an unexpected shift

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an unexpected shift

by Tizniz

Summary

“There’s a fox in the showers!” Hazy blurts out and Ilya’s eyes snap over to him immediately. His blood runs cold with fear.

“What?”

OR: Shane unexpectedly shifts in the Centaurs shower.

Notes

The reaction to *lisichka* has blown me away. I thought this idea of having Shane be a shifter was so silly and no one would enjoy it but y'all went OFF. And I am grateful for EACH AND EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU. Then someone recommended this on Threads?? Wow. Honoured.

I am sorry it took me so long to get this posted. I've had it ready for a little while now, but posting has been hard...I get this weird block in my mind for stuff, and unfortunately posting my stories is one such thing that gets blocked. Hence why I have a handful of stories. Sigh. I'm working on it.

Life also has been up and down with my grief and some other unfortunate stuff happening in my family. I won't bore y'all with the details though.

Good news for those who like this universe: I am already working on a third story! That one will be set sometime between the original story and this one, and it will explore more of why Yuna reacts the way she does in the first story. I'm looking forward to sharing all of that with y'all. I gotta finish it first though haha

Thank you again for loving kitsune Shane as much as me. I hope you enjoy this one, where we explore a more established (and now married) Hollanov and what happens when Shane shifts around the Centaurs :)

See the end of the work for more notes

There are some parts of being a famous professional hockey captain that Ilya could really do without.

He knows everyone thinks he loves the press, loves flirting with the camera and being an absolute terror to the reporters when he purposely ‘misunderstands’ their questions, but honestly? Ilya could care less for it.

Maybe back in the beginning, when he’d been trying to fill an empty void that was never fulfilled, he did enjoy the attention.

Then he met Shane Hollander.

Then he fell in love with Shane Hollander.

And that void was filled. It was overflowing now with love from his husband. Ilya didn’t need anything else.

Unfortunately, Ilya’s fame and status in the MHL had only grown as the years passed and he found his person, so Ilya was forced to keep doing media even when he didn’t want to.

And today was no exception.

Yuna had set him up with some ridiculous photoshoot, because apparently he needed to keep up with his brand, because apparently he didn’t already have enough money to last him a couple of lifetimes. All Ilya knew was that it was making him late to practice, and while he didn’t care if he was on time or not, it did mean he had to wait longer to see his husband.

Ilya was maybe a *tiny bit* obsessed with Shane. He didn’t care to fix it.

Yet, when he walks into the locker room, prepared to greet the love of his life with an obnoxious kiss that is certain to make his cheeks flush oh so prettily, Ilya doesn’t see Shane.

Instead, he sees his team all crowding around the doorway that leads to the showers, in various states of dress, definitely not ready for practice, and muttering amongst themselves.

“What the fuck is going on?” Ilya demands, crossing his arms to try and quell the itch rising inside of him to immediately find his Shane. Where the fuck is he? Ilya knew he was here. Shane had confirmed via a text, one Ilya saw when he finished the ridiculous photoshoot and headed for the arena. But he is distinctly *not* here right now as the Centaurs all turn around to look at Ilya.

“Roz, you ain’t gonna believe this.” Bood says, staring over at Ilya like even *he* can’t believe what he saw.

“Would help if someone told me.” Ilya snaps, barely resisting asking where his husband is. His team knows how much Ilya loves Shane. They know how attached he is. Especially now

that Ilya is allowed to be open about his affection. But there is obviously something going on right now and Ilya has to be *Captain Rozanov* right now instead of *Roz*. Besides, if there is a situation going on, Ilya suspects Shane will already be involved. The man loves control far too much.

“Uhm.” Haas speaks up, more of a squeak than anything. “There’s a…a…”

Ilya stares the younger man down. Luca Haas isn’t a rookie anymore by standings, but he’s still *Ilya’s* rookie and always will be. Meaning he’s easier to break. Except it isn’t him that reveals the situation.

“There’s a fox in the showers!” Hazy blurts out and Ilya’s eyes snap over to him immediately. His blood runs cold with fear.

“What?”

“Told you. Wouldn’t believe it.” Bood mutters as Barrett and Dykstra nod in agreement, equal looks of bafflement on their faces.

“I didn’t think foxes were common in Ottawa.” Dykstra comments in a poor attempt at a whisper.

Barrett smacks him on the back of the head. “Your brain has been rotted by your country music.”

“Hey!”

“SHUT UP!” Ilya roars and his team freezes, looking at him wide eyed. He doesn’t get like this with them. Not unless something is wrong. “Everyone. Out.”

“Roz…”

“*Out.*” He hisses, silently daring one more of them to try and protest. Ilya needs to get into the showers. He needs to find his husband. And he needs to know *what the fuck made Shane shift suddenly.*

The guys all exchange a look but then Bood is clapping his hands and herding the Centaurs out, Chouinard loudly asking if practice is still happening before yelping as someone probably smacks him. Ilya ignores them all, hurrying into the showers.

He sees a pair of sweats crumpled on the floor, under one of the shower heads, probably where Shane had been when he shifted. The problem is that there’s no sign of Shane or his smaller form anywhere that Ilya can see.

“Shane?” Ilya calls out softly, “*Lisichka*?” His worry increases immensely when he can’t see or hear Shane. Ilya thinks he’s probably terrified; an unexpected shift, in the showers where there’s few places to hide, and the entire team spotting him. A team that Shane is only just finding his footing within after being abandoned by his old team.

Okay, maybe the unexpected shift isn't the craziest thing.

"It is only me, Shane." Ilya calls out again, moving further into the showers towards the one stall that has a half wall blocking part of it. It's the only place that Ilya could possibly imagine Shane hiding within the showers. The handicap stall only has the wall to support the bench that is used for sitting but it's a wall that Shane can hide behind. "Please, sweetheart."

A small nervous chirp echoes off of the tiled walls before a nose appears around the half wall. Ilya releases a breath before he lowers into a crouch.

"Come on, sweetheart."

The kitsune emerges, its fur matted to its body as drops of water fall from it, ears folded back against his head. Shane must have gone to the showers when he felt the shift approaching. Ilya can imagine the water being turned on was not on purpose considering the team was preparing for practice. The chain that holds his wedding ring swings around his neck. He looks *miserable*.

"Oh, *moya lyubov*." Ilya holds his arms open and Shane darts forward quickly, his tiny body colliding with Ilya's chest, instantly soaking the hoodie Ilya had thrown on after his photo shoot. But he doesn't care about the wet fabric as he wraps his arms around Shane's small body, holding him close. He can feel the way the kitsune is trembling against him, either from fear or cold or both. "I have you. It is okay. I have you, Shane." Ilya murmurs, tiny paws trying to burrow through the fabric of his hoodie. "Is okay. Is okay. I will get you a towel. Get you warm."

He stands from his crouch and turns, prepared to head to the locker room where he can dry off Shane and then take him home. Except Ilya comes to a stop when he sees Troy standing there, mouth open and eyes wide.

Ilya knows instantly that Troy heard him. That Shane's secret is no longer a secret.

"I came to check on you," Troy stutters out, "You seemed…" He trails off, flailing a hand uselessly. Ilya does appreciate his friend coming to check on him but this is the *worst possible time to be a good friend.*

"Towel." Ilya says shortly, "Now."

"Yup. Right. Okay." Troy nods and spins on his heel, leading the way into the locker room. Ilya is nearly right behind him, so when Troy presents the towel, Ilya is already reaching for it and trying to wrap Shane in it with one hand. Except Shane is latching onto the wet hoodie with his tiny little paws and claws, making it difficult. He's also making this distressed squeaking noise that is shattering Ilya's heart.

"How can I help?" Troy asks quietly, eyes darting between Ilya and Shane. "Tell me."

"Hold towel. I need both hands to pull him away."

“Right. Sure.” Troy nods, taking the towel and holding it, ready to wrap it around the small fox. “Is…is he okay?”

“I do not know.” Ilya admits quietly, smoothing a hand down Shane’s back. “*Lisichka,* I need to pull you away. You are wet. And cold. You hate that.”

A small whine comes from Shane as he tries to burrow further into Ilya, which normally wouldn’t be a problem, but Shane hates his fur being wet so Ilya knows he’s uncomfortable. Sighing, Ilya tries to be gentle as he tugs Shane away from his body. As expected, a loud squeaky cry comes from the fox. Troy jumps a bit, clearly not expecting it like Ilya had been.

“Towel.” Ilya instructs and Troy immediately thrusts it forward, the warm cotton wrapping around the smaller trembling body. “Now hold.”

“Uh.”

“I am not risking dropping my husband, Troy.” Ilya snaps and Troy just nods, taking over the holding of Shane briefly so Ilya can grab him once more but this time over the towel. As Ilya wraps it fully around Shane’s small body, he holds the fox against his chest again. “There. Much better, hm?”

Shane glares up at Ilya before he burrows into the towel, disappearing from sight. Ilya smiles and ducks his head, kissing the towel covered head of his husband.

“Anything else?” Troy asks, hands tucked into the pockets of his sweats. He looks like he normally does, uncomfortably out of place but wanting to help because he’s trying to be better. Ilya is grateful for him being here, honestly.

“I need to get out.” Ilya tells him, “Without the others seeing. It’s already bad enough that you have seen. Shane will have big panic attack when he is him again.”

“Him…again…” Troy repeats slowly, shaking his head. “Nope. Not asking. And you can tell Shane I’m not going to say anything either. We can pretend this never happened.”

Ilya scoffs, “Have you met my husband?”

“True.” Troy nods, “Okay. I’ll…tell the guys you got the fox and are bringing it to…a wildlife place? I don’t know.”

“Tell them I have dealt with foxes in Russia and know how to handle them.”

“Have you?”

“Not in Russia. But I’m familiar with this fox.” Ilya kisses the top of Shane’s head again. “This one is special.”

Troy smiles softly and then ducks his head, “Okay. Cool. I’ll check in later.”

“Okay.” Ilya adjusts his hold on Shane and moves to Shane’s stall, grabbing his wallet and phone to shove into Ilya’s pockets. Everything else can be sorted later. When Ilya is at the

door, he pauses and turns back to look at Troy, who's watching him with a curious look. "Thank you. For helping. And not freaking out."

Troy huffs out a weak laugh, "Oh I am *definitely* freaking out. But I've got years of hiding that type of thing." He shrugs, "It's Hollzy though. He doesn't need me freaking out. Not when he's already freaking out enough for all of us."

"Yes. True." Ilya nods, gazing down at the towel covered lump in his arms. "But still. Thank you."

"Of course." Troy replies quietly and then Ilya slips out of the door. None of the team is waiting there, meaning Bood probably herded them elsewhere because he's also a great friend and fantastic A who anticipated Ilya's needs. He'll thank him later as well.

Getting out of the arena is easy enough and Ilya is careful as he places Shane onto the passenger seat. His husband makes a disappointed noise but Ilya clicks his tongue. "I cannot drive with you in my lap, *lisichka*, you will have to stay there."

He looks in his back seat and makes a small *ah-ha!* sound when he spots one of his hoodies. Ilya grabs it and tugs the towel loose from Shane, just enough to see his adorable little face.

"This should help." Ilya states, draping the hoodie around the towel and then tucking the sleeve closer to Shane's face. "But towel stays on, you are still wet from shower. Okay?"

Shane sneezes lightly and burrows his face into the opening of the sleeve, disappearing from view between the hoodie and the towel. *Adorable*. Ilya smiles and turns his attention back to the car. Time to get his husband home.

Shane jumps out of Ilya's arms the moment they step inside and darts up the stairs. Ilya lets him go, knowing that Shane is heading to his favourite hiding spot: the corner of their closet where one of Ilya's hoodies lives. Instead, Ilya crouches down and greets Anya, who is very excited that her papa is home.

"Good girl, hm? Daddy is not doing good, so it is just you and me, my pretty girl." Ilya coos and Anya's tail flicks back and forth quick enough that it could knock over one of the younger Pike children, probably.

Standing, Ilya makes a stop at the laundry room to deposit the towel he'd bundled Shane in and then opens the back door for Anya to go outside. He back tracks to the laundry room, finds one of his shirts, and then makes his way up the stairs. When he enters the bedroom, he hums softly, folding the shirt before placing it on the end of the bed. Then he quickly changes out of his damp hoodie and into a pair of cozy sweats, decides against a shirt, deposits his clothes in the hamper, and leaves the bedroom.

Re-entering the kitchen, Anya is bounding around the yard through the doors and Ilya watches for a moment, smiling softly. He knows today it won't happen, but maybe next week, he'll be able to convince Shane to shift on purpose and go outside to play with Anya. The kitsune and dog always have a wonderful time together.

Redirecting his focus to the fridge, Ilya tries to figure out what to make for a late lunch that both he and Shane will enjoy.

It's an hour later when Shane shuffles out onto the back deck where Ilya is sitting, legs stretched out on one of the lounging chairs they purchased for when it's warmer weather. September isn't as warm as the summer, but the day has enough sunshine that he can stay out here for a little bit and not get chilly, even without a shirt on. Helps that Ilya runs warm naturally. Anya's ears perk up when her other human father appears but otherwise she remains curled up on the grass, tired after having the ball thrown around.

Ilya locks his phone and opens his arms, silently inviting his exhausted looking husband to join him, which Shane does happily, settling down onto the chair between Ilya's legs, nuzzling into his bare chest.

"You're gonna get sick." Shane murmurs, hands roaming the bare skin and curling around Ilya's ribs.

"I'm okay." Ilya kisses the top of Shane's head, "I have sandwiches ready to throw together when you want to eat."

"In a little bit."

"Okay." Ilya slips a hand under the shirt Shane has on – the same one Ilya had left folded on the end of the bed earlier – and splays his hand against Shane's bare back. The skin to skin contact always seems to help with Shane grounding himself back to his human body, especially after an unintentional shift like today.

"I don't know what happened." Shane says a few minutes later, still tucked against Ilya's collarbone. "I was fine."

"Hm, I think not so fine."

"I *thought* I was fine."

"I believe you." And Ilya does. It's been years since he found out about Shane and his shifting ability. Ilya knows that no one knows Shane better than Shane, even if Ilya would prefer his husband didn't put off the shifting as long as he occasionally still does.

“I…” Shane squirms against Ilya, only settling when Ilya moves a hand to the back of his neck and squeezes gently. “I felt, for a moment, like I felt when I was still in Montreal. Towards the end.”

Ilya closes his eyes at the rush of emotions, mostly anger at the men who had tried so hard to break Shane but only managed to gain a few cracks. They don’t talk much about Montreal, something Ilya used to hate, but Shane has a therapist now, someone he *does* talk to about Montreal and what it did to him. Ilya has simply had to accept that Shane will only ever be able to offer him bits and pieces of what that felt like. It hasn’t been easy, but he has accepted it.

“It’s stupid, I know.”

“It is not stupid, sweetheart.”

Shane huffs, sitting up enough to look Ilya in the eye, “This is my second year with the Centaurs, Ilya. I’m not a newbie.”

“No,” Ilya concedes, reaching up to brush the hair away from Shane’s forehead. It’s not as short as when he was in Montreal, but it isn't as long as he let it first grow out when Ilya was in Ottawa. Somewhere in between, a length that really felt like *Shane* and who he wanted to be. “But it has only been a short while since you were in that locker room. And you spent a decade there, Shane. It took a toll on you. It is going to take time to move past it and even then, you may never fully do so.”

Shane’s face scrunches up into his ‘angry kitten face’, “You’re doing your therapy talk with me again.”

Ilya laughs softly and tugs Shane closer for a quick kiss, “But it is true, no?”

Flopping back down against Ilya, Shane sighs deeply. “Yeah. I suppose.” He falls silent for a beat, and then, “Troy is going to think I’m a freak.”

“No.” Ilya replies quickly and firmly, arms winding around Shane once more, “Not at all. His first concern was *you*, Shane. Not that you were an adorable little fox.”

“We can’t play it off as a weird dream, can we?”

“No. And I do not think we should.” Ilya hesitates and then adds, “I think you should tell more of the team, if not all.”

He feels Shane tense up. Prepares for his husband to pull away. To storm off in anger and frustration. Instead, Shane stays.

“You want me to tell them?” Shane whispers eventually. “About me shifting?”

“Da. I think it would be good.”

“Ilya…”

“No one is going to think you are a freak, Shane.” He reassures him, pressing a kiss to the top of Shane’s head. “I did not when I found out. Hayden and Jackie did not either when you told them. The kids love you even more and think you’re cool.”

“They’re too young to understand fully.” Shane protests weakly, even though they both know that isn’t true for the twins.

It had been hard for Shane, telling Hayden the other secret he’d kept from him, but he had a couple years back now. The only issue Hayden really had was that Ilya knew first. Ilya had happily reminded Hayden, again, that he also knew Shane first. It had not gone over well. But now Shane wasn’t hiding this from his best friend, the other people he considered his family, and Ilya knew it was good for him to share it with people he trusted. Ilya respected Yuna Hollander and what she did for Shane, but he disagrees strongly with her view on keeping this completely hidden from everyone. There are people, like the Pikes and the Centaurs, that can be trusted. Shane needs to learn that he can trust people.

“Troy also took it well, considering it was sprung on him unexpectedly.” Ilya continues, “And even he knew it was clearly a panic reaction more than anything.”

“I wasn’t *panicking*.”

“Potato, tomato.”

“That isn’t the saying.”

“Close enough. English is stupid.”

Anya stands, stretches, and pads over to the chair. She sniffs both Ilya and Shane briefly, gives a small lick to the latter, and then disappears into the house through the door that Shane had left ajar.

The quietness of nature settles across them and Ilya rubs his hand up and down Shane’s back, feeling the remaining tension ease away once more.

He won’t push Shane on telling anyone else but he knew it was right to suggest. Ilya wants the Centaurs to be a true family for Shane. Show him that he does belong, completely as himself. Kitsune side included. If Shane were still with Montreal, Ilya wouldn’t even *consider* telling anyone, outside of Hayden. But this team is different.

“I still hate that Troy knows.”

Ilya snorts, “Because you are jealous.”

“I am not jealous of Troy.”

“Yes, you are.”

“Then you’re jealous of Rose.”

“I did not fuck Troy.”

“You wanted to.”

Ilya snorts again, “No, *solnyshko*, he was interested in you. Not me.”

“Well that’s because he has good taste.” Shane teases as he sits up properly, kneeling between Ilya’s legs, which rest on either side of the lounge chair now to accommodate the bulk of his husband. “Okay. So. We tell a few. Like Wyatt, Luca, and Bood. Harris too. I don’t want Troy to have to keep anything from his fiance.”

“He would,” Ilya reaches for Shane’s left hand, playing with his wedding ring that Shane had put back on after turning human again, “If you asked him to. He is a good friend, you know.”

Shane wrinkles his nose but doesn’t say anything. It makes Ilya laugh; he thinks Shane will always be a little jealous of Ilya’s relationship with Troy, but it’s a healthy jealousy. Like the one that Ilya has with Rose. Because Troy and Shane are friends, much like Rose and Ilya are. Besides, it’s cute.

“Hazy will love this.” Ilya redirects, “He will have many questions.”

“Oh god,” Shane groans, tipping his head back, “He’s going to think I got doused in radioactive material or something.”

Ilya’s laugh is loud and boisterous this time, echoing across the yard. He can see a smile on Shane’s face now too. If he is joking about this, then that is a good sign. And means he is serious about telling some of their team. It makes something warm blossom in Ilya’s chest. He is very proud of his husband.

“I will not be compared to Spider Man.” Shane declares, resting a hand on Ilya’s thigh, absently rubbing at the muscle. “Even if Andrew Garfield is hot.”

“Not as hot as me.”

“Get a Spider Man costume and we’ll compare.”

“I can manage that.”

Grinning, Shane lowers himself down slowly, pressing a languid kiss to Ilya’s lips. “I love you, you know.”

“Hmmm, I think so.”

“Good.” Shane kisses him again, “I want that sandwich now.”

Ilya wraps his arms and legs around Shane, pulling him flush against him, “In a minute. I think I need to make *you* aware of how much I love you.”

love you.

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