

The Heart of Things

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The Heart of Things

by [whatstheproblembaby](#)

Summary

A snowstorm derails the Centaurs' travel plans. Shane and Ilya get sent to an...interesting B&B as a result.

(Set post-TLG, but no actual plot details from that book are discussed.)

Notes

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

Climate change really was a bitch.

The Centaurs were coming off a grueling road win against New Jersey, and all Shane wanted to do was get on the plane, fly home, and collapse in his own bed next to his husband. Unfortunately, Mother Nature wasn't cooperating with his intended plans.

"Six inches?!" He realized Coach Wiebe had literally just said the area was getting a freak blizzard, but he was still processing everything.

"That's what she said," Ilya interjected, snickering. Shane whacked backwards, blindly, and managed to thump Ilya in the chest. Ilya whined softly until Shane soothed his hand over the same spot.

"So what now? The hotel said they're booked up for that librarian conference, so we can't just stay here another night." Shane's brain started spinning, trying to figure out if he or his mom had any connections in this godforsaken state.

"The front office has been calling around seeing what's available," Coach Wiebe explained, looking around the loose semicircle the rest of the team had made in the lobby. "We're going to have to split you all up, but no one will have to sleep on the side of the road tonight. Harris and I will go around and tell everyone where they're going. Forward your Uber receipts from getting there tonight and to the airport tomorrow - God willing - to accounting for reimbursement."

There was a general mutter of assent. Coach turned back to Shane and Ilya.

"You two are going to the Skylark B&B in Montclair. We'll be in touch when we know more about flight conditions, but I wouldn't plan on leaving until the afternoon at the earliest."

Shane nodded, a slight motion in his peripheral indicating Ilya was doing the same. As they grabbed their suitcases and moved closer to the door, Ilya muttered "B&B?"

“Bed and breakfast,” Shane said, watching as Ilya ordered them an Uber. “It’s like if a hotel was in a cute old-fashioned house. There’s usually a theme or nice original woodwork-”

“Mr. Real Estate strikes again,” Ilya teased. Shane made a face. “OK, five minutes ‘til ride.”

Shane groaned. “I’m so tired. I thought we’d be at least on the plane by now, if not actually in the air - oh *shit*, Anya.” Shane pulled his own phone out of his pocket and shot a quick text to his parents. “Mom and Dad will check in on her. We’ll be lucky if they don’t kidnap her and stuff her with treats until we get back.”

“Is what best girl deserves,” Ilya said, smiling. “Just like best boy deserves treat once we are at new hotel.”

“And who is that?” Shane couldn’t help but mirror Ilya’s grin.

“Which one of us got Ottawa’s only two goals tonight?”

“Oh, I’m *sorry* that some of us were getting harassed by the ‘Bolts d-men all night and couldn’t just aim for an empty net like you did the second time!” Shane sniped.

“You’re *saur-ry*. So Canadian.” Shane glared at Ilya’s bad attempt at a Canadian accent. Unphased, Ilya continued, “Is true, though. Martens was riding you into boards like tailgater on freeway. Only riding you should experience is on my-”

“Look, our ride!” Shane cut Ilya off before he could say anything their teammates would never let them live down if they overheard.

They headed out the door and threw their luggage into the back hatch of the large, black SUV, calling out their thanks to the driver as they took their seats. Shane felt his mind start drifting the second the car started pulling away from the curb.

“How far away is it?” he mumbled, eyes already closing. He leaned his head against the cool glass of the window.

“Half an hour, maybe? I'll wake you up when we get there, don't worry.” Ilya said, stroking his left hand idly over Shane's right where they lay between them in the middle seat.

Shane dozed off at that, worn out from the game and the unexpected stress of their travel plans falling to shit. True to his word, Ilya gently shook Shane awake when they pulled up to their new hotel.

When Shane opened his eyes, he had to blink a few times to make sure he wasn't still unconscious.

The Skylark's siding was painted an electric turquoise, made even brighter with a butter-yellow front door, columns and gingerbread trim. A gigantic Pride flag flew from the porch railings, which were bubblegum pink.

Ilya had managed to grab their bags and shut the trunk by the time Shane clambered out of the back seat and made it to his side.

“Am I-” Shane began, staring up at three stories of fluorescent clapboard.

“No, I see it too,” Ilya confirmed. “Wiebe is punking us, maybe?”

“You had Punk'd in Russia?” Shane asked, feeling a small smile burst onto his face as he turned to look at his husband.

“No, I had idiot roommates during Boston road trips with horrible taste in TV,” Ilya said, making Shane laugh.

“Well, at least we know they won’t be weird about us sharing a room,” Shane said with a nod at the Pride flag. “Shall we?”

Ilya gestured for Shane to go up the stairs first, so he did. The wood floors in the seafoam green foyer creaked under their feet as Shane approached the front desk.

“Uh, hi,” he said to the jovial-looking older white man behind the counter. “We have a reservation under-”

Shane realized midsentence that Coach Wiebe had never actually told them how they were supposed to check into their new rooms. He looked back at Ilya, panicking.

“Rozanov? Hollander? Ottawa?” Ilya offered. He grabbed Shane’s hand and squeezed it once, a silent comfort.

“Oh, you’re our hockey boys!” the man said, smile growing even wider. “Welcome to the Skylark! We’re so happy we could accommodate you - we were actually all booked for tonight, but one of our reservations had to cancel because the snowstorm already blew through Chicago and cancelled their flight. What timing, am I right?”

Shane tried to make some kind of noise of agreement, but the man had already continued on with his speech by the time he got his brain to connect to his vocal cords.

“Anyways, you’re in room 305, on the top floor. You should have fresh towels and sheets, but if something looks wrong, just call down here and we’ll get you taken care of! Breakfast is from 8 to 11 tomorrow morning. Checkout is normally at noon, but we can play that by ear if the weather doesn’t cooperate. We wouldn’t throw you out in the snow! Oh, and my name is Bruce - sorry I didn’t introduce myself sooner!”

There was a brief pause, then Ilya (thankfully) took the reins and introduced both himself and Shane in response before asking a question. “I’m sorry, it might be my English - you kept saying *we*?”

“Oh, yes, sorry - my husband and I own this place,” Bruce explained, cheeks flushing light pink. “Even before we could legally call ourselves that. We always wanted a romantic vacation spot that catered to people like us when we traveled in our youth, so when this property went up for sale, we just had to make that dream come true! And now it’s been - God - twenty years? Where does the time go?”

“That is - really cool,” Shane said, wishing he had better words to describe the sensation of *warmth/community/safety* that had gone through him during Bruce’s story. Ilya squeezed his hand again, and Shane knew he was feeling the same way. He leaned into Ilya’s shoulder, resting the top of his head in the crook of his neck for a moment.

“Here, these are your keys,” Bruce said. He handed over actual metal door keys, and Ilya and Shane each slipped one into their respective pockets. “I won’t keep you any longer - I can’t imagine how tired you must be after running yourselves ragged on the ice for an hour! Rest up, and Marcus and I will see you at breakfast tomorrow.”

Shane and Ilya smiled and nodded at Bruce before turning and heading up the stairs to their room. Ilya ended up in front as they walked down the hall, so he unlocked the door and wandered in first, propping the door open with his back until Shane was also safely inside.

“Oh my God.” They spoke as one as they took in their bedroom for the night.

The room was a deep wine red, and the wallpaper was - *velvet? Jesus Christ*. The bedding was cream and looked temptingly soft, and the only light came from a couple of wall sconces mounted to either side of the dark wood four-poster. Shane thought there were also a couple of floor lamps tucked in the corners, but he couldn’t tear his eyes away from the framed art lining the walls.

“Not as good as mine,” Ilya said dismissively, examining the sketches of muscular naked and half-naked men popping their asses suggestively. Shane thought he might be having an out-of-body experience. “These men should do more squats.”

“Are we - did they - is this the *honeymoon suite*?” Shane’s voice became a screech on the last two words out of his mouth.

“Not the theme you were expecting, Mr. Interior Design?” Ilya teased. He walked into the ensuite bathroom, where Shane saw him freeze just over the threshold. “Hollander.”

Shane followed him in, peeking over Ilya’s shoulder before coming to his own abrupt stop.

While there were the expected sights of a toilet and a sink and a two-person shower stall, there was also a large, red, heart-shaped tub in the far corner of the room, sunk into a pale pink tile surround.

“Clothes off,” Ilya said.

Shane’s hands were already at the hem of his shirt when he went “What?”

“We are taking bath,” Ilya said, his own shirt already discarded on the matching pink tile floor. “When will we ever see tub like this again?” He leaned past Shane to throw his shoes and socks back in the bedroom, then pulled down his pants and underwear in one go.

“In my nightmares, probably,” Shane said, but he was already removing his own clothing and folding it carefully on the bathroom counter. While he went to put his shoes next to Ilya’s by the bedroom door, Ilya knelt at the side of the tub, where he turned on the hot water and examined the bottles sitting nearby.

“Lavender, ocean mist, or orange blossom?” he asked.

“Orange blossom,” Shane said, and Ilya dumped two capfuls under the faucet. They waited a moment for the water to get deeper, then climbed in. The left and right arcs at the top of the heart had ledges where they could be comfortably seated, and they lowered their legs into the bottom half of the heart, which was properly deep. Shane was sitting in the right arch, nearer the bathroom wall, with Ilya opposite him in the left arch. Ilya reached to the side and turned off the water.

“God, this feels good,” Ilya said, leaning his head back against the edge of the tub. “I love gay American hotels.”

“Please give ESPN that exact quote during your next interview,” Shane said with a snort. “This *is* nice, though.”

He mirrored Ilya’s position, letting the warm water and steamy air soothe him into a near fugue state. His muscles loosened, his eyes closed, his breathing got deeper and slower until-

“What the *fuck?!?*” Shane wiped a wave of soap and water off his face before glaring at his husband.

“You were practically asleep, Hollander. I thought you were going to drown,” Ilya said, unrepentant. “Come here.”

Shane backhanded a splash of water back in Ilya’s direction. “No. Why?”

“Come *here*.” Ilya beckoned Shane over with an impatient hand gesture. Shane scowled, but he still ducked into Ilya’s side of the heart, where he was duly manhandled into sitting on Ilya’s lap with his head tucked into the left side of Ilya’s neck. “There. Better.”

“You could have just told me you wanted to cuddle,” Shane said, but there was no heat behind his comment. Hell, the words barely came out coherent. He nuzzled his nose into the junction where Ilya’s neck met his collarbone and felt Ilya press a kiss into his hair.

“Shhh, *malysh*. We are relaxing now, yes?” Ilya ran his hand slowly up and down Shane’s spine, lulling Shane back to his half-asleep state. His world had narrowed to immediate physical sensations, a blur of skin and scent and heat. When a hand lifted his chin, he whined.

“Shane. Baby. Open your eyes and focus for me.” Ilya waited until Shane did as he had asked, then continued, “Do you remember what we talked about a couple weeks ago?”

“Wh- yes. Yes, I remember,” Shane said, coming back to awareness in the middle of answering Ilya’s question. “Now?”

“If you want.”

“I want. Ilya, baby, yes, I want-”

“Shh,” Ilya soothed Shane again, dropping a quick kiss onto his lips before stroking his hand over Shane’s face. “OK.”

Shane sucked Ilya’s thumb into his mouth, suddenly needing something inside him. “OK?”

“Yes, OK.” Ilya stretched out his free right arm, grabbing a bottle from the ledge that Shane hadn’t noticed before and positioning it closer to the side of the tub. Shane pulled off Ilya’s thumb and tucked his face back into Ilya’s neck, willing his breathing to slow down again.

They had discussed half-asleep sex over breakfast last month, after Shane had ground his ass sleepily into Ilya’s crotch in bed that morning and whined for it. He loved having sex with Ilya while fully awake, obviously, but something about the idea of Ilya fucking into him and only expecting him to lay there and enjoy it - well, it *really* did it for Shane. On the other side of the equation, Ilya’s stated preferences for sex were *yes, whenever, wherever*, but Shane knew he also liked being in the driver’s seat, so to speak.

Back in the bathtub, Ilya was about to step on the gas.

Shane had drifted into semi-alertness, easily soothed by Ilya’s warm hand on his back and the soft scent of oranges that had sunk into Ilya’s skin. He let Ilya adjust him so he was straddling Ilya’s lap with his arms around Ilya’s shoulders, but he refused to open his eyes or pull his forehead away from Ilya’s. Dimly, he noted that Ilya’s cock was hard against the inside of his thigh, while his own dick was practically flat to his stomach.

A bottle cap snicked open. A moment later, Shane felt one gentle finger press into his entrance.

“Bruce and Marcus are excellent hosts,” Ilya said as he slowly stretched Shane. A second finger joined the first, crooking and finding his prostate with ease. Shane moaned and rocked his hips back, pressing his forehead even further into Ilya’s. “This lube is waterproof. Smart of them.”

Ilya continued at a snail’s pace, not adding a third finger until Shane finally begged for “More, *please*.” Even then, Ilya lazily finished opening Shane up, leaving his fingers inside of him for what felt like hours.

“Oh, God, please. Please!” Shane gasped. His hips shifted clumsily against Ilya’s.

“Shhh, sweetheart. OK.” Ilya removed his fingers and pushed Shane up a little, one hand on Shane’s hip, the other at the base of his hard cock. Shane sank down greedily as he felt the tip line up with his hole. “*Fuck*.”

Shane sighed and leaned down for a kiss. When Ilya shifted his hips and rocked up into Shane, he broke away with a moan. “Ilya.”

“My baby is tired, yes?” Ilya said, dragging Shane so slowly up and down his cock that the water barely moved around them. “We must be gentle, not disturb him.”

As if on cue, Shane yawned.

“See? Such a long day,” Ilya said, practically cooing. He kept his maddeningly slow pace as he continued, “Is exhausting, being second-best hockey player in world.”

At that, Shane cracked his eyes open long enough to glare at Ilya, growling softly.

“OK, OK. In tie for first,” Ilya teased. Shane saw him grin as his eyes closed again. His forehead pressed against Ilya’s once more, and he felt himself slipping under, lost to sensation and pleasure in a way that would scare him if he didn’t know in his bones that Ilya would always keep him safe. “That’s right. Just rest, Shane. I’ve got you.”

“Love - love you,” Shane mumbled. “Love you, Ilya.”

“*Ya tebya lyublu.*” Ilya moved one hand to Shane’s dick, stroking it at the same lazy pace of his thrusts. He used his thumb to put a little pressure on the tip at the end of one of his passes, and Shane felt the last of his restraint shatter. “So good. So good for me, baby, so sweet-”

Ilya’s praise broke off as he came, groaning. Shane felt his cock pulse inside of him and moaned, savoring the feeling of being full and precious and loved. He buried his face in Ilya’s shoulder, dropping light kisses along the line of it.

They sat there in the cooling water for anywhere from five minutes to three months. Shane wasn’t conscious enough to be sure of the passage of time, but he knew however long it was, it wasn’t long enough.

“No,” he whined when he felt Ilya start to pull out.

“Shane. I am also going to fall asleep and drown in this incredible tub if we sit here any longer,” Ilya said, forcing him to sit upright. “And if we drown in a bathtub in New Jersey, Yuna will murder us both.”

“I hate it when you’re right,” Shane said. He pushed himself into the deeper end of the tub and stepped out, Ilya on his heels. “Come on. Shower.”

They rinsed the residue of their bath off quickly, even Ilya too tired to suggest a second round under the spray. Shane’s energy started flagging as they dried off, and Ilya ended up stealing the towel out of his hands and finishing the job.

“Pajamas,” Ilya ordered, and Shane used the last of his strength to dig a pair of boxers out of his bag before collapsing into the bed. Ilya spooned up behind him, naked, and wrestled them both under the covers. “Is your alarm off?”

“I think so?”

“Good. Tomorrow morning, we are sleeping in and enjoying breakfast. Team wants to book us honeymoon suite, we act like honeymoon takers.”

“Honeymooners,” Shane said, snuggling back into Ilya. “Alright. Let’s be on our honeymoon. Good night, husband.”

“Good night, baby.”

The last thing Shane felt before sleep took him was a gentle kiss being pressed to the back of his neck.

End Notes

Call me Jen of Arc, because the Lord sent me a vision of Shane and Ilya in a heart-shaped bathtub, and I had no choice but to heed the call.

On Tumblr under the same handle!

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