

911, Jackie speaking

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911, Jackie speaking

by [camiii](#)

Summary

“Jackie?” Shane’s question cuts through the silence, and Jackie winces at the frantic rasp of his voice.

“Right here, honey.” She tries to keep her voice light, wrapping her hand around Hayden’s wrist and meeting his worried gaze over the phone. “What’s going on?”

“I need your help.” Shane croaks out. “They called, but they won’t - I need to know if he’s okay, but they won’t tell me.” The end of his sentence disappears in something so close to a sob it makes something in Jackie’s chest freeze over.

Notes

Walks up to the sandbox, bucket swinging. hey guys, what's up? are you losing your mind over the queer hockey boys as much as I am?

A twist on episode 5 aka what if it was Ilya who got hurt instead. Jackie's POV because I'm new and this is terrifying. it's no doubt a very special cocktail of american and british spelling/grammar because I'm not a native speaker and it's my european prerogative to mix ut up sorrynotsorry

Eternal gratitude to Jo and Steph for cheering me on and helping me with the commas and stuff <3

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

It's a clear, crisp evening, and Jackie's pleasantly tired as she walks up the steps from the garage to the front door. Her lower back twinges, as it has been for weeks now, and she rubs the swell of her seven-month bump as she unlocks the door. It's only a little after eight thirty, and she's never as grateful for an afternoon game for Hayden as in the last weeks of her pregnancies. She left the Dagenais' house not very long after the end of the game, and it's probably another thirty minutes before Hayden gets home.

He'll no doubt be buzzing from the Metros' win over Boston, and she's hoping they can take advantage of the empty house to celebrate the two of them.

She disables the alarm and moves through the house, turning the lights on as she goes. It's so quiet; she'll probably never get used to being at home by herself again. Her phone vibrates in her hand, and when she unlocks the screen it's a picture of her two eldest babies curled up under the covers of her parents' guest bed. A snapshot of Arthur in his travel cot follows. She types out a reply to her dad before quickly getting into a pair of Hayden's sweatpants, relieved to be out of her denim. She's putting away toys in the playroom later when she can hear the sound of the front door closing behind him.

"Mrs. Pike!"

He sounds happy, and she finds herself smiling before she even spots him.

"Mr. Two Assists." She steps eagerly into his open arms, her smile turning into a shocked laugh when he picks her up and carefully spins her around. "Hayden, oh my God."

"Hello." He's laughing too, giving her a quick kiss before addressing her stomach. "Hello, baby girl."

Her heart swells. He kisses her again, hand stroking slowly across the bump and then towards her lower back. He digs his fingers in carefully, right where she needs the pressure the most, and she rests her head against his shoulder.

"My dad texted. They're all asleep."

"Even Ruby?"

"It looked that way in the picture, at least," Jackie admits, knowing her daughter's habit of staying up late at her grandparents' house. There is still a chance they'll get reports of late-night Uno tournaments with grandma when they pick them up tomorrow afternoon.

Hayden hums, pressing a kiss against her temple.

“You did so well, babe.” She keeps her arms wrapped around his waist. “I’m proud of you.”

“We were solid tonight.” He grins, pulling back a little to look her in the eyes. “Shane’s goal in the first was fu-” he corrects himself quickly, “amazing. I don’t know how he even got it in from that angle.”

“It was.” She agrees, stepping back to allow him to step out of his sneakers. “Too bad he kind of lost his momentum after Rozanov got laid out.”

Hayden grimaces. “Yeah, that was rough. I mean, don’t get me wrong, he was definitely asking for trouble with how he was chirping at Berkes all night, but that was a bad check. I don’t think he was conscious when they got him off the ice.”

A shiver runs down her spine, and she hugs him tighter. It’s always chilling, watching a player take a hit and stay down, even if it’s a player like Rozanov. She wonders if he had family watching tonight, too; she can’t imagine the horror of seeing your loved one unresponsive and unmoving on the ice like that. She’s seen Hayden take a few bad hits, but thankfully he’s never left the ice on a spinal board.

“Are you hungry?”

“Oh yeah.” Hayden murmurs against her throat, leaving soft kisses down the side of her neck.

“For food.” She pulls a little at his hair but still wants him close, trying to picture the contents of their fridge from memory. She wants him refueled but not full enough to collapse in a sleepy pile on the couch.

“That too.” He murmurs against her lips before kissing her again, a little dirtier this time, and oh yes, they’ll definitely take advantage of the empty house tonight. They’re interrupted by Hayden’s phone as it begins buzzing in his pocket.

“Speaking of the devil. It’s Shane, hold on.” Hayden’s still grinning when he answers the phone. “Oh captain, my captain!”

Hayden’s face falls, the hand that had been slowly moving past her waist and down towards her ass coming to an abrupt halt. Jackie’s stomach sinks somewhere level with her knees.

“Whoa, what’s-” Hayden’s brow creases. “Shane, buddy, you’re not- Yeah, I just got home. She’s right here.”

He shoots her an incredulous look. ‘Me?’ she mouths, surprised when he nods. That’s new. She could probably count the number of times they’ve spoken on the phone on one hand.

“Of course, just-” Hayden removes the phone from his ear. “Hold on, I’m putting you on speaker.” He shakes his head at her, mouthing a silent ‘what the fuck?’

Hayden holds the phone out between the two of them, lowering it a little so it’s closer to her face than his.

“Jackie?” Shane’s question cuts through the silence, and Jackie winces at the frantic rasp of his voice.

“Right here, honey.” She tries to keep her voice light, wrapping her hand around Hayden’s wrist and meeting his worried gaze over the phone. “What’s going on?”

“I need your help.” Shane croaks out. “They called, but they won’t - I need to know if he’s okay, but they won’t tell me.” The end of his sentence disappears in something so close to a sob it makes something in Jackie’s chest freeze over. “I didn’t know he-”

“Shane.” Jackie interrupts him, and it’s with her Mom Voice now. The one she usually only has to bring out when the twins are hurt or scared. She’s never heard him sound like this before. “Breathe, sweetheart.”

“I-” Shane cuts himself off, breath hitching audibly as he seemingly struggles to inhale.

“It’s okay.” She tells him, mimicking a slow and even breath the way she would for her crying children. “One more.” Her mind is racing through the possible reasons he’s this upset. Something with his dad? Please don’t let anything have happened to David. “What’s going on?”

“I need to know if he’s okay. He was unresponsive when they took him off the ice, and the hospital called but they won’t talk to me because I’m not her. Well, I am her but I’m not, and-”

“Who?”

“I can’t believe he didn’t change the fucking name.”

“Shane,” Her raised voice finally catches his attention, mid-sentence. “Who are you talking about?”

Shane makes that horrible gasping sound again. “Ilya.”

She doesn’t know anyone with that name.

“I wasn’t- I was going to tell you.”

“Rozanov?” Hayden interrupts him this time, confusion dripping from every syllable. “Dude.”

“What about him?” Jackie pushes on, squeezing Hayden’s wrist while her mind spins. Rozanov? Shane is this upset about Ilya Rozanov getting his bell rung?

“I’m sorry. We’re-” Shane chokes out, and it’s watery and sad and no, they’re not doing some kind of blame game right now. “I was-”

“What can I do?” Jackie cuts him off, distractedly reaching for Hayden’s belt loop, hooking her finger into it to anchor herself.

For a moment there's only silence over the line. When Shane speaks up again, he sounds a little more in control. "He- the hospital called. He put me down as his emergency contact, but I'm not- I'm on his phone as 'Jane'. So when they called I couldn't-" He pauses. "They couldn't give me any details; they could tell I wasn't-" A girl, her mind supplies. "I said she'd call them back. What if he's-"

Oh. It sounds as if Rozanov did have someone close to him in that arena watching him go down and stay down. "Shane, hon, listen to me, okay?"

A ragged inhale comes through the line. "Okay."

"Are you at home?"

"Yeah, I,"

"Okay." She looks up at Hayden, eyebrow raised in question, and he nods. She loves him so much. "Text me the number, and I will call them. Hayden and I are getting in the car; we'll be at your place in fifteen minutes."

"The kids-"

"They're with my parents." Jackie assures him, already pulling on her shoes and reaching for one of Hayden's jackets. "Don't worry, okay? Text me the number." Jackie takes over Hayden's phone, walking through the door and heading for the garage as he shuts it behind them. "Do you want us to stay on the phone with you?"

"No, it's- I'm okay."

They say their goodbyes, and she hangs up, shoving Hayden's phone into the pocket of the fleece. She's halfway down the steps before realizing that Hayden has stopped. He is still holding on to the door handle when she turns around.

"Babe, we need to go."

"Rozanov?" Hayden stutters, eyes wide. "Fucking *Rozanov*?!"

"Yes." Jackie nods, keeping it simple. It's not as if she has any answers either. He looks thoroughly confused, and there is a lot to unpack here, but there's just not enough time for that right now. She doesn't comment on the swearing, extenuating circumstances and all that. "I know, but it's Shane."

That does the trick of unglueing him from their front step, and it's a balm to the heart. His loyalty has always been one of her favorite qualities, and his loyalty to Shane is only matched by what he's shown her and the kids.

"Fucking hell." Hayden breathes out, jogging down the last couple of steps. His phone buzzes in her pocket, and when she unlocks it, there's a new message from Shane.

Right. She's about to impersonate Ilya Rozanov's...girlfriend? Mother? Great aunt? to a medical professional. A regular Sunday evening, really.

She brings up the number, listening to the call connect as she fastens her seatbelt. Hip-hop playing at a deafening volume fills the car for a few seconds, making her jump, while Hayden scrambles to try and turn the volume down. He shoots her a smile of apology, and she rolls her eyes at him, luckily having enough time for a steadying breath before someone picks up on the other side.

Lying, as it turns out, is surprisingly easy. Her voice doesn't waver as she introduces herself as Jane, Ilya Rozanov's medical emergency contact, and her call is quickly transferred on. When she hangs up a few minutes later, they're already on the main road, Hayden barely adhering to the speed limit.

"He's conscious." She knows to open with the most important part, and Hayden's shoulders lose a bit of tension. He flexes his fingers against the wheel, and she only has to reach out for him to let go of the wheel with his right hand, eagerly intertwining his fingers with hers. "He's got a mild concussion, a dislocated shoulder, and a hairline fracture in his shoulder."

"Ouch." Hayden shoots her a brief glance. "That's him out for the rest of the season then. Maybe even the playoffs, if Boston makes it that far without him."

"Yeah."

"I can't believe Shane and Rozanov are... what? Lovers? That's fucking-" Hayden forcefully swallows down the end of the sentence. "He's such an asshole! I played the whole fucking playoffs with bruised ribs because of him!"

That part makes Jackie pause. She'd forgotten it was Rozanov who had sent Hayden crashing into the boards and messed up his ribs. Unsure of what to say, she stays silent. Hayden is one of the calmest people she knows; he so rarely gets angry, and she knows the best thing is to simply let him vent.

"I don't care if he's gay or whatever! Shane's never-" Hayden trails off, quiet for a moment before he breathes out, "Boston Lily."

"Who?"

"You remember I told you about Shane's Boston girl? The one he's been texting for, fuck, for years now?"

"You think that's-"

"He's always sneaking off when we're in Boston."

Hayden might be on to something.

"Wow. But it's been years?"

"Years!" Hayden exclaims, forced to let go of her hand to hit the turn signal with a little more force than necessary. "What the fuck?"

“You can’t- you can’t be mad at him right now, babe,” Jackie reminds him carefully. “It’s not the time.”

“I’m not mad I’m-” He trails off for a moment, streetlights illuminating the way he chews his bottom lip. “I’m something else.” He mutters, eventually.

Knowing when to stop pushing and let him simmer, she stays quiet. Her chest aches for him, for him and Shane both. If they’re reading into this correctly, if there are real, big feelings between Shane and Rozanov, it must have been difficult. Lonely. She can’t even imagine Hayden’s career and their relationship without the luxury of at least living in the same city. Even living in the same house and being a family, she sometimes feels like the moments she gets with him are too few and far between.

Hayden makes a final right turn onto Shane’s road. Shane has a permanent guest parking spot in the sprawling garage below his building, and they leave their car next to his Land Rover before getting the elevator up to Shane’s floor. Ringing the doorbell, Jackie pulls in a deep, steadying breath. Here they go.

“He’s conscious.” She opens with the most important part, and Shane’s relief is evident in the instant drop of his shoulders and the choked ‘fuck’ he lets out as she envelops him in a hug without thinking twice about it.

“Hey, buddy.” Hayden says quietly, and Shane stiffens in Jackie’s arms before pulling back, wiping at his face.

“Hayds-” Shane’s voice falters, and he seems caught halfway between shying away and leaning towards him all at once. Hayden makes the decision for him, forcefully pulling him into a hug. When Jackie looks up at him, his jaw is set, and his eyes are suspiciously wet.

“I’m sorry.” Shane’s voice is muffled against Hayden’s hoodie.

“Nope.” Hayden gets out, ruffling Shane’s hair. “None of that. Come on, let’s get inside.”

Shane leads the way inside. His bag is right inside the door, with his jacket thrown haphazardly on top of it. He sits at the kitchen island, and Jackie takes the chair next to him, relieved when Hayden comes to stand behind her, a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“So,” she keeps her voice low. “I spoke to the hospital, and Rozanov regained consciousness in the ambulance.”

“Okay.” Shane nods; he digs his nails into the back of his left hand, tendons flexing. He’s staring straight ahead, anxiety radiating off him in waves.

“He’s got a mild concussion and some bruising on his face. They didn’t seem very worried about that. But he also dislocated his shoulder, and the x-ray showed a hairline fracture in his shoulder blade.”

Shane shifts in his seat, putting both of his palms flat against the marble countertop. He nods again to show he’s been listening, exhaling slowly.

“He won’t be needing any surgery on his shoulder; it popped back in no problem. They’re keeping him overnight, but as long as he has someone to keep an eye on him at home, he’ll be discharged in the morning.”

Shane frowns. “But the team’s flying-” He cuts himself off, probably when he realizes he’s giving away exactly how familiar he is with Boston’s travel schedule. Jackie carefully reaches out to put her hand on his lower arm, squeezing.

“I told them I would pick him up, you know, as his emergency contact.”

“What?” Shane finally looks at her, disbelief written all over his face.

She can feel Hayden’s shock behind her; that part is news even to him. He’d clearly not been listening too closely to her conversation in the car. “They sounded really hesitant to let him leave on his own. I assumed he’d be welcome here, with you, but-”

“Of course, he’s welcome here. Of course. Jackie, I- thank you.” Shane heaves a shuddering breath, arms stretched out in front of him as he puts his forehead down against the countertop. His shoulders are trembling.

Jackie bites her lip. Suddenly teary-eyed, she turns towards Hayden, silently asking him to do something. Hayden kisses the top of her head, but he’s quiet, and it’s all a bit of a mess.

“He’ll be okay.” Hayden says, eventually.

“Yeah.” Shane mumbles, face still pressed against the marble. “I’m just- fuck.”

Closing her eyes, Jackie leans back against Hayden’s steady warmth. The seconds trickle by in silence. When he wraps an arm around her from behind, she begins to brush her fingers up and down his lower arm. Waiting, willing him to speak up.

“It was a bad check.” Hayden offers up a while later.

“Fucking Berkes never gets them right.” Shane mutters before sitting back up, scrubbing a hand over his face roughly. “I’ve told him so many times!”

“I know, buddy.”

Patience gone, Jackie stands. “Shane, can I use your bathroom?”

“Of course. You know where it is?”

Jackie steps back from the kitchen island with a light touch to Shane’s shoulder. ‘Talk to him!’ she mouths at her husband behind Shane’s back. Hayden throws his arms out in silent exasperation, and she only points at Shane and then back at Hayden before heading to the bathroom. She actually really needs to pee. She also really needs her husband to step up and talk to his best friend.

She takes her time in the bathroom, trying to process the past thirty minutes and stealing some of the fancy hand lotion Shane keeps out for guests. Hayden’s sitting in her seat, but

Shane's standing now, leaning back against the kitchen counter on the other side of the island. He's got his phone in hand, staring fixedly at the screen.

"You boys need to eat."

Shane pulls a face. "I'm not really hungry."

"I am." Hayden retorts quickly, and of course he is.

"You need to refuel after that game." And the emotional turmoil, she doesn't say.

"Yeah, man, at least one of your disgusting smoothies or something."

For a moment it looks as if Shane might argue, but then, "Fine."

"Is there anything other than vegetables in that fridge?"

Shane gets to his feet and pulls the fridge door open, examining the contents inside. "There's quinoa?"

"Dude!"

Hayden's objections actually manage to bring out the ghost of a smile on Shane's face. "I think there's some protein pancake mix? I got it in a promo during summer break."

"Sounds great!" Hayden claps his hands together, and he's overcompensating, and it's a little awkward, but at least they're trying now, and Jackie loves them both.

The drive into town the next morning is slowed down by the last dregs of morning traffic. Hayden has refused to let her go on her own, but she drops him off at Shane's apartment before heading straight to Montreal General. Once at the hospital, it's easy enough to find parking and make her way to the right ward in the large, sprawling building. The ward is quiet, a nurse pointing her in the direction of Rozanov's room.

She takes a steadying breath before pushing the door open. He's not alone; a man in his late fifties, dressed in navy scrubs, is standing by the bed. Both men look up when she walks in.

"Hey you," she smiles, ignoring the confused look on Rozanov's face. "Hi, I'm Jackie." She extends her hand, once again surprised by how easily the lie flows. The man's name tag reads Doctor Mehta. "I'm a friend of Ro-" she catches the slip in time. "Of Ilya's."

Doctor Mehta nods. “That’s great; we weren’t sure you were coming. I was explaining to Mr. Rozanov just now that we would rather he not leave on his own.”

“Oh, he won’t be.” She deftly ignores the growing confusion on Rozanov’s face. He opens his mouth to speak, and she continues quickly. “Jane sends her love. She’s really sorry she couldn’t be here herself, but she’ll meet up with us at home.” She puts as much emphasis on the name as she can before sounding too strange and waits with bated breath to see if he’ll catch on. Something flickers across his face, and he closes his mouth again.

“Right.” Rozanov replies. He doesn’t take his eyes off her. There’s a bruise marring his sharp left cheekbone and another bruise at the edge of his jaw.

“As I was saying, Mr. Rozanov,” Doctor Mehta continues, and Jackie breathes a sigh of relief when Rozanov’s piercing gaze leaves her. “The scans didn’t show any new swelling. With your permission we will forward all the details to your team doctor, and they will be in charge of the rest of your rehabilitation.”

“Okay.”

“How’s your pain?” The doctor asks with a quick glance at his wristwatch. “I understand that you’re eager to get out of here. But from what the nurses told me, you’re due for another dose in 40 minutes or so. It might be wise for you to wait for them to kick in before getting in a car. You are driving, I assume?” He addresses the last part to Jackie.

“Yes, of course.” She nods, securing her grip around the tote bag on her shoulder.

“Is fine. I will take pills later.”

The doctor hesitates.

“They make me fuzzy.” Rozanov argues. “I wait.”

“Alright. We’ll make sure you have enough painkillers with you when you leave, saves you having to fill the prescription first thing.”

Rozanov nods, and Jackie watches the doctor leave, hesitantly turning back towards Rozanov once the door has clicked shut.

“Who are you?”

He bites out the question, and there’s something insecure hiding at the corners of his eyes. She offers him a careful smile.

“I’m Jackie, Pike. Hayden’s wife, Hayden’s-”

“I know Hayden.”

“Shane called us.” She’s talking fast, trying to get the story out before he decides she’s some kind of impostor or crazy fan. “Last night. There was a bit of a misunderstanding with the hospital regarding your medical emergency contact.”

“Oh.”

“Shane’s waiting for you at his place, he’s-”

She’s cut off by the door opening once more, a nurse wearing pale green scrubs walking through the door.

“I heard you’re leaving us, Mr. Rozanov.”

“I- Yes.”

“I have your prescription here and the sling.” The nurse puts the prescription down on the table next to the bed, then the sling on top of it. “Let me know once you’re changed and ready, and I’ll come back and help you get it on.”

Oh shit. Jackie had forgotten about that part.

“Mr. Rozanov’s team dropped off his things.” The nurse turns to Jackie. Her name tag reads Maria. “It’s all over there.” She gestures to a carry-on in the corner, a black leather backpack leaned up against it. There’s a jacket hanging over the handle of the suitcase and a pair of sneakers on the floor next to it. Someone on the Boston team must have gathered his things from the locker room and the hotel.

“Great, thanks.” Jackie forces a smile, desperately trying to figure out how on earth she’s going to get all 6’3” of immobilized hockey bad boy Rozanov into something that isn’t a hospital gown. That’s bound to be awkward for both of them.

“Phone?” Rozanov

“Your phone? Oh, I’m not sure, I’m afraid.” The nurse hesitates on her way towards the door. “It’s probably packed away somewhere.”

“I can-” Jackie gestures to the bags, wondering if she’s overstepping, but she’s here, and he hasn’t yelled for security yet, so she might as well try and make herself useful. She receives a brief nod in response.

She reaches for the backpack first, unzipping the main compartment. Headphones, an expensive-looking, black leather toiletry bag, a t-shirt, and a slightly battered paperback of the Lord of the Rings. Huh. She searches through the contents carefully, but with no luck.

“Small zipper. In the front,” he suggests from behind her back.

“Found it!” She holds it triumphantly in the air.

He looks relieved, and having a small idea of what might be on it and the trouble it would unleash if it got into the wrong hands, she completely understands his relief.

“I’ll leave it there, okay?” She puts it back, making sure the zipper is fully closed. Once she’s done, there’s no longer any putting things off if they want to make it out of this hospital room before noon. “So, this is weird.”

He actually smiles a little at her statement. "Strange concussion dream."

"Ready to get out of here?" She puts her tote bag down on the chair next to his bed. "Shane-" She bites her lip, throwing a careful glance over her shoulder at the closed door. "There's a zip-up hoodie for you; we didn't know if you had one."

"No. Good thinking."

"That's Shane for you."

"Yes." Something soft flashes over his features. It's so far from the cocky grin she's seen on TV more times than she can count, and it completely transforms his face.

He carefully pushes himself into a sitting position using his right hand, slowly easing his legs off the bed. She pretends to be busy unpacking the dark blue hoodie Shane had given her before they left last night, but there's no missing his sharp inhalation of pain.

"Maybe we should wait for those pills." She dares a look at him over her shoulder. He's pale, using his good arm to hold the other close to his chest.

"Is fine." He shakes his head. "I can-" He attempts to get to his feet, and she moves quickly.

"Oh no, you don't." She's got a hand on his good shoulder before she can think twice about it. "Sit."

"I have to-" He seems as shocked as she is by the touch. "Bag."

"I'll get it."

"You are," he carefully lets go of his other arm to gesture towards her stomach, "with child."

"Oh please," she scoffs. "I have a toddler and five-year-old twins. I can lift a carry-on." She rolls the suitcase towards the bed and gets it onto the mattress next to him. It's unlocked, and she flips it open before leaving him to rifle through it on his own. She'll draw a firm line at searching through his bag to decide which pairs of underwear are clean and which aren't.

In the end he seems to forgo underwear completely, pulling out a pair of black sweatpants before awkwardly flipping the case shut with one hand.

He pauses for a moment with the sweatpants on his lap, clearly trying to come up with a game plan. She watches him somehow manage to bunch one of the legs up, clearly intending on doing it all on his own. She waits, almost amused by how far he gets in his stubbornness, until he leans forward to try and get his foot through the hole and gasps when it jostles his injured shoulder.

"Yeah, let's not do that." She reaches for the sweatpants, meeting his wide eyes when he refuses to let go. He's got stunning eyes, she thinks to herself. "Come on."

"I can do it."

“Oh, I’m sure you could.” She rolls her eyes at him. “And mess up your shoulder even further in the process. Let me help you.” She tugs at the sweatpants again; he still won’t let go. She silently counts to five. If he thinks he’s winning the getting-dressed battle against a mother of three, he has another thing coming. “Or I could go out there and tell the nice doctor I’m not very comfortable taking you home if you’re in this much pain.”

If he wasn’t a grown-ass man, she’d say he was pouting. Refusing to be the first to break, she keeps waiting. Then, “Look. I’ll get them over your feet, and then you can sort the rest out yourself.”

He eventually nods, not meeting her eyes. His grip on the sweatpants loosens.

“I’ll turn around if it makes you feel better.” She offers, even if she’s at least eighty percent sure the hospital gown is actually long enough to preserve his dignity.

“You would miss out on view.”

He says it so seriously that it takes her a few seconds to catch on to the joke.

“Oh... shush.” She refuses to admit that she’s blushing. She bends down, holding out the sweatpants for him to put his right foot through.

“Is okay,” he tells her. “It would make your marriage unhappy.”

She comes very close to pinching his calf, but she grew up with three brothers, and she knows more than one way of getting back. She sends out a silent apology to Hayden for what she’s about to do.

“Oh, it’s a very happy marriage.” She makes quick work of pulling the elastic of his sweatpants up to his knees. There, that’ll do. “Four babies.” She stands up, hand on the swell of her stomach. “And we had a really good time making them. With the twins-”

“Please, no.” Rozanov is definitely pouting now. “Don’t make me think about Pike naked. Very bad for concussion.”

“You started it.” She replies archly, but she’s fighting a smile. In the end she does turn around while he slowly gets to his feet and pulls the sweatpants all the way up, busying herself with closing the suitcase and lifting it off the bed. “You’re reading the Lord of the Rings?”

“What?”

“It was in your backpack.” She reminds him.

“Ah, yes.”

“In English.” It’s not a question as much as a statement, and the second the words are out, she wants to take them back. She didn’t mean to be insulting, but it had caught her by surprise seeing that brick of a book in his possession in English.

“Yes.” He clears his throat. “You can come back.”

When she turns back around, he's wearing the sweatpants, fiddling with the tie at the back of his neck.

"I never finished it." She admits, "the Lord of the Rings."

"Is good practice." He explains, then elaborates, "I have read in Russian many times. Makes it easier."

"Right." She nods, trying to puzzle this piece of information together with the rapidly changing jigsaw that is her idea of him.

Getting him out of the makeshift sling and into the zip-up hoodie leaves no room for jokes or small talk. There's no way to get his arm through the armhole that doesn't aggravate his shoulder a little. Once she can finally help him zip it up, he's pale-faced and clammy, breathing hard, and she feels like an asshole.

"I'll get the nurse." She says, quietly. There is no way she's going to be responsible for getting his bad arm into the sling again.

She takes a step back when Maria comes back in, occupying herself with gathering his things and ignoring the pained grunts and quiet conversation. Maria leaves, and Jackie takes a few seconds to type out a quick message to Hayden, buying Rozanov a few seconds to himself.

"Ready?" She asks eventually, and he responds by slowly getting to his feet.

They make their way towards the elevators slowly, but he stops outside the nurses' office.

"One minute." He tells her, and she nods, walking the next couple of feet to the elevator and pushing the button.

She watches him knock carefully on the doorframe. A few moments later Maria and a male nurse are in the doorway. She can't hear most of their quiet conversation, but the nurses are smiling and nodding, and it dawns on Jackie that he's not asking them for anything but thanking them. A little while later he joins up with her, and together they head towards the parking lot. It's a slow walk, but it suits her just fine; her lower back is twinging again, and she's refusing to let him carry any of his things.

"This is mine." She nods towards the car, letting go of his suitcase to get ahold of the key in her pocket and unlock it.

"You have boring car."

She should probably have been prepared for that.

"I have three children. I have a *practical* car."

He sighs but slowly gets in the passenger seat while she throws his bags in the trunk.

"It's only a fifteen-minute drive." She tells him once they're leaving the parking lot. She can tell he's uncomfortable; he's gritting his teeth and sitting slightly shifted to the side in the seat

to keep pressure off his shoulder. “Are you okay?”

“Fine.” He bites out, but when she notices how he’s squinting against the pale, spring light she quickly reaches across his legs to retrieve a pair of sunglasses from the glove compartment. With all the practicalities surrounding his broken shoulder, she’d almost forgotten about the concussion.

“Here.”

He doesn’t object, slipping the Ray-Bans on without hesitation. He inhales slowly, throat bobbing as he swallows.

“Let me know if you’re going to be sick. It wouldn’t be the first time someone threw up in this car. I have bags.”

“No more talk of sick, please.”

“Right. I’ll focus on driving, and you-” work on not throwing up. “Just breathe, okay?”

“You can talk.” He replies evenly, keeping his head very, very still. “Tell me about little Pikes.”

“Really?”

“Not the making.”

“Yeah, no.” She hasn’t seen her babies in almost 24 hours; she’s not sure he knows what he’s getting himself into with that offer. Either way, she will not pass on the opportunity. She keeps a steady monologue going for the duration of their drive. Rozanov doesn’t throw up. It’s a win for everybody involved.

They’re parked and out of the car, waiting for the elevator, before Rozanov speaks up again.

“Thank you.” She turns towards him, probably failing to keep the surprise off her face completely. “For being good friend to Shane, and,” he nods to where she’s got his jacket under one arm, wheeling his carry-on with the other. “For this.”

“You’re welcome.” She replies softly, adjusting the backpack on her shoulder. She quickly types out another text to Hayden as they’re riding up, and when they step out of the elevator, the front door is already open and Shane is waiting.

Rozanov is clearly flagging, moving even more slowly, but looks up when Shane exhales an “Ilya” that scratches at something raw in Jackie’s chest. He closes the distance between the door and Rozanov in three quick strides but then stops, hesitating. Determined to give them a moment’s privacy, Jackie edges past them with what she hopes is a reassuring smile on her face, wheeling the carry-on through the door. Out of the corner of her eye she sees Rozanov raise his good arm and the way Shane completely melts against his side, wrapping both arms around his waist.

“Hey babe.” She greets her husband, who’s staring at Rozanov and Shane as if they’ve grown wings. “Babe.”

“Huh?” Hayden’s attention snaps to her, and there’s a frown lingering on his face. “That’s-”

Jackie decides the best way to break him out of his stupor is with a kiss. She leaves Rozanov’s belongings inside the front door, stepping out of her boots. “Could I have some water, please?” She asks Hayden, mostly to keep his attention from going back to whatever is going on on the other side of the doorway. He’s offering her a glass when Shane and Rozanov walk through the door.

“This way.” Shane still has one arm firmly wrapped around Rozanov’s waist, steering him through the kitchen. “I made up the bed in the guest room.”

Rozanov mumbles something in response that Jackie doesn’t quite catch.

“I’m not making you climb stairs like this!” Shane’s objection is easier to hear. “And it’s a king-size bed, anyway.”

“Pike.” Rozanov nods curtly when he passes by Hayden, then says, “When I’m not concussed, I will tell about your wife seeing me naked.”

“What?”

“Oh, please.” Jackie sighs, fighting a smile. She should have pinched him when she had the chance.

“Asshole.” Hayden glares in the direction where Shane and Rozanov have disappeared, and Jackie wants to ask him about the last hour here with Shane but now is not the time.

Suddenly remembering the painkillers, she retrieves the pills from Rozanov’s backpack and retrieves a bottle of water from Shane’s fridge, aware that Hayden is watching her from where he’s leaning back against the kitchen island. “I’ll be right back.”

She stops right on the threshold.

Rozanov’s sitting on the bed, Shane standing between his legs, and Rozanov has his face hidden against Shane’s stomach. His good arm is wrapped around Shane’s hips, underneath his hoodie. Shane’s hands are in his hair, slowly brushing through the matted curls.

The look on Shane’s face makes Jackie’s stomach flip. There’s love there.

A part of her wants to back away and leave them alone, but the memory of Rozanov’s pained expression in the car and how he was wincing when the elevator began to move on their way up makes the decision for her.

“Sorry.” She whispers, and Shane looks up in surprise. He doesn’t step back. She holds out the medication and the water as a peace offering. “The timing was really off; he was supposed to take these like, twenty minutes ago.”

“Why didn’t you just take them before you left?” He gently chides Rozanov, but he’s still toying with his hair and brushing soft fingers over his nape.

Rozanov makes a mumbled objection against the fabric of Shane’s hoodie. Shane seems to understand enough of what he says to roll his eyes at him. “Pain management is a really important part of rehabilitation.”

Shane’s clearly reluctant to let go, torn between getting Rozanov the pain relief and not leaving their embrace. Taking pity on them, she walks the few steps up to the bed, leaving it on the bedside table.

“Feel better, Ro-” She cuts herself off, “Ilya.”

Ilya hums, face still hidden against Shane’s stomach. “Thank you, Jackie.”

Hayden’s waiting for her by the windows in the living room. He wraps an arm over her shoulders and pulls her close. She relaxes into the familiar embrace, exhaling a long breath she hadn’t been aware she’d been holding. “You good?”

“I’m good.” She rests her head against his chest. “That was a weird morning.”

“Did he say something to you?” Hayden blurts out, anger creeping into his voice, and she stops him from pulling back with an arm around his waist. They’re going to have to talk about this later.

“No, no, not like that. He was nice?”

“Nice?”

Hayden sounds genuinely confused.

“Yeah. Not like I thought he’d be at all.” She admits, a little ashamed even, to her opinions from before today. “He’s reading Lord of the Rings.”

“Rozanov is reading Lord of the Rings?”

“It’s in his backpack. And we call him Ilya now.”

She can feel Hayden’s inhale. “Jacks-”

She squeezes his waist. “We’re keeping him.”

Hayden’s quiet for a while but then sighs. “Okay.”

“Okay.”

End Notes

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