

No Matter What

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No Matter What

by [HiddenArchive04](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya were supposed to be grabbing supplies for the cottage.

Until a little girl grabbed Ilya's leg.

Now, they face the most exhausting 12 months ahead of them.

Notes

First fic in AO3. I just really like the thought of Shane and Ilya adopting a kid. Please be kind.

This will be first part of a series of fics. Just domestic bliss, wholesome family moments, and slice-of-life stuff <3

Also feel free to correct my use of Russian.

- Inspired by [The Secrets We Kept](#) by [Larissa_liest](#)

Chapter 1: POV Shane

Shane didn't really expect for things to go this fast. One year ago, they were supposed to be heading to his cottage for their annual getaway from everything. They were supposed to just pick up a few things at the store before heading out.

If it wasn't for a little girl's curiosity, they wouldn't be heading to the orphanage a year later to pick up their soon-to-be bundle of joy.

Shane could remember it vividly. Ilya stopped dead in his tracks. The store was literally next door. He looked back. A small girl with a red headband. Frilly dress. Clinging to Ilya's pants. She looked like an angel, if it wasn't for her mischievous grin. Her tiny stature completely wrapped around Ilya's leg.

"Hello, кошечка (koshechka)." Ilya bent down to look at the girl clasped to his leg. The girl let out a big smile as she looked up at him.

"Hello there, Mister! Keep walking please." Shane remembered being so out-of-it that all he could really do is exchange confused looks with Ilya. His husband reciprocated by addressing this child and her ridiculous request.

"Sorry, I do not think I should." *Of course*, Shane thought, *we should act like responsible adults and not immediately succumb to the demands of a random child.* "Where are your parents, little one?"

As soon as Ilya asked, the girl's expression shifted quickly from giddy to somber.

"I don't have one."

Shane shifted his gaze from the child to the building in front of them. It looked like a chapel but when he looked closely at the sign, he understood. It was an orphanage. A tiny chapel surrounded by towering cemented buildings. It had grass, few foliage, and trees that made it seem like it was a green sanctuary from the grays of the concrete city.

He nudged Ilya and urged him to look up. He saw his husband instantly understand. Without wasting another second, Ilya pulled the girl from his leg and up to his face. He then placed her back down on the ground as if he was holding a porcelain doll. She might as well have looked like one with her frilly dress and headband.

Ilya knelt to get down to her level. Shane knew he could easily handle this kind of situation with children and prepared to get back to getting stuff at the store.

"What is your name, Koshechka?" Ilya let out a small grin. Mostly to comfort the poor girl who became meek.

"...Lily."

Wide eyed, Shane and Ilya stared at each other with shock. They stayed in that for a moment too long.

Lily. *Lily*. A name they once used. A name Shane saw for so many years on his phone. A name they agreed to give to their child.

FLASHBACK: A YEAR AGO

“If we got a kid, what name would we give them?” Shane asked earnestly.

“Lily. If a girl. Is cute.”

“It *was* cute. Do you think that would work as a kid’s name?”

“Why? Lily is still a name.”

“I get that. It just has...some baggage.”

“Because we used that when we were hiding?”

Shane couldn’t hide it. Ilya saw straight through him. It was a pretty sentimental name. A code name they used for their phone conversations. They *have* changed their names in their contacts to just Shane and Ilya years ago. But they were still names that they had always seen on their phone for years. Shane can’t easily remove the attached baggage it carried.

“Yeah. I don’t think I’ll get over it, to be honest.”

“I know.” He softly patted Shane’s hair. “Let us think of other name then, da?”

For a moment, he really considered it. *Jane. Lily. They are still cute names*. Might be symbolic if they used it. Like they’re using it to show themselves that their love is no longer this big secret. A name once used to hide is now a declaration of a love they have nurtured for many years. Yeah. It just might work.

“I just think Jane sounds better.”

“Oh, so you think Lily is not good?”

“No, I just think mine’s better.”

“You will pay for that, Hollander, for saying that.”

Teasing and bantering about names sounded silly. But to Shane, it meant that there’s nothing more to hide. He was happy knowing that those names don’t hold the same secretive nature they once held. He was happy thinking of family. He was happy thinking of a child they’ll once have.

They knew they wanted to have a family. Didn't plan when but was hopeful that if there was a sign, they would take it. In front of them was a child that looked like an absolute angel, that had the mischievousness of Ilya, that had the facial features of Shane, and had a name they thought would be perfect for their child.

To Shane, the stars and the planets aligned for a moment like this. A moment where they were sure. A sign they can take. A sign that they *want* to take.

Shane and Ilya broke through their trance and returned their focus back to Lily. A tear ran down both of their faces. Ilya quickly wiped his face with his hand. Shane saw him being mindful not to place his heavy hands on the little girl's shoulders by placing it on his knees. He thought that Ilya was trying his hardest not to embrace Lily.

"Well, little one. I am Ilya and this is Shane."

"You look like the hockey players on TV."

"You have good eyes, Lily. We play hockey."

"Really?" The girl beamed up.

"Yes. We play for best team. Ottawa Centaurs."

"Oh!" Lily exclaimed as if she remembered something. "You're Hollander! The others look up to you." She pointed at Shane who was crying the whole time. He quickly wiped his tears with his sleeves. He put on a smile to not weird out the kid.

"Yep. That's me. Thanks."

"A lot of the kids think you're the best! Including me!"

Shane could feel Ilya's piercing gaze at the sudden mention of being the best. *This kid is in deep trouble.*

"What about me? I captain the team!" Shane smiled at the thought of Ilya defending himself against a child's silly claim. Lily closes her eyes as if to remember. She perked up as if she finally got the memory.

"Oh! You're...Roza...Roza...The penalty box guy!" Shane couldn't help but do a spit take. It was so hilarious he couldn't help but audibly laugh.

"Shane!"

"Sorry! She's right."

"I have penalty box for...5 times so far!"

"5 times too much."

"Listen, Lily. I am the captain. He's just the left wing."

“Correction. Center.”

“He centers me.”

“Let’s not feed her misinformation now.”

“Is not wrong if you keep centering me.”

As they were bickering, they heard someone laugh. They turned to Lily and she was full on laughing at them. What were they talking about again? It flew from Shane’s brain the moment he saw Lily’s wide smile and laugh. Oh god, the tears are coming back. He fought for it to not fall this time. They both look at Lily with fondness and with certainty. This was their home.

A moment later, someone from inside the orphanage walked outside. It was a woman around her 30s who presumably worked for the orphanage.

“Lillia! What are you doing out here?”

“I was just playing and then I found them!”

“You know by now that you shouldn’t be-”

Her sentence cut away as she shifted her focus from Lily to the men beside her.

“Oh! You are Mister...uhh...Hollander and Rozanov! This is very unexpected.” She reached out a hand. Shane and Ilya shook it in turns. “I’m Sharon. To what do I owe this visit?”

“We were actually heading to the store next door, until Lily grabbed Ilya’s leg”

“She grabbed my attention. So I pay attention to her.” Ilya added with a wink towards Lily. She giggled.

“So you’re not here for a visit?”

“We weren’t but..” Shane paused before looking at his husband. *Are we really sure?* The last go-signal was what he needed before letting out the next words. Ilya nodded fondly. Shane returned it with a smile “...we will after going to the store.”

“Well, in that case, Lillia let’s go inside. We’ll see you later!”

Sharon ushered Lily inside. Lily looked back at Shane and Ilya with a wide grin and waved them goodbye. “See you Mr. Ilya and Shane!”

Ilya and Shane waved at her goodbye...for now.

Shane wanted to hug her then and there. If they could, they would just bring her to their home. But there’s a process, they had to remind themselves. They were willing to go through it if it meant being sure that they would be the best parents for Lily. They would do everything for a child they met just a few minutes ago.

Picking out supplies for the cottage was literally the last thing that was on Shane's mind. In his left hand was a checklist of things they were supposed to buy (written by Shane himself). In his right hand was a yellow headband with a ribbon on it. He seemed so fixated on it that Ilya had to nudge him awake.

"You good?"

"Oh...I...I'm..."

"We'll see her later, okay?"

"I know...I'm just-"

"Excited?"

"And nervous."

"Me too. You are not alone, sweetheart."

Ilya kissed Shane's cheek before going back to the store aisles. Shane's right hand trembled as he held onto the yellow headband. *We're just gonna visit her. No pressure.* He dropped the headband into his basket.

He really wanted to have a good impression on Lily. He wanted to make sure that she liked them. In his mind, new lines are written in his checklist.

Another cute dress.

An even cuter headband.

Bedtime storybooks.

A small bedframe and mattress.

Five or eight throwpillows (maybe more).

Dozens of stuffed toys.

Safe to say that Shane looked forward to their visit later.

Both of them left the store with a paper bag in hand, filled with cottage supplies. Shane held on to the yellow headband. *Hope she likes it.*

Ilya initiated ringing the doorbell. As they waited for a response, he tangled his hand with Shane's that was holding onto the headband. *We can do this.*

Not a moment later, Sharon opened the door.

“Hello there, Mr. Hollander and Mr. Rozanov! Come in.”

They stepped inside the orphanage. It was small. The main lobby had three small couches and a large TV. Shane assumed this is where the kids watched the hockey games. A small clerk table. A hallway that gave way to 6 rooms.

“The kids are actually in their reading time. So we have to be a little quiet here.” Sharon led them to the clerk desk. She grabbed a clipboard and a pen laying on the desk. “So, to what do I owe your visit?”

“We’re actually looking to adopt.” Shane said carefully.

“Oh perfect. That comes by very infrequently here so that’s good. But I want to remind you that it’s a very, very long process before you can actually-”

“We know a kid we want already.” Ilya interjected. Straight to the point was the thing that Shane was actively avoiding.

“Ilya..” Shane wanted to reel back what he said but there’s no taking back Ilya’s direct request.

“I’m assuming this is Lily.” Sharon let out a grin. “I thought so when I saw both of you.” She gestured towards a door near the clerk desk. “I think we’ll have a very long discussion. We should talk in our office.”

This was what they were waiting for. What they’ve been blindly preparing for. The first step to many more but the first nevertheless. Nerves run through them. And then they followed.

For three hours (or what felt like an eternity to Shane), Sharon explained to them how adoption works and how there are many steps to even do it, especially if they want to adopt someone specifically. Sharon checked on her laptop that there are few families who want to adopt someone specifically. Luckily for Shane and Ilya, no one has their eye on Lily. For a brief moment, Ilya let out a sigh of relief.

“Safe to say, this process will take at least a year, *if* you’re lucky. But that’s when the couple does a lot of work. Most couples take a few years.” Sharon laid out the timeline plainly.

Shane and Ilya exchanged looks. If they really wanted to commit to this, hockey cannot be off the table. It was their life and career after all. Time would be divided between seminars, hockey, and especially visiting Lily.

They saw it: their life for the next 12 months. Constantly tired. Never having time for just them. Sleepless nights.

It wouldn’t be fun. It wouldn’t be easy. But their eyes say differently. Without words, they were of the same mind. *We’ll push through. We’ll do this.*

“When do we start then?”

Chapter 2: POV Ilya

Chapter Notes

Chapter 3 will be published shortly after this. The last chapter will take longer though so, bear with me <3

Also, tell me what you want to see at the final chapter. Enjoy!

Ilya downed another cup of coffee. He really wished it was a cigarette but he knows a lecture from Shane would come over and he really doesn't have time for that.

It has been a week since that talk with Sharon at the orphanage. Exhausted is an understatement. Ilya hated spending the time in the cottage, a place that was supposed to be an escape, just pouring over the adoption papers laid out in his room. It felt like he was back in school, which was especially not a really good memory for him. But he can't see the papers as anything but homework.

He was annoyed. He wanted to just take Lily home. Spoil her on everything she wants. Kidnapping her from the orphanage was a thought. Let's just say he seriously considered it before being more pragmatic.

A knock.

"Any progress?" Shane asked with a cup of coffee in hand.

"Do you have a lighter?"

"Confiscated, and no, you can't burn all of that."

Ilya placed his hands over his face in frustration.

"Why is it so..." Ilya searches for the word in his tired state.

"Annoying? Tedious? Same." Shane took a swig of coffee.

"Why can they not just give her?"

"I get you. We still have to get to know her though. She has to be comfortable with us."

"You're right."

Shane landed a kiss on Ilya's forehead. "Back to work."

Ilya let out a very loud groan.

It seemed endless. The forms they had to fill out. The number of pages they had to read reached three digits. Ilya *really* hated it.

But amidst all of his complaining, he gets reminded why he was putting himself through this hell: *that smile*.

They had a short visit before going to the cottage. Ilya remembered walking into the orphanage and seeing Lily smile as she ran towards him. He couldn't help but imagine her running to him in their home.

Shane handed her the yellow headband that he bought a week earlier. Ilya saw how she was so giddy to receive it. The gift wasn't flashy. It wasn't even that expensive. It was *store-bought cheap* in Ilya's mind. But, it didn't matter to Lily. She was very content with it.

Ilya knelt down to place it on her head. He saw her wide smile as he placed it. He fought tears as it threatened to pour down.

It turned out she had been waiting for them to return since their last visit. She looked forward to seeing them again. They promised that they would visit weekly when they could after the cottage trip. She smiled and gave them a piece of paper.

It was a drawing of Ilya and Shane with a tiny figure beside them. It was her. That made Ilya's heart ache. He could've just picked her up and taken her to the cottage but Shane, being the sensible one, stopped him before he could even move. They exchanged their farewells and left.

Ilya has felt so empty ever since then. He couldn't even urge himself to be horny to Shane. He knew Shane felt the same. The cottage, the place they were supposed to be having the wildest sex to man, has now become the place where they worked hard to become suitable parents for a kid they met just a week ago.

Seeing Lily for the second time, a thought crossed his mind. *This was how Mama saw me. I understand now.*

He was loved by his Mama. He knew this. He knew how much she sacrificed for him and how her death was the consequence of things they couldn't control. Despite the grief and guilt he felt after she died, Ilya knew how his mother saw him. How her tender eyes would always look at him with utter adoration and warmth.

He felt that when he saw Lily. He doesn't want that feeling to go away. He wants to hold onto it. He wants to cherish it. He yearns to give that love to her. Fuck the paperwork. He wants to see her again.

A week more.

He recomposed himself and locked in on the stack of paper in front of him. It will be long. But he knows this.

For my family.

For Shane.

For Lily.

A week passed in their isolated cottage. Heading back to their home in Ottawa. Ilya's hands and eyes are so exhausted. He was glad Shane took the wheel this time. Though, he could see Shane's hand numb over the steering wheel. Instinctively, Ilya grabbed his hand.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, моя любовь (moya lyubov)."

"Sorry, we couldn't...you know."

"Fuck?"

"I wasn't even gonna say it."

"You want to? Suck you right now?"

"Ilya. Driving."

"So what? We did it before."

"I-"

They *did* in fact do it once. Ilya was feeling a bit too mischievous when his husband was driving them home from a game. Sometimes, old habits die hard. It was not the safest thing to do. Ilya didn't care though. He loved teasing Shane and giving him just a little. It made coming home much more urgent and their sex more explosive.

But he wasn't feeling it right now. In any other summer, he would have jumped at the opportunity. It only took a thought before. But now, something else was in his mind.

"No. Just kidding."

"Thank god. I'm not ready to crash this car."

"Should we visit?"

The question took Shane by surprise.

"The orphanage?"

"We will just say hi to her. That is all."

He wanted Shane to say yes. He almost pleaded but he didn't have to.

"Yeah. Let's drop by."

Ilya felt Shane's hand tighten. It was reassuring.

A couple hours pass by. They're right in front of the orphanage. Shane knew to call Sharon in advance. A few deep breaths. They walked out of the car.

"Hello there! How was vacation, Mr. Rozanov?" Sharon greeted him as she stepped outside of the building.

"Short." *And tiring.*

"Well, Lily's ready to see you. She's just in the playroom." She said as she led both of them inside.

"Oh actually, Mr. Hollander, I want to talk to you about the paperwork and the arrangement of your visits." Ilya looked at Shane. He saw him mouth something. *You go ahead.* He nodded in response.

"Sure thing. Just Shane would be fine." Shane said to Sharon as they headed into the office.

Left alone, Ilya walked towards what he assumed to be the playroom. The door to his left gave way to a room full of bunk beds. To his right was the playroom.

It was full of kids. He estimated that they would all be around three to eight years old. Activities were varied. Some are chasing each other. Some were reading books. Some were roleplaying. But he saw her immediately.

Alone. Yellow headband. A different frilly dress. Her hair in cute pigtails. Drawing on a piece of paper on the floor.

Ilya was about to make his way to her but worried his presence would disturb much of the kids. Turns out they didn't care much about him. Probably thought he was just another helper. So he scooted along the edge of the room to get to Lily.

When he reached her, Ilya intentionally blocked the light. It dimmed much of what she was drawing. By instinct, she looked confused. But her expression became bright when she recognized him.

"Mr. Ilya!" She got up to her feet. Ilya knelt down to match her level.

"Hello, Koshechka. Miss me?"

"I did. Wait!" She scrambled around her many drawings. It was varied in content. But one caught her attention. She pulled it out.

"I have this. For you!"

"Another drawing. For me?"

“Mmhmm!”

Ilya looked at the drawing. He instantly recognized it. It was him. The colors of the Ottawa jersey. His number. His curly hair. Lily’s drawing looked like a blur of a frame. But he recognizes it. That was enough for him. *Now this is impressive.*

“When did you get this?”

“The TV showed you and I wanted to capture it.”

“Oh the replay?”

“Yeah! You looked really cool.”

It was a children’s drawing for sure. Details were missing. Hell, he was missing the hockey stick and his left leg. But he recognizes the potential.

“This really good. Will keep it in a frame.”

She was very pleased with herself. Ilya looked at the other drawings and something caught his eye.

“This a famous figure skater, da?”

“Yep! She’s so pretty.”

“You like figure skating?”

“I wanna be a figure skater when I grow up.”

Figure skating. A world Ilya doesn’t really know much about. He only knows a few things about it. Like the hot athletes there. He knows it’s like dancing. Importantly, he knows it’s a pretty sport compared to hockey.

A thought once crossed Ilya’s mind that Shane could do figure skating. He had the face for it. The height. Was there a height requirement? Ilya’s pretty sure there isn’t. But he thought that if Shane would skate as gracefully in hockey, he could do it too in figure skating. Although, that would mean them not meeting so he kinda rejected that thought. But it was still something he pondered.

“You would be perfect for it. And you love drawing too, da?”

“I would skate and draw. I can do both.”

Ilya could picture it. Lily would be off the ice drawing the scenery. She gets called into the ice. She carries out a performance that was so beautiful she gets the gold. She calls both of her fathers to the ice. They share a tender moment as they hug her for her win.

“Mr. Ilya?”

Ilya caught himself daydreaming again.

“It’s nothing. I think that would be great.”

“I know so.”

The sass she displayed reminded him of himself with Shane on the ice. So sure of his abilities. Cocky in every face-off they had. She really reminded him of himself. He wondered if she would find someone who could match her. Ilya laughed at the thought of it.

“Well, can you draw me another picture?”

“Sure! You can do one too.”

Lily gave him some drawing materials. Ilya grabbed a pen and...doesn’t know what to really draw. Confused, he looked over Lily’s.

“Hey! No peeking!” Lily covered her paper with her tiny hands. It looked like a...dragon? No, a princess.

Ilya really didn’t know what to draw. *Fuck it.* He started sketching the cottage from memory. It was bad. Like really bad. The cottage, a place they have been going to for 10+ years, looked like a house melting in hell. It made Lily’s drawing look like Mona Lisa in comparison.

Ilya knew he had no talent in drawing. Luca Haas once tried to teach Ilya how to draw something simple: a dog. Ilya wanted to draw Anya. In the end, it looked like a blob that had legs. Haas assured him that it was okay, but Ilya saw how he was trying his hardest not to laugh in front of him.

All he really wanted to do was to make Lily laugh. If it looked like it was a house from hell and it made her laugh, that was enough.

“Okay, I’m done! How about you?”

“Oh more than ready, Малышка (Malyshka).”

Together they showed their drawings to each other. Ilya was shocked to see that it was them. Ilya as a knight and Lily as a princess. He recognized his curls and her yellow headband. A trademark now I guess.

Lily laughed. “Is that a dragon’s house? Why is it melting?”

There. She did laugh at it.

“Yes. Because he melted his house, he is coming for the princess next!” Ilya made a frightening shriek, imitating a dragon. Lily got scared for a quick second, but went back to laughing.

“Alright, everyone! Playtime’s over.” Sharon’s voice echoed to the entire playroom. The kids’ attention shifted from what they were doing to her.

Some kids made frustrated sounds but the other helpers came into the room and escorted all of them out.

Ilya shifted his attention to the door. Besides the helpers and Sharon, he saw Shane leaning against the doorframe, just looking at them. Lily noticed him too.

“Hey there, Mr. Shane!”

“Hey there, Lily. Did you have a good time with Ilya?”

“I did! He drew a house that melted and I drew him as a knight and me as a princess.”

“What?”

She showed him Ilya’s drawing. He let out a smile. He recognized it. Flabbergasted.

“It is definitely... *a* drawing.”

“Hey! I tried my best.” Ilya defended.

“She drew better than you.”

“I know. Because she is a genius.”

“You can score a hat trick, but you can’t even do a sketch of a house?”

“Like you can do better.”

“I bet I could.”

“Really? Lily, can you give us more paper?”

While the couple has their eyes locked to each other with competitiveness, they hear someone laughing again. It was Lily yet again. *She likes us bickering.*

“You can spend more time with her if you want.” Sharon offered.

“Thank you.” Ilya replied.

For the next 30 minutes, they drew pictures. Mostly it was Shane and Ilya trying to one-up each other, failing to draw a coherent thing, and showing it to Lily. It didn’t really matter to them if it looked good. What mattered was making Lily smile.

Sharon appeared near the doorway.

“Lillia, I’m afraid it’s time for you to go join the others. Say goodbye to Mr. Ilya and Shane for now.”

Lily looked sad.

“Hey.” Shane initiated. “We’ll come back again.”

“Really?”

“Do not worry, sweetheart. We will bring more paper and crayons for you.” Ilya reassured.

“Promise?”

“Pinky promise, Koshechka” Ilya tangled his pinky with Lily’s. Shane joined in.

“Bring more dandelion yellow!”

“Will find it for you. Do not worry.”

They wave goodbye to her, yet again. She goes to the other room and disappears from their view. Sharon guides them out to the lobby.

“See you again for your next visit.”

“Will do, Sharon. Thank you so much!” Shane replied.

Their next visits would be during the hockey camp and then during the season. It will be a long twelve months ahead of them. But Ilya always looked forward to their visits.

Now, they just have to find Dandelion Yellow crayons.

Chapter 3: POV Sharon

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It had been a week since Shane and Ilya last visited the orphanage.

Lily looked very excited in front of the TV. She asked earlier to put on videos of Mr. Ilya and Shane. She wanted to draw pictures of them, so she wanted references.

Sharon searched on Youtube for a video or something until she came across a livestream. The title of it was “Hockey Camp: Day 2” by the official Irina Foundation youtube channel. She clicked on it.

The camera was held by someone skating around the rink. It showed kids being guided during hockey drills by the various coaches. The camera panned to them. There was Ryan Price, Hayden Pike, Max Riley, Wyatt Hayes and Leah Campbell. Then, it panned over to Ilya and Shane who was, unsurprisingly, racing against each other as the kids cheered on.

“Mr. Ilya and Shane!” Lily pointed at the screen. She had a wide grin.

Sharon couldn’t help but smile at her. She hadn’t seen Lily smile so much.

“They’re so cool.” Lily pulled out her sketchpad and her crayons. Sharon gave it to her after Ilya and Shane last visited. She realized soon after that paper would run out in the orphanage if it kept up and had to remedy it quickly.

Sharon leaned against the lobby wall and observed Lily and the screen.

On the right of the screen, the chat was filled with people actively thirsting over the coaches in the camp, especially Ilya and Ryan Price.

Without missing a beat, Sharon navigated the screen and disabled the chat overlay. Lily was none the wiser.

The livestream continued showing the couple coaching properly. Sharon noticed that coaching was not really Shane’s forte, judging from how he explained specific techniques. But the kids got it either way, so it was still a success.

Sharon turned her attention to Lily and her drawing. She was drawing Ilya and Shane. At least she thinks it is. It had the colors of their distinct features but everything was pretty much a blur. *Work in progress*, she told herself.

But more importantly, it was how focused Lily was on drawing that really peaked Sharon’s attention. She even has her tongue out. It was *that* serious for her.

Sharon’s glad Lily was happy. But it wasn’t like this when she first found her.

She remembered the time when Lily, a 2-year old toddler, was left outside the orphanage. The poor girl was crying loudly in her little stroller with a piece of paper attached to it.

It was a letter. From the parent, Sharon presumed.

It was short. Deathly short.

“Lillia. Loves to draw. Tell her I’m sorry.”

Sharon has encountered many instances like this. A baby or a toddler being dropped by her doorstep. Their cries would always catch her attention. She would always see them either just abandoned or with a letter. Some would even have a bag beside them filled with supplies for a child.

The letters would vary in length. Some would overexplain and justify why they had to drop their child in an orphanage. Some would be short, like Lily’s. But all of them had something in common: Signed by no-one. Whoever the parent was, they really didn’t want to be found.

Sharon respected this. She just hoped that someone out there, a family, a couple, or whoever would adopt these kids.

She thought of adopting them all at once. If she could, she would. But her responsibilities already make her the most unfit parent there could be. Either way, she already sees herself as the foster parent of the 14 kids in the orphanage.

Lily was the odd-one-out to her. She was the only kid who was invested in drawing. None of the other kids really cared to draw. At least not at Lily’s level of proficiency and enthusiasm.

If drawing was what set her apart from the kids, it was ice skating that connected all of them. Figure skating, ice hockey. Sports like that really made the kids clamor for the TV.

For Lily, figure skating was her big interest. Seeing the skaters look graceful dancing and twirling on the ice was something that she really loved. She would sometimes get up from the couch and start twirling all over the lobby as if she was the one on ice.

More than anything, Sharon was happy that someone wants to give Lily a home, especially that it’s the popular hockey power couple that wants to adopt. She just hoped that the couple would push through the fatigue of the entire process.

She had seen so many people give up because it took so long.

“Done!” Lily held up the drawing. Sharon was right. The drawing is finally complete, Shane and Ilya’s features now more recognizable and details were added.

Really hope they do hold on.

For the next months or so, every week, Shane and Ilya would find time out of their extremely busy schedule to visit the orphanage.

Everytime they would, they would have gifts for all of the kids. Everytime, it grew more flashy. *Probably the price too.* All of the kids, in turn, started to anticipate all of their visits.

Lily, of course, got gifts of her own. The dandelion crayons (of course, a whole tub of them. Sharon doesn't know where they found a whole tub of the discontinued crayons), a pair of ice skating shoes, a sketchpad, dresses, accessories. *They are really spoiling her.*

While most of the kids got toys and such, Sharon received gifts from the couple too. Bank checks. And, *oh god*, it would always be five digits.

Multiple times, Sharon would deny their extremely generous donations, but they always insisted it was "their way of saying thank you."

She never really understood why. But she was always grateful for it. Because of their new stream of donations, Sharon was able to really maintain the orphanage. No longer out of pocket. It was a big relief to her.

She could finally afford her helpers, even though they always declined her pay. They insisted that it was because of her passion for the place that they would stay.

The visits were not just gifts. It was never about the gifts. It would always be their visits to Lily.

Every week, Sharon would see the couple being cooped up with Lily in a secluded corner of the playroom. Sometimes they would see them in front of the TV, looking at hockey clips.

It was apparent to her that they really cared for her. It was as if they were the only people in the room.

At one point, Sharon saw Ilya take up a whole side of the playroom to roleplay a...dinosaur? Or a dying dog? She wasn't quite sure. But it made Lily laugh loudly.

She noticed how the both of them had a different dynamic with Lily. Ilya was the one who played along with Lily, while Shane was the one who taught Lily various things.

During the busy patches of the hockey season, while their visits became much more infrequent, gifts would still arrive at the orphanage via delivery.

Sharon would put on the livestream of their games on the TV (at the request of Lily) and all of the kids would watch the whole thing.

When Shane or Ilya scored, Lily would be the first one to cheer for them. She would repeatedly say that they were "so cool".

Even when they lost, she would scream "You're still cool!" to the TV.

Sharon could tell. They have already built a good relationship with Lily.

They were happy.

But it wasn't always like that.

MONTHS LATER

Sharon was running around the orphanage, managing the kids and the office. I mean, they had another batch of gifts they had to pour through. Safety reasons.

As she scanned the lobby for any more gifts that they forgot, she spotted Shane on the couch. At first she thought he was just sitting very still, but as she looked, she noticed. Sleeping? *Well, that looks uncomfortable.*

Sharon gently nudged him awake. "Hey. Shane. Sorry for waking you."

Shane jolted as he woke up. "What?" He relaxed as soon as he realized. "Oh sorry. Was I..."

"Sleeping? Yeah. The office has a bed if you want to use it." Sharon offered.

"Oh, no. I wouldn't. I just..."

Looking closely at Shane, she noticed bags under his eyes. His hair was less kept together. He was wearing sportswear, like he had no time to change from the gym.

He looked like a mess. He looked tired.

"Please. I insist."

Shane, after a moment, nodded in response.

Sharon guided him to the office and showed him to the bed. He collapsed at the mere sight of it and crashed onto the bed. While it startled her, it wasn't surprising.

They're really giving it their all.

She continued on with her routine after placing a blanket over Shane's unconscious body.

Three hours pass by.

Lily was too tired and slept through the entire afternoon.

Ilya came up to Sharon and asked if he could sleep on the lobby couches for a few minutes. Few minutes turned into an hour.

Sharon hunkered down in the office as she managed some things.

"Shit." It was Shane waking up.

"Good morning."

“It’s not...how long was I out?”

“Three hours, max.”

“Shit, I am so sorry. I wanted to nap for a bit but uh...”

“Don’t worry. Ilya had same plans.”

“Oh god...” Shane sat on the side of the bed.

It had been on her mind for a while. She wanted to ask about it. She really shouldn’t. *Might as well.*

“Shane, can I ask you a question?”

“Is this part of the interview process? ‘Cause I am not in the right headspace for it.”

“Oh no. Just a personal one. It’s cool if you don’t answer.”

“Well, sure.”

Sharon turned around from her desk to face Shane.

“Why?” She said plainly.

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“Oh sorry! What I meant to say was...why do you go through...*all* of this?”

“Sorry, I must still be out-of-it. I still don’t get the question.”

“Like, you two are extremely busy with the season. The both of you are working towards the Stanley Cup. The both of you are at the peak of your careers.”

She was really skeptical of their visits, especially early on. They *were and still are* popular hockey players. What if they weren’t really serious? What if they treated these visits like some messed up sidequest? If these visits end all of the sudden, where does that leave all of them? Where does that leave Lily? She really doesn’t want Lily to feel disappointed. She already got to know both of them over the previous months, but doubts still hover over her. Sharon really wanted assurance, more than anything.

Sharon continued, “Why go through this exhausting process? Why divide your time to these online seminars and paperwork with, I’m sure, your very busy hockey schedule? Just, why do *all* of this?”

For a moment Shane was stunned. Probably because he just woke up. Probably because one of the heaviest questions was suddenly plopped in front of him *literally* after waking up.

“Wow, uh.”

“Oh sorry.” She realized. “It’s okay if you don’t-”

“Because we really want to.”

It wasn't the answer she was expecting. A short and succinct answer, but it had conviction.

“Because, for the longest time, we wanted something so bad that we were willing to put up with the annoying paperwork and the endless seminars, just for us to be the best people for her. If anything, we want to find out if we're even a good fit for her.”

They were. They were more than that. *They're the best.*

“We just...we love Lily. I can't focus on the games because all I could think about was what kind of picture was she gonna draw this time. We're always looking forward to these visits 'cause we literally don't know what else to do.”

Shane put his hands on his knees.

“We know we can give her a good life. We have the resources for that. But, everything else, I...I don't know.” His gaze was down to the ground.

Sharon got up her chair and placed a hand on Shane's shoulder.

“I really shouldn't be saying this but, if it were entirely up to me, I think both of you can take her home tonight.”

Shane looked up at her. She had a small smile.

“Thanks. I needed that.”

“It's getting late, why not go home for today?”

“That would be good.”

After a few moments, Shane got up and went to the lobby. He woke up Ilya, who was full-on drooling on the couch.

“Time to go.”

“Oh you scared me, sweetheart.”

“Let's go home for now.”

Sharon led them outside towards their car.

“Thank you again for visiting. Also for the gifts again.”

“They deserve it.” Ilya replied.

“See you again.”

“Thank you.”

A moment after, the car was off.

Sharon stood there alone.

Shane, Ilya, and Lily have all grown close over the past months. It was the first time she saw any couple go above and beyond to consistently visit, even at the detriment of their own time.

She wanted to do something for them in return.

She considered their generous donations.

She got an idea.

Sharon has been hoping to surprise the kids for a long time.

It would for sure surprise Lily.

She walked back inside the building.

It would surely surprise them too.

Chapter End Notes

Working as fast as I can to post the last chapter.

It's the longest chapter of the fic so it will take time.

Hope all of you are enjoying this fic so far! <3

Chapter 4: POV Lily

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Excited was an understatement.

Yesterday, Sharon told the kids something they never expected would happen.

“I have a surprise for you kids! We’re going to a hockey game tomorrow!”

Lily couldn’t contain her excitement. A chance to finally see people skate. To see how people glide across the frozen floor. *Maybe Mr. Ilya and Shane would be there!* She loved the thought of it.

“So, fix up your things. We’ll leave after lunchtime tomorrow.”

Lily was quick to leave the playroom and go to her bunk bed. She wanted to fix her bag as fast as possible. Rushing as if the bus to the arena was about to leave in mere minutes.

She had the bottom bunk so underside of her bed was pretty much hers. It was littered with her many drawings.

On the wall beside bed, her best works were taped on it. It was her drawings of Ilya and Shane. All in different scenarios, mostly fantastical ones. Hockey. Dragons. Knights. Princes. Her personal favorite of the collection was Shane as a wizard and Ilya as a barbarian.

She loved fantasy. The cartoons that had magic always intrigued her. Just like ice skating, it was the mystery that really got to her.

But above everything, located just above her bed, her magnum opus can be seen; a work that they collaborated on. It wasn’t fantastical. It was disarmingly simple. It was a dining room setting. She was in the middle while Shane and Ilya were at her sides. The food was indiscernible (probably Ilya or Shane’s work) but the focus of the drawing was on their expressions.

Ilya and Shane have soft eyes. Lily intentionally contrasted it to how she saw them during the games she saw. Both of them have smiles, Shane having a more subdued smile while Ilya has a wider grin. Lily, all the while, looked like the happiest child on earth. Her hands being held tight by Shane and Ilya.

It was domestic. It was idealistic. She liked it.

She stared at her magnum opus with a wide smile and anticipation in her eyes. *I’ll see them play!*

She searched for something among her things under the bed. Oh no. It’s missing.

“Lillia.” It was Sharon. She stood by the doorway. “Thought you’d look for this.”

In her hand was the sketchpad. Her eyes widened.

“Thank you Sharon!” She got up and ran towards her. Lily embraced her (at least her legs) in gratitude.

For a few moments, they stayed like that. Sharon pulled away from the hug and knelt down to her level. Handed back the sketchpad.

“Don’t lose it now.” Sharon reminded her. Lily nodded happily in response.

The sketchpad was special. It was Sharon’s gift to her. Along with it was a mechanical pencil and some extra graphite. *It’s what artists use*, Sharon told her.

Sharon was the closest thing Lily has to a parent. She was always the one who took care of her when she got sick. The one who scolded her when she got in trouble. The one to remind her to brush her teeth. Sharon was like that to every kid in the orphanage. She was their mother.

Lily knew that she was an orphan. Sharon told her as soon as she could understand. There were no emotions attached to that word. It was just a label to describe her.

But she knew what it meant. It meant that her parents were gone. Maybe not *gone* gone, but just not present. That made her sad. Thinking that people may have cared for her but couldn’t.

Thoughts like that don’t really bug her down though. Lily had Sharon after all.

She once asked Sharon to have her an ancestry test. Sharon was curious too. Lily looked too ambiguous to really pinpoint what it was. After a week or so, they got the result. Lily was half Japanese and half Filipino.

The terms were new to her and asked Sharon to search for it. They had a full conversation of what that meant. All Lily could take out of that was that she was “Asian”. That was enough for her. She just used crayons to describe the color of her skin to Sharon to fully understand it. It was between a light brown and a normal brown crayon.

It was her language. Colors and lines.

She really loved to draw. Ever since she could remember. It was always her, crayons, and the paper. The other kids tried to understand once. But they couldn’t really get into it.

She felt alone in it. At least, Sharon was always interested in it. She made Lily feel that drawing was normal. That it was a curiosity; a valid passion.

But, on a fateful day where they were all gathered in front of a TV, she got to see her other passion.

FLASHBACK: A YEAR AGO

They were supposed to watch an animated movie. Until they hovered over Ice Princess. It piqued her interest and insisted on watching it.

The entire orphanage was hooked. Lily remembered hearing everyone tear up during the movie, including her. She saw how graceful Casey slid across the ice. How she danced with the music. How she spun like a fairy.

It was mystery. It was intrigue. It was magic.

She wanted it. She wanted to experience it. She wanted to know how it felt.

And like that, figure skating has been engraved in her mind.

After that, the boys would put on ice hockey. Lily loved it less than figure skating. It was less...pretty. The men were pushing each other. Sometimes, injuries happen. She couldn't help but look away from it.

But one player caught her attention. It was someone from Ottawa. He had the number 24 on his jersey. He slid across the rink like he was a figure skater. Graceful. Fast for sure, but he was graceful above all else.

That intrigued her. How hockey can also be a pretty sport. Albeit, if the players knew how to skate as gracefully as...what was his name?

She looked closer at the jersey and saw the name "Hollander". She took note of it.

For the following weeks, the kids would watch hockey games on the TV. It was always Ottawa games.

Lily noticed a player that was always getting put in the penalty box. He *was* playing aggressively. More than what she would have liked to see.

She couldn't see the name but she knows the jersey number. It was 81. He also had distinct blond curls.

After the game, 81 would kiss Hollander. At first Lily was shocked at it. Boys can do that? After all, all of the cartoons she saw only had a boy and girl kiss each other. This was her first time seeing that.

"Sharon, can boys kiss other boys?" Lily asked earnestly.

Taken aback by the sudden question, Sharon had to recompose herself.

"Well, Lillia. They can. Only if they only want to."

"But in the movies, the boys always kiss the girls."

“Well, some boys do kiss girls and only girls. But some boys kiss girls *and* boys. Some boys only kiss boys. Some boys don’t even kiss people at all. But all of it is normal.”

Sharon explained it in the easiest way she could, using Lily’s language.

“Oh! I see! Then, Mr. Hollander and Mr. 81 can kiss boys.” At the corner of Lily’s view, Sharon let out a sigh of relief.

It was easy for Lily to understand. Boys can kiss other boys. It wasn’t weird for her. It was just a fact.

PRESENT: NEXT DAY

“Lillia, are you ready?” Sharon called Lily.

“Yep! Coming!” She picked up her bag full of drawing materials and a white shirt with something on it.

She rushed towards the lobby to see everyone ready to go.

“Alright everyone. On the bus!”

Outside, there was a yellow bus that could fit all of them. She was excited. No, ecstatic.

Time to see the ice. Time to see *them*.

After a long time in line going into the arena, she was bored.

She did notice that the sign outside said Championship Game. She figured this was a pretty important game.

Inside the lobby of the arena, she saw cutouts of different people. But her eyes gravitated to Ilya and Shane’s.

“Sharon! Look! It’s Mr. Ilya and Shane!”

Sharon looked at the cutouts and had a smile on her face.

“Want to take a picture with them?”

It didn’t take long for Lily to run up to them and take multiple pictures with them. She tried many poses. All of it cutesy.

Shortly after, they had to go to their seats. After a long walk, she was *very* bored.

But then, she saw the rink. It was all she expected it to be. Big. Cold. She imagined herself skating on it. Someday, she thought.

They proceeded to their seats. Sharon ushered each of the kids to their seats, ensuring that there's no one missing. Lily sat down and they were pretty close to the rink. A few rows up from the front row. They could see the entire rink from where they were. It was great.

To pass the time, Lily pulled out her sketchpad and mechanical pencil. She started sketching the rink, with every detail she tried to engrave in the paper.

She perked up. She forgot to do something. Something important.

She returned the sketchpad and pen back to her bag. She pulled out *that* thing.

All of the kids from the orphanage wore jerseys of the Ottawa players. Half of them have Hollander jerseys. He's after all the best.

Lily was supposed to pick.

FLASHBACK: THE NIGHT BEFORE

Sharon held two jerseys in front of Lily. It was Ilya's and Shane's.

"I'm sorry Lillia, you can't have both. We have a fixed number of jerseys."

This won't do. She wanted both. There is no negotiation.

"No. It's both or no jersey." Lily pouted angrily.

"Or you don't have to choose." Sharon offered the third option.

Lily was confused. Yet, she instantly understood what she meant as she saw Sharon with a white shirt.

"I have fabric paint, just for this occasion."

"Perfect!"

She couldn't hide her excitement for it. *This will be so fun!*

Lily pulled out the white t-shirt she and Sharon worked on. It was a "custom" jersey. It was oversized.

It had the color scheme of the Ottawa Centaurs. It even had their small logo. The center of the shirt was the main character. It had both their numbers: 24 and 81 just below it. It was big and recognizable. Surrounding the numbers were their names: Hollander at the top and Rozanov at the bottom. This was the first time Lily got Ilya's last name right. It had the same design on the back.

My best work yet.

She wore it over her shirt. She was proud. Very proud of it.

She went on to grab her sketchpad and pen. Psyched to draw some amazing pictures.

The opening of the game. Players arrived one by one. She spotted them. Waving at the crowds.

Lily mustered much of her to cheer them on as loudly as she could.

It was exciting.

Middle of the game. 1-1.

A powerplay between Ilya and Shane. The puck moved fast between them. Within a blink, the puck was inside the net.

Their teamwork was astounding to watch. Lily was really wowed by it.

That was it. The moment she wanted to capture. She could picture it in her mind.

Her hands moved fast across the page. The general figure of the two in their powerplay.

Lily's impressed how fast her drawing really improved over the past months. Her past drawings were all simple. But, she gets reminded of her magnum opus. That was something she worked hard on. Something she put love in.

It was the break so she continued mindlessly.

Until she felt someone excitedly nudging her side. It was another kid telling her to look up. It was the big jumbotron. It showed...her?

Instantly, she excitedly stood up after carefully putting her sketchbook on her seat.

She waved at her own projection, not knowing where the camera was. Then, she remembered to show off her shirt. She was particularly proud of that part. Wanted to show it off. She stretched her custom shirt to make sure that every detail was shown on the jumbotron. Of course, she didn't forget to show the design at the back.

People in the arena cheered for her. The kids from the orphanage were particularly loud.

"Woooo! Go Lillia!" Sharon cheered.

After she saw the jumbotron shift, she sat back down on her seat. Ego boost indeed.

She looked at the rink. Their position, where they can see pretty much everything, also showed the boxes of the different teams. She recognized the color scheme of the Centaurs.

She scanned the players one by one. Then there were their numbers. 24 and 81. Beside each other.

She waved at them widely. Although, she thought they didn't see her. But something was... off.

They weren't sitting normally. Shane has his head on Ilya's shoulder.

She focused. Like really focused on their face. Ilya was...crying. *Is he hurt? Did someone hurt him?*

She looked worried. Sharon picked up easily.

"What's wrong, Lillia?"

"Mr. Ilya. He's crying. What happened to him?" She pointed at the team box. Sharon followed it with a concerned face. She focused on him.

"I don't know, sweetie. I'm sorry."

"Can you check on him? I am really worried." She wanted Sharon to do it.

"Wait, sweetie, I think someone is attending to him already."

Lily looked back at Ilya. Someone was talking to him. It looked like a coach. He was gesturing towards Ilya. He's calming them down, she thought.

She got back down to her seat.

Really hope they're okay.

It's nearing the end of the game. It's 2-2. It's close.

Lily couldn't sit still in anticipation. They needed a really good shot to win.

The other team was not making it easy for Ottawa.

Lily prayed for a miracle. Please let them win.

Then, out of the blue, Ilya moved. Shane did too.

They were in sync. It was like that the entire game. This time felt different. It was like they're mad. Desperate? No. Laser focused.

They moved with purpose. Ilya matched Shane's way of skating. Graceful. The first time Lily saw him skate like that.

The puck passed between them at an alarming rate. In the confusion, the other team didn't realize the puck got past their defense.

10 seconds.

The goalie was wary of both of them. In position, he plopped his knees to block.

5 seconds.

Ilya passed the puck.

3 seconds.

Shane shot it.

Buzzer.

3-2. Ottawa won.

The audience burst into loud cheers. Everyone in the arena was crying. Lily didn't realize it but as she cheered, tears fell down her face.

They really did it.

She looked at Sharon. She was equally emotional. As their eyes met, they couldn't help but laugh in relief.

She was happy. Proud. The fact that she got to see them win the championship game live. The fact that she got to witness them skate. It was exhilarating. She wondered if it feels like that in figure skating.

Moments later, they brought out the Stanley Cup.

Ilya came up to the cup and carried it over his head. The entire crowd cheered for him. He pulled his husband towards him and they both held up the cup. An even louder cheer.

Soon after, the family and girlfriends of the players came on the ice. Hugs and kisses were exchanged between them. Shane and Ilya kissed each other. Lily saw them immediately looking all over the arena, like they were searching for something. Or someone.

Their gazes landed on Lily's side of the arena and found...her. They looked directly at her.

Eyes widened. A hand wave. No. Invitation?

Confused, Lily looked at Sharon. Their eyes meet. Sharon's softened.

"Come on, Lillia." She held out her hand to Lily.

She didn't understand what was happening. She took it.

Sharon escorted her down the stairs and near the rink. The guard let them through as Ilya and Shane approached their side.

"You didn't tell us you were coming." Shane addressed Sharon.

“Well, it’s a surprise. Were you surprised?”

“Very. Very surprised.” Ilya replied.

He turned his attention to Lily.

“You have a very good shirt. You made it?”

“I did! Congratulations, Mr. Ilya!”

“That is very generous of you, Lily.”

Shane gestured something to the guard and then put up a thumbs up.

“So, Lily.” Shane addressed her. “You want to know how it feels to be on the ice?”

“Yeah!”

His eyes met with Sharon’s. They exchanged nods.

“Alright, Lily. Let’s get you on the rink.”

Lily beamed up. This was what she always wanted.

Easily, Shane picked her up from the other side of the boards and let her down gently on the ice. As her shoes touched the ice below, she could feel it. Cold. Slippery.

She attempted to walk normally. She slipped immediately. Lily was sure she was gonna hit the ground. She yelped.

Thankfully, a hand grabbed her hand in time.

“Easy there, Koshechka.”

Ilya helped her gain balance.

“I think it’s better if we held both of your hands.” Shane suggested.

A moment later, Shane and Ilya held both of her hands.

“Ready?” Ilya started a countdown.

In sync, the three alternated their feet. “Left, right, left, right.” They chanted as they started to move.

Lily could feel the ground beneath her move. It was cold but mystifying. At some point, she stopped moving her feet and let the two beside her make the movement.

They walked around the ice for a good while.

The other Ottawa players were celebrating with their family and loved ones in the center.

Meanwhile, the three walked around the rink, just near the barrier.

Lily looked up at the crowd. They were all staring at her. *This is how it feels to figure skate.*

She was the center of attention. Just like the ice fairies she saw. She revelled in the feeling.

For a while, it felt like it was just them. Skating around the rink.

Lily looked at both of them. Ilya and Shane both have tears pouring down their faces.

“Mr. Ilya, Mr. Shane. Why are you crying? Did I do something?” She worried her lagging feet was the problem.

“No! No, sweetheart. We’re just...” Shane let a moment pass. “Very happy. Unbelievably.”

It was obvious to Lily. It was because of the win. What else could it be? She was proud of them.

After a few minutes or so, the excitement from the win started to die down. People were starting to get out of the arena. They did three circles around the rink. They approached Sharon waiting at the barrier, alongside the other orphanage kids.

“Hey, Lillia. Did you have a good time?”

“I did, Sharon. I was an ice fairy!”

“You were.”

Ilya got down to her level.

“Lily. Thank you. For coming. Is what we needed to win.”

“Well, you’re welcome!”

She grinned.

“So, you’re going back to the orphanage after this?” Shane asked Sharon.

“Yeah. The kids are all tuckered out. It’s about time for them to sleep too.”

“Ah I see.”

Shane got down to meet Lily’s level.

“That’s a...really good shirt.” a sniffle. “Thank you for showing it.”

“You should thank Sharon too. She helped me make it.”

“Really?” He turned to Sharon and nodded at her.

“Well this is goodbye for now, Lily.” Ilya said.

“Wait! Let me take a picture of all of you first.”

Ilya and Shane removed their helmets first. They held her hand and made sure she was in the middle of the picture.

Snap.

“Good one.” Sharon shot a thumbs up.

“Bye, Mr. Ilya. Mr. Shane! I’ll be waiting for you!”

“Will see you soon, Lily. Don’t worry.” Shane lifted him up and carried her to the other side of the barrier.

Shane and Ilya started to skate towards where the other players were going.

“Bye!” She waved her little hand above the boards. Shane and Ilya reciprocated it with a wave.

Then, they were gone.

A realization dawned on Lily.

Forgot to give them my drawing.

Three weeks have passed.

Their visits were the same as always. But different.

Lily had less time with them. More time with Sharon.

They would be in the playroom for a quick minute, then the office for the rest of the visit.

These weeks made Lily really sad. Am I..?

She didn’t want to entertain the thought.

Every time Shane and Ilya had to leave her side, they would always apologize. She felt it was sincere.

But still. Those weeks felt weird to her.

It’s the day before their supposed next visit. She really hoped they would keep visiting.

She didn’t want to think about the alternative.

Sharon called for her. She approached her.

“What’s the matter, Sharon?”

“Well, Lillia. I have some important news for you. But firstly, there are people who want to see you.”

Just behind Sharon, there was Ilya and Shane. Their eyes red.

“Mr. Ilya and Shane! I thought you’ll visit tomorrow.” Lily approached Ilya with open arms.

“Oh we will tomorrow, Malyshka.” Ilya reciprocated with a hug.

“Then why are you here?”

“Well...” Shane’s eyes went to Sharon.

“It’s better we tell you together on the couch.”

“Okay.”

All of them went to the lobby couches and sat there. There was tension in the air. Lily has no idea what’s happening.

“So...Lillia. Do you know why Shane and Ilya have been visiting for the past year?” Sharon asked.

“Because...they want to hangout with me!”

“That is true.” Ilya answered.

“Well, they’ve been visiting to get to know you better.”

“Lily, you remember how we first met?” Shane asked

“I...grabbed Mr. Ilya’s leg?”

“You did. And that made me very angry.” Ilya snarled like a dragon. It made Lily laugh.

“We...grew to really like you Lily. Do...you like us too?” Shane asked cautiously.

“Of course! You are bestest friends I have.”

“That is sweet, Lily” Ilya placed his hand on Lily’s shoulder.

“Actually, they came here more than just to be friends with you, Lily.” A moment passed. She placed her hand on Lily’s. “They want to be your...parents.”

The word never really came across Lily. She never thought she would hear that word. Ever.

Confused, she looked at Ilya and Shane.

“We...Ever since we met you, since that day. When you grabbed our attention. We knew.” Shane inched closer to her. “You’re such a sweet kid. You’re funny. Creative. Someone who

has lots of potential. We know we can give you the best life that you deserve. We...want you to be part of our family.”

“It is small.” Ilya added. “But it is enough.”

“So...” Sharon addressed her. “Do you want to be part of their family?”

For the past year, Lily has grown attached to the two ever since she saw them on TV. There was never a moment where she didn’t draw them. There was never a moment where she didn’t imagine what it would be like to have them as...her fathers. The pictures she drew. Things she thought were just fantasies. It could now be a reality.

She remembered the drawing just above her bed. *So...that can be real?*

She stared back at Ilya and Shane with tears welling up. She let out a big grin.

“Can I?”

Ilya and Shane couldn’t help but let tears fall.

“You can, sweetheart. You can be my доча (docha).” Ilya wrapped her in his embrace. “From now on, you call me Papa. No more Mr. Ilya. Just Papa, da?”

“Okay...Papa.” As those words left her mouth, Lily couldn’t help but wail. Cry like a baby. Out of pure joy.

Her vision blurred so much she couldn’t see anything. The only thing she could feel was Ilya’s tight hug. And then, a moment later, someone else. She looked up and peered through her soaked eyes. It was Shane. He joined with a warm embrace of his own.

“You can just call me Dad.” Shane offered.

“Dad. Papa.” The words that felt distant to Lily were now a reality.

She could hear someone besides the three of them sniffle. She thought it was Sharon.

They stayed in that moment for a few minutes. It was precious. A family finally formed. A family she never thought she would get. Especially not with the hockey players she saw on TV. *This feels like a dream.*

Sharon coughed as if to get their attention. The hugs of the couple loosened and all of them paid attention to her.

“Sorry to break this very *very* sweet moment. But, Lillia.” She addressed Lily. “There’s one more important thing you have to do before you become a part of their family.”

Lily wondered what it was.

“You have the opportunity to change your name.” Lily could feel Ilya and Shane tense up.

Lillia was the only name she has known. Sharon gave it to her afterall. She wouldn't want to give that away.

"I'm keeping my name."

Sharon has a shocked expression. She softened after.

"I see, then-"

"Wait!" Shane caught their attention. "Can you actually add one more name to her?"

Lily wondered what it would be.

"Only if Lillia want to."

Shane turned to her.

"What would you say if your name was Lillia Jane Hollander-Rozanov?"

It was a long name. But it was perfect for her.

"Perfect."

All of them smiled.

"So. You are now known as Lillia Jane Hollander-Rozanov from today onwards."

"Thank you for everything, Sharon." Shane said.

"Just...doing my job." She replied with a smile.

Lily approached Sharon and wrapped her in a hug.

"Thank you...for being my first mama." Lily said as she looked up to her.

"Oh...thank you. For being such an angel."

The moment was sweet. It felt like it could last forever.

It *was* forever for Lily. A dream she never thought would come true.

Forever living in it, now that it came true.

Lily packed her things in a box with help from Sharon. She had said her goodbye's to the other kids in the orphanage.

Ilya and Shane waited at the lobby, so Lily was in a rush to get ready.

"Wait just a minute Lillia. You forgot this." She placed the yellow headband on her head.

“There! You ready?”

Lily looked around the bedroom. The room she has known for all her life, she’ll leave it behind now. But, what waited ahead excited her.

“Yep!”

They walked together towards the lobby.

Lily was then greeted by a small dog barking at her affectionately, happily wagging her tail.

“Oh my gosh! A puppy! She’s so cute! What’s her name?”

“Anya. Your sister.” Ilya answered.

“Ilya, no. A dog can’t be her sister.”

“She can be! You will see. They will grow close.”

It didn’t take long. Anya became very friendly to Lily from that moment on.

“Well, Lillia. It’s time for you to go.” Sharon said to her.

Ilya called on Anya and grabbed her.

Shane, carrying Lily’s things in one hand, offered his free hand. “You ready?”

The moment she never thought would see. It was exciting.

“Mmhmm!” She took his hand. The three of them started to walk towards the car.

This was it. The start of her new life.

She didn’t know what to expect. She just knew it in her bones.

Everything’s changed.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! It means a lot to me that people are reading this! I'm always nervous about my work, so this has been a great exercise for me to get over it.

Stay tuned for more fics in this nature. All wholesome goodness soon to come!

See you in the next one everyone! <3

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