilya touches his heart—"you're right here for me, always. I'm sorry I can't bare more of myself to you."

Shane tucks himself against Ilya, fitting his head in the crook of his neck. Against his chest, he can feel Ilya's heart beating. "You have nothing to be sorry for. I want whatever—everything—that you can give me. Even if that's just, like, what you want to eat tonight." This makes Ilya laugh. "I'm serious. I love you like I've never loved anyone, Ilya. You make me happy just by breathing."

Ilya buries his face in Shane's hair and kisses him there, over and over and over. He says something in Russian to Shane, who is pretty sure it's something along the lines of, "You are everything to me."

Shane rubs Ilya's back, over the knots of his spine. "I know it's hard right now. But we'll get through it. We always have before."

"We've gotten through much worse," Ilya agrees. "Raising a child will be a piece of cake."

"Well, don't jinx us."

Ilya hums happily. "Too late."

A week later they return to their other home in Ottawa, the one that's closer to the rink. Before Irina was in the picture they had planned to do so anyway, since their summer camp takes place the first two weeks of July and they wanted to be close by.

They ended up deciding that they couldn't be away from her for that long, even if she would just be with David and Yuna, so they put out a statement written by their agent about their baby and their absence from the camp this year. Their fans were very supportive, and a few players in the league even reached out to say they would fill in as coaches for the camp.

They made a few surprise appearances throughout the camp, though, since they were already in the area. Ilya got out on the ice with the kids, since he was very obviously the better teacher of the two of them, while Shane watched from afar with Irina snug against his chest in a baby carrier. He has come to realize that he really enjoys carrying her like that. For one, he knows she's safe against him, and the nearness seems to calm her. For two, it discourages people from just reaching out and touching his daughter out of nowhere. Maybe he's too protective, but—whatever.

The other reason they had to come back to their main house was to get the house set up for Irina for when the season starts. They won't be with her all the time—something Shane's trying not to think about too deeply—but Yuna will be keeping her while they're on the road, and she said she doesn't mind staying in the house while they're gone. They've put covers into all of the outlets, locks on the bottom cabinets, and gates at the tops and bottoms of the stairs. Ilya, of course, is already having trouble getting into the cabinets in the mornings.

This morning when Shane walks into the kitchen with Irina, who is awake but content in his arms, he finds Ilya struggling to open the cabinet that holds the dog's food. The surprise is gone—he's come to expect it by now.

"What baby will figure this out," Ilya huffs, trying to force the latch.

"Ideally none of them. That's the whole point."

"You come do it if it's so easy, Hollander."

"Then take your baby," Shane says, already passing Irina off to him.

“Hi, Mouse,” Ilya coos. He pokes her nose. “How is my girl this morning? Oh, you are good? Well rested? I am glad to hear it.”

About that time, Shane undoes the handle to the cabinet lock and gets the dog food out.

“As usual,” Ilya says conspiratorially to their daughter, “your dad is trying to upstage me.”

Shane pours food into the dog bowl for Anya, who dives into it immediately. “Don’t tell her that.”

“It’s true,” Ilya continues, ignoring Shane. “Yes, it is. He is always trying to beat me. I am his number one rival. Number one! Yes, I know. It is hard to believe.” Irina’s eyes are open wide and her eyebrows are raised impossibly high. It’s so characteristic of Ilya that Shane’s heart melts into a puddle.

Shane can’t manage to play along, the joy bursting out of him through the smile on his face when he says, “Are you done slandering me so we can go on our walk?”

Upon hearing the word *walk*, Anya’s tail starts wagging and she wanders between their legs, sniffing impatiently. Ilya laughs. “Yes, we will go on a walk. You get Anya’s leash and I will put Mouse in the stroller.”

Ilya adjusts Irina so that she’s lying with her head over his shoulder. She peers back at Shane, drooling into Ilya’s Centaurs t-shirt. He gives her a little wave as she and Ilya go out the door that leads to the garage. By the time Shane gets out there with Anya in tow, Irina is tucked away nicely in her stroller. They head out into the warm July sunshine, down their driveway and out onto the street.

“Let’s cover her so she doesn’t burn,” Shane says.

Ilya adjusts the stroller’s canopy so Irina’s completely shaded from the sun. “I hope she’ll have freckles like you. They are so cute.”

The kids across the street are outside playing, one sitting in their driveway with chalk and the other riding a bike around. They come pet Anya on the head and wave at Irina, who tracks their movements with wide eyes. Ilya teases the kids and asks how it feels to be out of school for the summer—they’re enjoying the break, obviously—and after they continue on, Shane can’t help but be continually impressed by his husband. “You’re really good with kids.”

Ilya shrugs. “You think so?”

They pause momentarily so Anya can piss on a mailbox. “Well, yeah. I’ve known so for a long time.”

“Since when?”

“The All-Star Game in Tampa.”

Ilya grins. “You wanted to have a baby with me for all that time?”

“No,” Shane says immediately. They pass a man mowing his lawn and nod at him. “No,” Shane repeats once he can hear himself think.

“I think you are a liar.” Ilya bumps him with his shoulder. “But, it is okay. I have wanted a baby with you for a long time, too.”

Shane looks at him. “How long?”

“Since I first came to the cottage.” Shane wasn’t exactly expecting an honest answer out of Ilya. Ilya laughs at the look on his face. “I was in love with you! And I thought, ‘Well, after we retire, we can have anything. Shane told me so.’ And what I wanted was a baby, something that was ours.”

“But *why*?” Shane asks. “I wasn’t ever really good with kids. I mean, God, you’ve seen me at the summer camps.”

When he says it he’s expecting Ilya to laugh, but he doesn’t. “So you aren’t the best hockey teacher,” Ilya allows. “That doesn’t mean you won’t be a good dad.”

They round a corner and wave back at an older woman digging in her flowerbeds. “I didn’t say that.”

Ilya gives him a look. “You think you have to say things for me to know them?” Shane doesn’t respond. “I had a bad father. I turned out,” Ilya waves a hand, pushing the stroller with the other, “*okay*. But I think it is hard to be that bad. You will not be that bad, because you’re a good person.”

Shane blinks, a little overcome with emotion. Ilya, sensing it, hooks an arm around his waist so he’s forced to walk closer. “You’re a good person, too, Ilya. And a good dad.”

“Thank you, sweetheart. We will always try, for Mouse. Losing is not in our nature.” Shane snorts. That’s accurate, probably. They’ll take it one day at a time, just as they have been. What else is there to do, really, besides making themselves sick with worry all the time?

“Looks like our girl is asleep again.” Shane peeks inside to find Irina’s eyes are closed, her mouth open as she snoozes. She usually falls asleep on walks. She likes riding in the car, too; there’s something about the movement that is soothing to her.

“I can’t believe she’s a month old.”

“It has been a long month. But also short.” Shane can’t help but agree. Somehow way too long *and* way too short. The sleepless nights seem endless right now, but Irina is constantly getting bigger and her brain develops further every day, which has been fascinating to watch. And it’ll just continue to happen, until they have a bigger baby, then a toddler, then a kid, then a teenager, then an adult. The future is scary, but then, maybe it doesn’t have to be with Ilya by his side.

“I guess we’re in this forever, aren’t we?”

Ilya grins. “At least that long.”

The first pre-season game in September is on home ice. Three-month-old Irina attends, noise-canceling headphones perched on her head. Yuna holds her up behind the glass and a bunch of players from their team make silly faces at her and cover their faces with their gloves. They all pretty much exclusively refer to her as Mouse, thanks to Ilya. But she seems to like the attention, smiling and beating the glass with her fists.

“Hollander and I have the best baby,” Ilya boasts to their team.

“Hey,” Bood says, “what about mine?”

“He is cute,” Ilya admits. “But Mouse is the best because she is a Stanley Cup baby.”

“Ilya,” Shane warns, “we are not having baby competitions again.”

Ilya raises his eyebrows. “Maybe *you* are not...”

He smacks Ilya’s chest. The rest of their teammates are dispersing; the game will begin soon. “Bye, Mom. Bye, Irina,” Shane tells them, holding his hand up against the glass over Irina’s. Irina takes hers away and sticks it in her mouth.

Shane scoots back. Ilya, in a showier performance that Irina gets a kick out of, blows big air kisses with both of his hands. “Bye, my Mouse! I will see you later!”

Shane rolls his eyes. His heart is full.

“Do you think she has enough presents?”

Yuna looks back at the Christmas tree, appraising it. “Is that a serious question?”

Okay, so maybe they all went a little overboard buying presents for Irina. The worst part was actually getting them all here in the car. They decided to have Christmas at Shane’s parents’ cottage, treating their three days off for the holidays as a genuine break to get away and spend time with family.

David is in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches on the ham, while the rest of them sit at the dining room table. “It is because she is such a good girl,” Ilya says, patting Irina’s head. She sits up in her high chair with the rest of them at the table. They pointedly ignore that she is squawking and hitting her palms against the tray.

“She’s just hungry. Aren’t you?” Shane says to her. He fixes the bib around her neck. Irina smiles at him, seemingly excited—she knows that the bib means food, and she loves to eat.

Ilya twists open a jar of baby food, an orange-yellow paste inside. “Mouse, tonight you will have a lovely dinner of—” Ilya looks at the label on the baby food jar— “butternut squash and pumpkin. Look at you, so in the holiday spirit.”

Ilya gathers a bit on the baby spoon and she opens her mouth wide. He feeds the baby food to her and in the next moment she spits it out, the orange puree dribbling down her chin. Shane reaches out and wipes it off with the bib. “Maybe she doesn’t like that one?”

“It’s entirely possible,” Yuna says. “We haven’t tried pumpkin yet.”

“Or maybe she is just so excited for opening presents tomorrow,” Ilya says. He tries again and this time she turns her head away so that the pumpkin gets smeared on her cheek. Shane wipes her off again.

“Just do the banana,” Shane tells him. “We know she likes that, at least.”

“You want banana?” Ilya asks her as he comes back with a second jar. “Ba-na-na?” She smiles at him. This time when she takes a bite, she tries to grab the spoon from him. They all laugh at her excitement.

David comes in with the ham, setting it down in the center of the table. “She wasn’t feeling the pumpkin?”

“I mean, would you?” Yuna points out. “Look at that stuff.” It’s organic, of course, but still decidedly off-putting. Shane doesn’t blame her, either.

“If you are extra good and eat the rest of your banana,” Ilya tells their daughter, “Santa Claus will come to you tonight.”

Irina coos.

This season’s All-Star Game is in San Francisco. Ilya, for some reason, is very happy about that.

“What?” Ilya asks. “They love us here. San Francisco is the gayest city.”

Shane narrows his eyes at him. “Yeah, except for the fact that they *don’t* like us, because we’re hockey players that don’t play for San Francisco.”

Ilya waves him off. “Whatever. They don’t care.”

As luck would have it, they meet Scott Hunter, his husband Kip, and their baby Connor in the hotel lobby as they're trying to leave to explore the city. Connor is big, about a year older than Irina, and very cute. Shane can't help asking about him, wondering how Irina will develop. She can roll over, and they're trying to get her to stay sitting up without falling over. She's pretty close, Shane thinks.

"Their baby is cute," Ilya says after they leave. The long pause afterward makes Shane think there's a *but* coming— "But not as cute as Mouse."

There it is. "What is your justification now?" Shane asks. "You can't use the fact that she's a cup baby since Connor is *also* a cup baby."

Ilya's bumps his shoulder as they walk, shooting him a sweet, secretive smile. "Nope. It's because she's ours."

When Yuna answers the FaceTime call, the first thing out of Shane's mouth is, "How is she?"

Ilya's watching the screen over his shoulder. They just got in to their hotel room in Toronto, the end of two weeks on the road. Two weeks made infinitely longer due to the fact that their baby has been at home sick with a cold without them. Shane feels like he hasn't had a restful night sleep in a week because of how much he's been worrying about her.

"No fever, today or yesterday. She's even been eating and playing more," Yuna says. She strokes Irina's cheek with her finger, and Irina moves her head to try to chew on it. "We've really been keeping an eye on it, and I think she's pretty much over it by this point."

"That's great news. Thank you for taking care of her," Ilya says. "I don't know what we would do without you, Yuna."

"Yeah. Thanks, Mom."

"Oh, of course. She's the best. Keeping her reminds me of you," Yuna sighs wistfully. Then she picks up Irina's arm and waves it. "Can you say hi?"

"How are you, baby? We miss you," Shane says to her. Ilya rubs his shoulder.

"We'll see you tomorrow afternoon, Mouse," Ilya says, smiling at her through the screen. Irina blows a raspberry at them.

"Babababa," she says.

Despite his worry, Shane laughs. "Babababa? Is that so? Can you say Dada? Da-da?"

"Say Papa. Pa-pa," Ilya annunciates. As with all things, they've been competing with each other to see what her first word will be. Irina hasn't succeeded in saying either of their names

yet, but it's only a matter of time.

Yuna shakes her head at them. "It's always a competition with you two."

They talk with Yuna and Irina for a little while longer, until they have to hang up to take a solid nap before the game. Tonight's game against Toronto is the last one of the regular season, and then they're off to the playoffs. It's been a good season. Shane thinks it's very possible they could win the Stanley Cup again, which feels fucking insane. Not only that they could go back-to-back on cups, but the fact that it will very soon be a year since they won the last one. A year since Irina came into their lives.

"Your brain is so loud," Ilya says from the other bed, less than 10 minutes after they've turned out the lights and laid down. Ilya has weird, disruptive nap behavior that interferes with Shane's pre-game rest, so they usually each take their own bed when they're on the road.

"Shut up."

"Would sucking my dick make you feel better?"

Shane scoffs. "Fuck off." But now that he's thinking about it— "Can I?"

"Yes. Get over here."

Ilya flicks the lamp on so he can get over to the other bed without tripping over something. Ilya's legs are already spread, so Shane lays on his stomach between them, resting his head on one of Ilya's thighs. Ilya rakes a hand through his hair, scratching his scalp. Shane's whole body shivers. "What is it?" Ilya murmurs.

"Worried," Shane says honestly. This is the first time Irina has really gotten sick; Shane is so careful with her, after all. The fact that there are things he can't control is something that he doesn't want to face on a regular day, nevermind when it comes to things that can harm their daughter.

"I know," Ilya says soothingly. "But we will be back home tomorrow, and she's in good hands. Give your worry to me for a little while."

"Okay," Shane says. That's all he can do. "I will."

Ilya rubs his hand over Shane's cheek, feeling him, then pulls on his lower lips with his fingers. "Such a pretty mouth." When he tries to suck Ilya's fingers into his mouth, he moves them away. "I thought you wanted my cock?"

"Yes," Shane manages. He *does*.

Ilya pushes down the waistband of his sweats, exposing his happy trail and v-line and, finally, his cock. It's half-hard and flushed where it sits against his abdomen. "You can," Ilya urges, leading him by the hand in his hair.

Shane takes him in hand, kisses the tip, and immediately slides down the length of him. He feels Ilya harden fully in his mouth, one of his favorite feelings. “That’s it,” Ilya tells him. “Do you want to do it yourself, or do you want my help?”

Shane hums and Ilya’s hips twitch. After a couple of passes up and down, Shane pulls off. “You can fuck my face,” he says. “But you have to be gentle.”

“Of course.” This time when Shane takes him back into his mouth, Ilya’s strong hands bracket his face. Ilya pulls him down his shaft, holds him there for a moment, and then brings him back up again.

As Ilya finds a rhythm, Shane closes his eyes and lets himself be held. Focuses on relaxing his throat so he can take Ilya deeper. Listens through the blood pumping in his ears as Ilya’s breaths become harsher. Feels when Ilya gets closer, how his hips stutter. He’s careful not to ever gag Shane or handle him roughly, no matter how affected he becomes.

“Fuck, sweetheart,” Ilya hisses. “You want me to come in your mouth?”

Shane moans around him. He hopes Ilya knows that means *hell yes* and not *don’t*.

Though he shouldn’t have worried; of course Ilya gets him. Shane gets pulled up so that just the head of Ilya’s cock rests in his mouth, enough that Shane can swirl his tongue around it. Ilya holds his head there with one hand, and with the other he rapidly strips his cock, his fist bumping Shane’s lips on every upstroke. “Love you, fuck,” Ilya sighs as he comes.

“Love you,” Shane mumbles back once he swallows. He presses a kiss to the skin below Ilya’s navel.

“You’re so good, Shane.” Shane whines and presses his face into Ilya’s crotch, his hips hitching against the mattress. “So good, my love. Are you very hard? Do you want my mouth?”

“*Please.*”

Ilya rolls them over. Before Shane can blink, Ilya has his pants pulled down and his warm, wet mouth around his cock. “Oh my—fuck—Ilya,” Shane moans. It takes him an embarrassingly short time to reach his peak with the way Ilya is tonguing him. He comes pulling on Ilya’s hair, spilling into his mouth.

Ilya pulls off him, swallowing. He wipes his mouth on his t-shirt. “Better?”

Shane gives him a little smile. “Tired enough to sleep, at least.”

“Oh, good,” Ilya says. He throws an arm over Shane’s waist and snuggles in close. Shane doesn’t even care enough to move back to the other bed; in fact, he *wants* to stay here wrapped up with Ilya, even though he’s definitely going to elbow him in the ribs in an hour. “I will be here when you wake, of course.”

“The Ottawa Centaurs are your Stanley Cup Champions for the second year in a row!”

Before Ilya skates off to grab the cup, Shane catches his arm. “Don’t you dare wish for another baby.” Irina is the light of both of their lives and has been since they’d met her, but good lord, is a baby a lot of work. Her first birthday party is this weekend, and they’ve just started being able to sleep completely through the night again.

Ilya grins and smacks a kiss on Shane’s cheek, then bends and does the same to Irina, who giggles and slaps her sticky baby palm against his cheek.

“I will not!” Ilya promises, skating backward away from them and toward the cup. He winks. “Just another dog.”

“Ilya!”

End Notes

Consider dropping a kudos and/or comment if you enjoyed :)))

I feel like after this it's inevitable that I write pregnant Shane Hollander at some point. He deserves it. But today is not that day.

However I AM currently working on an F/F Hollanov fic where they're pageant queens/models... so user sub to get notified when I drop that if you, too, love it when women <3

**Edit to add that the first three chapters of the F/F fic are up. [Read it here!](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!