

The Next Paige

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The Next Paige

by [writinpoobs](#)

Summary

A few months ago Shane and Ilya had decided to take the next massive step in their relationship. Parenthood.

With a birthday party to plan, the realness of fatherhood hits both of them. The beautiful and the ugly self doubt. At this point though, they know they can rely on each other. Even for this new chapter.

(Hollanov child focused, Skip child mentioned!)

Notes

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

Shane smiled to himself as he wistfully stared at his new daughter, asleep on his husband's chest. Shane had always felt a sudden swell in his heart when he saw Ilya with children. It had never been a matter of if, always a matter of when.

As soon as 'when' turned into 'now' everything became more real than either of them pictured. Both of them babysat for Hayden many times and expected it to feel about the same. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Even if neither were at Paige's birth the paternal instincts came in immediately. It's rare for Ilya to let a tear slip out in public, but seeing her for the first time, he silently wiped more than a few from his and Shane's faces. That was a few months ago however.

Beyond delighted at the current sight of his two favorite people, Shane opened his phone to sneak a few pictures. The way Paige was holding onto Ilya's hand made Shane feel like he was going to explode inside out.

"Sneaking pictures are you?"

Ilya opened one eye halfway to look directly at Shane's camera.

Fuck. You're awake? Why are you awake asshole... let me enjoy this moment in peace.

"Hm?" Ilya interrupted Shane's inner dilemma.

"I want a picture of my kid. Is that surprising to you?"

Despite the sassy tone used neither were interested in being anywhere else. They both just stayed staring at the tiny human on Ilya's chest.

Her little body moved with every breath, so small and frail. They were solely responsible for her from here on. There was no going back. It was an adjustment.

“It’s cute that you are still sneaky about it”

“Yeah?” Shane’s fake confidence started fading.

“Of course. You still think I would give you shit over a picture.”

“You did.”

“... Just a little bit.”

Ilya’s smile told Shane he was safe in this conversation. His smile always had that effect.

Ilya’s cheeks flushed at the thought that even now he could make Shane sweetly nervous. God he fucking hoped Paige took after Shane. Instead of himself.

“That’s ours... that’s our daughter Ilya.”

Shane’s voice had genuine disbelief in it.

“Yes. We better not ruin her.”

Ilya’s tone sounded like he was trying to joke. His voice was flatter than Shane would have hoped for just a joke, however.

“We won’t ruin her. If we mess up I can get my parents to help.”

The concept of having a kid was still fresh to Ilya. Let alone the idea that he would have help from people he actually trusts.

“They won’t get sick of being our babysitters?”

“They’re not just babysitters. They’re her grandparents. Mom and dad raised me, I turned out fine.”

Ilya raised an eyebrow sarcastically.

“Shut up. You know what I mean. I’m good enough to get you to quit girls entirely.”

Shane’s facade shattered as Paige wriggled on Ilya’s chest. Both their attentions shifted.

“Do not say such things. I am still very able to love girls.”

Ilya grabbed her dainty wrists, moving them around in the air as if she were raising the roof.

“I very much love this girl.”

Shane felt a smile split his face in half. There wasn’t a point in trying to dull this one. It was already too late for being nonchalant.

“Me too. It’s almost weird how much I love her already.”

Surprised at such a statement Ilya slightly shook his head before looking at Shane, concern on his face. Ilya wasn't sure if he was shocked by the statement itself or how casually it was said.

"Is strange to love your daughter?"

It almost sounded like there was worry in Ilya's voice. Not a lot, but enough that Shane could tell. And dislike the implication.

After all this time he'd put a lot of focus into studying Ilya. Ever since Ilya had started therapy he'd been less guarded about showing his emotions, which had made it way easier to read him. Shane treated it as a skill to get better at. Like hockey or Russian. Just infinitely more important.

Especially for statements that he knew came from a hurt place within Ilya.

"It's not like that. We just haven't known her for very long I guess. I haven't loved something this fast since,"

"Since me?"

Shane became flushed in response.

"Anya does not count anymore?" Ilya joked trying to lessen the blow he knew Shane didn't mean.

"Of course but that's less romantic. Last time this happened, with a person, it was really scary for me. Straight couples at least get nine months of prep work."

Inside Shane hadn't admitted to himself how terrifying it was. The last time he had fallen this fast he had to fear about losing it just as quick. For nearly a decade. Even though the

situations were very different they felt similar enough to bring those old thoughts up again.

“I am truly sorry I could not impregnate you, Shane. I really tried.”

Shane laughed. It wasn't really a false statement, considering how babies are made.

“You should try harder next time.” Shane shot him a look, almost daring him for next time they were in bed.

“Yes, though, is scary. That I very much agree on.”

Paige suddenly started to cry, derailing the conversation.

“Fuck! What is this about?”

“Language. Does she need to be changed?”

“No.”

Ilya was already going through the checklist he had formed for whenever Paige randomly burst into tears. Diaper? Clean. Soothing? He already was. Gas? She hadn't even eaten.

She hadn't eaten in a while now that he thought about it.

“Is at age where we start on solids. Not baby food, yes?”

“Uh, yeah. Yeah, I prepped her a bunch of stuff already. It should be in the fridge.”

“Is not even a year old and already having her meals ruined by Shane Hollander. What a shame.”

“I’m not raising my daughter on crap, Ilya.”

“Language.” He replied in a mocking tone.

“It’s not even our rule. It’s Jackie’s.”

“Is good rule. Healthy.”

“Yeah, yeah. You want to help me get her fed or what?”

“Fucking please.”

“Unseasoned chicken and peas. Yum.”

Ilya kept picking at the scraps his daughter didn’t finish. He couldn’t wait until he could sneak Paige out for a Happy Meal while Shane was busy somewhere else.

“She’s allowed to have treats after dinner. Not before. Like a normal person-“

Shane couldn’t help the mocking tone at the last few words. He was still bitter that even fueled on junk Ilya genuinely rivaled him on the ice. How dare he be so perfect.

“-plus we don’t know what allergies she might have. I’m not risking a garlic allergy just so your sloppy seconds taste better.-“

Anya hearing the word ‘treat’ caused her to look up from her bowl in a way that they all knew only had one civil ending. As Shane opened the bag her tail began to wag even faster before mentioning something they have been procrastinating on.

“-You know, speaking of treats. What do you want to do for Paige’s birthday next month?”

“Hm. Not sure. What do you do for a one year old?” Ilya asked genuinely.

“Not one year old yet!”

Shane touched his finger to Paige’s nose after washing off the Milkbone crumbs. Her tiny laugh always made them both smile.

“Not yet but soon. Too soon.”

“Already growing up before your eyes, tough guy?”

“Yes. Is crazy to me. Do you know how many shoes we are going to buy her? She’s already outgrown two pair since coming home.”

“You know she’s gonna be talking soon too?”

Shane was beyond excited at the idea of having a real conversation with his daughter. His own daughter. He couldn’t wait to talk to the person him and Ilya were raising together.

“Yet another Hollander talking back to me? Exciting.”

“Oh please. You would love if she turned out like me.”

It would be the best thing to happen to me, Ilya thought.

“Who is invited anyway? She does not have friends we call.”

“She has friends.” Shane stated defensively.

“Pike kids don’t count.”

“Pike kids SO count.”

“Because it would be none if not for them?”

“She’s been making friends with mom. When they go to those ‘Grandma and Me’ things.”

“No. Is Yuna making friends who have babies around them.”

Shane sighed deeply.

“Fair. Just don’t say our kid doesn’t have friends, asshole. We can’t all flirt our way into friendships.”

“*Yet*. I say she has no friends *yet*.”

“Same thing.”

Ilya tried to hide a charmed smile. Shane was already so defensive over Paige. He loved seeing his man defend his baby girl, even if it was from Ilya himself.

“Maybe when old enough she can meet Dustin. If we go to New York for other reasons.”

Ilya and Shane weren't the first to become openly queer parents in the NHL. They weren't first out OR the first parents.

It doesn't hurt either of their egos whatsoever. Definitely not. It didn't eat Ilya up inside that Scott fucking Hunter did another big thing first.

Three summers ago Scott Hunter and his husband Kip adopted a little boy of their own. They don't share much about Dustin online but they tell everyone that will listen in their personal lives about him.

They're really good dads. In a lot of ways both Shane and Ilya hoped to emulate how they're raising him.

They just so happened to be doing a lot of things right.

“We should visit them sometime. You know Scott asked if he and Kip could come meet Paige?”

”Yes. I do. I am who he asked.”

”So you know he's trying. It would be really nice if you would let her have a friend she can relate to like that.”

“Do Pike kids not relate to hockey life?”

“Is Pike gay, Ilya?”

“If he is he’s hiding it very well.”

Shane rolled his eyes again but couldn’t fight back the laugh. It was like Ilya didn’t even process the question before knowing the funniest thing to answer with.

“Svet and Rose are a given. Knowing Rose we’re gonna have to redecorate the nursery around whatever she spoils Paige with.”

Ever since the wedding Rose had become an enthusiastic third wheel. She loves seeing her bestie happy with his man. After being drip fed their relationship for so long she loves to see them be sweet in person. Especially now that they brought Paige with them.

“Yes, probably. So cake? Is it going to be broccoli flavor?”

Even if Shane had let up on his restriction he still kept his balanced meals. It was so annoying. Ilya loved prodding knowing it just reminded Shane of Ilya’s fast food diet.

“No way. I wouldn’t torture her like that. I’m not sure what we actually should do though.”

“Chocolate is good.”

“You would think any cake is good.”

“Carrot cake is not good.”

“You don’t even taste the-“

Shane cut himself off realizing Ilya was being Ilya, making Shane squirm for fun.

“Maybe we could do funfetti? Seems... fun.”

“Funfetti? What is that? Haven’t heard that English before.”

Ilya waved a hand around his face with his eyes squinted shut. As if searching deep for the translation of whatever the hell ‘funfetti’ is.

“It’s pretty much just vanilla with sprinkles in it.”

“In the cake?”

“You’ve had it before. Barrett’s birthday last year had one.”

“Ah. Now I remember. Was good. Surprised you would suggest something that good.”

“Asshole.” Shane smiled through his teeth.

He loved that Ilya was still so Ilya even after all this time. Even if he could get on Shane’s last nerves sometimes, it was because Ilya knew him so well. Feeling understood by someone so much made Shane feel so comforted. Ilya knew how to push his buttons, but he knew how to make Shane feel more special than anyone else at the same time.

“That is for my cake flavor. Not hers.”

Shane snorted, not knowing to even expect that. Ilya could say crazy things that didn't even register to Shane that they should definitely be filtered. At least around Paige.

“Mom wants to do a smash cake thing. Basically a cake made for Paige to destroy. I think at least.”

“Is that not just normal cake?”

“According to mom, no.”

They both laughed. While Shane could be picky Yuna knew exactly what she wanted, how to ask for it, and how to make a backup plan in case the first falls through. Shane had to get it from someone, after all.

“Then smash cake it is. Very much do not want to make mom upset.”

For the last few years Ilya had started regularly calling Yuna ‘mom’. It took longer than he expected. He still felt strange calling someone other than his own blood the title so often. Ilya felt mixed about it but ultimately the smile on Shane's face made it worth doing.

“Dad still wants to grill for it also. I said that could be his gift but he wants to get her a ‘real gift’ too.”

“Again, who are we inviting? I haven't been to any parties for any one year olds before.”

“Well the team is an obvious one. Hayden and J.J., Price and Fabian? All the coaches for the camp probably. That's not weird, right?”

“I still question inviting J.J.” Ilya couldn't hold his complaint in.

"I'm who he fucked over, and I forgave him. I want him to be in my daughters life."

"What if I don't want him in mine?" Ilya's teeth gritted together as he spoke words he knew he shouldn't be.

"Then don't ask the guy for coffee, Ilya. I'm not inviting anyone else from Montreal so you don't have to worry about people like that."

"Besides J.J.?"

"Drop it. I'm not making her day about your grudge."

"Party is more for us than Paige."

"Too bad. Plus no one is getting drunk at my kids first birthday." Shane stated in a dead serious tone.

"Absolutely not, sweetheart. Is party for us to celebrate her. Not drink her day away. Is too important to not be sober for. I won't even smoke."

Ilya walked up behind Shane and wrapped his arms around his husband's chest, pulling him close. He gave Shane's neck a few soft, loving kisses before simply breathing him in.

"You make this easier than I thought it would be." Ilya blurted out.

"Party planning?"

“Parenting, I was worried we would suck at it.”

More like scared he would suck at it.

“I think it’s impossible for us to suck at anything. You’re good at whatever you do, it’s part of why I fell for you.”

Ilya smiled against Shane’s skin. Warmth and brightness masking his terror.

“I know something you suck at.”

Shane glanced at his new baby and beloved dog only feet away from them. He missed the spontaneous sex more than he thought he would, but hearing that in front of them specifically made him feel gross.

“You only have until she learns to talk to say shit like that. Babies pick up on speech way more than you would think.”

“Did you find that out from the books mom made you read?”

“I wanted to read them. She just already had them. And yes.”

“So when her first word is ‘asshole’ you shouldn’t be surprised?”

Both of them dropped the conversation when they heard Paige giggle. They didn’t even mean to get quiet, they just didn’t want to drown out her laughter. It was a sweet sound that made both of their hearts light up.

“She already has your laugh,” Shane reached up and grasped one of the hands still holding him.

“I hope she gets your heart.”

“She’s gonna be both of us-“

Shane gestured towards the still occupied high chair.

“-I love it so much.”

“Is everything you ever dreamed of?”

Shane turned his neck to look Ilya in the eye. His hand kept a firm grip on Ilya’s.

“Even better.”

Ilya knew Paige should already be in her crib. Bedtime was about half an hour ago, but he couldn’t bring himself to get up from the rocking chair they sat in.

They had been there cuddling for a while already. Ilya quietly absorbed every second of it.

The little girl that was in Ilya’s arms was all his. His and Shane’s. His husband Shane’s. He still couldn’t fully believe that his life looked how it did.

Fifteen years ago Ilya had never even considered what life with Shane Hollander could have looked like. Now he was in domestic heaven.

Taking care of others had always been important to who Ilya is. Growing up in the way he did, someone noticing he wasn't okay would have been life changing. After Irina passed he didn't have that outside of Svetlana. Not until his new family came into the picture. He knows what it feels like to truly hurt, and will always do what he reasonably can to show he's there for people.

Fatherhood though, this was a different level of looking after someone. He always loved kids and got along well with them. All of a sudden he hoped one kid specifically would love him back. God, he hoped he wouldn't push her away.

Rocking back and forth Ilya craned his relaxed head down to see Paige. She had woken up at some point and was now playing with the chain around his neck.

"Is pretty, yes?"

Ilya reached up to put his palm flat under the crucifix. While rubbing it with his thumb he debated if he should talk about the meaning behind it. Shane said she is already learning.

"Your grandmother gave to me. Not Yuna, though Yuna is very nice."

Was it even worth talking to her about? His therapist had encouraged him to open up to safe people more. Someone who can't talk about it to others seemed pretty safe.

"I wish you could meet her. She would have loved your dad, yes. But you. You would have become her world, my little angel."

As Ilya's throat clenched a bit Paige turned her gaze up to his. Fuck. She really is listening. Actually listening.

"I wish you could meet any of them."

In another world Paige would be visiting her cousin for play dates in Moscow. There wasn't much love there for Ilya, if any left at all. His niece however was just a kid when Ilya left Russia. He knew Paige would make him wonder about her, but he was thinking about it more than he wanted to admit to himself.

"You have good family. We have good family. They love us, maybe even more than your other dad."

He gave a little smirk that she mimicked instantly.

"You are going to be trouble maker aren't you?"

Ilya playfully tapped her arm with every word causing her to giggle. He gently pulled her closer to his chest. Paige reached out to hold the crucifix herself.

Ilya wanted to tell her everything about his family. Everything. If she understands him though he would feel so guilty about putting that on her. He wants her to know how awful he feels about it.

He's been in this spot before.

Taking a shaky breath, still heavily weighing his decision, Ilya began spilling in Russian. He hadn't even noticed he was speaking when he realized it was okay.

"I fucking hate that I can't bring you home. You deserve so much more than I can give you. I wish I could give you a family myself. I know Shane's parents are going to be there for you in every way. They will shower you with so much love how they did for me. Probably even more.

I wish I could say the same about mine.

If my mother was here she would adore you. I wonder if Alexi ever felt this way. Wishing his daughter could have met mom too.

I don't even know if your cousin knows about her. If he even fucking considered talking about her.

I will never let you feel the pain that fueled my family.

That family.

I am part of a new family now. Your family. Our family.

I hope you know there is nothing I wouldn't do for you. I didn't realize how much of me would become part of you. I'm already seeing both of us in everything you are. It's the best feeling in the world, seeing you live and knowing where you get it from.

It also scares the shit out of me to think you might feel how I did.

I will never let you hurt how I did. How she did.

I don't want to be why you feel that way. Please tell me if I ever make you feel that way.

Please."

Ilya closed his eyes and rocked in the chair again. Tears were forming but he fought them off.

“I love you so much already. I hope I never make you doubt that.”

Moments later he was alerted to someone in the doorway.

“It’s past someone’s bedtime.”

Shane’s voice was light and soft. Something made Ilya feel that Shane had been standing there for longer than he realized.

“Just five more minutes?”

Ilya’s face turned into a pout with big, wet, puppy dog eyes.

“You’ve had five minutes, longer actually.”

“Is just so cute. How can you expect me to disturb an angel?”

Shane smiled in their direction boldly.

“You’re both cute.”

Ilya motioned for Shane to come into the room. He did, and grabbed one of the fluffy poufs they had pulling it next to the rocking chair.

“You understand why I cannot get up?”

Shane put his head on Ilya's shoulder. He put one of his hands on Paige's back rubbing his thumb along her spine.

"I wouldn't be able to either."

As soon as Shane fully sat down they heard tiny paws trotting down the hallway. Anya brought in a toy and dropped it at the foot of the dog bed they kept in the room.

"Everyone is here now!"

Ilya blurted enthusiastically, hoping to shift the energy.

Shane looked into Ilya's eyes. Ilya couldn't help but think the same as what he hoped Shane was.

"Our whole family is here now. Together. Yours and mine. The same one."

"Still hard to believe you have such a hot husband, Hollander?"

"Genuinely yes."

Shane's expression melted Ilya's heart. Fuck Hollander, Paige is supposed to be the cute one right now.

"I'm very happy that my family is with you, Shane."

"Me too. There's no one else it could have been with."

After taking in the feeling for a few moments Shane spoke up.

“What were you talking to her about?”

“Is nothing.”

“It didn’t sound like nothing. It sounded kinda familiar, actually.”

“Your Russian good enough to understand what I said?”

“Parts of it... You don’t have to tell me but I would love to know.”

Ilya again didn’t have time to decide before he simply summed it up.

“That she would have loved her. The same way she would have loved you.”

End Notes

Hey y'all! After finishing all canon Hollanov media, and wanting a dad arc for my boys, I decided to take a crack at it myself! I have a very clear idea of who their daughter might turn out as, and thought it's worth starting fanfic for!

I know a lot of people firmly believe that Shane and Ilya would name their daughter Irina but I went a different direction. I personally feel that in character Ilya wouldn't want to wish that destiny onto his daughter. This is just the name that felt right for me and my perception of their futures! Though I thoroughly hope we get canonical Hollanov kids at some point!!

I have so many ideas for who Paige is as a person shaped by Ilya and Shane that, for my own self, I had to put it onto paper. I'm going to be taking it at my own pace though. I make absolutely no promises on timeframes for future works. I do have one other actively in progress and way more character notes for Paige than I should have this early into her existing in my head.

This is my first fanwork that I've developed enough to share outside of my own little bubble. And my first writing that isn't a character description or yes-and-ing with a friend. Please be gentle on me lol! I know it maybe isn't exactly the route Rachel or Jacob would take, but this is how I think the boys would emotionally react! Very mixed bag but also very worth the trouble, they're familiar with the feeling :3c

I hope you enjoyed reading!!! Thank you for giving me a slice of your time!

Edit - Thank you for over 1k hits in under a day holy shit. I'm so thankful that people are interested!!!! This feels so much better than keeping them in the notes app for just myself.

I honestly didn't expect even 50 hits let alone 1k+. From the bottom of my heart thank you for letting me add a slice to your enjoyment of our favorite queer hockey players!!!!

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