

You can't just borrow people's kids, Ilya!

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You can't just borrow people's kids, Ilya!

by [ACharlieK](#)

Summary

Shane is really stressed about getting the first hockey camp at the Irina Foundation Just Right
- Ilya has a solution: borrow Jade, Ruby and their friends for a trial run.
Will it be a disaster? Will Shane come to some realisations watching Ilya with kids?
Stay tuned to find out

Notes

Let's ignore my wild mixing of book lore and show lore idgaf

"I just don't know about this," Shane thumbed through the printouts again. "Three hours on the ice seems really long." Ilya, head resting on Shane's thigh, rolled his eyes.

"They'll be fine. We play lots of games, yes? Is supposed to be fun. I sometimes train for five hours at once when I was younger."

Shane gave him a look over the rim of his reading glasses. "And you're fine?"

Ilya frowned. "That's not..." He pushed himself off Shane's lap. Immediately, anxiety thrummed through Shane. Had he said something wrong? He thought they were just teasing each other, but... Before Shane could spiral further, Ilya sat up and scooted close to him, his chin resting on Shane's shoulder, and plugged the paper from his hands. "Give... Hm." His brow furrowed as he read, making Shane want to run his thumb over the crease in between his brows.

"What is solution then?" He asked finally, "What do you think?"

Shane shrugged. After over a year of work and lots of boring meetings with lawyers, during which his mother had thankfully taken the lead, the Irina Foundation was almost fully set up. In just a couple of weeks, just before playoffs, they'd have their first weekend of around twenty kids coming in for a training camp. While Shane was generally excited to see his plans finally work out and to be able to do this big thing not only for Ilya, but with him too, neither of them were hockey coaches, especially not for kids. And so the schedule for the weekend was still giving them trouble.

"I guess we could cut it down to two hours," Shane conceded, "Have another break, but..."

He hesitated again. "They are there to play hockey, right? So more hockey is good?"

Ilya let out short, soft laugh. "Hollander what are you even talking about, it doesn't matter."

"It does!" Shane protested. "I want this to work."

"You made fake charity as excuse to spend time with me. You will be fine running fake charity."

"First of all, it's not fake if we're making a real impact... And second of all, *I will be fine? What do you plan on doing, then?*"

Ilya shrugged. "Easy. You're boring, so I am fun. I'm gonna, how do you say? Entertain."

"Fuck you." Shane said, barely suppressing his smile. Then he groaned. "I don't know. It's just so many things to consider."

Ilya sighed. "You are overwhelmed." He stated.

"No shit."

"So don't think about big important charity. Think about ten-year-old Shane. Would he have liked hockey camp with three hours of practice?"

"Well yeah. But I was obsessed with hockey. I would spend as much time as I could on the ice. But most kids won't be like this. There will probably be at least some who have never even skated before and they might not enjoy it."

"We could do practice." Ilya suggested, "Invite some kids for free, see how they like it."

"Maybe." Shane worried his fingers over his thumb joint, trying to drown out his doubts with the repetitive motion. "I don't know any kids, though."

"Yes you do. What about your teammate who has babies like bunny and gives them all bad names?"

Shane gave Ilya an exasperated look. "Hayden is one of my best friends, don't act like you don't know his name."

Ilya shrugged. "I think I slammed him into boards before, yes. Ask him if you can borrow his kids."

"I can't just borrow someone's kids!"

Ilya shrugged again. "How old are they?"

Shane considered this. "The twins are probably, like, ten and Arthur... I don't know... But that's beside the point! Hayden hates you."

"But he doesn't hate you," Ilya reasoned, "Tell him he can come and watch if he doesn't trust me."

Shane sighed. "Fine."

"Everyone!", Ilya said, loudly, "Everyone! Welcome to hockey day at Irina Foundation." He spun a slow circle on his skates and Shane marveled at how easily Ilya commanded a crowd, even if the crowd in question was mostly made up of elementary school kids.

"I'm Ilya Rozanov and I play for Ottawa Centaurs." He continued. A small boy booed and Shane grinned. Even Montreal kids were serious about their teams.

"Ah, shut up." Ilya waved his hand dismissively at the kid. "Anyway. I'm coach today. Who here has skated before? You're with me. If you've not skated before, you're with Shane. He's boring guy over there, maybe you've seen him on TV before? He is pretty famous. But not as famous as me." He turned again, catching Shane's eyes over the heads of the kids and winked at him. Shane could feel his cheeks heat and he scowled at Ilya. Not here.

Ruby and Jade Pike had brought about half their class, so there were maybe twelve kids, plus their brother Arthur, the youngest among them. About half the kids now wobbled over to Shane, who felt his confidence sinking immediately. He had aimed to play a proper hockey game by the end of the day, but if half these kids had never even skated before... He inhaled. One step at a time.

"Okay." Ilya said. Shane noticed how easily he herded the kids around on the ice, making sure they stayed within listening distance. "This is hockey stick. This." He pointed to the opposite side of the rink. "This is penalty box and penalty box is for losers. You whack anyone with hockey stick, you go into box, yes?"

Some kids nodded, others were already busy skating back and forth.

"Why did you switch to Ottawa?" the kids who has booed Ilya earlier asked.

"Because," Ilya said conspiratorially, "Americans are really stupid and I was sick of them." The boy grinned.

"Uhm, Mr. Hollander?" A small voice asked at his elbow, "Should we also get a hockey stick?"

Shane tore his eyes away from Ilya.

"Please call me Shane." He told the girl, "I'm not that old, and no you don't need a stick quite yet."

The girl eyed him. "You are kinda old."

"Rude," he said with a smile, trying to channel the way Ilya talked to the kids. "Follow me, guys."

He led them off the ice onto the rubber mats along the rink, immediately sparking protest.

"It's just for now, okay?" Shane said, already somewhat on edge from the noise of several kids talking over each other, their voices echoing off the walls of the rink. "So you don't fall on your butts, you will do enough of that today. Now, look at me and put your feet into a bit of a V..."

"Like skiing!" one of the kids interrupted.

"Ah, no." Shane said, feeling a bit awkward, "The other way round, your blades should almost touch at the heel, like so. And then, we're going to pretend to march, but only pretend. Your feet should always stay under your body, not go in front of it or you will lose your

balance on the ice.”

Shane was a bit embarrassed to admit that he had watched a bunch of tutorials for beginners the night before. Skating was just so second nature to him that he had a hard time imagining what it was like to wear skates for the first time, to have to make a conscious effort to keep your balance.

Almost without meaning to, he kept glancing over at Ilya. His group was skating laps, hockey sticks in hand, to get used to it and Ilya was skating backwards, effortlessly weaving in and out between them to correct their form. Shane thought it was endearing, Ilya showing off to a gaggle of children, a massive grin plastered on his face, his hair gleaming under the rink lights.

From what Shane could tell, Ruby, Jade and Arthur were the most advanced skaters, which didn't surprise him. Their dad was an MHL player after all.

Would his and Ilya's kids also learn to skate almost before they learned to walk? The thought came to him unbiddenly, and he had to glance down for a moment. What was he thinking?

They wouldn't... He didn't even think Ilya wanted kids, even if he was very good with them.

“Like that?” One of the kids asked and Shane startled slightly. Shit, yes, he was supposed to teach them to skate.

“Uh, yes, looking good, everyone. Now we're gonna keep marching, but going from bottom to top, we first wanna bend our ankles a bit, and then our knees, but try to keep your hips and back straight.” He wiggled the corresponding joints a little, making the kids laugh. See, he could be good with them too, he thought, a little self-satisfied.

They worked on it a little more, Shane checking every kid's posture and correcting where necessary, but most of them grew bored quickly.

“Okay, I think we mostly got it,” Shane said quickly, before they could start messing around too badly, “Let's head to the ice. Everyone got their gloves on? Hands up so I can see them.”

“Why do we have to wear them?” One girl complained.

Ilya, just skating by, slid to a halt next to them, spraying Shane with ice dust. “Because if you don't wear gloves, skates will slice your fingers off,” He said, widening his eyes, “And then you will bleed aaaaaall over ice and Shane here will have to do lots of boring paperwork.”

A boy narrowed his eyes at Ilya. “Your English is really bad,” he remarked. “You call everything boring.”

Ilya peered down at him with mock disdain. “I speak Russian.” He said, then adding something in Russian that Shane with his pretty lackluster Russian skills thought translated to something along the lines of “At least I speak two languages.” Shane grinned. Ilya was in for a surprise. He wasn't in the States anymore, this was Quebec.

Like clockwork, the boy protested: “I speak French, et mon français est meilleur que ton anglais.”

“Showoff,” Ilya muttered, then he called over the ice: “You guys, go to center faceoff so the others can come skate!”

Shane spent the next hour or so teaching his group to go from marching on the ice to lifting one foot at a time up to gliding. He refrained from showing off too much, but every now and then, he would offer to pull kids along if he felt like they were having trouble adjusting to the speed of proper skating. Every now and then, he would stop to watch Ilya, who was running his group through a small training course, pushing a puck along some a weaving track of cones, then practicing passing back and forth and scoring goals. He loved watching Ilya skate. He never got to just enjoy it when they were playing each other, of course but now he had all the time in the world to watch Ilya's lean body, all taut lines, every movement languid and elegant, crossing his feet over each other, circling back and forth around the kids, just

having fun.

Shane's own group was taking well to the skating, seemingly enjoying themselves, but he had to admit that he would've preferred to switch places with Ilya. Hockey just was his passion, more so than pure ice skating had ever been, but then again, Ilya was born to be a hockey coach. Shane could perfectly imagine a retired Ilya, hair a little gray, face full of laugh lines, coaching little league games every week. The thought made his stomach give a small, infuriating flutter. He really wasn't supposed to fantasize about a future with Ilya, not with other people around like this.

Sometime later, Shane was leaning against the board, watching the kids taking a break off the ice, when Ilya skated up to him, bumping his shoulder into Shane's and staying like this, bodies touching. Shane immediately felt anxious but forced himself to swallow it down. It was just the two of them, the kids distracted.

"You happy?" Ilya asked, voice low.

Shane nodded. "Though I'm not sure of it would work with more kids than this. Not if it's just the two of us."

Ilya shrugged. "We could ask other guys. From your team and mine. I think more hockey players could be good selling point."

Shane laughed. "Did my mom teach you that word?"

"Yes." Ilya said smugly. "I'm her favorite, you know."

"I know, yeah." Shane glanced over at the group of kids again. "We could see about collaborating with the PWHL, too." He said finally. "There's so many little girls here, I think they deserve to look up to someone like them, too."

He thought of himself as a kid, of the way he had never had anyone in the MHL look like him, of Scott Hunter, his fingers tangled into his boyfriend's hair for all the world to see. Seeing people like yourself on the ice was important.

"Mm," Ilya hummed, "You are very smart, Hollander."

Shane smiled. "Careful. That almost sounded like a compliment."

"Oh," Ilya's voice dropped down low in a way that made a spark race through Shane's body.

"I think I can complement my boyfriend as much as I want."

Shane tried to hold Ilya's gaze, but it quickly grew too intense, and he fixated his skates instead, studying the way the tips pressed into the ice. "Not here," he said softly.

"Look at them, they're not even paying attention." Ilya said, reasonably, jostling his shoulder into Shane's even more, as if to prove a point. Ilya wasn't wrong of course, but knowing didn't change the way Shane's heart jumped into his throat and his hands started to sweat.

"I-" Shane cleared his throat. "Do you think we can aim for a full game towards the end?"

"Not full. Maybe three ten minutes periods to two twenty minutes, but you decide. You have the bad skaters."

Shane shrugged. "Kids learn fast. Considering they started today, they're already doing really well. If we mix up the teams, I think it's not a problem – unless your kids are shits to them."

"So far no hockey stick injuries so... probably fine." Ilya cocked his head to the side, his hair tickling Shane's neck. Shane swallowed thickly.

"Alright, then."

After the break, Shane had his group run through the same practice course Ilya had done earlier, while Ilya let his group race each other to pass the time. Shane was definitely enjoying this more. Watching the kids pass the puck back and forth, loudly counting the

number of passes made him feel nostalgic for the winters of his childhood, skating on lakes, playing his friends, Shane always the best among them.

"Shane!" A girl yelled before shooting the puck over to him. Shane pretended to almost miss it, then passed it on to a boy on his left. He had his back turned on Ilya and his group, when he suddenly heard a loud skidding, crunching sound behind him. He whipped around just in time to see one of the boys slam little Arthur into the boards. Shane was over there faster than Arthur could start to wail.

Luckily, all the kids were wearing helmets and shoulder pads, but Shane could tell that Arthur would have some nasty bruising on his arms and rib cage anyways.

"Ok, buddy, slowly," Shane said, hauling the little boy up to his feet, who, on top of everything else was starting to have a nosebleed. The boy who had pushed Arthur was still just standing there, breathing heavily, but before he could say anything, one of the twins skated up, angrily shoving him.

"What did you do to my brother?" She snarled, and Shane could hear Hayden in her voice, Hayden after a particularly nasty foul or a bad loss.

"Nothin'" The boy grumbled, "It was an accident. I slipped. He's just a crybaby." Before the twin could tackle him to the ground, Ilya got in between them, forcing them apart. "You!" he growled, "Off ice. To penalty box. Now." He turned to Shane and Arthur, eyes softening. "I can take Arthur to first aid," he offered, "If you call little shit's parents." Shane nodded.

"Can I go with them?" The other twin asked.

"Uhm..." Shane said, "No, Ilya's got it. Can you two split the group into teams and explain the basic rules of hockey to them while I call this guy's parents and yours? Ruby over here, Jade over there."

It wasn't ideal, Shane thought, but he had to keep them busy while Ilya and him were trying to get a handle on the situation.

"Oh no," Jade's eyes widened. "Please don't call daddy, he will come and pick us up immediately. I still want to play!"

Shane sighed. "Your brother is pretty hurt, I think it's important for your parents to come, but I'll tell him you want to play, okay?"

"Fine." Without another word, Jade whipped around and sped off to center of the rink.

"Guys!" She yelled, "Everyone over here."

Some people were just born to be team captains, Shane thought.

Two very uncomfortable phone calls later, Shane hopped over the barrier back onto the ice. Ilya and Arthur were back, sitting on the lowest spectator benches. Arthur had a juice box and was pressing a tissue to his nose, but Shane was relieved to see him laughing at something Ilya said. The other kids were huddled in two opposite corners of the rink. Ruby and Jade had clearly understood the assignment, both teams a decent mix of beginners and more advanced skaters.

Shane threw a glance back at the boy, Noah, sulking in the penalty box. He could tell that the boy felt bad, even if he insisted on pretending that he didn't and his dad had luckily been understanding enough, but Shane was still nervous about what would happen when Hayden got there.

But, Shane thought, he would solve that issue when the time came. For now, he had a game to run.

"Shane, what the fuck?" Hayden hissed under his breath. "Why is fucking Rozanov with my kid?"

Shane winced. "Look, Hay. I was busy calling you and Noah's parents, so Ilya took him to first aid. He's, uh, he's pretty good with kids, actually. Better than me in any case." He added for good measure.

Hayden gave him a withering look and made his way over to Ilya and Arthur on the bench.

Shane was about to follow him, when two girls skated up to him.

"Shane, she fouled me!" One of them yelled from a few paces away.

"Not on purpose!" The other girl seemed close to tears.

"Ah, alright. You guys... Juliette and..." Shane racked his brains for the other girl's name.

"Liv."

"Right, okay, Liv, Juliette, why don't you tell me what happened?"

"She elbowed me!" Juliette said, "And Ruby said that's a foul! I think we should get a penalty shot."

"I didn't mean to." Liv repeated, "I- I slipped and I almost fell and I accidentally hit Jules, I'm sorry Jules, I really didn't mean to!"

Shane nodded. "Okay, Liv, you get a small warning. Try the things we practiced when you feel like you'll slip, bend your knees. We don't want anyone to get hurt, not you nor the other team, okay? And Juliette, no penalty this time, because there's beginners on the team, okay?" Juliette scowled at him and Shane got a feeling that it was very much not okay, but before he could stoop down so far as to argue with a ten-year-old, Ruby skated up to them. "Come on," she said, "We want to keep going!"

Relieved, Shane made his way over to Ilya and Hayden, keeping an eye on the game. The kids weren't playing very well, something that would've bothered Shane if he had been playing among them, but they were clearly having fun, and wasn't that all he could ask for?

"Last year, I bruised ribs," Ilya was just saying, "Hurt like hell."

Shane plopped down on the bench next to him.

Ilya threw him a glance. "Tell him, Shane."

Shane sighed. "Tell him what?"

"That cool hockey players get hurt all the time."

"Daddy doesn't get hurt." Arthur said and Hayden nodded.

"That's true, I'm very careful."

"I said cool hockey players, no?"

Hayden scowled, but Shane nodded gravely. "It's true. I had a concussion last year, which is even cooler than bruised ribs."

"No way. He looked real stupid," Ilya told Arthur, "You wanna see photo?"

Arthur giggled and watched Ilya pull out his phone. Shane's stomach dropped. Please let Ilya use photos from the press, not ones he'd taken at the hospital. No one except his parents even knew about Ilya visiting him there, and while Arthur probably wouldn't pick up on it, Hayden most definitely would.

But before Ilya could produce any pictures, incriminating or not, a figure stepped up to the rink.

"Ah," Shane said weakly, "I'm sure that's Noah's dad."

Ilya gave him a sidelong glance. "I had Noah all day, I can talk to dad no problem if you..."

"Please." Shane's head was buzzing. The day had been filled with so many ups and downs, he wasn't sure if he could handle more talking to strangers.

"So," Hayden said the second Ilya was out of earshot, "Artie, how'd you like it?"

"It was great! Well until I got hurt." Arthur looked longingly over to the ice where the game

was still going on. "I wish I could play... but it was fun. Ilya is funny! He talks a bit weird, because he's from Russia, but he says really funny things all the time. Did you know he's Russian, Daddy?"

Hayden raised his eyebrows. "I did know that, yeah. So, you been with Rozanov all day?"

"Yep." Arthur gave Hayden a massive, shit-eating grin. "Maybe I'm a Centaurs fan now."

"Don't you dare, young man," Hayden said firmly, but Shane could see that he was biting back a smile. "So, uh, Rozanov wasn't, like, uh, mean or anything?"

"He did get pretty mad when Noah pushed me..." Arthur said pensively, "But..."

Hayden looked over to where Ilya was standing with Noah's dad and a now very contrite looking Noah. "Yeah, so, why did he even push you in the first place?"

"Because we were racing and I was better than him," Arthur said matter-of-factly.

That finally made Hayden laugh properly. "That's my boy." He said, ruffling Arthur's hair.

"Artie, will you go and change? I want to go home when your sisters are done with their game."

"I see you're serious about that whole thing with Rozanov?" Hayden asked.

"I see you're still serious about hating him." Shane shot back. They'd had a thousand versions of that exact talk before and Shane didn't care for it anymore.

"No, no, I mean it." Hayden sounded surprisingly genuine. "I saw how he acts with Artie. You're right, he's awesome with kids, he's funny, I have to give him that, I just... Shane I'm just surprised, really, how quickly the two of you became friends this year after hating each other's guts for so long."

"I- Well." Shane hated lying. He had hated lying to his parents and he hated lying to Hayden, so maybe he could get away with a little bit of truth.

"I guess it's not quite as out of nowhere," he said carefully, "We, uh, well, we've been friends since the, uh, All-Stars game." That's what his parents had thought, so it seemed like a believable enough lie to Shane. "The media just liked the idea of the rivalry..." he added quickly, "So we kept playing it up. And, well you've seen Ilya. He's an amazing player, he challenges me and I still want to beat him, no matter how close we are, so that was never pretend, it's just, off the ice we haven't hated each other in a long time and now that he's transferred to Ottawa, we've decided to just... let it fade out." He inhaled, then held his breath, waiting for Hayden to respond.

Hayden, head cocked, nodded slowly. "I see." Was all he said, "Maybe... Well, maybe I could make an effort to get to know him better. For you. Since he's, uh, your friend, and all." Shane honestly didn't really believe that there was a world in which Ilya and Hayden would ever get along, but he felt relief flooding through him anyways. He'd told Hayden some of the story, some of the truth and the world hadn't stopped. Maybe one day, he'd be brave enough to tell the whole story.

"Alright." Hayden drummed his hands on his thighs, "I- I'm gonna talk to Noah's parents, just make sure everything's good. And Shane?"

"Yeah?"

"Text me later, okay? I want a whole debrief about the day!"

Shane slumped against Ilya the moment the front door closed behind them. Ilya always understood. He wrapped his arms around Shane, one around his shoulders, one around his waist, the way Shane loved it most.

"Tired?" Ilya asked softly, nuzzling Shane's hair.

"Mm. Was kind of a lot."

That made Ilya laugh, the sound vibrating against Shane's body. "You can play full 60 minutes game with many screaming fans and then you can give perfect polite interview in perfect French after, but 12 kids are too much?"

Shane shrugged. "It's different then. When I'm playing, I can easily ignore everything else, all the noise and stuff and the interviews are always the same anyways. Hollander, why did your team win? Hollander, why didn't your team win? I usually have the answers prepared before we even head onto the ice."

"You're weird man, Hollander. I love you." Ilya said quietly.

"Mm. Love you too." Shane untangled himself from Ilya and pulled him over to the couch. This time, it was Ilya's turn to snuggle up against Shane, burying his face in Shane's shoulder. "You were great today." Shane told him, running his fingers through Ilya's curls. "Kids love you."

Ilya shrugged. "Was fun. I'm excited to do again. You too?"

Shane nodded. Despite everything, he had had fun. "It reminded me of when I started playing hockey. When it wasn't so serious yet."

"Yeah?" Ilya looked up at him, his hazel eyes sparkling in the lamplight. "How old were you?"

"I started skating when I was probably around, I don't know, three maybe? Really small. And then hockey when I was maybe four or five. You?"

"Same, maybe. Four, five. But first I just skated outside, you know when lakes freeze over. I went with... with my mother and Andrei sometimes, but just for fun, I didn't practice really until I met Svetlana in school and she took me."

"Oh?" Shane gave him a surprised look, "She got you into it?"

"Yes, into hockey, yes."

Shane smiled. "So I have her to thank for meeting you?"

"Maybe so, yes." Ilya hesitated. "I really want you to meet her. You like her, I think. She is also really boring about hockey."

"Maybe." Shane said. "Maybe." He knew Ilya didn't like Svetlana like that, but still, he wasn't sure he'd ever be fully at ease around her.

"Hollander, god." Ilya said, teasing. "Don't be jealous. I don't freak every time you text Rose."

"You do freak sometimes." Shane pointed out.

"Fine. Maybe sometimes."

They spent a few minutes in comfortable silence. Shane really enjoyed these moments, the quiet comfort, soaking up every last bit of Ilya's warmth, of his presence. How had he managed being away from Ilya months, sometimes years at a time? Just the thought made him ache and want to hold on to Ilya a little tighter now.

"You know," Ilya said after a while, "Hayden is boring, but his kids are great."

"I'm boring," Shane pointed out, "And you still like me."

Ilya made a dismissive sound. "You are good boring. Like blanket. Hayden is just boring." Shane scoffed. "I guess I'm gonna take that as a compliment. But yeah, his kids are great. Do you think we'll ever have kids like that that like hockey just as much as we do?"

The sentence was out before he could stop it. It was stupid and he knew it. Even if they could, there was just such a long road ahead, so many things to do still. Every time Shane thought about doing what Scott Hunter did, openly professing who he loved for all to see, it was like there was something blocking the words and the more he pushed against the blockage, the higher his panic rose until he wasn't able to breath, wasn't able to think straight. But weirdly, Shane found that the mental image of an older Ilya, his husband Ilya, teaching their child to

ice skate helped. Not much, not enough, but it helped.

Ilya let out a soft laugh. "Kids, Hollander? You want that?"

Shane hesitated. "I didn't think I did for a long time, but with you... yeah. You?"

"Yes." Ilya said simply, then he yawned. "We'll see about that."

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