

you take it on faith, you take it on heart

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by [MeganCantHearYou](#)

Summary

Ilya locks eyes with Shane, a small smile playing on the corner of his mouth.

“I... what?”

“I want a baby,” he says again, his voice just as definite as it had been the first time.

“Any one in particular? Harris and Troy’s is very cute.”

Shane lets out a small laugh as he rolls his eyes, “Yours preferably.”

or, that time Shane and Ilya decide to have a baby.

Notes

Hi! I'm really excited to share this story. It's my first time writing this tag and for this fandom so pls be nice <3 this was originally going to be a one shot but then it got really long so. oh well

TW: for discussions of potential infertility and prior miscarriages from other characters. please take care of yourselves! we are earning that angst with a happy ending tag though

Huge thanks to bestie [feetreadyheartbeatsteady](#) for the beta and the title assistance and just being an all around cheerleader <3

no AI was used in the creation of this story and if you dare accuse me of it, ill come to your house and cancel your wifi subscription

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

Chapter 1: June-December

June

“I want a baby.”

Ilya startles at Shane’s words, nearly tripping over his feet as he spins them slowly in a circle. They are at some gala for the foundation, the night slowly winding down around them as the patrons slowly make their way out for the night.

It was a tradition of theirs whenever they had these events. They knew they would be pulled in every direction during the actual gala, entertaining their guests and rubbing elbows to help secure even more funding for their charity. Every cent they would get would go to either a donation to a mental health organization or to new gear for the kids at their camps.

But Shane and Ilya always ended the night with a dance, slowly spinning together and enjoying a tiny moment in the chaos.

The years since they were outed, married, and on the same team had been some of the happiest of Ilya’s life. Shane and him were five and three time Stanley Cup champions respectively, two of those earned together in Ottawa, and they were both playing the best hockey of their lives.

So yes, Shane’s words startled him.

They’d talked about kids before, when they first got married. Shane had told him prior to their first hook-up all those years ago that he was a carrier, wanting Ilya to know every risk going into it. It wasn’t uncommon, approximately 60% of males had the carrier gene, and it wasn’t nearly as taboo as it had been even twenty years ago.

But it was still a big deal, something that would affect Shane’s career forever.

He hadn’t been ready at the beginning of their marriage, and honestly Ilya hadn’t been either. He knew he wanted them eventually though, but since it would be Shane that would be most affected, Ilya had been content to wait until Shane approached him with the topic again.

Ilya locks eyes with Shane, a small smile playing on the corner of his mouth.

“I... what?”

“I want a baby,” he says again, his voice just as definite as it had been the first time.

“Any one in particular? Harris and Troy’s *is* very cute.”

Shane lets out a small laugh as he rolls his eyes, “Yours preferably.”

His eyes scan Shane’s face, looking for any indication that he’s joking or playing a trick on Ilya. Not that he thinks Shane would actually do that in this situation, but Ilya doesn’t want to

get his hopes up. Shane could easily change his mind and that would almost be worse.

“Are you... sure?”

Shane nods, breaking eye contact with Ilya to scan the room, landing on where Troy and Harris are also spinning in a slow circle, their young son dressed in a baby sized suit and nestled between their chests.

“I’ve been thinking about it for a while, really since we won the Cup this year. I just wanted to be sure before I said anything.”

They are silent for a moment, Shane’s words washing over him. If he’d been thinking about it since the Cup, it means he has been thinking about this for over a month now. The song playing in the background slowly fades out, signaling the ever closer end of the gala.

“We should talk about this later, when we are not surrounded by people who do not need to know our business. And when I can think about something more than how quickly I can get you out of this suit.” He flashes a wink at Shane, a satisfied buzz thrumming through him when Shane’s cheeks instantly flush red. Even after five years of marriage and the nearly decade long relationship, both casual and serious, it still makes Ilya happy to see the effect he has on Shane.

Shane nods though, pressing a quick kiss to his husband’s lip, before they make their way to their remaining guests to say their goodbyes. Ilya leads him through the room before leading him back home and making good on his promise to get Shane out of his suit.

July

It takes them three weeks to bring the topic back up.

Despite it being the offseason, the one time when they should have time to relax and enjoy slow mornings and even slower evenings, they are constantly being pulled in one direction or another. Between their camps and their various brand deals, both together and individually, it only leaves about a month to actually enjoy the cottage these days.

Shane waits until they are in the car, a half hour into their drive out to the cottage, to talk about it again.

“I still want a baby,” Shane states. It’s a good thing Shane is the one driving the car— Ilya is pretty sure he would’ve crashed when he jumps at Shane’s words again.

“*Moya lyubov*, you must find a better way to start this conversation.” He huffs out a small laugh, shaking his head. “I’m never prepared.”

Shane’s eyes slide over to his, pink coloring his cheeks, before turning back to the road in front of them. “Sorry, I just... don’t know how else to start it.”

Ilya reaches over to where Shane’s hand rests on the gear shift, threading his fingers through his to quell the rising anxiety he knows Shane is feeling.

“Is okay, I am always happy to talk about this with you.” He gives Shane’s hand a quick squeeze. “Tell me what you are thinking, please.”

They are silent for a moment, letting Shane gather his thoughts.

“It’s been in my head for a while, I suppose. Especially after my birthday, realizing I wasn’t getting any younger. But I think it really hit after Harris gave birth and then Scott and Kip announcing that Kip was pregnant again.” He takes a deep breath before continuing. “I love you, and I don’t regret anything, but every single one of our friends has a partner who *isn’t* a hockey player. They get to have kids and build their life for after hockey, and what? We have to wait? Again?”

Ilya is silent as Shane rants because he is right. Their entire relationship has been about waiting. Waiting until it was safe to be together, waiting until they could start the foundation and become “friends”, waiting until they were ready to come out.

Waiting until Shane was ready to retire to have kids.

“My knee barely made it through the entire season,” Shane continues, “and we just won the Cup so I could end on a high note.”

That brings Ilya out of his silence.

“You would retire?”

“I can’t exactly play if I’m pregnant.”

“I know this. But you aren’t pregnant yet.”

Shane hums lightly as he mulls over Ilya’s words. Ilya keeps speaking before Shane can get too in his head about it.

“If you want to retire, I will obviously support you,” Ilya interjects hoping that Shane does not perceive his concerns with not supporting him. Ilya would always support Shane in this. “I just want to be sure we have considered everything.”

Shane nods slightly as he takes in Ilya’s words, considering them for a moment before he speaks again.

“A physical contact sport isn’t exactly the best scenario for a pregnancy.”

“No shit,” Ilya snorts a small laugh. He watches Shane’s face closely, watching for any sign that he is joking or not taking this seriously. He knows that Shane wouldn’t do that though, even if his brain refuses to let him fully understand.

“Fuck off.” Shane cuts him a small glare, but it’s missing any heat that would make Ilya think he’s actually annoyed. There is still a softness to his eyes that is present anytime he looks at Ilya and a small tilt to his mouth, the barest hint of a smile.

They drive in silence for a bit, their fingers still tangled on the gear shift between them as they get closer and closer to the cottage.

When Shane finally speaks again, it's softer, a bit timid even. "I just don't want to miss something. To not know and accidentally hurt them. It just makes more sense to retire."

Ilya stays quiet, his mind still not quite believing that Shane is even *hinting* towards retirement. He supposes it makes sense though, Shane just turned 35 and his knee had kept him off the ice multiple times this past season.

Retirement just always felt like something that would never happen to *Shane Hollander*. Like he would be playing until he was 85 and being pushed onto the ice in a wheelchair.

He would probably still be better than anyone else.

Ilya squeezes Shane's hand once, twice, and flashes him a smile before turning to look back out the window and letting the rest of the drive pass in silence.

Later, when they are at the cottage, their bags unpacked and the master bedroom thoroughly christened with their first fuck of the summer, Shane brings it up one more time.

"You haven't said how *you* feel about having a baby, you know." Ilya looks up from the vegetables he is chopping as they prepare dinner. Shane isn't looking at him, his eyes focused solely on his own portion of vegetables in front of him.

It wasn't often these days that Shane struggles with meeting Ilya's eyes, their comfortability and ease allowing him the confidence to look him straight on during their daily conversations. But Ilya could always tell when Shane was nervous, his eyes strategically bouncing around Ilya's face, never landing anywhere.

"*Moya lyubov*, if you had wanted children the minute we got married I would've said yes, you know this. My mind has not changed." Shane looks up slowly, meeting his eyes finally. There's a slight blush to his cheeks causing his freckles to pop. It makes Ilya want to forget dinner and take him back towards the bedroom.

"Really?"

"Mmm, really." He sets his knife to the side so he can move to Shane's side. His hands come to Shane's hips, slowly turning Shane until they are face to face. "There is nothing I want more than to be a parent with you. If you are ready, I am ready."

Shane's face lights up with a wide smile. "Okay then, let's have a baby."

Ilya can feel a smile just as wide on his own face as he leans in, unable to do anything else in this moment besides kiss Shane. It's wild, greedy, and so full of love. It's perfectly them.

Ilya's hands move from Shane's waist, grabbing him under his thighs so he can lift him, never letting his lips leave Shane's. Shane's legs instinctually wrap around Ilya, ankles locking behind his back.

He spins them slightly, setting Shane down on the counter of the island behind them. He pulls away just slightly, Shane looking at him in confusion when Ilya reaches behind him. He rifles around slightly, looking for something specific.

His fingers skim various pill bottles, his own anti-depressants, Shane's anti-anxiety, a pain killer for Shane's knee, until he finally finds the one he is looking for. Really it should've been easier, it's the only medication in a bubble pack.

Shane's birth control.

He lifts it slowly, showing it to Shane before he opens the drawer beside them and drops them in the trash can. Shane shakes his head, his face still bright with his smile.

"You're ridiculous, come back."

Ilya lifts him back up, carrying him back to their room.

"Put me down you asshole," Shane laughs, pushing gently on Ilya's shoulders though he makes no real attempt to get down. He loves everything about their sex life, but it's always undeniably hot when Ilya manhandles him a bit.

"You are with child, Hollander, I would be a bad husband if I let you walk."

Shane laughs loudly as Ilya practically throws him on the bed. "I'm not pregnant yet."

Ilya crawls on top of Shane, pushing him gently into the mattress. He waves a hand, rolling his eyes slightly.

"Easily fixed."

August

Shane knows he's being eager.

Knows that the likelihood of his hormones actually leveling out enough in a month to allow him to be pregnant is slim. He knows the stats, he looked them up more times than he cares to admit. The average person takes about three months to regulate after stopping the pill to be able to get pregnant.

And he doesn't even have any symptoms that would lead him to believe he's pregnant. No nausea, no tiredness, no cravings. Nothing.

But sue him, he's excited.

Ilya's not home, out taking Anya on her daily walk, so he knows this might be his only chance to take a test without getting his hopes up. If Shane *actually* thought he was pregnant, he'd wait.

If by some miracle it is positive, Shane thinks he could probably put on enough of an act that Ilya would never know he found out without him. All of the commercials he does must've

been worth something.

So he sits there, his pants around his ankles, as he takes the test. Shane only feels a little ridiculous about the whole thing.

He cleans up after, setting the test beside the sink as he washes his hands, and sets a timer on his phone for five minutes.

Shane tries very hard to keep himself busy so that he doesn't look early. He walks to the kitchen, filling up Anya's food and water bowls. She's always thirsty after a walk.

That only takes about a minute and he's stuck staring out the windows of the cottage, watching the water slowly lap at the shoreline while he waits.

When Shane hears the alarm on his phone go off, he practically runs back into the bathroom eagerly grabbing the test. He flips it over, the words *Not Pregnant* clearly showing on the digital screen of the test.

His stomach drops, and he feels a bit silly for being upset, because he *knew* he wasn't. But he can't help wishing that it had said something different.

He hears the door open, Anya's nails clicking on the hardwood and Ilya speaking rapid Russian towards the dog. Telling her to slow down and calm herself down.

Shane quickly stuffs the negative test into the trash can, crumpling a tissue and putting it on top of it so hopefully Ilya doesn't see it. He washes his hands, before greeting Ilya in the living room. He's sitting on the couch, pulling up *British Bake Off* on Netflix, and getting ready to play the next episode.

They've been working their way through all the old seasons.

Shane leans down, pressing a kiss to the top of Ilya's head before flopping down on top of Ilya on the couch. Shane cuddles in close, enjoying the warmth of his husband beneath him and Ilya's fingers carding through his hair immediately.

He might not be pregnant yet, but he knows it'll happen soon. And until then, he's content with this.

September

Telling the team he wasn't coming back was probably the hardest thing Shane had ever done. He honestly expected them to be mad or hurt that he was retiring. Frustrated that he was leaving them after winning them a Stanley Cup.

The official story they would tell would be that his knee was shot, that even surgery only had a small chance of letting him return to gameplay. And so he was stepping away from the ice while he still had enough use of his knee to enjoy the rest of his 30s.

They had already had enough pushback and hostility in the sports world when they were outed and when they got married, that if the press even got a small hint of the true reason he

was stepping away, it would be bad.

Shane's name would be dragged through the mud if the media learned that he was really retiring to have a baby.

So the fact that they were trying for a baby would stay between them.

The team however, understood fully.

Ilya tells him later that he is pretty sure Luca cried, no matter how much he denies it later.

Bood has a cookout in his backyard to celebrate. They toast to Shane, celebrating his career, his accomplishments, and to thank him for helping bring Ottawa the respect they always knew it deserved as a franchise.

Shane is sitting around the fire, taking a moment to himself to breathe. He loves this team, he really does. But they are still loud, especially when they have been drinking, and sometimes he just needs a moment to himself.

"Not drinking tonight?" Harris asks him, plopping down in the seat beside him. He raises an eyebrow slightly, lifting his son towards Shane and silently asking if Shane wanted to hold him.

He accepts greedily, cradling him close.

"Nope," Shane responds, adjusting slightly so he can sit back with the baby resting on his chest. "Never really do, you know this."

Harris chuckles, his eyes still bright even with the permanent tiredness that seems to be present in any couple with a newborn. "True, but this is a party for *you*. You could probably have one drink if you wanted to."

Shane smiles slightly, his finger gently running down the cheek of the baby on his chest. He can't *wait* to have this with his own baby.

He can already picture it.

A small son or daughter, he's really not picky, with a full head of blonde curls and Ilya's bright blue eyes. Probably inherited his stubbornness and Ilya's sass. A recipe for the most spoiled child on the planet.

He loves them already.

"Yeah, well..." Shane lets his voice trail off. He doesn't really have a good reason to not drink tonight. Nobody knows that they have been trying for a baby.

Not that he is pregnant yet anyways. The test he took before they left mocking him with the huge *Not Pregnant* that stared back at him.

He can't help the small pit of disappointment that he had felt when he saw that. And sure he's still within the first three months of stopping his birth control, so maybe his hormones still aren't back to normal levels, but he had half hoped that somehow his body would've done it faster.

"Do you guys want kids?" Harris asks him after a few moments of silence.

"Oh, yes," Shane says, nodding slightly. Harris's son snuffles slightly against him, burying himself deeper into his chest. Shane smiles down at him. "Maybe once Ilya retires."

Harris hums, but doesn't push and Shane knows he doesn't fully buy that it's his knee that is keeping him off the ice. Maybe he just knows the signs of wanting a baby, also being a carrier. But Harris is nice and won't call Shane out.

And while Shane might not be pregnant with their own baby, he can enjoy these snuggles for as long as Harris will let him.

Ilya and Troy find them later, the baby passed out on Shane's chest still, and Harris and Shane discussing the team's chances at repeating a Cup win without Shane on the ice.

"Hi baby," Troy says, plucking his son from Shane's chest and pressing a kiss on the top of his head. "And hi baby." He turns, pressing a kiss to the top of Harris's head.

"Ready to head out? He's been out for about an hour now." Harris gestures to the baby in his husband's arms.

Troy nods, "Night Hollander. It'll be weird not seeing you on the ice this season." He turns and begins to make his way towards Bood, wanting to say goodbye to the hosts for the evening.

"Ah, Barrett? No love for your captain?" Ilya protests.

"Fuck no, I'll see you tomorrow at practice."

Ilya has the audacity to look offended, even as Shane and Harris laugh, but the smile that breaks only a few moments later betrays him.

Once Harris and Troy have left, Ilya's arms wrap around Shane. He pulls him close, the warmth of the fire and the warmth of his husband fighting off the cool summer night air.

"You looked very beautiful with a baby on your chest," Ilya whispers in his ear.

Shane's head falls back, landing against Ilya's shoulder so he can look up at him.

"Soon," Shane says.

"Soon," Ilya agrees.

October

“What are you doing?” Ilya lets out a startled laugh as he walks back into their bedroom with a wet warm cloth, ready to help Shane clean up following their most recent fuck. They might be trying to get pregnant, but that doesn’t mean Shane wants his own cum drying on his chest.

Shane is laying on his back on the bed, a pillow under his hip to elevate them slightly, and his legs straight up in the air resting against the headboard.

Shane’s cheeks go a little pink as he tilts his head backwards so he can look at Ilya. Even completely upside down, Ilya is still the hottest man Shane has ever seen. He still can’t believe this is his husband.

“It’s probably a little silly, but I read on a blog online that doing this after sex can help you get pregnant. Gravity forcing the sperm to be near my cervix or something like that.” Shane shrugs slightly.

Ilya smiles, laying down on the bed and mimicking Shane’s position. “So what? We just stay like this forever?”

“Well *you* have a game tomorrow so probably not forever.”

“Okay Mr. Know-it-all, how long then?” Ilya nudges Shane’s foot with his, reminding Shane of all the times they have done something similar during their relationship.

“Fifteen to twenty minutes apparently.”

Ilya hums in acknowledgement, but in his head he only gives Shane ten minutes before the feeling of cum and sweat on his skin is too much and he has to get out of bed for a shower.

Shane makes it fifteen surprisingly and when he comes back to bed following his shower, he’s all warm and snuggly as he settles beside Ilya. He cuddles in close, his head on Ilya’s chest.

“I love you,” Shane sighs into Ilya’s collarbone.

Ilya leans in close, his nose in Shane’s hair as he presses a kiss to the top of his head. “I love you too.

The next day, Shane shoots Ilya a message as their game is ending. They just beat Florida, a close match that ended on a lucky tie breaking goal from Ilya with only a minute left in the game.

Shane

Can you pick up Mucinex on your way home?

Ilya

Mucinex? Are you feeling sick?

Shane

No. The Mom blogs say it could help with conceiving though

Something about thinning the cervical mucus

Ilya

That doesn't sound real, Hollander

But whatever you want, *solnyshko* ♥

The thing is, Shane knows that these “tricks” probably don't actually do anything to help people get pregnant. Probably a placebo, or a coincidence, but he feels like he has to do *something*.

He's now three months post stopping his birth control and has hit the average month someone gets pregnant. But Shane Hollander has never been average. He has always been above-average. One of the best around.

So the fact that he hasn't gotten pregnant yet makes him want to crawl out of his skin.

This led him to turning to the Mommy blogs, trying to find anything he might have missed when trying to get pregnant. The tricks might be silly, but it makes him feel like he is doing something so he is going to keep using them.

Only sex in the middle of the day because that's when hormones are supposedly at their highest. A new sleep mask so that Shane is sleeping in perfect darkness after reading that regulating his melatonin production which would in turn regulate his own hormones.

He knows it's a little frustrating for Ilya, all the new rules. Not that Ilya would tell him that. He's willing to do anything if it calms Shane's mind.

Well almost anything—he draws the line at changing from his standard boxer briefs to regular boxers because “you might be restricting the flow of sperm Ilya.”

“Are you coming to the game tonight?” Ilya asks him one afternoon, both of their legs in the air again. Ilya does it with him every time.

He cuts a small glare towards Ilya, “Of course I am.” He goes to every single home game, sitting with the WAGs and trying to keep his face off the jumbotron. He's there to support Ilya, not show off.

Ilya shrugs, “I was not sure if it was against your new rules. Vibrations from the arena lower your chance of getting pregnant or whatever.”

Shane's eyes widened in concern, “Do you think that's true?” Shit. Shane loves going to the games, he doesn't think he wants to give that up.

Ilya sighs, “No Shane, I don’t.” He reaches out, running a hand down Shane’s cheek. “If it was, hockey players would have no children and we both know that isn’t true.”

Shane lets out an unsteady breath, nodding slowly. “Yeah, yeah. You’re right.”

“I think maybe you are doing too much,” Ilya says after a moment.

Shane’s mind flashes to the test he took yesterday, *Not Pregnant*, and feels like maybe he isn’t doing *enough*.

“What do you mean?”

“This is meant to be fun, yes? You cannot tell me you are having fun right now.”

Shane quietly considers his words for a moment before he reaches out, nudging Ilya’s foot with his own.

“Well some it is pretty fun,” he murmurs.

Ilya smiles, nudging his foot back. The two of them look at each other, small smiles on their faces.

“It will happen when it happens, I do not think you need to be doing all of this.”

Shane sighs, “You’re probably right. That stupid mask was so uncomfortable to sleep in anyways.”

“Thank you! I have missed being able to see your freckles in the mornings. The mask covers them up.”

Shane laughs, the timer on his phone going off to let him know it’s been at least fifteen minutes. “Okay, okay. I get it.”

Ilya rolls over, hovering over Shane so they are chest to chest. He leans in, giving Shane a slow, deep kiss. Shane melts into it, he loves the feel of Ilya’s mouth against his.

Ilya pulls back, pressing one more quick kiss to Shane’s lips.

“It’ll happen when it happens.”

He rolls off the bed, leaving Shane still laying upside down as he heads into the bathroom to start running a shower for Shane.

Shane lets out a slow deep breath, nodding to himself. Ilya’s right. It’ll happen when it happens.

November

“Shaneyyy...” Rose whines over Facetime. “It’s perfect, Ilya is playing in New York this week, *I’m* in New York filming. You *have* to come!”

Shane is in the kitchen, his phone propped up in front of him as he prepares lunch for himself and Ilya who should be home from practice soon. It's weird being retired and having nowhere to go each day. He can wake up whenever he wants to, eat whatever he wants, and do whatever he wants. Turns out, he likes waking up early to work out and eat his healthy food even without the incentive of hockey.

"I don't know Rose..." He really doesn't have any reason to not go besides just not wanting to travel. If there's one thing he hasn't missed about hockey, it's the constant travel.

"Please!" Her eyes go wide and she looks like she might only be half a second away from begging. "I haven't seen you in so long!"

Shane sighs as he briefly glances away from the strawberries he is cutting the tops off of. He catches her jutting her lower lip out and her eyes instantly well-up with tears. He huffs out a laugh, shaking his head.

She's an actress *and* a drama queen it seems.

"Fine, fine!" Rose cheers loudly, her eyes drying instantly. "But only because it has been so long."

He hears the front door open, a loud Russian greeting echoing through the house as Anya meets Ilya in the hall, and quickly wraps up his call with Rose, promising to text her when he knows his flight details.

Ilya walks into the kitchen, pressing a kiss to Shane's cheek as he grabs his plate with a turkey sandwich and half the strawberries on it from the counter before sitting down at their kitchen island.

"Going somewhere?" Ilya asks as Shane sits down next to him.

"New York," Shane explains, "You have a game on Thursday and Rose is filming there right now so she convinced me to spend a few days in the city."

Shane pulls out his phone, sending his mother a quick text asking her if they would be able to watch Anya for a few days. Ilya is leaving Tuesday night for a short roadie: a game against Boston on Wednesday, New York on Thursday, a day off on Friday, and then an afternoon game against Philadelphia before returning home.

"You should text Kip, take Rose to the Kingfisher to watch the game. You'll have to put up with old man Hunter but Rose will have fun."

"You don't want me at the arena?"

Ilya smiles, running a hand down the side of Shane's face. "Of course I do, *solnyshko*. But I'll end up at the Kingfisher anyways and this way you do not have to deal with Madison Square Garden traffic."

It's a good plan, and honestly, Shane really does hate dealing with Manhattan traffic. It isn't so bad when he was on the team bus, bypassing most of the traffic with the escorts provided

to the team, but it could take forever to get there in peak traffic.

“You’ll meet us there?” Shane asks.

“Of course.”

And so, three days later, Shane and Rose are sitting at the Kingfisher with Kip and watching Ilya’s game on the TVs. Scott is actually at the arena too—the Admirals finally putting his number in the rafters five years after Scott’s retirement.

Shane can’t prove it, but he’s sure Scott specifically requested it happen against Ottawa just to piss Ilya off.

This is normally the type of ceremony Kip would’ve gone to, but this pregnancy has apparently been hard on him. It’s rare for him to have a nausea-free day and at least at the bar, he can go home quickly if it gets to be too much for him.

Shane tries really hard not to stare at the gentle curve in Kip’s stomach. He’s about six months along now Shane thinks. His eyes quickly move away from Kip and he takes a sip of his beer to try and wash down the bitter taste of jealousy that floods his mouth.

Shane isn’t a big drinker, and that hasn’t changed since retiring, but he needs something stronger than ginger ale to get through a whole night with someone who is currently the very picture of everything Shane doesn’t have.

Besides, there’s a *Not Pregnant* test at the bottom of his hotel trashcan that tells him it’s fine to drink alcohol tonight.

He puts on a brave face, laughing when appropriate and cheering as Ilya scores to bring the Cens lead to 2 right before the second period ends. Rose knows him all too well though, if the concerned looks she keeps shooting him is anything to go by.

She’s merciful luckily and waits until Kip gets up during the second intermission, stating he needed the bathroom and wanted to check on the bartenders.

“Alright spill,” she says, turning to look at him.

“There’s nothing to ‘spill’, Rose,” Shane protests.

“Shaney,” she starts, raising an eyebrow in disbelief, “You’ve been staring at Kip like he kicked your dog all night. You were down yesterday when we went shopping but I ignored it since you had to deal with the airport. But there is definitely something.”

He sighs, glancing around to make sure no one seems like they are listening before he looks back at Rose. He leans in slightly, reducing the space between them to try and keep their conversation as private as possible in a loud bar.

“Ilya and I... we’ve been trying to have a baby and it’s...” Shane sighs, “Taking longer than I think either of us expected it to.”

Rose squeals loudly causing Shane to flinch and more than a few patrons to turn to look at them. He shushes her quickly before anyone can look too quickly and recognize who either of them are.

“Rose!” He scolds her slightly. “The whole bar doesn’t need to know.”

She rolls her eyes, taking a sip of her gin and tonic, before grinning back at him.

“Sorry, sorry! This is exciting though! You guys are going to be amazing parents.”

He scoffs slightly.

“Did you miss the part where I said it hasn’t happened yet?”

She waves her hand slightly dismissively. “How long have you been trying?”

He blushes slightly, it sounds ridiculous when he says it outloud. “Five months.”

“Shane! That’s literally nothing. Doctors don’t even get worried until after a year.”

He crosses his arms, leaning back in his seat. The thing is that he *knows* this. He *knows* there isn’t technically any cause for concern.

But Shane can’t help the little voice in his head that tells him that they waited too long, that he’s too old now. That the years of hockey have impacted his ability to get pregnant somehow.

“I know,” he says finally, shaking his head as he reaches out and takes another sip of his beer. “I know. But I just... We are both professional athletes. In peak physical condition and health. I guess I just expected it to happen quickly.”

“Wait, is this why you retired?” She asks.

“Not completely. My knee really is fucked.” His twice weekly physical therapy appointment is a testament to that. “But it definitely played a part.”

“Shane,” she reaches out, grabbing his hand, “I say this because I love you. But you need to calm the hell down.”

He lets out a sharp laugh.

“I mean it!” She continues, her own laugh joining his. “One of the biggest roadblocks to getting pregnant is stress. The more you stress yourself out about it, the harder it’s going to be. Just enjoy the journey, have fun getting fucked down by your husband, it’ll happen when it’s supposed to.”

“You sound like Ilya.” She’s saying the exact same things Ilya told Shane recently.

“Well,” she shrugs, letting go of his hand to lean back in her own seat. “Maybe it’s because we are both right.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

When Kip rejoins them a few moments later, slightly out of breath but grinning, Shane finds himself feeling less jealous than before. He still is, his eyes watching Kip’s hands where he absentmindedly rubs the top of his bump, but being open with Rose about what has been bothering him is enough to get him through the rest of the night.

And when Ilya pulls Shane into his side an hour and one victory later, he feels that just maybe he can be a little more patient.

December

“Maybe you should talk to your mother, yes?” Ilya says as they lay in bed two days before Christmas. Ilya is home for the next few days with the Christmas break in games and this is one of the first days in a long time that neither of them have to leave the house for one reason or another.

He’s curled around Shane, his arm keeping Shane locked against his chest. They are having a lazy morning, a rare commodity during the season. Or as lazy of a morning as one can have when they are woken up with their husband’s mouth wrapped around their cock.

Ilya had taken it slow though anyways. He’d used his tongue, then his fingers, to worship at the altar that was Shane’s body. And after he’d drawn one orgasm out of him, he’d fucked Shane so thoroughly that this *had* to be the one that caught.

“My mom? About what?” Shane’s fingers are slowly tracing patterns on Ilya’s forearms, his head still slightly fuzzy as he comes down from his post-orgasm bliss.

Ilya sighs, pressing a kiss to the back of Shane’s head. “Your father told me on our wedding day that they also had trouble with... Ah... word for when baby is created?” Shane stiffens slightly, his fingers stumbling in their nonsensical patterns. .

“Conception,” Shane murmurs, his voice quiet.

“Yes,” Ilya whispers.

Shane resumes his patterns, the air in their room tense and a little sad almost. They don’t speak for a while, their breaths the only sounds besides the distant noise of Anya playing with a toy downstairs.

“I do not like you being sad, sweetheart,” Ilya says finally, his arm tightening just slightly against Shane, locking him in place. Like he is afraid Shane might run from this conversation.

“I’m fine,” Shane protests immediately.

“You think just because you wait until I’m on the road that I do not know you have been taking tests? That I do not notice when you are sad for a few days? Do not lie to me Shane.”

Shane’s breath catches. “How did you know about the tests?”

“You keep them under the sink, not exactly a secret, no?”

“Fuck off, I’m fine.” Shane squirms slightly, wanting to be anywhere but here and having this conversation. He doesn’t need to know how disappointed Ilya is; in Shane, in his body’s ability to get pregnant, or in Shane’s ability to not be a *normal fucking person* about the whole thing.

“Fine,” Ilya says, letting go when Shane squirms too much. “You do not have to talk to me, or Yuna, but you have to talk to someone.”

Shane knows that Ilya is right. But just talking to someone only helps for so long. The patience he thought he could have after his conversation with Rose only lasted until last week when he had another fucking *Not Pregnant* test.

He sits up, his feet dangling off the side of the bed but he doesn’t stand. He suddenly feels heavy, the weight of the rest of their lives feeling like it is solely on Shane’s shoulders.

His head hangs slightly, his breaths coming a little faster, and he squeezes his eyes shut to try to contain the wetness he can feel growing there.

“I just don’t want to get anyone else’s hopes up. I’ve already gotten mine and yours up. If it never happens, it’s just another person who is disappointed in me,” he says, his voice tight and controlled.

Ilya comes up behind him, setting one hand on Shane’s shoulder light enough that he could shake him off if he didn’t want to be touched. When he doesn’t, Ilya squeezes lightly, hoping to provide some grounding to Shane.

“Nobody is disappointed in you Shane.”

“You should be though. My body is literally made for this and I can’t fucking do it.”

Ilya moves off the bed, kneeling between Shane’s legs so he can look up at him. He brings his hands up to cup his face, forcing Shane to face him.

“Shane, *moya lyubov*, look at me please.” It takes Shane a moment, his eyes expertly avoiding Ilya’s before they finally settle and meet his eyes. “I need you to look at me when I say this so that you believe me. I do not need a baby to be happy with you.”

Shane opens his mouth to interrupt.

“*Nyet*, I do not need one. Do I want one? Of course. But I do not need one.” His thumbs brush over Shane’s freckles, catching the single tear that has escaped Shane’s eyes. “I only need you. If we never have a baby, I will still be happy because I have *you*. Okay?”

Shane nods slowly. “I... yeah okay.”

Ilya leans forward, kissing each of Shane’s cheeks, then his nose, before finally landing on his mouth.

“Ya tebya lyublyu,” he murmurs after he pulls away.

The corner of Shane’s mouth quirks up. He will never get tired of hearing those words. *“Ya tozhe tebya lyublyu.”*

Shane thinks about that conversation for the next two days though, Ilya’s words of encouragement to talk to his mother ring in his head. He hesitates to bring it up though when they see them on Christmas day.

It’s not that Shane doesn’t believe him, Ilya would have no reason to lie to him about this, it’s just that he hadn’t known this and it doesn’t exactly seem like something you just bring up on Christmas day.

He works up the courage to bring it up after dinner, his mother and him are in the kitchen doing dishes while Ilya and his father are in the other room beginning one of the many puzzles Ilya got him for Christmas.

“Can I ask you something?” Shane says finally, blatantly not looking at his mother as he rubs a towel over an already dry plate.

“Of course Ottawa has a chance at the cup, even without you,” his mother jokes.

He huffs out a small laugh, “Of course they do, but uhh no, not about hockey.”

She casts a sidelong look at him and knows he is nervous, considering he is *still* drying the same plate. She picks up another dish from the sink, following his lead.

“What’s wrong?”

He lets out a small frustrated noise, “I don’t know. Maybe nothing. Maybe everything.”

They are quiet again, Yuna giving him space to continue speaking when he is ready.

“How long did it take you to get pregnant with me?” He asks.

“Oh!” She startles slightly, not expecting this line of conversation. “Well, a while I suppose.” She places a newly cleaned plate in the drying rack in front of him.

“I don’t think I’ve ever talked to you about this, but you weren’t my first pregnancy.”

Shane’s eyes go wide as he looks at his mom. He sets the plate down, forgoing any pretense that the dishes are going to get done soon. This conversation is suddenly very important.

“I wasn’t?”

“No, you were my third. The first one was lost around six weeks. Barely even knew I was pregnant. The second was different. Harder. I was about 15 weeks at that point. I’d told people, we were excited.” She takes a deep breath, the emotions of that time still hard even all these years later. “So with you, I felt like I couldn’t be excited. I don’t think it even really hit me until they were placing you in my arms that it was real. That *you* were real.”

“Oh. I didn’t know,” Shane says.

“We didn’t want you to know really. Not because we were ashamed, or anything. We just didn’t want you to feel like you were growing up in the shadow of a different child.” She shrugs slightly. “Once you were old enough for that not to matter, it just... never really came up.”

“That makes sense, I guess.”

“Why do you ask, honey?”

Shane sighs loudly. “Me and Ilya have been trying to have a baby and it’s just... taking a lot longer than I expected.”

Yuna reaches out, squeezing his bicep. “You are allowed to be frustrated, Shane. You are allowed to be mad at your body for not doing what you expect it to.”

A confused look crosses his face. “I am?”

She nods sharply. “You are. But you can’t give up. If I gave up, I’d never have you.”

He smiles now, feeling immensely lighter than he has since his most recent test. Yuna pulls him into a hug, his forehead landing on her shoulder as he revels in the comfort he has always found with her.

“It’ll happen when it happens,” she says, her hand petting his hair.

Shane groans loudly, pulling away. “I am *so* fucking tired of hearing that.”

“Sorry honey, it’s true though. The first rule of babies is that they do whatever the hell they want, and that *includes* conception.”

He laughs, shaking his head slightly. Yuna pulls him back into another hug.

“You and Ilya are going to be fantastic parents, and your dad and I will be here every step of the way, no matter what.”

Shane catches Ilya’s eyes from where he sits at the dining table that is now covered in puzzle pieces. He smiles at Shane, who returns it quickly.

Shane feels settled in a way he hasn’t since he retired really. Hearing Ilya or Rose tell him that it’ll happen when it happens had helped slightly, but hearing his mother, who had had to be patient when waiting for her own baby, say it.

That was healing in a way he couldn’t put into words.

Hearing the validation that he was *allowed* to be upset, allowed to be frustrated that it hasn’t happened makes him feel truly seen for the first time since they began trying to have a baby.

He breaks eye contact with Ilya, tucking his face into his mother’s neck.

“Thank you, mom.”

For the first time in months, Shane feels like he can breathe a bit better.

Chapter 2: January-May

Chapter Notes

"ill update in a few days!" two weeks later... anyways

tw for brief mention of vomit towards the end of the chapter and some talks of infertility.

also anytime there is italics, Ilya is speaking russian, but I was nawt about to translate all that.

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

January

“Hollander-Rozanov?”

Shane’s head pops up from the magazine he was pretending to read in the waiting room of the fertility doctor. Ilya clicks his phone locked and places it into his pocket. They both stand, fingers interlocking, and follow the nurse back to one of the rooms.

Shane had felt much better since his discussion with his mother, his nerves settling just slightly. But after another *Not Pregnant* test, he’d decided he needed to know if something else was happening.

So he’d scheduled the appointments. Appointments for him to be poked and prodded, multiple blood tests and ultrasounds. They’d tested his hormones, checked how many eggs he still had, measured his uterus to ensure it was capable of even carrying a baby.

And Ilya, well. Ilya got to jerk off into a cup.

The nurse gives them a tight smile, both professional and familiar at the same time, and it’s obvious that she knows who they are. Ilya gives her a wide smile back while Shane dodges her eyes and stares down at the floor.

Ilya’s hand lands on the small of Shane’s back as he leads him down the hallway, both of them trailing after the nurse. She leads them to an office, a wide mahogany desk with black plush chairs on one side sits in the middle. Shane’s eyes jump from poster to poster, staged photos of babies and anatomical drawings cover each one.

“You can have a seat, the doctor will be in soon.”

Shane nods his head in thanks, still avoiding her eyes, as he takes his place in one of the chairs. Ilya sits down next to him, reaching over and grabbing Shane’s hand. He gives his hand a squeeze, his thumb slowly rubbing circles on the back of Shane’s hand.

Shane lets out a sigh, returning the squeeze to Ilya's hand.

"We're gonna be okay, no matter what the doctor says," Shane whispers. Ilya doesn't respond right away, but he does lift Shane's hand to his mouth, pressing a kiss to his hand.

"You and me, *moya lyubov*."

The door slams open behind them, both of them jumping slightly as the doctor enters the room, a folder tucked under her arm.

Dr. Allison Anderson is a petite woman, but her presence in the room is large. Her energy fills the room immediately, a wide smile and bright brown eyes slightly obscured by a set of glasses with rainbow frames. She gives them a wide smile as she tucks a lock of her ginger hair behind her ear.

"Hi boys!" She sets the folder down on her desk before she shakes both of their hands. "It's so nice to meet you!"

Shane gives her a small smile, nodding a hello. Ilya enthusiastically shakes her hand back, his smile matching hers.

Dr. Anderson walks to the opposite side of the desk, pulling the folder in front of her. She opens it, quickly rifling through the papers before she closes it, smiling back up at them.

"Okay, I know we put you both through a few invasive tests recently, and I have your results right here. But I want to know more about you both first. I love getting to know my couples." She folds her hands in front of her, smiling at them both.

"Oh," Shane says, a bit surprised, "Well, what do you want to know?"

"Anything! How long have you been together, how did you meet? You know, the cute stuff!"

Shane smiles, relaxing a little into the chair. If Dr. Anderson knows who they are, she's really good at hiding it. Shane always feels more comfortable when professionals don't know him.

Ilya laughs, shaking his head, while the doctor's eyes shift slightly between them.

"We've been together since 2010, in some capacity. But we decided to be in a monogamous relationship in 2017," Shane explains. "We met... at work I suppose."

Her eyes go wide. "Oh wow! I love that! A good longterm foundation!"

"Oh yes, Shane approached me and was immediately charmed. Fell in love with me instantly."

Shane resists the urge to roll his eyes, even as a small smile grows on his face. Maybe it wasn't instant, but he really can't imagine loving anyone else as much as he does Ilya.

The doctor smiles again, clapping her hands together. "Oh, how sweet! I just, oh, I love Love. And babies! Which," she flips the folder back open, "Is the whole reason why we're here."

She's quiet for a moment as she organizes the papers in front of her. The cheery, friendly mask she had been wearing slipped slightly into something more professional. She tucks the same piece of hair from earlier back behind her ear.

"Tell me, how long have you been trying to conceive?"

"It was..." Ilya's voice trails off as he tries to think of the timeline.

"July," Shane supplies. "I stopped my birth control when we got to our summer cottage this past year."

Ilya nods, "Yes, that sounds right."

Dr. Anderson hums slightly, "Well normally we wouldn't even test until about a year into trying, but since you are turning 36 this year, we do tend to speed up the process around that age. Tell me about your sex life."

Shane nearly chokes on nothing meanwhile Ilya's eyebrows raise in surprise. Ilya isn't particularly shy about what they do, but he hadn't expected such a direct question.

"Uhh..." Shane's eyes go slightly wide as he meets Ilya's.

The doctor laughs, "Sorry, let me rephrase. I don't need details, but how often are you having penetrative sex with ejaculation?"

"Most days, yes?" Ilya says, confirming with Shane as if he wasn't also there.

Shane nods as he turns back to the doctor. "Ilya is still working, so he's on the road frequently. But when he's home, at least once a day probably."

"Right," she nods as she glances back towards the papers. "Well I have good news and bad news."

Ilya's hand finds Shane's again, squeezing tightly.

"Let's start with the good news." She smiles at both of them, giving them a moment to prepare. When they nod, she continues. "The good news is that you are both perfectly healthy! Shane, your egg count and your hormones are exactly where I would expect them to be at this point. And your eggs are all perfectly healthy. Ilya, we didn't notice any deformities in your sperm. All perfectly ready to make a baby."

Shane sighs out a breath of relief, a weight off his shoulders that his body had *somehow* ruined this for them. He hears Ilya release a similar breath and Shane knows that he had been more worried that he was letting on.

They turn to each other, both of them smiling when their eyes meet.

Shane turns back to the doctor, his smile falling just a bit. "What's the bad news then?"

She purses her lips, her eyes turning apologetic. “The bad news is that I don’t know why you aren’t conceiving.” And Shane feels his heart break.

Shane is silent as Dr. Anderson gives them some tips to help promote conception, foods and vitamins that will apparently help, and a prescription for some medication to help promote egg release.

Ilya does the rest of the talking, taking the papers from the doctor. Shane barely hears what is being said, his eyes trained on a random spot in the wood of the doctors desk as he fights the wetness in his eyes.

There is nothing wrong, nothing for them to fix or do better. They just have to keep waiting and Shane is tired of waiting.

At least if the doctor had told them that something was wrong, he would have an answer for why this was happening to them. But instead he’s been told to eat more Omega-3s and fatty acids.

Ilya leads him to the car, Shane barely even realizes they left the office until he is sitting in the car. He just wants to get home.

It’s silent as they drive, Ilya’s hand holding Shane’s like a lifeline as he navigates the Ottawa streets.

“Shane,” Ilya whispers after they arrive at the house. “This is not bad news.” Shane takes his hand from Ilya’s.

“It feels like it is.” Shane keeps his eyes trained outside the window, his arms crossed across his chest.

He sighs, getting out of the car and walking into the house, leaving Ilya in the car. He’s not mad at Ilya, but he also doesn’t want to talk about this right now. He just wants to be left alone right now.

Shane walks upstairs immediately, starting the shower and letting the water warm up. He gets in, just standing under the water, letting it wash away the stress of the day.

Nothing.

There’s nothing wrong.

Nothing to fix, nothing to change.

He just has to keep waiting.

Shane loses track of how long he stands in the shower watching the water circle the drain at his feet. He startles slightly when a pair of arms wrap around his waist, breaking him from the fog in his mind. He lets his body relax into Ilya’s arms.

“I’m sorry, Shane.”

He shrugs. “There’s nothing to be sorry about, didn’t you hear the doctor? There’s nothing wrong.”

Ilya presses a kiss to the back of Shane’s neck, then to the skin behind his ear. “Then why are you upset?”

Shane feels his temper flare. “At least if there was something wrong, we’d know *why*. But no. It’s just my body refusing to get pregnant.”

Ilya sighs, one of his hands rubbing a slow circle on Shane’s stomach. “It will happen.”

“How do you know that?”

Ilya sighs, “I have to believe that.”

They both stay quiet as they finish the shower, Ilya drying them both off, before he leads Shane to bed. He wraps Shane up in his arms and both of them fall asleep, letting the stress of the day melt away.

February

It’s the growing cheer of the crowd that breaks Shane of the intense patty cake game he is playing with Dykstra’s youngest child. Besides getting to see Ilya play, his favorite part of going to the home games was getting to spend time with the WAGs and the kids.

It was a part of the game he had never experienced until now having always been on the other side, on the ice. He hadn’t expected to love it so much, but there was a special sort of happiness watching the kids yell and scream for their dads.

He glances up, noticing his own face looking back at him on the big screen. After the first few games of the season, the novelty of him being at the games had mostly died off. But today was the first home game against Montreal of the season so it shouldn’t be a surprise that Ottawa’s media team wanted to show off Shane a bit.

The game hadn’t even started yet and the crowd was already this hyped up. It was going to be an electric game if the teams were what the media had played them up to be. Montreal had turned their team around in the years since Shane left, but still weren’t nearly the threat they had been when he was around.

He glances quickly at the ice, noticing Ilya looking up at the screens too as the team goes through their pregame stretches. So Shane smiles, giving a small wave to the camera, and presses the tips of his fingers to his lips. The camera pans away and the media team throws up some graphic about Shane’s stats, comparing his time with both teams.

One would think he was still on the team with the way he is being paraded around.

The door to the club box opens, the final of their guests for the game entering. This box is typically only for Ottawa WAGs, but it’s not unheard of for them to invite visiting WAGS.

Especially if they were practically family.

Ruby and Jade enter first, both of them nose deep in their cell phones and looking like they would rather be anywhere else but here. They were dressed in Metros sweaters, Hollander stitched across the back, while Amber and Arthur followed behind in Pike ones. Jackie makes up the rear, somehow still looking frazzled even though all her children are old enough to not need constant attention.

Shane smiles, passing Caitlin back her child so he can greet the Pikes. The twins give him a hug before tucking into the back corner of the box, Amber following them after a slightly more enthusiastic hug. Arthur just smiles, putting his large noise cancelling headphones on and settling in a seat as far away from the adults as he can.

“I’m glad you guys were able to make it,” Shane says as he and Jackie sit down next to each other.

Jackie waves him off, “If it wasn’t a Saturday afternoon we probably wouldn’t have.”

He smiles, grateful to see them again. Now that the kids are older, all of them busy in their own clubs and sports, it was hard for them to ever find time to see each other. Especially with Ilya and Hayden still playing.

“I’m surprised the twins still fit into those,” he says, referencing the sweaters they are wearing.

Shane had been so excited the day they were born, Hayden was the first close friend of his to have a baby, and he had been determined to buy them something nice. He’d asked his mom for advice and when she told him to avoid Newborn clothes if he wanted them to wear it more than once, he’d bypassed the baby section completely and bought them official Hollander sweaters in the largest child size he could find.

Sure they hadn’t been able to wear them without tripping until they were about four, but they could still wear them at fourteen so he counted it as a win.

“They love them, even if they don’t act like it anymore.” She snorts out a small laugh.

He gives her a smile, but it slips a little as he turns to face the ice. The Metros players are out there now, Ottawa back in the locker room finalizing the lines for the game and going through any last minute game plans. The timer on the jumbotron says fifteen minutes until puck drop.

He loves getting to go to the games, having the privilege and freedom to be able to attend any and every match that he wants, and he does truly enjoy getting to see the WAGs and the kids. But something about Jackie and the kids being here is hitting him differently.

He’s sure it has something to do with the fact that for a large portion of his life, the Pikes were the only kids he interacted with. The closest thing he had to his own family for so many years, especially in the years when he didn’t think he’d ever be allowed to have this with Ilya.

It's the twist of jealousy low in his gut that keeps him withdrawn and a little distant during the first period of play. It's not fair of him to feel like this towards his friends, it's not their fault that he had *another* negative pregnancy test the other day.

So he smiles and nods. Responds appropriately as Jackie tells him how the girls are doing in school, graciously accepts the invitation to watch Arthur in the science fair in three weeks, and promises to make it to at least one of Amber's ballet recitals this spring.

He ignores the knowing looks she gives him for as long as he can. She's known him for coming on two decades now, she can read him like a book.

It comes to a head when Amber asks to be taken to the bathroom in the middle of the second intermission. Jackie grabs Shane by the elbow, forcing him out the door to walk with her.

She waits until Amber is safely in the bathroom before she rounds on Shane.

"Spill Shane."

"What do you mean?" He tries his best to avoid her eyes. He does not want to be having this conversation today, at the rink of all places. He had always felt most comfortable, most like himself when he was on the ice.

This journey though has taken all of the confidence he built after the metros destroyed every bit of it following their outing. Confidence that he deserved to be on the ice, no matter what he looked like or who he loved. Confidence that people liked him for more than how many goals he could score or how much money he could make them.

Jackie was now just another person who had noticed that there was something wrong and he kind of hated that he was so easy to read. An irrational jolt of anxiety tells him that the *next* person who notices is going to be some random journalist and then his business is on the front page. Again.

Ilya tells him nearly every day how much he loves Shane, how perfect he is. Reminds him how he appreciates everything Shane has ever done for him. And he has definitely noticed the changes in Shane's mood since they had that doctor's appointment.

"I mean," she starts, "That I can tell there is something on your mind."

His eyes dart nervously around the arena, plenty aware of everyone that is around them. Shane can't talk about this here with so many ears potentially listening.

"Can you just trust me that when I want to talk about it, I will?"

She smiles, "Last time you said something like that, you brought Ilya Rozanov home."

"And look at how that turned out," he jokes.

Jackie reaches out, squeezing his bicep. "I just don't want you to deal with whatever it is alone."

“I’m not Jackie, I promise.”

She searches his face for a moment as he looks away, not letting his eyes settle so that he does not see the concern in her face. “Okay, Shane.”

They walk back towards the box once Amber is done, confirming dinner plans at Shane and Ilya’s following the game.

He stays quiet for the rest of the game, letting the younger children crawl into his lap as they please. He loves when they get snuggly and sleepy in his lap.

It’s later that night when he watches Ilya and the twins playing Mario Party, yelling back and forth and filling the house with children’s laughter, that Shane realizes Ilya is made for this. Made to be a father, made to be around children.

Even Arthur, the shyest of the Pike children, the most sensitive to change and loud noises, is curled up on the couch with them. He’s loudly cheering for Jade, even though there is little chance of her coming back for the win.

He’s *comfortable* in this space. Because of Ilya.

Shane already mostly knew this from their camps, but this was different. These weren’t just the random kids that he knew for a week and then never saw again.

The pit that forms in his stomach at never being able to give this to Ilya drops hard and never leaves.

March

There’s something wrong with Shane.

Ilya can’t prove it, because Shane isn’t talking about it, but he knows his husband.

Shane has always been quieter, preferring to observe rather than engage, but this is different. He’s being closed off even with Ilya and his parents. This is withdrawn, not quiet.

The smile, when Shane does smile, doesn’t seem to reach his eyes. Most people might not notice, but Ilya does. Yuna does too, if the look she shoots Ilya during family dinner is anything to go by.

Ilya supposes that he actually *does* know what’s wrong, it isn’t hard to figure out. It’s no surprise that Shane’s moods tend to dip even more following another negative pregnancy test. Ever since Ilya called him out for hiding when he was taking his tests, Shane has stopped hiding.

Ilya knows the routine now. At least he thought he did.

The first two weeks of the month, Shane is relatively normal. He smiles, he skates, he takes Anya on a walk with Ilya in the evenings. He jokes with him and attends team night outs.

Even though he is technically a WAG now, he still gets extended an invite to team activities and he is more than happy to be there.

But then the middle of the month happens.

Shane takes his monthly test, even though he hasn't had any symptoms, because he just *needs* to know. And it's like a light switch flicks.

There's no energy. The smiles are fake. He's somehow both distant and clingy as hell at the same time. Clinging to Ilya like a lifeline while simultaneously refusing to speak about anything that's on his mind.

He stays that way for about three days, maybe four, before he slowly returns to himself.

But this month, this month has been different.

His energy never quite came back. He's a little bit more withdrawn than Ilya is used to seeing him. He's not even really reaching out for Ilya anymore. It's not that Shane is pushing him away, though either. He's just... there.

"Shane?" Ilya asks him, five days after he took his most recent test. They are laying on the couch, Shane's head in his lap and his fingers gently carding through his hair. He had just been sitting on the couch, staring at but not watching the television, until Ilya sat down beside him. He let himself be manhandled into laying on Ilya.

"Hmm?" Shane hums, his eyes closed as he leans into Ilya's touch.

He runs his fingers through Shane's hair a few more times before he talks again. "You are sad. Will you tell me what's on your mind?"

Shane stiffens for a second before he scoffs. "Sorry I'm not acting happy." He makes a move to stand up but Ilya's hand keeps him firmly in place.

"Shane please. I am worried."

"I'm fine," Shane says immediately. It's an automatic reaction from him, everything is always *fine*.

Ilya sighs, his hand slipping from Shane's hair to his neck and under his shirt so he can rub his back. "Yes, obviously. So fine that you push me away."

Shane does sit up now, Ilya letting him so they can look each other in the eyes.

"What do you want me to say, Ilya?" Shane starts, his words clipped. Ilya tries not to take it to heart, he knows that Shane isn't mad at him. He's just frustrated in general.

"I just want you to talk to me, so I can be there for you."

"There's nothing you can do," his voice raises just slightly. "You can't *make* my body decide to be pregnant. If you could, it would've happened by now."

There's an edge to his voice that Ilya has only seen a few other times in the past. When Shane stormed out of Crowell's office after their relationship was outed and that first season that followed when all any other player had to say to him was some jab at their relationship.

"Shane..."

Shane's head falls into his hands, hiding his face from Ilya. Ilya goes to reach a hand out, but hesitates just before he reaches his back. He doesn't hesitate for long though before his hand lands in the middle of Shane's back. He rubs slow circles, hoping to provide some comfort to his husband.

He raises his head, looking over at Ilya. His eyes are full of apology and tears that he hasn't let fall.

"Sorry, sorry," Shane says, "You didn't deserve that. I'm just... so tired."

Ilya continues his slow circles, giving Shane space to talk. He's learned after all these years that Shane does best when he doesn't feel pressured to talk.

"I just thought..." Shane's voice trails off before he takes a deep breath and continues talking, "I just thought we'd be getting ready for our baby by now. Waiting one month, two months, even three. I was prepared for that. But it's been nearly a year and not a single positive test."

Ilya can nearly feel his heart crack in two. His beautiful, wonderful husband is so torn up by the one thing they both want but haven't been able to get. They are multi-millionaires, there's not much they can't afford at this point if they truly want it, but this is one thing that can't be bought.

Ilya knows they have options if they decide they want to explore them. Adoption, IVF, even surrogacy. This isn't the time to bring them up though.

"I'm so fucking tired of having to wait. We *always* have to wait. There are teenagers running around right now pregnant because they thought the pull-out method was smart. But we have been *trying and trying* and it *isn't* happening."

Ilya pulls Shane into his side now. There's nothing he can say to take the pain that Shane is feeling away. But he can be an anchor in this storm.

Shane twists, pulling himself into Ilya's lap. His arms immediately wrap around him and Shane tucks his head into Ilya's neck. He lets out a single loud hiccuping sob.

Ilya doesn't know how long Shane clings to him, willing to provide him with all the comfort he needs.

When Shane finally pulls back, his eyes are rimmed red.

"Oh sweetheart," Ilya presses two soft kisses to each of Shane's cheeks.

A small attempt at a smile graces Shane's face. "I'm sorry," he whispers.

Ilya shakes his head before Shane even finishes speaking. “Nothing to be sorry about.” He searches Shane’s face for a moment before he continues talking. “We have options, yes? If this does not happen naturally?”

Shane is quiet for a moment before he nods.

“We do but... I can’t right now. I’m afraid that if we adopt, I’d only view them as a replacement for the baby I want today, and that’s not fair to them.”

Ilya nods, it’s a fair statement and something Ilya was afraid he’d feel as well.

“So,” Ilya presses a kiss to Shane’s nose and watches in awe as he scrunches it up adorably, “What is the plan now?”

“I think I need to stop taking tests every month. I’m tired of the disappointment. I didn’t even take one this month. I just couldn’t see another negative.”

“Okay,” Ilya says, a wave of exhaustion washing over him. He can see it reflected in Shane too. “Let’s go lay down, yes?”

He watches as Shane glances out the window, clearly trying to decide if it’s late enough to sleep, before he nods. He lets Ilya lead him upstairs and change him into one of his softest hoodies and a pair of comfortable shorts.

They lay down under the blankets, Ilya pulling Shane in close. He gently strokes his hair, whispering loving words in Russian in Shane’s ear until his breath evens out, a small snore filling the room.

He can’t help but worry still about Shane. Ilya feels a pit form in his stomach that this won’t be the last time he holds Shane through the night after a breakdown over their current situation.

It worries Ilya enough to bring it up to Galina at their next session.

He’s been seeing her a lot more recently, after a long stretch of monthly maintenance sessions. After January though, they returned to biweekly and most recently resumed nearly weekly sessions when Ilya’s schedule allowed it.

This is new, uncharted territory for both of them and while Ilya is trying to be strong for Shane, he really needs this place to process everything and his own emotions. He asks her for even more skills and tools to help Shane.

The best tool they receive though, is a woman by the name of Maggie.

Maggie is a small, tiny woman who isn’t afraid to call Shane out on the emotions he is feeling. She also specializes in prenatal depression, anxiety, infertility issues, and then further into postpartum struggles.

Ilya waits in the waiting room during Shane’s first appointment. It’s not Shane’s first time seeing a therapist, he met with one for a while when he first moved to Ottawa, but he was

particularly anxious for this appointment.

When the appointment is over, Shane leaves the office, his eyes clearly red from crying, but his shoulders seemed just a little bit higher. Like they were carrying a little bit less weight. He gives Ilya a small smile before confirming his next appointment with Maggie, and letting himself be led out of the office.

Ilya takes them to their favorite Italian restaurant for dinner and while nothing is fixed, it is still the happiest he has seen Shane in a while.

Everything feels like it might just be okay.

April

Throughout all of this, there's only one person Ilya wishes he could talk to about everything. Unfortunately, it's the one person he can't talk to.

His mother.

When he tells Galina this, she recommends he find a place where he feels closest to her and talk to her anyways. It might help him feel better.

He briefly considers the Russian Orthodox church down the street from the rink, he wears her cross around his neck so she clearly was connected by her faith, but he realizes there really is nowhere in this world that he feels her the most than when he is on the ice.

She was the one who taught him to skate when he was a child, lacing up his skates when he was only three years old. One of his earliest memories is her holding onto his hands on the pond behind their house, teaching him to glide.

She brought him to every practice, every game, every training camp.

Until she couldn't.

So he finds himself sitting in the stands after practice, the last one in the building except for the maintenance man he bribed to keep the lights on until he was done. The rink is quiet, settled in the way the air feels before a thunderstorm hits.

He feels a little silly for just a moment, before he pulls his necklace out from under his shirt. His fingers run over the rough corners of the cross as he wonders how to start. It feels awkward, the only time he ever spoke to her was when he would visit where she was buried on his trips to Russia. But he hasn't been back in years and it feels weird not being able to see her name in front of him.

"Hi Mama," he whispers eventually, the words tumbling out of him in Russian. *"I'm sorry I haven't been to see you lately, but I like to think you understand."*

He stares directly at center ice, picturing himself down there as his mother would look on while he was a child.

"I wish you could've met my Shane, he is as lovely as he seems. He always reminds me to take my medications and loves me in every way I know you had hoped for me." He feels shy for just a moment. "I hope you don't mind that he is a man, but... I like to think you wouldn't care."

He takes a deep breath before continuing. *"Mama... My Shane is so sad right now. We have been trying to have a baby and it's not happening, he hasn't been able to get pregnant. The doctors say there isn't any reason, it just isn't working."*

Ilya feels his eyes fill with tears. *"He would be the best father too. He is so kind but would be so protective and careful with our children, especially when they are young. They would never miss out on greens at dinner or forget to do their homework. But when he lets go, he would be the silliest and funniest father ever. I can already picture him chasing our children on the ice, like you did with me."*

"Mama, I don't know if you have any power wherever you are now, but if you could put in a good word for us? Shane wants this so badly. I mean I do too but... There is nothing else I can do. I have done everything I know to shoulder this for him. Please just... anything you can do to help."

He doesn't know what else to say. He doesn't have any words left in him other than to continue to beg his mother for her help. He knows though, that even she doesn't have that power. No matter how much he wishes she did.

He tucks his cross back into his shirt, giving himself five more minutes before he should head back home. Shane knows that practice is over and will probably start worrying soon.

"Hey Roz."

Ilya doesn't turn to look at the newcomer, he just listens as they settle into a seat behind him.

"Hayes."

"Figured you'd be home by now. You're usually one of the first ones outta here, dying to get back to Hollzy."

Ilya shrugs. "Yes, well..."

A tense silence stretches between them for just a moment. Maybe if Ilya is quiet enough Wyatt will leave him alone. It's not that he doesn't like Wyatt, he's actually probably one of his closest friends at this point, but this doesn't feel like something he wants anyone else to witness.

"So," Wyatt starts, breaking the silence, "I'm going to say a bunch of stuff. And I might be way off base here, but let me finish first. Okay?"

Ilya doesn't turn to look at him. He's pretty sure that Hayes has clocked Ilya's shit already. Stupid goalies and their perceptiveness.

Ilya waves his hand, gesturing for him to keep talking.

“Hollzy’s knee wasn’t bad enough to keep him from playing again this year, if he really wanted to. I know that, you know that, *he* knows that. I didn’t question it for a while, just wondered what possible reason Mr. Hockey himself has for retiring when he did. And then, I saw the look on his face when he was holding Lil’ dude at Bood’s cookout.”

Ilya’s mouth quirks up into a small smile at the mention of Troy and Harris’ son. He can’t help it. The kid was coming up on his first birthday and got cuter every time Ilya saw him.

“So I think to myself, Oh. I get it now. Rozy can’t keep his hands off Hollander and they are having a kid. Just waiting to announce it.”

If only, Ilya thinks. It would have spared them a lot of heartbreak if it was.

“*But then,*” Hayes continues, emphasizing a timeline that Ilya is all too familiar with.

“There’s no announcement, Hollander looks more and more withdrawn and sad every time I see him, and you are snappier than ever. So now one of two things. Either,” he holds his fingers in front of his face, “There was a baby and there isn’t anymore, or there never was a baby and you want one. But it isn’t happening.”

He goes quiet then, clearly finishing with his grand speech. He fights the urge to be angry with his teammate, knowing that this is all coming from a place of caring. Still, he can’t help but chirp even his friends.

“What, you want trophy for sticking your nose in Captain’s business?”

Wyatt laughs, jumping over the row of seats to plop down directly next to Ilya. He nudges Ilya with his elbow, just slightly, but doesn’t force him to talk.

Ilya finds that he wants to anyway.

He sighs. “Second one.”

Wyatt nods. “And I assume it... isn’t going well?”

Ilya shakes his head immediately. “The doctors say it should be happening, but it isn’t so.” Ilya shrugs. “We wait.”

“I kinda thought so. I’d recognize the way Hollzy has been anywhere.”

Ilya shoots a suspicious look at him. “What do you mean by this?”

“Me and Lisa aren’t childfree just so we can buy more comic books, Rozy.”

It takes Ilya a second to fully grasp what he is saying. His eyes go wide when it hits him though, and he turns to look at Wyatt.

“Hayes, I...” Wyatt waves him off.

“It’s fine, man. We’ve come to terms with it. We like the way our life turned out, ya know? I didn’t bring it up to get pity anyways. I brought it up, because I want *you* to know that you

aren't alone in this. Everyone is going to be worried about Hollander, which makes sense, they should. But sometimes... sometimes people don't think about the other person."

Ilya looks away from him, feeling the tears in his eyes. He knows Wyatt wouldn't care, but there's still the lessons he learned as a child buried deep within. Hide his emotions, don't let them see you cry.

He barely cries in front of Shane if he can help it. He sure as hell isn't crying in front of his goalie.

"I guess I just... wanted you to know that you aren't alone."

Ilya takes a second to compose himself before he looks at him. There's no judgement in his eyes, just genuine compassion.

"Thank you, Hayes. You are good friend."

Wyatt smiles, standing and holding a hand out to Ilya. They begin to make their way out of the stands, heading back toward the locker room to pick up their practice bags.

"Just promise me one thing," Wyatt says.

"Depends."

Wyatt grins, "When you guys eventually have a kid, because you *will* have one, there's no two people more deserving. Name it after me."

Ilya laughs, a full laugh. It feels like one of the first real laughs he has felt in a while. He knows, obviously, that they weren't the first couple to experience fertility issues. But having someone who he is close to, someone who he *knows*, be on his side and know how he is feeling, it lifts a weight from his shoulders.

"Absolutely not."

May

Shane wakes up the morning of his birthday feeling... off.

If he didn't know any better he'd think he was hungover. His head hurt, he was still tired despite just waking up, and he was vaguely nauseous in a way that only ever came after a night of drinking too much.

He sits up, stretching his arms high above his head, blinking rapidly to clear the dizziness that accompanies his headache. He gets up slowly, making his way to the bathroom before heading down the stairs to the kitchen.

Ilya is already awake, his back to Shane as he stands over the stove cooking breakfast. Shane smiles, walking towards him and wrapping his arms around Ilya's waist, his head landing on Ilya's bareback.

It's a rare morning in May when Ilya is actually at home. The centaurs are deep in a playoff run now, Detroit's team forcing a game five so they are back in Ottawa. Their next game is in two days and Wiebe gave them the morning off, only requiring an afternoon practice to give them some time to rest.

Ilya hums a greeting, "Good morning, *solnyshko*." One of his hands covers Shane's where they meet around his middle. "I have your smoothie ready, and birthday omelet will be ready soon."

Shane smiles, ignoring the way his stomach rolls just slightly when he gets a whiff of the eggs. He usually loved when Ilya would cook for him, but these smelled... eggy. That almost sulfur smell when the eggs are just a little too old.

But Shane still had some weird thoughts about food, especially when he felt out of control, and he knows Ilya would never serve him eggs that had turned, so he ignored it.

"Thank you, baby." Shane presses a kiss to the space between Ilya's shoulder blades. And then one more.

Because Shane really is lucky.

This glorious, beautiful, *sexy* man is all his. Loves Shane with every part of him and never fails to remind him of it. Both with his body and his words. And Shane loves him just as much.

He knows he's been down more these last few months, but weekly sessions with Maggie have really helped him. He still wants a baby, still wants to grow their family, but he's learned to let some of his worries go. Learned that he has no control over this and has come to terms with that.

Mostly.

But until then, he can love what he does have.

He presses an open mouth kiss to the middle of Ilya's back, lingering there just a moment. He licks just slightly, letting the saltiness of Ilya's skin bloom over his tongue. Shane doesn't need breakfast, he needs Ilya.

"Shane..." Ilya warns, "I am cooking."

Shane shrugs, kissing his back again.

Ilya spins, bringing them face to face. He levels a look on Shane, one of his eyebrows raising as he looks at him. "Are you trying to ruin your birthday breakfast?"

Shane huffs, rolling his eyes. He presses forward, placing a kiss on Ilya's mouth. He really doesn't want to waste food, but really the smell of the eggs was making his stomach feel even worse.

"You'll just have to cook something else," Shane practically purrs.

Ilya scoffs, turning back towards the stove. “Go sit down, it is almost ready. Stop being a brat and drink your smoothie. I’ll fuck you like you want after, if you are good.”

Shane flushes at Ilya’s words, but nods even if he can’t see him. Grabbing his smoothie off the counter, he heads towards the table, yelping when Ilya gives him a smack to his ass as he passes by.

He smiles when he takes a sip of his smoothie, the sweetness of the drink making him feel just a bit more settled. He’s sure there are the healthy parts he likes— kale, peanut butter, protein powder, but all he can taste is strawberries and bananas.

He beams at Ilya when he sets the plate in front of him, happily accepting the kiss the Ilya offers.

The eggy smell of the omelet returns and Shane’s stomach *rolls*. He can’t help the grimace that crosses his face when he looks down at it.

“Shane?”

He’s up and moving before he even registers what is happening. He makes it to the bathroom just in time to empty the meager contents of his stomach into the toilet.

“Shane!” Ilya is kneeling beside him, his hand on his back as Shane continues to gag into the toilet. He rubs small circles on his back as Shane’s stomach *finally* settles. Shane takes a few deep breathes, making sure the worst of it passes before he sits back on his heels.

“Fuck,” he curses under his breath, his eyes slipping closed.

“Are you okay?”

Shane nods, taking a deep breath before he tries to stand. Ilya stays behind him, making he stays steady.

“Think I’m getting sick. Dykstra’s kid sneezed *directly* in my mouth at the game the other day.”

Ilya’s fingers card through Shane’s hair as Shane brushes his teeth, getting the nasty sick taste out of his mouth.

“Oh my poor *solnyshko*, sick on his birthday.”

“Sorry about the omelet, I’m sure it would’ve been delicious.”

Ilya waves him off, helping him back into bed. Ilya tucks Shane in, promising to come back with some tea in a moment. When he comes back, he sits on the edge of the bed, running his fingers slowly down Shane’s face.

“How are you feeling?”

Shane takes stock of his body for a moment before he answers. “Honestly? Tired. But less nauseous so that’s good I suppose.”

“You relax, maybe sleep then. We can always cancel dinner with your parents if you are not feeling better.”

“I’m sure I’ll feel fine later.”

Shane most assuredly did *not* feel fine later. A week later and he was still waking up vaguely nauseous nearly everyday. He could usually stomach his smoothie, light enough in his stomach to settle it so that he can eat normally for the rest of the day.

Ilya is at practice this morning, the Cens wrapped up their latest series in five and are in a 1-1 series tie with Buffalo for a trip to the finals. Shane’s on his hands and knees, rooting around in the bathroom cabinet for something he isn’t even sure he has anymore.

He spies it finally, the last pregnancy test of a bulk amount he had bought a few months ago. He has an agreement with Maggie, no monthly tests until he thinks there is something to test for.

A week ago, he would’ve told you it was a cold. But there are too many factors to support his theory now.

The nausea, the headaches, the exhaustion, even the tenderness that has begun in his chest the last few days.

The second part of his deal with Maggie is that he’s only supposed to take a test when Ilya is home. For support afterwards no matter what. But he doesn’t want to see the disappointment on Ilya’s face that Shane is sure is coming.

It’s been a long year, sue him if he’s a little pessimistic.

He follows the instructions, setting the test face down on the counter as he sets an alarm on his phone for five minutes from now. He does everything he can to try and forget about the test resting nearly less than five feet from him.

When the timer goes off, he reaches for the test with shaky hands. He holds his breath as he flips it over.

Pregnant.

He lets out a loud sob, relief crashing into him. He suddenly feels a little guilty that he didn’t wait for Ilya to come home before he took this test.

Finally.

Finally.

His hand involuntarily drifts towards his stomach. He’s pregnant. His *baby* is in there. His and Ilya’s baby is in there.

“Shane!” Ilya calls into the house, having just gotten home from practice. Shane had been so overwhelmed that he didn’t even hear the door open.

“In here!” He calls back, his voice shaky with emotion. He knows Ilya would have noticed it immediately.

“Shane?” Ilya stands in the doorway of the bathroom, a confused and slightly worried look on his face. “Is everything... okay?”

Shane stands at the bathroom counter still, staring at himself in the mirror. He can’t tear his eyes away from his abdomen. Still flat, but now protecting the most important thing in the world.

Shane nods, “Yeah,” he clears his throat, unable to stop the tears from flowing down his face. He is so so relieved and so so happy. “Yeah, everything is okay.” He slowly hands the test over to Ilya. “More than okay actually.”

Ilya is quiet for a moment as he takes the test from Shane. He assumes Ilya looks at it, but Shane is still staring at himself in the mirror.

“Shane...” Ilya’s voice is soft, almost scared to break the silence between them. “This is real?”

That gets Shane to look away and meet Ilya’s eyes.

“I wouldn’t joke about this.”

“I know, I know,” Ilya reassures him. “I just mean... it has been so long, yes? This is real?”

Shane smiles, tears still in his eyes. “It’s real.”

Ilya’s eyes instantly fill with tears, barely believing it to be real, even with Shane’s reassurance. Shane steps up in front of him, both of them openly crying now.

“You’re pregnant?”

“I’m pregnant.”

Ilya’s arms pull Shane in close, whispering nearly nonsensical Russian in his ears. Shane is nearly fluent by now, but Ilya is speaking too fast to pick up most of it, only picking up some words. He hears *Thank you* and *Beautiful* and *I love you*.

They hold each other there on the bathroom floor for what feels like hours before Ilya pulls back, his hands on Shane’s cheeks so he can look him directly in the eyes.

“We are having a baby?”

The smile that lights up Shane’s face is quite possibly the best one Ilya has ever seen.

“We’re having a baby.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you everyone for reading! There's still one more chapter after this, but it's definitely more of an epilogue.

Love all ya'll so much <3

If you'd like to hang out with me and talk all things hollanov, you can find me on twitter [@hullanov](#) or on tumblr [MeganCantHearYou](#)

Chapter 3: One Year Later

Chapter Notes

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

June; One year Later

Shane glances up at the scoreboard, the clock slowly ticking down to the final moments of the game. There's two minutes left in game seven of the Stanley Cup Finals, Ottawa leading Colorado 3-2. But Colorado has pulled their goalie, going for the extra attacker in hopes to at least force overtime, and they are peppering Hayes with rapid fire shots hoping they can get just *one* in.

He's up in the WAG box again, one last time this season. He's surrounded by some of his closest friends, everyone making the trip to the arena to see what will be the final game of the season, no matter the outcome. His parents are also here, hanging a bit closer to the back of the suite.

As they've gotten older, they are a bit less inclined to be at the front and center of the high energy WAGs. Especially as the WAGs continue to get younger and younger with each crop of rookies that join the team.

There's a whistle on the ice, the puck deflected by Hayes and going up into the netting letting the play stop and the guys on the ice to catch their breath for just a moment. Shane glances at the scoreboard again, 1:37 on the clock.

They are *so* close.

He takes the break in play to glance back at his parents though, his face breaking out into a grin as he watches them. There, in his mother's arms, is the second reason why they are hanging out a bit further in the back.

His daughter giggles as his father blows raspberries in her face, her bright peals of laughter a sound that Shane is all too well attuned to. At five months old, she was, to put it nicely, a large baby. At almost 20 pounds, she was placed firmly in the 99th percentile, a surprise to all of them considering—.

A sharp cry pierced the box at the same time that puck dropped on the ice, a face off in Ottawa's zone as Colorado continued their relentless onslaught. Shane's head snaps to the side, Cassie looking slightly sheepish as his son stretches, clearly unhappy at being woken up from his nap.

Shane reached towards her, happily accepting his son back as his tiny nose scrunched up, clearly revving himself up to begin wailing. Shane pouts a bit, his lip jutting out in an overexaggerated mimic of his son's face. He runs his pointer finger down the length of the baby's nose, the touch gentle enough to soothe the oncoming cries.

Where his daughter was chunky, rolls upon rolls of soft, squishy, baby fat, his son was considerably leaner. He supposes that wasn't fair towards his son, he was perfectly average by every measurement scale, his twin sister was just *huge*.

Twins. That had been a surprise at their first ultrasound.

Shane still remembered the anxiety he had felt that day, both him and Ilya excited to get their first look at the baby that they had waited so long for. Shane had been laying there, the cold gel on his abdomen as the tech made sweeping passes talking to them energetically and occasionally clicking rapidly on her machine.

So when she paused, her head tilting slightly looking almost confused as she stared at the screen, both of them had noticed. Shane's hand tightened slightly in Ilya's.

"Is there... something wrong?" Ilya had asked, his voice wobbly. Shane had felt a pit form in his stomach, this could not be happening to him.

They had *just* felt comfortable telling people. At twelve weeks, they were nearly out of the first trimester, the doctor telling them that while the risk of miscarriage is always there, the chances were much lower.

So they'd told his parents at dinner last night, promising photos from the day's appointment, and had planned to tell the team at the upcoming monthly BBQ in a few days. It hadn't necessarily been difficult to hide from the team, Shane rarely drank alcohol still and he was a confusing mix of both starving and nauseous that led to him to eat in a way that wasn't all too different from his normal habits.

The tech glanced over at them, clearly seeing the anxiety on their faces before she brightened, resuming her motions and making a few more measurements on her machine.

"Legally, I can't tell you anything," she started, "But no, there's nothing wrong."

It barely helped.

When she had finished, wiping down Shane's stomach and helping him sit back up, she let them know that the doctor was going to look over the measurements and pictures she had taken and then be back in to talk to them.

Ilya and him stayed silent while they waited, Ilya's hands mindlessly rubbing circles into Shane's back. Shane's stomach was twisted, his normal nausea only increased by the rising tide of anxiety.

Dr. Anderson had merely smiled at them, asked them if twins ran in the family, and told them to buy double of everything.

Shane immediately threw up.

Ilya had to grab onto the bed to keep himself from passing out.

A sharp whistle on the ice rings out, the game stopped again with less than a minute, only 45 seconds left. A Colorado defenseman bumps into the side of Benson, one of the Centaurs newest rookies, as he makes his way towards the faceoff dot and causes Benson to retaliate.

Rookies and their tempers.

Lisa Hayes groans when Benson is steered towards the penalty box, putting the Centaurs at an even bigger disadvantage, 6 on 4 in terms of men on the ice. Wyatt has his work cut out for him for the rest of the game.

His son snuffles, kicking wildly to bring Shane's attention back to him and off the increasingly stressful situation happening on the ice.

"Oh, my poor baby," Shane coos, adjusting his hold so he can hold his son with one arm and prepare a bottle at the same time. Shane was mostly still breastfeeding, he loved those moments where it was just him and his babies, but with less than a minute left in the game, a bottle with prepumped milk was going to have to do.

Shane smiles as he pops the bottle into his son's mouth, the tiny hands coming to grab onto the sides to keep it steady. Warm, brown eyes look up at Shane, the same shade as his own, and Shane feels his heart clench with pure love for his babies.

Despite being fraternal twins, the two of them share many of the same attributes. They both got Shane's eye color and hair color, though his daughter got Ilya's curls where his son got Shane's own pin straight strands, and both of them got Ilya's sharp features. Ilya nearly fell to his knees when both of them popped a smattering of freckles across their noses and cheeks after their first exposure to the sun.

Shane's mother comes to stand next to him and he hands his mother a second bottle, knowing that if the Centaurs manage to hold off Colorado for just a bit longer, they will want two recently fed and happy babies during the trophy ceremony. He smiles when his daughter squeals with laughter, reaching for the bottle herself and a very persistent "Da!" leaving her mouth.

"Yes, hi baby," Shane says, his smile growing as she reaches for him. Both of his babies were clingy, neither one wanting to ever be put down, and he doesn't think either of them had been for the first month of their life.

That first month of their life had tested Shane and Ilya's relationship in ways that they hadn't even known was possible. Both babies had been colicky and their first two weeks had been marked by a continuous pattern of constipation and diaper blowouts, with nonstop crying.

Shane is pretty sure he and Ilya combined slept a total of twelve hours that entire time.

Luckily their doctor caught the issue quickly, food sensitivity to both dairy and soy. She gave them two options, formula feeding or a change to Shane's diet to eliminate any food sensitivities that he may be passing onto the babies.

It had been a no brainer for Shane, easily adapting his diet and within a week, both babies were the happy smiling versions in front of him now.

He really couldn't have done without Ilya, no matter how snippy they had been with each other at first. They'd both spent those first two weeks overwhelmed, exhausted, and frustrated. Frustrated with the constant crying, frustrated with other person for no real reason besides having to take their exhaustion out on someone, and frustrated that they had waited so long for their children just to be *miserable*.

Ilya had originally only planned to take the first week off from the team. If it had been up to him, he would've taken off the rest of the season, but Shane refused.

Afterall, this was going to be Ilya's last season.

Not that they had formally announced that yet, but most of the media and the entirety of the Centaur's pretty much assumed at this point. It was his last year on his contract, he hadn't signed a new one, and he had two beautiful babies waiting for him at home.

He'd nearly retired on the spot last year when he found out that Shane was pregnant. But after falling just short of another cup last season, Ilya had selfishly wanted to go out on top with a cup win, just like Shane had. And if anyone understood the need to go out with a win, it was Shane.

He had actively encouraged Ilya to finish out his last season, reminding him that they had plenty of help from others, including his parents, the other WAGs, and even Rose and Sveta who had each spent a week at their house to give them small breaks.

And while Shane had missed Ilya, he was forever grateful that they had been able to give Ilya this moment.

Shane watches as the final seconds tick down, the crowd chanting out the final ten seconds of the game. The siren blares, the crowd roars, and Shane feels tears spring to his eyes.

They *did* it.

The Centaurs won one more cup for their beloved captain. The man that had turned the team around, had pushed them to be the team that he had *always* known they could be. And Ottawa and the Centaurs will never let him forget that.

Shane watches as the team surrounds him, twenty grown men in a large group hug, all of them yelling and some of them crying. His gaze follows Ilya the entire time though, the way his eyes slip shut as he soaks in the roar of the crowd, and Shane knows Ilya will be able to retire completely fulfilled in his career.

"Shane?" Cassie says, coming up to stand beside him, "We are all going to head to the ice in a moment. I know you know how this goes, but we like to be down there and ready while they do the trophy presentation so we can join them immediately after."

He nods and smiles, passing his baby off to her so he can put on the baby carrier he uses when he has to go out with both kids and limited extra hands. One baby gets strapped to his chest, the other to his back. He rotates them with each wear so that both of them get to curl up on his chest.

“Come here you,” he says, taking his daughter from his mother so he can slip her into the carrier for his back, making sure she is completely settled before reaching for his son and attaching him to the front. “Let’s go see Papa.”

They make their way through the rink, Shane keeping himself in the middle of the pack of WAGs. The public knew that their kids existed, identical posts on their Instagrams with four pairs of skates had been shared after their birth, but Shane and Ilya did their best to keep their kids out of the media. There would be no stopping the pictures that would come out after the cup ceremony, but he can at least mitigate the photos that come from him just walking around the arena.

They arrive ice side just in time to watch Ilya lift the cup above his head, the crowd chanting his name as he skates his customary lap around the rink before passing the cup off to Bood. Shane smiles as he watches them skate around each other, the pure joy radiating off their faces.

The commissioner comes to the front once the team finishes their laps, making some speech about perseverance and coming back stronger after the loss last year. Shane barely listens, not really interested in anything Crowell has to say, and focuses all his attention on Ilya standing there at the front. Shane’s smile only grows when he realizes that Ilya is already looking at him where they wait near the boards.

Shane beams at husband just minutes later when he appears at the boards, opening the door so the families can be with their loved ones. Ilya’s hand immediately finds Shane’s waist, holding him close. He presses a hard kiss to Shane’s mouth, careful not to squish their babies, but keeping Shane close.

“Congratulations baby,” Shane speaks against Ilya’s mouth. “I knew you could do it.”

Ilya hums against Shane’s mouth, pressing another kiss on his mouth before pulling back just slightly. “I could not have done it without your support,” he says before he turns to his babies. “And especially not without the cutest babies in the world.”

“Da!” Their daughter squeals when she spies Ilya, kicking wildly in her carrier against Shane’s back. “Da! Da!”

Ilya’s face twists into an exaggerated pout as he lifts her from the carrier, “It’s my special day, *zaychik* and still, no Papa?”

Shane stifles a laugh as Ilya repeatedly tries to get her to repeat Papa to no avail. Shane is very aware that she is simply babbling, the fact that it sounds close to his given name of Dad is pure coincidence. But Shane will take the win and tease Ilya whenever he can that their children learned his name first.

“Cap!” Hayes calls from the center of the ice, waving both of them over. Ilya slowly skates his way over, still holding their daughter. Luca skates by, the extent of his asking permission to take Shane’s son being him just holding his arms out. Shane rolls his eyes, but doesn’t resist as Luca takes him to be next to Ilya and his daughter.

They had always made jokes about Luca being Ilya’s on, especially after Shane showed up. The fans had made jokes that he was the first Hollanov child and it had continued to ring true after the twins were born.

Luca *loved* the twins, constantly offering to babysit so that Shane and Ilya could get out of the house. No matter how often Ilya and Shane told him that he should be out with his teammates, enjoying life while he’s young and single, he still preferred to be around the babies.

It only takes Shane a moment to catch up to them, even without his skates he is incredibly comfortable on the ice and trusts himself to not fall on his way over. When he gets there, Ilya laces their fingers together, pulling him up right next to the cup.

“C’mon Cap, you have first honors,” Hayes says, gesturing towards the cup.

“First honors?”

“Baby in the cup, Baby in the cup!” Someone in the back starts the chant, the rest of the team joining in quickly.

Shane laughs as Luca hands him back his son. Ilya and him stand on either side of the cup, setting both of their babies in the cup as they pose for a photo taken by Shane’s parents. Shane feels like his heart is going to explode with how happy he is. His husband just won the cup, his beautiful babies are here and giggling as they sit in the cup, and after this, he will have all three of them at home with him, forever.

They put the photo on their fireplace, sitting it directly on the mantle so they can proudly show off their family to every visitor they have to their home. It follows them to every house they own; the one they move to once the twins start school and they wanted to be a little closer to the school, the one they move into when their third child is born and they need more space— another girl who, while not planned, was the missing piece in their family they didn’t know they needed, and even keep a copy at the cottage.

Shane can’t stop himself from staring at it from time to time, remembering the heartache they both went through while waiting for their babies, and reminds himself that sometimes the waiting is the hardest part.

But it makes everything worth it in the end.

Thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed <3

End Notes

Thank you for reading <3 the next chapter will be out in just a few days

in the meantime, you can come hang out with me on twitter [hullanov](#) or on tumblr [MeganCantHearYou](#)

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