

sunrises along the road

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sunrises along the road

by [alexporndealer](#)

Summary

Shane and Ilya being girl dads on a road trip.

Notes

My first time writing a non-smut one-shot 🙄

Hope you enjoy this!

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

Shane walks toward the porch, three heavy bags hanging from his hands. Ilya left the trunk open, their silver Toyota—perfect choice for road trips, in Shane’s opinion—standing in the middle of the yard. Ilya brushes a hand on his lower back as he passes him and disappears into the house, making Shane blush.

It’s all very new to him, family road trips with their sweet four-year-old daughter, Ilya sitting behind the wheel, relaxed, sometimes switching places with Shane and being the passenger princess, as Ilya loves to call it.

It’s barely five in the morning, and the sun is already rising. The sky is a pale blue with a mix of orange and pink in the east. Summer is only starting, and he and Ilya planned this trip ahead, thinking of each route before stopping at a hotel with water slides and playgrounds for little children.

Shane already packed their snacks, taking extra care with their daughter’s food. A piece of soft white bread, carrot sticks, chicken nuggets in dinosaur shapes, because Katya refuses to eat them if they’re not dinosaurs with little hands and tails. He also placed some freshly cut apple, a strawberry Pop-Tart, and a pack of apple Capri Sun. Now that he thinks about it, he realizes it’s too much food, but it’s already in the bag on the passenger seat anyway.

Ilya closes the trunk and starts the car, ready to take off. Shane walks into the house and toward the living room, where Katya sits on the couch, playing with her green dinosaur plushie. Shane can’t help but smile at the sight.

Before she was born, Shane suggested giving her a Russian name. Ilya, without any hesitation, fell in love with the idea. So when she finally came out of Shane’s belly, she was proudly named Ekaterina Hollander-Rozanova.

Katya has soft blonde curls that fall all over her forehead, the exact replica of his husband’s hair. Her little nose is undoubtedly Shane’s, and she also has what Ilya always dreamed of—a constellation of freckles spread across her cheeks, new ones appearing each day. She’s wearing white stockings, a baby-pink t-shirt, a denim overall, and Adidas sneakers—matching Ilya—that cover her small feet.

“Daddy!” she exclaims when she notices Shane, her face immediately lighting up at his presence. Shane strolls toward her and picks her up, her arms waving around his neck.

“Are you ready?” Shane asks excitedly, fixing a strand of hair behind her ear. He should’ve taken her to the salon for a haircut, but he just can’t resist leaving the long curls. They remind him so much of Ilya; the similarity between them is impossible to miss.

She claps her chubby hands. “Ready!”

Shane takes the dinosaur plushie along with his iPad, which he occasionally allows Katya to watch cartoons on—only when he and Ilya are both insanely busy because he prefers she has as little screen time as possible.

All the bags are fully packed and waiting in their car, which Ilya steps out of when he sees them.

“You’ve got everything?” Ilya says, looking around the porch. He’s wearing a casual outfit, all black, including a shirt that outlines his broad chest and biceps, and baggy sweatpants that sit low on his hips, the waistband of his boxers sometimes peeking out. The sight makes Shane’s mouth water, but he brushes it off, stepping toward the car door with Katya in his arms.

“I checked everything. That should be all,” he replies.

Ilya comes up to them and sets a palm on the top of Katya’s head, leaning down to kiss her forehead. There is nothing in this world that makes Shane happier than his husband being affectionate with him and their daughter.

“You ready?” Ilya asks before finally kissing him, his mouth soft on Shane’s. Katya lets out a delighted noise at the sight, grabbing Shane’s cheeks with both hands right after Ilya pulls away. Shane starts laughing and pinches the bridge of Katya’s nose, who shakes her head happily in response.

“I’m ready,” he says with an exhale, pleasantly noting the taste of Ilya’s mint mouthwash on his lips. He carefully places Katya in the child safety seat, strapping her in from each side so she’s comfortable the whole ride. He sits in the passenger seat, Ilya behind the wheel, and Katya in the backseat, her head already lolling to the side, ready to fall asleep.

Ilya drives the car out of the gates, attentive and precise. Now that they have a daughter, Ilya sold all of his expensive cars, only leaving the black slick Porsche and their silver Toyota, which Shane mostly uses when he needs to drive somewhere.

Shane looks around and sees that Katya fell asleep the moment the wheels started rolling. Her lips form a wet pout, big green eyes shut tightly as she clutches her dinosaur, her fist tightly wrapped around the plush fabric. He switches his gaze to Ilya, looking at his profile. Ilya’s eyes are focused on the view ahead, but the second his attention shifts to Shane, he smiles at him, warm and gentle.

Shane’s heart tightens. He has everything he has ever wished for.

They both do.

Ilya takes his hand and squeezes it.

“Are you okay?” His voice is tender, and Shane smiles through the wetness gathering on his lashes, nodding.

“I love you,” Shane whispers, bringing Ilya’s hand to his lips and kissing it. Once, twice, until Ilya understands that Shane just feels... bittersweet, joyful. Everything inside him finally feels complete, like the puzzle is done, and all the pieces are in their right place.

There’s nowhere he’d rather be.

“Я тебя люблю, дорогой. Невероятно сильно,” Ilya murmurs, his voice quiet so he doesn’t wake Katya.

“Ya tebya lyublyu, lyubimyy moy,” Shane repeats, proud he can understand and speak Russian more confidently each day. Ilya teaches him phrases, the alphabet, how each syllable is pronounced. Shane always listens, focused, determined to grasp the way his husband’s native language works—just so he can reach him better, to take a deeper dive into Ilya’s soul.

A few hours later, they’re already at the mountains—tall green hills spread across the ground. Ilya takes a hairpin turn, driving the car in circles and vortices across the beautiful landscape. The weather is sunny and warm today. It’s exactly what they need to enjoy this day at the beginning of June.

Ilya parks the car carefully so as not to startle Katya, who’s still somehow deep asleep in her seat. She loves road trips, Shane guessed that a long time ago. It takes a lot to make her cry or complain when Ilya drives them around the world. The car finally stops, and they start getting out.

Shane’s legs finally stand firmly on the asphalt, the cramp slowly dissipating. He looks at Ilya, who stretches like a little kid, arms high in the air. There’s no one around; Katya is still in the car, so Shane walks toward Ilya.

“Are you tired?” he asks, meeting Ilya’s green eyes that always shine in Shane’s presence.

“No, I’m good,” Ilya responds but yawns right after.

Shane has missed his husband so much—his strong hands, accented voice, sly smirk. He doesn’t like road trips only because it’s hard to be in a car for hours when he can’t touch Ilya properly or distract him too much.

I always want to, he thinks.

And Ilya would never say no to him.

Shane huffs before wrapping his arms around Ilya’s neck and pulling him into a kiss. Ilya grins into it, tightening his embrace on Shane’s waist and holding him flush against his chest. They stay that way for a while, and Shane takes his time, sliding his tongue inside Ilya’s mouth and deepening the kiss.

It’s not until a minute later that they both hear a familiar voice that can only belong to one girl.

“Go take Katenka,” Ilya instructs, landing a light slap on Shane’s ass. Shane gives him a warning glare before letting out a small laugh and showing Ilya the middle finger. “Stop being naughty. Bring my baby here.”

Shane rolls his eyes and opens the backseat door.

“Daddy!” Katya beams at him, making grabby hands in the air. Shane reaches out to wipe a dried trail of spit on her chin, unbuckling her. Her wide eyes are still hazy with sleep but full

of adoration and curiosity only children have.

“Come on. We’re going to look at the mountains and take so many pictures!” Shane says with enthusiasm. “You want to pose with Papa?” he asks, tilting his head suggestively.

“Can I climb on his shoulders?” she asks, her voice excited and loud as if she hadn’t been seeing a fifth dream just three minutes ago. “Please, please, please. I want to climb Papa’s shoulders!” She throws her arms into the air and giggles.

It’s always hard for Shane to say no to her.

“Okay, sweetheart. But be careful. Papa isn’t made of steel.”

“Yes, he is!” she protests, crossing her little arms over her chest.

Shane puts her on the ground, and she, without waiting a second, runs toward Ilya. Ilya squats down when he spots her running, opening his arms wide for her to melt into. Her clumsy legs stumble quickly before Ilya meets her in his bear hold and picks her up. She lets out a blaring chuckle as Ilya gently tosses her up into the sky before catching her and repeating the movement. Again and again.

“Who’s my favorite little girl?” Ilya asks, booping her nose.

“Katya, Katya, Katya!”

“Правильно, Катя,” he says reassuringly. “Ты моя самая любимая девочка на свете!”

Katya must understand what he’s saying because when he finishes his sentence, she laughs and kisses his cheek uncoordinatedly, clinging onto him. Ilya constantly uses Russian to talk to her, and she’s clearly fast to pick it up, always answering him with excited Russian words of her own.

Shane watches the scene unfold with amusement, warmth spreading down his body. He can’t be more grateful for what he has right now. Rummaging through his bag, he finds what he’s looking for—a camera he enjoys using to capture Katya’s childhood and their life with Ilya.

“All right, stand here,” Shane announces, motioning to the spot where the view behind them looks the best. Katya wriggles impatiently.

“Take me?” she says, looking up at Ilya and making a pleading face, pouting her lower lip forward. “On shoulders, Papa! Please!”

“Хулиганка маленькая.” Ilya picks her up anyway and sets her on his back. Her legs hang down each side of Ilya’s shoulders, and she happily grips Ilya by his curls, fingers hiding in the nest of his hair. “Look at the camera, малышка.”

Shane brings his camera to his face before closing one eye and focusing on the view inside it. Big, cheerful grins spread across both Ilya and Katya’s faces, teeth showing, even though hers are still tiny. The long view of mountains stretches behind them, the sky bright blue and

clear. The green colors fill the picture, along with the people Shane can't imagine his life without.

"Katya, here!" he tells her, snapping his fingers to get her attention. She starts giggling and hiding behind Ilya's head, shy. Ilya notices and makes a goofy face, telling her to repeat after him. They both extend their tongues forward, and Shane sighs, taking at least thirty pictures to not miss a thing.

Ilya puts her on the ground and brings Shane closer. Shane meets his gaze, understanding everything Ilya's eyes are silently telling him.

Katya starts running around, trying to catch a butterfly with just her palms. Shane takes that free moment to take a selfie with Ilya, kissing him and capturing the memory that, without a doubt, he will remember with profound nostalgia.

They take at least fifty more pictures of each other and the surrounding nature. Ilya starts the car, and Shane passes Katya all the snacks, letting her choose whatever she wants, but still insisting on eating the vegetables and nuggets first. He gives Ilya a sandwich he made, sharing his half with Katya, who happily bites into the bread.

When she's finished eating, Shane takes his iPad from the bag and puts on the downloaded Masha and the Bear, a Russian cartoon that Ilya insists Katya watch. She absolutely adores it. If she's upset, quiet, or bored, she always asks for it. Shane can never say no. He loves his daughter so much that limiting screen time feels impossible when she gives him puppy eyes and stares at him with almost-kill-like sadness. She's a good actress—great, even—and Shane always gives in.

"You want something else to eat?" he asks Ilya, touching the nape of his neck and squeezing to release some tension in his muscles. Ilya pleasantly exhales.

"Do we have something sweet?"

Shane rolls his eyes playfully. Ilya is predictable. "No, I haven't packed anything. We only have fruit," he lies.

Ilya's brows scrunch as he looks at him.

"Shane! You seriously didn't take anything besides sandwiches, vegetables, and fucking fruit?"

"Nope, and don't cuss," Shane replies, but a smirk spreads across his face. Ilya raises his brows and squeezes his knee fake-meanly when he sees it.

"I knew you were lying," Ilya says simply, tapping Shane's leg.

Shane reaches into his bag and gets out some home-baked chocolate chip cookies, a healthier alternative to what they sell at stores. Ilya opens his mouth, eyes on the road, while his chin turns toward Shane.

"I'm not feeding you. We already have a baby in the backseat," he notes, teasing.

Katya's head snaps from the screen when she hears. "I want a cookie too, Daddy!"

Again, Shane can't say no, so he gives her a cookie.

"Come on, милый," Ilya whines, putting on his pleading eyes. Just like Katya does when she wants something. Shane can't resist it, so he feeds Ilya the cookie, catching the crumbles with his other hand, like he doesn't already have a baby.

Ilya hums in approval and licks Shane's hand before Shane can snatch it away.

"Hey!"

"What? I love you." Ilya leans and makes ducky lips at Shane. Shane kisses him swiftly, tasting the vanilla from the cookie.

Another hour passes in silence. Shane rests his head on the small pillow under his ear, while Katya drifts somewhere between sleep and waking, murmuring a song under her breath. Ilya drives steadily, legs apart, one hand on the wheel, the other lifting a cup to his lips. Shane has tucked a travel pillow under Ilya's neck, helping him make the drive more snug. Shane's eyes are half-closed, and he's almost asleep.

That is, until a broad hand shakes his knee. Shane stirs and opens one eye, staring sleepily at Ilya in confusion.

Ilya chuckles at his groggy expression. "Look to your right, малыш." He nods toward Shane's window. Shane lowers the pillow—and his breath catches.

Thousands of cows and horses stretch out in a seemingly endless line, all different colors, shapes, and sizes. They graze lazily, tails swinging side to side, occasionally lifting their heads to look around. Shane stares at the animals in awe—it's not often he gets a view like this, so alive and full of nature.

Ilya slows the car down on purpose.

Shane's immediate reaction is to wake his daughter—he knows how much she would love to see this rare sight.

"Baby," he coos almost in a whisper, shaking her gently by the ankle. Her heavy eyelids flutter open.

"Daddy?" she asks drowsily, rubbing her eyes with her tiny fists.

"Come here," he tells her. Shane can tell Ilya is surprised by the request but doesn't comment. He knows it's not entirely safe, but he doesn't want her to miss this moment. He climbs out of his seat to unbuckle her carefully, and in a second she's perched in his lap. She stands lightly on his legs to get a better look, and he steadies her gently by the sides. Her eyes are wide, taking in the view outside.

"So many animals, right?"

She nods without hesitation, her mouth opening in interest.

“Look. This one is a mama. And that’s her baby,” Shane says, pointing to a big cow and a smaller one chewing green grass side by side. He watches Katya’s face light up, and he can’t stop his lips from curling upward.

“Like you and me?” Katya asks cheerfully, clapping her hands and waiting for his answer.

Shane smiles and nods. “Yes, like you and me, sweetheart.”

She lets out an amused gasp, her little feet pressing into Shane’s thighs, but he doesn’t mind. This moment is far more important to her than any discomfort he feels.

She points to a shiny white horse.

“A unicorn!” she screams, palm closing around her mouth in shock. Shane laughs, taking in the moment—his daughter truly believing there’s a unicorn in front of her as they drive through the fields, while Ilya snorts quietly. His gaze keeps returning to them, warm and soft. Shane’s chest tightens with affection as he watches Ilya reach out to tickle the back of Katya’s legs, and she turns to blow raspberries at him.

Ilya does the same in return, and Shane can’t help but feel like there are two four-year-olds in the car.

“Where did she even learn that attitude?” Ilya asks, mock-accusing.

“*Definitely* not from you,” Shane replies teasingly, just like their daughter.

“My little girl. Makes sense she looks like me then.”

“Hey!”

“What? Is true, Shane. Look at her.”

Shane looks at her—and Ilya is right. She’s a perfect miniature of his husband. The thought doesn’t bother him.

“Maybe we should have another one. The one that will look like me.”

Ilya’s brows shoot up. “Are you serious?”

“Yes. I mean, we’d have to think about it, plan everything—”

“I want it,” Ilya interrupts, breaking Shane’s sentence.

Shane stares at him, wide-eyed, gently patting Katya’s back as she stares out the window, completely oblivious to the life-changing decision that just passed between her dads.

Shane inhales, bracing himself before speaking.

“Ya khochu ot tebya yeshche odnogo rebenka,” he announces proudly, even though the Russian slips awkwardly from his mouth.

Ilya freezes mid-drive. His hands tighten on the wheel as he turns to look at Shane. Shane just told him he wants another child—in Russian, in the middle of the road.

“Shane,” Ilya breathes, half-laughing, half-shocked. “You can’t say that to me while I’m driving, baby. How am I—?”

Shane lays a hand on Ilya’s bicep, grounding both of them. “I know,” he says quietly. He licks his lips, and Ilya’s eyes follow the movement like a magnet. “We’ll talk about it later, okay?” He subtly nods toward Katya, still pressed to the window, despite the animals no longer in sight.

Ilya nods, but his eyes darken, saying everything without a single word. Shane knows that look: Ilya wants to consume him whole and tear him apart. It’s not the time or the place for a look like that, Shane knows. Yet a shiver runs through him, intense and thrilling under Ilya’s gaze.

Ilya shifts back into the rhythm of the road, and a soft, shared chuckle breaks the moment. Shane opens the window to let the fresh air in, breathing deep, holding Katya’s body against him, and brushing a hand through her curls.

The promise of what’s to come sits inside him, hopeful.

A sudden scream shatters the quiet.

“No!” Katya shouts, her legs stomping against Shane’s thighs as she twists in panic. He catches her instinctively.

“Katya, what’s wrong?” he asks, heart tightening. She points tremblingly at the corner of the car panel.

“Bee! Daddy, there’s a bee!” Her voice cracks, shaking with fear. Shane squints and spots it—a fat, buzzing intruder sitting calmly where it has no business. He opens his mouth to calm her down, but the bee suddenly flutters.

Katya screams louder, burying her face in Shane’s shoulder.

“Ilya, pull over!” Shane yells, trying to keep his own nerves from unraveling. Ilya glances at him and obliges, slowing the car to a stop.

Shane leans back in the seat, holding Katya tight. The bee hovers just inches from them, wings buzzing furiously. Shane freezes, every muscle alert, pulse hammering—but he can’t help laughing softly at the absurdity of it all.

Ilya presses the button, and the window slides down fully. The bee buzzes upward and disappears into the sky, finally leaving them in peace.

But Katya starts crying despite that happening, small hands reaching out.

“Shh, it’s okay,” Shane soothes, hugging her to his chest. “It’s gone now. See? All safe.”

“No...” she hiccups, shaking her head. “I want Papa.”

The car sits at the edge of the road, other vehicles passing by like the world continues without them. Without a word, Ilya leans over and lifts Katya onto his lap, turning her face to his. Her body melts into him instantly, and Shane can’t help but smile softly, lips pressed together, watching them.

“Девочка моя,” Ilya whispers, cradling her head. Katya immediately responds to his Russian words, looking up at him. Tears run down her chubby cheeks like a waterfall, and Ilya gently wipes them away with his finger. “Ты чего? Ты ведь у меня такая смелая, да?”

She hiccups again but nods. “Brave.”

“Yes, you are so brave, малышка,” Ilya praises, caressing her. She clutches the hem of his dark t-shirt, fists tightly wrapped around the fabric. “We are all safe now, yes? Just the three of us again.”

She peers into his eyes with a serious expression, then looks around, making sure everything is okay herself. Shane observes them, and it hits him like the first time—Katya clinging to Ilya, his strong arms holding her small body, protecting her from the whole world, even when no real danger exists.

Ilya glances at Shane, and Shane notices his eyes are watery. He rests his palm on Ilya’s leg while Katya breathes into the crook of his neck, heavy, but calming in her Papa’s presence.

“I think she’s hungry.” Ilya blinks through his tears, the sadness giving way to a grateful smile as he looks down at their daughter. “Are you hungry, моя милая девочка?”

Katya nods frantically, and relief washes over Shane as she finally stops crying. Ilya retrieves her plush dinosaur from the backseat and gives it to her, kissing the crown of her head.

“What do you want to eat? Papa will get you whatever you want.”

“Whatever?” she asks, pouty but bright-eyed.

“Whatever you want, ангелок.”

“McDonald’s!” she exclaims, her fear and tears forgotten.

“My baby wants McDonald’s?”

“Da!”

Shane squeezes Ilya’s knee and leans down to kiss Katya on the back and anywhere else he can reach. He doesn’t bother reminding Ilya that McDonald’s isn’t healthy—for tonight, he’s happy to bend the rules for their little girl.

They find the nearest McDonald's down the road and stop at the McDrive. Shane orders a salad and tea for himself, while Ilya grabs two thick burgers, fries, and a large Coke. *Of course.* Katya enthusiastically announces her order into the speaker—a Happy Meal with a cheeseburger, small fries, and orange juice.

The mood in the car transforms as the warm, salty scent of the food fills the air. Shane breaks Katya's cheeseburger into four small pieces, removes the straw wrapper from her drink, and places it at her lips. She takes tiny sips, sighing dramatically as the orange juice soothes her throat.

“Good, baby?” Shane asks, smiling as all three of them chew together.

“So good, Daddy!” she declares, bouncing in her seat and deliberately smacking on her fries. “I love you!”

Shane and Ilya exchange a surprised glance. It's rare for Katya to say it unprompted—only when she's truly, utterly happy.

“I love you too, baby,” they say in unison before breaking into laughter. Ilya steals a quick kiss from Shane, making Katya beam, her eyes sparkling.

“I love you, I love you, I love you!” she yells, pressing their faces together so their noses bump.

Shane kisses Ilya again, and Ilya makes playful biting sounds at Shane's neck, entertaining Katya. She claps and giggles before leaning back in her seat with a contented sigh. It makes Shane feel completely at ease—his husband, his daughter, all together on a road trip, full of McDonald's and smiles.

Their own little family.

End Notes

Thank you for reading this sweet, tender story. Writing it made me cry, so I'm really channeling and healing my inner child here. Comments, kudos, and any thoughts are very appreciated 💖

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