

high like the kite

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by [dressedupliketheking](#)

Summary

Shane was not texting Hayden (much) during the Cup final. What starts as gentle teasing from Yuna swerves into a conversation about marriage, emergency contacts and Shane's time in hospital after the hit from Marlow.

Also: laughs, and 8 is the perfect number of burgers this time.

Notes

this scene follows on from part 2 of this "things they (finally) said" series but is also good to go as a standalone. there is another scene ft mentions of scott hunter and hayden pike to come in part 4 of the series

Yuna rests her wrists on the table, hands full of burger. This is their third dinner altogether this week, and she is enjoying their developing dynamic as a four more and more with each visit. There was a jibe from Ilya earlier about making the full recipe she didn't quite catch, but the way Shane smiles more than she's seen him do at any age is so addictive she didn't risk ruining the mood by asking for an explanation.

They overlook the lake in comfortable silence a few moments before Yuna turns to Shane. There are still so many questions she wants to ask now she has context for the last nine years of interactions with her son. She is trying her best to gather information gradually, hoarding whatever pieces of themselves their boys are willing to offer up, rather than launch into a full Sherlock Holmes detective routine. She'd never have the thought aloud, let alone do it, but the idea of hooking them both to a lie detector machine and grilling them is more appealing than she'd like to admit.

"I am guessing," she says with a sly smile, "that you were not actually texting Hayden during the Cup final."

"Well, I, uh- I did. Once. But yes, I was mostly messaging Ilya," Shane says shyly. She knew it, but the confirmation was almost enough to send her heart bursting free from her chest regardless. If someone had told her the reason only eight days ago, she'd have thought they should be committed.

Ilya hums in affirmation, nodding. "About you, actually," he says through a mouthful of burger.

Yuna is shocked, and from the laugh Ilya lets out, expects it is plain to see.

"Me?" she asks, defensively. She knew she had been badgering Shane about time on his phone, about taking care as he recovered from his concussion. But this was Shane. Surely he wouldn't have been bagging her out to...

"Nothing bad, Mom, don't stress. Just your witchcraft, predicting Hunter's win," Shane says quickly, and Yuna's worry evaporates.

"She's good," David adds sagely, looking at Ilya. "Never bet against her if you know what's good for you."

"Mmmm," Ilya says again, swallowing his food before wiping his hands on a napkin. "It is talent, I hear. If you and Svetlana start business for online gambling advice you would be unstoppable."

Shane bristles at this, and Yuna is unsure if it's about the name or, given their access to the information of now two top tier teams, the ethics of the suggestion. She fears her attempt at lighthearted conversation is about to take a turn for the worse.

Ilya reads the room, and tries to correct. "Ah. Svetlana is friend from Russia, since we are kids. Lives in Boston now. Her father was Russian goalie Vitrov, she knows more about

hockey than many teammates. She predicts the year we win Cup in advance, entire Boston path to final. Sensible. You would like her.”

He directs the last part to both Yuna and Shane, who manages a “maybe” before falling silent for a long time. Ilya reaches to hold Shane’s hand who accepts it, but his fingers remain lax. Yuna watches Shane watch the lake rippling, sees Ilya squeezes his fingers, trying to bring him back from wherever he’s gone.

“We are friends, Shane. You said don’t marry Svetlana, I won’t. Canadian citizenship better than American anyway. I get it someday. Story end.”

“You talked about marriage, with Svetlana?” David uses the same tone he did to enquire about Ilya’s reputation as a “ladies’ man”. His caution, confusion and drive to protect Shane from being hurt equally evident as he looks between them.

“Da. Yes. For citizenship. Cover story. Paperwork only, not real. She would do it for me.” Ilya sets these facts out like someone might set cutlery on a table: routine, no nonsense.

“Ilya, I know it’s selfish and it would make you safer but I can’t-“ Shane words come out in a rush, until he draws a big breath and tries again. His eyes are glistening. Yuna imagines watching the love of her life marrying someone else for a piece of paper, and wants to bundle him up and rock him like she did when he was a toddler with a scraped knee. “I can’t watch-“

“No, no. Is okay, moy lyubov, you and me decide together I not do that. I just explain to your parents.” Ilya shuffles his chair closer and Shane leans ever so slightly against his shoulder. “But. I do want to give your phone number. To Sveta. She is emergency contact. She knows there is Jane, guessed Jane is a man. Maybe already thinks the man is you, I think. In emergency, she tell you I am okay.”

Yuna wishes she knew what clues Ilya had dropped over the years for this perceptive female friend to figure them out, considering she failed so spectacularly in catching Shane’s tells. One day, she might get the chance to ask Svetlana herself, but for now, she sits across the table from Shane as he gives a minute, stiff nod, pressing his lips together in the way he does when he’s trying to keep his emotions to himself.

“I want it to be me,” Shane whispers after a silence that stretches too long. Yuna wants that for them too, and the look on David’s face says he is thinking the same.

“I know,” Ilya says quietly, and raises Shane’s hand to his lips.

There is no solution to this, and won’t be for some time yet. There’s something else Yuna wants to say, but hasn’t yet found a good time. Right now is as good as any, she decides. Shane is upset anyway and the door to this conversation is already wide open.

“The night of Shane’s injury must have been very difficult for you, Ilya.” Yuna says, her voice low, trying her best to send tender without pitying.

“Yes, was very rude of your son to be in hospital on date night.” Ilya is trying to make his tone light for Shane, but the smile is not quite genuine and doesn’t reach his eyes.

“It won’t happen again,” Shane says with quiet determination.

“You can’t promise that, honey” Yuna says. “Hockey’s a dangerous game.”

“It is, but that’s not why I got hurt. I looked back with fucking heart eyes skating *in the neutral zone*. If any of my teammates did that...” Shane trails off, clearly irate with himself. “It was reckless and irresponsible. I could’ve been hurt so much worse, we could’ve been exposed. I know I made you all worry, and I will not let that happen again.”

“Mistakes happen, son. You can focus all you like but it’s no guarantee you’ll avoid another knock,” David says before turning to nod at his son’s boyfriend. “Ilya, now we have your number, I promise if he lands in hospital again you’ll know what’s going on the minute we do.”

The declaration is met with another tight-lipped smile and nod. “Thank you,” Ilya says. The unspoken *I want it to be me, too* clinging to the cool night air around them once again.

“I was surprised when I learned you’d visited Shane the next morning,” Yuna admits. “It certainly made me rethink how you go about your captaincy. I realise now, given your reaction on the ice, it should have made me rethink more than that.”

“Mmm, I am full of surprises,” Ilya says, with a smile and a nudge of his shoulder against Shane’s. “I am only surprised Shane didn’t tell you himself that day. He was, how you say, high like the kite?”

Shane chuckles to himself, a weak and watery laugh, the memory seemingly just enough to draw him out of the mud of his mind. He reaches across his body to stroke Ilya’s forearm. “Close. ‘High as a kite’.” Shane corrects tenderly.

Ilya shrugs and nestles into Shane’s ministrations.

“I don’t remember much of the conversation to be honest, but I’m pretty sure the nurse who came in as you were leaving took pity on me,” Shane says. “She gave me something to knock me out after I gushed about you being gorgeous and funny and secretly coming to my cottage over summer. When I woke up Mom and Dad were there and I was more, um, in control.”

He says this with an undercurrent of contentment rather than melancholy, but Yuna’s eyes prick. She remembers Shane wincing while declining the next dose of heavy duty painkillers in favour of basic paracetamol. Even with his season over, body hurting and head thumping, he had chosen physical pain over their potential judgement. Shane may have forgiven her, but whether she can ever forgive herself for Shane’s silent suffering is yet to be seen. The boys, luckily, seem unaware of her inner turmoil, and continue with their banter.

“Was lucky,” Ilya gives Shane a mischievous grin and Shane’s eyes widen in alert, “you might have told your parents how we-“

Shane claps a hand aggressively over Ilya’s mouth, who is throwing his head back with manic laughter.

“Relax,” the Russian manages through laughter that has overtaken them both, “I say nothing.”

Yuna and David share a glance. The way Shane can oscillate between heartbreak at what they can't have in their current circumstances, acceptance of what they do have despite them, and pure, unfiltered delight in the moment with Ilya is new to both of them. Ilya is wiping his eyes and Shane is elbowing him and neither are making any moves to get space between them. If anything they look like they are somehow wriggling closer, plastered to each other's sides, patches of bare skin at the calves and forearms pressed together hard enough they may as well be trying to merge into one body.

And who is Yuna to say they won't? These are two of the most determined, hardworking players in the history of hockey. They've achieved so many things they've set their minds to separately, and beaten the odds together so far. Their road will be far from easy, but Yuna suspects neither she or famed psychic Svetlana would be brave enough to bet against Shane and Ilya from here on out. She rests back against the chair, tilts her face skyward, and smiles.

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