

Intermission Surprise

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Intermission Surprise

by Anonymous

Summary

“You okay, Hollander?”

Ilya’s voice cuts through the pain. Shane tilts his head upwards, catching Ilya’s gaze. His facial expression is his hockey default, stoic and frozen. His eyes tell a different story. Their pale blue color looks less like ice and more like the ocean, waves of concern betraying his cool demeanor.

Or, Shane didn't know he was pregnant... until he's in labor.

Notes

Alt title is "Hayden Pike, part time OB"

I haven't written anything in months so I'm sorry if this sucks. But Hudson said to knock Shane up, so who am I to refuse?

Also, all of my hockey knowledge was googled so I'm sorry if it's grossly inaccurate.

The only thing that belongs wholly and entirely to Shane Hollander is his body.

When he was a kid, it was hockey, and not just because he was good at it — though that certainly helped. But the older he got, the less hockey became something that belonged to him, and moreso *became* him. Every syllable of his name, from his teenage years to long after he's gone, will be followed by something by hockey; it's practically his surname. Shane Hollander, reigning Metro Captain. Shane Hollander, the latest Right Wing of the Centaurs. Shane Hollander, hockey All-Star.

When Rose asked him if hockey ever stopped being fun, it gave him pause. The game itself was always fun, trying new plays and winning Stanley Cups. The actual act of hockey never stopped being fun for Shane, and he hoped it never would. But the career that came with it?

Yeah, Shane's not sure that was *ever* fun.

Hockey has given him opportunities that he wouldn't dare to squander, but that didn't mean he enjoyed them all, either. He never wanted to be a model or a brand ambassador; all Shane ever wanted to do was play the game that he loves. He'd rather spend an entire day on the ice than a single hour on a photoshoot. But photoshoots gave him notoriety, which put eyes on his playing, which was ultimately the only thing he cared about.

Well, not the *only* thing.

Regardless, hockey gave Shane *everything*, even if it no longer belonged to him. It gave him his career, his legacy, and most importantly, the love of his life. The least Shane could do is give everything back to hockey, even if that means never drinking alcohol and only eating boring foods. Which, much to his chagrin, is getting harder and harder to do.

Shane's body is the only thing that belongs to him and only him, but lately, it doesn't feel that way. He's never, in his thirty years of life, had a craving. At least, not to *this* extent. When he finds himself reaching for a can of Ilya's coke and a jar of pickles, he shakes his head in utter disbelief at his own actions. It's too much sugar, too much salt, *too much*. Yet consuming it scratches an itch that no amount of salad or brown rice ever could. Ilya doesn't make a big deal out of it; in fact, most of the time, he *encourages* it, which somehow makes Shane feel both better and worse.

'Finally sick of your gross food?' He'll tease. *'Good. You deserve something good.'*

Says the man who can drink full-sugar Coke and still look like a Greek god. Fuck his gorgeous fiancée.

No amount of training can distract Shane from the dull ache in his hips. No amount of sleep fixes the constant fatigue. No amount of dieting has deflated the recent curve of his stomach. The one thing that's always been his is slowly betraying him. It's enough to make him chronically nauseous.

Something else making Shane nauseous is this game. They're halfway through the second period, 2-1 with Metro taking the lead. Normally, Shane loves playing against the Centaurs; facing off against Ilya reignites the flame of their early relationship. Only now, they reunite at Ilya's house instead of random hotel rooms. Shane feels warmth and pride when they collide, rather than guilt and shame.

A few things make this game different, Shane rationalizes. It's one of the last games he'll play as a Metro, whoever wins this game qualifies for the playoffs, and he probably has the flu. It's great timing, the random waves of nausea and occasional stomach cramps. Shane hasn't seen Ilya in a few weeks due to schedule conflicts, so they'll be making up for lost time tonight, after the game. The longer he plays, though, the more Shane wonders if he'll make it to then. Shit, he's starting to wonder if he'll even make it through *the game*.

He skipped breakfast in an effort to quell his queasiness, but it proved futile. He threw up in the locker room, all dry heaves and bile. He stumbled his way through his captain's speech, trying to ignore Hayden's concerned stare.

Shane hoped that getting out on the ice would quell his nerves and settle his stomach cramps. Unfortunately, the activity appears to be doing the opposite. The cramps are occurring more frequently, lasting longer, and hurting more. One hits him in the middle of a face-off with Ilya, coming on so strong that he actually gasps and leans forward.

"You okay, Hollander?"

Ilya's voice cuts through the pain. Shane tilts his head upwards, catching Ilya's gaze. His facial expression is his hockey default, stoic and frozen. His eyes tell a different story. Their pale blue color looks less like ice and more like the ocean, waves of concern betraying his cool demeanor.

The referee blows the whistle. Ilya wins the face-off — Shane is too busy focusing on staying upright to care about the puck.

He eventually skates towards the action, sparing a glance up at the timer. Two minutes until the period ends, giving him twenty minutes to get his shit together. Shane Hollander can do *anything* for two minutes.

The buzzer eventually blares, signaling the end of the period. Shane's never gotten off the ice so quickly. His skates are off in a matter of minutes, and he practically sprints to the locker room, ignoring his teammates' calls after him.

Shane peels off his gear until he's only wearing his undershirt and pants. He's dripping in sweat, which is far from unusual, but it's starting to feel cold on his burning skin. He heads to the shower.

He turns the faucet on the coldest setting, not even bothering to take off the rest of his clothes before stepping under the stream. The sudden temperature shift makes his teeth chatter. He leans a forearm on the wall behind the showerhead, resting his forehead on his arm as the water pelts his back.

“Hollander, what are you —” Hayden starts, then cuts himself off. “Holy shit, are you okay?”

Shane opens his mouth to respond, but another stomach pain hits him like a freight train. In the isolation of the guest team locker room, he lets out a low groan.

“Shane, what’s wrong?” Hayden asks.

All he can focus on is the pain. It’s white hot and blinding, like his internal organs are twisting themselves into angry knots.

“You have to talk to me, man,” Hayden says, then continues, “hey man, I don’t think you’re supposed to be —”

“Shane,” Ilya’s unmistakable voice says softly. “What’s going on?”

Only when Ilya sets his hand on Shane’s shoulder does he realize his eyes are closed. He quickly forces them open, turning his head towards his fiancée.

“I don’t know,” he whimpers out. “I started having these cramps last night, and I thought they’d get better as the day went on, but they’re only getting worse.”

Ilya’s hand quickly moves to Shane’s head, brushing back his hair. “I’ll go get the medic.”

At this, Shane’s eyes widen, and he clutches Ilya’s bicep. “No! Don’t leave, please.”

Ilya turns to Hayden, who looks over his friend wearily. “Okay. I stay, Hayden gets the medic.”

Shane nods, suddenly feeling claustrophobic. He reaches for the collar of his shirt, tugging uselessly. Ilya takes the queue, grabbing the hem of the shirt and peeling it off.

“Hayden,” Ilya barks, “go get the medic.”

Hayden doesn’t move. His eyes fall to Shane’s stomach, or more specifically, the undeniable bulge of it. While Shane’s had it for months, it’s become more prominent over the last few weeks. He can practically see the gears turning in Hayden’s head.

“Shane...” he says carefully, “...is there *any* possibility you’re a carrier?”

Ilya snorts. “There’s no such thing.”

“Up to a quarter of North American men are carriers,” Hayden counters. “Eastern countries tell young men it’s a myth because, well...”

Between his exhaustion and uncomfortable state, Shane loses all patience. “Hayden, what the fuck are you trying to say?”

“You’ve had intermittent stomach pains that get progressively closer over the course of hours?”

Shane nods, too tired to form words.

“That’s exactly what happened when Jackie was in labor,” Hayden explains, eerily calm.

Shane snorts. “There’s no fucking way I’m -”

As if on cue, another contraction swells. It’s the worst one by far, sharp and entirely demanding. Shane doubles over with a sound somewhere between a gasp and a scream. Ilya stabilizes him, one hand on his waist and the other reaching across his chest to rest on his shoulder.

For the second time in his life, Shane hears panic in Ilya’s voice. “What the fuck do we do?!”

Shane barely registers him, consumed by the overwhelming instinct to push. The action dulls the pain's intensity, dispersing it through his pelvis and thighs.

“Shane, are you pushing?” Hayden asks, setting a hand on his friend’s shoulder.

Once again, all he can do is nod. Ilya mutters something Shane vaguely recalls as a Russian profanity.

“You have to breathe, buddy,” Hayden says gently.

The contraction halts, and Shane sucks in a deep breath, panting until he is no longer lightheaded.

“Rozanov, you wanna...?” Hayden makes a gesture to his own pants as he crouches down.

“*You’re* going to deliver a baby?” Ilya challenges.

Baby. Holy shit, he’s having a *baby*.

Shane whimpers at the realization. “Ilya...”

“I’m here, my love,” Ilya promises, tightening his grip on Shane.

“I’m no doctor, but I have like, a million kids,” Hayden jokes. “We’ll get through this, Shane.”

“Okay,” Shane replies shakily, unsure of what else to say. He then groans. “Fuck, it’s happening again.”

“Rozanov, stand behind him,” Hayden directs. “Shane, I’m gonna...” he cuts himself off, reaching for the waistband of his pants.

Shane nods his consent as Ilya stands behind him, pulling Shane’s back against his chest. Ilya holds each of his hands and crosses their arms across Shane’s chest.

“Push when you’re ready,” Hayden says.

Shane waits until the pain is almost unbearable before leaning into it and pushing as hard as he can. “Fuck, fuck, *FUCK!*”

He hears Ilya mumbling in his ear, a mix of English and Russian encouragement. He tries to focus on his fiancée’s words until the pain starts to subside.

“Holy shit that hurts,” Shane remarks breathlessly, leaning his full weight against Ilya. Despite this, his legs start to shake.

“Shane, do you need to lie down?” Hayden offers.

He shakes his head a little too violently. “No, I... I don’t know... this...”

“Sweetheart,” Ilya says calmly, “breathe.”

Shane lets out a sob. “How is this happening? How is this real? How am I having your kid in a fucking locker room?”

“I don’t know,” Ilya admits, “but you’re doing great, okay? I’m so proud of you.”

Shane’s reply is cut short by another contraction. He screams his way through it, and when the dull ache is replaced by a sharp burning, he screams even louder.

“I can see the head,” Hayden remarks. “You’re almost there, Shane.”

They go through the motions a few times over: Shane pushing, Ilya encouraging him, and Hayden updating them both.

“Head’s out!” Hayden exclaims. “One big push and they’ll be out, buddy.”

On the next contraction, Shane uses every ounce of strength left in his body to bear down. He feels so much pressure that he wonders if it’s possible for a human to explode from the inside out. And then, *finally*, he feels nothing.

Shane collapses back against Ilya, the sound of his panting filling the shower room. That is, until the sound of a baby crying fills the air.

“Shane,” Ilya says thickly. “Look down.”

Hayden, still crouched between his legs, is holding a screaming infant. He holds them up with a grin. “It’s a girl.”

The sound of the baby crying is drowned out by the sound of his own heartbeat. His vision is locked on the baby, his *daughter*, but he can see Hayden’s expression flatten in his periphery.

“Shane?” Hayden asks carefully.

It feels like, with each breath, Shane’s lungs grow smaller. He opens his mouth to try to get more air, but it just makes his throat feel like it’s closing.

Ilya pulls Shane's head back against his shoulder, examining his face. "Shane? What's wrong?"

Shane's gaze fixates on the tiled ceiling. His vision starts to blacken around the edges. His heart grows louder, and his breathing quickens.

"I think he's gonna -"

Everything cuts to black.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

Shane frowns, squeezing his eyes together. He's in bed, but the beeping doesn't sound like his alarm. In fact, he can't remember going to sleep. He doesn't remember the game ending. Who won?

Beep beep beep beep beep

The game didn't end. Well, it did end, but Shane didn't see it. He spent the second intermission in the locker room. Hayden and Ilya were there. Why was Ilya there?

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

Shane's eyes spring open as reality catches up to him. He darts his head around, quickly taking in his surroundings. It's dark, but he makes out vague shapes and quickly realizes he's in a hospital.

"Shane," Ilya says, setting a gentle hand on his cheek. "You're okay. You're safe."

The beeping quiets as Shane relaxes into Ilya's touch.

"Holy shit," Shane breathes, reaching up to grab Ilya's forearm. His eyes fall shut again, comforted by his fiancée's presence. "What happened after I..."

"They called an ambulance and brought you here," Ilya explains.

"Why did I...? Did I lose a lot of blood or something?"

"They think you were in shock," Ilya says. "But you're okay now. And so is she."

His eyes open again, looking around the room. "Where is she? Are you sure she's okay?"

"The nursery. I'll get her now, okay?"

Shane nods as he swallows. Ilya kisses his forehead before poking his head out of the room. A few moments later, he's wheeling in a bassinet.

Shane sits up with a wince, leaning over to look.

She's small, much smaller than any of Hayden's kids were when they were born. His gaze shifts to the card tucked into the top of the bassinet. Under "Baby Girl Hollander" is her weight: 5 pounds and 9 ounces.

"She's *tiny*," Shane gasps, reaching out carefully. "Are they sure she's not underweight?"

"She's okay," Ilya reassures. "Small but mighty, just like her dad."

"Fuck you," Shane retorts with a smile. "I'm not *small*."

"You make small babies, though."

Shane sets a hand on the baby's chest, over her swaddle. "I made a baby. Holy shit."

"You made a *beautiful* baby," Ilya corrects, running a knuckle along the baby's cheek. Shane's probably imagining it, but it already looks like she has Ilya's lips, a prominent cupid's bow pouted in thought.

"Want to hold her?"

"I'm afraid I'll break her."

"You won't," Ilya assures, his hands carefully slipping under her. "Small but mighty, remember?"

Ilya carries her with such ease that it brings tears to Shane's eyes. How is he already so good at this?

"What's wrong?" Ilya frowns. "Pain? I can go get the nurse if -"

"You're gonna be such a good dad," Shane chokes out.

Ilya's face relaxes into a gentle smile. "We both will."

Carefully, Ilya transfers their daughter to Shane's waiting arms, then curls up on the bed next to them.

"This still doesn't seem real," Shane whispers as he stares down at the infant in his arms. She frowns and tilts her head slightly, shifting the striped cap she's wearing. Shane catches a glimpse of dark, curly hair by her ears.

The door creaks open, catching both of the boys' attention.

"Hey," Hayden says softly, poking his head in. "I won't stay long; just wanted to make sure everyone's okay."

"Come on in," Shane says.

Hayden steps into the room, setting down a big pink gift bag on the table before approaching the bed. “Jackie sends her love... and a whole bunch of newborn outfits.”

“You guys didn’t have to do that.”

“You’re doing us a favor,” Hayden brushes Shane off. “We had a lot of stuff the twins were too big for.”

“Well, thank you,” Shane says earnestly, “and thanks for... being there. I don’t know if we could’ve done it without you.”

“Hey, anytime,” Hayden says, like it was a simple favor. “So... the word about you two is definitely out.”

Shane can’t help but chuckle.

“One hell of an announcement,” Ilya remarks, wrapping his arms around Shane’s shoulders. “She’s a star, just like her dads.”

“Well, I’ll let you guys enjoy her,” Hayden says, setting a hand on the doorknob.

“Hayden,” Ilya says as he stands.

“What’s up, Rozanov?”

Ilya approaches him, standing in front of the other man for a moment. Then, he pulls Hayden into a tight hug.

“Oh,” Hayden says in surprise, before returning the gesture. He claps his hand across Ilya’s back a few times before they part.

“Call me if you guys need anything, okay?”

“We will,” Shane promises. “Thanks again, Hayden.”

He smiles and nods before leaving.

Ilya rejoins Shane on the bed, their legs touching as he leans his head on Shane’s shoulder.

Shane’s body no longer belongs to him. In a literal sense, it hasn’t belonged to just him for the last eight to nine months. In a theoretical sense, it hasn’t belonged to just him since he met Ilya almost a decade ago. Regardless, he can’t bring himself to care.

His body, heart, and soul belong to the people resting against him. At one point in his life, that reality would have terrified Shane. But now? As his soon-to-be husband dozes off on his shoulder, and their daughter sleeps in his arms?

He’s more than okay with sharing.

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