Foal

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Foal

by Opalsong

Summary

Ilya wants kids and after seeing him with his niece, Shane is going to make that happen.

Notes

A warning for the discussion of the possibility of a miscarriage but no miscarriage actually happens -

▶ click here for spoilers

I did zero research on adoption agencies here. It's entirely possible it wouldn't be that hard for Shane to find a baby to adopt but then I wouldn't have a reason for him to be pregnant soooooo…. I also have done no research into the PWHL (or NHL) policies for maternity/parental leaves. I assume the PWHL has to have one. But I have no idea what it's like.

Did I write this in 2 days and 2 sittings and just let it pour forth like a fountain upon the page? Yes. Does that mean this is pretty much entirely unbeta'd? Also yes. There are probably a million typos.

See the end of the work for more notes

The trigger was Ilya's niece. They'd been building to it for a while but it wasn't until Ilya's niece that Shane actually thought about it seriously.

It had taken a while for the money Alexei still had to run out, and then more time for the money he got from selling Ilya's apartment to run out, and then still more time for the government to catch him in the act of embezzling. So it was the summer after Shane and Ilya took home their first Cup for Ottawa that they ended up hosting Ilya's niece for a few months. (They took care of her for the summer and when they went back to hockey, Shane's parents were amazing and helped out whenever they were needed. Ilya's sister-in-law eventually made it to Canada and she and Ilya's niece were reunited.) And seeing Ilya with a child, so constantly and consistently good with her, made Shane really start thinking about kids.

He'd known Ilya wanted kids, in a sort of abstract way, for years. They'd talked about it casually but both acknowledged that they were too busy. They didn't have a WAG or HAB at home to care for the kids. Hell, they could barely even have a dog because they were gone so often. So Shane had put a pin in that thought for after retirement.

Except that after seeing Ilya with his niece, Shane did the math. He wanted them both to have long careers. As long as possible. Which meant definitely into their mid thirties and maybe even into their late thirties. And that was getting late to raise a kid. And sure, they could adopt someone older but Shane saw how Ilya was around babies - every time they visited Hayden, Ilya wouldn't put the latest baby down for anyone. They'd worked it out with Ilya's niece, they could make it work for a baby of their own.

So Shane looked into adoption. Maybe they weren't ready immediately, but adoption took a while to get set up, even for people with money like them.

It turned out that the good adoption agencies, the ones where you were sure no one was stealing kids to sell them to rich white people, all also felt that having at least one parent around all the time was necessary. Their haphazard "we'll care for them when we're home and when we're not we'll have the best nanny services a person can have, and grandparents will help out too" wasn't a good enough plan. On the one hand, Shane appreciated that these agencies were taking the health and happiness of children seriously. On the other hand it was frustrating that he and Ilya weren't considered good parents.

(There was also the discrimination factor. They had so many ticks against them for those organizations. Their races and ethnic backgrounds, that they were a gay couple, even the fact that Shane was an omega counted against him a bit. Especially since he wasn't going to be a stay at home dad.)

Shane was talking with Hayden about it (who else would he talk to about potential children) when Hayden said, "why don't you just do it? You're an omega right?"

And that was. Well, Hayden wasn't wrong. Shane *was* an omega. But the reality of a male omega's anatomy wasn't like it was in romance books or in those crime procedurals where pretty much any time a male omega was mentioned he was pregnant or in heat. In real life,

male omegas almost never got pregnant. Their wombs were vestigial - they were still there, but there weren't any hormones to make it work. (The same as a female alpha's testes.)

Shane never thought about getting pregnant. Well, not unless Ilya was fucking him hard and murmuring "going to fill you up, Shane, fuck a baby right into you." And then it wasn't about being pregnant really. That was just a kink thing. Shane knew that because Ilya went a bit nuts when Shane turned the tables and fucked him and said the same thing. Ilya liked that even more, Shane was pretty sure. (Not the being fucked part, but the imagining Shane fucking a baby into him bit.)

Honestly, Shane thought about being an omega about the same amount that he thought about being half Japanese. It was something about him that people used to put him down and chirp him about and a part of him that brands wanted to capitalize on. But it wasn't as important to him or as dangerous to him (or as lucrative for him) as being gay was. Or being as good at hockey as he was. It was just a quirk of his biology that meant he had to tell his doctors so he got the appropriate medical care. That's it. (It didn't make his relationship with Ilya any more palatable for bigots. A male omega was still a man. Like, maybe it was better than Ilya being with a male alpha but by a negligible amount. And even then Shane wouldn't bet on it.)

But he *could* get pregnant. Hayden wasn't wrong. Or well. He maybe wasn't wrong. Not all male omegas who tried to kicstart their wombs managed it. But it was an option.

An option that would result in a baby that was half Shane and half Ilya.

Fuck.

Even if it would mean having to take time off hockey.

And there was the problem with this plan.

Hockey.

But that was getting ahead of himself. He needed to know if Ilya actually wanted kids. Really wanted them. Because it was one thing to look up adoption agencies without talking to Ilya, and another to start messing with his body. In ways that might affect his hockey.

When Shane finally managed to broach the topic, Ilya looked at him with want in his eyes. He deflected and joked but Shane could see how much he wanted it. Wanted kids.

It took weeks of dancing around it, having the conversation without actually saying what they meant, but finally Ilya admitted that he wanted a family. And wanted one soon. He kept joking that Hayden managed to kickstart his biological clock. Shane admitted that he'd looked at adoption agencies and didn't get to finish his sentence because Ilya kissed him.

For a while.

When they lay panting in bed, covered in sweat, Shane admitted that unless things changed or they went to the less savoury adoption agencies, they weren't eligible. Ilya was devastated.

Then Shane brought up the other way. That he was an omega.

And it was in that moment that Shane fell in love with Ilya all over again. Because Ilya was devastated that they would have to wait. Truly horribly sad. But he still fiercely said no.

No, he would not ask this of Shane. Would not ask him to change his body and take time away from hockey. Not for this. Not when they could wait.

But, Shane pressed, if Shane was willing, would Ilya want that?

Well, it didn't help, because Shane wasn't on any treatments, but Ilya showed just how much he liked that idea and enthusiastically tried to make it happen that evening.

After that, it was talking to his mom. Because she was his manager and Shane needed to know how this would affect his career.

They took five minutes to cry about it together before packing the emotions away and getting down to business.

There were two problems (from his mom's perspective): his brand deals and getting parental leave. The brand deals would be easy, according to his mom. It was pretty well known that Shane was an omega and that he was in a gay relationship. So him getting pregnant wouldn't be unheard of. The brands might not like it, but he could still shoot promos until he started showing and his mom said she would start approaching some maternity and baby companies. To fill any gaps if any of his current brands dropped him.

The MLH on the other hand, didn't have a parental leave policy. And certainly not one for the bearing partner. His mom started looking into the PWLH for possible contract wording. The Centaurs were amazing, but Shane wasn't sure what their ownership or management would think about one of their star players needing to take a year off to be pregnant. (Maybe a little less than a year, if the rehab from pregnancy went well.)

None of this would matter if Shane's body didn't cooperate though. And the fertility doctor said that starting the hormones needed for the process of "awakening his womb" (Shane wanted to roll his eyes at the wording. Ilya did roll his eyes. Shane was so happy to have Ilya to be rude for him) wouldn't cause any problems if he wanted to keep playing hockey. Shane double checked with his primary care doctor and then again with the team doctors (after confirming that they wouldn't tell management anything that wouldn't affect his hockey). They all agreed. Shane could start taking hormones and getting his body ready without affecting his play.

Ilya had to go back to wearing a condom though. Just in case the hormones worked too fast.

Shane hid it for months. Until his mom and his agent had negotiated a deal with management that protected him and his position and gave him the time off to protect the pregnancy. He'd still be required to practice with the team ("required" as if that wasn't a bonus for Shane) and do media stuff throughout the pregnancy. But once he was pregnant he would be in a no contact jersey for all of it and would be out of games until after the baby was born and he could hold his own with the team again. He got the Canadian standard mandatory six weeks maternity leave for the birthing partner but would be allowed to come back early if he was ready and wanted to. (Something everyone except Shane doubted) and between him and Ilya,

they'd get the regular year of parental leave - with the caveat that they couldn't both be gone at the same time (his mom wasn't happy with this. Pushing in case Shane needed support. But they were already changing a contract mid-season, Shane was going to take the pretty generous offer they were getting). They hadn't sat down to figure it out, but Shane was pretty sure that as soon as he was able to play in games, Ilya would want to be a full time parent for a while.

And then Shane could stop hiding it. He could stand beside Kagey - their rookie goalie who took his T shots every day, and shove his own needle into his stomach. Kagey came out to drinks with them after practice that day for the first time and never asked what the needle was for. No, that came almost a week later. Seriously, it took this team a week to realize Shane was stabbing himself every day at the same time.

After that it was a shit show. Their hockey stars, trying for a baby!!

Ilya put them all on media black out on the topic with a truly massive fine if anyone mentioned it. Because it might not work. Not every male omega could get pregnant.

Shane could feel something building during playoffs, but that wasn't the time for it. They needed to win. They knocked out Montreal in a sweep that was still deeply satisfying for Shane and then got knocked out themselves which sucked. It happened, it hadn't been their year. Two in a row would be pretty greedy.

And with the way that Shane fell into a real, true, full blown *heat* the moment he entered the cottage? He couldn't find it in himself to be devastated by the loss.

The thing was, male omegas went into heat, sure. But it wasn't the same as a female omega. Again it was a hormonal thing. Probably. Shane wasn't an expert. Female omegas went into heat anywhere between one to three times a year and it was apparently pretty all-consuming. It depended on the person, of course, some people worked through their heats, but most people (at least in Canada) didn't. They were too busy fucking themselves or having a partner (or partners) fuck them to consentrate on anything else. But male omegas didn't get that. Or at least Shane didn't.

He normally didn't actually notice until it was over. He'd slowly ramp up in horniness until he was fucking himself on a dildo anytime he was able to. And now that he was married to Ilya, they just had more and more sex until suddenly, Shane felt sated and he realized that, huh, yeah. He'd probably had his bi-annual heat. But he never noticed because he and Ilya were just. Like That.

(The Centaurs found out that Shane never realized he was in heat and were both appalled and also not shocked at all. Except by the implications. They had how much sex normally??)

But this heat that hit after playoffs was nothing like any that Shane had felt before. It was all consuming lust and a need to - not just have sex, but specifically get fucked. And more specifically, be knotted.

Ilya made him see a doctor the next day. Got the gynecologist to drive out to the cottage to do an ultrasound and confirm that they could try for real.

They got the go ahead.

They tried. They tried really hard.

The heat was extended and they fucked often and deeply and knotted as many times as Ilya physically could.

A month later and the pregnancy test still read negative.

They'd have to wait until winter.

Male omegas couldn't get pregnant whenever, like cis-women. They could only get pregnant while in heat. (But because of that, they didn't have periods. Which Shane was forever grateful for after helping babysit while Jackie was on her period once. Shane was half convinced that the reason she and Hayden kept having kids was so she could avoid her period.)

Shane asked about inducing another heat. But while having his womb be open for business wouldn't affect his hockey, the drugs to induce his heat would.

So the season started again and Shane was back to standing side by side in the mirror, stabbing himself in the stomach while Kagey stabbed himself in the thigh.

Shane's second ever full heat hit in the middle of a game against Montreal. Because of course it fucking did. Shane played while feeling slick drip down the backs of his thighs because he wasn't going to let them have the satisfaction. And when he was on the ice, nothing mattered but hockey.

He didn't shower after, just secluded himself in a physio room and fucked himself on his fingers until Ilya was ready to go. (The team laughed when they realized. Fucking Hollander. So dedicated that he played through his heat and won. Got a goal even. While high on heat hormones. Only him.)

This time, it was during the season so after his heat he sat out for a week - stayed home for that roadtrip. Not doing more than light skating. It burned, not being there for his team against Florida or Texas. Seeing them drop a game.

But it was worth it, to greet Ilya at the airport with a small paper from the doctor that confirmed it. He was sitting out the rest of the season. Ilya nearly screamed in joy.

They managed to get out of there before anyone could ask questions.

They still didn't announce it publicly. Shane was out with a "lower body injury" until further notice. Of course there was rampant speculation but no one wanted to announce the pregnancy only for it to end in a miscarriage.

Shane followed every single doctor's order to the letter. He kept working out but a little bit lighter and with less lifting. He kept skating but avoided even lightly bumping into people. He wanted this baby.

And then they were far enough along that they could relax a bit and announce it. Shane wasn't showing much yet. (Well, he wasn't showing anything but frustration at not being able to skate hard and play hockey for real.) But they had a press conference and revealed what his "injury" was.

And waited for the backlash.

The outpouring of support bowled them over. Of course there was some backlash. Some people using this to try and support outdated anti-omega views and others who used it as another tally on their Shane Hollander hit list and a few die hard Centaurs fans who started blaming Shane for every loss. But overall there was way more support than anything else.

People were talking about how this baby was going to be the next Great One. Which. Shane wasn't opposed and definitely wanted them to play hockey. But if they weren't good at it or didn't want to play, that was up to them. Shane's parents never forced him to choose hockey, he wanted to and he wanted to be that parent for his child. Ilya felt the same.

But all of that led here, to Shane standing in the booth with all of the WAGs, in a jersey that barely fit over his bump. The jumbotron kept showing him, like it did every home game, and Shane tried to wave every time but it got tiring. He was finally showing and he didn't fit into his suit. Centaurs' PR said that he was fine wearing his jersey to games, even if he wasn't allowed to play.

It was hard though, seeing his team make the playoffs without him. Even if he had told Ilya that if Shane was going to be out for the season, Ilya better bring home a cup to make it worth it. Ilya was certainly putting in the work for it. They were on game six of the finals and Shane wanted nothing more than to be on the ice with his team.

Well no, he wanted his baby healthy. He wanted that more.

Which is why he was here. Waving at the jumbotron. Instead of on the ice.

Ilya scored and the baby kicked and Shane grinned wildly and pressed a hand to his belly, saying, "you and me both."

And then the game was over and the cup was presented and Shane walked onto the ice (a travesty) and kissed his husband and their baby kicked with joy.

That would be the fairy tale ending to the story. But Shane still had two months until his c-section date and he stopped being able to skate sometime in there.

His ankles swelled up too much to put skates on, his joints got extra mobile - making it dangerous and throwing him off balance, and speaking of balance - having a bowling ball attached to his abs threw everything off.

Shane was grumpy that summer.

So grumpy.

He was hot and couldn't skate and he was horny but Ilya had team and brand obligations sometimes.

But really, it was the lack of skating that was the worst.

He was so grumpy about it. Ilya kept making posts about it and teasing him in the Centaurs' group chat.

The joke about Shane wanting to skate was so pervasive that no one realized how true it was.

Shane's c-section was scheduled for July and true to form, he delivered a tiny human into Ilya's arms at precisely the scheduled moment. They had a good month as a family, Ilya bending over backwards to care for the baby and Shane as he recovered from the surgery.

Then the pre-season started and Shane was given a tentative go ahead from his surgeon and the team doctors and he was skating again. His body still fragile but slowly beginning to feel like his own again.

And because he was Shane Hollander, by the time the season started, he was back on the ice with the team for real and Ilya was up in the box, with their baby in oversized ear protectors.

Their fans couldn't stop screaming that first game.

And if Shane had a goal to bring home his own Cup so that they could place their baby in it?

Well, that's for him to know and the world to find out at the end of the season.

CODA:

As much as Shane threatened to get Ilya pregnant next time, it was, of course, impossible. What wasn't impossible apparently, was three years later, Shane having another heat and them not realizing that they needed a condom. And well. Ilya'd been wanting another baby anyway and they already had the nannies and Shane's contract was the same still. So.

(That was enough though. They weren't *Hayden*.)

End Notes

This started with the joke that omega Shane would be SO GRUMPY while he was pregnant because he couldn't play hockey. Then it expanded into this much softer character piece.

I have a couple more worldbuildy tidbits for this universe that I couldn't work into this fic. Maybe one day I will write the "5 Significant Heats of Shane Hollander" fic that's slowly percolating in my brain and I'll include them there.

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