a new passion

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a new passion

by Tizniz

Summary

“Seriously, dude,” Hayden snorts, dragging Shane away from the hockey books he’d been looking at. “You need to find a new topic.”

“But I like those.” Shane replies with a small pout, gazing back at the shelf he’s getting further away from.

“I know you do. But you’re supposed to challenge yourself!” Hayden waves a hand to gesture across the large bookstore they’re in, “Find something new!”

Shane glares at Hayden before shifting his focus to the various signs displaying different genres. “Fine. I’ll find something not hockey related.”

OR: Shane finds a new passion.

Notes

Hello :)

This story is lowkey inspired by a comment on my fic *sleeping beauty, won't you wake up?* from circle_of_the_sea: "now that you've said you have a geography degree i fear it must be worked into a fic that'd be so fun"

I love geography. It is such a passion of mine. I also just went to the Grand Canyon and had a whole nerd out moment about it. This was finished before that but I hadn't posted because I was busy with a scary trip (which resulted in my life blowing up a little and am still dealing with...) and then my fun trip to the GC. I'm back now though and have a couple stories to post, so I'll do my best.

For now though...enjoy this :)

Xx

See the end of the work for more notes

“Seriously, dude,” Hayden snorts, dragging Shane away from the hockey books he’d been looking at. “You need to find a new topic.”

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Hayden snorts again and pats Shane on the shoulder, “Sure you will. I’m going to go find that book Jade was asking for. Come get me when you’re done.”

– One month later –

Ilya swings open the door, glaring at Hayden, “You owe me a husband.”

“Uhm.” Hayden blinks, Arthur in his arms and smiling happily at Ilya.

“Uncle Ilya!” The twins cry out in unison, appearing from behind Hayden.

Ilya’s face transforms as he smiles and crouches down, opening his arms to the two smaller bodies that crash into him, “Ah, my favourite *printsessy*!”

“Why do I owe you a husband?” Hayden questions, leaning over so Arthur can stand on his own, the little boy latching his arms around Ilya instantly, burrowing his face into his neck. Ilya simply curls an arm around him, holding him close.

“Because you took mine away.”

“I haven’t seen him in a month!”

“Hi, Ilya.” Jackie greets, Amber happy in her arms, “Here, babe.” She thrusts a bag at her husband before stepping around Ilya and into the house, Ruby and Jade following her.

“You still took mine away.” Ilya snipes, lifting Arthur and spinning on his heel, heading into the house, “Jackie, wine?”

“God, yes!”

Ilya cannot help but smile at the sight of Shane frowning adorably at the sauce he’s thickening on the stove. He had been fretting and worrying about this get together even

though it was only Hayden and Jackie.

“Moya lyubov, the Pike’s are here.” Ilya announces like the twins aren’t already cooing over Anya, who’s rolled onto her back for belly rubs. “Where is the wine?”

“White is in fridge. Red is on counter. Didn’t know which one Jackie wanted.”

“Either one is wonderful.” Jackie comments, pausing beside Shane to peck him on the cheek, “Hi, baby.”

As he always does when Jackie calls him that (and the *only* person besides Ilya who is allowed to call him that), Shane blushes and ducks his head. “Hi.”

“Smells amazing.” Jackie continues as she pours herself a glass of wine, reaching for another to pour Ilya one as well. Amber, having been placed on the floor, is crawling over to join her sisters and Anya.

“Why the fu—“ Hayden cuts himself off as he enters the room, four little eyes swiveling to their father, “—udge do I owe Rozanov a new husband, Shane?”

“Hi, Hayden. I’m well, Hayden. Thanks for asking, Hayden.” Shane drawls dryly, adjusting the heat and placing the lid on top of the pot. “So glad to see you, Hayden.” He reaches for Arthur when the little boy leans away from Ilya and towards his other uncle.

Ilya smirks into the glass of wine Jackie has passed him, enjoying when his husband gets snarky.

Hayden rolls his eyes, dropping the baby bag heavily onto one of the bar stools, “Hi, Shane. So glad to see you even though we talked on the phone three days ago and saw each other a month ago.”

“Which,” Ilya tips his glass at his least favourite Pike, “is why you owe me a new husband.”

Shane turns to lift an eyebrow at Ilya, “I didn’t know we were splitting up.”

“No, no,” Ilya flaps a hand, “I just want my husband back.”

“I’m so lost.” Hayden groans.

“So things are normal.” Jackie giggles, smiling innocently when Hayden glares at her.

Shane ignores the two and narrows his eyes at Ilya, “Is this about the mountains?”

“Yes it is about mountains!”

“Oh my god.”

“Mountains?”

“Yes, *mountains*, Pike.” Ilya snarks, placing his glass down and planting his hands on the counter. “You told him to find something new. You told him he likes hockey too much. You ruined my husband!”

“Ruined?” Shane echoes but Ilya ignores him, glaring still at Hayden.

“Sorry for encouraging my best friend to get into something besides hockey.”

“I like hockey…” Shane says with a small pout.

“We know you do, sweetie.” Jackie pats him on the shoulder, taking Arthur from him, “Let the children argue it out.”

“We are not arguing!” Ilya and Hayden say in unison, huffing and looking away from each other immediately after.

“No.” Jackie snorts into her wine, “Definitely not.” She wanders over to where the actual children are and takes a seat on the floor, Anya immediately climbing into her lap.

“I thought you liked the stuff I was learning.” Shane comments, shifting his full attention back to Ilya.

“I do!” Ilya replies quickly, hating the despondent look that spreads across his husband’s face. “Shane, sweetheart, you know I would listen to you talk about anything for hours.”

“Then why does it matter if Hayden got me into something new?”

“You’re in trouble now.” Hayden mutters, snickering when Ilya flips him off without looking.

“It does not.” Ilya steps towards his husband but Shane crosses his arms, cheeks tinged red with emotion. “Shane…”

“You’re literally standing here telling him you need a new husband, Ilya.” Shane’s voice is level, a big red flag for Ilya, “Because I got a little into mountains? And other geographical features?” He throws his arms up in the air, “Everyone always wants me to shut up about hockey anyways! Now I do and suddenly it’s an issue?”

“Woah, bud…” Hayden starts but Shane shakes his head, hands falling to his side with an audible slap.

“Sorry. Next time I’ll make sure to take a survey from everyone and pick a topic acceptable to all of you.” Shane snaps and then he spins on his heel and marches out of the room.

Ilya stands there, mouth agape. He didn’t expect *this.* It was meant to be teasing! Fun! Annoying Pike!

But instead, he’d upset Shane. Ilya hadn’t missed the shine in those big brown eyes he loves so much.

“Well. Shit.” Hayden sighs, leaning against the counter.

“Daddy, swear jar!” One of the twins calls out.

“Actually, honey,” Jackie says softly, “I think we’ll let Daddy have this one.”

Ilya looks over at Hayden, who’s already looking back at him, “We messed up.”

“Just a little.”

“How do we fix?”

Hayden blows out a puff of air, “Give him a few minutes and then go grovel?”

“Perfect.” Jackie chimes in as she holds up her glass, “Mommy needs a refill anyways.”

As Hayden goes to collect his wife’s glass, Ilya stares at the hallway Shane has disappeared down.

How had this gone so wrong?

Shane frowns down at the book in his hands as he sits on the side of the bed.

He had been so excited last week when it showed up, looking forward to learning more about what made the physical world the shape it was, but now it almost feels like it’s mocking him.

How dare you try and get into something that isn’t hockey? Shane can hear a voice scoff in his head, the same one that had tried to deter him last month in the bookstore. Except the challenge from Hayden had won out, and that’s when Shane had grabbed the first book about geography.

He doesn’t really know why he chose that topic. Maybe because it was different from hockey and yet he could still connect it to the sport he loved so much

(Geography meant the world and the world had ice and rinks and that was where hockey was played. Shane never said the connection was strong…)

But then he started reading, started learning that geography was so much more than just maps. He got into learning about how mountains were formed and the fact that glaciers moved and he came to discover that there was also human geography, which he didn’t enjoy, but physical geography? That was interesting.

Shane was finally, for the first time probably ever, interested in something that wasn’t hockey.

Hell, even his husband came from hockey! This is literally the first thing not hockey related that Shane enjoyed.

And now he was being told it was wrong.

He replaces the book onto the night stand, propping his elbows on his knees and dropping his head into his hands, fingers carding through his hair.

Stupidly, Shane sort of feels like crying. And he knows it's stupid and ridiculous. There's no reason to cry.

But it's hard.

He'd been teased all his life about how his entire life revolves around hockey (which it *doesn't*…anymore.), simply because he enjoyed the sport. And now he finds something else that catches his attention, scratches his mind in a way that stats and plays did before, and he's getting told to stop. By the most important person in his life. All because his best friend told him he's too into hockey.

Groaning, Shane flops backwards onto the bed, throwing an arm over his face as his eyes burn.

"Stupid." He whispers to the ceiling. "Stupid, stupid, stupid."

Okay. So. He stops reading about geography. Forgets all the facts about mountains and rivers and lakes that he's learned. He'll go back to reading about hockey. He'll start spewing out facts about the history of famous players until people's eyes glaze over and he trails off and stops talking.

It'll be just like before.

And that's okay. Shane can do that.

The problem is he doesn't *want* to.

Geography is really cool, actually. And living in Canada, where there's such a widespread variety of geographic sights, he thinks it'd be a shame to not explore it more.

Shane hasn't told anyone, not even Ilya, but he has a list of places in Canada he'd like to go see. Not the tourist attractions like The Landing Pad in Alberta (although they will go because Ilya loves the idea of a giant UFO), but places like the Rocky Mountains.

When he learned that there were *seashells* discovered on top of the Rockies, Shane wanted to see them instantly. Had even started looking up flights to British Columbia. That's when he'd come back to himself and realized that was silly and put a stop to it. Instead, he'd added it to his secret little list of 'Canadian geographic spots' that he'd like to see.

Now he'll never see them. He'll continue to go around his country, play hockey, but never see any of the natural beauty that exists within it. Because apparently him branching out and finding a new interest is too much for everyone to handle, his husband included.

Okay, he's probably spiralling a little, but Ilya's words bothered Shane.

You ruined my husband!

Shane's throat and chest tighten; ruined? He was ruined because he was exploring something new? So Ilya only loved him because Shane was obsessed with hockey?

"No." Shane tells himself outloud, fingers curling into the blanket, the arm still over his face pressing down harder, "No, Ilya loves you because you're you."

A soft knock on the door sounds out and Shane flinches; he hopes whoever is there (probably Ilya) didn't hear him talking to himself (again). He doesn't need to be locked up for being crazy on top of everything else.

"Shane?" Ilya's voice carries through the door, "Can I come in?"

"Yeah." Shane replies, loosening his fingers at his side but remaining hidden under his arm. "It's your bedroom too." He adds when the door clicks open.

"Yes, but if you need space…" Ilya's voice is clearer without the door in the way but judging by the sound of it, he hasn't stepped into the room.

"Just come in." Shane sighs, curling and uncurling his toes against the rug beside the bed.

"Okay." Ilya's footsteps are barely heard as he walks further into the room, the door shutting behind him before he moves towards the bed. The mattress dips down at the foot of the bed and Shane peeks out from under his arm to see his husband sitting sideways there, one leg hooked up onto the mattress, hazel eyes watching Shane with a small frown on his lips. "Shane…I am sorry."

He goes back behind his arm. "It's okay."

"No it is not." Ilya snaps back softly, "I hurt you."

"No."

"Shane–"

"I'm just being ridiculous. It's fine. You and Hayden were right. I shouldn't have strayed from hockey." The words burn a little on the way out, but Shane's used to that. He's said a lot over the years that isn't quite true. Hell, he had the world convinced he hated Ilya Rozanov. And now they're married!

"Stop that." Ilya snaps again, voice a bit sharper, "Do not do that."

“Do what, Ilya?” Shane sighs, suddenly exhausted. Except he can’t stay here; Jackie and Hayden came over, they brought the kids, Shane has to be a happy and polite host. He drags his arm off of his face and sits up, spine hunched a bit as he grips to the side of the bed.

“Pretend you are not bothered.” Ilya explains, “I told you to not do that with me.”

“I’ve been told a lot of things in my life.” Shane mumbles, unable to force himself to his feet. God, this dinner is going to be a disaster. Jackie and Hayden are never going to want to come over ever again.

“I know,” Ilya’s voice is softer now, and Shane makes himself focus on the conversation. “And I am sorry. That is also unfair.”

“Yeah, well, I’m used to it.” Shane shrugs, trying to also shrug off everything else, “Sorry you have a ruined husband. I’ll make sure to stick to hockey.” He stands, finally, but just as he’s on his feet, fingers curl around his wrist and tug him back down. Shane’s body tumbles backwards onto the bed, landing on his back with a scowl. “Ilya!”

“I do not want that.” His husband says, scrambling to crawl across the mattress until he’s straddling Shane’s hips, pinning him to the bed.

“We have guests.” Shane reminds him, going to shove at Ilya’s chest, but those fingers return to his wrist, both this time, and also pin his hands to the bed. “We are not having sex when the Pikes are here.”

A crease forms between Ilya’s eyebrows, “We are not having sex. I just do not want you to walk away again before you hear me.”

“I heard you fine, Ilya.” Shane focuses somewhere around Ilya’s left ear, “You’re upset because Hayden told me to read something not hockey related. And then it was something you didn’t like. And now I’m ruined.”

“Shane—”

“So I’ll stop reading about geography.” *Stop reading the one thing that’s been interesting to me since I learned about hockey.* Shane thinks, blinking away the sudden rush of tears, “Don’t worry.” His voice wobbles that time. Which, *shit*, because now Ilya’s expression is shifting into one of devastation.

“Shane…”

“Please.”

“No. I am *so* sorry. It was just joke!” Ilya leans down, eyes trying to catch Shane’s, but Shane can’t handle the contact, so he slams his eyelids shut. “I’m sorry, Shane. I love listening to you talk about mountains and rivers and rocks.”

“No, you don’t.”

“I *do*.” Ilya insists, fingers squeezing where they’re still wrapped around Shane’s wrists, “Because it is you talking about it. And you talk differently about those things than when you talk about hockey.”

“Which is why you think I’m ruined.”

Ilya curses in Russian, his nose brushing against Shane’s as he gets closer, “I never should have said that. Bad words. Please, let me take them back.”

“But they’re true.” Shane whispers, eyelashes growing wet even though his eyes are still closed.

“No. No, no, no.” Ilya’s nose hits Shane’s with each shake of his head. “I said different but a *good* different. I have heard you talk about hockey for years. I know it is passion of yours. But when you talk about geography?” His breath is warm against Shane’s lips, “You are… lighter. I can tell this is different passion. One you chose.”

Shane sniffles, “I did…and I…I *do* like it. A lot. It’s interesting.”

The confession feels heavy. Like it’s too much. Shane opens his eyes, not wanting to remain in the darkness, but all he sees is Ilya. His husband is close, too close really, and his features are a bit blurry because of it.

There’s nothing but love in Ilya’s hazel eyes though. That is clear and steady.

“I don’t want you to stop learning or sharing. Please.” Ilya whispers, thumb stroking along the pulse point of Shane’s right wrist. “I want you to tell me everything that you like. Or don’t like. Please. You are perfect. Not ruined at all.”

“M’not perfect.” Shane grumbles even though he knows the argument is pointless. No matter what he says, Ilya will find a reason to dispute it. This has been going on for many, many years at this point.

“I am sorry, Shane.” Ilya says again, voice full of sincerity. “I hate that I made you feel the way I did. Especially when it was with something you like so much.”

“It’s really cool.” Shane admits quietly. “Seashells were found on top of the Rockies, Ilya.”

His husband nods, peppering kisses across Shane’s face. “That is very cool. I love hearing what you’ve read. You will not stop?”

“I…yeah. Okay.”

“Okay.” Ilya repeats and after a long, deep kiss, he climbs off of Shane, tugging him up to his feet. “Pike also wants to apologize—“

“He didn’t do anything.”

“Hmm, yes, it was more me.” Ilya nods, “But he still feels bad. Because he argued with me. And we both know you do not like that.”

Shane sighs and drops his forehead onto Ilya’s shoulder, “I know you two won’t ever be best friends. I just want you two to be civil towards each other.”

“I will be nice. Besides, kids and better Pike are here.”

“I don’t think Jackie likes that nickname.”

Ilya grins brightly, “Ah, so you admit Jackie is better Pike.” He laughs as Shane shoves him away. “Okay, okay. I am done. We go join the others now?”

“Yeah. Okay.” Shane nods, tangling his fingers together with Ilya’s as they leave the bedroom.

They’ve barely made it into the living room before Ilya’s hand is suddenly empty as Hayden pulls Shane into a hug.

“*Oof*.” Shane grunts, “Hayd—“

“I’m so sorry, Shane.”

Ilya huffs out a small laugh and steps around the two as Shane does his best to reassure the other man that everything is fine. He makes his way over to where Arthur and Amber are putting together one of the puzzles that is designed for kids with larger pieces that Ilya had bought for them. “How is it going?”

“Good.” Arthur nods, placing the piece that Amber hands over him. “Thank you.”

Smiling at the politeness that reminds him of his husband, Ilya gives his hand a quick pass over Arthur’s head, careful to not disturb the young boy’s hair, before he continues walking towards the kitchen.

The twins are set up at the table, paper and colouring supplies sprawled across the surface.

“Hi Uncle Ilya!” Ruby greets, Jade hunched over her drawing.

“Hello, my malen’kiy rubin.” Ilya replies, smiling as the girl giggles at the Russian nickname. He doesn’t stop at them, going straight towards their mom instead. Jackie has, unsurprisingly, taken over watching the food. Ilya refills her wine glass before leaning over to peck her on the cheek. “Thank you.”

“Of course.” Jackie smiles, eyes flickering over to the doorway, “How is he?”

“Better.” Ilya hums, collecting his wine glass from before to take a sip. “We talked. I apologized. Now Pike is doing so.”

“And Shane is going to keep reading geography stuff?”

“Yes.”

“Good.” Jackie smiles, patting Ilya on the chest, “And next time you tell your husband he’s ruined because my husband did something stupid, I’ll kick your ass.”

“Noted.” Ilya nods a second before Shane walks into the kitchen. Ilya tilts his wineglass towards his husband as Shane opens his mouth, “No.”

“You don’t even know what I was going to say!” Shane protests.

“Yes, I do.” Ilya sips his wine, “You were going to get upset because Jackie is at stove.”

“Well she’s a guest! I’m supposed to be making dinner!”

“And you did.” Jackie interjects smoothly, “I was just ensuring nothing burned. And please, I’m not a guest.”

“You still shouldn’t be doing anything.” Shane grumbles, pouting quite adorably in Ilya’s opinion.

“And *you*,” Jackie says, “should be telling your nieces about what you learned.”

“They don’t want to—“

“Uncle Shane!” Jade abandons her drawing, and Ilya tries to not be offended that she does so for Shane instead of Ilya, “Daddy said you were learning about mountains!”

“Yeah!” Ruby chimes in, “Can you teach us?”

Shane looks bashful, “Really? You wanna hear about that?”

“Do they ever.” Hayden states as he walks in, his youngest in his arms. “They wouldn’t shut up about it for the whole drive, bud. *Please* tell my children something about mountains or rivers or whatever.”

“Oh wait,” Jackie looks to Ilya, “Can you grab Arthur? I know he’s working on the puzzle, but he has a list of questions he’s been saving. He’ll leave the puzzle for this.”

Shane’s cheeks flush a pretty pink as he ducks his head, a small smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

“I will fetch my little soldier.” Ilya takes one last sip of his wine before placing the glass down once more and sweeping out of the room to collect Arthur.

The little boy is more than happy to abandon his puzzle to go and grab the notebook he had tucked in the bag Jackie had packed, climbing onto a chair at the table and leveling Shane with a serious expression. Ilya, Jackie, and Hayden have to muffle their laughter. Shane simply slides into a seat as well and prepares himself to educate the kids.

Ilya rejoins Jackie and Hayden at the island counter, the couple occupying two of the stools while Ilya leans against the opposite side of the counter.

He smiles as he listens to his husband.

“Did you know that Canada, the country we live in, contains over sixty percent of the world's natural lakes?” Shane asks, the kids shaking their heads, eyes wide with wonder. “It’s pretty cool.” He adds, “The Great Lakes are also the largest source of freshwater in the world.”

“They’re *HUGE*!” Ruby yells, stretching her arms as wide as she can. “We can’t even see the other side of some!”

Shane nods, “Yes. They’re called great for a reason.”

“Uncle Shane.” Arthur pipes up, voice still quiet. Ilya’s heart warms as he watches Shane give his full attention to the young boy. “I heard that really old rocks are found here.”

Shane smiles, “There are. Actually, the oldest known rocks on Earth are found in Canada. Do you know how old?”

Arthur shakes his head, “No. Older than Daddy?”

“Hey!” Hayden cries out, Jackie hiding her laughter in her wine glass.

Shane chuckles, “Way, way, *way* older than your dad. The rocks found here are two hundred and fifty *million* years older than any other known rocks. The oldest found is four point two eight *billion* years old.”

All three kids mouths fall open in shock, their young minds unable to wrap their minds around it. Hell, even Ilya is struggling.

Pausing for a moment, Shane taps his finger on the table, and then his entire body perks up.

Ilya falls a little more in love.

“Not quite geography related, but…Canada hosts seventy percent of the worlds maple syrup supply.”

Amber giggles suddenly in her dad’s arms, clapping her hands together.

“Yeah, you love maple syrup, don’t you?” Hayden coos at his daughter.

“And you get mad at me when I feed your children sugar.” Ilya mutters.

“Because you overload them.” Hayden fires back.

“Ninety percent of the earth’s population lives in the northern hemisphere.” Shane blurts out before Ilya can say anything more.

“Wait,” Arthur looks down at his notebook, eyebrows scrunched together, “but geography is about mountains and rivers.”

“That’s what I thought,” Shane explains, “but there’s two branches: human and physical. I like the physical more too, but some of the human stuff can be interesting…”

“Okay.” Ilya whispers to Jackie and Hayden, “He will be going for a while. We will need to stop him for dinner.”

“Oh, do we have to?” Jackie pouts lightly, “He looks so happy.”

Ilya glances back at his husband, watching as Shane animatedly relays the various facts and trivia he’d learned about geography. Jackie is right, he does look happy. The light in his eye that Ilya and Hayden had dimmed earlier is back. A smile stretches wide across Shane’s face and he waves his hands in the air. A sign that he’s truly into what he’s talking about.

“You’re right.” Ilya vocalizes, “Dinner can wait. Let’s let him talk a little longer.”

“And maybe next time you’ll trust me when I make Shane do something new.” Hayden smirks, shifting Amber in his arms, the youngest Pike starting to doze against his chest.

“Do not push it, Pike.” Ilya warns, watching his husband with a heart full of love.

love you.

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