have you seen my husband?

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have you seen my husband?

by shaneverse

Summary

Shane Hollander Rozanov is many things: a devoted father, a loving husband, and currently, a pregnant omega stranded in a restaurant with his three-year-old daughter because nobody believes he's married to the owner.

Notes

twitter

Chapter 1

There were very few things in life that could successfully neutralize a three-year-old.

Fortunately for Shane, the steady hum of a private jet was one of them.

Mila was currently sprawled across the cabin's plush leather sofa, her face mashed into Shane's thigh, while her light-up sneakers were wedged firmly into Ilya's ribs.

Across the aisle, Kip lowered his tablet and leaned over, pitching his voice into a whisper.

"I still can't believe you're four months along," Kip said, gesturing vaguely at Shane with his stylus. "You just look like you had a very aggressive dinner."

"Tell that to my stomach," Shane deadpanned, shifting to get comfortable. He rested a hand over the small swell of his belly. "This pup is currently rejecting everything that isn't pure sodium or heavy carbs."

Kip groaned, resting his chin in his hand. "God, I feel you. I'm eight weeks in and surviving entirely on bagels. Scott had to hide the toaster from me this morning."

At the mention of food, the man sitting next to Shane stirred. Ilya cracked one eye open. His hand, previously resting near Mila's sparkly shoes, shifted to cover Shane's knee.

"Do you need food?" Ilya asked, his voice a sleep-rough rumble.

"I'm fine, Ilya," Shane smiled, lacing their fingers together. "Go back to sleep."

He didn't.

Before the cabin doors even opened to the freezing Russian air, Ilya tackled the monumental job of wrestling a whining toddler into a bright red winter jacket.

They bypassed the airport completely, moving from the jet to an SUV, and eventually into a private elevator that whisked them up to the quiet, sprawling warmth of a penthouse suite.

While Scott and Kip vanished into their own rooms to prep for the afternoon, Ilya lingered in the entryway, frowning at his watch.

"The executives are expecting us at one-thirty," Ilya said, glancing up at Shane. "Are you sure you don't want to just order room service and stay here?"

"If I let her stay cooped up in a hotel room all afternoon, literally no one is sleeping tonight." They both paused to watch Mila, who was currently doing laps across the living room rug. "Go make your millions. Mila and I are going to do the tourist thing."

Ilya's frown deepened. He crossed the room, snagging a cashmere scarf from the coat rack, and effectively trapped Shane in front of the hallway mirror. Without a single word, he began

meticulously wrapping the wool around Shane's neck for the third consecutive time.

"Ilya, I'm not venturing into an arctic tundra," Shane laughed, swatting lightly at Ilya's hands. "You're strangling me."

"It is Moscow autumn," Ilya grumbled. His hands dropped, his thumbs smoothing possessively over the wool of Shane's sweater, right over the bump. "The wind has teeth. You and Mila, alone in the city..."

Shane leaned up, pressing a quick kiss to the corner of his husband's mouth. "We'll be surrounded by tourists. We're just going to look at some buildings, eat pastries, and tire her out."

Right on cue, Mila abandoned her laps across the rug and skidded into the entryway, stopping just short of Ilya's dress shoes. "Papa! Go see castles now?"

Ilya scooped her up, pressing a loud kiss to her cheek that made her shriek with giggles. When he set her down, his blue eyes snapped back to Shane, serious. "Keep your phone on. If you need anything, call me. I will walk out of the meeting."

"I know you would," Shane smiled softly, stepping into his space to briefly straighten Ilya's tie. "Go terrify some executives. We'll see you before dinner."

♡

Ilya was right about one thing: the wind *did* have teeth.

Shane was clutching a scalding paper cup of street-vendor tea just to thaw his fingers as they navigated the wide, bustling sidewalks toward the Alexander Garden. Within three blocks, the physical toll of growing a human while wrangling another one began to show.

When his lower back gave a sharp, warning twinge, Shane surrendered. He guided Mila toward a wrought-iron bench beneath a golden-leafed tree, sinking down onto the cold metal with a heavy sigh.

He rubbed his spine through his coat, watching fondly as his daughter immediately zeroed in on a flock of pigeons pecking at the cobblestones.

With a delighted squeal, Mila stomped her light-up sneakers, sending half the flock scattering. But one particularly round pigeon just blinked at her.

"Dad! Bird!" Mila yelled, squatting down and extending a chubby hand. "Come here, bird."

"Don't touch him, honey, he's dirty," Shane warned.

Mila looked back at him. "His name is Boris. I take him home?"

"No, you definitely cannot take Boris home."

Shane pulled his phone from his pocket, snapping a quick photo of Mila having an intense stare-down with the pigeon.

I

Ilya ❤️

Today 2:06 PM

She has named him Boris and is demanding we adopt him. Please advise.

Tell her Boris has a family.

And diseases.

She says the other pigeons are also named Boris.

We are currently negotiating custody.

Tell her I will buy her a clean bird.

A parrot. A peacock.

No street birds.

Shane snorted, shoving his phone back into his coat pocket.

He spent the next few minutes patiently explaining to his daughter why a flock of Russian street pigeons could not relocate to their Montreal penthouse.

"But Boris is cold," Mila argued. Her bottom lip jutted out in a tremble-heavy pout that was entirely unfair—mostly because Shane knew for a fact she had inherited it directly from his own face.

"Boris has his own family to feed, baby," Shane reasoned gently, crouching down to her eye level to pull her knit hat a little further over her ears. "And he's already wearing a very warm feather coat. Come on, let's go find a real castle."

Mila gave the pigeon one last look and raised a mittened hand. "Bye, Boris," she whispered, before finally letting Shane take her hand and hauling himself back up, forcefully ignoring the dull pop in his knees.

When the expanse of Red Square finally opened up in front of them, Shane pointed up at the candy-colored domes of St. Basil’s Cathedral.

Mila stopped dead in her tracks. "Look!" she cheered, doing an excited hop-stomp. "My castle!"

"It definitely looks like a castle."

"Where is the princess?" Mila asked. She peered around the base of the cathedral with suspicion, as if expecting a woman in a ballgown to step out.

"Maybe she's sleeping," Shane suggested.

Mila gasped, both mittened hands flying to her cheeks in a moment of realization. "I am the princess? And Papa is king?"

"Papa Ilya is absolutely a king," Shane laughed. "A tall, grumpy one."

Mila beamed, doing a wobbly twirl in her red coat. But mid-spin, she paused. Her smile faded into something serious as her gaze dropped to Shane's stomach.

She shuffled closer, reaching out to pat the wool. "Baby see castle too?"

He crouched down, wincing as his bladder voiced its displeasure at the angle. "No, sweetie. The baby can't see anything yet. It's too dark in there."

Mila frowned, clearly devastated. She leaned forward, pressing her cold cheek against his coat. "Baby missing everything," she whispered to his stomach.

"We'll bring the baby back to see the castle when they're older," Shane promised softly. He pressed a kiss into her dark curls. "Deal?"

"Deal," she mumbled.

Smiling, Shane hauled himself back up to his feet and pulled his phone out.

I

Ilya ❤️

Your daughter has claimed the castle.

She says she is the princess.

We live here now.

She is the princess.

I will buy the building.

You cannot buy a historical monument.

Watch me.

Are you warm enough?

Do you need to rest?

Yes, alpha.

We're heading inside to get sugar.

And to find a bathroom.

Good.

I love you, moya lyubov.

Love you too.

They managed exactly one quick stop at a nearby kiosk for a vanilla ice cream - which Mila promptly painted all over her nose and chin -before the inevitable sugar crash hit.

They were only halfway down the pavement when Mila simply stopped walking, lifting both arms in universal surrender with a demanding, "Papa, carry."

"Alright, up you go," Shane grunted, hoisting her onto his hip and biting back a wince as her weight settled directly against his aching spine.

Between the dense layers of her winter coat and her heavy boots, she felt like a very adorable, incredibly dense sack of flour. Still, he just wrapped his arms around her securely, burying his freezing nose in her warm curls.

Shane stopped under the yellow glow of a streetlamp to catch his breath, balancing her dead weight carefully against his hip while he dug his phone out of his pocket.

He was right in the middle of the awkward gymnastics required to take a one-handed selfie when an older woman in a thick wool coat stopped next to them, her eyes crinkling with instant grandmotherly affection.

"You want I take?" she asked, gesturing to the phone with a thick accent.

"Oh, yes, please," Shane sighed in relief, handing the device over. "Thank you."

He shifted his grip on Mila, resting his cheek gently against her knit hat.

The woman snapped a couple of photos, patting Shane's arm with a warm nod before handing the phone back.

Shane didn't wait for the cold to settle back into his bones.

He hailed a taxi, fully intending to head straight back to the hotel and melt into the mattress. But halfway there, as the cab navigated the heavy afternoon traffic, his stomach suddenly *tightened*.

It was a specific, undeniable biological demand for the beef stroganoff from Rozanov’s.

Fine.

He pulled his phone out one last time, awkwardly typing out a message with his thumb while keeping his other arm securely wrapped around Mila's sleeping weight.

I

Ilya ❤️

Today 4:22 PM

Craving hit. Blame the baby. We're stopping at the Tverskaya restaurant for stroganoff before we come back.

Shane shoved his phone and wallet into his deep coat pocket and leaned forward, handing the driver a few crisp rubles with a breathless, "Change of plans."

The second he pushed the heavy door open, a gust of freezing wind bit so hard at his cheeks that he flinched, his grip on Mila instantly slipping.

He tossed his phone and wallet onto the taxi seat for exactly two seconds - just long enough to use both hands to safely wrestle the kid out of the cab.

Shane kicked the door shut with his boot, practically jogging across the pavement to push through the heavy glass doors of the restaurant.

A host in an immaculate suit took one sweeping, faintly judgmental look at Shane's pale, wind-chapped face, his messy hair, and the dead-weight toddler in his arms. He hesitated for a fraction of a second before grabbing a menu, guiding them past the elegant front tables to a secluded, dimly lit leather booth in the very back.

Shane didn't care.

He ordered stroganoff and a plate of blini, and the moment the food arrived, Mila woke up. She eagerly dug in until she had sour cream all over her fingers, while Shane practically inhaled his own meal.

The rich food settled the gnawing ache in his stomach.

Crisis averted.

Until a tall server materialized, smoothly placing a leather-bound checkbook on the edge of the table.

"Thank you," Shane smiled, reaching into his right coat pocket.

His fingers met *empty fabric*.

He frowned.

Shane shifted his weight, digging his left hand into the opposite pocket, only to find the exact same nothingness. A sudden, icy prickle of sweat broke out at the base of his neck.

He sat up straighter, patting down his jeans.

The taxi.

"Excuse me, sir?" the server prompted. He tapped his pen against his notepad. Once. Twice.

Shane swallowed hard around a throat that suddenly felt lined with sandpaper. "I... I'm so sorry, but I left my wallet and my phone in the taxi."

The server's polite, professional smile evaporated. "You have no money."

"Not on me," Shane said quickly, instinctively pulling Mila a fraction closer. "But my husband is Ilya Rozanov. If you could just let me use a phone to call our hotel, his business partners can verify who I am and bring the payment."

The server let out a short, cold scoff. "People try to claim relation to Mr. Rozanov every week to get a free meal."

"I *am* his husband," Shane insisted, fighting to keep his voice level as the older couple in the adjacent booth turned to stare. "Call corporate. Look up a photo. *Please*, get your manager."

"I will fetch the manager," the server said. The polite veneer was completely gone. "Do not move."

It took ten agonizing minutes for the manager to arrive. He planted himself directly over their booth, arms crossed tightly over his chest.

"*No identification. No phone. No money*," the manager listed, his voice a low, bureaucratic hum of pure dismissal. "And I am to believe Mr. Rozanov's husband wanders in off the street, panicking, begging for a five thousand ruble meal?"

"It is the truth." Shane gripped the edge of the table.

"It is a common scam." The manager didn't even blink. "*Get up.* You are taking up a paying table. Wait by the host stand."

Shane froze, his heart slamming wildly against his ribs.

He looked at Mila.

Her spoon was suspended halfway to her mouth, eyes wide and entirely confused.

"Come on, Mila," Shane whispered. He pulled her out of the booth, hoisting her onto his hip.

The walk to the front of the restaurant felt like a public execution. Shane could physically feel the eyes of the dining room tracking them.

"Look at him," a man at a nearby table scoffed softly to his wife, casually cutting a piece of steak. "*Shameless*."

Shane stood awkwardly by the front doors, the freezing draft seeping through the cracked glass and biting at his ankles. He pulled Mila closer, hiding her face in the curve of his neck so she wouldn't see the stares.

The manager stepped behind the reservation desk and picked up the landline. "What is the number?"

Shane opened his mouth.

Nothing came out.

He *knew* Ilya's number. He had dialed it a million times. From grocery stores, from airports, in the middle of the night.

But standing there under the manager's heavy silence, his brain flooded with pure, suffocating white noise.

The digits scrambled.

Was the second number a four? Or a seven? "I..." Shane stammered. His breathing turned shallow. "I can't... I can't remember."

The manager's expression settled into absolute disgust. "You do not know your own husband's phone number."

"I know it!" Shane insisted desperately, his voice cracking. "I'm just panicking. Please, just call the Metropol." He paused, a new, paralyzing wave of horror washing over him. "Or... or the Four Seasons. Kip booked it, I don't..."

The manager hung the phone up with a sharp, definitive click. "You do not know the number. You do not know where you are staying. I'll call the police."

"Please," Shane begged. "Just let me wait here until his meeting ends. *He'll come.*"

"I am done speaking with you." The manager turned his back, dismissing Shane entirely.

The rejection hit hard, and Mila felt it first.

She stiffened against Shane's shoulder, her breath catching before she buried her face in his coat and let out a thin, sharp wail. It grew fast - loud, heavy, hiccuping sobs of fear that echoed through the quiet restaurant.

"Shh, baby, I know. I'm sorry," Shane whispered frantically, rocking her on his hip. He kissed her hair, trying to force his own erratic breathing to slow down. "Dad's got you. We're okay."

The minutes stretched into a suffocating, agonizing eternity.

The heavy glass doors opened.

A desperate, irrational hope flared in Shane's chest - *let it be him* - but it was only another wealthy stranger shaking the sleet from his tailored coat.

The man glanced at the crying child, then at Shane's pale face, and quickly looked away.

"Using a pup for a scam," a woman muttered in English as she glided past them toward the exit.

Shane bit the inside of his cheek so hard he tasted copper.

He turned away, shifting his weight to physically shield Mila's body with his own.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

hi guys!
just dropping in to explain that i ended up leaving the cops out of the fic. i honestly just couldn't think of a resolution for that that wouldn't feel kinda toxic

i tried my absolute best to give them the comfort and resolution they deserved.

really hope you guys like it! happy reading ❤️

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Deal closed," Svetlana announced, tapping her folders against the table.

At the head of the table, Ilya let his rigid posture drop. He rolled the tension from his neck as the visiting executives exchanged polite handshakes.

Moscow expansion was secured.

Reaching into his jacket, he pulled out his phone. A private smile touched his mouth as he opened his messages.

Svetlana paused behind his chair, peering over his shoulder. "Is that Mila?"

Ilya tilted the screen slightly so she could see the photo: Mila yelling into Shane's stomach.

"She is beautiful," Svetlana murmured, her eyes crinkling. "And looks convinced that the baby can hear her."

"Mila is loud enough," Ilya whispered back.

"She is already trying to manage her siblings," Svetlana chuckled. "Your absolute clone, Ilya."

"No," he replied, locking the screen. "Mila negotiates. That is Shane."

Smiling fondly, Svetlana followed the last executive out the door.

Ilya tapped his thumb against the edge of the phone casing, waking the screen again.

4:40 PM.

His eyes snagged on the timestamp of the last message.

S

Shane ❤️

Today 4:22 PM

Craving hit. Blame the baby. We're stopping at the Tverskaya restaurant for stroganoff before we come back.

Today 4:41 PM

Eat. Then go straight back to the hotel. I miss you all.

He waited for the small *Read* receipt to appear or the bouncing typing bubbles to start.

Nothing.

Ilya set the phone face-down on the table.

Halfway to the door, Scott paused. "Everything alright?"

"Probably," Ilya said, his tone flat as he slid the phone into his pocket.

He was already striding toward the private elevator before the hallway even cleared.

Still no reply.

"I am starving," Kip groaned, leaning back against the mirrored wall as the elevator descended. "I swear this baby only wants carbohydrates. If I don't get bread in the next ten minutes, I'm going to pass out."

"You're eight weeks pregnant," Scott pointed out, loosening his tie.

"And *starving*."

"We can eat downstairs," Ilya said, watching the floor numbers drop. "Shane and Mila will probably already be there."

But when the doors parted at the lobby and Ilya swept his gaze across the restaurant, their table was empty. No Shane. No Mila.

"They're sleeping," Scott reasoned, catching the subtle shift in Ilya's posture as they headed back to the elevators. "With the time difference and all that walking, they're probably passed out."

Ilya didn't answer. He stepped off the elevator before the doors had fully parted, striding down the hall and swiping his keycard.

He pushed the heavy double doors open.

The suite was pitch black.

"Shane? Mila?"

Silence.

Mila always left a trail. A stuffed penguin wedged into the sofa cushions, tiny light-up shoes kicked off by the door, a mess of crayons on the coffee table.

But when Ilya hit the lights, the living room was perfectly clean.

His stomach pulled tight.

Crossing the room in quick strides, Ilya grabbed the tablet from the desk, dragging up the room service history with a sharp swipe.

There was *nothing*.

"They're not here?" Scott asked, stepping inside with Kip right behind him.

Ilya dropped the tablet back onto the desk. "No."

Before Scott could offer another rational excuse, Ilya reached across the wood and snatched the receiver off the landline. He hit the button for the front desk, pressing the phone hard against his ear.

It rang twice.

"Mr. Rozanov. How may I assist you?"

"My husband," Ilya interrupted, his voice tight. "Has he returned to the hotel?"

A brief pause on the other end was followed by the rapid clicking of a keyboard. "No, sir. Mr. Hollander-Rozanov has not returned to the premises since he departed at noon."

Ilya's grip tightened until the plastic receiver actually creaked in his hand. "Check again."

"I... sir, the keycard has not been swiped at any door since he left."

Ilya didn't bother replying. He dropped the receiver back onto the cradle with a sharp clatter and dragged both hands hard over his face. "*Fuck*."

By the door, Kip exchanged a quick, tight glance with Scott.

"Maybe his phone died," he offered, though his voice lacked its usual confidence. "Or they stopped somewhere and lost track of time. Let's just give it a few minutes."

Ilya tried to wait, standing by the floor-to-ceiling windows and staring out at the gray Moscow sky as he listened for the sound of the suite door opening.

He lasted exactly eight minutes before pacing the length of the living room with his phone pressed tight against his ear.

The first call went straight to voicemail.

Pulling the device away with a muscle feathering in his jaw, he hit redial, only to get voicemail again.

He tried a third time, but the call didn't even ring before the network simply dropped it.

Stopping abruptly in the middle of the room, he opened their chat, his thumbs moving rapidly over the keyboard.

S

Shane ❤️

Today 4:58 PM

Did you make it back to the hotel?

Today 5:01 PM

Are you eating?

Answer me.

Today 5:04 PM

Shane.

Today 5:06 PM

Moya lyubov, please answer your phone.

Not a single message changed to *Read*.

Behind him, Scott checked his own phone for what felt like the hundredth time. "Nothing."

Ilya didn't answer, unlocking his screen again, his thumb automatically pulling up the last thing Shane had sent: the selfie from 4:18 PM. He just stared at it, anchoring himself to the quiet happiness on Shane's face where his cheek rested against Mila's knit hat beneath the yellow glow of a streetlamp.

The image abruptly vanished, swallowed entirely by an incoming call.

Shane.

Relief hit with such violent force it physically knocked the breath out of him, pulling a laugh from his chest as his thumb jammed the accept button, instantly hitting the speaker icon.

"Shane, *moya lyubov*, I-"

"Uh... hello?"

The voice echoing into the quiet room was rough, hesitant, and distinctly not his husband.

Ilya froze, the fractured relief draining out of him in a single heartbeat. Across the room, Scott and Kip both stiffened, the atmosphere instantly turning to ice.

"Who is this?" Ilya demanded, staring down at the phone in his hand.

"*Look, I'm just a taxi driver. Pavel,*" the man's voice crackled through the speaker, clearly taken aback by the sudden hostility. "*I pulled over to clean my cab and found this phone ringing. There's a leather wallet back here too. Must belong to the guy with the little girl I dropped off earlier.*"

"Where." Ilya gripped the phone so hard the casing creaked. "Where exactly did you leave them?"

"On Tverskaya Street. Right in front of that fancy place, Rozanov's."

"Rozanov's," Ilya breathed.

"Oh, fuck," Scott muttered, already pulling his phone from his pocket.

"Where are you right now, Pavel?" Ilya asked, his voice dropping into a lethal calm.

"I'm still on Tverskaya. At the taxi stand just two blocks south of the restaurant-"

"Do not move." Ilya snatched the phone off speaker, already turning and striding toward the suite doors. "I am coming to you. You will be compensated for your time."

He ended the call without waiting for a reply.

The descent to the lobby and the frantic drive from the hotel were an absolute blur.

When Ivan, his private driver, violently swerved the armored SUV into the taxi stand on Tverskaya, Ilya was out the door before it had fully stopped.

The exchange with Pavel took less than thirty seconds- a harsh bark in Russian and a thick stack of ruble notes shoved through the driver's window.

Ilya snatched the phone and the worn leather wallet.

Standing right there on the wet asphalt, he flipped the brown leather open; Shane's driver's license was there and, tucked into the back fold, his passport.

He didn't even bother getting back into the SUV.

"Meet me at the restaurant," Ilya barked at Ivan over his shoulder.

Then he ran.

The freezing snow soaked straight through his suit, and he didn’t feel it. The distance vanished beneath his frantic strides until the glowing facade of the restaurant loomed ahead.

He hit the glass doors with his shoulder, pushing through with enough force to make the brass hinges rattle.

The sharp crash instantly killed the soft hum of conversation and the clinking of crystal in the dining room.

Ignoring the frozen staff, his eyes swept the foyer.

Shane was cornered near the reservation desk, pale and hunched at an awkward angle, using his own body to shield Mila from the drafts slipping through the doors. Mila was crying, her face buried deeply into his neck, her tiny fingers twisted into his collar.

A few steps away, the manager stood with his arms crossed.

Ilya crossed the foyer without a single second of hesitation.

Lifting his head, Shane revealed red-rimmed eyes and a lower lip chewed raw.

"Ilya," he breathed.

Reaching them in seconds, Ilya pressed his hand firmly against Mila's back. "Hey," he murmured. *"Moya malenkaya."*

Mila made a broken sound and reached for him blindly. Tucking her against his chest, Ilya let her bury her wet face into his coat.

Freed of her weight, Shane physically swayed.

Ilya's arm hooked around his waist instantly, catching him before his knees buckled.

"I'm here," he said quietly, pulling Shane flush against his side.

Shane let out a hard, shaky breath, leaning his weight into Ilya to ground himself. His fingers gripped the lapel of the coat, his knuckles white.

"I tried to explain," Shane muttered, his jaw tight as the pure frustration finally bled into his voice. "He thought I was lying when I said I was married to you."

Only then did Ilya look up.

Scott and Kip had followed him inside. Kip let out a devastated breath, his hand instinctively dropping to his own flat stomach as he took in Shane's trembling frame.

The manager had gone completely still, the arrogant confidence draining out of him.

"Mr. Rozanov," he stammered.

"He gave you his name," Ilya said, his voice entirely dead.

The manager tried to backpedal, his arms dropping to his sides. "Sir, I didn't know, I have strict protocols to follow-"

“Protocol.” Ilya repeated the word like it tasted foul. He shifted Mila higher against his shoulder, his other arm locked around his husband. “You were looking at a pregnant man and a crying toddler.”

“I was just doing my job, I couldn’t verify-”

“You could have called me or checked the *fucking* internet,” Ilya cut in, his stare sharp as fractured ice. “Instead, you put my family at risk. That was a very stupid decision.”

He didn’t raise his voice.

“Scott,” he said, not even looking away, “get him out of my sight before I deal with him *myself*.”

He didn't wait for the manager's panicked apologies.

Shrugging off his heavy coat with his free hand, he draped it over Shane's shoulders, pulling the thick lapels tight to trap the heat around him.

"Let's go," Ilya murmured, his hand settling at the base of Shane's spine.

Shane took a deep, steadying breath. Pulling the oversized coat tighter around himself, he stood a little straighter, letting Ilya anchor him as they walked out of the lobby.

♡

The drive back to the hotel felt incredibly fast, a quiet blur of city lights and snow against tinted glass.

Halfway there, Ilya’s phone vibrated in his pocket.

He pulled it out just enough to read the screen.

S

Scott Hunter

He’ll never work in this city again. ✅

Also, Kip refused to leave without eating, so we stayed for the pelmeni.

Ilya let out a breath that didn't quite make it to a laugh, locking the screen and putting the phone away. He didn’t say anything, just pulled Shane closer, pressing a kiss to the top of his head.

When the penthouse doors closed behind them with a heavy click, it was as if the outside world ceased to exist.

For the first time since the freezing street, the knot in Shane’s chest finally gave way.

He could breathe.

"I'll be right back," Ilya murmured, adjusting the weight of a sleeping Mila against his chest.

Shane nodded faintly.

When Ilya returned, Shane was exactly where he'd left him in the entryway. His arms were wrapped protectively around his own stomach, his gaze lost on the floor.

"Ilya-" he started, his voice failing immediately.

Ilya crossed the space in two strides. "*Come here.*"

Shane surrendered completely. He folded forward, his fingers gripping the fabric of Ilya's shirt like it was the only solid thing in the world.

Ilya caught him effortlessly, pulling him in flush.

"I forgot it," he whispered against his collarbone, the words raw and torn with shame.

Ilya stilled, his hand tracing the line of Shane's spine. "What?"

"Your number. I know it by heart, Ilya, I *swear* I do, I just... I'm sorry."

A slow exhale left Ilya. His hand moved up, sliding into the soft hair at the nape of Shane's neck, holding with enough firmness to anchor him.

"Look at me," Ilya murmured.

When Shane didn't move, he gently tilted his chin up.

For a second, he just looked at him- *really* looked. At the tear tracks, the unfocused eyes, the way his breathing still hadn't settled, the faint scatter of freckles across his nose and cheeks.

His thumb brushed along Shane's cheek, slow, catching briefly over one of those freckles.

"Hey," he said softly.

And then Ilya kissed him.

Shane froze for a fraction of a second before melting into the kiss with a trembling breath, his eyes fluttering shut as all the fight finally drained from his body.

When Ilya pulled back, he didn't go far.

"It's okay," he murmured, his forehead resting briefly against Shane's. "It's my fault. I should have made sure every one of my restaurants knew your face. Yours and Mila's."

Ilya's hand slipped from his neck, trailing down the front of the coat to rest possessively over the curve of his stomach.

“You kept them safe,” he continued. “That is the only thing that matters. *Come*. Let’s get you warm.”

Ilya guided Shane across the room with quiet insistence, one hand steady at his back, the other still loosely wrapped around his wrist as if afraid he might disappear.

The bathroom light flickered on, soft against the cold clinging to Shane’s skin.

By the time Ilya turned on the shower, the room was already beginning to fill with heat, the air thickening until the bathroom slowly filled with dense steam.

Shane didn't have to do a thing.

He just stood there, exhausted, letting Ilya’s gentle hands slide the heavy coat and cold clothes off his skin.

Under the hot water, Shane leaned back against the tile with a ragged sigh, closing his eyes as the heat finally began to sink into his bones.

"Too hot?" Ilya asked, adjusting the dial with one hand while the other made quick work of stripping off his own clothes.

Shane shook his head, keeping his eyes closed. "No… it’s good."

Stepping fully into the spray, Ilya reached for the shampoo.

He was meticulous and infinitely gentle, working the soap into a thick lather as his fingers massaged Shane's scalp with slow, grounding movements. Once the suds were rinsed away, his hands moved down to smooth body wash over Shane's tense shoulders, tracing his spine before washing carefully over the curve of his stomach.

Shane went completely still.

The remaining adrenaline bled out of him so fast it left him hollow, and the tears came without warning- silent, getting lost in the water streaming down his face.

"Hey," Ilya murmured, crowding him gently against the tile.

He pressed a wet kiss to Shane’s cheek, and then lowered himself. One hand held Shane’s hip firmly while he left a long kiss against the skin of his stomach.

Shane’s breath hitched in a sob. "*Rozanov*…"

"I've got you," Ilya promised, standing back up.

Shane’s wet hands slipped into Ilya’s hair. He pushed off the wall and went straight into his husband's arms, clinging tightly to his neck, burying his face in his shoulder.

"Easy," Ilya murmured, his hand moving up and down his slick back, supporting his entire weight.

"I'm okay… I'm okay."

"I know, *solnyshko*."

Later, both dry and dressed in thick sweatpants, Shane crawled into bed and sank into the mattress, already half asleep.

"Don't move," Ilya ordered quietly, pulling the heavy duvet up over his shoulders.

Shane made a soft sound of agreement.

Watching him settle, Ilya lingered by the bed, his gaze drifting toward the hallway, toward Mila in the other room.

The thought settled, and he moved before he could reconsider, reaching for the door.

"I'll be right back."

Shane didn't question it, too exhausted to open his eyes.

When Ilya came back, Mila was nestled against his chest, half-awake and warm, her cheek pressed flat against his shoulder.

"Papa?" she mumbled, her voice heavy with sleep.

"*Shh*," Ilya whispered, smoothing a hand over her back. "We're going to sleep with Dad tonight, hm?"

She made a soft sound and let him carry her the rest of the way. Ilya set her on the bed carefully, but the instant Mila's knees touched the mattress, she was already crawling across the blankets.

Mila reached Shane, settling right on top of him and dropping the weight of her small head against his chest, exactly where she belonged.

Shane let out a quiet breath, his arms coming up to wrap around her on pure instinct. "Hi, baby," he murmured, tucking his nose into her curls.

She just hummed in response, already sinking back into sleep.

Watching the two of them, the last coil of tension in Ilya's body finally unraveled.

He climbed into bed behind Shane, shifting closer until there was no space left between them. His arm slipped over Shane's hip, the hand sliding under the fabric of the shirt to rest bare against his stomach.

Ilya leaned forward, pressing a soft kiss into Mila's curls, and then another, lingering one to the back of Shane's neck.

Shane shifted back into him instinctively.

For a long time, Ilya remained perfectly still, listening to them breathe, his hand resting exactly where it was, solid and certain.

Only when the room had gone completely quiet did he close his own eyes, keeping his family exactly where he could feel them.

Chapter End Notes

just a quick note: please assume that, off-screen, mila also took a shower ok? 😭 i couldn't figure out how to fit that in without completely losing the emotional focus of the scene and ruining the vibe smsjbdjfndk

thank you so much for reading!
let me know what you thought in the comments!

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