

Shane Is So Done

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/82535161) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/82535161>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Mpreg , Male Pregnancy , Pregnant Shane Hollander , Over due and annoyed about it , Fic based on Artwork , Uncomfortably pregnant , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Ilya is the best partner , Soon to be parents Ilya and Shane , Papa Ilya , Daddy Shane , soft hollanov - Freeform
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-04-05 Completed: 2026-06-28 Words: 15,703 Chapters: 2/2

Shane Is So Done

by [LoveSimonFicWriter](#)

Summary

Shane is 41-weeks pregnant with their baby girl, and so, so done with being pregnant. Just a little slice of life as they get ready to head to the doctor's office.

Completed 6.28.26!

Short based off artwork by: @Medrawawi on X!
Link in Authors Note :)

Notes

Hi guys!! I hope you enjoy this short.

I'd LOVE to write an additional part to this to show the appointment and perhaps his labor?? so if you're interested in that- drop a comment about it below! :) But this felt like a nice little chapter all by itself. I do hope you enjoy it :)

This is a story based off the incredible art by: Medrawsawi on X (Twitter) I was truly inspired and couldn't get enough of it

Link: <https://x.com/medrawawi/status/2040066057415602572?s=46>

Kudos, Comment & maybe subscribe <3

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

Chapter 1

Shane is done. So done. In fact, stick a fork in him.

He's tired of hearing people say, "Any day now!" *Wish it were today.*

"Oof, you look ready to drop that baby!" *Thanks, I wish I could.*

"Shouldn't they induce you?" *Apparently not.*

"That looks really uncomfortable." *No shit.*

"Is it twins?"

No, it's not twins! It's just a very large, stubborn baby who has been growing for forty-one weeks now.

It takes a lot of self-control on his behalf to not explode on the people who think he's carrying multiples. Shane knows his belly is huge. He doesn't need any reminders from the peanut gallery of how ridiculously pregnant he is.

It's almost like people think he can't see himself in the mirror or something. Like they think he's blind to the circumference of his waist that used to be as flat as a board. Or that the all over pain plaguing his swollen body isn't a gentle reminder of how much work he's put in over the last nine months.

Forty-one weeks is a long ass time to be pregnant. He's more than ready to meet their baby girl, but also ready to gain some independence back. Being as big as he is, everyday tasks have become more like obstacles.

He can hardly do anything for himself anymore, but thankfully he has an extremely devoted husband to help him out. He has no idea how he would have handled pregnancy without Ilya.

Obviously there wouldn't have been a pregnancy without him, but not the point. Ilya is a godsent. Willing and able to do anything and everything for Shane- no questions asked.

Shane drops something on the ground? Ilya is right there to pick it up. Shane can't reach a glass cause his belly bumps the counter? Ilya grabs it for him. Shane can't roll over in bed? Ilya gets out and repositions him until he's comfy, as many times as he needs. Shane's belly knocks over a display in the grocery store? Ilya takes the blame.

Anything and everything. He's there.

These last few weeks have been a true test of Shane's patience though. At thirty-eight weeks, he was told by his doctor that he could go into labor at any time and to be on the lookout for signs.

At thirty-nine weeks, he was told the baby was just being stubborn, but she's still healthy enough to keep growing.

At forty weeks, on his due date, his doctor suggested he wait to see if he goes into labor naturally by Monday and to come back in to talk about induction if he doesn't.

So, it now being Monday with no sign of baby arriving any time soon, they are heading to the doctor to talk about his options.

He's been having contractions off and on for over a week now, but they are far from consistent. He just hopes that what little ones he's had are still doing something productive for him.

They hurt like hell when they happen, that's for fucking sure but are so far apart that it feels like his body is teasing him. He doesn't want a c-section either but given the size of the baby at this point, he's afraid that might be his only option.

He knows he can't stay pregnant forever, obviously, but he rather let his body decide when it's ready, than try to force it. He just hopes to hear some good news when they get there.

Ilya helps Shane swing his legs over the side of the bed and gives him a second to acclimate. Going from lying on his side all night to a sudden upright position can be jarring for both dad and baby. It's not easy to move around anymore, let alone have his body cooperate.

"Oh my god- *ow*." Shane whines miserably, pressing his hands against the solid, taut dome of his bare belly.

"Contraction?" Ilya asks with a tense expression. He's standing nearby the bed, not wanting to go too far, but also wanting to give Shane some much needed space.

"Ow- *no*." Shane growls through gritted teeth, scowling at his husband. "Just the same, *ow*... round ligament pain." He winces at the baby's heavy movements as she settles low in his pelvis.

Ever since he hit thirty-six weeks, Shane's had to battle intense round ligament pain. It's only gotten worse as the baby has gotten bigger and the only way to combat it has been to wear a belly brace. Some days it's not too bad, but today the pain feels magnified and he hasn't even tried to stand up yet.

Ilya frowns, cautiously stepping closer to his husband. He bends over to press a kiss into Shane's bedhead, while smoothing a hand over the damp skin of his back.

"I know, sweetheart. Is very painful, yes- but you are doing such good job. She is very happy in your belly." He smiles, laying a hand over Shane's bump where he can feel their daughter turning languidly.

"*Ha!* Could have fooled me." He snaps, flicking Ilya's hand off of him. "It's like she's trying to push all my organs out in here." He pouts, staring down at the magnificent belly cradled in his hands. "But god forbid she break my water or something!"

He very obviously ignores his husband's praise, already feeling like a jackass for being so bitchy right out the gate this morning. He really can't help it though. Between his raging hormones that either have him wanting to climb Ilya like a tree or throw him off the nearest cliff for doing this to him, he can't win emotionally. The pain, the impatience, the excitement, the fear, the exhaustion- he's going through it. He needs this to be over- *TODAY*.

He feels out of his mind lately, and he should really thank Ilya for putting up with his mood swings, but then he remembers Ilya's the reason he's in this predicament and says *fuck it-I'm not sorry*.

He just wants to hold his baby and not be in so much pain anymore. He wants to start parenthood with Ilya and stop day dreaming of the life he's so excited to give them already.

Shane looks up at Ilya again, expecting to find the man frustrated and out of patience for having to deal with his ass but instead is met with the kindest, most affectionate expression he's ever seen on his husband's face.

Shit.

What the hell did he do to deserve this man?

Yeah, okay he's pregnant and in pain- but Ilya has been nothing but attentive and sweet with him the whole time.

"I'm sorry for being so mean to you... You don't deserve that." The pregnant man's irritated expression crumbles as fresh tears stream down his cheeks. "I'm just in so much pain and I don't-*hic*- want to be pregnant anymore!" He sobs, covering his face with his hands. "This is so fucking hard."

"Oh, *lyubimyy...shhh*," Ilya hushes him as he takes a seat beside him. "I know. I know this is very hard for you. Is okay, no need to cry. Come here, is okay." He pulls Shane into his side, wrapping an arm around his shoulders.

"Hey, we will go to the doctor today and tell her you are ready, yes? I know you don't want help going into labor, but I think we need to try something else. Is okay to get help. That's what you always say to me, no?"

Shane wordlessly nuzzles his wet face into Ilya's neck, dampening his skin and the collar of his gray tank top with his tears. He sniffs hard, trying to regain composure, but unfortunately, it's just one of those mornings where he needs to cry it out in order to feel better.

Ilya sits with him for another five or so minutes, helping him calm down by rubbing his belly and reminding him how brave and strong he has been this whole pregnancy.

"We're so close to meeting her and all of this pain will be forgotten. You'll see very soon, my love. Okay?"

"Okay." Shane sniffs, nodding as he shifts himself away from Ilya's side.

“Okay,” Ilya smiles with a clap of his hands. He stands from the bed and offers for Shane to grab onto him.

Shane stares at his husband’s outstretched hands and chews on his bottom lip.

“I’m afraid the pain might get worse when I stand up.” He confesses.

“I go slow.” Ilya nods once. Shane considers his promise and takes his hands. Ilya begins pulling Shane to his feet, pausing every so often when Shane lets out a sharp gasp or jolts when the movement triggers the pain to spike in his pelvis.

He’s finally up after a rough transition and his hands immediately cup the underside of his particularly low hanging belly.

“I have to pee.” He sighs, beginning the slow waddle to the bathroom. “I’m gonna be a while I think.”

“Take your time. We have an hour before the appointment.” Ilya tells him, already moving across the room to the closet. “What do you want to wear?”

From the bathroom, Shane snorts, “Is going naked an option?”

Ilya’s eyebrows lift at the suggestion, “Ah, yes, is always an option- but only at home.” He chuckles. “You need to wear something to go out. Then when we get home you can be as naked as you want. I would never complain about that.” He inhales sharply at the mental image as he combs through Shane’s shirts.

“Comfy then. The comfiest clothes you can find.” Shane replies. The pregnant man grunts a second later, “Jesus, why is it so hard to pee? She’s literally using my bladder as a pillow right now- it should just flow out of me.”

Shane eventually finishes up and rejoins Ilya in the bedroom. On the bed, Ilya has laid out a few options for his husband to choose from. It’s all lounge attire in sizes Shane never thought he’d ever have to wear.

He dislikes everything paternity, even the clothes sent exclusively to him by *Nike*. He did a brand deal with them for their maternity/paternity line back when he was freshly five months pregnant and didn’t have the heart to tell them he didn’t like the style of the clothes.

His mom tried to convince him to wear at least a few pieces out in public, but the idea of being uncomfortable in his clothes while also feeling uncomfortable in his own skin was a sensory nightmare.

Some of the items had a nice fit to them, but Shane felt weird wearing workout tops with scrunchy side panels and workout shorts that had thick elastic support bands.

The bands always made his skin feel too itchy, and the tops made him feel compressed. As his belly grew bigger, he started gravitating toward shirts with extra room and sometimes nothing at all while working out. Ilya thoroughly enjoyed getting to watch his husband work out topless, especially with his belly exposed.

When it came to pants, Shane would much rather push the band down under his bump than have something too tight around his waist. This almost always resulted in a little sliver of his belly showing under each shirt. Another favorite aspect of Shane's pregnancy for Ilya.

He's pretty sure Ilya would get a nose bleed and pass out if he ever walked around the house in a crop-top and short-shorts. Unfortunately, he didn't own either of those things but was very tempted to buy them just to test his theory.

Shane surveys his choices and settles on a go-to favorite of his. A cornflower blue t-shirt he's been wearing pretty much his entire pregnancy. It started out roomy, but overtime began conforming to the shape of his bump. It still has a bit of room when he's standing but usually hugs his belly when he sits down.

Regardless of the fact, it's the comfiest shirt he owns, and he much rather wear it over any of the others he has. He also chooses a pair of dark gray sweatpants that he's absolutely certain will remain stretched out for the rest of his life. They are bigger than what he normally wears anyway, but his belly has done a number on the waistband...and his ass- can't forget how his ass has grown since getting pregnant. His entire body is so swollen and stretched, he's afraid he may never look like himself ever again.

Ilya certainly isn't complaining about the changes to his body, in fact he's been very vocal about how much he loves Shane's new curves.

He keeps telling himself that once he sees their baby, everything he's done to provide for her will be worth it- but it's a little hard to accept mentally at the moment.

He'll probably throw all the stretched out clothes to the back of the closet once this over for the next baby- *if he ever gets to have this one first that is*- she might just live inside him forever at this point.

Shane has no trouble getting the shirt on by himself but needs Ilya to assist with his pants and socks. Ilya squats in front of him, gathering up the first pant leg and helps guide Shane's foot into the hole. He can't see anything beyond his belly, to the side or front, so Ilya has become his crutch. He relies on him for everything below the belt now...and he absolutely means *everything*.

From getting dressed, to sexual favors- Ilya is the only one who can help. Shane stopped being able to reach himself without difficulty a little into his eighth month. After that, Ilya's had to do everything for him. Not that Shane would ever complain about getting a hand job or being blown by his husband, but losing a bit of independence has been hard.

Once his pants are up and Shane adjusts them under his bump in the most comfortable way he can manage, he drops onto the corner of the bed with a grunt. He absentmindedly rakes his nails over the skin peeking out from the bottom of his shirt, leaving red lines across the already prominent stretch marks there.

Ilya helps the pregnant man into his socks, then leans forward and presses his lips to the reddening, warm exposed skin. He rubs a gentle hand over the belly and glances up at Shane who is staring down at him with a tired smile.

“Stop scratching, *moya lyubov*. Is going to bleed again.” Ilya reminds him. “I will get the lotion if it is that itchy.”

“You and I both know it doesn’t really help. The skin is just too tight.” Shane’s face scrunches in discomfort as he smooths the pads of his fingers over the hot skin.

Ilya shrugs, kisses the belly again, then gives it a gentle pat before rising to his feet.

Upon standing, Shane tugs the front of his shirt down as far as it will go and waddles out to the hallway. He can feel the baby’s weight settle between his hips and cradles the underside of his belly in an attempt to lift his daughter off his cervix. Her head is so heavy, and each step leaves him even more uncomfortable than the last.

“Jesus,” He groans, feeling the weight of her against his fingertips. “This kid is huge-”

Shane pauses just before the foyer, pressing a hand against his lower back. He supports himself against the wall with the other, sucking a sharp breath between his teeth.

“Everything okay?” Ilya asks, coming up behind Shane, placing a hand on his hip. He gives the plump skin a light squeeze as he moves around to face his husband. “Shane- answer me please, what’s wrong?”

His face scrunches up in pain, “Hold on...contraction- I think.” He hisses, rubbing a frantic hand over his belly. He begins to pant as the tension builds tightly in his pelvis all while sharp cramps shoot down the insides of his legs. “Holy shit this one really hurts.” He winces hard, turning his body toward the wall. He presses both palms flat, bending forward at the waist as the pain gradually increases.

His belly drops forward as he arches his back, shifting uncomfortably on his feet.

Ilya, without needing to be asked, stands on either side of his husband and applies counterpressure with his hands to the outside of his hips. “This okay?” He asks, quietly.

Shane nods fervently, continuing to breathe.

“Almost through?” Ilya speaks up after a solid minute has passed.

Shane doesn’t respond. He’s focusing on his breathing, while shifting his hips from side to side. The counterpressure helps, and soon the contraction is over.

“That one seemed much longer, yes?” Ilya gulps subtly, pushing a hand through his curls.

“Y-yeah.” Shane nods, smoothing his hands over his stomach. “More painful too.” He notes.

“Da, I could tell.” Ilya agrees, fixing his expression to read less anxious. “But you handled it very well. I’m proud of you.” His smile full of pride and adoration as his hand grazes over Shane’s belly.

Ilya pays no mind to the way Shane side eyes him with the grumpiest little pout. He knows better than anyone that Shane is uncomfortable and willing to sell his soul if it means getting

this baby out faster.

“Hopefully it’s a sign that things are getting started.” Shane sighs, cupping both hands under the bump. The baby is much more active following the contraction, most likely not fond of her home squeezing in around her.

Ilya trails closely behind his husband as he waddles to the bench in their foyer.

He sighs heavily as he lowers himself with care onto the padded seat. His hands, on instinct, hold the sides of his belly as if checking to see if the change in position sits well with the passenger princess inside him.

Shane grimaces at the strong movement visible at the front of his bump.

“You have to come out at some point, little miss.” He talks down at himself. “I mean seriously, how are you even still comfortable in there?”

“Should we be timing the contractions now?” Ilya raises an eyebrow at him, crouching down to retrieve Shane’s sneakers from the mat beside the door.

Shane waves a dismissive hand at his husband, letting it fall back on his belly.

“Let’s just see how-” he huffs a labored breath, reclining himself back a little, “long it takes for the next one to come.” The pregnant man winces at the very obvious movement happening. Ilya stalls a moment, having caught it with his own eyes. He raises an eyebrow when a knee- or elbow, maybe- slides hastily across the upper part of Shane’s stomach.

Both men lock eyes, and a second later dissolve into a fit of laughter.

“She’s going to kick a hole through you, I think,” Ilya snorts, squatting in front of Shane.

“I think that’s the point- she’s just not getting the message.” Shane sighs, leaning back fully on his palms. His mountainous belly sits impressively round and wide in his lap, rising and falling with each of Shane’s heavy breaths. The baby dropped days ago, but her size alone still has Shane struggling to operate his lungs at full capacity.

Ilya unties Shane’s laces and takes the back of Shane’s right foot into his hand. He pauses to pinch the swollen skin around his ankle before slipping Shane’s foot into the shoe.

“Hmm,” Ilya hums, furrowing his brow, “Remind me when we get home to have you put your feet up.”

“Are they swollen again?” Shane asks, trying to get a look at his feet, but failing to see beyond his bump. He has zero energy to lift his thick leg, and trusts Ilya to tell him the truth.

“Yes, very.” Ilya nods, lifting his left foot now to slip his other shoe on.

Shane exhales hard, lazily draping an arm over his stomach.

“I’m so fucking tired.” He complains, tipping his head back with his eyes closed. “I’ve never been so tired in my life, Ilya.”

“I know, *moya lyubov*. Home stretch, yes?” He smiles at Shane, peeking at him over the crest of his bump and pats the outer part of his knee once he’s done tying the last shoe. “Let’s go see the doctor and find out next steps. We’re almost done.” He stands.

“*We’re* almost done?” Shane’s voice cracks as he blinks up at Ilya. “Who is the one carrying around your giant baby, Ilya? It’s *me!*” He points at his chest. “ME!” He shouts, eyes unnecessarily wild.

If Ilya was even the least bit startled by Shane’s explosive response, he didn’t show it. Instead he extends his hands with a smile and waits for Shane to calm down enough to accept the offer.

“Come, we stop and get you breakfast on the way, yes? Whatever you want.”

With a scowl, Shane places his hands into Ilya’s and holds on tight as the taller man heaves him to his feet.

Shane waddles toward the door with a hand planted against his lower back and one atop his belly. He pauses a moment, narrowing his eyes at his husband.

“I want a bacon and egg sandwich from that place on Bank street- *BUT*,” he raises a finger at Ilya, “I want avocado instead of cheese, and I want them to drizzle hot honey over it.” He explains, starting toward the door. “Oh-” he turns back, “and raw onion. If it’s not red, I don’t want it.” Shane cuts a hand through the air.

Ilya just smiles, chuckling softly to himself with a shake of his head. He opens the door for his husband, “Okay, *moy bol’shey golodnyy persik*. We get you whatever you and the *malenkij golodnyj persik* want.”

“I’m too tired to translate right now, so if you’re making fun of me- stop it.” Shane narrows his eyes at him again.

“I would not think of making fun of you, my love.” Ilya shakes his head, “Only ever call you cute things.”

“Mmhmm, *sure*. Come on, let’s get this baby out of me already, I’m done.” Shane grumbles as he slowly exits the house, belly first, with his chin held high.

Ilya rolls his eyes with an amused smile and closes the door behind them. “*My s toboy oba, lyubov moya.*” *You and me both, my love.*

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

I honestly didn't think it would take this long to post this- but man I have been busy, and also working on some other things (which you've probably seen by now). No excuses anymore- cause here it is!

We have (@medrawawi- X/ Mewrote- AO3) to thank for this getting done. If they didn't post that work of labor Shane, I don't know if I would have found motivation to finish this yet. (I know in reality that picture is of Shane having baby#3, but for the motivational purposes- Shane just labors the same with all his kids- okay? Take it or leave it. LOL).

I do hope you enjoy and if you do, please leave me a little comment & kudos. I love hearing your feedback <3 Helps me in the long run when it comes to future works. But I also just love hearing your thoughts in general :D!

Ignore any all spelling mistakes- it's late and I can't look at this anymore XD

Also thank you to: imbihesgay for always being my wonderful first reader <3

Kudos and Comments <3 Thanks guys!

PART 2

Shane has Ilya order him a bagel sandwich, a strawberry-banana smoothie, and two hash browns when they stop for food. He finishes every last bite just as they pull into the parking lot of the doctor's office.

"That was," Shane says, crumpling up the sandwich wrapper and tossing it into the brown takeout bag, "delicious. But now I have the worst heartburn." He sighs as soon as Ilya parks, already unbuckling his seatbelt.

Shane rubs at his chest, wincing at the five-alarm fire crawling up the base of his esophagus.

Ilya reaches into the center console, pulls out a bottle of chewable antacids, and hands them over with a small smile.

Shane immediately melts, all gooey affection as he takes the bottle. "God, I love you so much."

"Mm, I love you too, sweetheart." Ilya leans back in his seat. "Ready to go have your cervix Swiffered?"

Shane chokes on a laugh. “E-excuse me?!” He stares at him, utterly dumbfounded.

“Didn’t you say is what the doctor will do today?”

“I said *sweep*, Ilya. Not *Swiffer*.” Shane snorts. “That’s the brand name of a duster.”

“Sweeper, Swiffer, whatever.” Ilya waves a hand dismissively. “Do we think she’ll do it?”

“You are fucking ridiculous, you know that?” Shane says, shaking his head as he rubs his hands over his belly. “And I don’t know. We’ll have to see. It all depends on my-”

He suddenly stiffens with a soft gasp, both hands going still on his belly. “Oo- god, this one’s strong.” His face scrunches from the pain.

“Another one?”

“Mm. Mmhhh... bad one too.” Shane grits his teeth, gripping the handle above the car door while his other hand stays pressed against his belly. “Shit, I think you should probably time this one.”

“O-okay.” Ilya fumbles for his phone, nearly dropping it before finally getting the app open. He watches Shane carefully, waiting for the signal that it’s easing so he can be ready to hit the button.

When it appears the contraction is over, Shane tells Ilya it’s best they hurry inside before he has another.

Shane tries and fails to see the doctor over his belly. She’s currently sat on a wheeled stool between his spread legs, performing a membrane sweep on his cervix. It’s uncomfortable and something he wishes he could have avoided doing, but it’s honestly the final attempt at naturally kick starting his labor.

The too-small paper sheet draped over his legs provides absolutely zero privacy at this point. It might as well be a cocktail napkin for his knee.

And for someone as pregnant and uncomfortable as he is, someone who really shouldn’t care who might catch a glimpse of his bare ass, he feels *painfully* on display. He should be used to this by now, but honestly, if there were any way to give birth without an audience anywhere near his lower half, he’d take it in a heartbeat.

“Well?” Shane’s voice cracks a bit as he blinks up at the ceiling.

“Almost done here.” He can hear the smile in her voice.

Ilya, meanwhile, is doing a piss-poor job of hiding his intrigue. Ever since Shane got pregnant, it’s like he enrolled in some kind of crash course in obstetrics. Not that Shane’s complaining- he could’ve ended up with a husband who was squeamish, or worse, completely uninvolved.

Not Ilya. No, sir.

If he could perform the exams himself, he would. Actually, Shane is pretty sure he's tried a couple times.

He's been deeply involved in the whole process, wanting to know everything there is to know about having a baby. Shane isn't sure if it's Ilya's way of managing the anxiety of becoming a first-time dad, or if he's just genuinely that fascinated by it all. Either way, he's been wonderful, and Shane couldn't have asked for a better partner to go through this with.

"Done," she announces cheerfully, standing from her stool with a smile.

"Oh, thank god." Shane blows out a heavy breath, pressing his hands into the top of his belly, just below his ribs. At the angle in which he's reclined, her entire body feels like it's sitting in his chest. "Can I sit up now? I can't breathe." He pants, trying to push her off his diaphragm.

"Oh, of course!" She says, stepping out of the way of his legs. The gloved fingers that were, moments ago, inside him are now held off to the side. The off-white latex is tinged a faint pink, just enough to signal a bit of residual blood.

"Is that normal...for him to be bleeding?" Ilya asks, gesturing to the doctor's gloves with a nod of his head. He helps Shane lower his legs from the stirrups and eases him upright.

She twists her wrist, examining the color for a moment. "Oh, yeah, that's totally normal. The cervix is highly vascular, so bleeding is very common during and after a membrane sweep."

"Vas-cure-*what*?" Ilya tries to sound out, falling short almost immediately. He cocks an eyebrow in her direction, as if waiting on her to elaborate. This has become a thing with them- these mini vocabulary sessions. Ilya not understanding something and the doctor taking her time to explain, which in theory is great, but Shane has had enough.

Shane rolls his eyes with a faint, irritated sigh, rubbing his hands over his tight belly.

His doctor appears delighted to elaborate for him, "*Vascular*, meaning lots of blood vessels down there. When they get irritated, they-"

"Oh my *god*!" Shane exclaims, throwing his hands up. The room falls into a shocked silence around him. He aims a pointed finger at his doctor, and another in Ilya's direction, clearly as a warning.

"Can we skip the lessons for today, please?" he grits out, shooting Ilya a hard glare. "I know you're trying to graduate with your doctorate before this baby gets here, but I am begging you to knock it the fuck off. Google is your friend. *Use it.*"

Ilya blinks at him, momentarily stunned. His mouth opens around a response, but then he catches the look on Shane's face and wisely shuts it again.

"Okay," he says softly after a beat, holding his hands up in surrender. "Sorry, I keep my mouth shut, *lyubimyy*."

Shane gives a tight nod, then slowly turns back toward his doctor, taking a deep breath before continuing.

“Alright... what now?” His voice tight, dropping his hands back to his belly.

She strips her gloves and disposes of them in the trash. She nods once, grinning at Ilya with a knowing smile before turning her attention back on Shane. Her amused little smile does absolutely nothing to help calm the raging, hormonal beast inside him but he refuses to look like a crazy person more than once during a visit.

“Now we wait.” She shrugs her hands up. “It could take anywhere from a few hours to a few days before you go into labor- if it works. If we don’t see baby by Thursday, I think we should consider inducing you Friday morning.”

“So...” Shane gulps, looking down at his belly, palming the side of it. “I could be having a C-section Friday if I don’t go into labor?” He glances back up at her, eyes shiny and a little terrified.

She shakes her head, “Not necessarily. Remember that it’s only an option if you are struggling to go into labor on your own during the induction process or you have a hard time during delivery. Only other time is when it’s an emergency, but I don’t think you’re gonna need one. She *is* on the bigger side, but I don’t think it’s anything you can’t handle right now.”

“Okay.” Shane nods, feeling his daughter shift under his hand. She’s probably just as uncomfortable as he is, especially after so many position changes on his part.

“You can expect some spotting, and cramps over the next couple hours. The cramps can linger for a bit, so don’t be too worried if they don’t go away.” She informs him. “Give me a call if your water breaks, or your contractions become five minutes apart or less.”

She pats him on the shoulder, hands Ilya Shane’s file to bring with them to the front and sees herself out.

Ilya helps Shane climb into the car, lifting his leg in for him when Shane fails to haul it up after the third try.

He huffs out a labored breath once he’s in, “Oh my god, thank you.”

“Of course, my love. Watch your foot.” He says before closing the door.

Shane swallows, letting his head fall back against the headrest. He cups the base of his belly while attempting to scoot his butt into a more comfortable position, only to move barely an inch from his original spot. His body has never felt so heavy in his life.

He grumbles, “Fuck it, it’s fine,” then pulls the seatbelt across his chest. He tucks the lap strap under his bump, then lets his body relax as much as it can.

“I can’t wait till I can move my body again without feeling pain all over.”

Ilya nods in agreement. Watching Shane suffer like this has not been easy by any means, but knowing they are almost done with this stage is helping him reel in his emotions.

“Do you feel any different now after the thing?” Ilya asks, starting the car.

“Nope.” The exhausted man shakes his head, peering down at his distended middle, chasing his daughter’s movements beneath his hands.

Ilya watches them for a moment with a small, quiet smile, saying nothing. His gaze lingers on Shane’s belly at first, soft and so full of love, before drifting up- unable to help himself as he takes in the man who’s doing all the work of growing the life they made together.

That is... until Shane realizes he’s being stared at.

His eyes track slowly across the car to the driver’s seat, landing on his husband’s expression of open adoration, and his face immediately twists into a grimace.

“What are you staring at?” He snaps bitterly.

Ilya is forced out of his daze with a hard flinch, blinking at Shane for a beat before clicking his tongue in annoyance. He makes a disgruntled noise at the back of his throat before turning his body toward the wheel.

“Ah, so I can’t look at my beautiful husband and be happy now, huh? That bothers you too?”

Shane makes a sorry attempt at adjusting in his seat, pouting out the window.

“Not when there’s nothing beautiful to look at. I’m all sweaty and swollen and I feel like a fat cow.” He pauses for a second before adding, “And if that last bit is about me blowing up at you in the office, I’m sorry...I’m just so uncomfortable and the longer I have to sit around feeling like a bloated whale, the more irritated I become with everything.”

“You may feel all those things, *moya lyubov*, but to me you are so, so beautiful. I don’t care how you feel.”

“Wow, thanks.” Shane huffs a humorless laugh.

“No.” Ilya squeezes his eyes shut with a frustrated sigh, “Is not how I meant it. You know that.”

He turns his body toward Shane again, “You feel like cow, but I don’t see a cow. I see a gorgeous man with a thick, sexy body. With so much life inside him...and your glowing skin is so pretty, and your hair is so shiny.” He says, reaching over to thread his fingers through it.

He deadpans at his husband, “It’s grease, I didn’t shower this morning, remember?” He raises an eyebrow at him.

Ilya says nothing at first, just smiles at him, “Shane, let me admire you...you are only this way for little while longer, huh?”

Shane eyes him curiously, “You really find me beautiful like this? Seriously?”

“I tell you every day, you do not hear me when I say this?”

Shane shoots him a disbelieving look, “Oh, I hear you...I just figured you were saying it just to say it...not because you actually thought it. You know...*being nice*?”

“I always think you’re beautiful, but you are more beautiful than ever with our baby in your belly. Believe me, *moy upryamets*, I would not lie.”

Shane frowns down at the monstrosity taking over his entire lap. He cups the base of it in his hands and takes a deep, soothing breath.

“I can feel my double chins growing double chins...and I look enormous...how could you find this beautiful?”

Ilya pulls out of the parking lot and reaches over to place a hand on Shane’s belly.

“Because your body is growing our beautiful baby. She is big and healthy because you did so well and I promise once she is out, you will not feel so bad anymore.”

Shane shakes his head, “No way for you to know that.”

“Do I need to show you how beautiful you are to me?” A hint of mischief in his voice.

“Depends, does it involve sex in anyway because I might be too tired for that.”

Ilya shrugs, “It could if you want it to.” His thumb brushes back and forth over Shane’s stomach, stopping to press in when the baby kicks in response. “Might help her come out faster.”

“I’ll think about it. Right now, I just want another smoothie, and maybe something with chocolate.”

Ilya smiles, “Ah, I knew it- you are hungry again. We will get you and *malysya* something to eat, yes?”

Shane blushes at the mention, “Thank you.”

“Of course, my love.” He smiles, winking over at him.

Two or so hours later, Shane is remarkably uncomfortable. He honestly wasn’t expecting anything to come of the membrane sweep so soon, so it was a bit of a surprise when the first pain hit him the second they arrived back home.

Since then, he’s been restlessly pacing the hallways, digging his fingers into his lower back and stopping every few feet to roll his hips. The pressure in his groin has increased tenfold, making it feel like her head is right there.

He finds Ilya in the kitchen making himself a snack and comes to a halt just short of the island.

“Fuck,” Shane hisses, pressing his fingers into the underside of his belly. “She wasn’t kidding about these cramps. Ah, shit-”

One hand shoots out to brace against the countertop while the other disappears beneath his shirt, cradling the heavy curve of his stomach. He squeezes his eyes shut, swaying through it.

“I think they’re getting worse,” he grits out.

Ilya pauses mid swipe of the knife over a slice a bread and studies him carefully.

“Are you sure is not labor...cause this looks like labor to me.”

“I don’t think so.” Shane shakes his head, tugging his shirt up over his belly. The fabric suddenly feels suffocatingly tight, sticking to his damp skin. He’s sweating enough to leave himself clammy and flushed, every inch of him overheated and uncomfortable.

“Why don’t you go-”

“AH!” Shane gasps, folding forward so suddenly it cuts Ilya off mid-sentence. His breath catches hard on the sound, both hands flying to the underside of his belly. “Oh shit, oh shit, Ilya...I think my water just broke.” He gulps, stepping back to see the large puddle forming at his feet.

“Shit.” Shane grunts, feeling the pressure return with a vengeance.

And yeah, this is definitely real labor now.

“O-okay, okay.” Ilya moves quickly to his side, sliding an arm around his back. “Let’s sit you down, sweetheart.”

“No, no- I’m gonna get the chair all dirty.” Shane fusses.

He’s hunched over as Ilya carefully guides him toward the kitchen table and lowers him into a chair.

“Is leather, it will be fine.” He dismisses his husband’s concern. “Now you are in real labor, *da?*” Ilya says, watching the way Shane squirms in the seat, unable to get comfortable.

“I-I guess so,” Shane chokes out breathlessly. “Yeah. No going back now.” He laughs nervously.

Another cramp rolls through him and he writhes helplessly. His face twists with pain as his hands clutch at the underside of his belly. “Oh my god, it hurts even worse now.”

Ilya nods eagerly, realizing he might want to hurry up, “Okay, I will get the bag and put it in the car. You stay here. I will come right back for you, yes?”

“Okay. Good plan.” Shane nods quickly, trying to focus on his breathing instead of the pain wrapping around his middle.

Ilya cups the back of Shane’s damp neck and pulls him close, pressing a kiss to the side of his head. Shane’s cheeks are flushed when Ilya pulls back, his eyes glossy with unshed tears.

“Is okay, *solnyshko*,” Ilya mutters softly. “We are finally going to meet her very soon. It is very exciting, right?” He lifts his eyebrows, trying to coax a smile out of Shane despite the obvious apprehension buzzing beneath his own excitement.

Shane forces a strained smile, rubbing firm circles over his belly, “Y-yeah...exciting.” He pants. “Just, hurry up, okay?”

“Yes, I am going. Right now.” Ilya tells him, running toward the front door.

Shane paces the hospital room with both hands braced against the small of his back. His shoulders tense every time another contraction starts to build, but Ilya can usually see the pain building in his expression first. It then turns into a full body experience.

So far, he’s asked Ilya to only step in when he needs him. It isn’t personal, Shane just can’t handle being fussed over right now and Ilya, of all people, knows that. The pain demands too much of his concentration, and even though he loves his husband, being touched right now feels like a sensory nightmare.

Labor alone is already a sensory nightmare between the pain, the bodily fluids leaking all over the place, and the wires he keeps getting hung up on. The nurse even tried to help him feel more comfortable by suggesting a second hospital gown that could be worn around his back like a robe, but that was quickly vetoed.

The gowns are already huge on him, to accommodate the size of his swollen, heavy belly- the last thing he needs is to feel weighed down by the scratchy, annoying fabric twice over.

So, Ilya stays nearby and lets Shane move however he wants, while he hovers quietly by the window without crowding him. Every so often Shane pauses beside the bed or leans against the foot railing, breathing through contractions exactly the way they practiced in Lamaze. Slow, controlled and relaxed.

It’s working at the moment, but the contractions are coming hard and regular now and Shane’s breathing grows rougher every time they hit. Ilya can tell he’s getting less patient each time, begging the pain to leave him when he’s had too much.

He’s only four centimeters dilated according to the nurse, which feels extremely unfair considering how much pain he’s in already. The nurse had tried to reassure him that slow dilation this early wasn’t necessarily a bad thing or out of the norm, but it still struck a nerve.

Ilya gets it. No one wants to go through that amount of pain only to be told it’s doing nothing to further the process. Shane is justified in his frustration.

The contractions will likely bring significant change over the next hour or two, but for now Shane's doing his best to stay positive.

Halfway through another contraction, Shane bends forward with both palms planted on the mattress and suddenly begs for Ilya to get his hands on him.

Nearly tripping over himself, he rushes to Shane's side. "Where you want me, *lyubimyy*?" He hovers, hands at the ready.

"F-fuck, my back. Push my back!" Shane pants, haphazardly gesturing to where he wants Ilya to touch him.

The Russian man takes his hands and presses them into the small of Shane's back. He starts kneading his fists into the tight muscles there, getting a relieved sigh from the pregnant man.

"Pressure is okay?" Ilya asks, glancing up at Shane for confirmation that this is what he wants.

"*Ah, ah.*" Shane pants, shifting his weight, "Yes, perfect. *Ow*, a little harder actually. Don't be afraid to really get in there." He tells him, hanging his head forward.

Ilya doesn't shy away from the pressure, and Shane seems to appreciate it. When the contraction finally eases, Shane turns and throws his arms around Ilya. Despite the massive curve of his belly between them, he still tries to bury his face in the crook of Ilya's neck.

"I hate this so much," he whines into his husband's warm skin, tears already stinging his eyes.

Ilya sighs softly with a sympathetic frown and wraps his arms around Shane's back. "Oh, sweetheart, I know. Is a lot right now. But you are—"

Shane jerks back, brow pinched tight. "Don't even fucking tell me I'm doing well right now, Rozanov." He sniffles, swiping the tears away underneath his eyes, "We've barely gotten started and I'm already a mess."

Ilya tilts his head with a puzzled look, "Who said that?" he teases gently. "Someone told you that?"

Shane lets out the tiniest huff of annoyed laughter, though a reluctant smile still tugs at his mouth.

"No." He replies halfheartedly, dropping his eyes to his belly.

"Then why do you think you are a mess, huh?" Ilya asks quietly, picking Shane's chin up until their eyes meet. "Because you are in pain? You are *in labor*, Shane. Of course it hurts."

Shane sighs with a roll of his eyes, "Yeah, okay- but like, I've broken ribs before. I've taken hits to the face- broken my literal collarbone, Ilya. All of that hurt like hell, and not once did

it make me feel like this.” He suddenly winces, both hands dropping beneath the weight of his belly. “Fuck,” he hisses, face twisting as another contraction grips him.

“Ah, no... because those injuries were not a little human trying to come out of a hole the size of a quarter,” Ilya smiles, swiping a tear off Shane’s cheek. “Very different kinds of pain.”

Shane can’t help but glare at him, “Little? In what world is your giant fucking baby *little*, Ilya?” He growls, pulling away and planting his hands on the bed again, “*Shit*- J-just shut the hell up and push against my back again,” he grits out, motioning behind him.

Ilya smirks faintly but obliges immediately, planting his hands firmly against Shane’s lower back. He starts muttering small encouragements in Russian, and little by little, the contraction finally loosens its hold on him again.

“Shit... I think I’m gonna need the epidural after all.” He pushes his hands against his back, stretching a little.

Ilya starts toward the door. “Do you want me to-”

“No. Not yet.” Shane shakes his head quickly, letting out a hard breath. “Let me lay down for a bit first and see if that helps.”

He waddles carefully toward the side of the bed with one hand braced beneath the heavy sway of his belly. Ilya is beside him in an instant, with a hand at his waist, making sure he doesn’t trip over the many cords and wires attached to him.

“Easy, slow,” Ilya tells him, moving the gown out of the way so he can sit on the pad they laid out for him. Since his water broke, he’s been consistently leaking and instead of changing out the bedsheets a million times, they offered to keep replacing these every hour.

Shane lowers himself onto the mattress with a groan, exhausted already, and Ilya quickly moves to help lift his legs fully onto the bed. As he does, he catches sight of the streaks of fluid running down Shane’s swollen calves and realizes the tops of his grippy socks are soaked.

“Can I have the blanket?” Shane asks, trying to reach up, but stopping short of his massive belly.

“Hold on,” Ilya tells him gently.

He carefully peels the damp socks off and tosses them aside before disappearing into the ensuite bathroom. A moment later, he returns with a fresh pair of socks packaged in plastic and a warm, wet cloth draped over one hand.

Shane watches through half-lidded eyes as Ilya begins wiping away the sticky fluid from his inner thighs, down his calves, all the way to his feet. The cloth is warm enough to make Shane sigh softly despite his discomfort. The tension slowly eases from his body under his husband’s touch.

“There,” Ilya says quietly once he’s finished, sliding the clean socks onto Shane’s feet. “Feel better?”

“Much. Thank you, honey.” Shane’s soft, sleepy smile is met by Ilya’s lips. He pecks a quick kiss before he pulls the blankets up over Shane’s legs. With the same tenderness, he tucks the blanket around Shane’s belly before settling onto the edge of the bed beside him.

His hand comes to rest on the bump, feeling the warmth of the stretched skin through the gown. His thumb slowly strokes over the belly, and his expression softens even further as the baby shifts beneath his palm.

“She is doing okay in here?” he asks gently, mesmerized by the way her little limbs distort the round curve.

Shane lets out a shaky breath, one hand drifting protectively over top of Ilya’s. “I think so,” he admits with a small nod. “She’s been a little restless since this all started.”

“Ah, she is panicked. I would be, if I was being kicked out of my house too.” Ilya jokes.

“Yeah, I guess.” Shane giggles, staring down at their hands. “...Thank you for taking such good care of us.” He says, glancing up at Ilya again. “No way in hell would I have been able to do this without you.”

Ilya’s crooked smile warms Shane’s heart the second their eyes meet.

“Of course, *moya lyubov*,” he coos, “Anything for my two favorite people in the whole wide world.”

He gives Shane a little wink, rubbing his hand gently back and forth over the tight curve of his belly while Shane melts deeper into the pillows beneath him.

Their quiet moment is shattered almost immediately by another contraction.

At first, it only makes Shane tense slightly against the pillows, a sharp inhale slipping through his teeth. But within seconds, the pain spikes hard and fast.

“A-ah, shit that hurts,” he gasps, eyes going wide as he realizes his belly is getting tighter with no end in sight, both hands flying to its sides. “Holy shit, okay- that’s enough!”

Shane’s breathing breaks apart into desperate pants. “*Hoo- hoo- Ah, hoo, hoo, ah, ah- arh-Ilya!*” He blindly reaches out for his husband, grabbing hold of Ilya’s hand and squeezing hard enough to hurt. He turns to him with wide eyes full of panic.

“I’m right here!” Ilya tells him, half standing off the bed, “Keep breathing, Shane.”

“It hurts so bad, Ilya.” He sobs, kicking his legs out beneath the blankets as his whole body writhes against the mattress, unable to stay still under the force of it. The muscles in his stomach pull painfully tight, as if this one contraction is meant to get the baby out in one go.

“When will it fucking end?!” He gasps out, throwing his head back against the pillows.

“I know, I know,” Ilya says immediately, smoothing his free hand over Shane’s damp hair. He curls his hand around the back of Shane’s neck and begins coaching him through the breathing techniques again. “Look at me, sweetheart. Breathe with me.”

Shane tries, but he can’t focus long enough to get through a second round of *hee-hee-hoo’s* without wanting to punch Ilya in the mouth.

“Too much,” he gasps. “Stop breathing on me!” He shouts, pushing at Ilya’s chest.

Ilya allows Shane to push him back, and waits until Shane reaches for him again which is only a second later.

As the contraction starts to mellow out, Ilya presses a kiss against his husband’s damp forehead, continuing to let Shane crush his hand in a vise grip. “You are doing so well, *moya lyubov*. So well.”

Shane shakes his head weakly, tears finally spilling free as the pain settles. “I can’t- Ilya, I can’t do that again.”

“Yes, you can,” Ilya insists softly but firmly. “You already are. Every time you say you can’t but you do.”

Shane scowls at him, “Let me rephrase then- I don’t *WANT* to do that again. Do you understand me?”

He rubs slow circles over Shane’s belly, nodding, “Ah, yes...I do. I will go get the nurse.” He smiles, pressing a kiss to the side of Shane’s sweaty temple before hurrying out of the room.

“Thank you.” Shane nods, letting his head fall back again with a heavy sigh. He returns his hands to his belly, rubbing soothing circles into it.

The nurse comes in fifteen minutes after Ilya goes to find her.

“So, we wanna talk about that epidural now?” She smiles, squirting hand sanitizer into her hand.

Shane nods, massaging the underside of his belly.

“Yes, please.” He replies weakly.

“You got it, sweetie.” She says, “How about we do a quick check and see where we are first? Doc is gonna wanna know before putting in the orders.” she explains, pulling on a glove. Her eyes flick toward the monitor beside the bed and she seems to stall a moment.

“Everything okay?” Shane asks immediately, noticing the way she’s watching the heart rate.

“Mhmm, just fine,” she assures him. “Her heart rate’s a little elevated, so I’m just going to note that and—”

“How elevated is elevated?” Shane interrupts, looking down at his belly before back up at her. “Is she okay?”

“She’s sitting between 180 and 182 right now, which is considered high. Is she moving around a lot?” the nurse asks.

Shane shrugs awkwardly. “No more than she has been.”

The nurse waves a hand dismissively, like it’s nothing urgent. “Okay, then I’m gonna order an ultrasound just to make sure everything looks alright. Sound good?”

“Uh... I guess so, yeah.” Shane swallows hard. “Should I be worried?”

“No. Let’s take things one step at a time.” She gives him a reassuring smile. “I’m gonna put that order in, then I’ll come back and check you.”

“O-okay.” Shane nods, then winces as a contraction starts up.

He turns his head toward the monitor, to watch if it causes a noticeable change. For a second, the baby’s heart rate jumps to 183 before dipping back down to 179.

“Ilya,” he pants, “what if something’s wrong with her?”

He adamantly shakes his head, “No, sweetheart. I’m sure she’s fine.” Ilya takes Shane’s hand in his and gives it a gentle squeeze. “Do not panic, *da*? I’m sure is nothing.”

Shane tries to focus on breathing through the contraction, but his eyes stay fixed anxiously on the monitor beside the bed.

The numbers never leave the danger zone. Eventually he has no choice but to move his attention back on his belly. He holds the side of the tight dome, pressing his hands in firmly to combat the pain.

“*Hooo*, oh, *hooo*, ow, *hoooo*-my god, this fucking hurts.” Shane vocalizes, panting hard on the uptick of the contraction. “Ahh, ahhh, shit- *Ahhhh*.” He throws his head back, squeezing his eyes shut. His hands shoot down by his sides, fingertips straining against the mattress.

He begins panting through his teeth, twisting his hips in an attempt to ease the pressure in his pelvis.

Ilya watches the fetal heart rate closely, chewing anxiously on his bottom lip as the monitor keeps up its relentless rhythm. **179- 180- 181-179- 180.**

Shane’s grip tightens around Ilya’s hand as the contraction peaks. Sweat beads along his forehead, his breathing uneven and shaky by the time it eases off again.

“She’s still high.” He says, voice shaky. “Ilya, why is she still high?”

Ilya moves in closer, one hand cupping the side of Shane’s face while the other stays locked with his. “Shane.” His tone is deliberately calm. “Look at me, *solnyshko*. Until we know what

is happening, do not get upset. Is easy to worry, yes, but we don't know what's going on. Keep eyes on me. Not that."

But Shane can't quite drag his eyes away. He knows it's not long until the next contraction so he tries his best to relax like Ilya said, but it's like his body knows something is wrong.

He begins fidgeting with the blanket in one hand, while the other rubs restless circles over his belly.

"Is okay, *moya lyubov*." Ilya rubs a firm hand over his shoulder. "She is okay."

"But what if she's not. What if she's in distress?" Shane worries, taking a deep, trembling breath. "What if something's wrong and they don't help her in time?"

Ilya's expression falters for just a second, just enough for Shane to catch it.

"I knew it. You think something's wrong too," Shane tears up immediately.

"No." Ilya blurts out, then relaxes with a shake of his head. "We should wait and let doctor tell us what's wrong before anything else. Okay? No reason to worry until they give us one."

Then, somewhere beyond the door, Shane hears the rattling sound of something heavy being wheeled quickly down the hallway. It grows louder by the second, accompanied by hurried voices meshing together just outside the room.

A knot tightens painfully in Shane's throat when he realizes they are absolutely talking about him. His hand instantly moves to find Ilya's, and holds on tight.

The door opens a second later and several people file inside at once.

The ultrasound tech comes first, maneuvering a bulky machine through the doorway. Shane's nurse follows close behind them, another nurse on her heel. The last to enter is his doctor, already pulling on a pair of gloves as she crosses the room.

Not once does the smile leave her face, which should be reassuring, but Shane knows that's just her way of trying to keep him from freaking out because clearly there is something to freak out about.

"She's already trying to be the most popular girl in the room and she hasn't even made her debut yet, huh?" the doctor jokes lightly as she takes her place beside the bed. "Little overachiever."

"Just like her dad," Ilya teases with a wink, squeezing Shane's shoulder.

Normally Shane would've rolled his eyes at that and had a silly little comeback ready, but he's really not in the mood for lighthearted banter. He can barely breathe.

"Why are there so many people?" he asks, voice thin and breathless as his eyes dart between them. "What's happening?"

“Nothing yet, I promise,” the doctor assures him gently. “They’re here in case we need extra hands. That’s all.” She gestures toward the blankets. “Can I lift this?”

“Yeah,” Shane nods before adjusting his body.

He watches anxiously as she folds the blankets back from his legs and takes a seat on the edge of the bed. She motions for him to scoot down a little farther and open his legs for her.

Shane glances up at Ilya with an uneasy look and is greeted with a soft, comforting smile. It does nothing to calm his nerves. He closes his eyes, wets his lips and tries to take another deep breath.

The exam is quick and efficient on his doctor’s end. “Good, we’re a little more than halfway there now.” She says, withdrawing her fingers.

At the same time, the ultrasound tech wheels the machine closer and within seconds they have gel on Shane’s stomach and the probe pressed against the taut dome of his belly.

“Let’s just take a quick look at what’s going on in here,” the doctor says, watching the screen carefully over the tech’s shoulder.

The room falls quiet except for the rapid thumping of the baby’s heart rate on the monitor. Shane can see everyone looking at the screen, expressions fixed and unchanging as they assess the issue.

The doctor murmurs something quietly to the tech before stepping back into Shane’s view. At the same time, she starts helping ease him carefully onto his side.

“Alright,” she says calmly, “here’s the situation. First and foremost, we’re gonna keep you off your back. I don’t want you lying flat again until after she’s born.”

“W-why?” Shane stammers out. “What’s wrong?”

“Remember a few months ago when we talked about your placenta being marginally low-lying? I told you I wasn’t too concerned because it wasn’t covering the cervix enough to become dangerous?”

“Yeah,” Shane says faintly, swallowing hard around the growing lump in his throat.

“Well, the way your daughter is positioned right now, she’s putting a lot of pressure on the placenta during contractions.” The doctor keeps her voice calm and calculated. “In certain instances, like this one, where the placenta gets compressed, the blood flow and oxygen supply to the baby can temporarily decrease. That’s why her heart rate’s been elevated.”

All the color drains from Shane’s face in an instant.

“Oh my god.” His hand flies to his mouth, the other to his belly. “Oh my god, she’s suffocating? I’ve been suffocating her-”

“Shane.” The doctor’s voice sharpens just enough to cut through his panic and draw his attention back onto her. “Listen to me. This is in no way your fault. You had no way of knowing, and we caught it in time. She is okay right now.”

She points toward the monitor, where already the heart rate has dropped to 175.

“See?” she says warmly. “You’re already helping her by lying on your side. She’s improving drastically as we speak.”

Shane stares at the number, studying it closely, in fear that it might start to go up again.

“The only thing I’m concerned about,” the doctor continues carefully, “is whether this has happened before without us realizing it.”

A broken sound leaves Shane’s throat, “Oh my god...”

“Have you spent much time lying on your back at home?”

“No.” Shane shakes his head quickly. “She’s too big. I’m always either sitting up or on my side. Sometimes I’d wake up on my back, but-”

“But I would turn him as soon as possible,” Ilya cuts in immediately.

The doctor nods once. “Okay. That’s good.”

She opens her mouth again, but Shane interrupts before she can continue.

“Does she need to come out?” he blurts out, eyes a bit wild. “Like right now? Just take her out. I-I don’t care about surgery anymore, just take her out-”

“Hey.” The doctor takes a seat on the edge of the bed again, resting a hand over Shane’s leg. “Listen to me, Shane. She is stable right now. I’m not going to put you through emergency surgery unless I truly believe we have to. Okay?”

“But what if she- Oh god...” Shane hisses, grabbing hold of his belly. “Hold on.”

Another contraction tightens across his belly, hard enough to steal the breath from his lungs. He curls forward with a strangled sound and drops his forehead against his arm while the nurse quickly adjusts the fetal monitor again.

The heart rate climbs to 176 but no higher.

The doctor visibly relaxes a fraction but Shane does not. He’s a nervous wreck the entire contraction, obsessively watching the monitor as the pain crests.

“What does this mean?” he asks shakily once the contraction eases. “Could she have brain damage or neurological problems or something?”

“I can’t answer that for certain right now,” the doctor says honestly. “But as soon as she’s born, I’d like the NICU team to evaluate her and run some tests just to be safe. We may want

to monitor her for a little while.”

“Oh my god, Ilya,” Shane chokes out, covering his face with both hands as fresh tears dampen his cheeks.

Ilya immediately steps closer. One hand smoothing through Shane’s damp hair while the other settles firmly over his belly.

His own expression is heavy with worry, but he does his best to remain calm when he speaks for Shane’s sake.

“Shh... *moya lyubov*, is okay, she’s going to be okay. Our girl is very strong.”

Then Ilya glances up at the doctor, “Shane will still get to hold her first, yes?”

“Of course,” the doctor says without hesitation. “Nothing in your birth plan is changing. We’ll place her right on your chest, just like you wanted.” Her gaze softens as she looks directly at Shane. “You’ll both have time with her before we take her to the NICU, and the moment she clears her tests, she’ll come right back to you.”

Shane’s face crumples at the thought of them taking his freshly born baby away from him only moments after her birth. Far away from the only home she’s known for nine months, to a cold, lonely place full of loud sounds and bright lights. His stomach clenches at the thought of her needing him and him being so far away. His lip trembles and more tears well up in his eyes.

“C-can Ilya go with her to the NICU?” he asks shakily. “I don’t want her to be alone.”

“*Moya lyubov*...” Ilya exhales, thumb brushing gently at Shane’s hairline. “What if you need me here?”

“No.” Shane shakes his head hard, tears falling. “She’ll need you more than I will, please, Ilya I won’t be able to relax knowing that she’s by herself.”

“Okay... okay.” Ilya soothes him at once, voice soft as he strokes Shane’s hair again. “Do not think about this right now. One thing at a time.”

The doctor nods, listening carefully.

“When she goes in for testing, he can stay with her the whole time, if that’s what you want.”

“That’s what I want,” Shane says immediately, turning his head slightly to look at Ilya again. “I don’t want her to be alone, Ilya, please.”

“She won’t be,” Ilya promises without missing a beat. He leans down and presses a soft kiss to Shane’s hair. “I will go with her. Is okay, sweetheart.”

Shane lets out a shaky breath, clinging to that answer.

“Can I still have an epidural or does this complicate that?” he asks the doctor.

“Of course you can have one,” she replies. “I’ll put the order in right away. Just remember that you’re not gonna be able to lie on your back and no prolonged sitting.”

Shane nods. “Okay, I can do that.”

“We’ll get you comfortable on your side or on hands-and-knees,” she adds, “So as long as you’re okay with that, I’ll put the orders in.”

“I’m good.” Shane nods again. “Anything to help with the pain and keep her safe.” He lays a protective hand over his belly.

“Okay, I’ll be right back with the anesthesiologist.” she says before stepping out of the room.

The second the door closes and it’s only the two of them left, Shane can finally break down.

He covers his face with both hands, a sob tearing out of him as his whole body starts to tremble.

“Fuck, I’m so scared, Ilya,” he chokes. “What if she’s-”

“She’s not,” Ilya cuts in sharply.

“But you don’t know that!” Shane shrieks, his voice rising with panic.

“None of us do, Shane!” Ilya inadvertently shouts back. He quickly reins it back in as he sees how shaken his husband is.

“Sweetheart, please,” He goes around to the other side of the bed and pulls Shane’s face to his chest. “We don’t know anything yet, but right now she is okay. Heart rate is coming down. You see right there?” He says, pointing at the monitor that’s been reading 169 for the last five minutes.

Shane shakes his head, still crying. “That doesn’t mean she doesn’t have brain-”

“It means we focus on what we *do* know,” Ilya insists, “She is with us.” He places a hand on Shane’s belly. “You are with her. We are here. That is what matters right now. She will be born and we will worry about her brain then. Yes?”

Shane lets out a broken, uneven breath, but it doesn’t stop the tears. His shoulders keep trembling as another wave of fear rolls through him and he clings to Ilya.

Ilya tightens his hold around him, pressing his forehead briefly to Shane’s shoulder.

“Breathe with me, *moya lyubov*,” he mumbles against the hospital gown. “Breathe. One thing at a time. Please.”

Another five minutes pass and Ilya has managed to help Shane relax some. He’s lying there, playing with the crucifix around Ilya’s neck when he breaks the silence with a small voice and says, “Can you call my mom? I think I need her here.”

Ilya smiles, brushing hair off Shane's forehead with his fingertips, "I will call her."

"Now?" Shane insists gently.

"I will get her here as fast as I can." Ilya assures him, kissing his tear-stained face. "You rest; I will call."

"Thank you." Shane snuffles, wiping at his wet cheeks.

"Of course." Ilya stands from where he'd been crouched beside the bed and reaches for the phone in his back pocket to call his mother-in-law.

Yuna arrives an hour later with a small tote bag slung over her shoulder and a large coffee in hand, which she passes off to Ilya the second she walks in.

He kisses her cheek before lifting the cup slightly toward her as a nod of appreciation.

"Thank you," he whispers.

"Of course, honey. How is he doing?" she asks softly, glancing toward the bed.

Shane is asleep on his side with a peanut ball wedged between his legs to keep his hips open. The room is dim and quiet around him, sans the white noise machine humming away on low. The blinds have been lowered, leaving only a thin sliver of daylight peeking through.

According to Ilya, the epidural had gone okay, but unfortunately, he can still feel quite a bit on his left side and some heavy pressure that comes with each contraction. Aside from that, a majority of his pain is gone and he's able to get some sleep, which is a major win for them all.

Ilya tells her in a hushed voice, "Sleeping is good for him I think."

"Of course." Yuna nods. "Did the doctor say anything else about what's going to happen with the baby?"

Ilya shakes his head. "No. Only that we have to wait until she is born. Shane will get to hold her, and then they will bring her to the Nee-Ne-Q place." He furrows his brow, searching for the word.

"The NICU," Yuna supplies, "Yeah that's what I figured. Poor baby, he's gotta be so worried."

She swallows hard, her eyes drifting back to her son before she crosses the room and sets her things down. Motioning for Ilya to sit beside her, she tries to offer a distraction by chatting quietly about her day and listening while he recounts everything that had happened so far.

The conversation is cut short when a soft groan cuts through the room. "Mmm... Ilya?" he mumbles, trying to lift his head.

Ilya is on his feet in an instant, hurrying over to his bedside. "Da... everything okay?"

Shane shakes his head as he wraps an arm around his belly. “Contraction...I’m feeling a lot of pressure,” he grunts, wincing as it increases.

Ilya glances at the monitor and sees another contraction building. He rests a hand on Shane’s belly and feels how tight it is.

“Should be over soon,” he tells him, smoothing Shane’s hair back from his forehead. “Can I get you anything?”

“More ice chips?” Shane requests timidly, glancing up at him through his eyelashes.

Ilya nods, leaning down to kiss his forehead, “*Konechno, milyy.*” He pauses before stepping away and eyes Yuna across the room. He smiles back down at Shane before adding, “Ah, and your mom is here.”

“She is?” Shane perks up, trying to roll onto his back to look for her.

“Ah-ah, no.” Ilya places a firm hand on Shane’s hip before he can turn too far. “She will come here. Don’t move.” He says, motioning for Yuna to come over.

“Mom!” Shane calls blindly into the room, reaching his arm covered in wires into the air.

Yuna is beside him in seconds, already taking his hand and brushing a hand through his hair. “My baby,” she coos gently. “I’m right here, sweetheart. Ilya tells me you’re doing so well.”

Something inside him collapses upon receiving his mother’s comfort. His expression crumples under the weight of his emotions, and pulls her in closer.

His voice trembles, “Thank you for coming...” and an exhausted sigh of relief escapes him as tears trickle down his face.

“Oh, honey. I wouldn’t miss this for the world.”

Despite the enormous belly beneath those blankets and the wedding band on his finger, he’s still the same little boy who, every now and then, needs his mom.

Ilya watches them from the doorway, admiring the overwhelming love shared between them. He presses a hand against his chest, fingers tracing the crucifix beneath his shirt. Shane’s lucky to have not one but two living parents who love him unconditionally.

And of course, Ilya knows his mom is here with him in spirit, but he’d give anything to have her physically on this earth right now...for her to see him become a father- the kind he wishes he had.

He gives the two of them some space and disappears out of the room, taking his time to find more ice chips.

Shane barely manages to close his eyes again over the next couple hours. With the epidural only taking half of his pain away, he’s left feeling a bit restless and uncomfortable with

unfortunately nowhere to go but his bed.

Ilya has been instructed by Shane to not stop rocking his hips back and forth for him because it helps with the discomfort. The task is made easy by the peanut ball still wedged between his knees. It's been helping with the pressure a lot, but as the contractions continue to get closer together, the more the pressure intensifies.

For the past hour, Shane has been clinging to the bed's handrails, a low, steady moan emitting from deep within his chest. A sign that things are progressing in the right direction.

Yuna's been a great support in draping cool cloths over his wrists, as well as feeding him ice chips whenever he asks for one.

"How are we doing in here?" Nurse Dani asks, coming around to the left side of the bed where Shane is facing. He picks his tired head up and blinks wearily at her.

"Surviving." He swallows, shifting his hips a little before letting his head recline back on his arm. "Don't stop." He orders Ilya.

"Wouldn't dare." He flashes him a crooked smile, continuing to move his hand against him.

"Are we okay with another cervix check real quick? I feel like we might be pretty close now."

Shane nods and Ilya steps in to help remove the peanut ball and sets it off at the end of the bed. Yuna steps away for privacy and Dani snaps on a glove before situating herself between Shane's knees.

Ilya pushes his right foot back, that's entirely numb, to help open up his hips and Dani proceeds with the exam.

"Oop, yeah, okay." She pulls her fingers out of him and starts toward the trashcan. "I'm gonna go alert the team. That is definitely her head coming down, we're ready."

Shane picks his head up again, more awake now, "Wait, what...so soon?" He snaps his eyes to Ilya, who is beaming with excitement.

"Yup, it's time to meet your baby." She smiles disposing of her glove and jogging out of the room.

"Holy shit." Shane mumbles under his breath, staring down at his belly. "Holy. Shit. I really have to do this, don't I?"

She touches his face softly, directing his attention up at her, "Listen to me, you're gonna do great, honey. She's almost here and all the pain and discomfort you're feeling will soon be forgotten when you get to see her cute little face."

Shane immediately reaches for Ilya, squeezing his hand tight the second their fingers touch. "Oh god...I really hope she actually fits. There is nothing *little* about this baby, mom." He gulps, shaking his head at the sheer size of his belly. He's seen the scans- he knows how big

she is compared to other babies and the thought of having to push that out of his body is still terrifying no matter how ready he is.

Ilya can't help but snort at Shane's remark. "Don't worry, Shane, she will." He says, resting a hand on the side of his belly. "You're going to do so well, *moya lyubov*."

"Holy shit," He tips his head back, blinking up at the ceiling, "we're really about to meet her, Ilya. We're about to be parents." His eyes wide and full of fear.

He grunts when another contraction starts up and along with it comes an intense wave of pressure causing Shane to squeeze his legs closed.

"Oh shit...oh shit," he tucks his head against his arm, pulling his hand out of Ilya's to wrap around his belly, "I think I need to push."

"Just wait for the doctor." Yuna tells him, rubbing the white knuckles of his left hand, that have yet to let go of the bedrails for over ten minutes now.

"No shit, but it's a little hard not to."

Soon enough, the entire room is a busy flow of nurses setting up, as well as the preparations for transport to the NICU.

He tries desperately not to focus on that as he's repositioned onto his hands and knees. It was part of his birth plan to be able to give birth however he felt most comfortable and given the circumstances, he rather do it the safest way at this point.

His doctor has no qualms about it, in fact supporting the position fully since it helps take all the pressure off the cord and placenta.

His face is squished against a cushy pillow that he has his arms wrapped securely around and his belly is pressed into the mattress below him. They are still getting everything ready, but in the meantime letting Shane give small practice pushes when he feels the need to.

Before he was even helped into such a vulnerable position, with his ass on display for the room to see, he kindly asked his mother to step out. It's one thing having a million random people stare into your backside while you push a whole human out, it's another thing having your mother there too.

Ilya leans in close with a warm smile, brushing a thumb across Shane's cheek.

"Hey..." Ilya whispers, and Shane reluctantly opens his eyes. Fresh tears rim his lash line, a few dropping onto his pillow. He takes a deep shaky breath before Ilya continues.

"You are strong, you are brave...you are safe here...you can do this, *lyubimyy*. I'm right here beside you, whole way."

Shane closes his eyes again, more tears streaming out. His lip quivers as he whispers back, "I love you...but I'm so scared."

Ilya's brow pinches together yet his expression remains soft, "No, you don't need to be scared, my love. You can do this." He presses a kiss to his forehead. "I love you so much."

"I love you." Shane gulps, taking Ilya's hand.

"I love you." Ilya repeats.

The doctor steps in behind Shane, gowned up and ready to go, "We ready to meet this sweet girl?"

"Oh god." Shane begins to tremble, tucking his face into the pillow. "Hell no."

"We are very ready." Ilya nods, feeling Shane's grip on his hand tighten.

The doctor nods and gently touches the sides of Shane's hips as a signal to get ready.

"Next contraction, let's give it a go. No more practice, this is it. Okay, Shane?"

Shane nods fervently into the pillow, widening his knees to help open himself up. The first push feels awkward because he can't feel half of his body, but the second push comes with a little more confidence.

"That's great, Shane. Keep at it, just like that."

Shane nods again, and turns his face toward Ilya.

"I love you." He whispers with a hitch in his voice, closing his eyes.

Ilya rubs his right hand over Shane's upper back, kissing his bare shoulder where the gown has slipped off, "I love you."

Another push, and then another. Shane is really giving it his all. He feels so much pressure in his bottom that the next few pushes almost feel impossible.

"*Aarrgh*, god dammit, I can't get her out. S-she's not coming out." Shane bellows miserably, pushing himself upright on his arms, against the half-reclined mattress. He shakes his head telling them they should just take her out. He's not built to deliver a baby of her size.

What follows is a chorus of nurses and Ilya praising him for his work so far, and telling him not to give up.

"Shane, she's coming down. It's slow, but guess what- labor is not a race. Keep at it." His doctor says, pressing a hand firmly against his sacrum. "That's it, good... good, Shane!"

She praises him as he pushes again, his face beet-red and covered in sweat already from his efforts.

"Ow, ow, ow. No, no I can't do this. It really hurts." He pants, feeling all the pain of labor settling on his left side. "I can't do it- she's not coming out."

“She’s coming, Shane- I promise you. Keep going.”

“I can’t.” He shakes his head, dropping it down against the mattress. “Please, I can’t push anymore.”

“You’ve been pushing for fifteen minutes straight. Take a small break, push when you need to.” She assures him and a nurse on his left begins adjusting the fetal heart monitor under his belly. He anxiously asks for the number and finds relief in knowing she’s holding steady.

Ilya leans in close, “Do you want to try on your side?”

“No.” Shane shakes his head, breathing raggedly as he rests his body against the pillows.

Ilya is handed a cold cloth to press against Shane’s head and dabs the flushed skin of his burning cheeks with care.

In Russian, Ilya tells him, *“What did I say about being strong, huh? You are much stronger than labor. You can push her out. She is big, okay, but you are bigger.”*

Shane nods like he agrees and up again he goes.

“Push, Shane.” Ilya coaches, taking a quick peek behind him, “You can do this, *moya lyubov*, push! Her head is right there.”

“It is?” He groans, dropping his head forward. *“Ahhh, fuck me that fucking hurts.”*

His doctor starts assisting with her fingers, helping the head begin to crown.

“Shane, keep at it, she’s almost fully crowned here.” She says, and proudly tells him good job when the next push brings her head right against his opening. “Pant, pant, pant, go slow here, okay? Her head is big and I don’t want you to tear as it comes through.”

He rolls his eyes with a grunt, and grits out, “Oh, great,” while bearing down again and unfortunately, he’s unable to control his strength. Two pushes with minimal assist, followed by a horrific yelp from him and her head is out.

“Good job, Shane. No tearing!” She announces.

“Amazing.” Shane pants, rubbing his heavy belly hanging between him and the bed.

Ilya, who at this point is practically supporting most of Shane’s weight, looks between Shane’s legs and begins tearing up.

“She has dark hair, *lyubimyy*, so dark!” Ilya exclaims, informing Shane of his findings. He leans in, pressing countless kisses against his temple and boasts about getting the mini-Shane he has been praying for.

For nearly forty-five minutes now, the laboring man has been giving it his all. He has officially shut out everything but the relentless need to push, with his cries of pain being the

only sound filling the room. He works tirelessly to birth their daughter, sobbing at the end of each push and begging the doctor to just pull her out already.

He's exhausted and weak and in so much pain, but finally, after one last brutal push, one shoulder slips free, then the other. The doctor gives a gentle tug around her body and with a gush of fluid and a whole shit ton of things to say, she slides into the world screaming her little head off.

"She's out," She chimes happily, announcing, "and definitely a girl!" before suctioning her mouth and nose with a bulb syringe.

Shane collapses into the mattress, his body going limp as a wet sob rips out of him. Elated to finally get to meet his reward for all the hours of hard work he spent carrying and birthing her.

"Oh, thank God- thank God. *Holy* shit that was hard." He pants, barely able to catch his breath as he's being turned over.

Shane's world comes to a halt upon catching his first glimpse of her. Aside from falling in love with Ilya all those years ago, he's never been a big believer in love at first sight, but he's pretty sure this is what that would feel like. He's never felt so protective, felt so much love for another human being before, especially of one who could be considered a perfect stranger. A person who, moments ago, only existed inside of him.

But he does know her, and she's anything but a stranger which is the most confusing feeling in the entire world. She's finally here and suddenly life feels like it has so much more purpose and meaning.

"Look at this beautiful baby you made, my love. She's perfect." Ilya chokes out, tears streaming down his cheeks as he helps ease Shane onto his back. "Oh, *lyubimyy*... she's so perfect. Look at our beautiful girl."

The second she's settled against his chest, skin-to-skin and wailing her heart out, there isn't a dry eye left in the room.

A breathy, elated laugh escapes him and he simply can't believe his eyes, "Oh my goodness...oh, my baby, it's okay sweetie...it's okay." He comforts, tucking her in close. "You're here...you're finally here." He snuggles her, nuzzling his cheek against her head, "Oh my god, I can't believe it."

She looks so small in his arms despite her actual size, but more importantly she looks like she belongs there. The missing puzzle piece in their lives, finally found and put into place.

Shane can barely see her through his tears, and Ilya's kissing him and thanking him for their little miracle and he doesn't know which way is up or down- but he's on his own little personal cloud nine.

"Congratulations, fellas. She's beautiful." His doctor says, getting a good look at her.

“Thank you.” Shane snuffles, hiking her up a bit in his arms. Ilya gets to cut the cord and then a nurse places a warm blanket over the two of them. Shane finally takes a good long look at her and his heart instantly melts.

She’s the spitting image of him, with just a touch of Ilya in the way her dark hair curls at the ends. Her fat little cheeks are squished up against his chest and her chubby fingers claw aimlessly at his skin. She’s got the sweetest little nose, and shares the same exaggerated bow as him in her upper lip.

Off and on she whimpers and her face scrunches up, but it never lasts. Shane can tell she feels safe in his arms.

Ilya can’t seem to pry his eyes away from her for more than a few seconds at a time, but when he does, it’s only to kiss Shane and praise him all over again for doing such an incredible job.

“I love you.” Ilya says, pressing yet another kiss to his head. Shane turns his chin up, meeting Ilya’s lips this time, then goes right back to admiring their girl- the only thing that matters now in his opinion.

“I love you, too...and I love her so much...oh my god, how did she not exist until right now?” He sighs, shaking his head in disbelief. “I can’t imagine our life without her.”

“Neither can I, *solnyshko*.” He replies dreamily, sinking in beside Shane. “Have you ever seen a more beautiful baby in your life?”

“No...she’s literally so perfect.” Shane snuffles again, bouncing her lightly in his arms. She lets out a tiny squeak of a cry, as if she’s about to start wailing again, but Shane kisses her forehead and she stops.

“Everything’s alright, peanut...Daddy and Papa have you.” He whispers to her and just the sound of his voice seems to do the trick in calming her down.

The nurses give them a few more minutes of bonding before she explains that the NICU team is ready to take her for testing.

“I promise, we’ll be quick. If anything comes up, you’ll be notified immediately, okay?” She assures him and Ilya stops her from taking the baby out of Shane’s arms.

“Is better if I carry her to you. Please.” He shoots her a pleading look before reaching over and taking her from Shane’s arms. Shane grabs Ilya’s wrist as he lifts her up, pulling him down a little so he can give her one last kiss before they’re off.

“Make sure you stay with her, Ilya. Don’t let her out of your sight.” Shane calls to him.

Ilya nods, “I wouldn’t dream of it,” and hands her off to the NICU nurse.

He turns back around and rushes to Shane’s side, taking his face into his hands. He pulls him in for a kiss, then leans back, holding him still for a moment. He brushes his thumbs over Shane’s cheeks, smiling with a heart so full.

“You have very rosy cheeks. Is very pretty on you.” He says, noticing the flushed skin of Shane’s face that hasn’t gone away yet. All from overexerting himself while pushing no less.

“Fuck off,” he curses affectionately with a roll of his eyes.

Ilya’s smile is huge when he steps back. “We will be right back, my love.”

“Okay.” Shane nods, resting fully now against the bed.

Ilya follows the NICU team out, and Yuna is welcomed back into the room to be with Shane. The delivery of the placenta is smooth, and before he knows it, he’s being moved to his recovery room where hopefully soon, he’ll be reunited with his family.

It’s a beautiful day when Ilya returns with their baby only an hour and a half after being separated. He enters the room first, followed by a nurse who is wheeling in the plastic bassinet carrying their daughter.

Shane gasps, sitting up with a little wince, “Oh my god, you’re back so soon. How did she do, is everything okay?”

He places his Styrofoam cup he’d been sipping from on the tray table in front of him. His new nurse on the family floor made him an extra special post-delivery mocktail, and even though it’s sickeningly sweet, it’s exactly what he needed after such a strenuous event.

“She was very good girl for them, not fussy at all and passed all her tests. Perfectly healthy little girl.” Ilya’s proud Papa smile is infectious, leaving Shane grinning from ear to ear from listening to how thrilled he is for their two-hour old baby’s achievements.

God, he’s gonna be such an incredible dad and Shane’s the lucky one who gets to watch it happen.

“Oh, I’m so glad to hear that. I missed both of you like crazy. Come here,” Shane pouts, reaching a hand out for his husband.

Ilya takes it, giving it a little squeeze, “Ah, she missed you very much too. So did I- gimme kiss.” he says, leaning over the bed to peck his lips. He smiles into the kiss, pulling away with a giddy little laugh.

“Wait, where is Yuna?” He asks, noticing his mother-in-law is missing.

“She got me situated, but had to leave cause visiting hours are over. She’s gonna come back first thing tomorrow with my dad.”

“Ah, okay sweetheart.” He nods, placing his hands on his hips. “And you are okay?”

“Perfect.” Shane gives an affirmative nod. “Little sore and really tired, but over all I’m good.”

“I’ve got someone here waiting to be snuggled. Are we ready to hold her?” The nurse questions with a playful tone, wheeling their daughter closer.

“Yes, please.” Shane’s sleepy little smile and outstretched arms send butterflies soaring through Ilya’s chest.

The nurse picks her out of her bassinet and hands her to Ilya who in turn hands her off to Shane.

Shane’s mouth falls open in shock as soon as she’s placed in his arms. “Holy crap...how much did she end up weighing exactly?” his voice cracking by the end, almost afraid to know the answer.

Ilya smirks, moving aside so he can read the bassinet card. Shane leans in to read it, and his eyes snap open wider.

“No the hell she wasn’t.” He gapes up at his husband, then down at the chubby angel in his arms. She’s all clean now and swaddled with a bow hat, looking sweet as ever.

“Oh, yes...we made a very big baby. Twenty-one inches too.”

“Ilya- are you seriously telling me I just pushed out a ten-pound baby?”

“Ah, no.” He holds up a finger, then points to the card, “Ten pounds, thirteen ounces.”

His expression falls flat, “Oh- okay then, my bad. She’s basically *eleven pounds*?”

“Yes, after today you are truly my hero, *moya lyubov*.” Ilya cackles.

Shane rolls his eyes with a scoff, unsure whether he should also find this funny or not. If you asked him three hours ago, he’d tell you to go fuck yourself, but right now he’s more impressed with himself than anything.

“She’s big and beautiful.” Ilya smirks, leaning over Shane to get a look at her. “And healthy, which is all we wanted her to be, huh? We are very lucky.”

“Yeah, we are...but I’m never doing this again.” He says, rocking her gently in his arms. “You’re it kid.”

Ilya’s laugh is warm and rumbles low in his chest as he kisses Shane’s head, “Ah, we will see about that. I think we will have more.”

Shane cocks an eyebrow up at him. “Oh, really? Well, that’s if I ever let you touch me again after this.”

“I don’t think that will be a problem.” Ilya shmoozes, “You are very easy to convince and I am very sexy...will be hard for you to resist.”

Shane sighs with a shake of his head. “I hate you.”

“You *love* me.” Ilya sing-songs, pressing a kiss to Shane’s temple.

A soft smile tugs at Shane’s lips, but he doesn’t rise to Ilya’s teasing. Instead, he watches their daughter peacefully drift in and out of sleep in his arms and wonders how he got so lucky to love, and be loved by, the two most extraordinary people in his world.

He refuses to admit it on sheer principle alone, but deep down, he already knows they’ll have more. It’s just a matter of when and how many...

~End

End Notes

Russian that Ilya says to him at the end.

-My big hungry peach

-Little hungry peach

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!