great happiness

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by shchi

Summary

Ilya's past catches up with him, except this time it's planned his future too.

Notes

made some edits <3

See the end of the work for more notes

Their morning starts like any other. They kissed each other awake, made and ate breakfast, a quick 5k to warm up for a HIIT workout to mimic the short, high intensity periods of play in hockey.

Until Ilya checks his phone and sees a missed call, important enough to leave him a voicemail. He clicks play on the message and holds the phone to his ear, listening curiously to the voice.

The message starts with: "*Good morning Mr Rozanov. This is Kelly with Always Hope. I'm calling with some important news. Yesterday, Lucy Atwood passed away and she leaves behind her 8 year old daughter, Alisa.*"

A pause, Kelly inhales. Ilya already knows what she's about to say.

"*Lucy claims Alisa is your daughter.*"

There it is.

Now he listens seriously, thoughts racing, heart copying as he tries to process everything. He barely remembers sleeping with Lucy - a one night stand in his youth, deep into his reputation and coping mechanism of a high libido, a young NHL player with more money and suitors than he should have.

He stopped sleeping with anyone else after he and Shane had sex for the first time. He made sure to use protection every time to avoid this situation. But now that it happened.

There's a child - *his child* - who needs stability and love as they process the trauma of losing their mother - their entire world.

So he decides to phone back, tell Kelly he'll - *they will* - have her, but he has to explain it to Shane first and suddenly he's nervous.

Shane will agree, right?

Well. It was Ilya's decision to get Anya. Shane was ok with that.

This is different.

This is huge.

They wanted kids.

Maybe it'll work out?

"Hey," Ilya hates how hesitant he sounds as he finds his husband in the kitchen. "Can I talk to you?"

Shane smiles, a comforting one as his eyes hold concern, abandoning his freshly made coffee to join Ilya at the breakfast bar. "Sure," he says.

"Uh," he fails once at just coming out with it. "I had a phone call," he tries to explain. "From a child's care home," he hopes the English term is right. "Fuck. Не знаю как говорить — ok, listen. I only just found out about this myself so I don't even know what to think myself. I have a child," he tells Shane. "A daughter. And her mother has just passed away and they're offering me - *us* - custody."

Shane looks shocked and Ilya assumes it was the same expression, the same whirlwind of emotions he'd felt listening to the voicemail. He's silent. Ilya feels sick. With nerves. With guilt. With pain.

Until Shane speaks, and all the worries he has evaporate. “Do you want custody?” he asks softly. He doesn't ask about the circumstances of how Ilya’s daughter came to be, doesn't think of her mother. Instead he’s thinking of the child in the heart of the situation. She must feel abandoned, confused and scared.

“We want kids, right?”

Shane gives a small nod. “Maybe… this works for us, Ilya.”

“We procrastinated,” Ilya gives a weak chuckle.

“You came home with Anya,” Shane adds with a smile. “Let's come home with your daughter.”

“Our daughter,” Ilya clarifies quietly.

Shane smiles.

Ilya hugs him, buries his head into Shane’s neck as he feels his eyes well with tears. “Thank you, sweetheart. Fuck, you're too good to me,” he forces a laugh.

Shane holds him close, letting him feel the emotions for as long as he needs. A hand cradles the back of his head, toying with messy golden curls while the other is caressing Ilya’s back in soothing circles.

“Люблю тебя,” Ilya sobs as he lifts his head up. It feels like a lead weight, impossibly heavy with newfound responsibility for the adjustment in their married life. He kisses Shane twice before recovering enough to break contact. “I’ll phone her back,” he tells him.

The car ride to the adoption agency is filled with excited chatter about future adventures as they evolve from a family of three to a family of four.

The nerves return as Ilya parks the car, and begins the walk into the agency. “Ilya Rozanov,” he tells the receptionist.

“I’ll tell Kelly you're here,” the receptionist clacks acrylic nails on plastic keys for far too long.

Kelly appears promptly with a hospitality-esque smile and greeting. “It's so nice to meet you,” she continues, shaking both Ilya and Shane’s hands before leading them to a separate room. “I’ll go and get Alisa,” she says.

The wait is nerve racking. and Ilya doesn't feel good. Shane squeezes his knee as they sit on the couch.

The door clicks open, and Ilya almost flinches.

Fuck. He’s not even this nervous about hockey.

Alisa enters behind Kelly, clutching a light brown teddy bear.

And she's definitely his child. From the hair colour to the freckles. That's his kid.

“Ok, Alisa. We’ve got some very special people here to meet you,” Kelly says gently.

“Hockey players,” Alisa murmurs gently before turning to Kelly with hesitant enthusiasm as if she expects praise.

Kelly laughs. “Well, yes, they are hockey players, but there's something even more special.”

When she turns to the couple on the couch who look like they’ve suddenly remembered that they're not on the bench at a hockey game, Ilya panics.

“Do you know I am?” he asks Alisa softly as if she might give a different answer this time, hoping she'd realise the resemblance.

“A hockey player,” she grins with confidence. “Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander,” she adds with pride, back straight, head held up.

“I’m also more than that,” Ilya tells her. He stands up, only to crouch in front of Alisa so it's less intimidating and more personal. “I’m your dad.”

The next question Alisa asks shatters his heart as she doesn't smile, shrinks back into her shell as she stares at Ilya. “Where have you been?”

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.” His apologies are automatic and filled with genuine regret. “I didn't know you existed.”

“I didn't know you existed either,” she says quietly before she starts crying. “Will you leave like Mommy?”

“No,” Ilya’s quick to promise. “Never.”

“They say Mommy’s gone.”

“I know, sweetheart,” Ilya comforts. “We’re not replacing her. We’re helping her.”

Ilya doesn't see it, but Kelly’s smiling. Shane, like Ilya, is near tears. Ilya’s focusing on nothing but his daughter.

His daughter, who is grieving. Her mother. Her 8 years without her father.

Ilya knows that she will have longer with her father than she did with her mother. Longer alive without her mother than she did with her mother.

She’ll forget her mother's voice as the years go by. The memories she’ll have will last forever. She’ll build new memories with her fathers. She’ll wish she was a little kid again, cradled by her mother as she grows up and realises the enormity of what happened when she was only 8 years old.

Ilya knows it too well. He’s lived it.

He’s been that little child.

Except his father wasn't loving. Didn't let him process his grief.

It makes him angry as he now sees himself in Alisa.

“She needs you to be ok. And it will hurt for a while, maybe even forever, but that's how much she means to you. That’s how much she loved you. I know because I lost my own mom.”

Alisa seems to perk up at that last sentence as she asks: “Are they together?”

“Yes,” Ilya smiles. “Yes, I think so.” And wipes his tears.

Ilya fills out his paperwork first as Alisa sits on the couch with Shane, both laughing and chatting, mostly about hockey. The conversation turns to dogs, and it turns out Alisa loves dogs.

That's his girl, Ilya thinks to himself as he whips the pen over the dotted line to form his convoluted signature. Almost adds 81 but remembers this is a very official document and not a piece of factory mass-manufactured merch.

The paperwork allows them to temporarily foster Alisa, and if everyone is happy after the allotted time has passed, they could officially have custody of her.

The next time they drive to the agency, it's to pick up Alisa. They couldn't take her home after their initial visit as they needed to turn a spare bedroom into a kid’s room, purchase clothes and toys, have their house checked by Kelly to ensure their household was safe.

Ilya and Shane had hugged each other when Kelly approved them, but instead of celebrating between themselves, they were shopping. Shane on his phone while Ilya drove them to various stores to pick up more than they needed, but if he spoiled Anya, he was going to increase that tenfold for Alisa. She deserved it.

Alisa sits in her car seat in the back of the car, her small suitcase of belongings in the trunk as the three of them make small talk.

Anya’s waiting for them at home, with Alisa possibly more excited at the prospect of having a dog than her new life with Ilya and Shane.

The conversation switches naturally to hockey with Alisa being an Ottawa fan since it's the city she's grown up in, and would continue to grow up in. She remembered the chaos the news of Ilya leaving Boston caused. It was unheard of for a player so gifted to leave the team they were drafted for - drafted *first*, won the cup with, to up and leave the first time his contract was up for renewal.

Ilya explains he left to be closer to Shane, and she asks about their relationship and why some people thought it was bad. It occurs to Ilya that even young hockey fans would have their opinions molded by the adults in their lives.

Ilya lets Shane handle that one, he explains those things much more eloquently than Ilya can in his second language. He treads carefully, saying that some people didn't agree to it because they were both men, due to religion, and the similarities meaning they could only have kids via adoption, but it only prompted Alisa to ask how babies were made and Shane handed it back to Ilya instead.

"Uhh, sometimes an expression of passion," he blurts out and wonders what the hell he's saying, but Alisa goes quiet.

Shane asks if she's excited to meet Anya, and she's chatting away again, more excited than even Ilya had been when he got Anya.

When they reach home, Shane goes ahead with Alisa to greet Anya as Ilya brings Alisa's suitcase. By the time he's through the door, Shane and Alisa are crouched in front of Anya, who's barking excitedly, accepting introductory pets. Alisa giggles as she strokes Anya's fluffy fur before she follows Ilya up to her room.

"What did you like to do with your Mom?" Ilya asks as he unzips Alisa's suitcase and lets her choose where to put things.

"Paint my nails," Alisa replies as she stands on tip toes to put her day clothes in the top draw of her newly built chest of drawers which definitely didn't nearly cause an argument between Shane and Ilya when they tipped several planks of woods to be fixed together with only pictures for guidance. Ilya declared they were done when they ran out of parts to fit together and steps to follow.

Shane argued they weren't done just because they'd used everything. He was proven right when they went to pick it up to lean it against the wall and the sides they were holding came off in their hands and the rest of the unit hit the floor so hard Ilya expected it to crash through the ceiling of the living room.

It hadn't.

They'd grumbled as they rebuilt it with Shane's dad this time.

Alisa shrieks excitedly when she sees the dollshouse that used to live in her bedroom at her mother's apartment, and Ilya is ripped from tormenting memory of assembling flat pack furniture.

It's complete with her dolls doing various tasks including relaxing in bed, making food in the kitchen and playing with the dog figurine. Ilya had arranged that one after Shane told him it wasn't appropriate to put one of the dolls on the toilet.

Except the initial position of one of the dolls in bed with their arm hanging down made Ilya uncomfortable.

It occurs to him, as Alisa calls him to join her, that he was never allowed to do this as a kid. His father forced him into hockey upon realising his talent at a school hockey game, yet it was his mother who cheered him on, hugged him when he won or lost, supported him more than her own career.

He looks at Alisa and wonders if he feels the same towards her as his mother did towards him. Alisa's the beam of joy lacking from his life, tunneling a lifeline of light through the darkness of his depression, reminding him of innocence and the simplicity of youth.

It takes him a while to notice his husband standing in the doorway. All Shane can think is why it's taken them so long after babysitting Hayden and Jackie's kids for them to jump into the rink of parenthood. It made him melt seeing Ilya interact with kids.

His husband blushes furiously when he sees Shane. “How long have you been there?”

“Long enough to hear the voices,” Shane laughs.

“Alisa mentions she and her Mom liked to paint their nails,” Ilya suggests, smirking as Alisa remembers that, shoots up and rushes over to Shane, begging him to paint her nails.

It doesn't take long for Shane to let up his little nail salon station - just a few bottles of polish on top of a sheet of kitchen paper to protect the breakfast bar. Alisa chooses a light purple color, and Shane gets to work.

Ilya watches, smiling into his cup of coffee. A concentrated Shane is adorable. Until that concentration breaks and now they're both begging Ilya to have his nails done, except Shane has his left hand and Alisa has his right. They're painting them different colors: bright red and yellow.

Ferrari colours, Ilya says. Not Winnie the Pooh as Alisa and Shane agree.

Yet it leaves them all on the sofa together watching a Winnie the Pooh movie that Ilya didn't even know existed.

Ilya is as engrossed as Alisa in the movie, as Shane slips away to let Anya out into the backyard.

“I’m hungry,” Alisa announces suddenly.

“You like pasta?” Ilya suggests with a grin.

“I *love* it!”

Ilya pauses the movie and leads Alisa to the kitchen and places a pot of water on the stove while giving the important task of snapping the spaghetti to fit the pot to Alisa.

There’s tiny pieces of spaghetti scattering the counter and the floor, but Shane’s protests die in his thoughts, not even making it to his throat to voice them when he returns.

Ilya grates a mountain of parmesan while Shane searches the fridge to find a tupperware cup of his mother’s pasta sauce.

Ilya helps Alisa stand on a small step to stir the simmering pasta with a spoon with a long handle.

They add the sauce to the drained pasta, let it heat before serving simply in a bowl topped with cheese.

Alisa is messy as she eats like it's the best meal she's had in weeks. “It’s easier if you twist it,” Ilya suggests as he sticks his fork in the center of his pasta and turns the fork in circles until a mouthful of pasta has been neatly collected.

Alisa watches then copies. Ilya and Shane share a look of pride, a successful parenting moment.

She watches the rest of the movie as Ilya and Shane clear up the kitchen by shoving everything into the dishwasher. Their conversation is quiet and not child oriented because the kitchen and living is open planned, and no matter how engaged Alisa may be to the film, something could break through.

Shane is adamant not to let her fall asleep on the couch when she hasn't showered or brushed her teeth yet. Ilya chuckles and kisses his temple. “My Mom let me fall asleep on the couch all the time.”

“And you have veneers,” Shane tells him as Ilya shows them off in a wide, cocky smile, but it falls away as he realises something.

“Does she have her adult teeth?”

Shane pauses, stumped. “Uh, not all of them, I’d assume.”

Instead of disturbing Alisa, they pull out their phones to come to a conclusion.

“Maybe we’ll know when she gets a lisp like when you got your veneers redone,” Shane laughs.

“Thut up,” Ilya tells him.

It’s not long after that when the movie ends and Alisa requests a bath. Shane and Ilya go into action, one in charge of running the bath and selecting bath toys while the other helps Alisa choose her pyjamas and a towel.

They're both suddenly awkward after collecting everything, not sure if one of them should stay in the bathroom with her. They decide on leaving the door open a little while they went down the hall to their room.

“Let me see your teeth,” Ilya says as Alisa opens her mouth after brushing them. Not only to check she’d cleaned them, but to deduce if she has baby teeth or adult teeth or a mix of both.

“Do you like bedtime stories?” Shane asks before offering up Ilya’s voice acting services from watching the dollshouse experience earlier.

Ilya feels stupid as he starts to read a book to Alisa, but seeing how intently she was listening and the sleepy smile, it strips away any insecurities. Until she asks why they all speak with a Russian accent.

He tucks Alisa into bed after bringing in Anya to say goodnight, before leaving the door open a little and greeting his husband in the kitchen with a hug from behind and a kiss to his neck.

“You're cuddly today,” Shane relaxes into his husband’s touch and sighs happily. “You're so sweet.”

Ilya hums slightly. “I’m selective.”

“I’m so grateful,” Shane murmurs as he shifts around in his arms to face him.

“How grateful?” Ilya pries.

“I can show you.”

They’re quiet as they make their way to their room, giggling as they fall into bed, kissing and tugging at each other's clothes.

Then the door clicks open, Alisa in the doorway as they freeze, pulling apart from their affections.

Ilya is first to stand up. “What's wrong?” he inquires gently.

On closer inspection - now that Shane has turned on the bedside lamp - Alisa’s face is stained with tears and she's sniffling.

“Oh, sweetheart,” he coaxes as she approaches him for a hug and he obliges.

It takes Shane, Ilya and Anya to get Alisa to feel better. She explains how she misses her Mom, so they ask if there was anything special, any routines that she and her Mom did together. She says her Mom would let her stay in her bed until she fell asleep.

Alisa’s quick to snuggle down in between Shane and Ilya, Anya at the end of the bed. They lean against the plush headboard of the bed. Shane and Ilya share a knowing glance with an agreeing smile.

They speak about her Mom, and their own mothers too. Yuna will be over the moon to meet Alisa, but it’s too early. They’ll have to introduce Alisa to Shane’s parents eventually as they're likely to be the ones looking after her when they're away. Ilya’s worried introducing them too early will cause more stress for Alisa, if she might ask why Shane still has his Mom and she doesn't.

Life is unfair, but telling her that would be unhelpful. Ilya had a poor childhood while Shane had an ideal one, yet they ended up in the same place. Life’s unfair, but it works out in the end. To get through struggles is to have strength.

When Alisa falls asleep, Ilya carries her back to her bedroom and tucks her in again.

Yet as he returns to Shane, their previous idea is replaced with a need to sleep as they begin getting ready for bed.

The next day, Alisa is exploring Shane’s trophy room with interest as Shane recounts memories of his career. It prompts Alisa to ask to go to an ice rink, and of course they take her.

Except it's been so long since they were kids learning to skate, overcoming that fear of ice that they're hesitant on advice before settling for holding onto one of her hands each and slowly skating forwards because it will pull Alisa along with them.

They tried several pairs of skates for her as well, wanting to get the correct fit.

Alisa seems to be having fun though, as Ilya and Shane get comfortable enough to let go of her. Ilya skates backwards to position himself a few meters ahead of his daughter.

“Come to me,” he encourages with a grin, as she glides into his arms.

By the end of their session, he’s beyond proud of her. “You're a natural,” he praises, “like me,” he adds with a cocky smirk.

Shane rolls his eyes as he unlaces his skates.

“Next time you can try with a puck,” Ilya suggests as Alisa grins.

“I bet I can score more goals than you,” she boats.

“We’ll see,” he says as he pulls off her skates and hands her her sneakers.

On the drive back, Ilya gets a phone call from Kelly and gives her an update. She’s happy. That's enough for everyone to feel comfortable. She mentions that Alisa should probably re-enrol back into school.

Shane handles that phone call.

Alisa seems excited to see her friends again.

Ilya and Shane dread the idea of making small talk with other parents, helping with homework and maybe being recognised and the news getting leaked before they were ready to announce it themselves.

So they contact Farah to let her know about everything. She's happy for them, sad given the circumstances, but agrees to draft a statement to go out in the next few weeks.

The next few weeks fly by, and it's October. The start of the NHL season.

While there's still a few days to go, they invite Shane’s parents round. Alisa has settled in incredibly well, but still has wobbles. She has hockey practice once a week with both Ilya and Shane. Ilya wants her to obliterate the kids on the junior team if she wants to join. She enjoys it enough.

Shane and Ilya’s joint statement is released on social media saying they’ve adopted a girl. No details revealed apart from the fact they now have a daughter. They’ve not officially adopted her yet, but Kelly’s frequent calls allude to that outcome. Shane knows Ilya wouldn't part from Alisa now. He’s grown so attached to his daughter.

Shane has as well.

Yet Ilya’s the one she calls for first if she has a nightmare or needs help, a glass of water in the middle of the night.

For once, Shane’s content with being second. The assistant to Ilya’s preference. That’s not to say Alisa doesn't like Shane. She does. It's still early days. But Ilya allows her to have an extra piece of candy if she asks.

Anya is her favorite, though. That’s undisputed. She'd hugged Anya more than Ilya or Shane when they went to visit her mother's grave. She'd requested it, Ilya and Shane had hesitated before eventually agreeing. Maybe it'd help, yet they'd cried more than she did as they could fully comprehend the situation.

She's sitting on the couch with Anya watching an episode of Spongebob when the doorbell announces the arrival of Shane’s parents.

“Alisa,” Ilya calls out, “there's someone here to see you!’

She doesn't come immediately.

“It could be Spongebob,” he jokes with a grin.

She comes rushing, slight disappointment when it is not, in fact, someone who lives in a pineapple under the sea.

Yuna’s face lights up immediately. Shane and Ilya had explained the circumstances last night. They greet Alisa carefully as she warms up to them, a confident child given all she’s been through. It makes Ilya proud.

It doesn't take long for Yuna and David to get involved with a game of dolls followed by a session of nail painting. While David’s having his nails done, Yuna finds Shane and Ilya in their bedroom doing the mundane laundry chores.

“She's adorable,” she beams.

“I make cute kids,” Ilya says, smug before Shane playfully punches his arm.

“Are you ok to look after her next week?” Shane asks as he folds another t-shirt.

“Of course,” Yuna agrees, eager. “Do you want us to stay here?”

Ilya and Shane share a look. That was actually a great idea, better for Alisa.

“That works out better,” Ilya says before smirking. “Just don't go looking too hard in our room.”

Shane blushes, beet red. His mother gives an understanding nod after a moment of surprise.

Alisa watches the Ottawa game intently as Yuna and David help her identify Shane and Ilya.

“Yay, Daddy!” she cheers when Ilya scores a goal.

Yuna and David share a look, hearts melting.

Ottawa win the game, all players piling on top of their captain who led them to victory.

Ilya’s interview is next and he's ecstatic, for once not minding the boring questions. It's a welcomed change from the disappointed, losing-related questions. Winning at home, in front of their fans was amazing.

Alisa stares at the screen but her focus is slipping as she rubs at her eyes. Yuna and David make the decision to take her to bed, David reading her a story while Yuna calls her son.

Normally she wouldn't. But they missed out on a milestone tonight and she feels like they should know.

Shane doesn't know whether or not to tell Ilya. He decides not to as they feel it's better if he hears Alisa say it herself.

By the time it's Christmas, they receive the news they've been waiting for.

Ottawa has made it into the playoffs.

Ilya jokes that's more important, but what's made his entire year is being allowed custody of his daughter, with Shane listed as her adoptive father.

Their private celebration is more tearful than Ilya expected. He's overcome with emotions. He wishes his mother could've met his daughter.

They don't tell Alisa yet. She's got her first game of junior hockey today. Ilya wants to focus on that as much as she does as he checks her kit over to make sure she's wearing it correctly.

He's worried when she enters the rink. Shane's holding his hand. "She'll be fine," he comforts. "I mean, how many other kids have 3 months of training with NHL players?" he says with a laugh.

"Maybe she should play for Ottawa," Ilya continues the joke. "Better than some, I think."

As the game starts, Shane feels worry rising inside him as well. It occurs to him: this is the rest of their lives now.

Parental panic.

That little girl is so precious and she's been through so much at such a young age. Hockey was too much of a violent sport. How the hell did his own parents cope?

“Давай!” Ilya cheers as Alisa scores her first goal in her first game of junior hockey.

Shane grins.

She’s a natural.

“Did you see me, Dad?’ Alisa jumps into Ilya’s arms as they hug. He didn't seem to notice what Alisa called him, but Shane did.

He bit his lip to stop his smile as he looked over to his parents.

Ilya wouldn't stop praising Alisa, even on the car ride home.

“You were great,” he continues as they walked through the front door. “The best!” he messes up her hair.

Their dinner is pasta, Alisa’s staple. Shane jokes it was Ilya’s too, but they both looked at him, forks sticking out their mouths before Ilya’s lips turned into a taught, mouth filled attempt of a smile.

He swallows, gaining an idea that he can barely until everyone’s done with dinner.

“Alisa,” he starts. “What do you want for Christmas?”

“I wanna stay here!”

He knew she’d say that.

He also knew she’d written on her letter to Santa, that she wanted her mommy. And if she couldn't, she hoped she was ok.

That made Ilya cry.

He’s almost tearing up now at the fact his daughter wants to stay here as much as he wants her to stay here.

“Then you can stay here,” he tells her, voice thick with emotion as she hugs him and he picks her up. “I love you so much,” he said through tears.

“I love you too. And Shane!” she reached her hands out for Shane, and he moved to join the hug.

Now they're all emotional. With Anya brushing around their legs.

“And Mommy too,” Alisa adds.

“Yes,” Ilya agrees. “Never forget your mommy,” he tells her.

Even though he didn't name her, he knew her name was accurate.

The meaning of Alisa was great happiness.

End Notes

WAAAAH PLS LMK WHAT U THINK :D i wrote this in like 4 hours help me 😭💕 i do hope u enjoyed!!!
sorry i love hollanov too much
maybe a teeny bit rushed at the end but ajsjsjddj sorry i wanted to post it but ill add some more scenes soon

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!