

One More Time

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One More Time

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Summary

Shane and Ilya are trying for their third baby but things are just not going the way they planned. Maybe it was just best if they let things happen naturally.

OR: 4 times their family subconsciously discovers that Shane is pregnant before he does + the 1 time Shane and Ilya reveal the pregnancy to their kids

Notes

This is a one-shot spinoff of my original [it's always been you](#). This one-shot contains several references to the main work as well as the other one-shots in the series, but may be read as a standalone with limited confusion.

FYI: Any dialogue written in italics means that it's spoken in Russian.

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

Steam filled the room and sat thickly in Ilya's lungs while warm water streamed down his back. Despite the smell of Shane's earthy shampoo, Ilya could smell both of their scents swirling together. If anything, the steam only making their scents more fragrant—it was so pungent that Ilya was getting dizzy.

What was more dizzying was the sight before him. Shane had his hands splayed out over the white marble walls, head slightly tilted back with quiet moans flowing out of his mouth. Ilya kept his grip firm around Shane's hips as he thrust over and over; his hold was probably tight enough to leave some light bruises on Shane's hips. Even though they had been trying for three and a half months, Ilya could never get used to how amazing it was to have Shane like this—without any protection or suppressants. He could easily lose himself if it weren't for the fact that Shane's sweet, tight heat was keeping him grounded, tethered to his fantasy-like reality.

“Ah ah harder,” Shane moaned as he pushed his ass back against Ilya's pelvis. “Need you.”

With a clenched jaw, Ilya snapped his hips, driving his member deep into Shane. Both of them cried out as Ilya's tip slammed against Shane's cervix. Still, with the sounds of the running water to drown them out, Ilya was sure that it would be possible for their kids to hear them. Good thing that they were asleep.

Again and again, Ilya pounded into Shane. Eventually, the sensations were so intense that Ilya couldn't help but clamp his teeth over Shane's shoulder. Ilya hummed with satisfaction as he tasted Shane's sweet flesh. Meanwhile, Shane shuddered against the pressure of Ilya's teeth.

Ilya laved his tongue over the teeth marks he left on Shane's skin, still keeping his hips' rhythm. Shane tipped his head forward and was now silent save for quiet grunts escaping his throat. Based off of how Shane was clenching and tightening himself around Ilya, Ilya knew that Shane must be close and was biting on his lower lip to prevent himself from being too loud. Even in a state of utter bliss, Shane was being considerate of their children.

“Fuck—Shane,” Ilya said through gritted teeth. Pleasure was pooling deep in his belly and his body was going lax from overwhelming euphoria. “You think you can come untouched today?”

“Can't... no,” Shane panted, barely lucid.

Usually, Ilya would have teased Shane about this but Ilya was enjoying everything too much to even put up much of a fight. Teasing was hot, but having Shane being so wholly dependent on Ilya was even hotter.

Ilya released his right hand from Shane's hip and admired the red fingerprints that he left behind. Not wasting time, Ilya wrapped his hand over Shane's member, causing Shane to immediately melt under his touch. Ilya quickened his pace, making sure to synchronize his hand with his movements.

“Oh god-” Ilya’s moan was cut off as Shane tightened around him, causing Ilya to come too. Releasing his hold around Shane’s cock, Ilya’s hand traveled to Shane’s lower belly, splaying his hands around the smooth, supple skin. Both of them took a few moments just to catch their breaths and allow themselves to come to.

“Fuck that was hot,” Shane sighed, leaning his head back against Ilya’s shoulder.

Ilya chuckled and pressed kisses along Shane’s neck, making sure to give Shane’s scent gland extra loving. “*I love you.*”

“I love you, too. So much.”



There was an unspoken tension between them after their shower, as there always was these days after they had sex. They were always left wondering if this time had been successful—if they were able to succeed in creating another bundle of joy to bring into their lives. Misha had been a miracle and a complete and utter surprise early in their relationship. Mari was planned but only took a few times of trying before she was conceived. It took only a week of trying before Shane had an unspeakable urge to take a pregnancy test, which immediately came back positive. Now three and a half months into their journey of creating a third child, the weeks seemed long and nothing seemed to be working.

Ilya was already more than happy with the life he had now. Shane, Misha, and Mari were everything to him. He couldn’t ask for anything else. If they could have another baby, that would be beyond amazing, but if they couldn’t, he would be okay as well. However, it broke his heart to see Shane disappointed over and over again as he took a pregnancy test at the end of everyweek, only for it to come back negative. Ilya didn’t want Shane to start blaming himself if they weren’t able to have a third child—it wasn’t Shane’s fault at all. Sometimes, as Dr. Patel put it, it just took a lot of time to conceive and sometimes it just didn’t happen. It was just how life worked, unfortunately.

Using the luxurious cream towels that Shane had bought, Ilya dried off Shane’s inky hair. His heart boomed as Ilya took in the image of Shane gently closing his eyes with a small smile on his face as he leaned into Ilya’s touch. He saw so much of Shane in their children. Mari had inherited Shane’s freckles and Misha got his daddy’s shyness and gentleness. God, Ilya loved the three of them so much.

Ilya moved onto towelling the rest of Shane’s body, making sure to worship him at every step of the way. Shane’s body was amazing: his arms carried their children; his breasts fed and nourished them; his belly created life and grew their children cell by cell, which his beautiful stretch marks stood reminder of; his legs chased after their children when they got too rambunctious. And how could Ilya forget Shane’s heart? Ilya kissed Shane’s chest, right above his heart. Shane’s heart was where he kept his infinite love for their children and Ilya.

Shane looked at Ilya with his trembling warm brown eyes. “*I love you.*”

“I love you, *my beloved*. You are so, so amazing.” Ilya brushed his nose against Shane’s cheek as Shane’s sweet autumnal scent filled his lungs.

“I think... I think I’m going to stop taking the tests for now, if that’s okay with you.”

“Okay.” Ilya nodded.

“We’ll keep trying, of course, but I just don’t think I can handle seeing another negative.”

“Of course, Sweetheart.” Ilya kissed Shane’s forehead. “Whatever you would like to do, I will always support you.”

“I really want to have another baby with you, *Ilyusha*.”

“Me too.”

Shane pulled Ilya closer and gently kissed him. They tenderly kissed without any expectation of more. This was already more than enough. This was just an expression of their love, just as another baby would be another extension of their love.

Ilya woke up to the sounds of crying from down the hallway. Ever since Mari moved into her big girl bed, Shane and Ilya kept their bedroom door cracked open, just as they did for Misha when he was her age. Ilya instantly knew that it was Mari and based on the sounds, she was crying so hard that she probably had tears and snot running down her face.

Looking at their dim alarm clock, it was only three o’clock in the morning—far too early for anyone to be awake. Shane hummed as he gently stirred awake.

“I’ll get her. Go back to sleep,” Ilya said.

“Thank you,” Shane replied, voice gravelly with sleep.

The cold air immediately wrapped around Ilya as he climbed out of bed. Sleep tugged on his eyes, almost begging them to close. He quietly walked through their house with urgency as he could still hear Mari crying. It never got easier to hear any of their children cry, no matter how few or many tears were shed; it still broke Ilya’s heart nonetheless.

As soon as he cracked open the door, the crying turned into whimpering. In the soft glow of her night light, Ilya could see how her wavy dark hair was tousled in all different directions and her face was red and tearstained.

“*It’s okay, my miracle. Papa is here now.*” Ilya knelt beside her bed and easily took her in his arms.

Mari wrapped her arms around Ilya’s neck and shakily breathed. Mari’s sweet strawberry scent was alarmingly strong from distress. Instantly, his neck became wet with tears and snot. He rubbed circles onto her small back, making sure to apply gentle pressure to help her calm down.

“*Did you have a bad dream?*” Ilya asked.

Mari stiffly nodded. “Daddy?” Her voice was all croaky and hoarse.

“Daddy is still asleep.”

“I wan’ Daddy.”

“Do you want to sleep with Daddy and Papa tonight?”

“Please.”

Ilya wiped her face with his hands before he got up. Mari never let go of his neck, in fact her hold only got tighter as he walked. Before going back to their bedroom, Ilya stood outside of Misha’s bedroom for a moment just to make sure that he didn’t wake up. Ever since Misha had his first growth spurt, he seemed to sleep like the dead, so Ilya wasn’t too concerned that he would wake up. Still, he wanted to check and make sure that his baby boy was okay. There was no movement coming from his room so Ilya continued to proceed to their room.

“Daddy,” Mari whined the moment they entered.

“Come here, *my miracle*,” Shane said sleepily with his arms outstretched.

Slowly, Ilya lowered Mari onto the bed. Mari all but scrambled towards Shane before sprawling out over his chest and wrapping her arms around Shane’s neck, just as she had done for Ilya. Shane patted the back of Mari’s head, smoothing out her hair, as Mari nuzzled her nose into Shane’s scent gland. Ilya couldn’t blame her. Shane’s scent was one of the most comforting things in the world for Ilya, and it had gotten sweeter and stronger ever since they decided to try for another baby and Shane stopped his suppressants.

Ilya went to their ensuite bathroom and turned on the light before leaving the door ajar so their room would be just bright enough for Mari to feel comfortable. He then climbed back into bed, enjoying the warmth of his husband and daughter next to him.

“What happened, Mari?” Shane asked in a hushed voice.

“I had scary dream.” Her voice was muffled by Shane’s neck.

“I’m sorry. Do you want to tell Daddy what happened?”

Mari humphed. “Just want Daddy.”

“I see that I’m just sloppy seconds,” Ilya joked.

The soft glow of light did nothing to soften the harsh look that Shane shot Ilya. Instantly, Ilya’s chest ached. Right. Not the time to be joking around.

“Sorry, *my miracle*,” Ilya muttered as he patted her back. “Daddy is my favourite too. He’s the best at comforting.”

Mari acknowledged Ilya with another humph.

As silence began to settle upon them, Shane began to hum. It was the same song that Ilya's mother had sung to him many, many years ago and the very song that Shane and Ilya had danced to in the kitchen when Shane was pregnant with Misha. Now, the song had been a pillar in their house—the tune that their entire family turned to in times of joy and comfort.

Ilya laid on his side and tangled his fingers in Shane's hair, appreciating the sight of his daughter melting onto his husband's chest. Still humming, Shane leaned into Ilya's touch and closed his eyes. His long dark eyelashes fanned out against his cheeks, exactly as their children's did.

"Daddy smells good," Mari said, voice filled with so much amusement that she was nearly giggling.

Shane fluttered open before looking longingly at her. A smile sleepily tugged at the corner of Shane's lips. Ilya was sure that he had the same look on his face, just as he was sure he was looking at Shane and Mari with his "heart eyes," as Hayden called it. Even though Hayden had said it jokingly, Ilya knew loved it. He knew that he looked at his family with nothing but love, but he loved that other people could see it too.

"I do?" Shane chuckled.

"Yeah, Daddy smells so sweet. So good," Mari said, just as Ilya had said many times before.

"Thank you, baby." Shane breathed in their daughter's scent deeply.

"Let's try to get some sleep, yes?" Ilya whispered. "Someone still has daycare tomorrow morning."

Upon hearing this, Mari visibly tightened her hold around Shane. "Daddy still hold me?"

Shane looked at Ilya with surprise. Mari loved as loudly as her papa did, but she was never this clingy, not that either of them were complaining. As soon as she was old enough to be sleeping alone in her big girl bed, she revelled in her newfound independence and loudly declared that she didn't need either her daddy or papa anymore. It understandably broke both Shane and Ilya's hearts but they understood. Despite being premature and smaller than her peers, Mari made up for it with her heart and bravery.

"Of course. Daddy will hold you until you wake up."

"Love you, Daddy. Love you, Papa."

Shane was vibrating with stress. His poor nails couldn't take any more of the abuse that he had subjected them to so he could only gently tap his foot against the cool tiled floor of their

kitchen while a pot of homemade chicken noodle soup simmered on the stove. He had to be quiet since Misha was home sick with a burning fever today. Mari was at daycare and Ilya was at practice, so Shane worked from home today to stay with Misha. He had plenty of admin work to get through.

Of all the places that Misha wanted to rest, he wanted to sit right across from Shane, plopping down on a bar stool while being engulfed by Ilya's large Centaurs sweatshirt and a throw from the couch. Shane looked at his son, who could barely keep his eyes open, and couldn't help but fondly chuckle at the sight. Misha looked so small like this, which was a rarity nowadays since the boy seemed to have growth spurt after growth spurt.

Shane and Hayden had opened up a second location of Leaf + Sake when Misha was 20 months old, and now they were planning on opening a cafe together. Even though Shane knew exactly what he needed to do for this new cafe, it didn't stop any of the anxiety coursing through his body. In all the ways that counted, a cafe was unlike a restaurant. For one, a lot of the menu planning went to J.J., meaning that Shane was in less control than he'd like to be. But he trusted J.J., so Shane just had to make sure that his own body got the message to relax a little.

Not to mention, he was also extremely stressed from the major elephant in the room. It had been four months and a week since he and Ilya started trying. They were worried about what would happen if they had another child that was delivered prematurely like Mari was. However, Dr. Patel assured them that there wasn't anything wrong with Shane, Ilya, or Mari to cause a premature birth—they were cleared to be having another child—and the danger of having a premature child would always be there. Dr. Patel had also told them that it might take a bit longer since they were a little bit older now. It would technically be an advanced maternal age pregnancy. The term itself only worsened the fear that Shane held: what if his body decided that he was done having children when his heart stilled longed for one?

He loved Misha and Mari more than anything else in the world, but there was an inexplicable pull that Shane felt in his chest for one more child. Instinctively, Shane's hand traveled down and cupped his belly, where he once carried both of his children.

Just one more, he prayed to whatever entity was listening.

"Daddy, can you get me a tissue? Please?" Misha sniffled. His hazel eyes were rimmed with red as he helplessly looked at Shane.

Wordlessly, Shane set a box of tissues in front of Misha, who gingerly stuck his hand out of his blanket cocoon and took one. He blew his nose into tissue before grimacing, probably because the blowing didn't do anything to relieve the pressure in his sinuses. Shane brushed away Misha's dark brown curls and pressed the back of his hand against Misha's forehead. It was slightly damp from sweat but definitely fractionally cooler than before.

"Do you think you feel well enough to have some soup?"

"Maybe just a little," Misha croaked.

Shane ladled some soup into Misha's favourite bowl. It was Japanese ceramic bowl with a t-rex drawn in the centre in the traditional blue and white sometsuke style. On the side, Shane also plated Misha a couple of saltines. Misha needed carbs and electrolytes right now.

"*Thank you, Daddy,*" Misha said in Japanese.

"*You're welcome, Misha.*"

Shane tried not to hover as Misha took a couple of bites. He knew that he could be a little bit of a helicopter parent at times and was actively trying to rectify that. It was just that Misha was his baby—his very first baby—and there weren't many times where he would be this small and dependent on Shane anymore. Instead, Shane fixed his attention to cleaning up. Upon putting the sleeve of saltines away, Shane's mouth suddenly salivated, wondering how good it'd be to slather Nutella onto them. The sweet and salty combination sounded heavenly. Shane immediately pushed the thought aside. He shouldn't be having Nutella right now.

While he wasn't as anal or restrictive as his food intake anymore—if anything, his relationship with food had never been better—he knew that he had to be mindful of his diet while they were trying. Shane and Ilya had to be at peak condition if they were going to be successful with baby number three. Ilya was already on a bit of a performance diet because, as much as he didn't like to admit it, Ilya's age was catching up to him and he couldn't eat everything like before. And, Ilya also wanted to be in the best shape possible for his last season in the NHL. So, Shane had to do his part too and err on the side of caution, which meant avoiding Nutella with its palm oil and sugar.

"Are we going to have another sibling?"

Shane froze. "Why do you ask that, *Malyshka*?"

God, he hoped that Misha hadn't heard anything coming from their bedroom. The thought of that was mortifying and spine-tingling. He turned around to look at Misha, who was still eating his soup and looked oblivious to how much weight his question had held.

"Just thought it'd be nice to have one more." Misha shrugged.

"Mari's zoomies and speeches aren't enough for you?" Shane laughed.

While Misha was the quiet and shy one, Mari was just one hell of a little fireball. She was unapologetically herself, brave, and curious, much like her papa. Misha and Mari perfectly balanced each other out, making Shane wonder what their possible third child would be like with them. Would they take more after Shane or Ilya, or would they be a perfect mix? Shane stopped his running mind, saving himself from the potential heartbreak of having hope but never being able to conceive again.

He was being selfish, Shane reminded himself—he already had a perfect family and he just wanted it to be even more perfect.

Misha weakly laughed before his laughter morphed into coughing. By the time he was done coughing, his eyes were watery. Shane immediately grabbed a tissue and wiped his baby

boy's face.

"I think having two Maris would be kind of nice," Misha said.

Shane kissed Misha's clammy forehead. He loved his son so much that it made his chest ache. "We'll think about it."

Misha happily hummed before nibbling on a saltine. "I think I'm done."

"Okay, I'll clean it up. Do you want to go rest on the couch?"

"Can you... can you come too?" Misha's face was already faintly pink from his fever but now it was reddening with a blush.

Shane melted as his son's words settled. "I'll come as soon as I load the dishes into the dishwasher."

Slowly, Misha rose from his seat and wandered towards the couch. He was so sick that he wasn't able to walk in a straight line. Still, he made it to the couch okay and all but collapsed onto the cushions.

Shane worked quickly to put the dishes away and wipe the counters with the refined practice that he had. He worked as quickly and as efficiently as he did if it were rush hour at the restaurant. As soon as his weight settled on the couch, Misha latched himself onto Shane's side, hugging Shane's arm with his entire body. Immediately, Shane was hit with a mix of Misha's forest-like scent and Ilya's coffee scent from the sweatshirt that Misha wore. Shane melted under Misha's touch as Misha threw his arm over Shane's stomach—it was like he had his own personal heater and teddybear all in one.

Selfishly, he wished that Misha stayed this size—able to scrunch up enough so that Shane could hold his entire body easily on his lap—for as long as possible. He loved their children being a huggable size. Still, no matter how many growth spurts that Misha had gone through and will inevitably continue to undergo, he would always be Shane's little baby boy. Same went for Mari too.

"Little baby," Misha suddenly mumbled while patting Shane's stomach.

Shane choked out a laugh. Where was this coming from?

"I don't have a baby in there, Misha." *Not yet, anyway.*

"That's where she'll go later," he replied with conviction.

"She? You think you'll get another sister?"

"Oh I know so," Misha replied tiredly but smugly. God, he embodied his papa so well.

Suddenly, the image of Misha holding his stomach brought Shane back to years ago, where a tiny four year-old Misha protected Shane's pregnant belly with all his might. He even protected Shane from Ilya when he had attempted to hug Misha like usual. The memory

settled in Shane's heart as he pulled Misha close to him and kissed the top of his head. Looking at his baby now, he no longer had those adorable chubby cheeks. Misha had lost his baby fat or more accurately, it had stretched to accommodate his ever growing body. Still, Misha held onto Shane just the same as he did years ago.

If the universe would allow it, Shane would love nothing more than to see Misha become a big brother all over again.

Ilya sprinted out of baggage claim the moment he grabbed his luggage. His eyes carefully scanned through the crowds as he exited, scavenging for his family amongst the sea of strangers. It only took mere seconds for Ilya to find his perfect little family. Mari sat on Shane's shoulders, holding a large sign with a drawing of their family and "Papa" scribbled slightly off-centred. She held her sign in a way that it was always at risk of blocking Shane's eyes. Her dark brown hair was also braided into one braid, just like Elsa. Misha stood just slightly off to Shane's left, also holding a sign that read "*Welcome home, Papa,*" in Russian, written in Misha's neat handwriting. Just like his daddy, Misha had perfect handwriting, the kind that looked like it could have been printed. It seemed like just in the week that Ilya was gone, Misha had somehow grown once again. Shane held Mari's calves tightly with one hand and a sign that read "Ilya Hollander-Rozanov ❤️" in the other. He was also nervously looking at the people coming out. The sight made Ilya's chest so warm and he couldn't help but pick up his pace.

Their faces bloomed with happiness the moment they caught sight of Ilya. Mari let out a large squeal and bounced up and down from Shane's shoulders, making Shane's face contort with worry. Misha shook his sign with excitement as his bright hazel eyes shone.

The people surrounding them all turned to watch as Ilya engulf his family in one giant hug, but Ilya didn't care. His world was in his arms. He could never get used to this little tradition that Shane had created. Ever since Ilya's first away game after Misha's birth, Shane would make a sign to welcome Ilya home. As soon as Misha and Mari were old enough, they also started making their own signs. Every time was just as good as the first, and Ilya kept every single sign. Now that Ilya was in his last season, he treasured this tradition even more.

"I missed you guys so much," Ilya happily sighed in Russian before kissing Shane's cheek.

Immediately, Ilya noticed how sweet and strong that Shane's scent had gotten. It was intoxicating, so much so that Ilya wanted to take Shane right then and there. It was perhaps even stronger than when Ilya had left for Edmonton. Ilya quickly dismissed the thought, chalking it up to Ilya being away for so long and him being so eager to possibly have a third child.

"Papa, hug please," Mari said as she leaned forward from Shane's shoulders.

“Of course, my miracle.” Ilya was all but too happy to take his daughter into his arms, giving her a tight squeeze before resting her on his hip and also giving his son a warm hug too.

“Your Cyrillic is perfect, Malyshka,” Ilya commented before he tousled his son’s dark curls. *“Even better than your daddy’s.”*

A blush grew on Misha’s face while Shane was quick to defend himself, *“hey, Daddy can understand too!”*

“Your Russian and Cyrillic are perfect, my beloved. Just not as perfect as our Misha’s.” Ilya pecked Shane on the lips.

“Fine,” Shane huffed. *“I accept.”*

“Papa, you like Mari’s sign?” Mari held her sign close up to Ilya’s face.

“I love it, Mari.”

Her face split open into an even bigger smile while her eyes twinkled in the oppressive airport lighting. “This one Papa. This one Daddy. This one Misha. And this one Mari!”

From left to right, Mari went through every stick figure on her sign: Ilya was drawn entirely in yellow with curls spilling from his oval head, and he had square shoulders; Shane was drawn in purple and had a circle for a torso and had large rectangular glasses drawn in green; Misha was drawn in blue with the same curls that Ilya had and was oddly just as tall as Shane’s drawing; Mari was drawn in pink and had her signature wavy hair that was as long as her body. Ilya definitely had to ask Mari and/or Shane about her artistic choices for Shane later.

“This is beautiful. Did you do this all by yourself?”

“Yeah, all by myself.”

Ilya nuzzled his nose against his daughter’s cheek, causing her to giggle so much that she almost dropped her sign.

“Yo Roz!” Hayes’s familiar voice rang out. “You got so excited that you forgot your bag on the plane.”

Shane shot Ilya an amused look before Ilya turned to find Hayes, who was holding Ilya’s duffle bag like it was a fish that he just caught.

“Thank you, Hazy. You are a life saver!” Ilya said.

Seriously, thank god for Wyatt Hayes. Ilya’s gifts for his family were in there. He got a bunny stuffy for Mari, a book about Alberta’s dinosaur fossils for Misha, and a book about the history of the Edmonton Tankers for Shane.

“Yeah, no kidding. Hi kids and Shane! How are you doing?” Wyatt asked, handing Ilya his bag before bringing Misha and then Shane into a side hug. He also kissed Mari’s knuckles

and bowed a little bit as if she were a princess.

Misha shyly mumbled a greeting while Mari exclaimed “Uncle Wyatt!”

“We’re doing great, Wyatt,” Shane replied. “Do you need a ride home or anything? And thanks for getting Ilya’s bag.”

“No problem,” Hayes beamed. “It’s okay but thank you for your offer. It’s actually Lisa’s day off and she’ll be here in a few minutes.”

“Sounds good.”

“Let us know if you need anything, yes?” Ilya added.

Hayes nodded with a smile before heading off.

“Okay, let’s get Papa home now,” Shane said with a clap.

In one hand, Ilya carried Mari and with the other, he slung his duffle over his shoulder while pushing his luggage. He was tired from playing last night because the Albertans always gave them a good fight (which the Centaurs won), but he wasn’t bone-tired yet so the weight was nothing that he couldn’t bear. Plus, how could he not hold his sweet daughter, especially when she had a tight hold around his neck and was scenting him as they walked? Ilya was ready to melt under her.

“Let me take something from you,” Shane said as he reached out to grab Ilya’s luggage.

“It’s fine, *my beloved*. I’ve got this.”

“I know you do, but I’ve got a free hand.” Shane wiggled the fingers of his left hand as he held his and Mari’s sign in his right hand.

“It’s fine, really.” There was a little bit more heat in Ilya’s response than he’d like, though it was nearly undetectable to any ears other than Shane’s. It was just the thought of Shane needing to overexert himself when Ilya was here that bothered him. In truth, while Ilya missed Shane and his children terribly, there was also this growing feeling in his chest that he couldn’t push down no matter how hard he tried. The feeling just told Ilya that he needed to protect Shane at all costs.

“Sorry, Shane. I didn’t mean to say it like that. I’m fine with taking it all.”

Shane gently smiled before placing his hand on top of Ilya’s, which was still pushing his luggage. “It’s okay. I know you’re just tired. You guys put up a good fight last night.”

“We watch your game, Papa,” Mari quietly giggled.

“Traitor!” Shane gasped. “It was supposed to be our little secret.”

“He let us stay up until the third period,” Misha added with a smirk. “We got to see your hat trick, Papa.”

With the time difference between Edmonton and Ottawa, that meant that the kids stayed up an hour and a half past their bedtime.

“Shane Hollander-Rozanov!” Ilya gaped. “When did you become such a bad influence on our children?”

“It’s not my fault they were missing their papa! They just wanted to see you.”

Ilya tutted with a smug pulling at his lips. “Throwing our sweet, innocent children under the bus now, are we?”

Shane took Mari out of Ilya’s arms and started to walk fast, causing Misha to immediately match his pace. Even as he stormed off, Ilya could see the amusement shining in Shane’s eyes. Ilya took a few large strides before catching up.

“I’m sorry, *my beloved*. I will not tease you anymore,” Ilya pleaded.

“Fine. Apology accepted. I will allow you to enjoy the special lunch that the three of us made.”

Mari opened her mouth but before she could utter a word, Misha put his hand over her mouth. “It’s a secret, Mari. Papa is not supposed to know until we get home.”

Mari scrunched up her eyes into little crescents, the same way that Shane did, and giggled underneath Misha’s hand. Misha fondly looked at his sister and only when the coast was clear, he removed his hand. Ilya tried to picture what the two of them would be like if they had another sibling in the picture. Just the thought of it made his heart soar.

When they reached their car, Ilya once again refused any help from Shane to put his luggage in the trunk. Shane didn’t put up much of a fight this time. But the feeling in Ilya’s chest only grew more—he just needed to protect Shane for some reason, even if it was from himself. This was not an unfamiliar feeling to Ilya but he had never felt it so intensely before.

“Uh-uh I will drive,” Ilya said firmly before Shane could climb into the car.

Shane furrowed his brows. “Ilya... I can drive. I drove us here.”

“That you did, but I got it. Rest, *my beloved*. You have done so much to take care of our children for the past week. Let me take care of you.”

With rosy cheeks, Shane walked to the other side of the car before settling in the passenger seat.

The Hollander-Rozanovs were sprawled over the couch as *The Incredibles* played on the screen. More accurately, Shane and Ilya sat on the sides while Misha laid his head on Shane’s

lap and rested his legs on Ilya. Mari laid on top of Misha, making sure nestle enough of her head into the crook of Misha's neck while still being able to watch the TV. Mari had one hand resting on Shane's leg while her toes were just barely touching the edge of Ilya's thigh. Ilya loved that their children felt the need to be touching both of them while they were watching a film.

Their bellies were all warm and full of the beef stroganoff that Ilya had insisted on making for dinner. He wanted Shane to rest as much as possible so he sent Shane to take the bath that Ilya had drawn while he cooked away in the kitchen. It was fun to have two little helpers with him as they made one of his mama's recipes. They had a little step stool from when Misha was a toddler, which Mari used as Ilya helped her slice some mushrooms. Since Misha had been in the kitchen since he was a baby and Shane and Ilya taught him how to use knives, he was able to independently slice some onions. He did, however, have to wear some onion goggles that Ilya bought for himself. On Ilya, the goggles looked ridiculous, but on his son, the goggles only made him look more cute. They pushed against his face in a way that made his cheeks bunch up, similar to how they were when Misha was younger. It was nice to have some bonding time with his children after being away for so long—too long, Ilya might add.

Now, Ilya could see how an exciting afternoon in the kitchen was effecting their children. Mari's eyes were barely open but slowly tracked the animations on the bright screen. Misha absentmindedly combed his fingers through his sister's hair but his movements began to slow down as the movie progressed. Luckily, they had predicted that this would happen so they got the kids ready for bed before they started the movie.

"Baby Jack Jack," Mari mumbled as he appeared on screen for the first time.

"Yeah, that's baby Jack Jack," Misha confirmed.

Ilya couldn't help but smile at his children and husband, whose loving eyes were gazing at them. Shane buried his hand in Misha's hair and started lightly massaging.

"Daddy," Mari said, suddenly sounding alert all of a sudden. Her eyes were now bright with energy.

"Yes, baby?"

"Daddy," she repeated with more emphasis.

"What do you need, *my miracle*? Daddy's right here."

Mari crawled into Shane's lap, accidentally kneeing Misha in the lungs while doing so. He let out a slight grunt of discomfort but quickly recovered, already used to being a climbing gym for his baby sister. She rested both of her hands on Shane's stomach before looking at him with all the intensity a three year-old could muster.

Shane looked a little bit more serious now that Mari was occupied by her thoughts enough to stop watching the movie. Still, that didn't erase any of the fondness in his eyes.

“Daddy, they five people family,” Mari said with conviction, keeping one hand on Shane’s belly while raising the other to show five with her fingers.

“Yes, they do have five people in their family,” Shane confirmed with a nod.

“We five people too?”

Shane immediately scrunched up his face in confusion and looked at Ilya for help. Ilya couldn’t help but shrug his shoulders.

Ilya had offhandedly asked Shane why Mari’s sign yesterday had Shane with a pregnant belly but Shane admitted that he didn’t know but was equally as curious. They then had a good laugh about the sign, fawning over how cute it was that Shane was the only one who had a circle for a stomach. Ilya and Misha had a straight line for a torso and Mari had a triangle to indicate that she was wearing a dress.

Did Mari know something that they didn’t?

“How do we have five people, Mari?” Ilya asked before holding his breath.

Mari looked at her papa as if the answer were the most obvious thing in the world. “Mari, Daddy, Papa, *brother* Misha, and baby!”

“What baby, Mari?” Shane was the one to ask.

“I think she means Jack Jack,” Misha offered, now bunched up against Ilya to make more space for Mari in Shane’s lap.

“No Jack Jack,” Mari humphed, becoming irritated by their lack of understanding. “Our family baby.”

Then, in a move that surprised them all, Mari patted Shane’s stomach and repeated “baby” once more. Neither Shane nor Ilya had explained to Mari where babies came from. They were saving that talk for after they were successful with conceiving a third child. So where did Mari learn this, and how did she know that Shane would be the one to carry a child? Ilya supposed that she might have seen a picture of Shane with his cute pregnant belly and made a connection in her mind. But there was no way that was possible, right? She was extremely intelligent for a three year-old, but no three year-old understood anatomy like this. Right?

Ilya’s mind was swirling as he looked at Shane and Mari. It looked like Shane was stunned into silence before whipping himself out of it. He just held Mari close to his chest, unable to confirm or deny Mari’s insistence.

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None of them had been able to watch the rest of the film. Misha and Mari fell asleep shortly after—before Bob even got back into being Mr. Incredible—and Shane and Ilya were still trying to wrap their minds around what Mari had said. It didn’t really matter since they’d already watched the movie several times before. Ilya carried Misha to bed while Shane took Mari since she passed out in his arms. Internally, Ilya was grateful that he was the one to

carry Misha to bed because there was no way that he'd let Shane haul their not-so-baby-anymore boy up the stairs like that.

"She woke up as soon as I put her down but thankfully fell right back to sleep," Shane said as he closed their bedroom door behind him.

"Good."

Ilya sat on the edge of their bed, nearly fidgeting with nerves. They had to talk about what just happened. Shane joined him and quickly laced their fingers together. Subconsciously, Shane started to bounce his leg up and down, as he always did when he was uncomfortable or nervous.

"So..." Shane started.

"That was weird, right?" Ilya laughed. That was the only adjective he thought was appropriate.

"So weird." Shane's eyes crinkled as he breathlessly laughed. "But it's kind of not the only time it has happened."

"What do you mean?"

"When Misha was home sick a few weeks ago, he also patted my stomach and said 'little baby' to me. Do you think the kids know something that we don't?"

"Have you been feeling nauseous? Any pain in your lower back? Tenderness? Fatigue?" Ilya asked, symptoms just freely flowing out of his mouth as he recounted everything that Shane had experienced.

"No, I'm fine, Dr. Rozanov," Shane chuckled.

Ilya shot Shane a look. Shane always played down his hardships.

"Really. I haven't been feeling anything out of the normal. I'm perfectly fine."

"I will say, my beautiful husband has been glowing and he smells so very sweet," Ilya added, making Shane blush.

"You're just saying that because you're obsessed with me." Shane playfully shoved Ilya.

"I know you said you wanted to stop but would you want to take a pregnancy test just to check? It's been a while. But, I understand if you do not want to. It is very hard to see a negative result."

It's been a little over five months since they started trying and seven weeks since Shane last took a test.

"Do you think that there might be a chance?" Shane's eyes were glossy as he cupped a hand over his abdomen.

Ilya rubbed Shane's shoulders as an offer of support. "Maybe... I really hope so."

Just as they did with Misha and Mari, Shane took several tests and set them on the bathroom counter while the two of them waited in the bedroom. Ilya sat Shane down in his lap and rubbed his lower back while they waited for the timer to go off.

"I love you so much, *my beloved*. Nothing will ever change that." Ilya kissed Shane's temple. He hoped that his anxiety wasn't seeping through. He needed to be strong for Shane.

"I love you so much, too. I just really want it to be real this time."

"I know, me too."

"You know, Misha was also pretty convinced that we were going to have a girl," Shane said with a ghost of a smile.

"A girl?"

"I asked him if he'd like having two Maris around and he actually said yes."

"He is an amazing big brother."

"He is, isn't he? I think Mari will make a great big sister too. I can already picture trying to show the baby everything and explain every single detail about it."

Ilya could picture it to. She'd probably demand Shane or Ilya to hold her baby sibling while she went on one of her ramblings about her fixations of the week in her toddler language. Though, if they were successful, Mari would probably be able to form longer sentences by the time her new sibling came along.

"Do you think they'll need reading glasses like their daddy and big brother?" Ilya asked, his lips barely brushing over Shane's cheek.

Shane broke out into a bigger smile. "I don't know, but I know you'd love it."

"Yes, I love my boys in glasses," Ilya grinned.

Suddenly, the timer went off, effectively snapping the two of them out of their moment.

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Six weeks and four days. That's what Dr. Patel happily announced as their little bean showed up on the ultrasound. They couldn't believe it and both immediately burst into tears upon hearing the news. The tests were all positive but they held their breath until Dr. Patel could confirm it. Ilya engulfed Shane into a hug and held him while Dr. Patel proceeded with the ultrasound. While they were mostly crying because they were unbelievably happy, part of

their tears were from sheer relief too. The nights spent trying, worrying, and crying were all worth it. Shane and Ilya finally had their third miracle.

This meant that Misha and Mari were both right. It also explained why Ilya had been so attentive and protective over Shane in the past few weeks. Shane was pregnant. Baby was six weeks and four days along.

All of a sudden, this massive weight that Shane had been carrying floated away. It was like he was breathing fresh air for the first time in his life. However, the fear of problems with this pregnancy started to creep in, tainting his happiness. He tried to push it away and just enjoy the now. Shane placated his mind with imagining how they would tell Misha and Mari that they were going to have a sibling on the way, just like they predicted. It wasn't entirely effective but it worked well enough to let Shane refocus on the ultrasound.

"Would you like to hear their heartbeat?" Dr. Patel asked with a knowing smile.

"Please." Shane nodded, holding Ilya's hand tightly.

Dr. Patel gently moved the wand around before finding a heartbeat. The soft but steady thuds that filled the room never failed to take their breaths away. Shane teared up again, though he was sure that he hadn't stopped crying in the first place.

"That's our baby, Ilya," Shane cooed before craning his neck to peck Ilya's cheek.

"You did it, *my beloved*."

"We did."

"Baby's heartbeat is 99 BPM, which is in a perfect range," Dr. Patel announced. "Everything is looking really good, dads."

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Immediately after their appointment, Shane and Ilya drove to a baby store. Ilya had come up with an idea to announce the pregnancy to their kids the moment they saw the line of positive pregnancy tests on their bathroom counter. While the smarter thing to do was to wait until Shane was past the first trimester (just like they had done for Misha), they just couldn't wait. Dr. Patel had also said that it was more than likely safe to tell the kids, meaning that this was a viable and safe pregnancy. If his doctor was fine with it, then Shane was fine with it—more than fine, really.

The hard part was that they had to go home and pretend as if nothing happened. They told the kids and Yuna, who was babysitting, that they were just in dire need of a date. The story they came up with was that they went to an Italian restaurant that Hayden's friend owned and had a long lunch there. Not the most elaborate but Yuna didn't seem to need the details as she was overjoyed at the opportunity to spend time with her grandchildren. If Yuna had seen right through them, she didn't say anything, which Shane was more than thankful for.

At dinner, Shane and Ilya were buzzing with excitement. Thankfully, Misha and Mari filled the silence and distracted them by recounting everything that they had done with grandma. They made chocolate chip cookies, watched movies, drew, and so much more.

By the time Shane and Ilya were in bed, neither of them could sleep. They were just as giddy as they were when they were in Dr. Patel's clinic. In the darkness, they held each other close and whispered their plans for tomorrow morning, trying to account for every possible detail. They wanted everything to be as perfect as possible.

Shane ended up waking much too early but he didn't complain. The moment he opened his eyes, he was already wide awake. Shane had to gently clamber out of Ilya's hold and stood still as Ilya stirred. Thankfully, his husband just flipped to his other side and went straight back to sleep.

In the bathroom, Shane took his time getting ready, making sure to enjoy every single step of his skincare routine. He firmly pressed his rice water toner onto his skin and even warmed up his moisturizer between his palms. It wasn't often that he got to enjoy his own company like this, so he'd like to savour it whenever the opportunity presented itself. He loved his husband and children more than anything else in the world, but Shane also appreciated when he could just sit with himself in a moment of calm.

By the end of the routine, Shane took a moment to lift up his shirt and look at his belly. His stomach was much looser than it was when he was younger. There were still firm muscles present but it was undeniable that the skin was loose and a little bit jiggly. He didn't mind the look as much as he thought he would, though there were days where Shane found himself mourning over his body. It definitely helped that Ilya seemed to go feral over Shane's body, especially over the stretch marks that covered Shane's stomach, thighs, and arms.

Lightly, he placed his palm over the small, almost indiscernible bump. Because this was his third pregnancy, he was going to be showing a lot sooner. But it was also true that part of the bump was just residual fat and loose skin from his previous pregnancies. Shane reminded himself that it was this loose skin and fat that helped create two out of the three loves of his life, now three out of the four. That always helped him to be a little kinder to himself.

"Hi baby," Shane whispered as he began to rub the bump. "It's your daddy. I hope you know that you are so, so loved. We are so excited to have you and I can't wait until I get to hold you in my arms."

Shane almost laughed at recalling how he had chided Ilya for trying to speak to Misha the moment they found out they were pregnant. Of course he was being logical at the time and he knew that that logic still remained true, but now, he couldn't help but talk to their baby as if they could hear everything already. There was just something in him that compelled to do so.

"We're going to tell your big brother and sister about you today. I just know they're going to be over the moon to have you. They've been wishing for you."

The moment Shane opened the bathroom door, he was engulfed into a warm hug. Ilya sleepily nuzzled into the crook of Shane's neck before taking a deep breath. Shane

immediately reciprocated, splaying his hands over Ilya's bare back while also breathing in Ilya's scent.

"Hmm bed is cold without you," Ilya mumbled with a deep, gravelly voice.

"You have enough warmth for the both of us," Shane lightly laughed.

"Is true but I like it better when you're there."

"Are you still excited to tell them today?"

"Could not be more excited. I will burst out of my skin if I am anymore excited," Ilya chuffed.

"Can't have you shooting out of your skin. I still need my husband and the kids still need their papa."

"Kids."

Shane could feel the large smile that Ilya had against his shoulder. Ilya's hand traveled from Shane's waist to his belly, where he stayed put. Warmth instantly radiated from Ilya's hand. Shane rested his hand on top of Ilya's, enjoying the firm hold that Ilya had. They stayed in that position until Ilya went to go brush his teeth so that he could kiss Shane like he wanted to.

Like clockwork, Mari woke up at a quarter past six. Shane and Ilya both went to go collect her, making sure that they used their extra quiet voices to not wake up Misha, who usually woke up anytime between seven and seven thirty. Unlike her brother, who always woke up without a fuss, Mari was so unbelievably angry with the world when she woke up, which has thankfully mellowed out as she aged. Her little face always seemed to be scrunched up while her wavy hair stuck out in every possible direction. This morning, her feet rested on top of her pillow while her head was underneath her bunched up blanket. Her little cheeks were covered with the impression of blanket lines as Shane brushed the blanket to the side.

"Good morning, *my miracle*." Shane scooped her up from her bed. She smelled so sweet and sleepy.

Mari let out a little whine.

"*Did you have a good sleep?*" Ilya asked, smoothing out her hair.

"No!" she exclaimed.

"*Why is that?* Did you have another bad dream?"

"No!"

Ilya looked at Shane with concerned but amused eyes that were reciprocated. It was no secret that their daughter's favourite word in the morning was "no." But it seemed like she did have a good night's sleep, judging by the fact that she wasn't crying.

“Do you want to help Daddy and Papa with something, Mari?” Shane asked.

“No.” Her response was a little less fierce this time.

Shane and Ilya took their time with helping her get ready in the morning. Ilya helped her brush her teeth, making sure to pretend as if they were in a princess beauty parlour of sorts. Ilya tried to muster up his best British accent, which made Shane laugh so much his stomach ached but Mari loved it so much she couldn't do anything but smile. Meanwhile, Shane smoothed out Mari's hair with the help of some water in a spray bottle and a comb. He was quick to style her hair into two pig tails that hung low by the nape of her neck as she didn't love having her hair in her face when it was styled. They had to work quickly together because Mari wasn't the greatest at staying still but Shane and Ilya had their morning routine down to a T.

“What a beautiful little princess!” Ilya gaped, looking at Mari in the mirror.

“*Princess!*” Mari clapped.

“*Yes, princess! Mari is Papa and Daddy's beautiful princess!*”

Shane watched the two of them with a smile on his face. He couldn't wait to tell their little girl that she was going to be a big sister. As her wavy pigtails bounced with laughter, Shane wondered what colour hair would their third child have. Misha's was the darkest, being a dark chestnut brown, and Mari's was just a tad lighter, which was even lighter under the sunlight. Misha also had his papa's curls while Mari had loose waves.

Ilya carried Mari on his hip as they went back to her room. Shane finally opened the blackout curtains now that the coast was clear. If he opened them the moment she woke up, they would have had a mutiny on their hands. With a little pep in his steps, Ilya grabbed the shirt that they had bought immediately after their appointment, which Shane had already washed and ironed. He also grabbed a pair of dark brown pants that were unbelievable soft and stretchy.

“Are you going to look so cute for your big brother?” Shane asked as Ilya pulled the shirt over her head.

“Yeah, so cute!” she giggled.

“You are always very cute, *my miracle*,” Ilya confirmed.

As soon as she was dressed, the three of them walked over Misha's bedroom. It was seven-ten already, so he should be waking up anytime now. Shane's heart raced with excitement. He could still remember how jubilant Misha was the first time that he was going to be a big brother. He immediately started running around the room, exclaiming “big brother” over and over again. Looking at Ilya, he seemed to be just as, if not more, excited than Shane. Ilya's eyes were glistening with anticipation as he bounced Mari up and down on his hip.

Shane cracked open Misha's bedroom door. Misha was still in bed with his duvet covering his entire frame, decidedly still asleep.

“Go wake him up, Mari,” Ilya whispered as he set her down.

Immediately, Mari bolted towards her big brother. With a little grunt, she climbed onto his bed and instantly crawled on top of him. Shane turned on the lights and stood hand-in-hand with Ilya by Misha’s bedroom door to watch everything unfold.

“Morning time!” Mari squealed.

Misha let out a confused hum. “Good morning, Mari. What are you doing here?”

“Morning time!”

Misha picked up Mari as he sat up. Slowly, his sleepy eyes widened as he read the words on Mari’s shirt. “Big sister” was written in a pink and purple floral font. Mari, of course, couldn’t read so she didn’t have a clue of what was going on.

“What? You’re pregnant?” Misha gaped as he made eye contact with the two of them.

Ilya rested his hand on Shane’s belly as Shane eagerly nodded, tears in his eyes. The two of them went into his room and was met with a hug from Misha and a giggly Mari was sandwiched in between them.

“We also got a shirt for you.” Ilya grinned before handing Misha a white cotton shirt.

“Best big brother ever?” Misha laughed as he read the shirt. It was written in a bold, dark blue font.

“Best big brother!” Mari declared.

“It’s true.” Shane nodded. “Mari thinks so. Your papa and I know that you’ll also be the best big brother to your new sibling too.”

Misha looked at them with an expression that Shane found so familiar because Ilya had the same fond look. His lips were pouted and his hazel eyes were large and slightly watery.

“Mari, do you know what this means?”

“Big brother Misha!”

“You’re going to be a big sister!” Misha exclaimed.

“Big sister?”

“Daddy has a baby in his belly,” Shane confirmed.

“You will have someone else to play with,” Ilya supplemented.

Just like she did on their movie night, Mari crawled over and patted Shane’s belly fondly.

“Baby.”

“Yes, Mari. There’s a baby in there,” Shane laughed.

End Notes

I just want to give a huge thank you to every one of you who has read my work. It really means a lot to me to see that my writing has been seen by so many of you. And an even bigger thank you to those of you who have read every single work in my series. Thank you!

P.S. I have been thinking of writing a new fic about Shane and Ilya that is not a part of this series. Neither of them will be professional hockey players and it will kind of include the forced proximity trope. So, please look forward to that in the near future!

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