

I Don't Wanna Be In Love

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by [MoreFicsPlease](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov is traded to the Ottawa Centaurs after becoming a free agent and finds himself thrown into an almost instant brotherly bond with his new alternate captain, Cliff Marleau; finding they easily connect both on and off the ice as if they've known each other their entire lives. Happier than he's ever been in what, for the first time in his life, feels like a real pack, Ilya suddenly finds himself faced with a decision that will break his heart no matter what path he chooses. Will it hurt more to lose his new brother, and likely the pack with him, or turn his back on the chance at his perfect mate?

Or: Ilya unwittingly falls for Cliff's ex

Notes

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

Chapter 1

Ilya finds himself enjoying the chaos of the Montreal club around him less than he had during his party days in Boston. In his short time with the Centaurs he's gotten used to the more laidback atmosphere of Monk's; playing pool and having a few beers with the guys instead of getting lost in a sea of sweaty bodies under strobing lights. Nonetheless, he is glad he'd agreed to come celebrate the Raiders win or mourn their loss against Montreal when Connors and St Simon had asked weeks ago. Luckily, the Raiders had managed to beat the Metros 4-3, the Centaurs had won their afternoon game as well, and spirits were high in the VIP area of Le Ciel.

"Next round is on Roz!" Connors calls through cupped hands and the group of Raiders around them roar their approval.

As Connors lowers his hands from his mouth and pats him on the shoulder, Ilya laughs, "Da. We should celebrate Hammersmith finally learning to skate before big game." He earns an offended look from Hammersmith and the laughs of a few other Raiders that join in on giving the other player a hard time.

Ilya excuses himself from Connors hold on his shoulder to go order a round of shots for the table and a drink for himself. He makes his way across the club through the ever shifting crowd of bodies until he finds a space to lean against the bar. After getting the attention of the bartender and ordering for the table and his own beer, he finds himself turning to scan the crowd of dancing people around him while he waits.

He hadn't been to a club in the months since he'd left Boston and thanks to that had far fewer hookups these days. Ilya had found that picking someone up at Monk's made for a far less clean cut one night stand when most of the patrons of the bar were regulars he would have to see every time the team went out. After two women having to be banned from the place for what definitely qualified as stalking, he decided not to take the risk there again.

So tonight in Montreal, two hours from his new home and spending only one night in the city, he didn't see any harm in looking for a hook up. His gaze slides across the space until it lands on the most beautiful man he's ever seen. He's dancing, poorly Ilya notes, with a red headed woman in a glittering dress. Ilya barely registers the bartender's presence as she returns with his drink and takes it from her with a quick thanks before beginning to cross the room.

The red head spots him as he approaches them and he watches as she says something with a devilish smile to the beautiful man with his back to Ilya. He could see the tips of the man's ears turn pink under the ends of his black hair as she suddenly took him by the shoulders and spun him toward Ilya once he's in their space.

Now almost face to face, aside from being a good 5 inches taller than the man, and close enough to touch, he can see the man also has a blush dusted across his cheeks beneath a smattering of freckles. Ilya catches the red head's whisper of "have fun" as she squeezes his

shoulders and gives him a light shove before disappearing into the crowd with that same devilish smile playing at her lips.

Ilya's lips quirk into an amused smirk as his gaze moves back to the man's face and catches him looking up at Ilya through long lashes with the blush still clinging to his cheeks. "Hello," he greets in deeply accented English as their gazes met. Ilya's amusement only increases as he watches the man's cheeks turn a darker shade of red.

"H-hi," the man stumbles out as Ilya steps a bit further into his space forcing him to tilt his head back to look up at him fully.

Ilya chuckles softly and asks, "Dance?"

He takes a moment to collect himself after the suddenness of his friend almost literally pushing him into the arms of a stranger. "Buy me a drink first?" he responds with more confidence than his greeting though the blush still faintly clings to his cheeks.

A smile spreads on Ilya's face as he nods, "Da. Then I ask again." He laughs as he reaches out to place a hand on the other man's lower back and lead him to the bar.

The shorter man makes a quiet noise at the point of contact, but he doesn't remove Ilya's hand and allows himself to be led away. "Shane," he says abruptly as they work their way through the crowd, "My name is Shane. You?"

"Ilya," he looks down at Shane with his signature smirk, "Surprised you do not know me. I am easy to recognize in hockey cities usually."

"So you're a hockey player?" Shane asks as they make it to the bar before turning to the woman behind the counter and ordering himself a drink.

"Da," Ilya answers when Shane turns back toward him, "But not for this city. Would never play for Metros." He makes a disgusted face that earns a small chuckle from the beautiful man next to him.

Shane leans against the counter as he replies, "I guess you picked the one person in Canada that doesn't keep up with hockey. Are you any good?"

At this Ilya puts his hand on his chest and schools his face into mock offense, "I am the best."

Shane rolls his eyes but laughs, "I'm sure," with a small smile. The bartender returns with his drink and he takes the straw between his lips as he watches a grin spread on Ilya's face. His eyes seem to sparkle as he shifts his gaze back to Ilya's face before he releases the straw and flicks his tongue out to taste the sugared rim of the glass. Ilya's eyes instantly darken as he tracks the movement.

Shane returns his lips to the straw before giving Ilya a knowing smirk, "Don't you have something to ask me?"

Ilya returns his gaze with his own signature smirk as he reaches for Shane's waist, "Dance?"

Shane sucks the rest of his cocktail through the straw and gives the rim a final exaggerated lick as his eyes are locked with Ilya's before placing the glass on the bar. He allows Ilya to lead him back into the sea of bodies.

Engulfed in the pulsing rhythm of the music and surrounded by the crowd, Ilya turns Shane so that his back is to his chest. He pulls their bodies flush against each other and moves both hands to grip Shane's hips as he begins to guide their movement. Shane doesn't shy away from the press of Ilya's hips against his but he can see the pink tint begin to tinge the tips of his ears again. It makes Ilya want to bite. Instead he adjusts his grip to slide his fingers under the hem of Shane's shirt and tightens them enjoying the feeling of his warm tan skin.

Ilya leans down so that his breath ghosts against Shane's ear as he whispers, "You blush like you are shy, but I think is not true. I think you are dangerous, Kotenok." He presses his groin more firmly against Shane's ass as he speaks and his eyes darken further at the soft sound Shane makes in response.

Shane snakes one arm up over his shoulder and tangles his fingers in the curls at the base of Ilya's neck as he turns his head to meet Ilya's eyes. A mischievous grin plays at his lips contrasting the soft blush clinging to his cheeks, "I can't be a little of both?" He briefly bites his lower lip and Ilya knows Shane can feel him getting hard where they're pressed together by the quiet gasp that escapes him. Shane pushes his ass back against Ilya and rotates his hips with the music earning a low growl in return.

Shane lets him suffer through the feeling of their clothed bodies moving against each other with his fingers still playing in the curls at the base of Ilya's skull until the music shifts. Then he turns in Ilya's hold and pulls him down so his lips now meet his ear, "Want to get out of here?"

Ilya's eyes are dark as he pulls back and his chest rumbles with his answer, "Da. Now." His eyes meet with Connors, Hammersmith, and St Simon as he leads Shane out of the crowd with an arm wrapped tightly around his waist. They give him a knowing look before Hammersmith whoops and Ilya smirks over Shane's head in return giving them a small wave in parting.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

This is just smut. Hopefully decently written. It's my first time, but not Shane's. Lmao

Shane silently thanks Rose for being the giant pain in his ass she always is and decides he owes her brunch as Ilya presses him against the wall of his hotel room and slides his palms under his shirt.

He immediately shoves all thoughts of her out of his mind, though, as he grapples with the buttons of Ilya's silk shirt and exposes his broad pecs and perfect abs. Ilya shrugs the shirt off fully then exposing his equally sculpted arms. Is he a fucking Greek god? Shane worries he might be drooling as Ilya lifts his face with a gentle but commanding grip of his chin. Their lips crash together in the most heated kiss Shane has ever experienced and he thinks he might melt when Ilya pushes his tongue into his mouth.

Shane moans into Ilya's mouth and earns a deep growl in response. He claws at his own neck for his scent patch and quickly yanks it off before tossing it aside. He is rewarded with Ilya grinding their hips together as he moves to kiss and nibble at Shane's neck while ripping his own patch off. Soon their scents begin to fill the space. Shane's warm vanilla honey perfectly complimented by Ilya's earthy pine.

Ilya pulls Shane's top off before returning his mouth to his neck. Shane trembles as Ilya's teeth ghost over the sensitive skin near his scent gland and he moves his hands from mapping Ilya's impressive torso to work on his pants. He fumbles for a moment with the button and zipper before slipping his hand into Ilya's waist band. "Holy fuck," he mumbles against Ilya's lips that have moved back to his when he palms his apparently also massive, perfect cock through his boxers.

Ilya smirks against his lips, "Don't worry, Kotenok. You can take it like good Omega." His accent and voice seem to deepen the further they get. Shane whimpers and his cheeks heat as the words make slick gush between his thighs. Ilya takes advantage of Shane's distraction to quickly relieve him of his pants revealing black lace panties and fully exposing the scent of his slick. Ilya's pupils dilate and he growls as he suddenly grips the backs of Shane's thighs and lifts him off his feet. Shane scrambles for purchase on Ilya's shoulders, wrapping his legs tightly around the man's waist.

Ilya carries Shane to the bed as if he weighs nothing, licking and nibbling along his shoulders and neck the entire time. He kneels on the bed and slowly lowers Shane back against it until he is trapped under the other man, arms bracketing either side of his body. Shane's grip moves from Ilya's shoulders to tangle his fingers in the larger man's golden curls. He uses his hold to pull Ilya into a messy kiss and let the Alpha's tongue explore his mouth.

He feels Ilya's hands sliding along his body, fingertips leaving pinpricks of heat as he trails over Shane's nipples, ribs, soft stomach, and finally play with the edge of the panties barely concealing him. Shane untangles one of his hands from its hold in Ilya's hair to reach between them and stroke his still clothed cock desperately. The rumbling in Ilya's chest coupled with his length throbbing in Shane's hand causes him to whine with need as another gush of slick escapes him. He quickly moves to hook the fingers of both hands into the waistband of Ilya's boxers of jeans desperate to free him of his remaining clothes.

Ilya's hands brush his away as he straightens himself and shoves his pants and boxers down. Shane whines again at the loss of contact as he sits up to protest, but is quickly cut off by the gasp that escapes him as he comes face to face with Ilya's huge cock hanging heavy between his legs. He is absolutely drooling this time. Ilya watches with dark eyes and a smirk as one of his hands grips his cock and slowly strokes, "You still want?"

Shane gazes up at him from the bed with wide dazed eyes before letting his eyes wander back to his length and biting his lower lip. He shifts his body from where he sits to crawl the short distance between them. Shane arches his back putting his perfectly round ass on display as he boldly flicks his tongue out and kitten licks the fat head of Ilya's cock causing him to groan at the contact and sight in front of him. Ilya grips his chin tightly as Shane looks at him through thick lashes and growls, "Such a tease."

As the haze of want grows thicker in Shane's mind with Ilya's scent so strong it fills his lungs, he licks a stripe along the underside of his length enjoying the weight of the Alpha on his tongue before taking the head into his mouth. Ilya moves his hand from Shane's jaw to tangle in his hair. When he gently pushes for Shane to take him in further and meets no resistance, he tightens his grip and thrust shallowly into his warm mouth. Shane fully relaxes his jaw, feeling the stretch of his lips around the thick cock and allowing him deeper with each thrust until he's fully seated hitting the back of his throat. He gags at first feeling drool run out of the edges of his mouth as Ilya's scent completely engulfs him and moans around him; the vibration causing Ilya's grip in his hair to tighten further as he curses in Russian above him.

As Ilya fucks Shane's face, he reaches out and grips his ass with his free hand before landing a solid smack across the globe causing Shane to moan around him once again. Ilya groans, "fuck," and pulls out of Shane's mouth with a lewd pop. Shane pants as Ilya pulls him to a kneeling position and crashes their mouths together in a filthy kiss before shoving Shane backwards onto the bed.

Shane's eyes are glazed as he watches Ilya surveying his now splayed out body from above. Ilya places a knee between Shane's legs as he bends over him, trailing kisses and light bites from the flush of his chest, over each of his nipples, and across the smattering of light stretch marks that litter his lower stomach before a ripping sound fills the space around them and Shane suddenly feels the cool air on his now exposed pussy.

Before he can even react to his panties being shredded, Ilya has his mouth on Shane causing him to cry out and arch off the bed. He reaches down blindly tangling his fingers back in those golden curls as Ilya's hands move to his thighs and push them open wider leaving him completely on display. Shane tilts his head to watch as the Alpha inhales the scent of his

slick. Ilya flicks his gaze up to meet Shane's as he praises, "Such a pretty pussy, Omega," sending another rush of slick out of him. Ilya growls appreciatively as he dips his head down and laps at Shane's folds tasting him again. He moves one hand to play with Shane's clit as he buries his face in Shane's cunt and works his tongue inside him. Shane keens at the combined sensations of being aggressively tongue fucked and having his clit toyed with by Ilya's rough hand, writhing in pleasure and tugging him impossibly closer by his grip on Ilya's hair. Slick pours out of his pussy and down Ilya's chin as the Alpha eats him out like a starved man.

When he feels two of Ilya's long, thick fingers press inside of him alongside his skilled tongue, Shane thinks he might die. He feels his orgasm building rapidly and rocks his hips against Ilya's face and hand chasing the sensation. Ilya's fingers slowly fuck into him as his mouth moves to Shane's clit. As if sensing the impending orgasm, his fingers speed up and he curls them in just the right way to tease Shane's most sensitive place. Shane's back arches off the bed and his thick thighs tense around Ilya's head as he mewls, "Cumming," between panted breaths, "I'm cumming!" As the wave of pleasure crashes over Shane's body, Ilya continues fucking him through it with his skilled fingers and lapping at his slick.

Shane's body feels weightless and his head pleasantly empty as he comes down from the high of his orgasm. Ilya softly bites his hip just below one of his more prominent stretch marks but doesn't comment on it. The larger man crawls back up his body, meeting Shane's mouth in a wet messy kiss that tastes of his own release. Shane whimpers as he feels Ilya's hard cock rub against the folds of his sensitive pussy but bucks his hips up into the contact seeking more anyway.

"Such a needy kotenok," Ilya murmurs against his neck before lightly biting and sucking over the indents left behind.

"Please," Shane begs as he rocks his hips against Ilya's impressive length, "Please fuck me!"

Ilya smirks against Shane's neck before sitting back on his knees and reaching for the discarded jeans across the foot of the bed. He fishes a condom out of the pocket and quickly rips the foil packet open. With the condom rolled down his length, he gives himself a couple of slow strokes. "Since pretty Omega ask so nice," he teases with a drawl, pressing the head of his cock to Shane's entrance, "I give you what you want." He slowly pushes inside and Shane writhes at the stretch as his body opens around the thick member with a high keen.

"God! Fuck!" He gasps as Ilya's thick cock works inside his slick soaked pussy and his back arches impossibly off the bed pushing his hips to meet Ilya's slow thrusts.

"Not God. Ilya," the gorgeous man above him corrects with a dark smirk as he fully seats himself inside Shane's body. The stretch is impossible and perfect all at once. Shane's hands scramble for Ilya; one desperately clawing at his sculpted bicep while the other snakes fingers into his unruly curls and grips fiercely.

"Alpha," Shane mewls as he pulls Ilya down into a filthy kiss while rocking his hips, "More. Please. Need you."

Ilya growls low in his chest and pulls his hips back until just the head of his cock is left inside Shane's dripping cunt. He moves one hand to paw at Shane's chest as he slams back into him and sets a punishing pace. Shane screams in pleasure as Ilya hammers into him. The scents of their arousal and slick sounds of their bodies meeting fill the air around them.

"Take me so well," Ilya groans into Shane's mouth between messy kisses as he fucks into him hard and deep, "Such a good Omega for me." He nips at Shane's jaw as the smaller man keens at the praise and tightens his thighs around Ilya's waist pulling him ever deeper. His free hand moves to tweak Shane's nipple earning a soft whine as he writhes in pleasure beneath him and leaves scratches across Ilya's shoulders where he clings to him.

"Alpha," Shane whimpers as he gazes up at Ilya flushed a soft pink from his cheeks down his chest. His mouth hangs open as he pants desperately for breath and chases the other man's lips. Ilya watches him with dark, hungry eyes and it sends a thrill through Shane's entire body that has him clenching around the massive cock splitting him open. "Wanna ride you. Now," he pleads as he feels the responding throb deep inside him.

Ilya's eyes flash with deepening desire as his hands move to grip Shane's sides and roll them so that Shane is perched in his lap. Shane throws his head back in a wanton moan as his hips meet Ilya's burying the entire length of him inside his aching pussy. He rolls his hips and wins a deep moan from the statuesque man beneath him as his grip on Shane's hips tightens. Ilya's heated gaze is locked on the place where their bodies meet as Shane tips his head forward and lays his palms flat on the alpha's broad chest for support. Slowly he lifts his hips until Ilya is only halfway inside him before dropping back down and setting his own demanding pace.

"Fuck," Ilya rumbles in a drawn out groan as he watches the beautiful omega bounce on his throbbing cock. He shifts one hand away from its grip on Shane's hips and finds his clit with the calloused pad of his thumb. Shane inhales sharply and his hips stutter as Ilya begins rubbing circles against the overly sensitive bundle of nerves. He recovers his rhythm and gazes down at Ilya with a desperate need in his eyes, "Alpha! Alpha please! Need your knot!"

Shane grinds his hips down feeling the head of Ilya's cock so deep inside him he's sure his cervix will be bruised tomorrow. "Knot me," he moans as he leans down to catch Ilya's mouth in a filthy kiss that is all tongues and teeth, "Need you so bad, Alpha."

A deep growl begins low in Ilya's chest and doesn't stop as he returns his bruising grip to Shane's hips and plants his feet for leverage against the bed. He slams his cock deep into Shane's slick soaked cunt while he moves the Omega's hips in time to meet each thrust. Garbled Russian flows from his lips as he buries himself in the man straddling him again and again. Shane's nails dig into Ilya's shoulders holding on for dear life as he's split open over and over again on the biggest dick he's ever seen. He whimpers feeling the alphas knot begin to inflate and catch on his opening, popping in and out with the erratic thrusts.

When Ilya's knot fully inflates and locks into place, Shane arches and throws his head back in a scream of pleasure while he feels Ilya throb and pulse his release into the condom between them. The alpha rumbles beneath him in a deep moan, his grip moving to Shane's round ass and squeezing, as the omega's walls milk him for all he's worth in an answering

orgasm. He can feel some of the rush of slick leak out around his knot and drip down his balls.

Shane collapses against Ilya's heaving chest completely spent and whines at the tug of the knot when his body shifts. Ilya's arms wrap around him loosely, fingertips trailing patterns over his spine and carding through his fine black hair as he babbles in breathless Russian. "You have killed me," he finally tells Shane making a sound somewhere between a sigh and a laugh, "Dangerous kotenok."

Shane puffs a soft laugh against his pec as his head slowly clears and he begins to feel the pleasant ache between his thighs more clearly. Once the knot deflates, Ilya gently pulls out of Shane causing him to mewl and releasing a flow of sticky slick. "God," Shane mumbles as his cheeks flush with embarrassment at the feeling.

"Ilya. Not God. I told you this," Ilya smirks as Shane lifts himself off of his chest. Shane pinches Ilya's nipple and rolls his eyes with a mumbled, "Shut up," as Ilya smacks his ass in retaliation.

Ilya leaves the bed and disappears into the bathroom while Shane moves to the edge wondering if he can even stand on his now trembling legs. Just as Shane decides to attempt standing, Ilya returns and gently stops him with a hand on his shoulder and a warm wash cloth in the other. He takes it from the other man with quiet thanks noticing he's removed the condom and freshened himself up already. He doesn't comment on how big he is even while soft but he gets the feeling his gaze and pink tint give him away when Ilya smirks before stepping away to put on his boxers. Shane cleans up his sticky thighs and pleasantly sore cunt before he spots his shredded panties on the floor near him.

"You owe me for these," he light heartedly complains as he tosses them at Ilya who catches them easily with a laugh.

"Let me call you car as apology," Ilya offers and Shane accepts as he begins stepping into his pants and goes to find his shirt. As he pulls the top on, Ilya holds out his phone for Shane to put his address into the app and complete the transaction. Before Shane can pass the phone back, Ilya meets his gaze and asks with a smirk, "Your number? Would be fun to have you come apart on my cock again."

Shane feels himself flush crimson and his cheeks heat as the filthy words settle in his now sober mind and starts to refuse, not one to repeat a hook up like this, but stops as he considers never feeling so full again. After a moment of hesitation, he pulls it back and texts himself from the alpha's phone.

"Maybe I'll answer," he says with a coy smile as he finally places the phone back in Ilya's hand. Their fingers brush momentarily and it's as if the air is charged again. Shane pulls his hand away and checks his own phone finding a string of texts from Rose demanding he give her all the details of his night. He pockets it again, rolling his eyes at the messages with a quiet chuckle.

"See you around," he tells Ilya with a grin and small wave while moving to the door. When he's halfway out of the room he hears Ilya reply, "Soon," and glances back to see him

watching with that ridiculously sexy smirk he wore so well.

Neither of them realized just how soon that would turn out to be.

Chapter 3

“I’m sure the guys won’t mind,” Cliff says into his phone as Ilya comes back to his locker after a shower, “It’s family night and the kids want you there anyway. Great. I’ll see you there. Oh, don’t forget to pack Hana’s jersey! Thanks. Ok, bye.”

“Baby mama?” Ilya asks when Cliff ends the call and goes back to pulling his t-shirt over his head.

Cliff chuckles, “Not exactly. He’s not really what I’d call a “baby daddy” either. My ex is gonna bring the kids to the barbecue at Bood’s tonight and hang out for a bit.”

Ilya nods slightly, filing away the detail of Cliff’s ex being a man for later. He’d only seen Cliff with the occasional woman in the time he’d been on the team so he’d always assumed it was a baby mama on the other end of the calls. No one in North America really cared about what gender anyone was with, but it wasn’t something they really discussed randomly either. “You are on good terms then?” He asks casually while buttoning his jeans and turning to sit on the bench.

“Absolutely,” Cliff answers easily, sitting down on the bench beside Ilya and grabbing his shoes, “If he’d take me back, we’d be on even better terms.” Cliff laughs and Ilya gives him a curious look spurring Cliff to continue, “Nah. He’s really great, but he made it clear he was sick of hockey players when we split.” He shrugs as he stands back up and gathers the last of his things.

“Is good you get along for kids sake anyway,” Ilya gestures vaguely while grabbing his bag and throwing it over his shoulder, “Could be worse than you pining in secret like stalker.”

Cliff cuts his eyes at Ilya in annoyance then rolls them, “You only do one night stands and don’t understand love. Don’t open your big Russian mouth about it tonight either.”

“Tonight?” Ilya quirks an eyebrow at his friend.

“Yes. Tonight,” Cliff deadpans and rolls his eyes again, “You have to come to Bood’s place. Not having a family isn’t going to get you out of team bonding time anymore, man. Besides, the twins want to see you.”

Ilya groans in complaint in the most exaggerated way he can manage before conceding, “Fine. Will be there, but I’m not bringing anything. Except vodka for myself.”

Cliff claps Ilya on the shoulder with a smile at the easy victory, “Whatever gets you there. See you at 6 and watch your mouth around the kids. Especially mine or I’ll sick their other dad on you. I already took the fall for you once when Hana called broccoli bullshit last month.”

“Fuck, I’ll try,” Ilya teases and is met with Cliff’s most serious “I’m warning you” face. The other man shakes his head and chuckles as he leaves the locker room.

Ilya trails behind him and heads for the parking lot. He's got just enough time to walk Anya and get in a short nap before he has to get ready and head to Boodram's house for the monthly team and family gathering. He'd rather be driving to Montreal to meet up with that Omega from a couple weeks ago, but the man still hadn't responded to the text Ilya had sent during a short break at practice.

Anya greets him at the door with a wagging tail and happy bark when he drops his bag in the entryway of his home and he smothers her with affection and sweet murmured Russian praises about how beautiful and perfect she is. Once he's fastened her leash to her collar they're off down the driveway to the sidewalk that trails through their quiet neighborhood.

His phone pings with a text notification and he digs it out of his pocket while Anya is stopped to inspect a group of bushes at the edge of the path. "Sorry, can't. I'm in Ottawa this weekend," the text from Shane read. Ilya couldn't believe his luck. He quickly types back, "Is no problem for me. Free at 10?" He watches the text flicker from delivered to read and Shane's typing bubbles appear and disappear a few times before he replies, "Maybe. I'll let you know." Ilya huffs a laugh to himself as he fires back, "Will make it worth your time," followed by an eggplant and splash emoji. Shane sends back one of rolling eyes and another "Maybe," that felt more promising than the last. Ilya pockets his phone with a grin and continues his walk with Anya.

Boodram's back deck and yard are full of Centaurs, their partners and children filling the chilled evening air with the sounds of chatter and laughter. Ilya is glad he came after all, but also finds himself almost obsessively checking his phone for a new text from Shane. The Omega has consumed his thoughts in his free time more than he cares to admit. Cliff ribbed him about it when he caught him checking his phone for the fifth time after arriving at the barbecue earlier. His fingers itch to check again as he sits around the fire pit chatting with Cliff, Troy and Wyatt about their upcoming road games.

Cliff's phone chirps beside him and he excuses himself from the small group, "Kids are here. I'm gonna go help move all their stuff to my car." With that, he's off and headed for the privacy fence gate behind their seats.

"Have either of you met the ex?" Wyatt asks as he leans forward to look toward Troy and Ilya on his right, "I heard he's going to hang out tonight."

Troy and Ilya shake their heads at the same time and Troy answers, "I'm sure he's good people. Just look at how great the twins are every time Cliff has them."

"True," Wyatt nods as he considers this but Ilya has already tuned out to check his phone again, "I wonder why he's in Ottawa this time. Usually they do the swap halfway between here and Montreal."

Troy shrugs and takes a sip of his beer as he settles back into his chair. Wyatt lets the conversation drop and turns his attention back to watching the flames dance in the fire pit

while Ilya aimlessly scrolls Instagram.

“Troy! Hazy! Roz!” the trio hears two singsong voices call out followed by giggles as the 7 year old twins bound around the edge of the seats forming a semi-circle around the pit.

“Little Marleys!” the men cheer back as the dark haired boy and girl take turns giving them all excited hugs and babbling rapidly about their trip and how excited they are for them to meet their Daddy.

Ilya drops his phone back in his pocket as the duo make their way to him and holds his arms out ready to accept his allotment of hugs. As the boy steps back and the girl snuggles into his arms, he hears Cliff round the side of their seats and announce, “Guys, this is Hana and Hank’s other dad. Shane, this is Wyatt, Troy and Ilya.” Ilya releases the girl in his arms as he looks up to greet the newcomer. He pauses momentarily at the name then completely freezes when he locks eyes on the Omega that’s plagued his thoughts for weeks.

Shane appears to also be frozen in place for a split second before shifting his gaze toward Wyatt and Troy, fixing the smile that had faltered on his face. “Nice to meet you,” he offers after clearing his throat, “The kids tell me you’re all really great to them when they visit.”

Wyatt and Troy chuckle at the praise while Ilya fights to find his voice and the ability to tear his gaze from the beautiful freckled face in front of him. His best friend’s ex. The father of his best friend’s children, his brain adds unhelpfully, and he finally snaps himself out of it and works to school his features back to their usual nonchalance.

“Roz is the captain, Daddy! He’s even better at hockey than Dad,” Hana announces and Cliff barks a wounded, “Hey! You’re supposed to be MY biggest fan not his!” Hana dissolves into giggles as Cliff scoops her up and tickles her mercilessly for revenge.

“Da. Little Marley is right. I am the best,” Ilya chirps at his best friend and Shane flushes a soft pink at the phrase. Ilya chokes on his laugh as the sight reminds him of the last time he’d spoken that phrase. Cliff glances at him curiously while placing Hana back on the ground and Ilya waves him off blaming it on his beer going down wrong. With a shrug, Cliff straightens and returns to Shane’s side at the edge of the group chatting with Wyatt now. Ilya risks another glance at Shane briefly catching his eye before he turns away again. He feels the weight of Troy’s scrutinizing gaze before their eyes meet next.

Ilya finds himself regretting ever agreeing to meet his friends in Montreal as he turns his body and eyes back to the fire pit. Maybe he regrets having a phone at all. This is going to be a problem.

Chapter 4

“Shit this is bad!” Shane frantically types into the message thread with Rose while he leans against the bathroom counter in Zane Boodram’s house.

Her typing bubbles appear instantly as she responds, “What happened?! Are the twins ok?!”

“They’re fine! I’m not! Not only did you make me break my rule about hockey players but he’s here!! He’s Cliff’s teammate!!!!” Shane clutches the counter with white knuckles as he sends the text and tries to calm himself with deep breaths.

Rose sends back a string of eye rolling emojis, “I didn’t MAKE you fuck him, Shane. You did that all on your own. And loved it from what you told me over brunch. He’s hot and you gave him your number so you don’t care that much about your own rule. Who cares if they’re teammates?”

Shane groans in annoyance as he types his frustration, “Shut upppppp! Obviously I care they’re teammates, Rose! I can’t hook up with him again now! Things will get so messy!”

“No they won’t,” she shoots back, “It’s not like you’re dating the guy and even if you were, you and Cliff broke up years ago. He dates people and it isn’t a problem. Why can’t you have fun?”

Shane considers her reasoning and exhales the breath he’s been holding slowly. Maybe she has a point. Shane had dated a few people since he’d left Cliff and he’d never had a problem with it. Not that he wants to date Ilya, he insists to himself. But maybe it wouldn’t hurt to hook up one more time. Or a few.

“...maybe you’re right,” he concedes in his reply to her, “But I shouldn’t like tell Cliff or anything, right? At least not yet.”

Rose sends back a laughing emoji, “He’s your kids’ father, not yours. Have. Fun. You can tell Cliff if it gets more serious than bouncing on Ilya’s knot when you get the chance.” She ends the text with a winking face and Shane rolls his eyes.

He knew better than to go out with her on his kid-free weekends and yet here he was living in the consequences. He collects himself and takes one more steadying breath as he resolves to take her, probably bad, advice again before leaving the bathroom. She was right, after all, in a lot of ways. He is an adult with no one to answer to. He deserves a little fun. And if that fun just happens to be with what should probably be an off-limits Alpha, who cares?

He pulls his phone back out and quickly types the message, “Still on for tonight?” He shoves the device back in his pocket after it sends and makes his way back to the gathering outside. As he walks through the house, he detours into the kitchen to find the wine the partners of team members had told him to help himself to. A little extra liquid courage wasn’t a bad idea right now. Or maybe it was as he found Ilya in the kitchen. He watches the man stare at his phone intently before shuffling through the mixture of cans and bottles littering the fridge.

Before he could decide whether to sneak away or speak, Ilya suddenly turned toward him with a bottle of vodka in his hand. “Um, hi,” Shane squeaks out in his surprise, “I’m just looking for the wine.”

Ilya seemed to buffer in real time before he points to the wine fridge built into the lower cabinetry next to him. “Is here,” he adds after a moment then slowly returns to his task of filling the short glass on the island with vodka. Shane finds a wine glass and settles on what seems like a nice white from the small fridge.

“I see your text,” Ilya speaks suddenly and Shane freezes before turning to meet his assessing gaze, “You are sure?”

Shane pauses and takes a sip of the wine he’d poured before answering with more confidence than he really felt in the moment, “Why wouldn’t I be? Are you not?”

“I just thought,” Ilya fumbles, “Cliff? The twins?” and gestures vaguely at the room around them.

Shane quirks an eyebrow and puffs out a laugh, “What? We aren’t married. Or together at all for that matter. And the twins are staying with him over the weekend.”

Ilya lets out a startled laugh, “Would be bad to sleep with alternate captain’s husband so this is good news.” The joke relaxes the atmosphere around them and he adds, “Was not sure it would be good idea with your history to...”

“It’s not like we’re dating. Cliff doesn’t have to know my personal business. And I’d like to keep it that way,” Shane waves a dismissive hand at the first notion and fixes his gaze on Ilya waiting for the man to confirm he understands that what happens between them isn’t something he needs to share with his ex.

Ilya’s eyes narrow slightly as he considers this. He looks as if he’s weighing the consequences of committing a crime almost. “You do not want Cliff to know,” he finally says as he leans against the counter next to where Shane stands. Shane nods in agreement with the statement. Ilya nods back just once, slowly. “Da. Still on for tonight.” Shane watches that signature smirk spread across his face again and silently thanks Rose and her bad advice again.

“Good,” Shane murmurs into his wine as he takes another sip, “I’ll text you the details. Let’s not talk about it anymore here.” He steps around Ilya and resumes his path to the deck. He can’t be sure yet whether the knot in his stomach is from the thrill of being with Ilya again soon or the dread of the chaos it may create.

Chapter 5

Ilya is not a good friend, he decides. A good friend wouldn't be driving to Montreal on the night before an off day to meet their best friend's ex. Again. Certainly not for the twelfth time in half as many months. Sure, he feels guilty, but it hadn't exactly stopped him from agreeing to meet Shane that night at Bood's or any opportunity since. Maybe Ilya's biggest character flaw is his penchant for making bad decisions like Sveta always tells him.

He reminds himself that Cliff regularly goes out with different people. Besides, maybe his comment about Shane taking him back wasn't all that serious. He'd said Shane wasn't interested in hockey players yet he seemed to be more than happy to meet up with Ilya again and again. Maybe none of it was all that serious. Maybe it wasn't guilt gnawing at his gut so much as the realization that he'd seen and spoken with Shane more consistently than anyone outside of hockey and Sveta in years.

Ilya swipes his hand through the air as if the thoughts are a physical thing he can push out of his car as he parks. He's absolutely not developing feelings for Shane. He's just fun to fuck. And text. And occasionally share a meaningless meal with. And maybe he smelled better than anyone else Ilya has ever met. That's all.

He blows out a long puff of air and forces all the complicated thoughts out with it. After grabbing his overnight bag from the back, he double checks the floor and apartment number Shane had sent him. This was a new development in their...situation, Ilya decides is the right word. Shane had suggested that Ilya come to his apartment instead of them meeting at a hotel in one of their cities. The overnight bag was also fairly new. Up until their last few meet ups, whoever hadn't gotten a hotel room went home after their time together. It means nothing. It's just easier to share a bed after a late night.

The elevator stops on the twelfth floor of the high rise and Ilya finds apartment 1221 not too far down the hallway to his right. He smiles softly at the crayon drawing of the family of three taped to the door with Hank's signature scrawled in the bottom corner and knocks. After a moment, Shane pulls the door open and greets him with a small smile and steps aside so that he can enter. Ilya notices the neatly organized shoe rack in the entryway and Shane's socked feet so he slips his shoes off and deposits them in an empty space on the top of the rack. "Oh, thank you, it helps keep the floors cleaner," Shane says as he turns from locking the door and catches Ilya straightening himself back up.

Ilya nods in acknowledgment, "Of course," and drops his bag on the floor beside the short rack. Shane fidgets a bit with nerves as Ilya turns to face him fully again before raising an arm and gesturing further into the apartment, "Dinner is almost ready. You can make yourself comfortable while I finish up."

"Dinner?" Ilya quirks an eyebrow and a mischievous grin crawls across his face, "What have I done to deserve this special service, Kotenok? Or do I need the calories to keep up with you later?" He closes the short distance between them as he speaks and grips Shane's hips causing the Omega's cheeks to flush his favorite pink.

Shane smacks him on the chest and grumbles, “You’re so annoying. I changed my mind. You can go home now.” He grabs Ilya’s hands at his hips and half heartedly attempts to push him off.

“No, please, Kōtenok,” Ilya whines with an exaggerated pout as he reaffirms his grip on Shane’s hips and tugs him flush against his body, “I am sorry. Don’t send me away.” He moves to nibble at Shane’s neck just below his ear and revels in the lack of a patch dulling the Omega’s scent tonight. “I will be good for you,” he promises as he trails his lips along the sensitive skin and Shane shivers in response.

Shane makes no move to escape Ilya’s touch and concedes defeat with mock exasperation, “I guess you can stay. I’m going to hold you to that promise, though.” The Alpha removes his face from Shane’s neck and is met with a playful grin to match his own before their lips meet. There’s a needy heat in the way they kiss tonight but also something softer behind it that perhaps hadn’t always been there. Shane places flat palms on Ilya’s broad chest and pushes him backward to break the contact. “Down, Boy. I spent too much time on this meal to let it burn,” he laughs as he maneuvers himself out of the hold on his hips and walks deeper into the apartment.

Ilya follows behind quickly and glances around the space as they go. He sees the living area ahead with a sofa and oversized chair arranged around a coffee table housing a box of children’s art supplies at one end and several floor cushions stacked to the side. Cozy looking blankets litter the backs of the seats as well as spill over the top of a decorative basket nestled in a corner beside the television. The space looks and feels lived in and Ilya feels himself smiling at the warmth of the home. He forgoes enjoying this space in favor of following Shane into the kitchen off to the side.

“Smells good,” Ilya comments as he watches Shane remove a baking dish from the oven, “Cannot be your bird food that smells like this.” Shane glares at him as he sets the hot dish down and doesn’t bother dignifying his words with a response. He pulls two plates from the cabinets and points to a seat at the island behind him, “Sit.” Ilya does as he’s told and perches on the bar height stool watching as Shane plates their meal.

“Salmon, brown rice with quinoa and garden salad,” Shane announces as he sets a plate in front of Ilya and the other beside it, “It’s not “bird food”. It’s good for you.” Ilya fights the urge to tease Shane further as he accepts the cutlery he’s handed, “Looks delicious, Kōtenok. Thank you.” Shane smiles back at him as he takes the seat beside him and gestures for Ilya to dig in. As they eat, the two catch up about what’s gone on since they last had time to actually talk and Ilya finds himself sinking into an unfamiliar comfort in the home.

“He did not let them get away with that!” Shane squawks in disbelief as Ilya relays how he and Cliff had caught the twins ordering toys from Cliff’s Amazon app when they accompanied him to a short practice the day before.

Ilya chuckles and nods, “He is weak to their charms. They do the puppy eyes and he cannot help himself.”

Shane hangs his head in exasperation and sighs, “I can’t believe those two. They did not get that from me.” He laughs again softly as he lifts his head and meets Ilya’s signature smirk.

“Is not true. I think you also use cute face to get what you want,” he teases and Shane rolls his eyes even though a light pink dusts his cheeks.

“Shut up,” Shane mutters as he stands and collects their dishes. As he rinses them in the sink, Ilya slinks up behind him and wraps his strong arms around the shorter man’s waist resting his chin on his shoulder.

“So pretty when you blush for me,” Ilya murmurs against Shane’s neck as he turns his face to inhale the Omega’s scent. Shane’s blush deepens at the feeling of the Alpha’s breath against his skin and his words. As it spreads down his neck toward his chest, Ilya’s eyes darken and he nips at the delicate spot below Shane’s ear with a soft growl. He grinds his hips into the plush curve of Shane’s ass then shifts his grip to turn the smaller man to face him.

“Pretty kotenok with pretty freckles,” he praises as he traces the constellations adorning Shane’s face with the pad of his thumb. Ilya traces his thumb down his cheek and across his plump lower lip pausing there. He uses the fingers resting below Shane’s chin to tilt his face up and meet his eyes. Shane gazes up at him with slightly blown pupils crowding his chocolate brown irises. Ilya sees the desire there and prompts in a low timber, “What do you want, Krasivyy?”

Shane opens his mouth as if to answer, but instead pulls Ilya’s thumb into his mouth and lightly sucks. Ilya’s pupils dilate at the sight and he feels himself immediately getting hard. “You,” Shane hums as he releases the digit and moves to slide his arms over Ilya’s shoulders, tangling his fingers in his curls.

A low growl rumbles from the Alpha’s chest in approval. He quickly lifts the beautiful man off the ground, “Bedroom?” Shane points him toward the hallway as he wraps his thighs around Ilya’s waist and they’re quickly crossing the apartment.

Shane licks and nibbles at the sensitive skin of Ilya’s neck as they go and Ilya groans when he grazes his scent gland. He presses Shane into the bed when his knees find the edge and grinds his hips into him as he captures the Omega’s lips in a filthy kiss. Ilya paws at Shane’s top, desperate to feel the man’s exposed skin, and hikes it up to his chest. Shane lets out a breathy laugh, “So needy,” as he pulls back just enough to yank the material over his head and toss it away while Ilya does the same.

Ilya growls and nips at his jaw, “I think needy one is you.” He reaches between them; palming at Shane’s clothed cunt feeling the slick dampened fabric. Shane rocks his hips into the contact involuntarily as his blush creeps further down his chest. Ilya smirks and hooks his fingers into the waistband of Shane’s joggers and panties, yanking both down at once before tossing them aside.

Slick already coats Shane’s thighs and more leaks from his desperate pussy as Ilya runs two fingers through his folds and teases his clit. The unfettered scent of his arousal floods Ilya’s senses. “Off,” Shane demands while squirming against the touch and struggling to reach for Ilya’s pants. Ilya obliges; quickly releasing himself from his jeans and stepping out of his boxers along with them.

Shane swipes the back of his hand at a bit of drool that escapes his lips while he watches Ilya's already leaking cock freed from its confines. Ilya smirks at the sight and crawls over the Omega's body, pressing their hips together and rocking so his length drags between Shane's folds in a slow rhythm. Shane whines at the contact and rocks his hips up to match Ilya's. Slick gushes from his opening every time the cockhead brushes against his sensitive clit.

Ilya's chest rumbles appreciatively at the sensation and captures Shane's mouth in a messy kiss. As their tongues move against each other, Shane locks his thighs around Ilya's waist and takes advantage of the larger man's distraction to flip their positions on the bed. He grinds his hips down against the alpha's hard cock once earning a low groan from Ilya before shifting off his lap as he trails light bites and licks down his impressive body. Shane slips off of the bed to settle between Ilya's legs with Ilya lifting himself to sit on the edge. He bites at the edge of Ilya's Adonis belt and sucks on the skin there leaving a mark.

Ilya tangles the fingers of one hand into Shane's hair as he watches the omega take his length in both hands and stroke him slowly. He growls his approval as Shane licks the head and slowly begins to take him into his warm mouth. Shane slowly bobs his head and hollows his cheeks as he takes more and more of Ilya. He keeps one hand working what he hasn't fit yet. "Such good mouth," Ilya moans above him as Shane pulls off and licks a fat stripe up his cock from base to tip.

Shane practically purrs as Ilya takes his cock in his hand and rubs it over Shane's cheek and lips before smacking it against his waiting tongue. "So pretty," Ilya praises while feeding his cock into Shane's gaping mouth. He moans around Ilya and quickly swallows him all the way to the base, inhaling Ilya's deep scent in the trim curls there. "Da. Like that," Ilya growls with a deep drawl as his grip on Shane's hair tightens when he swallows around him.

Shane looks up at Ilya through his lashes as he bobs up and down on his cock with drool and pre-cum running down his chin. The sloppy sounds fill the room around them and Ilya's head falls back in another deep groan. He uses the hand twisted in Shane's hair to pull him off with a wet pop and guides him up to lick into his mouth, tasting himself there. Shane straddles his lap and mewls into the kiss. He holds onto Ilya's shoulder with one hand while reaching down to grip his spit-slick cock and guide it into his soaked pussy.

They moan into each other's mouths as the head of Ilya's cock breaches his entrance and Shane sinks down onto him. Ilya thrusts suddenly burying himself to the hilt and Shane keens at the feeling of being completely stretched open around the fat cock. He claws at Ilya's shoulders leaving behind red crescents and long scratches where he loses grip as Ilya fucks up into him again and again.

Ilya grips the two perfect globes of Shane's ass holding him in place as he sets a slow deep rhythm with each thrust into his tight pussy, cursing under his breath in Russian.

"More," Shane whines breathlessly as he feels Ilya's throbbing cock move inside him, "Please, Alpha!"

A deep growl builds in Ilya's chest as he moves Shane's legs to wrap around his waist then grips the smaller man's hips hard enough to leave marks. Shane yelps in surprise and clutches

Ilya's shoulders tighter as the Alpha crosses the short distance to the wall and presses him against it still buried inside his body. Ilya smirks at Shane's confused look using the wall as leverage to shift his arms under Shane's legs one by one cradling his knees in the bends of his elbows and gripping the soft flesh of his thick thighs.

Ilya's grunted, "Hold on tight, Kotenok," is Shane's only warning before Ilya pulls his hips away from the wall and sets a punishing pace. Ilya's massive cock pumps in and out of Shane's cunt so viciously his thighs tremble in Ilya's hold as he claws at the man's back and wails in pleasure. Slick drips from where he's stretched open around Ilya's dick and falls on the man's balls and the floor beneath them.

Shane's nails biting for purchase in Ilya's back and his own shoulders pressed against the wall are the only things keeping him upright as his body becomes putty in the Alpha's hands. Ilya bites at his neck and collarbones leaving angry marks on his tan skin as he carves a home for himself inside the Omega's body. The mewling and babbled pleas for more of the man in his arms causing his knot to begin to inflate at the base of his cock.

"Knot me," Shane pants desperately as he moves one hand to tug at Ilya's sweat damp curls and tries to push his hips out to meet each thrust, "Give it to me!" Ilya's movements become erratic at the demand and his knot begins to catch on the opening of the perfect pussy clenching around his cock desperately trying to milk him. With a final hard thrust it slams into place tying them together as their shared orgasms wash over them at once.

"Alpha!" Shane keens in a drawn out scream as his pussy spasms around the pulsing knot and Ilya's cockhead abuses his cervix. A deep groan escapes Ilya when he feels his release pulse inside his, no the, Omega taking his fat knot perfectly. As they slowly come down from the orgasm, Ilya carefully carries Shane's now pleasantly limp body back to the bed and sits down. He slowly lays back cradling the now purring man to his chest and hisses at the slight pull on his knot from the change in position.

When Ilya's knot finally goes down, a gush of slick and cum leak from Shane's spent cunt. "Fuck," Shane grumbles, "You made such a mess." Ilya lets out an amused huff at the complaint before he stiffens at the realization that he's not wearing a condom. They forgot the condom and now his cum was pouring out of Shane and onto his groin.

Shane feels the sudden rigidity of Ilya's body at the same time his anxiety tinges his scent. He lifts his head and gently grabs Ilya's chin pulling his gaze to focus on him as he pushes out soothing pheromones. "Hey. It's fine," he assures the Alpha beneath him, "I know we don't usually...do that...but I'm on the pill."

Ilya studies the expression on his beautifully freckled face and his soft gaze before releasing a long puff of air and relaxing against the bed a bit. "Is okay?" He checks and Shane kisses him gently before nodding, "Okay."

Shane props himself up on shaky arms and slowly moves off of Ilya to lay beside him on the bed. He stretches his limbs in a way that reminds Ilya of a cat and makes him chuckle softly. "Shower?" Shane prompts as he sits up and tugs at Ilya's arm for him to follow.

“Da,” Ilya agrees, letting himself be pulled upward to sit. When Shane stands first, he wraps an arm around Shane’s waist from behind and gently bites the curve of his ass cheek earning a light smack to the top of his head along with the omega’s verbal protests. He stands from his place on the bed with a grin and scoops Shane up and over his shoulder without warning.

“Let me down!” Shane wails as he clutches at Ilya’s back and Ilya laughs as he begins walking toward the door of the en-suite, “I mean it, Ilya!”

“I thought you like when I pick you up,” Ilya playfully smacks his ass as he continues on his path, “Throw you around like, what was it you say, ragdoll?”

Shane blushes and stretches an arm down to pinch the top of Ilya’s ass in retaliation before he concedes defeat with a huff, “Knothead hockey players.”

Chapter 6

“Thanks for helping out, Man,” Cliff claps Ilya on the shoulder as he comes to a stop beside him on the ice.

“Is no problem,” Ilya insists as he leans against his stick watching the gaggle of children decked out in full hockey gear go through drills in front of them, “Little Marleys are not so bad. Their Pike friend is almost as bad as her father, though.”

Cliff chuckles and shakes his head and admonishes, “No chirping the kids, Assistant Coach.”

Ilya sighs exaggeratedly, “Fine. I will not stop chirping Pike, though.”

“Okay, Man. Just don’t let Shane hear you. That’s like his best friend and he’ll kill you,” Cliff laughs before he skates closer to the group and calls them into a huddle.

Ilya pauses before he follows behind him to join the huddle. He hadn’t considered Shane being here when he agreed to fill in for Hayes as the youth team’s assistant coach over the break. It will be fine, he tells himself. He can keep his hands to himself and pretend they’re just acquaintances instead of fuck buddies for one night. He would love to get his hands on the beautiful omega, though. Shane had turned down his attempts to meet up over the last two months and he desperately wanted to see him again. To trace those perfect freckles and see what sounds he could pull out of him.

He shakes his head to clear the thoughts and tries to focus back on what’s happening around him. Cliff had just finished his pep talk and dismisses the children to the bench to rest and have their snacks. More parents had filed into the seats near the benches and Ilya spots Shane easily as Hana and Hank excitedly talk to him through the plexiglass. Cliff and Ilya skate over to join the group and Cliff goes to join the twins.

Ilya resists the urge to seek Shane out as well and instead sits on the far end of the bench and checks his phone. The omega looks beautiful in well fitted jeans that hug the curves of his thighs and ass and an oversized cream sweater that Ilya thinks is probably soft based on what the man usually wears. He finds no new messages from Shane in their thread and decides to try his luck. “You look pretty today, Kotenok,” he types out and hesitates for only a second before pressing send. He pockets the phone and steals a glance over his shoulder to find Shane with pink tipped ears looking at his own phone. Cliff says something to him and Shane quickly puts the device away and returns to their conversation.

As the children line up for handshakes after a close win, Cliff tells Ilya, “The twins want you to come with us for pizza. You down?”

“Da,” Ilya agrees easily, “Anything for Little Marleys.”

“Great,” Cliff smiles as the line of children passes them headed down the tunnel to the locker room to get changed. “I’ll tell Shane to make it a table for five then. The twins will ride with me and you,” He’s gone before he can catch Ilya blanch at what he’s just done. Fuck. He’d just granted his own wish to spend time with Shane in the worst way.

“Daddy!” The twins cheer as they drag Ilya and Cliff towards the table Shane is waiting at.

“Babies!” Shane calls back in kind and bends to collect them both in a big hug, “You did so well today. I’m proud of you both.”

“Come on, let’s go get you get some food,” Cliff corrals them toward the buffet leaving Ilya and Shane beside the table.

“Hello, Shane,” Ilya drawls with what he hopes is a casual smile.

“Ilya,” Shane greets in return as he absently picks at the hem of his sweater and keeps his gaze on his twins hanging off Cliff’s arms as he tries to balance plates and fill them with pizza. “They’re feral,” he mumbles to himself with an exasperated chuckle.

Ilya follows his gaze and laughs, “Da. Must get it from Marley.”

Shane laughs openly at that and nods in agreement, “Absolutely. Especially Hana.” He finally turns his gaze to Ilya and offers a small smile, “You should go get something to eat.” Ilya nods and excuses himself to join the chaos unfolding at the buffet. Hana shifts her focus to him and clings to his leg while Hank swings from Cliff’s forearm. Shane watches them with a fond expression and absently trails his fingers over the fabric covering his lower stomach before sitting back down.

“Whoever finishes all food first gets \$20 for arcade,” Ilya announces as the group makes their way back to the table with plates piled high. The twins cheer loudly and devolve into a heated argument of who will win as they scramble into their seats and begin scarfing down slices of pizza.

Cliff groans, “Come on, Man. They’re gonna have stomach aches tonight and I do not wanna be cleaning puke out of my carpets again.” Ilya laughs and offers a halfhearted apology while the twins insist they’ll be fine between mouthfuls.

“Did you see my goal, Daddy?” Hana asks as she takes another bite and grins excitedly up at Shane, “Roz taught me how to do backhand like him!” Her eyes sparkle as he answers, “I did and it was amazing, Sweetie. I’m so proud of you.” She turns her bright smile to Ilya before putting her attention back on eating faster than her brother.

“Ilya is pretty great with kids. They all love him,” Cliff comments as a follow up, “Some of the single mom’s asked if he could replace Wyatt full time, too.” Cliff and Ilya laugh at this; both missing the scowl that Shane quickly wipes off his face before mumbling, “I’m sure,” and taking another bite of his salad.

Ilya quirks a brow at the tone of Shane's voice, but brushes it off as he lifts his gaze to see the omega smiling and listening intently to Hank's retelling of scoring the first goal of the game. Cliff pulls his attention away with questions about his plans for the next day.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Maybe this should be a prologue but I wrote it at this stage so I'm slapping it here for now anyway

8 years ago

"Are you sure?" Cliff asks as he drops into his desk chair.

Shane sighs in exasperation as he leans against the wall with his arms wrapped around himself, "Yes, Cliff. I wouldn't be telling you this if I hadn't missed two cycles and peed on four sticks. All positive. Every single one."

Cliff releases all the air in his lungs as his entire world shifts around him. "Do you... What do you want to do?" he tries gently as he looks up at his boyfriend, "You're only 17 and I'm going to the draft after I graduate in two months. I just... How am I supposed to leave you here like this?"

Shane takes a moment before he drops his arms back to his sides and closes the distance between them. "I think," he starts as he reaches out to put his hands on Cliff's shoulders, "I want to keep it. I want you to go through with going to the draft, too. I've got my parents here and, yeah, they're going to freak out at first, but they'll help me. Besides we know you can support us with an MLH salary." He smiles down at Cliff hoping ending on a lighter note would help calm him further.

"You want to have my baby?" Cliff whispers as he takes Shane's hands in his and looks up at him with adoration and tears in his eyes.

Shane's smile softens and he feels tears prick his eyes as he nods, "Of course, I do. I love you. It's just a little sooner than we thought maybe."

Cliff laughs quietly, "Maybe." He stands and pulls Shane's body against his in a tight embrace. "I love you so much."

4 years ago

"What the fuck is this?" Shane growls through clenched teeth as he throws the magazine at Cliff's chest.

Cliff startles from his sleep and grabs the magazine as he sits up on the couch. “Fuck, Babe,” he groans, “What’s wrong?” He looks around the room through squinted eyes as his head pounds.

“Hungover again, too?” Shane seethes, “Christ, Cliff! Do you know how to do anything other than play hockey and get drunk anymore?” He throws his hands up in frustration and adds with a scoff, “I guess you know how to do one more thing since the fucking gossip rags are covered in evidence of you cheating on me this morning.”

Cliff furrows his brow at that and immediately begins denying it, “I would never cheat on you, Babe! Those things are trash. You know that.”

Shane snatches the crumpled magazine from Cliff’s hands and shoves the cover in his face. “You wanna tell me that isn’t you?” he spits, “Sure looks like you to me. Especially the fucking ring I bought you.” He angrily points to that corner of the photo before dropping the magazine back in Cliff’s lap and moving away.

Cliff stares down at the photo cover in his lap and tries to piece everything together through the fog of lingering alcohol. A memory slides into place as the scene clicks together in his head and he buries his face in his hands.

“Baby, I’m sorry,” he pleads, “I swear it will never happen again,” When he looks up he finds Shane’s back to him and his arms wrapped tightly around himself. His shoulders tremble. “Shane. Please look at me.”

“You need to leave,” Shane finally answers while moving further away and staring out the window. “I can’t do this anymore. The kids don’t need to see their father drunk on the rare occasion he’s home. You can come back to get all your things when I take them to visit my parents this weekend.”

“Shane,” Cliff tries as he stands and begins to approach with his hand outstretched. Shane immediately tenses and his scent lashes out sour with anger and pain. Cliff stops and lowers his hand, “Ok. I’ll go.”

Shane stays frozen in his place as Cliff pulls on his shoes and grabs his bag still packed from the road trip the Metros had just returned from the day before. He finally moves when the front door softly clicks shut and collapses on the couch with his head in his hands as the tears escape in hot tracks down his cheeks.

3 1/2 years ago

“Ottawa?” Shane questions into the phone as he pauses on the sidewalk outside of his twins Montreal preschool, “Ok. Well, I hope it’s the change you need. Yeah. We’ll work all that out later. No, I have classes to teach so my mom will bring the twins to you. Mhm. Bye.”

“Everything good?” Rose asks as she looks up from scrolling on her own phone.

Shane puffs out air then answers, “Yeah. Cliff is being traded to Ottawa. I guess the Metros got sick of his constant partying, too. Anyway, I’m going to have to adjust my class schedule to be able to take the twins back and forth but it’s fine.”

“Ouch. Ottawa?” Rose raises a perfectly manicured brow. Shane nods and sighs, “At least my parents will be close on his weekends if there’s emergencies, I guess. Thanks for sitting with them this afternoon until my mom gets here, by the way. I really can’t afford to cancel or reschedule these three classes.”

Rose waves him off with a dismissive hand, “It’s no big deal. I love those little monsters. And it gives me a chance to throw out your ugly clothes without you in the way.” Shane lightly smacks her shoulder and rolls his eyes before gesturing for her to come on as he continues on their path up to the school doors.

Chapter 8

2 months ago

“Shane?” Rose calls out as she lets herself into the apartment, “I got your SOS text. Where are you?”

“In here,” Shane calls back and she follows his voice and the distressed scent to the ajar door of his bedrooms en-suite, “What the hell are you doing in here? Did you get something stuck?”

Shane groans and throws her a look that could kill as she pushes the door open, “No, I didn’t get anything stuck! It’s so much worse.” He whines in frustration as he cards his fingers anxiously through his shaggy black locks while sitting on the toilet lid.

Rose scrunches her face in confused concern as she walks further into the room and takes in his appearance. “You’re freaking me out, Hon. What’s going on?” she tries again and he just throws an arm out pointing to the counter. Rose slowly turns her gaze away from him toward the counter and her eyes go wide.

“Holy fuck, Shane,” she breathes as she moves to the counter and sees the line of positive pregnancy tests. “SHANE!” Rose yells before throwing a hand over her mouth when he winces, “The hockey player?”

“Rose,” Shane whines as he finally looks up at her distraught, “What am I going to do? How did I let this happen?”

“Oh, Hon,” Rose comforts as she moves to stand beside him and wrap her arm around his shoulders while pushing out calming pheromones, “It’ll be okay. You don’t have to do this, you know, unless you want to. And if you do, you don’t have to do it with him exactly. You’re pretty good at coparenting with Cliff already.” She shrugs trying to calm him as they watch each other in the mirror across the space and Shane huffs.

“I’ve got to tell him either way, right? Fuck, it’s all my fault for getting distracted and not getting my refill soon enough. Cliff still has no idea I’m...seeing? Fucking? I don’t know, doing something, with his team captain and apparently best friend from what the twins say and how they talk about each other. Fuck,” Shane groans and buries his hands back in his hair turning his gaze to his feet.

Rose lets out a long breath as she watches him then decides to try to lighten the mood again in her own way, “For the record, you DID get something stuck up there to be in this situation. And that something left you with this something.” Shane pinches her thigh and she yelps, “I’m just saying!”

“You’re the worst,” Shane admonishes before a nervous laugh escapes him and he turns his head to look up at her, “I guess you do have a point, though. Shit. I’ve got to figure out how

to tell Ilya without it being a complete disaster.”

“Do you think he’ll be an asshole?” Rose asks with a raised brow, “I mean, you obviously like him or you wouldn’t be doing whatever it is the two of you are doing. Especially not without protection,” Shane pinches her thigh again in warning and she continues, “Again. I’m just saying. If the guy seems good enough for you to keep around this long, he’s probably good enough to not be a dick to you when you tell him you’re pregnant. And it doesn’t really matter how Cliff feels about it. You’re all adults and you don’t belong to him.”

Shane considers her logic before slowly nodding, “Maybe.”

Shane fidgets with the sleeve of his sweater as he paces around the apartment. He’s finally going to see Ilya and tell him he’s pregnant. Or maybe he could turn out the lights and pretend he isn’t home instead. The twins were spending the weekend at his parents’ lake house so they couldn’t give him away by making noise. Yeah, maybe he’ll do that.

He’d avoided seeing the man for almost 3 months now. At first he just hadn’t felt well and then he made excuses to hide the new milky undertone of his scent after he’d taken the tests. Aside from running into him at the kid’s game a month ago, but he always wore patches in public so he wasn’t outed then. They still texted regularly, even called a few times when Shane had moments without the twins under his feet. Ilya hadn’t really complained about his avoidance, but it was obvious the Alpha wanted to see him again with the frequency of his offers to drive to Montreal if it was more convenient for Shane.

Maybe he will be good with the news like Rose suggested. Shane had even kept up with the games score tonight, something he never did, to ensure it would be a good time to share the development in their...relationship? The Centaurs had made the playoffs and after tonight’s win would advance and the Metros had been knocked out. He knew that would put the hockey player in high spirits and hopefully soften the blow.

Shane takes a few deep breaths as he checks the time on his phone. Ilya would be there any minute. “Fuck, why did I decide we didn’t need to use condoms anymore after that first time we forgot?” He whines as he presses his palms against his face.

He freezes when he hears the first knocks and finally convinces his body to move when the second round starts. Shane takes another deep breath and checks his face in the entryway mirror before he opens the door.

“Hey,” Ilya greets with a wide smile across his face as Shane lets him into the apartment, “Did you watch game?”

“No,” Shane scoffs while he locks the door behind them, “But I did see the score. Congrats.”

“Thank you, Kotenok,” Ilya replies moving to wrap Shane in his arms once he’s out of his shoes and drops his bag on the floor.

Shane relaxes into his embrace and greedily inhales the scent of the Alpha where his cheek rests against Ilya's sculpted chest. He looks so good in his game day outfit. Black dress pants that hug the curve of his perfect ass and a button up just a little too undone to be professional with the sleeves rolled up to reveal his forearms. When he feels Ilya's chest move with his quiet chuckle, "You miss me?" he realizes he's purring.

Shane flushes crimson and forces his Omega body to stop betraying him in such an embarrassing way. Ilya laughs softly again as he gently takes Shane's chin in his hand and tips his head back so their gazes meet. "Is okay, Kotenok. I miss you, too." Shane barely stops a needy whine from escaping him at the admission and Ilya leans down to press their lips together. The gentleness of the kiss almost breaks Shane so he steps away and offers Ilya a soft hopefully reassuring smile.

"Come on," Shane prompts and moves toward the living area. He hopes Ilya doesn't see him fidgeting with the sweater sleeve slid over his hands as he sits on the couch and pulls one leg up underneath him. He pats the space next to him and gestures for Ilya to sit down.

Ilya quirks a brow at him but follows the nonverbal instructions and drops onto the cushion next to him. "You want watch movie?" he asks as he throws an arm over the back of the couch behind Shane, "I may sleep. Was hard game tonight, but I can try for you."

"No," Shane answers with a slight shake of his head, "I don't want to watch a movie." He loses the nerve to speak beyond that at the moment and finds himself almost frozen just watching Ilya beside him.

Ilya watches him back for a few quiet moments then nods slowly, "Okay. No movie. What do you want, Krasivyy? I am excellent hockey player but no mind reader."

Shane feels like his mouth is glued shut and thanks the Goddess he aired out the apartment and put on a patch before Ilya came over. The Alpha's scent is soothing as it wraps around him, but the anxiety Shane knows would be souring his own is fighting the effects making just existing next to Ilya challenging. "To talk," he finally musters and voluntarily looks Ilya in the eye for the first time since he'd arrived.

Ilya waits a beat before prompting, "Okay? About?" and gesturing for Shane to continue. The smile on his lips and his piercing blue eyes tinged with a bit of concern.

"I'm pregnant," Shane blurts suddenly then clamps both hands over his mouth. He feels his soul leave his body and is almost certain he sees the life drain from Ilya's face in the same moment.

Chapter 9

Ilya isn't sure if he's in Heaven or Hell. This perfect Omega is pregnant. His best friend's ex is pregnant. Presumably with Ilya's baby. Surely Shane wasn't telling him he was pregnant by another Alpha. But he had avoided meeting with Ilya for nearly three months so maybe that was a possibility. A horrible one. Fuck, he should say something.

"Is mine?" He finally manages and immediately regrets it when Shane glares at him as if he's trying to set him on fire with his mind. He's in Hell. The Goddess wouldn't let him be this big of an idiot in Heaven. Before Ilya can find something better to say Shane snaps back, "Obviously. How many people do you think I'm sleeping with?"

Ilya lurches forward to grasp Shane's hands, gently stroking his thumbs across the backs of the balled up fists in his lap and scrambles to fix his mistake, "Am sorry, Kotenok! Should not have asked this. I do not think you are slut." He realizes he has fumbled his words again when he feels Shane's fists tighten in his hold and the Omega tries to pull away. "Please, Krasivyy, am having trouble with English right now. Am very tired and is big news! Overwhelming," he pleads and tacks on, "But good, da?" He gently squeezes Shane's hands as he searches the man's face for his feelings on the situation and not just his bumbling.

"Good?" Shane asks as he lifts his gaze again to search Ilya's face for clues in turn, "You aren't...mad?"

Ilya raises a brow at the question, "Why would I be mad? You say baby is mine so no reason to be mad."

"I mean," Shane relaxes just barely at his words and explains, "I told you I was on birth control and now I'm telling you I'm pregnant. I was! I was on birth control! Don't get me wrong. I just messed up and missed a few and...now this. I swear I didn't plan this. I'm not trying to baby trap you."

It takes Ilya a minute to process everything Shane said and he startles Shane with a laugh as he finally processes what baby trap means. "Kotenok," he murmurs as he moves one hand to caress Shane's freckled cheek, "I do not think bad things about you. I know you would not do this. Is okay. Everything is okay." He smiles softly as he sees Shane begin to relax further as if he has just taken a heavy weight from his shoulders.

"Do you want?" Ilya asks gently, "Baby, I mean. Is okay if you do not."

"Do you?" Shane whispers back with his gaze turned down to his lap where their hands rest together.

Ilya is quiet for a moment so Shane slowly peeks up to find him watching him with a soft fondness in his eyes. "I want," he answers quietly, "But is not only up to me. I know situation is not...ideal...and is your body. We do what you think is best."

Shane sits with his answer for a beat before a glimmer of a smile plays at his lips, "Thank you. I do want to keep this baby." He carefully pulls his hands from Ilya's grasp and moves them to his lower abdomen, "I always wanted more children; a big family."

"Is good news for us both then," Ilya smiles warmly at him, "We handle the rest tomorrow. Too much worrying has made you tired, Kotenok. Should rest."

Shane smiles back at him and nods. "Will you still stay?" he asks with uncertainty laced through his voice.

Ilya pulls Shane into his arms, cradling him against his chest, "Of course, Krasivyy. How could I leave you alone like this? Come. Let's go to bed."

"I'm going to have to talk to Cliff about this soon," Shane sighs heavily as he gestures to his stomach over breakfast, "We may not be together, but what's happening in my life does have some effect on him when it's this major. We need to be on the same page about how to answer the twins' questions also."

Ilya nods in understanding, "Okay. You want me to tell him about us? Maybe too much stress for you to tell him about everything?"

Shane considers the offer then shakes his heads, "You don't have to do that unless you want to. And I don't really have to tell him that it's you right away. I'll be fine either way."

"I will talk to him first," Ilya decides, "Marley is my best friend. He deserves this much from me. Will not tell him about baby, but the rest."

"I really don't think that part will be that big of a deal to him," Shane offers, "But the situation is a bit different than him meeting my boyfriends over the years so."

Ilya's possessive streak peeks its ugly head out as he bristles at the mention of other men that had been in Shane's life and he quickly shoves the low rumble building in his chest down. He reminds himself that Shane is not his even if the omega is carrying his child.

"Da. News I am baby daddy is different," he retorts as lightheartedly as he can manage.

Shane wrinkles his nose, "Gross, Ilya. Don't call yourself that."

"If not baby daddy, what?" Ilya questions, "We are not boyfriends. Fuck buddies does not seem right for situation." When Shane's cheeks flush and he recoils at the words Ilya continues, "Would you want to be? Boyfriends?"

Shane's blush deepens and he turns his gaze to his plate. "I don't get the idea you're the boyfriend type from all the headlines," he mutters.

Ilya's eyebrows raise and a curious grin creeps across his face, "You do not follow hockey or read tabloids but you know this? You Google me?"

Shane's cheeks burn and he's sure he's the same shade as the tomatoes on his counter, "No! Shut up!"

Ilya coos with a huge smile splitting his face, "You are so cute, Kotenok. Is okay."

Shane stands and quickly crosses the kitchen with his dishes in hand. Ilya follows him and captures him in his arms once the omega stops at the sink. "So cute," He presses a kiss to the top of Shane's head with a laugh. Shane relaxes into Ilya for a brief moment before he straightens himself back up and moves to put a bit of distance between them.

"We probably shouldn't," he tells Ilya as he wraps his arms loosely around himself and leans his hip against the counter. "Talk about being boyfriends or whatever," Shane continues when Ilya gives him a confused look, "It's not like we were dating before and we shouldn't do that just because I'm pregnant. A real relationship isn't a consolation prize."

Ilya briefly looks like a puppy that's been kicked before he collects himself and slowly nods his assent to Shane's reasoning. "Okay, Kotenok," he decides on instead of pleading his case, "You are right."

Shane nods once stiffly. He absently rubs a thumb in soothing circles on his bicep as he tightens his hold on himself before pushing off the counter and looking toward the hall behind him. "Right," he chirps trying to keep his voice even, "I'm going to shower and get ready. I've got classes to teach this afternoon and need to get to the yoga studio a little early."

"Okay. I need to get back to Anya soon anyway," Ilya replies, "Will get dressed and leave while you shower. See you soon, Kotenok?" He watches Shane with a small, hopeful smile and quickly kisses the omega on the cheek when he turns to face Ilya again and nod in agreement.

Ilya collects his bag from the entryway and makes his way to Shane's bedroom to gather his discarded clothes from the day before and put on a fresh outfit for the drive home. The ensuite door is closed and he can hear the shower already running as he sets his bag on the bed and gets to work getting dressed.

"Will text you when I am home," Ilya calls through the closed door as he zips his bag and slings it over his shoulder. He hears Shane's muffled acknowledgement after a moment and makes his way out of the omega's apartment. Once he's made it back down to the parking garage and into his car, he drops his head against the steering wheel and releases all the air from his lungs.

What the fuck was he doing? How was he going to look Cliff in the eye let alone talk to him about any of this? How was he supposed to look Shane in the eye after that rejection? It was fair for Shane to not want to be boyfriends just because he's pregnant, but Ilya didn't want him only because of that. How do you tell your fuck buddy that you think you have feelings for them after they drop a pregnancy on you and it not sound like that, though?

"Fuck," Ilya groans as leans back against the drivers seat and starts the car.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Ilya Rozanov's no good very bad day incoming

"What's up, man?" Cliff greets with a broad smile as he slides into the booth across from Ilya with a beer in hand.

Ilya returns his smile though it doesn't quite reach his eyes. He hopes he made the right choice inviting Cliff out to the semi-neutral territory of Monk's to have this talk. Shane had told Ilya he'd be meeting with Cliff to talk about the changes his pregnancy would bring after dropping the twins with his parents this evening. It was now or never if he wanted his chance to come clean to his best friend.

"Just need to talk privately," Ilya shrugs as if it's no big deal, but Cliff sees past the nonchalant act.

Cliff furrows his brow and leans forward with his elbows on the table between them, "Is everything ok? Is it your brother again? You don't have to answer that knothead's calls if he's trying to get money out of you again."

Ilya puffs a laugh and waves a dismissive hand, "No. Alexei is still blocked since Papa died." He pauses for a moment and takes a swig of his own beer, "Everything is fine. I just...I need to tell you something and hope will not upset you."

Ilya forces himself to meet Cliff's confused gaze directly and watches him take in what Ilya's said so far.

"You better not be leaving the team already," Cliff scowls at the idea, "This is the farthest the Centaurs have ever gotten in the playoffs and we can't make that kind of magic happen without you, Roz. I know Ottawa isn't as exciting as Boston, but come on, Man, don't quit on us after one season."

Ilya fiercely shakes his head and puts up his hands as if physically clearing the air, "No. No. I would never abandon team. You are all pack to me. I take this serious. Is personal matter for me. But not Russia problem."

Cliff leans back and relaxes his face as he releases the tension that had built in his shoulders. "Alright. That's good. We are pack and I doubt anything you've got to say could make me mad. We're always gonna be good, Man. What's going on?"

It's Ilya's turn to tense as he moves a hand to scratch the back of his neck and take another long drink from his beer. "I have maybe not be so honest with you," he begins slowly and

looks to the ceiling as he gathers his words carefully.

“...Okay?” Cliff raises his brow as he sets his own beer back on the table between them and studies Ilya’s new twitchy disposition.

Ilya takes a deep breath and finally levels his gaze so that he’s looking Cliff directly in the eye. “I have been sleeping with Shane,” he admits, “Has been casual and he is private person so we did not say.” He braces for impact and watches with quiet anxiety as the words wash over Cliff. His expression morphs from one of concerned curiosity to a level of fury he has only seen the man embody during on ice scrums in what seems like slow motion.

“What the fuck?” Cliff shouts, “After I told you I still wanted him back?”

“Before,” Ilya admits quietly as he flinches, “I did not know he was your ex the first time. Was weeks before Bood’s party.”

“And you kept screwing him after?” Cliff seethes with his fists clenching on the table in front of him, “What the fuck kind of friend are you, Rozanov? Why the hell are you even telling me now after keeping this shit secret for almost a year?”

Ilya clenches his own fist trying to steady himself in the cloud of rage engulfing him as his friend stares him down with a cold gaze that cuts him to the core. He is right. What kind of friend would do this? “I am sorry,” he tries, “I just want to be honest with you now. I fucked up. We did not do this to hurt you. I did not think. Is my fault not Shane’s.”

“You’re god damn right it’s your fault!” Cliff bellows as he slams a fist on the table causing Ilya to jump, “You’re fucking sorry? What a joke, Rozanov! I should’ve known you’re the same selfish asshole everyone says you are. Did you tell him what I said about him and laugh at me behind my back, too? You spend half our off time at my house! With my kids half the time acting like their uncle! I can’t fucking believe this!” The hatred in his eyes deepens impossibly further as a thought crosses his mind, “Have you been doing this when the twins are home with him? Playing stepdad to MY kids? Having them keep this from me, too?”

Ilya raises his hands between them to try to show he isn’t a threat as the eyes of the few other patrons and staff of the bar fall on the scene and shakes his head. “Cliff,” he pleads, “I would never do this! I do not tell Shane anything you say about him and I do not pretend to be twins’ father. We do not even meet when they are home.”

Cliff abruptly stands and moves from the booth heading toward the door with Ilya quickly following. “Cliff,” Ilya calls after him, “I am sorry. You are my best friend. Please.”

Cliff stops just shy of reaching the exit and whirls on Ilya. Before Ilya can react his head is jerked sideways when Cliff lands a heavy blow to his jaw. “Go fuck yourself, Rozanov,” he spits and yanks the door open taking his cloud of rage tinged with pain with him as he leaves.

Chapter 11

Cliff yanks the door open with an angry growl and startles Shane into dropping the hand he had raised to knock again. “What’re you doing here?” he asks as his expression slips to one of confusion, “I thought your parents wanted the twins this weekend?”

“They did,” Shane answers after a beat, “They do. I just dropped them off before I came over here. I need to talk to you.”

Cliff narrows his eyes as the scowl returns to his face, “Did Rozanov send you? I’m not apologizing to either of you for punching him. The motherfucker deserved it.”

“Rozanov?” Shane furrows his brow at the lack of the usual nickname then gasps as the rest of Cliff’s words catch up with him, “Why the hell did you punch him?”

Cliff crosses his arms tightly over his chest as his large body fills the doorway in front of Shane. “You know why,” he answers with another low growl, “We don’t need to talk about anything. He already told me and got what was coming to him. What you can do is tell that lying piece of shit to stay the fuck away from you and my kids or I’ll remind him myself.”

“Cliff. What the fuck?” Shane narrows his eyes, “You do not have the right to tell me what to do and they’re OUR kids. What happens between me and Ilya is not your business. I’m the one that told him not to tell you. There’s no reason for you to know about that part of my life.”

Cliff scoffs and rolls his eyes, “He should’ve told me! He was supposed to be my friend and you’re mine!”

“No, I’m not,” Shane bites out as he fills with rage at the idea of being treated like property, “I do not belong to you or anyone else! God damn it, Cliff. I don’t need this shit right now. It’s not good for the baby for me to be even more stressed out!”

Cliff freezes and his expression collapses as Shane’s words hit him like a check into the boards. “What?” he chokes out, “The...baby? Shane. What the fuck are you saying?”

Shit. This was not how Shane envisioned this conversation going at all. “Yes. The baby,” Shane sighs heavily as he rubs his temples before meeting Cliff’s eyes again, “I’m pregnant. That’s what I wanted to talk to you about. The changes I’ll need to make to our schedule because of it and all that. I’m having a baby. With Ilya.”

Cliff falters in the doorway as if his knees might give out completely and he leans against it for support, “You’re having Rozanov’s baby? This is a sick joke, right?” He straightens himself up and his voice rises again, “Not only have you been fucking him behind my back, but you’re pregnant. This doesn’t make any sense, Shane! Rozanov is a manwhore that spent the better part of the last six years blacked out in clubs! You left me for one mistake and now you’re with him?”

Shane's eyes narrow and he stabs a finger into Cliff's chest as he levels him with a furious glare, "Don't you fucking dare, Cliff! Nothing I do is behind your back because we aren't together! We haven't been together in four years and we were NEVER going to be together again! I don't care what Ilya's done in the past because he wasn't leaving me at home alone with babies to raise while getting wasted and cheating on me. YOU did that. Not just one time either! You're such a knothed!"

Cliff deflates at the reminder of his past mistakes and lowers his shoulders, dropping his hands to his sides. He tries a different approach, "I'm sorry for getting loud. I just don't think he's good for you, Shane," he reaches out a hand toward the omega.

Shane recoils from his attempted touch and cuts him off, "You don't decide what's good for me. I do not belong to you, Ilya or anyone else. I'm a single adult and I make my own decisions. I'm going to have my mom take over exchanges again until you get your shit together. She'll drop them off at the arena next week. I better not hear about the twins witnessing any of this obnoxious alpha posturing bullshit either." With that he turns and storms back to his car leaving Cliff standing on the porch alone.

"That could not have gone worse," Shane mutters to himself as he pulls back out of the driveway. He wonders if he should check on Ilya but brushes the thought aside for the time being so he can spend the drive back to Montreal getting himself together first.

Chapter 12

Ilya slams his helmet into his locker and curses in furious Russian as Cliff yanks his skates off on the bench beside him. The tension around their neighboring lockers was palpable across the entire room and had been every time the team had been together leading up to their loss tonight. The bloom of yellowing purple of the fading bruise across Ilya's jaw did nothing to help the situation as the rest of the team avoided acknowledging any of it around the two. Once Cliff storms off to the showers, Troy carefully leans toward Ilya while he angrily unlaces his skates.

"Everything alright, Cap?" he asks quietly enough that only the two of them can hear, "What's going on with you and Marleau?"

"Is fine," Ilya answers through clenched teeth and continues removing his gear without offering anything more.

Troy studies him for a few minutes before pushing further, "Is this about you having a thing for his ex? I saw the way you looked at him at Bood's that night, you know. And I'm sure I've seen his name pop up on your phone."

Ilya's piercing heat-filled gaze snaps to Troy as he growls a warning, "Shut your stupid mouth, Barrett. You know nothing."

Troy raises his hands in surrender and mutters, "Fuck. Fine." He stands to pull on his shirt and grabs his bag before adding, "Listen, Man. I'm around if you decide you want to talk. For what it's worth, the whole team is worried about both of you. You two need to figure it out because it's already cost us the playoffs now with you refusing to work together on the ice. And if it is about his ex, I have your back. I don't believe in that toxic alpha bullshit. You don't own your exes." He throws his bag over his shoulder and leaves Ilya with that.

Ilya rests his elbows on his knees and hangs his head in his hands as the locker room clears out more. Troy was right. He and Cliff had cost the Centaurs their chance at the cup with this mess. This has to get better before next season.

Ilya spots Cliff in the hall as he heads for the player's parking lot. "Cliff," he calls as he picks up his pace to close the distance between them.

"Fuck off, Rozanov," Cliff replies in a clipped tone without sparing him a glance over his shoulder.

Ilya mutters to himself in Russian and continues to follow him down the hall. "Cliff, we must talk," he insists when he reaches the man's side, "We are shit captains if we let this continue to affect team."

Cliff's shoulders tense and he bristles at the statement. "Fine," he quips but doesn't stop walking, "You want us to not have a problem? Then stay the fuck out of my way and stay

away from Shane and my kids. That's the only way I'm going to tolerate sharing the ice with you again."

"Does Shane tell you he wants me to go away?" Ilya argues in the most even tone he can manage, "I have right to know MY child, Cliff. Same as you. I respect if you do not talk to me outside hockey. Will even stop coming to team family gatherings to give you peace with twins. But I will see Shane until he tells me not to."

Cliff pauses with his hand on the exit and finally mutters, "Fine." He pushes through the door and Ilya hears the twins calling out to their father from across the lot. He keeps his gaze turned away and continues to his car in the opposite direction.

"You have to come with me," Troy insists as he puts down the controller and stands from Ilya's couch to stretch, "Hazy's son loves you and Cliff is out of town so it's not like he'll be there."

Ilya sighs as he tosses his control on the coffee table beside Troy's, "I don't understand why I HAVE to go to child's party. Is not life or death."

Troy rolls his eyes, "You've skipped almost every team function since the break started. Captains can't do that even if they're fighting with their alternate captain. It's bad for team morale and all that."

Ilya stares up at him with an annoyed frown. "Fine. Do not guilt me like this, Barrett. I will go," he agrees and stands from the couch.

The Hayes' home is a mad house of bright colors, loud family friendly music and giggling children. Always the overachieving father and husband, Hayes goes all out for birthdays and holidays. On this occasion he's secured every balloon in Ontario in every color imaginable, two water slide inflatables, a bounce castle and a cake large enough to feed four MLH teams. It is a child's dream come true in every way so Ilya is not surprised to see the property overrun with what must be every person under 12 years old in Ottawa.

"Glad you could make it, Cap," Wyatt greets him with a wide smile as he and Troy step through the sliding doors onto the deck led by his wife, Lisa.

"Wouldn't miss for world," Ilya laughs while ruffling Wyatt's son hair as he runs past with a water gun too big for his small stature.

Wyatt laughs holding out a beer he'd fished from the cooler beside him in offering to Ilya. He takes it with a nod in thanks and moves to sit in the deck chair beside him while Troy goes to talk to Harris across the way. "Good. The twins will be happy to see you when they get here, too. They've asked about you at the last couple of get togethers," Wyatt comments as he watches the chaos unfolding in his yard.

“The twins?” Ilya pauses with the beer can against his lips.

“Yeah,” Wyatt nods, “Lisa called and asked Shane to bring them since Cliff’s out of town this week. They should be here soon. She said they were on their way about two hours ago.”

Ilya nods once before continuing with his sip. Fuck. This simple outing Troy had convinced him to come on was about to get a lot more complicated. Shane was showing now and it was too hot out for him to be able to hide the bump with layers. There’s no way there wouldn’t be questions that Ilya wasn’t sure either of them were ready to answer once the team saw him. His thoughts were interrupted by them apparently jumping from his mind into reality as he heard Shane’s voice coming from the open door to their left, “Really, Lisa! I’m fine. It’s not too hot and I don’t need special treatment. This isn’t my first time.”

“Are you sure?” Lisa asks as the two appear on the deck, “It’s really no problem for me to have Wyatt move an extra fan out here for you.”

“Please don’t,” Shane laughs, “I’m only 16 weeks and haven’t started overheating yet. This cold water is all I need.” He holds up the bottle in his right hand and brushes her fussing off with a wave of his other.

“Fine,” Lisa sighs, “Just promise me you’ll sit here and relax. We’ve got the kids handled while you’re here.”

Shane gives her a mock salute as he turns to do as she’s said and find a seat in the shaded area of the deck where Wyatt and Ilya are.

“Congratulations!” Wyatt cheers when Shane joins them and he returns a soft thanks, settling into the seat beside Ilya.

“Hey,” he murmurs to Ilya with a soft smile as their eyes meet and sets his tote down between their chairs.

Ilya’s face breaks into a warm smile of his own and responds in a quiet tone to match, “Hello. You are feeling well today?”

Shane nods, “Yeah. I think I’m past the worst of the morning sickness at least. I’m keeping all my food down finally so you can quit asking if I’m eating enough now.”

Ilya’s smile widens at this news, “Good. Bird food you eat is barely enough as is. Russian babies need more robust diet.”

Shane rolls his eyes and Ilya laughs before he feels eyes on him and is drawn out of the bubble he and Shane were in. Wyatt and Evan Dykstra, who had been passing by, were both frozen with inquisitive looks as they watched the exchange. He shifts his gaze away from them to find Troy watching him from his position across the deck with wide eyes and mouthing, “Oh fuck.”

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Drop your Hollanov recs in the comments? Most of my subscriptions have stalled, unfortunately.

“What the fuck, Cap?” Dykstra asks as he takes the seat Shane had recently abandoned to take pictures of the twins at one of the water slides.

“Yeah. What exactly did you mean “Russian babies”?” Wyatt adds as he leans forward. Troy quickly joins the group taking up the space next to Wyatt at the same time Bood joins the impromptu team huddle happening.

“What’s going on, guys?” Bood questions with a raised brow, “It looks very serious over here.”

“We’re waiting on Roz to answer that question, actually,” Dykstra informs him as he leans in with his elbows on his knees.

Troy gives Ilya a sympathetic look though he’s also clearly still reeling from the same realization Dykstra and Hayes are having. Ilya takes a deep breath as he contemplates trying to brush the whole thing off or just put everything out in the open.

“Whatever it is, you can tell us,” Troy offers reassuringly.

Ilya pushes out the breath he was holding, “Shane’s baby is mine,” and buries his face in his hands with his elbows resting on his knees.

Bood and Dykstra’s eyes grow almost comically wide as Hayes whisper-shouts, “Oh my god!” Troy blows out a long breath as he takes in the confirmation of his suspicions.

“Cap,” Bood sighs heavily as he shakes his head and looks around as if words will appear in the air for him to grasp at, “That’s... Wow.”

Dykstra snaps his fingers, “Is this why you and Cliff are all fucked up? And that bruise?” He studies Ilya closely waiting for answers.

All Ilya can manage is an attempt at nodding while refusing to remove his head from his hands.

“This is fucked,” Dykstra mutters and straightens in the chair, “No wonder Cliff’s so pissed. They don’t have Bro Code in Russia?”

“Fuck off with that,” Troy snaps in Ilya’s defense.

“He kind of has a point,” Boon shrugs as he scratches the back of his neck, “I mean it’s pretty obvious to me Cliff still has a thing for him. That’s got to be a boundary, right?”

Wyatt waves a hand through the air as if shoving the notion away, “Nah, Man. They haven’t been together in years and no one gets dibs on another person for any reason. That’s toxic.”

“Exactly,” Troy nods once firmly, “We don’t need that type of shit.”

Dykstra shakes his head as he stands, “All I’m saying is that if you can’t trust someone off the ice, you sure as shit can’t trust them on it.” Wyatt stops Troy from standing and arguing with a hand on his shoulder and single shake of his head as Dykstra turns to leave the group, “I feel bad for Cliff in all this.”

Boon shakes his head and looks to the ground for a moment before sighing, “I don’t know what exactly is right here, Man. I do know this shit cost us a cup, though, and that’s not cool.” He turns and follows Dykstra back out into the yard.

“Listen,” Wyatt says in his best dad voice as he puts a hand on Ilya’s shoulder and gently shakes him to sit up straight. Ilya takes a deep breath as he pulls his head from his hands and looks to Wyatt and Troy beside him. “Ignore that toxic alpha bullshit. They aren’t and weren’t ever mates. No one has any claim over Shane. Cliff can and will get over it.”

“You didn’t do anything wrong,” Troy adds over Wyatt’s shoulder fixing Ilya with a steady gaze, “We’re happy, if you’re happy. I’m guessing you are based on the goofy smile you had talking to him, too.”

Troy offers a lopsided grin and Ilya chuckles softly, “I am.”

Wyatt nods and smiles warmly at him as he pats Ilya’s shoulder, “Good. Being a father is one of the best things that can happen to you. It’s worth a lot more than winning a cup. Which we’re, unfortunately, never going to do if you and Cliff can’t work this out.” He sighs and shakes his head, “It’s going to be hard, but it’s not impossible. If the two of you can figure it out the rift in the team that just opened up around us will close too.”

“Fuck,” Ilya groans as he leans back against the chair and closes his eyes.

Chapter 14

Ilya looks cartoonishly oversized trying to fold his bulky frame into the small waiting room chairs and Shane has to fight back a laugh at the sight. He peeks over to see him checking the Stanley Cup finals score as he mutters to himself in what sounds like annoyed Russian. “You are sure we will know gender today?” Ilya asks as he glances up from the phone screen at Shane.

Shane nods, “I’m sure. I could’ve found out with a blood test weeks ago, but I thought you’d like to be here when I got the results so. It’s super clear on these 20 week ultrasounds.”

Ilya smiles fondly and places a large, warm hand on Shane’s knee, “Thank you, Krasivyy.” Shane blushes lightly at the Russian pet-name he’s become accustomed to.

“Hollander,” the sonography tech calls from the doorway. Shane and Ilya follow her down the long hallway to the sonography room she stops beside and gestures for them to enter. Shane takes a seat on the raised exam table and Ilya once again tries to fold himself into a too small plastic chair at its side. Shane leans back against the elevated end of the table and pulls his shirt up to expose his ever growing bump.

“You know the drill,” the older woman smiles as she tucks the paper blanket into the top of Shane’s shorts, “This might be a bit cold.” She preps the ultrasound wand with the gel and then presses it to his lower abdomen. She hums quietly to herself as she moves the wand around while watching the screen. After a moment she pauses her hand and announces, “And there’s baby.”

As soon as the words have left her mouth, Shane feels Ilya stand next to him and crowd the exam table. There on the small screen in front of them is a perfectly recognizable baby. Shane hears Ilya’s breath catch as the tech clicks a button and a steady whooshing fills the room, “And this is baby’s heartbeat. Strong. Baby looks and sounds very healthy.”

Shane looks to his side and studies the awestruck look on Ilya’s face as he stares at the screen wide eyed. He smiles softly at the sight and without thinking reaches out to take Ilya’s hand in his. When he squeezes it gently, Ilya’s gaze turns to him full of wonder and the beginnings of tears building in the corners.

“Our baby,” Ilya whispers as he slowly pulls his gaze from Shane’s face and back to the screen where the tech is taking measurements and clicking away while moving the wand around on Shane’s stomach.

“Do you want to know what you’re having?” She pauses to ask before moving the wand further.

“Yes,” Shane answers at the same time Ilya chokes out, “Please” in a wrecked rasp.

The tech smiles warmly at them both and goes back to her work. “Looks like this is a healthy baby girl. Congratulations. I’ll just clean you up and print a few pictures for you to take home

then we're all done."

She quickly wipes the gel from Shane's stomach with the paper blanket and tosses it in the trash before pulling the sheet of ultrasound prints from the machine. "Here you go," she says as she hands them to Ilya and he mumbles his thanks while staring intently at one of two with a perfect silhouette of the side of their baby's head.

Shane squeezes his hand again to bring Ilya out of his daze once he's adjusted his clothes and sitting up. "It's time to go," he laughs softly as he steps down from the exam table, "Can I see?"

Ilya nods, "Da. Of course," as he passes the strip to Shane and they leave the room together.

"Good," Shane comments with a smile as they make their way out of the doctor's office, "She printed two of the best one so we can cut the top one off for you to take with you."

"Thank you," Ilya murmurs, "I would like that."

Shane asks, "Do you have any names in mind? I hadn't really thought of any for a girl." He looks to Ilya holding the door to the parking lot open for him.

After a moment of walking in silence, Ilya gives him an uncertain look but keeps the small smile on his lips. "I do not know," he speaks slowly, his voice still sounding as if he's teetering on the edge of sobbing, "But I do like...Irina. Was my mother's name."

Shane's expression softens further as he takes Ilya in. He makes note of Ilya using the word was, not is, to describe his mother's name. They hadn't discussed his family much beyond knowing his father had died in the last year and he didn't speak to his brother anymore. If that was his mother's the she must've passed as well. "I think that's a beautiful name, Ilya," Shane replies as they stop beside Ilya's car. He reaches up to gently wipe away a tear that had escaped onto Ilya's cheek, "We can name her after your mother, if you'd like."

His words seemed to break the thread holding Ilya together in that moment and Shane was suddenly engulfed in a crushing embrace. "Thank you," Ilya whispers against his neck. Shane feels his hot tears on his skin and Ilya's chest quake against him as he fought to stop the sob desperately trying to rip out of him. Shane slowly wraps his arms around the Alpha and brushes the fingers of one hand through his curls at the back of his head to soothe him.

The walking Calvin Klein ad of an alpha Shane met at Le Ciel all those months ago was not supposed to be making him feel this way. This was just a physical relationship that was turning into coparenting in about 4 months. Nothing more. So why did Shane's heart soar when he smiled during the ultrasound and feel like it was breaking while he quietly cried in his arms in this parking lot.

Chapter 15

"I've got it, Mom," Shane calls out when he hears the doorbell as he passes through the living room of his parents' lake house.

Yuna shouts back, "Ok, sweetie. It should be Cliff. I'll get the kids," while stepping back through the French doors to their back patio.

Shane pulls the door open to find Cliff as Yuna suspected. "Hey. The kids are out back," he greets while moving aside to let Cliff in, "Mom is getting them together right now."

Cliff nods while walking through the door and past Shane into the house, "Hopefully they aren't giving her too much trouble this time," he chuckles.

"They probably are," Shane sighs. He passes Cliff and leads the way through the living area and dining room to the patio doors.

Cliff clears his throat, "Uh, you look nice. Is it...easier this time?" Shane glances over to him from where he's watching the soaked twins run away from his parents desperately trying to catch them with towels through the glass doors.

"It is," he answers after a beat and looks down at his hands absently rubbing the swell of his stomach. At seven months, the bump was prominent and a couple of small fresh stretch marks peeked out where his shirt rode up with movement. "Helps to not be 17 and know what I'm doing, too. The cravings are just as bad, but it isn't as hard to carry around one as it was with two," Shane laughs.

Cliff laughs and nods his head, "I remember those. Ginger Ale and dark chocolate again? You called me while I was in Montreal for training camp crying because you didn't want to wake your mom up to get it for you at 2am and couldn't find your keys to go yourself."

Shane groans at the shared memory but then smiles fondly at a new memory, "Yeah. Same thing this time, but I think Ilya bought every case of ginger ale in Ontario plus a recurring shipment of my favorite chocolate bars. He had to empty out my extra coat closet to store it all. He was worried I'd want it and he wouldn't be around to grab them for me."

Cliff's smile falters watching Shane tell him this while smiling down at his bump. "That's... great," he clears his throat again, "Sounds like he's helping a lot then."

"He takes care of us," Shane murmurs to the bump before lifting his gaze back to Cliff, "I know you hate him right now, but he's a good person. The twins don't understand why they don't see him anymore either. They've been asking me why he doesn't come play when they come to Ottawa with you anymore. I just tell them he's busy or that you want them to yourself while you're on summer break."

Cliff shifts his feet and looks past Shane out the windows to the twins being dried off by their grandparents. "They ask me, too," he admits after a long moment, "I still don't want to be

around him. I don't forgive him."

"There is nothing to forgive, Cliff," Shane sighs and turns his back to him as he faces the French doors fully, "We've talked about this over and over again."

"I mean," Cliff tries to shift directions in the conversation, "I can understand if you want him to be around when the twins are home. You've got stuff going on and you're busy." He scratches the back of his neck and moves his eyes back to Shane, "Are you two...serious now?"

Shane turns back to face him with his frustration clearly written on his features, "No. We aren't anything but coparents. How gracious of you to give me permission to have my own children around someone who is a pretty big part of my life now, though. Thank you so much." Sarcasm drips from the words like venom as he speaks. Shane pushes open the door and walks out onto the patio toward his parents and children leaving Cliff behind.

"Dad's here. Time to say goodbye to Grandma and Grandpa," Shane announces to the twins' excited squeals.

"Roz!" Hana and Hank cheer as Shane lets Ilya into the apartment. They dash past their father and into Ilya's arms where he crouches in the entryway to catch them.

"Little Marleys!" Ilya laughs as Hana hugs his neck and Hank squeezes his waist both refusing to take turns to greet him, "I have missed you, Solnyshki."

Ilya looks up to find Shane watching the interaction with a soft smile and absently rubbing his round stomach. He smiles back at him as he gives the twins one more squeeze before wrestling himself free of their grasps and straightening back to his full height. Once the children run back down the hall to the living area, he crosses the space to Shane and kisses his forehead, "Have missed you, too, Kotenok. You have been good? Malyshka is not making you sick?"

Shane nods, "I'm fine. I haven't been sick at all lately. What do those words mean?"

"What words?" Ilya asks with a coy grin and Shane pinches his bicep. "Okay. Fine. Fine. Do not attack me, Kotenok," Ilya relents, "Solnyshki is like 'little sunshines'. Malyshka is baby girl."

"And the other one? What do you keep calling me?" Shane presses after trying to shape his mouth around the other Russian words.

A mischievous grin takes over Ilya's face, "Ah. This one is secret. Just for me." He cuts Shane's protest off as he moves past him further into the apartment, "What did solnyshki pick for dinner?"

Shane grumbles in complaint to himself as he follows Ilya past the kitchen and into the living room where the twins are building block towers on the circular rug covering the hardwood

floor. "They want pizza and it's getting close to their bedtime so I already ordered it. Hope you aren't picky," Shane answers.

"Am not. Whatever you like is fine," Ilya assures while moving to join the twins on the floor. Shane watches over the back of the couch as the twins begin rapidly filling Ilya in on the storyline of their play and directing how he should participate.

Once the pizza box is empty and the twins' eyes are heavy with sleep, Shane directs them to brush their teeth and begins gathering up their plates. Ilya silently moves to tidy the living room and leaves him to his work in the kitchen.

"You didn't have to do that," Shane sighs when he returns to find the space neatly organized the way he likes, "They can clean up after themselves, you know."

Ilya waves a dismissive hand as he straightens up from sliding the box of blocks under the coffee table, "Is fine. Will make bedtime easier for you."

"Thank you," Shane murmurs with a soft smile that the alpha easily returns. When he hears the twins calling out to tell him they're done brushing he starts down the hall, calling to Ilya over his shoulder, "The boxes are already in the spare room. You can get started while I get them in bed if you'd like."

After no less than four goodnight kisses for each twin and an apparently urgent sip of water for Hank, Shane steps back into the hallway. He checks that each door is cracked just the right amount before wandering back toward the living room toward the stream of light spilling from the open spare room door. Shane pauses in the doorway to observe Ilya sitting cross legged in the floor battling with the half put together crib and an allen wrench. The oversized man mutters to himself in irritated sounding Russian while trying to shove unruly curls out of his face without letting go of the crib or tool. When a soft giggle escapes him at the sight, Ilya freezes and snaps his head to the side to look at him.

"You think is funny?" Ilya complains with an eyebrow cocked.

Shane nods and laughs openly now though a light pink flush dusts his cheeks from being caught not only watching but giggling like a teenager, "I do, actually. Have you considered maybe not trying to juggle in the middle of building? Or getting a third hand?" He meanders all the way into the room and sits down in the rocker Ilya had managed to already finish putting together.

"I am very good with these two hands. You have not complained before," Ilya smirks and wiggles his eyebrows suggestively, quickly jumping at the opportunity to get a reaction out of the omega. It works. Shane feels his cheeks heat and the light flush underneath his freckles darkens.

Before Shane can admonish Ilya for the innuendo he's cut off by a sharp jab to his side and lets out a soft "oof" while wincing and moving his hand over the spot. Ilya is beside him in an instant, leaning over Shane with hands held out in front of him unsure of where to go. "You are hurt?" The alpha asks with obvious concern in his voice and on his features, "Is malyshka okay?"

Shane hurries to calm him by releasing soothing pheromones and giving Ilya a reassuring smile. “No, I’m fine. She’s fine,” he huffs a laugh, “More than fine really. Her kicks have gotten stronger is all.”

“You did not look like that last time I see her kick,” Ilya argues gently as if he’s deciding to believe Shane or not.

Shane rolls his eyes, “Because she didn’t kick that hard then. I promise we’re fine.” He grabs one of Ilya’s hands and tugs at him while gesturing for him to sit with the other. “See,” he continues as Ilya kneels on the floor beside him and Shane places one of the Alpha’s large hands over the swell of his stomach, “Just her kicking.”

Ilya’s face flickers with several emotions as he feels their baby’s feet thump against Shane’s bump. “Very strong,” he finally agrees in a soft rasp, “Is not like before.” There’s something in Ilya’s blue eyes that Shane can’t quite put a name to when the man turns his gaze up to his face. Between the warm look, Ilya’s long fingers splayed across his abdomen and the nursery coming together around them, the domesticity of it all is almost too much for Shane to bear.

“It’s getting late,” he interrupts the peaceful silence and shifts in his seat, “You should finish this up so we can get some sleep.”

Ilya slowly pulls his hand away and nods before shifting to stand, “Da. I will finish this. Go get some rest, Krasivyy.” When Shane opens his mouth to argue that he can stay a yawn escapes and Ilya chuckles, “Go. I have this.”

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Fun fact: Good Charlotte was the inspo for the title of this fic. And some of the lyrics did, in fact, influence the vibe. Enjoy!

The room was still just as divided as it had been since the beginning of the summer break. Cliff gave him the cold shoulder or avoided his locker all together when Ilya was at his own beside it this entire first month of training camp. The tension between those that were supportive of Ilya and the near half that didn't even know the full situation and seemed to decide he was a traitor was especially palpable when Troy asked, "How's Shane?" without bothering to lower his voice.

"He is good," Ilya answers simply, looking to Troy with a cautious smile. Though Ilya had felt such a strong bond with Cliff when he'd first arrived, it had been Troy over the last months that had proven to be his fiercest defender and closest ally. He frequently checked in on Ilya during the offseason and was quick to intervene on the ice when other teammates got more physical than was strictly necessary during practice. Ilya could easily hold his own and had, Boyle had the bruised ribs to prove it, but it was nice to have someone staunchly in his corner.

"Good," Troy smiles back with a quick nod while sitting down on the bench beside Ilya and unlacing his skates, "He's like eight months, right? Halloween baby?"

Ilya nods and chuckles, "Da, eight months now. Malyshka is due October 28. She is very strong. He says she will break his rib soon with kicks." He pulls his phone from his locker and holds it out so they can both see it as he unlocks the screen and goes to his gallery. Troy leans toward him and Wyatt joins them with a towel wrapped around his waist, leaning over Troy's other shoulder. Ilya presses play.

His screen fills with Shane's tired face and then his hand quickly covering the lens, "Not my face, Asshole. I look awful," as he shoves the camera away while Ilya laughs and moves to focus on Shane's exposed rounded stomach, "Is not true, Krasivyy." The recording quakes a bit as Ilya's position shifts when he presses a flat palm near Shane's belly button then levels out. After a moment, the camera captures a barely noticeable flutter of movement across the skin and a very visible stretch at the place where Ilya had now pulled his hand away. Shane's stomach bounces with the force and another quickly follows. "Malyshka is very strong like her Papa," the Ilya on the phone announces from behind the camera as it moves closer to Shane's stomach until the screen goes black followed by the audible smacking of lips in a wet kiss on the cheek and Shane wailing, "Gross! Don't get your spit on my face!" Ilya's loud recorded laughter is cut off as the video ends.

“Wow,” Troy looks to Ilya wide eyed as Wyatt lets out a slow whistle, “I did not know babies could kick that hard. He might be right about his ribs.” Wyatt pats Troy’s shoulder and nods sagely, “Watching Lisa’s pregnancy and listening to her stories from work gives me nightmares. It’s amazing what omega bodies can do. Shit does not seem real.”

“Can you ladies not read? This is a men’s locker room,” Boyle snipes from across the room while pulling on his shirt.

“Fuck off or I’ll make your face match those ribs,” Troy snarls in a dangerous tone. Wyatt tightens his grip on the other man’s shoulder to keep him in place.

“He is not worth it,” Ilya dismisses in a bored affect, “No one gives a shit what fifteenth best player on team has to say.”

“Fuck you, Rozanov,” Boyle hurls back, “Put a muzzle on your bitch of a guard dog.”

“You want to say that shit again,” Troy snaps as he gets to his feet brushing Wyatt off.

Ilya quickly follows him up and across the room, moving between the two as they bare teeth and growl at one another. Wyatt reappears at Troy’s side after rushing to pull on his boxers. “Come on, guys. We’re a fucking team. This shit needs to stop,” he tries to calm the escalating scene unfolding.

“Nah, man. We were a team until this backstabbing motherfucker fucked it up for some easy pussy,” Boyle spits as he nods toward Ilya. His next words are cut off by the sickening crack of Ilya’s fist connecting with his nose before he lands on the floor with Ilya standing over him.

Ilya yanks the dazed man up by the front of his shirt, Boyle’s own blood staining the white fabric as it pours from his nose and rubs off of Ilya’s knuckles pressed tightly against it. “Don’t fucking talk about him like that,” Ilya growls through bared teeth once he has him at eye level, “Say what you want about me. All of you,” he makes a broad gesture with his free hand to the crowd around them, “Talk about me how you like but don’t ever mention Shane!” He throws Boyle back to the floor, “Any of you fuckers have something to say?”

He looks around the room at the mix of concerned and angry faces but no one speaks. As he moves to grab his bag and leave, he makes eye contact with Cliff standing in the doorway between the lockers and showers. Tightening his grip on his bag, he storms out of the locker room.

Chapter 17

Harris, being ever the diplomatic member of the Centaur family, invited the entire team to a Halloween party at his family orchard the weekend before the holiday so those with kids wouldn't miss out. Troy had tried to talk him out of inviting everyone, but Harris wasn't having it and insisted the team needed to get it together and stop being a bunch of knotheads. He'd also made it abundantly clear that any nonsense on his family's property would be handled accordingly. Harris solidified his plan by separately cornering Cliff and Ilya to have them swear to enforce his rules.

The event barn was decked out in true Harris fashion with orange and purple string lights, fake spider webs, and ghosts hung from the rafters. Hand carved jack-o'-lanterns were scattered around the space, a cemetery backdrop set up for photos, and cheesy Halloween music filling the air. He even had a rack of miscellaneous costumes by the door to bully anyone who hadn't stuck to his dress code into wearing.

"This is amazing, Babe," Troy compliments as he looks around, "You really went all out."

Harris smiles brightly at the compliment, "It is my favorite holiday. Love the costume, by the way."

Troy smiles back and tips the cowboy hat he wore, "I like yours, too," and kisses Harris on the cheek. Harris preens at that and shimmies so that his sparkling wings catch the light just right. He gives Troy a quick kiss in return before flitting over to a group of WAGS and other team staff to chat.

"Oh my god," Lisa Hayes gasps when her gaze flicks over Caitlin Dykstra's butterfly wing toward the door. Caitlin, Gen, Rebecca, and Selena Chouinard all give her confused looks and she simply points past them with her eyes wide. The group turns to see Ilya in his gladiator costume that leaves very little to the imagination. Leather straps cross his well defined bare chest attached to a matching leather shoulder guard on his right side. His chiseled abs and beginnings of his Adonis belt as well as his toned legs are also on full display; the outfit is completed with only a short leather strip sort of skirt with equally short modesty lining and classic Roman sandals.

"Jesus," Gen mumbles as they all gawk. "Who let Achilles out of the museum?" Rebecca adds in a stage whisper. Selena chimes in with muttered rapid Québécois French and dramatically fans herself with one of Caitlin's wings.

"Christ, Roz!" Wyatt chirps with a faux offended look on his face starring his wife who hadn't noticed him approaching the group, "Are you trying to take all of our wives home? Have some decency!"

Ilya laughs loudly, "Maybe fill out Superman costume better and Wonder Woman will not look at me!"

Wyatt flips him off while laughing and wrapping an arm around a furiously blushing Lisa as all the other women quickly pull their attention anywhere else also flushing various shades of pink and red at being caught staring.

“You’re staring again,” Troy grumbles at Harris while tightening his arm around the other man’s waist.

“It’s not my fault he looks like that!” Harris squawks while gesturing wildly at Ilya in front of them, “You get a costume like that and I’ll drool over you, too!”

“Sorry,” Ilya chuckles with an apologetic smile to Troy over the top of his hard cider. “I will send you link to shop,” he adds winking at Harris.

Troy starts to gripe again but is cut off by Ilya’s phone ringing. He pulls it free from where he had tucked it into one of the straps across his chest and sees that it’s Shane calling.

“Hello, Kotenok,” he speaks into the phone with a soft smile. Troy and Harris stop chatting amongst themselves when they notice Ilya’s expression quickly slipping. “Now?” Ilya asks, his voice gone tight with worry, “Okay. Okay. Will be alright, Kotenok. Yes. I am coming.”

“Is something wrong?” Harris asks with a worried frown as Ilya sets his drink down on the table beside them and frantically taps at his phone.

“Shane is in labor,” Ilya answers before muttering in furious Russian at his phone, “Fuck! I took Uber here and do not have time to wait for ride to my car.”

Harris nods quickly, “Ok. We’ve got this! Just hold on one second,” and takes off across the room. He’s back to the now fully panicking Ilya within minutes, Cliff dressed as Maverick from Top Gun in tow.

“Fairy God-Omega always delivers,” Harris announces while flourishing his wand, “Cliff drove here and he hasn’t been drinking. He’ll take you. Now go! Shane’s waiting.”

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

I think we're getting to the end. Maybe a couple more chapters to go.

The car ride to Montreal feels impossibly slow even though Cliff has been speeding the entire time. Aside from a quick call from Yuna on Shane's phone letting Ilya know what hospital and floor they were on, it had been silent. Ilya shifts nervously in his seat while constantly checking his phone for any updates.

Cliff suddenly speaks, "He's ok. It just happens a little earlier than they say it will sometimes." He glances at Ilya before looking back at the road, "I freaked out, too."

"I do not want to miss," Ilya replies quietly while staring hard out the window, "He should not be alone."

"He won't be," Cliff tries to reassure him, "Yuna is there and they would have called if he started pushing. Trust me. I got that call during a home game. Destroyed my skates running out of the arena in them. We're only twenty minutes out now."

Ilya takes in a deep breath and slowly pushes it out, "Okay."

The looks Ilya had gotten from hospital staff while asking for Shane's room number finally make sense when Shane's brows almost disappear into his hairline as he shouts, "What the fuck are you wearing?"

Ilya freezes in the doorway and looks down at himself then back to Shane who wears a bright blush across his face. "Was at costume party when you called," he explains sheepishly.

Shane groans and throws his head back against the pillows. "You cannot meet our daughter like that. Can you please bring him some scrubs or something?" He looks to the nurse beside him pleadingly then scowls when he notices the way she's staring at Ilya. "Excuse me," he bites out finally drawing her attention away from Ilya's body, "Scrubs for him? Please?" The nurse snaps to attention and rushes out an apology promising to bring something right away before hurrying out of the room with her eyes on the floor.

"So feisty, Kotonok," Ilya comments fondly with a bemused smirk as he stands at Shane's bedside and brushes the black strands off the omega's forehead with gentle fingertips, "You are okay?"

Shane grumbles about lacking professionalism then sighs and relaxes back against his pillows, “Yes. We’re both doing good. They said I was dilated to a seven when they checked after we got here so I was still able to get the epidural. They’ll come check me again soon.” He notices Ilya’s face doing something complicated trying to process what he said so he adds, “It just means everything is good and we’re waiting now.”

Ilya nods slowly and murmurs, “I am glad I made it in time. Could not have you have malyshka all alone,” while taking Shane’s hand carefully in his. Shane smiles softly up at him and gently squeezes his hand.

“One more push, Shane, on my count,” the doctor instructs from her stool between the omega’s legs, “You’ve got this.”

Shane tightens his grip on Ilya’s hand and groans through clenched teeth when the doctor finishes her count and signals for him to push again. A sharp cry pierces the air as he collapses back against the hospital bed and pants.

“Perfect baby girl,” the doctor announces as she works with the nurses to pass the newborn off, “Great job, Shane. Congratulations!”

Ilya’s vision blurs as he blinks tears away and gently squeezes Shane’s hand while watching the nurses moving quickly around the room cleaning up and checking their daughter. “Amazing, Krasivvy,” the alpha praises the omega, “You did so good.” He leans down to kiss Shane’s forehead and gently traces his freckles with his thumb while murmuring to him in soft Russian. “Rest now, da?” Shane nods in agreement as his breathing slowly levels back out.

A nurse approaches them with their newborn daughter bundled in a tiny blanket with an even tinier hat covering her head. When Ilya moves to step away so the nurse can give her to Shane he stops him, “You hold her first. It’s ok.”

Ilya carefully takes the bundle from the nurse and cradles her against his chest. Dark eyes stare up at him and he spots golden hair peeking out from the edges of the hat on her head. His heart has never felt as full as it does in this moment holding his child. He whispers to her in Russian while swaying gently. “Ya tebya lyublu, malyshka,” he tells her before bending down and holding her out for Shane who’s watching them with a tender smile.

“Beautiful,” Shane murmurs when he finally sees her face and Ilya moves her into his waiting arms, “Hello, Irina.” Ilya chokes on a sob at the name. Shane reaches out to him, pulling him in close by his side to try to soothe him. “Thank you,” Ilya rasps as he presses kisses to Shane’s hair while leaning over the side of the bed next to them, “She is everything.”

While Yuna and David visit with Shane and baby Irina, Ilya goes to get coffee and a ginger ale. He finds Cliff in the waiting room with the twins on his way back.

“Roz!” Hana calls out to him when she spots him rounding the corner, “Can we go see our baby sister now?” Hank joins her looking up to him expectantly.

“Not yet, Solnyshki,” Ilya answers with a soft smile setting down the drinks and crouching to their level to ruffle Hank’s hair, “Very soon, though. Grandma and Grandpa are meeting her now and checking on your daddy. We give them time.”

“Ok,” Hana sighs with her bottom lip pushed out in a pout, “Will you tell us about her? Is she really small? Does she cry a lot? Is she pretty?”

Ilya puffs a laugh, “Da. She is very tiny and cries normal amount for new baby.” He blinks away fresh tears and murmurs the next part, “And she is so beautiful. So beautiful. Like you.” Hana puts on a toothy grin at the compliment then gives him a contemplative look when she notices the tears in his eyes. After a moment, she steps forward and hugs him tightly around the neck.

“Thank you, solnyshko,” Ilya smiles softly as he wraps his arms around her small frame returning the warm embrace.

Before Ilya can straighten back up, Hank mumbles while fidgeting with the zipper on his jacket and glances between Ilya and Cliff, “Since you’re Irina’s papa does that make you our papa now, too?”

Ilya freezes at the question and forces himself to keep his facial features neutral. He studies the small boy then flicks his gaze to Cliff also frozen in his seat across the room. When the other alpha doesn’t move to intervene, Ilya looks back to Hank and gestures for him to come closer.

With Hank standing next to Hana, Ilya places a hand on each of their shoulders. “Solnyshki,” he begins in a gentle even tone, “You already have good dad. I am not taking his place.” He lightly squeezes their shoulders and offers a reassuring smile, “No one is replacing your dad.”

The twins nod slowly and Ilya can feel Hank relax under his touch. He pats their shoulders once before stretching back to full height to see Cliff approaching with hands in his pockets wearing an unreadable expression. He pulls a few bills from his wallet and sends the boy and girl to the vending machine on the other side of the space.

Ilya internally braces for whatever is coming as Cliff stops just feet from him. He’s caught off guard when Cliff lifts and drops his shoulders once and blows out a long breath, “Thanks. For that. For being good with them.”

“Is nothing,” Ilya replies after a long moment and shifts on his feet, “Should get back. Shane is waiting for drink.”

“Yeah, of course,” Cliff nods stiffly and steps back, “Hey, uh. Call me when you’re back in Ottawa. I’m gonna leave when Shane’s parents get back out here to the twins so. Congrats.” He holds out a hand in offering between them.

Ilya glances down at the outstretched hand then back to Cliff's face. Finally he extends his own hand and grasps Cliff's in a firm shake while looking the other alpha in the eye, "Da. Thanks." He collects his cup of coffee and Shane's can of ginger ale from the low table beside him and nods once to Cliff before disappearing back down the hall toward Shane's room.

Chapter 19

Shane wakes slowly and stretches his limbs out across the bed like a starfish finding the sheets next to him cold. He frowns as he rubs the sleep from his eyes and sits up to look around his bedroom. His eyes slide across the quiet room to find the pillow beside him still crumpled from Ilya crushing it under his head and chest while he slept and the bassinet beside him empty. He slips out of bed and pulls on Ilya's sweatshirt hanging on the bed post over his thin sleep tank.

Shane wanders from the barely sunlight room down the hall towards the sound of soft murmurs and a cartoon playing low on the tv in the living area. He leans against the hallway entrance with his arms wrapped around himself and watches as Ilya whispers to Irina cradled against his chest while the twins lean against him wrapped in blankets on either side.

Ilya turns his head to look at him when he feels his gaze and smiles warmly. "Good morning, Kotenok," he greets and his smile grows as he notices Shane is wearing the Centaurs sweatshirt he'd worn the day before.

"Morning," Shane murmurs back pushing off of the wall and moving toward the kitchen, "Breakfast?"

"Can we have pancakes?" Hana pops her head up to watch him with an excited smile.

"Of course, baby," Shane answers turning to grab a mixing bowl from the cabinets, "Bananas or strawberries?"

"Both!" the twins shout in unison with their attention turned back to the cartoon on the screen.

Shane nods to himself, moving around the kitchen to collect ingredients and tools and spread them out on the island countertop. Ilya surprises him with an arm sliding around his waist and a kiss to the top of his head while he's standing over the hot pan waiting to flip the first pancakes. For such a huge man, he was alarmingly stealthy at times. "Anything I can do? Malyshka is asleep in her bed again," Ilya says as he releases him and leans against the counter.

"Slice the fruit?" Shane suggests and uses the spatula to point to the knife and cutting board he'd laid out on the island. Ilya nods and goes to the fridge to collect the strawberries. They work around each other in comfortable silence as the smell of pancakes fills the air and the twins gradually become more lively.

The four gather in the chairs on the outside of the island exchanging quiet laughs and listening to the twins babble while eating their strawberry banana topped pancakes.

“You’re going back to Ottawa today?” Shane asks when he stands to collect the used dishes and carry them to the sink.

“Da. Late afternoon practice today and I have already missed too many,” Ilya answers between sips from his coffee mug, “Should leave soon. Still have to pick up Anya from boarding facility.”

Shane nods, keeping his back turned to hide the disappointment written on his face. “Will you be back next weekend?” he forces his voice to stay even.

Ilya sighs heavily from behind him and Shane glances over his shoulder to see his apologetic grimace. Even though Shane knows it’s coming he feels knocked off balance when he answers, “No, we have roadie in the states. Will be gone two weeks. I am sorry, Krasivyy.”

“It’s fine,” Shane insists with a forced shrug as he turns back to the dishes and away from Ilya’s pleading eyes, “It’s your job.”

After the twins say their goodbyes to Ilya and return to their playing in the living room, Shane leans against the wall in the entryway watching him put on his coat and shoes. His fingers absently fiddle with the cuffs of Ilya’s sweatshirt covering his hands. He shifts his gaze to the floor when Ilya’s blue eyes lift to meet his face.

“Kotenok,” Ilya croons at him softly, “Will be okay. Yuna and David will come to help with kids while I am away. You will not be alone long.”

Shane nods once fighting the tears pricking at his eyes. He wasn’t worried about having help with the children. What worried him was the ache in his chest at the thought of the alpha being gone so long. Of Ilya leaving at all. His omega screamed for his alpha to stay. Always. No, that’s wrong. He didn’t even have a claim to Ilya. He wasn’t his. They just shared a child. He knows the immense sadness welling inside him pollutes his scent when Ilya quickly crosses to him and takes Shane’s face gently in his large warm hands.

“Kotenok,” Ilya murmurs as he tilts Shane’s head to look up at him, “What is wrong? Tell me.”

Shane’s lower lip trembles and he bites it to try to stop the tremor when his damp eyes meet Ilya’s searching blues. “I know I’ll have help. I just...I don’t want you to leave,” he finally breaks on a sob as the tears run down his cheeks in hot tracks.

Ilya’s breath catches at the soft admission. “Malysh, I do not want to leave,” he assures the omega as his thumbs brush tears from his freckled cheeks, “I will be with you as soon as I can. Promise.”

Shane closes his eyes leaning into the touch and nods slowly though his instincts plead for him to beg the alpha to stay with him. “You promise?” he whispers and opens his eyes to look at Ilya again.

“Promise,” Ilya repeats before placing a gentle kiss on Shane’s lips and pulling him against his chest in a grounding embrace, “I will come back to you.”

Chapter 20

Halfway through the Centaurs roadie, the crowd filling TD Garden roars around Ilya. He enjoys the challenge of playing his previous team usually, but this game is different. Though things seem to be somewhat better between him and Cliff, the team has not come back together fully. That's evident in the lack of cohesion in his line and the bruised ribs he's playing with after being left open to a rough check during their game in Florida. He still hadn't spoken to Cliff outside of what was necessary for practice and games since returning to Ottawa two weeks after Irina's arrival. The intense animosity between their lockers was gone, but the divide still echoed around them.

As Ilya flies across the ice with the puck in his control, he fights to keep his mind on the game and not think of Shane and Irina back in Montreal. In his distraction, he doesn't see Carmichael rapidly approaching and the lack of his own defensemen anywhere close. When Ilya realizes Carmichael is coming at him faster than he should, he turns to brace for impact a second too late and the world goes black as they crash into each other.

Vaguely he can hear Marleau shouting and St Simon calling for medics.

Ilya's head throbs and the bright light above him burns his eyes when he tries to open them. He hisses as he turns his head to the side and slowly tries opening them again.

"Careful," Cliff warns from the plastic chair against the wall in front of him.

"Where am I?" Ilya croaks and tries to wet his parched mouth and sandpaper throat.

"Mass General," Cliff answers as he stands and presses the nurse call button beside Ilya's bed, "Try not to move around too much. You hit the ice pretty hard. They said you've got a nasty concussion and busted collarbone."

Ilya starts to nod without thinking and winces again. "Okay," he pushes through clenched teeth.

When the nurse comes into the room, Cliff moves toward the door and excuses himself, "I'll be back later."

The next time Ilya opens his eyes he's sure he's dreaming. Shane stands over him illuminated from behind by the glow of city lights outside the window of the dark room. He realizes he is actually awake when he feels Shane's soft palm against his cheek and fingertips ghost across his forehead brushing mangled curls away.

Shane shushes him when he opens his mouth to speak, "My flight landed about an hour ago. Mom has the kids." His deep brown eyes wander over Ilya's face and a frown tugs the

corners of his lips down, "How're you feeling?"

Ilya offers him a soft smile and reaches up with his good hand to capture one of Shane's as it rests lightly on his injured shoulder, "Better now, Krasivyy. You have cured me."

Shane huffs a startled laugh and rolls his eyes though smiling now. "Idiot," he murmurs fondly while squeezing Ilya's hand in his.

"Hey," Ilya chides softly when a fat tear rolls down Shane's cheek and his shoulders tremble, "Do not cry. I am fine. Is only concussion and broken bone. How do you know I am here?" He removes his hand from Shane's to swipe the tear track from the omega's freckled cheek with his thumb and cradles his face in his wide palm.

Shane leans into his touch and closes his eyes, taking a slow breath. "Ok," he whispers back when he opens his eyes again. "My mom called when she saw you go down on tv," he explains, wrapping his fingers around Ilya's wrist and idly rubbing circles at the pulse point, "Then Cliff called and let me know what hospital they brought you to."

Ilya takes in the explanation before getting lost in studying every detail of Shane beside him. The freckles dusted across the sharp line of his nose and high cheek bones holding the majority of his focus before moving to his deep cupid's bow and plump lower lip, his chocolate brown eyes sparkling with unshed tears, the purpling underneath those eyes giving away a lack of sleep, and his slightly shaggy black hair that framed his face and was disheveled as if he'd spent hours carding his hands through it with worry.

"I was so scared," Shane tightens his grip on Ilya's wrist and nuzzles into his palm with eyes closed, "You promised you would come back and then I thought you wouldn't."

"Malysh," Ilya croons caressing the omega's cheek with his thumb, "You break my heart with this sad face. Please." The moment between them is broken before Shane can get out the words his lips had parted to say by the click of the door closing and Cliff clearing his throat.

"Sorry. Didn't know you were here yet," Cliff apologizes as he takes in the intimate scene, "I just came to let you know the team has to fly out early to make our next game. Two of the medical staff are staying to fly back to Ottawa with you when you get discharged in the afternoon."

"Thanks, Cliff," Shane answers for Ilya and Cliff quickly says his goodbyes and shuffles out of the room.

"I'm staying here tonight then I'll fly back with you and drive you home," Shane insists and shakes his head to stop Ilya from arguing when he opens his mouth, "The kids are in Ottawa with my parents anyway and the time I get back won't make a difference."

Ilya thinks he should probably be annoyed as an alpha by being told what to do by an omega he's not mated to, but he can't help finding it both endearing and incredibly attractive when it's Shane.

Shane kisses his palm before finally moving Ilya's hand away from his face and releasing his wrist, "Get some sleep now."

Ilya closes his eyes while Shane gently moves his curls from his brow again all the while pushing calming pheromones into the air around him. A soft rumble builds in Ilya's chest as he begins to be lulled back to sleep. "Ya tebya lyublu," falls from his lips followed by his breathing evening out and the haze of sleep completely taking him back under.

Chapter 21

Shane hums quietly to himself as he moves through Ilya's ridiculously huge house doing all the little chores he had assigned himself. He's instructed Ilya to stay on the couch and not move unless he absolutely has to despite his many protests over the last few days since returning to Ottawa. Shane has even enlisted the twins to be his watch dogs when they're over and Shane is busy working in other rooms. The omega means business and his, no the, alpha is learning the hard way.

The day starts like any other while the twins are with his parents. Shane feeds Irina and gets her ready for the day then repeats the pattern by cooking Ilya breakfast and helping him in the shower. After that, he sets up for his yoga routine in the expansive sun room and has Ilya join in during the lighter stretches then sit with Irina until he's done. Then he arranges Ilya in the living room with an old mp3 loaded with Shane's favorite audiobooks and a collection of puzzles while he gets to work on the rest of his chore list. With Irina down for her nap and Ilya sprawled on the couch, Shane changes into a pair of shorts and one of Ilya's t-shirts that hangs off his shoulders and almost hides the shorts underneath. He then works on swapping the laundry before going to the kitchen to prep lunch.

He's startled while chopping vegetables when he hears the front door swing open and heels clicking sharply against the floors. Shane's blood runs cold when he hears a lilting woman's voice call out, "Ilyusha!" followed by the sound of Ilya scrambling up from the couch and the heel clicks quickening past the kitchen doorway toward the living room. He is frozen to the spot with his knife hovering above the cutting board when he registers two voices speaking in rapid Russian. Ilya's alternating from soothing to annoyed and the woman's from deeply concerned to irritated.

Without another thought, Shane walks out of the kitchen and rounds the corner into the living room where he freezes again at the edge of the room. He finds a tall curvaceous woman with golden bronze skin and her back to him wearing a body hugging mid-thigh black dress, too tall high heels and a neatly styled pile of thick auburn curls on top of her head leaning over Ilya. "Ilyusha," she complains again before she fires off rapid Russian and frets with his sling before touching the purple around his eye. Shane couldn't pick out a single word other than the obvious nickname but his omega's hackles stand on end at the implications of the tone and sight. He doesn't realize he's growling and pouring out hostile pheromones until Ilya leans around the woman to look at him while she straightens and turns to face him as well.

"Who is this?" Shane practically hisses and gestures toward the intruder with the hand he's forgotten he's holding a large knife in.

"Kotenok," Ilya pleads with his hands raising in a gesture meant to show the omega there's no threat as he takes in the look of the seething man watching them from across the space. "This is Sveta. Svetlana. She is friend of mine."

"A friend?" Shane quirks an eyebrow and looks between the two assessing, his sharp gaze flicking to her hand delicately rested on Ilya's shoulder.

Ilya tracks his eyes to where they land and removes Svetlana's hand from its perch trying his best to appease the furious omega. "Yes. From Russia," Svetlana speaks in accented English to Shane, "You will stab me over Ilyusha?" She cocks her head toward the knife Shane has forgotten he's holding with an amused curve to her lips.

"Shit. Sorry," Shane mumbles when he glances down and realizes it's still in his hand from cutting vegetables, quickly lowering his arm to his side, "I was making lunch and..." He trails off as his cheeks turn pink, "I didn't know Ilya was expecting someone."

"Ah. He was not," Svetlana replies with a shrug, "He has not answered phone so I come make sure he is alive. You are Shane, da?" Shane is caught even more off guard by her knowing his name and can only manage to nod.

Svetlana's lips split into a wide smile as she looks between Shane and Ilya, "Is baby here then?"

Chapter 22

Ilya's shoulders shake with loud laughter as Troy's face twists in shock at his retelling of Shane meeting Svetlana while he was recovering from his injuries. Troy slowly shakes his head, "I really hope for your sake that no other omega's have keys to your place."

Ilya replies easily, "Only Sveta and she gave it back before she left. Told me she would not be responsible for my death if Shane was over again."

Troy pushes out a breath and just shakes his head again. "So Shane and the kids went back to Montreal since you're off restrictions?" he follows up while bending to lace up his skates.

"Nyet. They are leaving in the morning. He wanted to come to game tonight. He says was twins, but I know he is still worried," Ilya answers after pulling his jersey over his head.

"Shit. We better win then. And make sure you don't get hurt. I'm not about to disappoint the little Marleys and get killed by your omega in the same night," Troy laughs as he slaps Ilya on the shoulder.

As the third period buzzer rapidly approaches, Ilya takes a pass from Troy as they fly across the ice and fires the puck toward the goal. The hometown crowd erupts when it sails over the goaltender's left shoulder and into the net. Ilya pumps his fist in the air and skates along the boards. His eyes scan the crowd and his smile widens when he spots Shane with Irina in his arms, the twins and his parents beside him. He waves and throws a kiss in their direction causing Shane to blush furiously before skating away.

The interaction is caught on the big screen by the cameras broadcasting the moment to the entire arena.

As the locker room clears out, Cliff sits down on the bench in front of his locker next to Ilya who's pulling his pants back on. "You know," Cliff starts while toweling off his wet hair, "Shane hasn't watched a hockey game that wasn't played by the twins in 5 years."

Ilya pauses putting on his shirt, "I did not know."

Cliff tosses the towel aside and stands to grab jeans from his bag in the locker behind him. "It's pretty big for him to be here tonight," he nods toward Ilya, "He's only ever sent the twins with his parents before."

Ilya takes the information in trying to decipher what the other alpha is getting at. "Okay?" he prompts.

Cliff sighs heavily as he sits back down on the bench once his jeans are buttoned. He looks up at Ilya and gestures to the empty space beside him. Ilya sits and leans with his elbows on his knees turned to look at Cliff.

“I’m trying to say that you must be important to him,” Cliff explains while scratching the back of his neck and glancing toward the ceiling, “Look, Man. It’s obvious there’s something between you that isn’t just coparenting no matter what Shane says. He doesn’t just do these things for anyone and you look at him like he’s the moon. I guess what I’m getting at is, I get it now. Shane was right about me being a knothed. I fucked up letting some childish ideas get in the way of the team dynamic and our friendship.”

Ilya listens intently as Cliff continues, “I was hurt. Not really because of Shane, I realize now, but because you kept me in the dark for almost a year. Thinking of my best friend lying to me or worse not trusting me fucked me up more than anything else. And then I proved why I couldn’t be trusted. It’s not an excuse and I’m going to correct this toxic shit with the guys on the team. I never should’ve let it get as far as it did. It should’ve stayed between us. I just...I just want to tell you I’m sorry. For all of it. I don’t expect you to forgive me now or even soon but can you try to? Eventually?”

Ilya sits with it all for a moment, letting the silence of the otherwise empty locker room stretch between them. When Cliff finally turns his eyes back to Ilya he’s met with his steady gaze. “I can try,” he finally answers with a slow nod, “Not today. Maybe not soon, but I will try. Thank you...for saying this. For what it is worth, I am also sorry for hiding things from you for so long. I just...could not let him go.”

Cliff offers a tight smile and nod in return as he stands and gathers his things, “I get it.” With that, he throws his bag over his shoulder and walks out.

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Mini chapter of Rose and Shane for fun while I work out my next steps <3

“Um, Shane?” Rose calls out as she returns from answering the door while he changed Irina and put her down for a nap.

“Yeah, what is it?” Shane answers as he rounds the corner and meets her in the hallway. His eyes grow wide and his mouth falls open, “Oh. My. God.” Rose holds a bouquet of white lilies and deep red roses in a crystal vase wrapped with a big red satin bow so large he can’t even see her from the shoulders all the way to the top of her head.

“I think it’s a gift from your not so secret admirer,” the red head snorts as he takes it from her hands and carefully carries it to the kitchen island.

“Oooh, there’s a card,” Rose chirps cheerfully as she snatches it out of the lux collection of flowers and quickly jumps out of Shane’s reach when he lunges for it.

She holds it high over her head laughing then lowers it back to eye level and holds Shane away with her other arm stretched out placing her palm firmly against his chest. Rose clears her throat and puts on her best (awful) Russian accent, “Beautiful flowers for most beautiful omega in Canada. See you soon. Ilya.”

When Shane finally snatches the card from her she fakes a gag, “That is disgustingly sweet.”

“Shut up,” Shane mumbles while looking at the card with his face painted a red to rival the roses now adorning his kitchen. He gently places the card back in the bouquet so the note is on display.

“What’s that word?” Rose asks as she points to the Cyrillic letters at the end of “See you soon”.

Shane shrugs still blushing, “Probably one of the names he calls me all the time. He won’t tell me what they mean.”

“So let’s find out,” Rose decides with a wicked grin as she pulls out her phone. She snaps a picture of the word while Shane watches and feeds it into a translating app on her phone. When she doubles over laughing, Shane yanks the phone from her hand to see the app informing them that the word Ilya had written on the card was Russian for kitten.

“Oh my god,” he groans as he feels his entire face go hot with a deep blush. He lightly pushes Rose away as she gasps for air between fits of laughter, “Wrap it up before you wake

my baby, Asshole.” Though there’s no actual heat in his words.

“Sure thing, Kitten,” Rose jabs as she swipes tears from her eyes and slowly settles down trying to catch her breath.

Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Working out an epilogue. May revisit as a series with snippets of their life after this moment. Thanks for reading!

Cliff followed through on his promise to correct the toxic behavior he allowed on the team before he pulled his head out of his ass. He'd even gone to Wiebe to discuss Boyle's particularly bad behavior and by mid-March he was traded to Las Vegas. Good riddance. Cliff's only regret for the man was not knocking his teeth out after Ilya broke his nose. Dykstra apologized for helping the problem spread by sharing information that wasn't his and Boodram expressed his regrets for letting things fester even though his own qualm was with their playoff loss caused by the initial lack of cohesion.

The team was functional again even if several friendships were still on the mend and Cliff and Ilya weren't fully back to their previous brotherly relationship. Troy and Ilya maintained their closer than ever bond through it all and could be found together, sometimes with Cliff, at all the gatherings Wyatt hosted. Now, in mid-June they prepared for game seven of the Stanley Cup finals against Montreal.

"The fucking cup is ours!" Ilya shouted with a fist raised in the air to end his pre-game speech to cheers and whistles from the Centaurs crowding the locker room around him.

Shane fidgets with the sleeve of Ilya's home jersey while bouncing Irina on his knee. Rose sits to the right of him chatting happily with Svetlana and his parents sit to his left; Hana in David's lap and Hank in Yuna's. Bell Center buzzes with anticipation around them.

His cheeks tint pink beneath his freckles and a soft smile tugs at his lips when Ilya skates out for the final face off and looks to them in the crowd. Shane holds Irina's hand up and waves it back at Ilya as he throws them a kiss before bending to wait for the puck drop.

"They've got this," Yuna leans over, "It's their year."

"Whatever you say, Mom," Shane huffs a laugh while tracking Ilya across the ice below. He bites his lips and worries it between his teeth. The clock is ticking down and the Metros have the puck.

"Come on," Shane mutters to himself, fist clenched at his side, sliding to the edge of his seat and leaning in when Ilya steals the puck from Hayden. He watches Ilya and the other Centaurs charge down the ice toward the Metros' goal. Passing the puck between Troy, Cliff

and back to Ilya as they go evading all of Montreal's attempts to get the puck back in their control.

"Davay!" Svetlana shouts as she gets to her feet; eyes fixed on the action.

Ilya gets the final pass from Cliff and launches the puck at the net. Shane feels like the world around him freezes as he watches the puck slide under the goaltender before he can drop his pad in its path then it erupts back to life.

"Yes!" he cheers jumping to his feet with Irina clutched tightly to his chest as the final buzzer sounds and the arena roars. He can see Ilya throw his helmet and shout toward the rafters before he's engulfed by the entire Centaurs team.

Ilya skates around the arena with the Stanley Cup held high over his head and a huge smile splitting his sweat drenched face. He passes it off to Cliff and captures Troy in another hug. "We fucking did it!" Troy bellows when they release each other and he spots Harris at the boards. Ilya nods for him to go and skates to a spot a little further down the boards, he spots Shane easily and beckons for him to come down.

"Now! All of you!" Ilya yells through cupped hands when Shane goes bright red and shakes his head. He watches with a wide smile as Rose and Svetlana tug Shane away from his seat and gently push him to start down the stairs ahead of them with Yuna, David and the twins in tow behind them.

"Come on, Kotenok," Ilya chuckles as he takes Irina from Shane's arms and holds her on his right hip while offering Shane his left to help him over the boards. Once Shane is on the ice, Ilya pulls him into his chest and buries his face in the omega's hair breathing him in.

"You did it," Shane murmurs tilting his head back to look up at Ilya and resting his hand on the alpha's chest.

"Da. Good luck charms were here," Ilya smiles down at him before kissing his forehead and then Irina's cheek. Svetlana and Ilya share a look over Shane's head. The woman nods imperceptibly before coming around to collect Irina and ushering their small group toward Cliff not far away.

"Krasivyy," Ilya begins softly and reaches behind his neck to unclasp the golden chain carrying his mother's cross he always wears tucked safely under his uniform, "I have something important to ask." Shane's eyes widen when he watches the alpha slide a glittering white gold band with a single diamond off the chain before fastening it back around his neck.

"Ilya," Shane's voice shakes and his hands cover his mouth in shock.

Ilya slowly lowers himself to one knee on the ice beneath them as the rest of his team celebrates with their families around them. Shane's parents, Rose, Svetlana holding Irina, the twins and Cliff watching from their place to the side.

“Marry me?” Ilya asks while looking up at Shane with sparkling blue eyes and a warm smile on his lips, “I want to be good man and good mate for you, Shane. Forever.”

Shane chokes on a sob as tears fill his brown eyes looking down at Ilya and the beautiful ring held up between them. He slowly pulls his trembling left hand from his mouth and holds it out to Ilya while nodding emphatically and whispering, “Yes.”

Ilya carefully slips the ring on Shane, kissing the omega’s ring finger before looking up at him again, “Is what you want?”

“I want,” Shane cries, the tears slipping freely down his cheeks now, “Now get up here and kiss me, you idiot!”

Ilya laughs as he straightens himself back to full height and Shane flings his arms over his shoulders pulling him into a warm embrace and passionate kiss. He wraps his arms around the smaller man’s waist and lifts him off the ground. Ilya kisses him deeply as he spins them around on the ice tasting Shane’s tears as they mingle with his own. The cheers of the Centaurs and stands still full of fans engulfing them as their engagement broadcasts on the big screen overhead.

“My Omega, ya tebya lyublu,” Ilya murmurs against Shane’s lips.

“I love you, too, My Alpha,” Shane whispers back.

Chapter 25: Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much for enjoying my story as much as I did! Can't believe my first fic ever already has almost 6,000 hits within a week. It's been fun ♥

4 years later

"Ilya," Shane whines and throws his head back against the pillow, "I need to make breakfast and get the kids ready for school. Let me up!"

"I just need a little, Shanya, please," Ilya groans back as he moves over Shane's body lying in bed and kisses him gently.

"Ilya," Shane warns softly, "five minutes and that's it. And you have to do Irina's hair for me."

"Deal," Ilya breaks into a wide smile and kisses his omega on the lips again before trailing more back down Shane's body, "Is very important I start day this way."

Shane sighs but smiles fondly down at Ilya as he places gentle kisses across the swell of his stomach. He tangles the fingers of his left hand in Ilya's curls and lightly scratches his alpha's scalp while he murmurs to the bump in quiet Russian the same as he did every morning. Before Ilya's allotted five minutes is up, a loud wail cuts through the serenity of their bedroom followed by another.

"That'll be your boys," Shane announces as Ilya sits up and helps him to do the same; it wasn't easy for Shane to do alone anymore at seven months very pregnant. "I'm going downstairs to start breakfast. Have fun with them," he grins and kisses the top of Ilya's head as he stands.

"Is always fun taking care of our children," Ilya hums lifting himself off the bed and following Shane out of the room. While Shane waddles to the stairs, Ilya turns the opposite direction and wanders further down the hall toward the sound of crying.

"What is wrong, my mal'chiki?" Ilya croons as he opens the door closest to the master and steps inside. Two sets of blue eyes under unruly dark curls stare back at him from where the twin eighteen month olds stand in their cribs.

"Papa!" the twin on the right in a blue bear themed pajama set cheers with hands outstretched to Ilya, "Up!"

“Papa, me!” the twin on his left in green hockey themed pajamas argues with a pout also reaching for Ilya.

Ilya smiles warmly at both, crossing the room and collecting each from their cribs and squeezing them tight to his body in a hug. “Good morning, Maxim,” he hums kissing the twin in green on the forehead. “Good morning, Luka,” he kisses the cheek of the twin in blue.

“Eat, Papa,” Maxim complains and Luka nods, “Eat!” Ilya laughs and turns to the door carrying both twins, “Of course. Daddy is making breakfast now let’s go see what it is.”

“I can’t believe you’re about to have six kids,” Rose huffs with a shake of her head while Shane holds her palm to his bump so she can feel the kicks, “You’re actually insane.”

Shane rolls his eyes and laughs with a shrug, “I said I wanted a big family so he gave it to me. I can’t believe you and Svetlana aren’t having any.”

Rose waggles her eyebrows suggestively and smirks, “Oh I bet he did, Kitten.”

Shane smacks her leg and mutters, “God. Just shut up. PLEASE,” with a bright blush across his cheeks.

“Anyway,” Rose continues, “Your kids are plenty for us. Svet says,” she clears her throat and puts on her barely improved Russian accent, “Little Ilyusha are enough work.” As if to prove her point, Maxim ran barefoot through the dining room with Svetlana’s phone in hand and Luka following close behind; both giggling and smiling like they were playing the best game in the world. Svetlana appeared not long after, chasing behind them and pleading, “Maxy! Luki! Please give Auntie Svet her phone!”

Rose and Shane had watched the whole thing in stunned silence and burst into laughs once they’re alone at the dining table again. “Your husband is going to have to buy my wife a second phone if they make it to the bathroom again,” Rose warns while her shoulders shake with laughter.

End Notes

I've read a lot of Hollanov, like an embarrassing amount a lot, and hadn't seen this done outside of my own brain so...here we go. If you have seen this idea or similar let me know so I can check it out.

Teen Pregnancy tag refers to the past only.

Kotenok - Kitten

Krasivyy - Beautiful/Handsome

Da - Yes

Patience and kindness appreciated(:

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