

surprise interference

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surprise interference

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Summary

Jane

[1 image]

Ilya stared at the photo of a tiny, red faced baby. He wasn't sure why Shane was sending him a photo of a random newborn.

Lily

Cute! Whose baby is that?

Jane

She's ours

Lily

What?

Jane

I had a baby an hour ago

Before Ilya and Shane meet at the cottage, Shane very very unexpectedly has a baby. Chaos (and love) ensues.

Notes

my apologies for any typos. i lost my job 3.5 hours ago because of the trump admin. i work with people that have substance use disorder. the admin knows their decision is going to kill people and did it anyway. go me.

tw for cryptic pregnancy and birth mentions with some homophobia mentions

Note that Ilya calls himself partially gay because in the book he does not mention being bisexual until the epilogue so he doesn't quite have the actual language for it here.

Another note: to reconcile the discrepancy of book Shane being Japanese and tv show Shane's actor being Korean, Shane's mom is a Korean adoptee who was Korean and Japanese. This fits in line with Korean adoption to western countries starting in the 1950s and

60s and continuing to the early 2000s. His mom being Korean and Japanese very specifically fits in well with the time period she would've been adopted from and multiethnic Korean adoptees were very common in the 50s and 60s. In my headcanon she was adopted by an interracial couple (so white mom and Japanese dad). This is why Shane considers Appa as a parental title and his mom refers to herself as Baa-Baa which is one anglicization of the Japanese word for grandma.

Chapter 1

Ilya was violating his contract with the Raiders and probably his apartment lease by smoking inside of the house when he received a text message from Shane.

Jane

[1 image]

The photo was of a brand fucking new baby who was still scrunched up from being inside their mother. It reminded Ilya of his niece when she came home from the hospital. The baby was small, red faced, with dark blonde hair and watery bluish eyes. She was pretty cute though.

Ilya wasn't sure why Shane was sending him a photo of a random newborn. Was it a teammate's kid? The baby was a sandy blonde so perhaps it was the Pike family's new edition. Ilya wasn't sure.

Lily

Cute! Whose baby is that?

Ilya had learned that even if babies were scrunched up and alien, people were supposed to say that babies were cute, although this baby seemed to be particularly cute. There was just something about them that made Ilya smile.

Jane

Are you alone?

Lily

Yes

Jane

She's ours

Lily

What?

Jane

I had a baby an hour ago

Lily

Tell me you are joking

Jane

[1 image]

The attached image was a selfie of Shane in a hospital bed with a baby on his chest.

What the fuck? Had Shane had a fucking baby? Had Shane just had *Ilya's* fucking baby? No fucking way. He needed proof.

Lily

Call me

Jane

Can't, my mom is in here and I haven't told her who the dad is yet

Lily

This better not be a joke, Hollander

Jane

It's not a joke

Jane

[2 images]

The first image was a photo of Shane's with an armband that read Unlisted Purple and noted that he had a baby in the nursery. The second photo was of the ankle of a baby, where a tiny hospital bracelet reads: Unlisted Purple, Baby Girl with a time stamp of almost an hour ago.

Lily

Call me now!!!!

Jane

Hold on, I'm going to ask my mom to get me a cheeseburger

Jane

Okay they just asked me if I want to give her vaccines. They said they're coming back in 10 minutes to give her her shots.

Ilya hit the call button immediately. He was shaking because he was still not sure any of this was real. How could this be real? Hollander swapped the call over to a video call. Hollander was still in the hospital bed and there was a very tiny sleeping human on his chest.

"This is your baby, our baby," Shane sounded loopy, not like he was high or anything just like he was exhausted and running on adrenaline. "I thought I had appendicitis but it turns out it was a baby."

"Holy shit, Hollander," Ilya said. "Is she real?"

As if she'd heard his question and was offended by it, the baby gave a little squeak. She was so small and tiny that it made Ilya's heart hurt.

Holy shit. That was a real fucking baby. It would be a long length to go to for a prank. And Shane didn't exactly do pranks.

“You had a baby?” Ilya asked. He couldn’t breathe. Shane had just had a baby? Shane had just had *Ilya’s* baby?

“Yes, like 72 minutes ago,” Shane responded. He stroked the baby’s back.

“I’m going to book a flight.” How long would it take Ilya to get there. “Can you text me what hospital you’re at?” Shit shit. Did Canada have visa rules if he wasn’t entering for a game? Ilya couldn’t fucking remember. Stupid fucking Russian passport.

“We’re in Boston, actually,” Shane said.

“Why are you in Boston?” Ilya asked.

“Meeting with a doctor about my shoulder. I wasn’t loving how my collarbone healed and wanted to discuss options,” Shane answered. “We were supposed to leave today.”

It wasn’t uncommon for athletes to be in Boston consulting with orthopedic surgeons. Boston had the best orthopedic surgeons in the world.

“Holy shit,” Ilya breathed. “What hospital are you at?”

Shane gave the name of the hospital and Ilya put it into his GPS. Google Maps said it would take 27 minutes. Apple Maps said 26. That was too long. His mind was spinning. Shane had a baby. Shane had Ilya’s fucking baby. And he was in Boston.

“Are you okay?” Ilya asked as he got dressed. “Are you healthy?” Ilya knew that people died during childbirth. Babies did too.

“It hurt like a fucking bitch,” Shane groaned. “Women are amazing for doing this for centuries. It happened so fast I didn’t even get pain meds.”

Shane kissed the head of the baby and Ilya’s heart hurt. He wanted so badly to be there so he could hold her, memorize her tiny features, and give her a kiss just like Shane had.

She was beautiful.

Ilya was going to get there as fast as he could.

* * *

Shane had to tell his mom because someone had to let Rozanov in and give him a wristband. They’d already let Shane know he could use a private elevator and have limited physicians and nurses coming in, barring an emergency, which, because Shane and the baby were apparently both healthy, did not include the fact that Shane had had a baby he didn’t know about two hours ago.

Shane did not want a random nurse giving Ilya Rozanov a wristband. He wanted his secret contained to as few people as possible, and besides, Rozanov was on his way and Mom would definitely notice a fucking giant Russian hockey player holding the baby that was currently in Shane’s arms.

Speaking of, Shane kept forgetting he was holding a real, breathing baby and that she was his, and that he was a dad (or Appa; Shane hadn't decided). She was so small and blonde and beautiful and she looked liked Shane and fucking Ilya.

Holy shit.

Mom brought Shane's cheeseburger back in the room and Shane found he was reluctant to let the tiny sleeping baby on his chest go.

"You need to eat," Mom said. "Do you want me to hold her?"

Shane, instead of responding to Mom's question because if he didn't tell his mom about it now, he'd lose his nerve, said: "Her other father is Ilya Rozanov and he's on his way here."

Mom nearly dropped Shane's cheeseburger.

"Sweetie, can you say that again?" Mom asked. She looked like she thought maybe the stress of the day had caused hallucinations.

"Ilya Rozanov and I have been..." Shane trailed off. "Messing around."

"Maybe a bit more than messing around," Mom said with a soft look at the baby, Shane's daughter. Shane's *fucking* daughter. "That explains why she's blonde," Mom said.

"Are you mad at me?" Shane asked.

"Why would I be mad, sweetie?" Mom asked.

"I don't know. I just, I had a baby." Maybe Mom would be mad about Ilya or mad that Shane has been sleeping with the enemy.

"You had a baby," Mom said. "I'm not mad that you had a baby."

"I had sex," Shane said needlessly. "With my rival."

"That part is a little surprising," Mom said with a little chuckle. "But I'm not mad. It's going to be okay."

"What if something is wrong with her?" Shane asked. "I swear I didn't know. I took so many hits. I cut calories, I-"

"Shane, sweetheart, it's okay. You didn't know. You had no reason to think you were pregnant. You just had a baby."

Shane thought for a second and then realized... "Oh my god. Did you call dad?" Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

"He's on his way. He's driving. He should be here in a couple hours."

"Oh my god," Shane groaned. "Dad is going to know I had sex with Ilya Rozanov."

“I think your dad is going to care a little more about having a granddaughter than he is about who you made her with, honey.” Mom reached out and stroked his hair. “Now, why don’t you let her Baa-Baa hold her so you can eat?”

Shane was reluctant to let the tiny person go but he was fucking starving. He wasn’t even sure why he wanted a cheeseburger because he never fucking ate them but it was the only thing that sounded remotely edible.

Shane ate his cheeseburger and watched Mom coo at the baby. “You’re just the cutest little girl aren’t you? You have your daddy’s nose.” Mom tapped it.

Shane smiled. Holy shit. His mom was a grandma because Shane was a dad. Holy shit.

The baby fussed, a light little whimper that made Shane zero in on her.

“She probably wants her daddy back,” Mom said.

Shane was someone’s daddy. Mom handed Shane his baby back. The baby grunted and then settled against Shane’s chest.

Holy shit.

She was so small but also entirely too big to have been inside of Shane until 2 hours ago.

What the fuck?

“Mom, I don’t know how to raise a baby,” Shane blurted. “I’m a fucking professional hockey player. How am I supposed to raise a baby?”

“It’ll be okay.”

“No it’s not. Mom we don’t have anything for a baby. My apartment is so unsafe for a baby. I,” Shane couldn’t breathe.

Worse yet, it seemed like the baby could tell Shane was getting upset because her breath quickened too. What the fuck? What the fuck? What the fuck?

Mom started humming, an old melody she used to use to help Shane calm down before juniors games. When hockey started getting serious, the crowds had gotten overwhelming. Mom knew when he sometimes needed a minute at tournaments and would sometimes shuffle him into the car or anywhere else that was quiet and private and she would hum until Shane could breathe again.

She’d take Shane into the quiet place she could find and she’d start humming melodies. These were old songs, unlike the French and English songs of Shane’s childhood. These were songs mom’s Dad sang to her.

Shane listened to his mom’s hum. He concentrated on it.

His breathing slowed and somehow, so did the baby’s. What the fuck?

“She’s attuned to you,” Mom said. “Her heart rate, her breath, they match yours because that’s what she’s heard since she’s had ears. She knows what you smell like. And she knows that you are *hers*, even if you don’t feel like she’s yours yet.”

Shane looked down at his baby, who looked up at him. She had this look, like Shane wasn’t a stranger, but like he was an old friend, someone she knew, someone she had always known. And that was true. She’d only ever known Shane.

Shane couldn’t stop staring at the baby that looked so much like him and so much like Ilya.

The baby started to fuss. Shane wondered if she was hungry. The nurses had taught Shane how to feed her with his body. Well, there was one nurse who was apparently a lactation consultant who had asked Shane if he wanted to try formula or human milk. She’d asked Shane about top surgery (which Shane hadn’t had because being an elite athlete had delayed his puberty long enough that he never had tits and then puberty blockers and T had taken care of most of that.)

Still, when the nurse had explained to Shane that feeding the baby with his body even once would help give her antibodies to build her immune system, would coat her stomach in healthy fat that would help her transition to any milk, including formula, and, that, at most, she would only need it for 5-10 minutes at a time at first, Shane had acquiesced.

He’d closed his eyes and let his mom and the nurse get the baby settled on his chest. Feeding her wasn’t as bad as Shane thought it would be. Uncomfortable and weird, yes, but also for some reason it felt weirdly nice. Shane didn’t think he wanted to do it exclusively and he especially didn’t want to be milked like a cow, but he was fine doing it for a few days, especially if it was good for his baby.

Before Shane could consider if the baby was hungry any further, Shane’s phone started buzzing.

It was Ilya.

“Mom,” Shane said. “Ilya’s here.”

* * *

Ilya wasn’t sure what the protocol was for meeting your rival/fuck buddy’s mom in the parking garage of a hospital on your way to meet your daughter that no one, including the father of your daughter who was pregnant with her, knew about until two hours ago. He was pretty sure there was no protocol.

“I’m Yuna Hollander, Shane’s mom,” Yuna said calmly. She was very pretty up close. Ilya had never seen her up this close.

“I’m Ilya Rozanov, Shane and I are…” Ilya trailed off because he had no idea how to describe it.

“You and Shane just had a baby,” Yuma supplied.

Ilya nodded.

Yuna sized Ilya up. “After you meet her, we are going to talk. Understood?”

Ilya nodded. That was fair, more than fair. He was a complete stranger who had put a baby in her son.

A baby.

Holy shit.

“How are you feeling?” Yuna asked.

There was no English words for how Ilya was feeling or at least not English words that Ilya knew.

“I don’t know,” Ilya answered. “This doesn’t, this doesn’t feel real. “ It still felt like a super weird dream.

“It’s a lot to take in,” Yuna said softly. “But she’s beautiful. Have you called your parents?”

“No, they’re dead,” Ilya answered. “My mother when I was 12. My father died earlier this year but he was not a good man.”

Yuna’s face fell. “Is there anyone else you can call?” She asked.

Ilya shrugged. “My brother, but he would not want to know. He is not happy that I am partially gay.” Ilya put his hands in his pocket. He could call Svetlana, seeing as she knew about Shane, but that was about it.

“Can I give you a hug?” Yuna asked.

Ilya nodded.

Yuna pulled him into a hug and Ilya nearly broke. It had been a very long time since Ilya had been hugged by a mom. He couldn’t help the wet sob he let out. Yuna rubbed his back in soothing circles.

Yuna started humming something Ilya didn’t recognize the melody of, but it was soothing and helped Ilya catch his breath.

“Okay,” she said once she pulled away. “Are you ready to meet your daughter?”

Ilya wasn’t sure he was ready but he was going to anyway.

* * *

She was so small. Like, barely came all the way to the crook of Ilya’s elbow small.

She had watery blue eyes and a shock of blonde curls and, most devastatingly, her nose crunched exactly like Shane’s did.

She was fucking perfect.

“Holy shit,” Ilya said. The baby furrowed her brow for a second and Ilya’s bottom dropped from under him. He’d seen his mom make that same face when he lied. He never thought he’d see it on another person again. “Holy shit, Hollander.”

Ilya looked up at Hollander, who was smiling. “It’s weird, right?” He asked. “Seeing *us* on another person?”

“Holy shit, Hollander,” Ilya repeated. How the fuck was she made of Ilya and Shane? How the fuck did she look like both Ilya and Shane?

The baby started fussing, a light, soft, tiny wail. Ilya panicked. “Did I do something wrong? Is she hungry?”

The baby kept whimpering, her lips quivering in a way that totally devastated Ilya.

“Try talking to her,” Yuna suggested.

“Hi,” Ilya whispered. “Hi.” She quieted some. Talking was working. “I love you,” he said softly in Russian to her.

Ilya waited with bated breath as her whines changed into soft grunts, like maybe she’d just been testing how her voice worked but now she was soothed by the sound of *Ilya’s* voice.

If she didn’t look so much like a mix of Ilya and Shane, Ilya wouldn’t have believed she was theirs.

“I love you,” he said again in Russian. He took a second to memorize the features on her. She was so beautiful and so ridiculously small. He looked up at Hollander who was watching the two of them, mostly the baby.

One of the precious few things he’d brought home from Russia was a photo of his mom as an infant. It had weathered a number of storms and Ilya felt like he was looking right at it except the baby had dirty blonde hair. She looked so much like his mom that it hurt. And yet, she had the best features of Shane too.

She was perfect.

There was a sharp surge of anger that Ilya could not stop from bubbling. Had Ilya’s dad ever felt like this? And if he did, how could he have terrorized Ilya his entire childhood? How? The thought of yelling at this tiny perfect human made Ilya want to cry. The thought of hitting her? If he ever even thought about hitting her he’d probably find the tallest building and jump. How could his father have hurt him? His heart squeezed.

She was so beautiful and perfect and wonderful.

“I love you,” he whispered again in English because he didn’t know if babies knew Russian if they never heard it.

Ilya looked at Shane.

“How to say I love you in French?”

Shane grinned. “I don’t think it matters if you say it in Russian or French or English.”

“Yes, but what if she only knows French because she only heard French in Montreal,” Ilya responded. “I want to make sure she knows.”

“Je t’aime de tout mon cœur,” Shane responded. “It means. I love you with all of my heart.”

Ilya definitely could not repeat what Shane said so he said: “Okay, you can say it to her in French. I’ll say it to her in Russian. She knows three languages before school. Good.”

Shane laughed.

After a bit the baby started fussing for real.

“She might be hungry,” Yuna said. She looked at Shane, who made a face.

“I can feed her,” Shane said.

“The nurse brought formula samples,” Yuna pointed.

“I said I can feed her,” Shane snapped. “They said it’s good for her. Just... I need to be alone when I do it.”

“Alright,” Yuna said. “If you’re sure.”

Shane nodded.

“Your dad is calling,” Yuna said. “he’s probably here. Ilya, why don’t we go get David from the parking garage?” Yuna suggested. So this was going to be the aforementioned conversation.

Ilya was reluctant to leave Shane and the baby but it definitely sounded like Shane wanted privacy to feed the baby. Ilya could guess pretty well based on teammates wives with young babies what that meant.

Plus, Yuna was probably itching to talk to Ilya.

Ilya had never really been on the receiving end of a shovel talk. He’d never really been close enough to someone for that to happen.

But, there was a first for everything.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

there was originally three chapters but this baby decided it was done. hope y'all enjoy this cuteness

content warning for super brief mention of miscarriage (not of shane)

Ilya followed Yuna to the private elevator and parking garage.

Holy shit.

Ilya had knocked up someone's kid without ever meeting them. And this wasn't just some random woman that Ilya had met during one of his many one night stands. This was his rival. He'd knocked up Shane fucking Hollander and hadn't even met Shane's fucking dad.

"So we're going to sit in David's car," Yuna said. "I don't know where mine is; probably towed. It was so chaotic when we came in. Shane couldn't walk."

Ilya swallowed hard. That must've been terrifying for Shane.

"He must've been scared," Ilya said quietly. Not just of what was happening, if he was dying, but whether he'd be able to play hockey again. "That must've been so terrifying." Things went wrong during birth, even with people who knew it was happening.

"He's okay, she's okay," Yuna said gently.

"She's perfect," Ilya said quietly. "And so small. I can't believe she was just born. I can't believe you and Shane were here in Boston." Something occurred to Ilya. "Wait, is she American?"

"Unfortunately," Yuna responded.

"Is it going to be hard to get her back to Montreal?" Ilya asked.

"That's what I'm working on. Shane has an American attorney that should be able to pass us along to the right people," Yuna reassured Ilya. They stepped into the parking garage where David stood by his SUV.

"How is he?" David asked.

"He's still fine. I told you," Yuna said softly.

“And the baby’s okay?”

“She’s beautiful, David,” Yuna smiled. “I need to call some people on the roof of the parking garage. I need to figure out when we can go home. You and Ilya are going to talk.”

David groaned.

“Would *you* like to call our lawyer?” Yuna asked.

“I just realized our granddaughter is American,” David complained. “Well, we’ll love her anyway.” He smiled.

Yuna poked her husband and then turned to Ilya. “David, this is Ilya Rozanov, Shane's friend, apparently,” Yuna said.

“Hi,” Ilya stuck out his hand for David to shake.

David shook it. “Nice to meet you Ilya Rozanov, I’m David Hollander”

“Ilya, before you talk with David, what’s your address? We’re going to be here a few days getting things sorted out and I’d like to get some stuff sent to your house.” Yuna didn’t phrase it like a question.

Ilya gave Yuna his address and Yuna wrote it down. She was already dialing as she walked away.

“Let’s talk,” David said, nodding to his car.

David Hollander did not give Ilya a shovel talk.

He said: “Now I don’t know you very well and I want to get to know you seeing as you are the father of my grandbaby. You treat Shane and the baby well and we won’t have a problem. If you don’t treat them well, you’re going to find out exactly how many lawyers a guy who works for the treasury board of Canada has. Understood?”

“Yes, sir,” Ilya responded.

“Good, then. So, Ilya Rozanov, where are you from?”

Ilya might’ve preferred a shovel talk.

Yuna returned to the car twenty minutes later. “I sorted out what we need to do to get her home and Ilya, there’s some baby items on the way to your apartment. And they’re going to expedite her birth certificate so we can go home.”

“Wow,” Ilya commented. “Fast.” How had she managed to set up all of that in the time it took for David to ask Ilya his entire life story?

“It didn’t take much,” Yuna said. “I had to use Shane’s card though. Why don’t we go back up? The baby should be done eating.” David looked a little confused about that and Yuna

said: "I'll explain later."

The three of them returned to the private elevator and went back up. David got a wristband, the same Unlisted Purple one they all had, and then Yuna knocked.

"Come in," Shane whispered. "She fell asleep."

"My teammate said is no good to whisper when they're a baby," Ilya said. "Because then it makes them wake up all the time later."

"He's right," Yuna said.

Ilya smiled.

David added: "Don't yell but don't whisper either."

The baby fussed a tiny bit but then settled back on to Shane's chest, content.

"She's beautiful," David said, mouth slightly open.

"I had a baby," Shane said to his dad. "With Ilya Rozanov."

"We've met," David informed his son.

"So, the nurses told me that you can leave the hospital whenever you want," Yuna said after a beat. "It'll take us a few days to get the paperwork to take her home."

"We can't take a newborn back to a hotel," Shane said.

"We are going to my house," Ilya told Shane.

"You don't have anything for a baby," Shane said.

"Already taken care of," Yuna said. "Don't worry. We've got you three."

* * *

They ended up going to Ilya's penthouse the following morning with strict instructions for Shane to monitor how he was feeling and have his vitals checked frequently.

Mom had also arranged for a check in for Shane and the baby from a nurse midwife every 12 hours and Dad watched Shane like a hawk while Mom explained what baby supplies she'd gotten that were currently sitting in Ilya's living room.

Mom had turned Ilya's living room into a nursery and had a king sized bed put in the center of it. It was genius, because someone could sleep on the bed and tend to the baby, and there were still other places to sleep, like the couch and a cot in the corner. In theory, all four of them could sleep in the living room with the baby.

The baby did not have a name yet mainly because Shane thought they needed to think more than 24 hours before they named a person since their name would be something the baby

would have forever.

Mom, had, under her breath, stated that she could confirm the name you gave your child indeed wasn't forever.

Mom was right but it was a lot to adjust to at once and Shane wanted some time before they made a choice that would be at least a little bit hard to undo. Plus, the baby was perfectly fine with being called sweetheart and mon chou and a dozen Russian terms of endearment from an Ilya who seemed totally smitten and who would only speak to the baby in Russian before looking up at Shane and translating what he'd just said to her.

And speaking of her, Shane was so fucking in love with the tiny human he'd given birth to that it hurt. Mom was right, she did know Shane was hers, and something about that made Shane ridiculously possessive of her. Shane belonged to his baby in a way that he hadn't belonged to anyone before.

And his baby was mesmerizing. She looked, and it still floored Shane, like a mix of Shane and Ilya. There was a person in the world who was made of Shane and Ilya Rozanov. *Shane* had created a person who was made of him and Ilya. Shane had created proof of...

"Holy shit," Shane breathed and then three sets of eyes were on him.

"Are you okay?" They asked in near unison.

"I'm fine," Shane said. "Just... she's made of *us*." He looked at Ilya.

"It's a little uncanny," Dad said, "Seeing a baby and realizing they're made of you and the person you..." Dad trailed off.

Shane swallowed and looked down at his and Ilya's daughter.

His and Ilya's fucking daughter.

Shane was in love with her and he was in love with her because he was in love with Ilya.

"We need groceries," Mom announced abruptly. "David, why don't you and I go get some."

"We could order delivery," Dad responded.

"I think the fresh air will do us some good," Mom said pointedly.

"Delivery would probably be faster," Dad said. "We don't know where anything is around here."

"I think the boys need a chance to talk," Mom sighed.

"Oh!" Dad said. "Right! Okay! Did you boys want anything?"

"Gatorade," Shane answered. He was so fucking thirsty.

“I am good,” Ilya responded, not taking his eyes off Shane and their daughter.

Mom and Dad headed out to the nearest grocery store and Shane looked up at Ilya. They’d probably have an hour, and it was basically their first time alone together since they’d had a daughter. Holy fucking shit.

“Can I hold her again?” Ilya asked.

Shane nodded and very gently placed the tiny baby in Ilya’s arms.

She fussed some, a little high pitched whine that settled the moment she realized she wasn’t being put down, just transferred to another set of loving arms.

Ilya whispered something to the baby in Russian and then turned to Shane: “She is perfect, Hollander. She is perfect.”

“She really is,” Shane agreed.

“And I love her,” Ilya said aloud. And then he whispered it to the baby in Russian. Then, he whispered something else to their daughter, something that involved I love you and father. Ilya didn’t translate it, so Shane asked.

“What did you say to her?” Shane asked.

Ilya took a deep breath and looked down at the baby. “I told her that I love her so much. And that, I love her father very much too.”

“Holy shit,” Shane breathed.

Ilya looked up at Shane; his eyes were wet.

“I love you too,” Shane responded, like it was as easy as breathing. In some ways it was. “I love you both so much.”

Ilya grinned wide and then looked down at their daughter. “See,” he cooed, touching her tiny nose. “Your dad is very brave. He did not need to borrow you to say how he feels.”

The baby looked up at Ilya and let out a little contented huff.

“I agree,” Ilya said. “He is very brave. It is one of the reasons I love him.”

Shane couldn’t help the hot blush that colored his cheeks because Ilya was being so fucking sappy it almost hurt.

“Your other dad is brave too,” Shane told his daughter. “He makes *me* want to be brave.”

Ilya smiled at Shane again. “You’re the one who had her with no medicine. And grew her while you played a full season of hockey.”

Shane winced. “I swear I didn’t know.”

“Look, she’s perfect,” Ilya held up their daughter. I “You kept her safe anyway.” He whispered something to her in Russian and then looked up and translated. “I told her she already has an amazing father and that you love her very much.”

Shane smiled. “Well, tell her she has *two* amazing fathers that love her very much.”

Ilya kissed the baby’s head and whispered to her in Russian. Then, he gently handed her back to Shane. “Here, she needs to hear that I love her and you in French.”

* * *

“Okay,” Yuna said. “Shane, it’s been 48 hours. We need to get some paperwork filed so we can go back to Canada. She needs a name.”

“I don’t know,” Shane shrugged. “It’s just, this is a big deal. This is... permanent.”

“You can just go to the court house and get it changed,” Yuna replied. “It’s less than \$100 and you get to see your kid all dressed up in fancy clothes.” She smiled like she was remembering something. “It’s okay if you have to change it later. We need something to put on paperwork now.”

“If we’re going to change it it’ll be because *she* wants to,” Shane said. “I want to pick the right one. I don’t know. Ilya, do you have any baby names?”

Ilya had one baby name, a little girl’s name. Ilya remembered being ten and finding his mom in tears in her bedroom. He thought it had been because of his father but later in the day found his mom by the tree in their small backyard with a small wooden cross.

Ilya asked Mama if someone had died, and Mama had explained that she’d had a baby in her tummy, but the baby had stopped growing.

“*Nadezhda*,” Ilya said quietly. It’s what Mama told Ilya that she might’ve named the baby, if she’d been a girl.

Shane stopped breathing for a second. “Say it again.”

“Nadezhda,” Ilya reported, a little slower.

“That’s really pretty,” Shane said. He looked down at their daughter. “It’s a big name for a little girl.”

“We would call her *Nadia* or *Nadyusha*,” Ilya responded. “Or if she is in trouble then maybe Nadezhda.”

“Nadia,” Shane said. “And Nadezhda?”

Ilya repeated the pronunciation, correcting Shane’s. Shane got in perfectly on the second try. Of course he did.

“I like it,” Shane said. “What do you think, Nadia?” He said to the baby.

Nadia sneezed. It was the most adorable thing Ilya had ever seen and to Ilya, it was a sign that she agreed.

“I think she likes it,” Shane told his mom.

“Now for her middle name,” Yuna said.

“Your turn,” Ilya encouraged Shane. He didn’t have a second baby name.

Shane looked at his mom and then quietly said: “Jun, no E.”

Yuna looked surprised. “Are you sure, Shane?”

“It’s a very pretty name,” Shane said. “I know you and dad took a lot of care picking it and it would also be pretty funny if she also decided that something else suited her better.”

Oh. *Oh*.

Yuna smiled but looked like she was going to start crying so she looked down and started working on Nadia’s passport application.

Ilya settled closer to Shane.

Nadia had fallen back asleep and Ilya wanted to soak her in. She was gorgeous.

“Hey, Ilya, where’d you get her name from?” Shane asked.

“My mother, before she died, said if she had a daughter, she would’ve named her that. She liked what it meant.”

Shane looked like he was going to cry, tears glistening on his eyelashes. “It’s beautiful,” Shane whispered.

Ilya nodded.

“What does it mean?” Shane asked.

“Hope.”

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