

little fish.

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by [pocketsun](#)

Summary

The sound of Ilya's whispered curse and the sight of a broken condom isn't exactly the end to a perfect night Shane has been daydreaming about for months, but it could be worse. Right?

The four positive pregnancy tests Shane later stares at tell a different story.

Notes

Look away if you must.

I needed to write this and I couldn't live if I didn't. I have recently been on an mpreg journey and I understand myself a lot more now. I think, after two decades of existing in fandoms, it is my fic writing right to do this. And I'm having an amazing time doing it, too.

Chapter 1

The sound of Ilya's whispered curse and the sight of a broken condom isn't exactly the end to a perfect night Shane has been daydreaming about for months, but it could be worse. Right?

"I am sorry," Ilya sheepishly apologizes. "I should not have gone so hard."

"No, come on," Shane tries to laugh it off. Inside, he's losing his mind. His anxiety is soaring, and he's trying not to think about how hot the idea of fucking without protection suddenly is to him. "It's not a big deal."

"No?" Ilya asks, sounding unconvinced and looking it, too. "*Hollander*, the condom broke. That is a big deal."

"*Rozanov*, it was like, not even a minute of you coming in me," Shane insists, trying to convince himself as he tries to convince Ilya too. "It's fine. Come on, we barely see each other. Let's just, let's have this."

Ilya remains sitting there, brows furrowing, and Shane leans in, kissing his frowning lips.

"I love you," Shane whispers and smiles when Ilya kisses him back.

And then, he bursts into laughter as he's pushed down onto the bed, and Ilya makes a show of brandishing a new condom packet from the box on Shane's bedside and tearing it open with his teeth.

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So maybe it's a big deal.

Maybe it's a really big deal.

It's a really, really, great *big* deal because Shane stares at four separate positive pregnancy tests, and his ears are ringing, and his heart is racing, and he can't breathe.

No way. There's no possible way this is true. It's got to be a fluke. This is a bad batch of tests. Maybe they're expired? Maybe they're on recall? Because there's no way that he's pregnant. There's no way, and Shane grabs the tests and throws them into the trash.

It's fine.

"I'm fine," Shane says out loud. He stares at his reflection and forces himself to smile. It's painful looking. "Everything is fine."

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So, it's not fine, not at all, not even close, and a week later, Shane's sitting in a doctor's office an hour away from home, listening as every single one of his fears is confirmed.

Why can't he remain ignorantly blissed out by his delusions instead?

"The blood test confirms your pregnancy," the doctor is saying. "Your levels are quite high, so there is no doubt here."

Shane nods his head even though he's not listening very well.

Alarm bells are going off.

Sirens are screaming.

He's got bombs exploding in his head.

He's dizzy.

"I have a few pamphlets for you, and we can schedule your next appointment for an ultrasound," the doctor continues. She's been so helpful, and Shane really appreciates everything, but he can't remember how to be human and properly function right now.

A baby is growing inside him.

Ilya's baby.

The baby they made together was because a condom broke. The baby that exists because of barely a minute's mistake.

This is ... not something Shane can even begin to deal with. He's got so much going on, and there's absolutely no way he can handle a pregnancy.

He makes an ultrasound appointment anyway and drives on autopilot. It's a miracle he makes it home without getting into an accident. Once he's inside, Shane locks the door and leans against it, smacking his head.

Fuck.

With a shake of his head, Shane inhales deeply and exhales as he pushes away from the door and drops the pregnancy, abortion, and adoption pamphlets onto the nearest table.

He can't make these sorts of decisions. Not now, not when it's fresh and frightening, and he's confused and sick.

Or, that's just the morning sickness kicking in because contrary to what it's called, Shane's got that sickness all day long.

He sprints to the bathroom, expels nothing but bile, and hugs the toilet as his body trembles in aftershocks of throwing up. Everything hurts, and he whimpers, blinking quickly as the tears roll down his cheeks.

When he feels his strength return, Shane stands on trembling knees, washes his face, brushes his teeth, and undresses.

He pointedly ignores his reflection even though he's fully aware that nothing on his body has changed.

Not yet.

The water is scalding and comforting, and he stands directly beneath the spray, willing everything to temporarily disappear. It's easy when he's lost in the hot humidity of his shower. He can forget every single problem and all the fears that have been brewing inside of him since the positive pregnancy tests. Shane can be, and he holds onto the feeling until the water is freezing, leaving him shivering.

Hours later, Shane lies in bed and quietly scrolls through articles about ending a pregnancy. It's early enough that he could opt for pills and not need any medical procedure. He could swallow those pills and make this disappear. What's a few days of discomfort versus completely turning his life upside down?

But a small, nagging voice inside him doesn't agree. That same voice tells him that this is a miracle. Isn't it? The fact that they made a baby from one small mistake? The fact that a broken condom and like, a minute of unprotected sex could create life?

It's sort of special when Shane really starts to think about it.

And how gorgeous would their baby be? Ilya's so beautiful, and his eyes are as blue as the ocean, and his smile is as bright as the sun itself. Shane thinks about a baby with Ilya's curls and smile, and his insides twist.

That could also be the morning sickness hitting again.

Only Shane knows it's not. He knows it from the way his heart beats like a hammer, and his stomach does this swooping sensation that normally occurs when Ilya is around. Being adorable and silly and flirtatious, and *fuck*, Shane can't get rid of the baby.

Truthfully, the fact that he's been calling it a baby the entire time has been the most telling part of the choices he's going to make.

Ilya's baby. Their baby.

He's so fucked.

That's how you got into this mess in the first place, the nagging voice says.

Shane closes his eyes, willing the rest of the day to pass uneventfully.

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"Ruby and Jade's birthday party is next Thursday," Hayden rambles at Shane's side. "Jackie has a theme. It's Cinderella, and they both want to be her, but we are dressing Arthur up as Gus, and he looks so stinking cute, Shane. I can't believe how cute my kids are."

Shane looks back at Hayden distractedly and nods. "They're cute," he agrees. "They definitely got it all from Jackie."

"Hey!" Hayden complains and playfully punches Shane's arm. "You sound like Ro—"

"So I was thinking about gifts for the girls," Shane loudly and pointedly interrupts. They're in public. Hayden can't just mention his public rival like that. Anyone could hear. "You think they'd want one of those jeeps? I think they sell princess ones."

"No way, Shane. They'd probably run Arthur over," Hayden says. "Dolls are fine. Honestly, they're into makeup, jewelry, and stuff, too. They'll be happy."

"Okay," Shane slowly replies. They're standing in front of a massive wall of stuffed animals.

"Do the girls have stuffed animals?" Shane curiously asks.

Hayden grins. "Since they were babies," he confirms. "They sleep with them. I have a feeling they will make it into their teenage years. I know I did."

"Since they were babies?" Shane asks, frowning deeply enough that his forehead wrinkles.

Should he choose one for his baby? Would that be something he should do as a father?

No, whoa! Shane hasn't even told Ilya about the baby! He can't start choosing important things like a stuffed animal. Ilya has to be part of it.

Thinking about their baby, small and precious, clutching onto their beloved stuffed animal makes Shane smile. He hums softly and nearly touches his abdomen.

“Dolls are in the next aisle,” Hayden says, bringing Shane back to reality.

Shane laughs and drops his hand at his side. “Let’s go get those dolls for the birthday girls!”

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“You are warm,” Ilya mumbles, kissing and nuzzling Shane’s cheeks. “Do you feel unwell, sweetheart?”

Shane shakes his head and wraps his arms around Ilya’s neck, forcing him closer. His legs spread to accommodate Ilya’s wonderful, perfect body, and Shane circles his legs around Ilya’s hips.

He’s clinging, and he doesn’t care.

“Just happy you’re here,” Shane whispers. “It’s been so many weeks, Ilya.”

“It has been thirty-three days,” Ilya groans. “So many days without my Shane to hold, to kiss, to fuck.”

“And you were beginning to sound so romantic,” Shane laughs and slaps Ilya’s shoulder. “At least I know you really did miss me.”

Ilya’s hard against Shane’s stomach. It’s thrilling.

This feels like them, like how they always are, only Shane is keeping a secret, one nestled safely deep inside of him. It’s a secret he wants to share, but he’s nervous and isn’t sure how exactly to divulge it.

Does he just blurt it out? Does he just tell Ilya what he's been keeping to himself? Or does he wait for the perfect moment? Does the perfect moment even exist?

"You are thinking loudly, and that means I am not doing a good job," Ilya says. He kisses Shane's cheek and squeezes Shane's ass.

Shane moans and grinds his hips into Ilya's.

"I, ah, I really need to tell you something," Shane whispers through the warm haze that starts spreading through his veins, right to his own hardening dick. He wants Ilya so bad, but not yet. He's got to do this now or he never will.

Ilya rubs their noses sweetly together. "What is it, *moya lyubov*?"

Shane whimpers. His hands scramble for purchase on Ilya's chest, and he gently pushes until Ilya lifts a little. He can barely think when Ilya's so close and so sweet to him.

"Do you remember when ... we were together after our last game before the playoffs?" Shane cautiously asks, twirling Ilya's curls around his finger. He avoids eye contact because he won't get through this if he looks directly into Ilya's eyes.

"Yes," Ilya easily answers and turns to kiss Shane's fingertips.

Shane shivers and gasps. Push through! He's got to do this. It's now or never! "And we had that little mishap," Shane continues, laughing awkwardly about it. "And I told you that it wasn't a big deal?"

Ilya's hand is on his cheek, and he forces Shane to look up at him.

There's this strange little smile on Ilya's lips. God, Shane loves that mouth. He wants to press a kiss to Ilya's perfectly defined cupid's bow.

"Are you trying to ask if I want to fuck without a condom?" Ilya bluntly asks.

Shane's eyes widen. Alright, that's definitely not where he's going with this. It's not even close! "Jesus, Ilya, that is not what I'm trying to say."

"Then, what is it?" Ilya asks with a frown. "Tell me? Please?"

Fuck. Okay. *Okay*.

Shane takes a deep breath.

"I'm pregnant," he says at the quick and loud exhale of breath he takes.

And then, all he can hear is the sound of both of them breathing. Ilya is silent, gazing at Shane like he's grown an extra head, and Shane feels the nausea hit. This is bad. This is so bad.

Ilya's probably going to break up with him. He's probably about to get up and walk out and never come back. Ilya's going to totally leave him.

"Shane, really?" Ilya softly asks.

When Shane is brave enough to look at him again, Ilya is gazing reverently down at him.

His stomach flips. For once, it isn't morning sickness.

Shane nods. "Yeah, I went to the doctor and got a blood test to make sure. I'm close to two months, and it all adds up and, um, are you mad?"

Shane doesn't give Ilya enough time to answer because he resumes his rambling. He's so nervous! He can't help it.

"I totally get it, if you're mad," Shane says quickly and breathlessly. "This wasn't planned. We've got so much time left for hockey. Our plan didn't have anything about this in it. This is such a surprise. I honestly can't believe it even happened. It's wild, isn't it? It was like a minute, and then, that minute made an actual baby?"

"Shane," Ilya murmurs.

"I took four tests. Four! I didn't believe them. How could it even be true? Jesus, Ilya, and then I went to the doctor, and I was thinking, fuck, I can't do this. I absolutely can't have a kid. Now? This is the worst time. And I have these pamphlets, and there's plenty of information on options, and well, I didn't want any of that because I made up my mind the second I realized I kept thinking about it as a baby and not a mistake."

"Shane," Ilya tries again.

Shane isn't done! He's been holding this in for too long. "And I completely understand if you aren't ready. I'm not asking you for anything. I just, I know I can't get rid of them. I can't, Ilya. I really think this is meant to be, even if it's happening at the worst possible moment. I think I'm supposed to have this baby. That this is ... this is *my* baby. My time."

"Shane, please!" Ilya exclaims.

And Shane finally stops because Ilya rarely sounds like that. He snaps out of it and finally takes a second to really take Ilya in.

His eyes are bright, shining with tears. His cheeks are flushed, and he looks ... *happy*.

Seeing Ilya happy makes Shane feel it, too.

Ilya wordlessly erases the space between them with a kiss.

Shane clings, realizing how badly he needs this as it happens. He moans into it, and Ilya breaks away, gasping.

"I want the baby, too," Ilya feverishly whispers. He splays his hand between them, his fingers stretching across the expanse of Shane's still flat abdomen. "I want them, Shane. I want them so much. I want you, and I want the baby."

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"There they are," the ultrasound tech happily says, pointing to the monitor. "There's baby!"

"Holy shit," Shane rasps. "That's an actual baby."

"Did you think the baby would not be there?" the tech chuckles. "They look to be perfectly growing, too!"

"Really?" Shane asks, feeling relieved. "I've been worried since I was playing and didn't know they even existed, and I got shoved around a lot."

Ilya drops a kiss on the crown of Shane's head. He's uncharacteristically quiet.

Too many emotions. Shane understands.

"Your doctor will be able to tell you more, but from what I can see, your baby seems to be healthy and happy."

Shane looks up, beaming at Ilya. He pulls Ilya's hand to his lips, kissing his knuckles.

Ilya shakes his head as his eyes close, and Shane watches the tears roll down his cheeks. Happy tears, but tears nonetheless.

"I'll print out some copies, and we can email the sonograms to the address you provided as well."

"Shane," Ilya whispers. "*Moy lyubimyy...*"

Shane kisses the top of Ilya's hand, then turns it over and kisses Ilya's wrist. He keeps his lips pressed against Ilya's warm skin, feeling his pulse beneath his mouth. It calms Shane, centers him, and makes him feel completely at peace.

"They are so small," Ilya whimpers.

Shane laughs. "The size of a grape," he informs his very overwhelmed boyfriend.

Ilya laughs and cries more.

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Telling his parents is ... honestly one of the best moments of Shane's life. The top moment is Ilya telling him he loves him at the cottage, followed by everything else at the cottage, and then finding out he's pregnant.

And now, it's this.

The look on David and Yuna's faces is pure shock. It's the way that shock morphs into pure joy. It's the way his mom bursts into tears and rushes to him, wrapping her arms around him as she cries against his chest.

It's the way his father walks right up to Ilya and pulls him into a hug.

Shane is floating. This is definitely what cloud nine feels like. He's got his man and a baby on the way that his parents are ecstatic about, and everything's coming up daisies. He's healthy and happy, and Ilya looks gorgeous as he beams at Shane.

Shane wants to kiss him. Desperately.

He settles for holding Ilya's hand as they sit together, and Yuna excitedly talks about baby clothes and nursery themes. It's music to Shane's ears.

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After the euphoria comes the crashdown.

Shane's back to reality, sitting with his mother, agent, and lawyer as they draft an official statement for his temporary medical leave.

They can't outright say he's pregnant, considering no one knows he's currently in a serious relationship with the most hated man in the league. They *can* say that Shane has gotten into an accident that has caused a broken hip that will require endless rest and rehabilitation to recuperate and get back to his peak shape.

Shane signs off on the statement and a few more pieces of paperwork, and then leans back in his seat.

This is a lot.

“You are doing so well, honey,” Yuna says, smiling warmly at him. “This is a lot. I know it is, but it's necessary to keep you and the baby safe.”

The baby. Shane still can't seem to wrap his head around the fact that there's actual life growing inside him, that he's helping an actual person be made. He's using his body, his breath, and his blood to make cells into a baby. There's a part of Ilya and Shane existing there, nestled deeply inside him, slowly growing until the day they'll be born and out in the world for all to see.

And the world will know what their love is like— bright, strong, and so perfectly beautiful.

It's terrifying.

It's so meant to be.

“We can share the final draft with Ilya before it's released,” Farah says.

Yuna nods, and Shane squeezes his mother's hand.

She gives him an adoring smile. “Everything is going to be alright, Shane,” she reassures him. “No matter what happens, it's going to be worth it in the end.”

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“So, do you have something to tell us?” Hayden asks.

Jackie sits beside her husband, watching and waiting.

Shane shifts uncomfortably in his seat and then glances at Ilya, who remains stone-faced and powerful. He's not about to give away their secret. That's for Shane to reveal. That's what they've discussed prior to this dinner at Shane's home in Montreal.

"You don't look like you've been in an accident," Hayden says. "And you definitely aren't about to go to rehab to get fit and healthy for the new upcoming season, so, what's going on, Shane?"

"Hayden, maybe it's something we shouldn't," Jackie hesitantly begins.

Hayden squeezes his wife's hand. "We are all friends here."

Ilya doesn't even scoff or make a joke about it. Shane is so proud of him.

"Okay, so, it is medical," Shane carefully starts to explain. "And I'm, uh, probably going to be out for a little more than a year."

"Fuck, is it cancer?" Hayden asks, sounding horrified.

"Hayden!" Jackie gasps in her own horror. "Don't even say that!"

"No, it's not cancer," Shane quickly replies, wanting to get that entire idea out of this space. He doesn't need any negative energy! "No, it's, um, I'm—"

"Oh my god, Shane," Jackie suddenly interrupts, excitedly. "Oh my god?"

"What?" Hayden asks.

Jackie begins giggling.

Shane grins.

“What is it?” Hayden whines. “Someone just tell me!”

“Shane and I are having a baby,” Ilya answers Hayden's demanding whine. “He is nearing the end of first trimester, and we are very happy.”

The way Hayden's eyes bug out is so hilarious; Shane doesn't hold his laughter back. He laughs loudly, the sort of laugh that rumbles deep in his chest and makes his stomach clench. He laughs, and Ilya joins him, and then Jackie does as well, and they're all laughing while Hayden sits there, silent, looking like he's about to pass out or pass away or both.

“Breathe, Pike,” Ilya orders, a shit-eating grin appearing on his face. “You must live to take care of all your babies. There are, what, ten now?”

“Four!” Hayden croaks out.

Jackie pats her husband's shoulder, probably trying to console him.

“Such great kids,” Ilya continues, smirking. “I still believe Jackie had them all herself. Immaculate conception! No way Pike's genetics could make those adorable children.”

“Hey, fuck off,” Hayden grumbles. “Shane, this guy, really? He's who you chose to have a kid with?”

“Yes,” Shane says, unwilling to hide the dreamy, lovestruck look he's got as he stares at Ilya. He's so handsome. Shane really hopes their baby looks like Ilya. He loves thinking about that,

of a tiny Ilya to raise and love. His heart feels two sizes too big for his chest.

“Wow,” Hayden laughs. “Jackie, can you believe it? They're having a baby. Them!”

Jackie watches the two across from them and begins smiling. “Yeah, Hayden, I can believe it.”

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“So the baby’s the size of a pear now,” Shane says while he lies in bed with Ilya. “And I went out and bought one yesterday to compare. They're still so small, and I can't believe it, but I swear I can feel these little movements in me!”

“What does it feel like?” Ilya asks, smoothing his hand over Shane's middle. He still isn't showing. Not really. His abdominal muscles are far less defined. There may be a slight slope to him. Maybe it will take longer since he's such a fit person. Maybe.

“Um, like, honestly, it's what I imagine a fish tail swishing around feels like,” Shane answers, smiling sheepishly. “It's this weird sensation. I don't think I'll get used to it any time soon, or maybe ever. It's like ... it's weird.”

“Unpleasant?” Ilya asks.

Shane shakes his head and covers Ilya's hand with his. He loves this. He loves knowing they are both holding their unborn child. Or, that's how Shane always interprets this.

“Just a new sensation,” Shane says. “New and strange and exciting because it means our baby is growing and they're healthy.”

“They are the size of a pear,” Ilya chuckles. “You went to the market and bought a pear because you are you.”

"Obviously, I'm me," Shane laughs. "Who else would I be?"

Ilya leans over and drops a sweet, gentle kiss to Shane's cheek. "No one but you, my Shane," Ilya whispers. "Only my Shane, always."

"Hey," Shane says, as he looks at his boyfriend.

Ilya's eyes are bright and full of the unsaid. Shane doesn't want him to hide, to keep it inside.

"I know it's a lot," Shane softly says. "This entire pregnancy. It came out of nowhere, and I want you to tell me if you're overwhelmed or scared."

"Never scared," Ilya passionately declares. His hand presses more firmly down onto Shane's abdomen. Shane sighs and feels so wonderfully warm. It's so blissful to be like this. He's so safe.

"But it's pretty scary," Shane tries to reason. "I feel scared sometimes."

"Scared of little fish?" Ilya teases, using Shane's words to joke now.

It works. Shane smiles, and the corners of Ilya's eyes crinkle up with how much he's smiling too.

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Little fish.

They end up fond of the little nickname for their baby, or Ilya does, and then Shane thinks he likes it, too.

And so their baby is *little fish*, and Shane even begins to humor the idea of a nursery theme.

"We could do an ocean theme," Rose excitedly says over FaceTime.

She knows. Yeah, she knows, because Svetlana knows, and it's fair, and they're both going to be godmothers to the baby, and Svetlana has already been organizing a baby shower.

"Cute little fish bowls for party favors," Rose continues. "Lots of Swedish fish to fill them! We can get cupcakes, and maybe we can have blue streamers to signify the ocean and—"

"Tacky," Svetlana disagrees. "No, Rose, no streamer. We will have a professional designer come and make the shower luxurious for the baby."

"The baby doesn't need luxury," Rose argues, frowning at the screen in her corner. "The baby doesn't even know what that means!"

"The baby is rich," Svetlana insists. "Rich and privileged and will not have cheap streamers for decorations, Rose Landry!"

"We could do a hockey theme," Shane suggests to break the tension.

Both women glare at him from their designated boxes on his phone screen.

"Okay, so, the ocean theme sounds great," Shane quickly changes his tune. "I'll leave it up to both of you, since Ilya and I trust you to make it amazing."

"Do you want to know the sex?" the tech asks as she closes the ultrasound wand over Shane's belly.

Because he's got a belly now. Because he's finally showing.

He's nineteen weeks along, and he's showing, and Ilya is here, clutching his hand excitedly.

The answer is clear.

"Yes, we would like to know," Shane answers.

The tech nods and rolls the wand down, then presses firmly.

Shane sucks in a sharp breath.

"Oh, hello," the tech chuckles. "There she is! There's your little one!"

"*She?*" Ilya whimpers.

Shane thinks he's going to throw up, or pass out, or maybe both.

A girl? A daughter? Are they having a daughter?

He's dizzy. Thankfully, he's lying down because he thinks he may faint if he stands. This is crazy. This is incredible. This is definitely one of the best days of his life!

"Ilya, we're having a little girl," Shane says and promptly bursts into tears.

They're happy tears, but tears nonetheless, and Ilya shushes him and wipes the tears from his cheeks and nuzzles their noses together. They are the only people in the room.

The two of them, and then the sound of their unborn daughter's heartbeat.

It's perfect in every way.

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"She is kicking again," Shane groans, flipping onto his opposite side.

"What do you expect her to do, *moya lyubov*? She is a tiny baby. She must kick! It is her job."

"She seems to be living rent-free inside me right now," Shane huffs. "This isn't her job. She is jobless."

"Oh, but she is so sweet," Ilya laughs into Shane's ear. He reaches around and strokes Shane's belly. "Our little jobless fish!"

The kicking grows more intense.

Shane pushes back against Ilya and grumbles. "I swear the two of you have some sort of conspiracy against me," he says irritably. "You can communicate telepathically or something."

"Shane Hollander, you are crazy," Ilya laughs. "You are lucky you are so pretty."

"She's doing it again," Shane whines. "Stop talking so loudly! She can hear you. Fuck, she always reacts this much when she can hear you talking."

Ilya nuzzles along the side of Shane's neck. "She loves her Papa," he states gleefully against Shane's skin. "I cannot help it if she chose me as her person."

"I'm the one carrying her," Shane hisses. He reaches down and bats Ilya's hand away from his belly. "She should be kinder to her human incubator!"

"Maybe if you called yourself her Daddy and not that?" Ilya suggests.

Shane licks his foot back against Ilya's shin.

"Ouch!" Ilya exclaims! "Shane, so sassy tonight."

"Shut up," Shane mutters.

Despite the violence, Ilya kisses Shane's shoulder and pointedly does not touch his belly again. Instead, he rests the same hand on the small of Shane's back and begins to massage it.

That feels incredible.

Shane's changing body has been causing some growing pains, especially in his hips and lower back.

He sighs and melts in Ilya's arms, leaning back against that sturdy chest.

“What the fuck is that?”

Shane looks up from bed, giving Ilya a frown. His boyfriend sounds so upset, and Shane isn't exactly sure why. He's only lying in bed, so comfortable because—

“Shane, what the hell is that? What are you lying in?”

“Oh,” Shane laughs, patting the pillow that surrounds him. “It's a pregnancy pillow, Ilya! Mom got it for me after I told her about how uncomfortable I'd been and how sleeping was becoming really difficult.”

“Pregnancy pillow,” Ilya repeats, testing the words. “This ... raft? Is pillow?”

“It's not a raft,” Shane laughs again. He slowly sits up and grins broadly at Ilya. “It's a miracle, Ilya! I'm comfortable. I actually napped.”

“Is raft,” Ilya insists, unconvinced and unmoved by Shane's insistence that this pillow is a good addition to their bed.

“It's not,” Shane says, “and it's staying. If you don't like it, you can sleep on the floor.”

“May as well with that thing in our bed,” Ilya mutters distastefully, walking around to sit down on his side of the bed. Or, what is left of it. Shane can admit his pregnancy pillow is sort of big and maybe takes up a little too much room, but it is also necessary for Shane's need for sleep, which he's been lacking in.

So, Ilya's gonna have to get over himself and accept the pillow.

“Shane, I cannot hold you,” Ilya complains once he's lying down on his side. He frowns and reaches out, looking pitiful.

Shane lies down, too, and enjoys how good it feels to have the stability of the pillow against his chest and between his legs.

“Sure, you can,” Shane says. “Here, just touch me?”

Ilya pushes himself against the pillow and then curses in Russian. “No, this does not work,” he says. “No, Shane, this raft keeps you from me. Now I cannot hold you. Now I cannot be close to you?”

Ilya proceeds to dramatically flop onto his back and throw his arm over his eyes.

Shane remains where he is, comfortable and content, and without any plans to lose his new miracle pillow. He still cannot believe he's napped today! It's so refreshing, and he feels better and more energetic than he has in weeks.

“I cannot touch our little fish,” Ilya whimpers.

Okay ... Well, that one gets to Shane.

No! No, stay strong, Shane. He's got to stay strong.

“Sure, you can,” Shane repeats once more. “If you just move a little bit, we can hold each other.”

“With a raft between us,” Ilya groans. “Raft! May as well be ocean, Shane! Ocean between us in bed! And me, alone on an island, away from my boyfriend and baby!”

Said baby is moving a little too much, and Shane swears she actually rolls inside him, her body pushing against him. Shane shouldn't be surprised about it, but he is because, whoa, that's insane. That's actually insane, and he tries to keep it to himself, but he probably gives it away on his face because Ilya is staring at him again, a knowing smile on his face.

"You see, our baby has spoken," Ilya gleefully says and rolls back onto his side. He shoves his hand between the offensive pillow and Shane's belly and curves his palm up, feeling their daughter move.

"She wants the raft to leave," Ilya informs him. "She is a little fish and wants out of this raft, Shane. Listen to her. A little fish like ours needs space to swim."

"You are literally not making any sense," Shane disagrees, mentally willing their unborn child to please stop encouraging their idiot father about this non-issue. Shane needs the fucking pillow.

"Stop plotting against me," Shane adds, sounding pretty crazy himself. "I want to be comfortable!"

"Is my job to keep you comfortable," Ilya says matter-of-factly. "You will take my job away, Shane Hollander? My most important job?"

"Ilya!" Shane laughs loudly because he can't take another second of this insanity. "Come on, okay? I need the pillow."

But Ilya lifts the pillow, with an ease he really shouldn't have, considering it's a pretty big pillow, and then tosses it right off the bed.

Shane's jaw drops.

And Ilya smirks, snuggling up, pulling Shane into his arms and against him. “Hold me like you hold the raft,” Ilya demands happily. “I am better. I am warm and real and will kiss you. I am so much better than the stupid raft.”

As if their baby agrees with her father’s wild, ridiculous ramblings, Shane feels a swift kick up against his ribs, and he groans, pressing his face into Ilya’s chest as he clutches him tightly.

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The craving hits him at the most unfortunate time.

They’ve been at the cottage for a little over a week, and Shane stares at the grapefruit that represents their daughter’s growth. He smiles, lifting it against his belly, feeling its weight in his hands. He marvels at the idea that she is this big. She used to be the size of a grape!

He doesn’t want any grapefruit, though. No, Shane wants ... a tuna melt.

Shane wants a tuna melt, specifically one that tastes exactly like Ilya’s from a time they do not mention. Shane wants it so bad that he shakily sets the grapefruit down and silently makes his way through the dark cottage and upstairs to their bedroom.

Ilya is on his stomach, snoring, his arm dangling off the side of the bed, and the sheets kicked down to his feet.

It’s a little after two in the morning, and Shane bites his lip. Maybe he can deal with the craving? After all, it’s only food, and logically, a tuna melt isn’t something good to eat so late, especially when he’s going to end up sleeping again, and his heartburn has been pretty awful lately. Why tempt fate?

The illogical side of Shane breathes deep and knows that if he doesn’t get the tuna melt, life isn’t worth living. He’s shaking as he slides into bed and spoons himself behind Ilya, pressing

short, little kisses along the back of Ilya's neck. His hand smooths down Ilya's chest, and he scratches his nails along Ilya's abdominal muscles.

Ilya rouses from sleep.

Shane nips at Ilya's skin with his teeth.

"Shane?" Ilya hoarsely asks. "What is wrong?"

"Nothing," Shane mumbles, kissing the spot he's just bitten. "I wasn't sure you were awake," he proceeds to lie. Ilya doesn't need to know it's a lie. Ilya can believe that Shane is sleepy and confused, and then turns around, so they're facing one another.

Ilya does exactly this, and Shane smiles when his boyfriend kisses him so sweetly.

"Why are you awake, *lyubimyy*?" Ilya asks.

Shane bumps his nose with Ilya's and sighs. "I woke up, with an intense craving..."

Ilya sports a wolfish grin, but Shane shakes his head and spreads his fingers against his cheek. "I was craving a tuna melt," he confesses. His fingertips dance across Ilya's cheekbone, and he admires how lovely his boyfriend is, especially now, when he's still clinging to sleep, and his hair is a mess of curls.

"I will make it for you," Ilya immediately declares without waiting a second to process. Not one! Shane's heart starts racing.

"No, wait," Shane suddenly begs, wrapping himself up around Ilya as best as he can with the changes his body is currently experiencing. His center of gravity is completely messed up, and he can barely understand how to move himself to feel comfortable in his own skin, but this ... Shane knows he is good at this.

They've always been so good at this part, and he rocks himself against Ilya's thigh.

Ilya sucks in a sharp breath, and his body relaxes against Shane's. It feels good, and Shane is so turned on by how easily Ilya has agreed to leave the comfort of bed at two in the morning to cook for him. It's so hot, and Shane kisses him, attempting to translate how he feels into the physical.

From the soft moan Ilya makes, he seems to catch on quickly.

Shane shoves Ilya down onto his bed and climbs onto his lap, shedding his t-shirt (an old and weathered one belonging to Ilya), and then leans over him, running his hands greedily up Ilya's chest, feeling him up.

"You're so fucking hot," Shane whispers feverishly. He licks his lips and brushes his fingertips across Ilya's nipples, feeling a rush of heat burst through him when they harden into pink little buds beneath his touch. Shane grinds himself down, right onto Ilya's quickly hardening length, and Shane doesn't hold back the extremely loud moan that passes through his lips when Ilya roughly grabs at the meat of his ass and squeezes.

"So beautiful," Ilya gasps, gazing up at Shane like he's some kind of God, and fuck, that only turns Shane on more. Knowing Ilya is genuine in his desire for him? Fuck, Shane thinks he may come just from the earnest way Ilya regards him like he's the sexiest thing Ilya's ever laid his eyes on.

And the thing is, Shane knows Ilya thinks that, too. Ilya does, and Shane feels the same, because no one's ever been sexier than Ilya Rozanov, and now he's all Shane's, and it's to the point that Shane's carrying their unborn child and feeling all sorts of possessive and crazy and horny, and he needs ... god, he needs to get fucked.

Who cares about tuna melts?

Ilya manages to read his mind, which is also such a them thing. They're so in tune with one another and have been for so long, and Shane leans against Ilya while he pushes Shane's pajama bottoms down, and Shane reaches between them to pull Ilya from his boxer briefs and eagerly pumps him. Ilya's wet with pre-come leaking, and Shane is, too, and he moans Ilya's name as he kicks his pants away and settles comfortably onto Ilya's lap again.

Ilya wordlessly reaches out for the bottle of lube, and then there are slicked-up fingers teasing Shane's rim, circling it, making Shane whimper against Ilya's cheek as he grinds his erection against Ilya's. The friction feels incredible, only heightens the desire, and Shane is not above begging.

"Two, please," Shane pleads because one of Ilya's fingers isn't close to enough. "Please, I need you so fucking bad. So bad, Ilya!"

"I will give you what you need, sweetheart," Ilya huskily promises, his lips brushing Shane's temple. And he does. Ilya is a man of his word, and soon, oh soon, there are two perfectly thick fingers fucking Shane open, and Shane is leaking between them, making a mess, yes, but making the slide of their cocks rather effortless as well in the process.

"Like this?" Ilya asks minutes later, holding himself by the base of his cock.

Shane is up on his knees, his thighs burning as he holds still. He moans, but then nods. "Yes," he gasps. "I need, I need this. I need you like this."

Ilya's free hand holds onto Shane's hip, and Shane slowly lowers down until he's sitting comfortably on Ilya's lap, his cock buried inside him to the hilt, and Shane throws his head back, calling out Ilya's name.

It's so good, too good, and it's only just begun.

Ilya's hands are everywhere, and Shane's delirious in his hazy lust, swearing his boyfriend has to have extra hands appearing because how else is he touching Shane everywhere Shane needs him to? And then, fuck, Ilya's grabbing his ass and lifting Shane, jackhammering his

perfect, gorgeous, thick, magnificent cock into Shane until Shane is screaming as his orgasm crashes into him.

Ilya continues to fuck him through it until he's coming, and Shane is actually crying from how sensitive he is and how satisfied he feels. He's a total mess, but he's so blissed out and happy that it doesn't matter. He doesn't even care about the mess, and that he'll eventually become uncomfortable enough that they have to get out of bed, and while Shane showers, Ilya will inevitably remake the bed with fresh sheets because he knows Shane hates dirty sheets and wet spots. In the morning, they'll do the laundry together, and it will all be so disgustingly domestic and also everything Shane longs for.

For now, Shane lies happily on top of Ilya, nuzzling his cheek over Ilya's chest, feeling the pounding of his beautiful heart against his skin, and Ilya gently murmurs to him while he runs his hand up and down the length of Shane's back.

There's nothing better than this.

Only ...

"Fuck," Shane rasps.

Ilya immediately stops moving his hand and cups the back of Shane's neck. "What is it? Are you hurt?"

"No," Shane moans, shaking his head and pressing a kiss to Ilya's chest. Heat floods his cheeks, and he knows he's blushing. "I ... god, I need the tuna melt. Ilya. I'm so sorry, honey. I need it. I need it or—"

"Hush now," Ilya insists, slowly sitting up, bringing Shane along with him.

Shane bites his lip, and Ilya cups his cheeks, brushing his fingertips across Shane's freckles. "You want it, and I will get it for you, make it for you. Is so little to ask me when you are

sacrificing your life, body, and career, to bring our little fish into the world.”

Shane sobers a little and grasps Ilya’s wrists, shaking his head at him. “Hey, listen, it’s not a sacrifice,” Shane needs Ilya to know, so he makes sure to sound serious about it. “I want this life, more than ... anything. More than hockey.”

Ilya stares until he apparently can’t, and looks away.

Shane won’t have that. No, he gently turns Ilya back so that they can look at each other again. “Ilya, I mean it, okay? This, us? You, me, and our baby? I want it. I want it more than I’ve ever wanted anything. Maybe more than I want the stupid tuna melt.”

“Maybe?” Ilya asks, sniffing.

“I’m kidding,” Shane laughs, smiling warmly at him. “More than even the tuna melt. I wasn’t sure at first. I was so scared, but after these months, and learning this new life we’ve been making together? I don’t want to go back to thinking other things are more important than this happiness. You’re the most important person to me, Ilya. There’s literally no point in trying if I don’t have you with me.”

“Shane,” Ilya rasps.

But Shane kisses him, and kisses him, and kisses him, until Ilya isn’t crying anymore, and then, yes, he does follow Ilya out of bed and sits at the kitchen counter while Ilya cooks him the tuna melt, and one for himself, too.

By the time they’re eating, it’s nearly three in the morning, and Shane doesn’t think anywhere else can be better than right here with Ilya, in their cottage, safe and sound, while their baby wakes and starts to move gently.

Shane takes another bite of his sandwich and thinks, maybe she likes it, too? God, is it going to be a family staple for dinner? Tuna melts?

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Their daughter is the size of a butternut squash when Svetlana and Rose arrive, both excitedly chatting as Ilya follows behind, carrying more luggage than one man should.

Shane grins at him from his spot on the couch, where Svetlana and Rose now flank his sides and coo over him.

Ilya winks, and it's butterflies, thousands of them, right in his stomach, and not their baby's kicks.

It's love, too much, but somehow, Shane's body manages to make more room for it.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

And baby makes three.

Chapter Notes

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

It's astounding how little Shane misses hockey when he takes a moment to think about it. And maybe this is due to hormones or growing a little human by himself, or maybe it's because he sees Ilya Rozanov covered in paint, laughing with Svetlana and his father as they prepare the nursery.

Maybe it's the way his mother looks at him now, like Shane's this entirely new person, one she wasn't sure she would ever meet, and now she's happy to know he is finally existing.

Maybe it's the way Hayden and Jackie come over with their brood or children. Shane cradles Amber against him, her little body curved over his belly as she breathes so warmly against his shoulder, and he rubs his hand softly over her back, soothing her to remain napping.

It's definitely Rose, green eyes twinkling as she snaps a photograph and pumps her fist in the air. "Got you, Daddy! I'm sending this to Ilya right now," she gleefully informs him. "He's going to lose his mind seeing you holding that baby."

"Aw, let me see," Jackie begs, coming over to lean against Rose. She tilts her head, and their temples touch as Rose shows her the photograph.

Jackie whimpers and shakes her head, and Shane feels deeply uncomfortable from all the attention, his contentment quickly shifting to unease under their focus.

He's rooted in place, unable to go anywhere, while Amber remains a peaceful weight against him.

Jackie seems to get the hint when she finally looks at Shane and not at the photograph, and she is gentle, as only a mother can be, as she lifts her slumbering child into her arms. Amber is sweet and soft, sighing and curling into her mother, and Shane wonders if his baby will come to trust him this way.

Is it instantaneous? Or will Shane need to earn it? Will his baby know how much he loves her? Will she know he is willing to sacrifice every old dream he's ever had to make new ones with her and for her?

Is this what it means to be a parent? To be selfless? To give your all to a tiny little life that will rely on you for years to come?

Shane wants it. He wants everything that comes with it.

He wants Ilya.

And as if his boyfriend can sense the want or maybe read Shane's thoughts, Ilya appears, freshly showered and dressed in clothes not covered in green paint.

"Shane, are you hungry?" Ilya asks, soft, so soft, and sits at Shane's side.

Shane immediately reaches and curls his fingers into Ilya's collar. His emotions are heavy and hard to manage. He really loves Ilya Rozanov. Shane takes a deep breath and laughs on the exhale.

"I love you," Shane gasps, eyelashes fluttering quickly while warmth floods his cheeks. "You make me happy."

Ilya smiles, slowly and so handsomely. "You make me happy, too," Ilya says. He strokes Shane's cheek.

Shane feels his blush and knows Ilya loves his freckles. He's sure they're showing now. "I wouldn't want this with anyone else," Shane whispers. He tries to calm his shaking hands. He's more overwhelmed than he can handle.

"Shane," Ilya says in that special tone meant just for them. "I would only want this with you, too. You are the only one for me. You and our little one."

Finally, Shane surrenders and relaxes. He leans into Ilya's strong chest, and Ilya's large hands move to his back, gently massaging.

Shane moans gratefully. "That feels amazing," he slurs.

Ilya chuckles and kisses the crown of Shane's head. "It is the least I can do, with the sacrifice you have made for us."

"Not a sacrifice," Shane mumbles, sounding sleepy. He's in such a perfect state of contentment that he is pretty sure he can actually fall asleep soon, too. "This is like the happiest time of my life, Ilya. I never knew how much I wanted this until it happened."

"Thanks to the broken condom," Ilya jokes.

Shane lifts and slaps Ilya's chest. "I'm trying to be romantic, and you're being an asshole."

Ilya nods and leans in, pressing a slow kiss to Shane's frowning lips. "Yes, but I am *your* asshole," Ilya reminds Shane. "Only yours, Shane."

Shane is about to move away, to sit up and stretch, when he's suddenly pulled into Ilya's lap. Shane yelps his surprise, but then quickly relaxes, arms encircling Ilya's neck as he settles

comfortably. It feels so good to be held, and Shane presses up closer, then begins laughing.

“What?” Ilya asks, smiling at him. “What makes you laugh this way?”

“We can't be chest to chest anymore with this basketball strapped to my front,” Shane says, laughing. “I think she knows when I'm close. I know logically she hears your voice and gets excited, but it's sweeter to think she knows we're close, right?”

The smile Ilya sports softens. He slowly nods, and then his large hands splay against Shane's sides. “Yes, well, is important business to be baby's favorite person,” he states diplomatically. “I take this honor very seriously, you see, most important honor of my life.”

Shane's eyebrows rise. “Oh? This is the most important honor of your life?” he teases.

Ilya gives a firm nod this time. “You would not understand, Hollander. Maybe next time, with the next baby, you will be the favorite.”

Shane sputters and laughs loudly. “*Next* baby? Buddy, you're insane!”

“Buddy,” Ilya repeats, shaping the words to feel them. “Is that who I am? Your buddy, Hollander?”

“I,” Shane begins.

Ilya swoops forward and bumps his nose to Shane's chin. “Your bro? Am I your bro?”

“Oh my god, stop,” Shane begs and smacks Ilya's shoulders. “It was just a joke! You're not my buddy.”

"You have a baby with your buddy," Ilya says, laughing. "Shane Hollander, you are the most surprising Canadian. Maybe not as boring as I always say?"

"Ilya," Shane whines, "*stop*."

"Ah, *now* I am Ilya. Now I am not buddy," Ilya chuckles. "How would our little fish feel, to hear her Papa called *Buddy*? She would not be happy, Hollander!"

Shane, completely exasperated at this point, goes limp against Ilya and groans.

It works.

Ilya drops the teasing and begins to coo, mostly in Russian, and Shane smiles, trying to hide it against the side of Ilya's neck.

That doesn't work, not when Ilya can feel it, but Ilya doesn't mention it. He is quiet, save for the sound of his breathing, and it comforts Shane while their unborn daughter kicks away between them.

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"Shane, sweetheart, what is ... *that* doing in our bed again?" Ilya's cautious voice asks from behind him.

Shane hums and glances back, giving Ilya a sleepy smile, and then snuggles the pregnancy pillow. "I needed it," Shane mumbles, nuzzling the pillow. It's a godsend. He's so comfortable. "It's so good."

"But, I am here," Ilya says. Shane feels the dip on the bed as Ilya gets into it and crawls over, lying down behind him. "I am better than ... the *raft*."

It's incredible how Ilya can make a simple and harmless word like raft sound like it's the absolute most vile and offensive thing in the English language.

Shane huffs. He's tired. This weird battle between Ilya and the pregnancy pillow needs to end, and end right now. He begins to move, tries to turn as gracefully as he can, considering he's got the extra weight of their growing strapped to his front, and then groans when he can't do it.

Shane can't roll over on his own.

"Help me," he pathetically asks Ilya.

Ilya, for his part, says nothing about this and assists Shane in rolling onto his side so they may face one another. Ilya looks so stupidly gorgeous as he gazes so devotedly at Shane that Shane momentarily loses all train of thought.

Then, Ilya reaches and tugs the pillow—

Shane snaps out of it and grabs Ilya's hand, stopping him. "*Why* do you have this weird animosity towards this pillow? And don't say it's because it's a raft."

Ilya sighs. "It keeps you from me," he answers very simply. "It's easy to understand, yes? I want my Shane and my baby in my arms to hold, and the stupid pillow keeps you both from me."

"Ilya, I'm not giving it up," Shane says firmly. "You need to get over it. I'm the one carrying this baby, and I am going to be comfortable."

"*I am comfortable,*" Ilya insists, pouting. "I am here, ready and waiting to be your body pillow! You are wasting an opportunity that anyone else in the world would take."

Shane rolls his eyes. “You think a lot about yourself,” he mutters.

“No, is fact,” Ilya insists. “I am in the top ten of most eligible bachelors in Canada! You know this, Shane. How many copies of magazines have I left for you?”

“Maybe they can keep you warm at night,” Shane says. “Since I have the raft, and you are a big, crying, baby man.”

Ilya gasps. It’s loud, so loud that it’s funny, but Shane doesn’t laugh. “You use fighting words, Hollander,” Ilya grumbles. He flops onto his back, crosses his arms over his chest like the big baby man Shane has called him, and scowls up at the ceiling.

Shane doesn’t give in, even if Ilya does look really fucking adorable right now. He doesn’t give in, even though their baby is going wild inside him, kicking up a storm. Shane holds his own and hugs the pillow against him.

Mostly because he has one small fear that Ilya will pull it away and throw it out the window. Shane doesn’t fully believe that his boyfriend will, but there is a slight chance. After all, they’re on this journey as expectant parents because of a slight chance, and that chance is now wiggling and using his ribs as a footboard.

“Ilya,” Shane whispers, staring at him with his best sad eyes. “Ilya, come on, please?”

“Why don’t you marry raft, Hollander?” Ilya whines at him. “Marry it and live happily ever after! Since you do not need me!”

“I don’t want to marry the stupid pregnancy pillow, Ilya!” Shane finally exclaims in agitation. “The only one I want to marry is you”!

You could hear a pin drop in the silence that follows Shane’s outburst.

“Ow,” Shane suddenly groans and presses his hand to his side. He applies more pressure, trying to shove their baby’s foot away. It doesn’t work, and he groans again, his cheeks aflame as he tries to ignore the fact that he has told Ilya he wants to marry him.

“Here, I do,” Ilya murmurs, sitting up. He leans over, curving his palm against Shane’s side. He begins to massage the spot, and soon the pain subsides, and Shane sighs blissfully, smiling at how much better everything feels.

“So, you want to marry me,” Ilya says right against his lips.

Shane gasps, his eyes flying open, meeting Ilya’s.

Ilya is grinning, and before Shane can think of a response, he is being kissed very thoroughly and suddenly hating the pregnancy pillow for keeping Ilya’s body from pressing against his. Shane grunts and kicks at it, twisting to no avail.

Ilya laughs against Shane’s mouth. “What is it, *moya lyubov*?”

“The fucking raft,” Shane hisses, pushing at it. “Get it off me, Ilya,” he demands. “Want to feel you.”

“Ah, ah, ah,” Ilya teases, sitting up again. He creates distance Shane absolutely no longer desires. It’s unfair! Ilya knows! He knows, and he’s laughing about it. The bastard is laughing at Shane!

“Ilya,” Shane whimpers, pathetically lifting his arms up. He’s hopeful for a hug.

“Oh, Shane,” Ilya says, shaking his head at him. “You are not like anyone I know,” he continues, leaning back down. Ilya successfully lifts the pillow up and once again throws it down onto the floor behind him.

Shane makes a happy noise and grabs Ilya, pulling him down. He's eager as Ilya kisses him, and only good, positive sensations begin to sweep through him. His heart pounds, and yes, their baby starts kicking, but it doesn't matter because Ilya is kissing him so well.

Shane moans into the kiss, runs his fingers back through those soft, perfect curls, and wraps as much of himself around Ilya as is physically possible.

"You want to marry me," Ilya chuckles.

Shane sighs and rests his head on the pillow beneath him, and bravely gazes up into Ilya's eyes. They're such a gorgeous shade, and Shane keeps hoping their baby inherits them. That, and Ilya's perfect smile. "Yeah, I do," Shane says. "What are you gonna do about it, Rozanov?"

It isn't a challenge, but it does sound like one. When have they ever backed down from a challenge?

"Mm, this is most interesting way to get me to propose, Shane," Ilya says, raising one eyebrow. "You are fishing."

Shane snorts. "I am not."

"You want me to ask you to marry me," Ilya states.

"Yeah, or I can ask you," Shane replies.

Ilya shakes his head. "Mm, no," he says. "No, I said long ago, remember? I would propose, for citizenship, of course, but I would be the one proposing."

“For citizenship,” Shane repeats, smiling stupidly at this large, handsome, Russian hockey player who has managed to flip Shane’s entire life upside down. “Just that.”

“Yes, baby is a nice extra,” Ilya grins back just as dumbly. “A good offer to make the proposal happen sooner. We get married, baby has parents who love each other, and we give baby hyphenated last name.”

“When did you learn that word? Hyphenated?” Shane asks.

Ilya drops a kiss to the tip of Shane’s nose. “New Yorker had an article on subject,” Ilya answers. ‘It was very interesting. Do you think Rozanov-Hollander is best?’

“It could be Hollander-Rozanov,” Shane offers. “Or maybe we make up a new last name? Hollanov?”

Ilya laughs and shakes his head. “No, no, I like Rozanov-Hollander,” he informs Shane. “Let our little one have a good, strong, Canadian last name.”

“You’re ridiculous,” Shane says affectionately.

“No, I am Ilya,” his boyfriend replies cheekily, “and you, Shane Hollander, will make me the happiest man and marry me. Won’t you? Will you?”

“Ah,” Shane says.

“Will you marry me, Shane?” Ilya asks again, so sweetly that Shane could start to cry. Or, he is actually crying. There are tears, and it’s not all because of hormones. No, Shane thinks he’s dizzy in love, and yeah, he absolutely wants to marry this man and spend forever with him.

“Yeah,” Shane rasps, nodding quickly. “Yes, I’ll marry you,” he continues, laughing through his tears. “I love you so much.”

“I know this,” Ilya says, kissing Shane softly. “You show it to me every day, with how brave and strong you are, carrying our baby. You are perfect, sweetheart.”

“Shut up,” Shane laughs, pulling Ilya down to kiss him properly. “God, I love you so fucking much. You make me so happy, Ilya. Fuck, I’m so happy!”

“Then, we get married, you never think about raft again, and we are happy with our baby?” Ilya mumbles between hot kisses that make Shane hum approvingly.

Shane doesn’t even care. God, he’s too happy and warm to care about whatever it is Ilya is saying, and he just hums, nodding and burying both hands in his fiancé’s hair, pulling him into a deeper, more fulfilling kiss.

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Their baby is the size of a papaya when Shane has his little baby shower. Only his parents, Ilya, Rose, Svetlana, and the Pikes attend, but it’s such a sweet and warm day that Shane would be content to simply have dinner.

But no, Rose and Svetlana go all out for their future goddaughter, and the under-the-sea theme is in full force. Ruby and Jade run around, singing about being mermaids, and Arthur adorably runs after them, crying for attention.

“You’ll understand when you have two,” Jackie laughs, patting Shane’s shoulder. “I thought I only wanted one, but I got two for the price of one, and then, I thought, they needed another friend. Then, Hayden thought, “ Hey, Jackie, let’s go away for a weekend, and oops, I got pregnant with Amber”!

“But you’re done now?” Shane asks. “No more?”

Jackie bites her lip. “The truth is, seeing you pregnant has made me miss it,” Jackie confesses. “And as much as I joke about Hayden keeping his hands off me, and of us never having another baby, I think, if I found out I was pregnant right now, I’d be really happy about it.”

“I can’t imagine doing this again,” Shane admits. “I love that I can, and I love how happy Ilya and I are, but I also love hockey, and I believe I have a few more years of it left in me before I retire.”

“Well, you could always try again after,” Jackie suggests with a kind smile. “It’s not like you’re going to stop being able to, Shane. Maybe it would be even better to wait. Let your kids have a bit of an age gap?”

“I see how close the girls are to Arthur, and how much Arthur loves being with Amber, and maybe an age gap isn’t the best idea,” Shane hesitantly confides in his best friend’s wife. “I haven’t even had this baby, and I’m thinking about this. It’s crazy.”

“You love plans, Shane, this isn’t at all surprising,” Jackie says. “Have you talked to Ilya about it?”

“No,” Shane answers, watching while Ilya and Hayden argue over the proper way to change a diaper. “I told him I didn’t want more than one, and he kind of just dropped it, and we never talked about it again. Ilya is really big on respecting my choices. He would have supported me whether or not I chose to continue this pregnancy.”

“But,” Jackie encourages him.

“But,” Shane laughs, “I’m really happy I chose to keep this baby. I have so many dreams and plans for her. I can’t wait to finally have her, hold her, and make sure she feels how much I love her every second of every day. She won’t ever doubt we wanted her.”

“Ilya’s like a massive teddy bear,” Jackie says, giggling. She is also watching as her husband and Ilya bicker like two foolish little boys. They’re ridiculous. “He’s going to melt the second he holds her, Shane. His entire life is going to change because of one precious little girl.”

“I can’t wait to see it,” Shane says dreamily.

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“She will be so small,” Ilya coos, sitting on the floor. He folds their daughter’s tiny outfits while Shane sits in the rocker, going over appointments and checklists.

“Tiny, little fish,” Ilya continues, mostly to himself. “I will hold her, and she will be small enough to fit in one hand. Our little princess.”

“Okay, but she’s growing really well,” Shane suddenly says, breaking out of his sharp focus on his to-do list. “She’s probably going to weigh, like, eight pounds, Ilya!”

“So small,” Ilya grins.

“Maybe nine,” Shane frowns. “And yeah, I’m lucky I’m not pushing her out, but she's really healthy, Ilya. She’s going to be so ... fuck, so fucking cute!”

Shane whimpers and covers his face. He’s overwhelmed with what can only be described as cuteness aggression. That’s a term Rose has recently taught him.

“If she looks like you, Hollander, I will fall to my knees every day,” Ilya jokes around. “Ultrasound shows that she has your nose.”

Shane thinks fondly about that. Their baby has grown so much. She’s precious and perfect and has ten fingers and ten toes and apparently, a head full of so much hair it is floating in the sonogram.

“She’s gonna have your curls, Ilya,” Shane says. “Trust me. I’ve got so much heartburn that there’s no way she won’t.”

“She is big like honeydew now,” Ilya grins at Shane. “Sweet like one, too.”

“You don’t have her little feet kicking your organs,” Shane says. “That’s not very sweet. She’s really strong.”

“Will make a good hockey player when she is older,” Ilya waves a hand at Shane. “Strong legs and feet. She will be the fastest and strongest player and will go to the Olympics. Win gold for Canada!”

“You’ve got some big dreams for her,” Shane says. “Don’t put too much on her, Ilya. She hasn’t even been born yet.”

Ilya gently sets the pink little onesie down, and knees in front of Shane, then presses his face against Shane’s belly. “My little fish,” he coos, his mouth brushing against Shane’s shirt. “You are a dream come true. Did you know this? Papa loves you more than all the stars in the sky.”

“Ilya,” Shane sighs, resting his hands on his shoulders. “You’re going to make me cry.”

Ilya kisses Shane’s belly, and then looks up, grinning and looking so boyishly handsome that Shane sees the young man he fell in love with so long ago. That takes his breath away.

“I love you,” Shane whispers, cupping one side of Ilya’s face. “You’re an amazing father.”

Ilya scoffs. “How can I be? She is not yet here.”

Shane shakes his head, rubs his thumb along Ilya’s cheekbone. “You’ve loved her since I told you about her,” Shane says. “You’ve been her favorite person. She loves you, too. Yes, I

carry her, and I love her, but I know, in my heart of hearts, that she's going to be as obsessively in love with you as you are with her."

Ilya's eyes are shining.

Shane taps his cheek. "Get up here and kiss me, Rozanov," he playfully demands.

Ilya, never one to let Shane down, is up and kissing him seconds later, giving Shane exactly what he asks for.

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It's a quick wedding.

The countdown to Shane's due date is approaching rapidly, and Shane becomes worried that they won't be married before their baby is born. He isn't exactly sure why he needs them to be, but in his head, it makes the most sense, and for some crazy reason, Ilya agrees.

The courtroom is quiet, and Svetlana is crying while the two exchange vows. Shane thinks that, later, maybe when their baby isn't a newborn, they can start planning another wedding, or a reception to celebrate. Later, when they're no longer a secret. Later, when they decide to tell the world about their love and the beautiful little girl it has created for them to raise together.

That's later, and this is now.

Shane laughs when the ring gets stuck on his swollen finger. Ilya looks distressed, and Shane cups his face, reassuring him that it's fine. He can wear his ring on a chain and match Ilya.

Still, Shane does get pleasure in sliding Ilya's ring onto his finger and staring at it while possessiveness flares deeply inside of him.

This man is his, all his, and he's never going anywhere else. Ilya loves him, only Shane, and they're making that vow now, to each other, until death parts them, not that Shane thinks about dying when he feels as alive as he does in this moment. He's too focused on their future to think about giving up. Such dark thoughts are a thing of the past.

Shane has half a mind to ask his mother if it's a good idea to just make an instagram post tonight and tell the world that they're married and expecting.

Yuna must sense this, after, when they're back at the cottage and all celebrating. Hayden and Jackie have arrived, and Svetlana is dancing around with Arthur in her arms, singing to him in Russian while Ilya watches his dearest friend with so much fondness that Shane feels himself about ready to cry.

Yuna sits down beside him, presses a cheek to Shane's cheek, and then holds his hand. "You make me proud, son," she whispers. "I am so proud of the man you have become. You have made this beautiful life for yourself, and it's yours, honey. It's all yours."

"I really love him, Mom," Shane whispers back to her. "He's everything I never thought I could have in a partner. He's not some secret. I want to love him in the open so badly."

"You will, Shane," Yuna promises, stroking the top of his hand. "Not now, but soon. You'll have the baby, and then, when it's time, we'll call Farah, and you can do this like you really want to. You and Ilya can share your joy with the world, and we will all be here for you. You'll never be alone."

"I want the best for her," Shane says. "I want her to know I love her and I want her, and that I've never been ashamed of her. I knew she was going to be mine when I found out I was pregnant. I knew she was meant to be."

"Shane, you're an amazing father," Yuna says proudly.

Shane scoffs.

“No, you are,” Yuna insists. “Shane, honey, look how far you’ve come and how much you’ve grown.”

Shane only has eyes for Ilya, though.

Ilya must feel his stare, and then he’s walking over, taking Shane’s hand from Yuna and pulling him up. They sway together, and Shane is dizzy in the best way.

Ilya steps back, giving them room, and they continue to sway as Rose plays a lovely song on her playlist and Ruby and Jade beg Hayden to dance with them, too.

“Is this all you wanted, Shane?” Ilya softly asks, gazing into Shane’s eyes with an intensity Shane knows he would have once not been able to match. "Are you happy?"

Shane matches it now and brings Ilya close, kisses him right then and there, for their little world to see. “Happier than I’ve ever been,” Shane murmurs against Ilya’s lips. “I love you, husband.”

Ilya smiles so bright, brighter than the sun. “I love you, husband,” Ilya returns adoringly.

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Their daughter arrives a week before her due date, screaming her way into the world. Shane sobs from behind the medical curtain, seeing her up high, the doctor holding this wriggling, pink, little newborn covered in blood and whatever else. She’s so loud, and god, Shane loves her more than he has.

Ilya weeps at his side, and then, their baby is wrapped in a blanket and cap, and placed in Ilya’s eager arms.

Shane gasps, and it's not from the drugs or the surgery. There is no pain, and he stares at Ilya, his Ilya, cradling their newborn in his big, strong arms.

'She's so small,' Shane whimpers.

"Yes," Ilya coos, rocking her. "So small, so pretty. She has your nose, Shane."

Shane laughs through his tears.

"Ilya, I love you so much," Shane croaks out. "I love you and ... thank you. Thank you for doing this with me and for making her with me."

"The best thing we have made," Ilya agrees, gazing at Shane. "Such a good surprise, isn't she?"

Shane tiredly nods and feels himself beginning to drift. He's so warm. It's a warmth that feels like he's about to have the best sleep, like after a great workout. His entire body begins to float away and—

"*Shane!*"

.

"It was touch and go for a moment, but we got the bleeding in control," someone is saying. "We didn't notice it at first. There was some bruising and a cut made where it shouldn't have been during the surgery."

"My son could have bled out!" Yuna exclaims. "He would have died, and then what?"

"Hey, let's calm down. Let's sit down, honey," David suggests. "Ilya needs us to be there for him."

Ilya?

Shane groans, trying to open his eyes. Why is it so difficult to? He feels like there is pressure above him. It aches. It's not a good feeling. Not at all.

"Shane!"

Shane's eyes slowly open, eyelids fluttering until he sees the blurry and familiar outline of his husband.

"Ilya," he murmurs.

"Yuna! David! He is awake!" Ilya is sobbing loudly. "Shane, oh Shane!" His hands are lifted, and Shane feels dozens of kisses being pressed to them, across his knuckles, down his wrists, pressing warm lips against his pulse.

"Ilya," Shane repeats, his vision clearing to see his husband, face red, covered in tears and distress. There is lingering fear in his eyes. "What happened?"

Ilya leans over and kisses him desperately, whimpering against his lips. Shane frowns, and Ilya shakes his head, gasping from how quickly he's breathing. "You almost left me," Ilya whispers, stroking Shane's cheek. "I could not go with you, Shane. You were leaving me."

Shane shakes his head, not understanding at all, but he slowly lifts his arms to hold Ilya like he knows his husband needs. His embrace is weak, but it feels good to hold Ilya this close. Their chests rest together, and Shane presses a soft kiss to Ilya's temple.

"Mm, sorry," Shane mumbles. "I don't wanna go anywhere."

Yuna sobs loudly again, and Shane can hear his father trying to calm her down.

He could have died.

That's what Shane understands, half an hour later, while Ilya clutches his hand like a vice and refuses to leave his side.

Yuna has disappeared for the nursery, but David lingers, sitting awkwardly by.

"You gave us a scare, son," David says. "The doctors worked very quickly to get you back to us, but there was a scary moment there when we weren't so sure."

"You would not leave us," Ilya vehemently disagrees. "Never. You promised me."

"Where's the baby?" Shane mumbles, his mouth feeling like it's full of cotton. His lips are so dry, so cracked. "I wanna see her, Ilya. Where is she?"

"Yuna is with a nurse, Shane," David says calmly. "Don't worry, she'll be back with baby girl in a few minutes."

"She needs a name," Shane realizes tiredly. His brain is all fuzzy. The drugs are really good here. "Ilya, we need ... to give her a name."

"Soon, *moy lyubimyy*," Ilya reassures him. He lifts Shane's palm to his cheek and turns to kiss it. "So soon. Just wait, you will see her soon. Then, we will name her together."

Shane is quiet and thoughtful while they wait. He thinks about what it means to have nearly died. He wonders how hard Ilya took it and if it was triggering. He knows how deeply the

loss of Ilya's mother affects him to this day, and it pains Shane to think he has made the pain worse.

Although it is completely unintentional on his part. Shane still feels guilty, and he wants to make it up to Ilya. It's insane to think this way, but it helps Shane recenter himself. He has Ilya and their daughter. He has a family now, and they're his sole focus. He must be good and healthy for them, now more than ever.

There is cool metal touching his skin.

Shane glances down, watching Ilya slide the wedding band on his finger.

"It fits," Shane marvels at the sight.

Ilya bends to kiss the ring and nuzzles his lips against Shane's skin. "Perfect fit for perfect man," Ilya whispers. "My man. All mine."

"Knock knock," an unfamiliar voice sings by the door.

Shane immediately looks up, staring at a nurse pushing a clear cradle into the room. There is a tiny bundle resting inside it, and the yearning to peer inside and see his baby floods Shane so quickly that it takes his breath away.

"Here we are," Yuna coos from behind the nurse. She rounds the bed and drops a kiss onto Shane's forehead. "Are you feeling okay, honey?"

Shane nods, but his eyes remain on his baby.

Ilya bends to pick her up, holding her like she is made of glass, and Shane's hands begin to tremble.

"You've got the shakes, honey," the nurse soothes him. "It's natural, I promise. It's all part of birth!"

"Shane, here she is," Ilya says, settling down at his side. Shane peers over and begins to cry.

She's beautiful.

"She looks like me," Shane whimpers.

"Yes, she has your sweet nose and your cheeks," Ilya proudly agrees. "But, those are my lips. She has not opened her eyes. She is not ready."

"She's such a good baby," Yuna sings from where she sits with David. "The nurses were telling me she's been sweet and sleeping. Not fussy at all."

"She's gorgeous," David says, sounding choked up. "Our granddaughter, Yuna! I can hardly believe it."

"But she wanted her Daddy," Ilya murmurs, beaming down at their baby. "She has met all of us, but she has not officially met her Daddy. Isn't that right, *malysh*?"

Shane knows that he cannot hold her, at least not the way he wants, due to the stitches and pain, but he still holds his arms open as Ilya delicately sets their daughter high up against Shane's chest.

And everything finally falls into place.

Shane breathes her in. She smells so wonderful, and her body is like a tiny little space heater. She's so warm and so sweet, and Shane doesn't try to stop the tears from rolling down his

cheeks as he smiles at her.

“She's perfect,” Shane rasps through his tears. “Ilya, she's so perfect. Oh my god.”

Ilya presses a kiss to Shane's temple and murmurs in Russian, and Shane barely understands because he's too busy gazing down at their beautiful baby.

Her precious, pouty lips pucker. Shane bends down, kissing her tiny forehead. He breathes her in again, holds her closer, and begins to rock with her. Ilya's arm wraps around his shoulder, his body pressing flush against Shane's side, and everything makes complete and total sense for one glorious moment in time.

Only, as it passes, Shane quickly realizes that the moment continues, and then another and another, as they begin to fall into the family they've been meant to become.

“I've been waiting for you,” Shane whispers, kissing their baby's cheek. “You won't be swimming around in the water alone anymore, little fish. We're here to hold you now.”

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She has Ilya's eyes.

The moment she opens them, her thick, black eyelashes fluttering, Shane holds his breath. They're alone, just the two of them, Ilya having gone down to the cafeteria with Shane's parents to get them dinner. Shane sits, cradling their daughter, and hums a random tune while he watches her.

When isn't he staring at his baby? She's changing already with every passing day. Her sweet snuffling sounds drive Shane to constant tears, and maybe it's all the hormones trying to regulate, but he's never been as emotional as he is now. It's alright, though, because it's worth it for the precious gift he now cradles in his arms.

But then she opens her eyes, stares up at him, and Shane's breath catches. Those eyes, familiar yet new, gaze at him with unwavering trust and love.

Ilya's eyes, now their daughters, and Shane smiles, watery and sniffling, cupping the back of her head and carefully massaging her scalp with his fingertips.

"My little fish," Shane whispers, dropping a kiss to her pouty lips. "There you are," he says softly. "You have made my every dream come true. Even dreams I didn't know I had. So much for such a little girl to achieve already."

"She is meant for great things," Ilya declares, his chest puffing out proudly as he strides right towards the bed and sits himself down at Shane's side. He drops a kiss on Shane's cheek, then bends to kiss their daughter's forehead.

"Emiliya, Papa is very proud of you," Ilya happily tells their daughter. "You have made your Daddy believe in fate! Destiny! Wishes!"

"Shut up," Shane laughs. He elbows Ilya's side. "I already believed in all that stuff."

"No, no, not like this," Ilya delightedly disagrees. He kisses and nuzzles Shane's cheek. "Admit it, Hollander, you have gone soft in your old age."

"We're literally the same age," Shane mutters.

And maybe he elbows Ilya's side again, just for good measure.

"Emmy, don't listen to your Papa, he is silly and has one brain cell rattling in that pretty skull of his," Shane says. "I know he was your favorite before, but surely now I am?"

"Shane Hollander, you wound me," Ilya exclaims offensively and dramatically. "You are trying to turn our baby against her Papa!"

Shane rolls his eyes and turns his attention back to the newborn in his arms. He cradles her and coos down to her and then presses a few more short and sweet kisses to her tiny, beautiful face. Honestly, Shane knows he may be biased, but no baby is or will be as pretty as their little girl.

She's utterly perfect, but of course she is, though they made her, and God, Shane loves how much she looks like Ilya, even if he refuses to say that because he doesn't need to boost Ilya's already enormous ego any further. How will his husband fit through the door if his head is five feet wide?

Shane laughs softly at himself, and Ilya makes a questioning noise, kissing Shane's cheek. Okay, so, he really cannot resist and looks up again, grinning so stupidly at Ilya because that's what he is. He's so stupidly in love to the point it's completely embarrassing, but Shane also doesn't want to exist any other way.

"This is crazy," Shane laughs, shaking his head. He can hardly believe their luck. "We've got our own little family. I can't believe this, Ilya."

"Believe it," Ilya says, pressing a gentle kiss to Shane's forehead. His large hand presses up, resting against their baby's back to keep the weight off Shane's abdomen, and Shane sighs, melting into the arms of the man he loves while their daughter drifts off to sleep.

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"So, what's the verdict?" Jackie asks weeks later, when everyone is over for dinner. It's officially time to introduce Emiliya to their closest friends, and Shane feels immense pride as he shows her off.

She's so gorgeous. He's not biased!

“Look at those eyes,” Rose whimpers, staring down at Emiliya while Svetlana smirks about it.

“Yes, our goddaughter is the most gorgeous baby to exist,” Svetlana smugly declares. “Look at the ocean eyes on her.”

“And those eyelashes!” Rose squeals. “Oh my gosh, I just want to bite her cheeks.”

“No biting my daughter,” Ilya sternly says from where he sits beside Hayden of all people. The two are playing cards, while a very serious Arthur supervises them. If they argue, the little boy gets \$100 from each person in attendance.

“I can go back to hockey in six months,” Shane says, “and I want to. I want to play another season, win another cup, and then maybe...”

Jackie grins knowingly and pats Shane’s arm. “Mhm, that’s what I thought, Shane.”

“What are you two talking about?” Hayden calls out. “Jackie, I know that look! That’s your up to no good face!”

Jackie rolls her eyes. “Hayden, don’t make me tell Ilya about the way you count cards!”

Ilya gasps loudly and then points at Arthur. “Your father is cheater!”

“Daddy is a cheater!” Arthur repeats and pumps his little fist in the air. “I get money! Everyone pay up!”

“Where did he learn that phrase?” Shane asks Jackie.

Ilya laughs, hearing the question. “Little Arthur and I have practiced it! He is very smart, unlike his sad, rocks for brain father!”

“Hey!” Hayden cries out in offense.

“Would you rather be rocks for brains or fifteenth best hockey player on your team?” Ilya asks very reasonably.

Hayden glares, but then pulls out his wallet to hand a hundred to his son.

“Maybe I can play two more seasons,” Shane murmurs. “Then we can talk about another baby.”

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The best laid plans are simply that.

Because Shane definitely gets the best lay nearly a year later, when Ilya looks way too sexy at the cottage, and Shane cannot resist the urge to shove his husband down onto the dock and ride him. He’s grateful to his parents for taking their daughter for a day, because they’ve been seriously lacking in time alone, and Shane plans to take advantage of every second they have alone.

That, and Ilya’s always wanted to do this on the dock with him.

Shane rides the hell out of him, slams Ilya’s wrists down onto the dock, and throws his head back as his mouth drops open, and he moans.

Ilya’s hips stutter as they thrust up, and then, then it’s bliss, and Shane is very gooey and pliant and melting against his husband, messy and sweaty and extremely satisfied.

Ilya kisses Shane's temple and smooths his hand down Shane's back, giving his ass an appreciative few pats.

Shane laughs tiredly, kisses the hollow of Ilya's throat, and basks in the afterglow and sunlight warming them.

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"It's positive," Shane says, eyes wide and full of surprise.

The pregnancy test joins the others on the bathroom counter, and Ilya sits behind him on the edge of the bath, looking just as surprised.

Until he grins, rises, and pulls Shane into his arms. A loud, messy kiss is pressed to Shane's cheek, and Shane is laughing when Ilya manages to get to his lips to kiss him and kiss him and kiss him.

Shane steadies himself in Ilya's embrace and grips his shoulders tightly. They stare at one another, and there's nothing to fear or doubt. The genuinely powerful excitement rushes through them, and Shane leans in so their foreheads touch.

"So we do this again," Shane says. "And Emiliya gets a sibling."

"Maybe two," Ilya chuckles. "Imagine, twins!"

Shane punches Ilya's shoulder hard. "Stop mentioning multiples," he whines. "If you want that, you carry them yourself."

Ilya simply giggles and pulls Shane into another kiss, swaying them from side to side in the embrace they share. “Thank you, Shane,” Ilya murmurs, their lips brushing together. “For giving me a family.”

Shane hums happily, kissing Ilya again.

This time, there's not even a broken condom to blame.

They didn't use one anyway.

Chapter End Notes

I do not advocate for unsafe sex, but hollanov do and then act surprised when there are consequences to their actions. Two idiots in love. <3

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