

how I've lived 'til now, I tell them I don't know

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by [imbihesgay](#)

Summary

Still, there's something that sticks in his chest about all of this, feeling like somehow, he's failed. Baby should have turned on her own by now. What is he doing wrong? Everything else about the pregnancy so far has been textbook. He's done everything right- his diet, his exercise routine, prenatal yoga, Lamaze class, protein shakes, oil massages-

Seriously, he's done every single thing the pregnancy books advised him to do. He hasn't missed a single one.

Yet, somehow, he's failed at this. And this is pretty fucking important. If she's not head down, he can't safely deliver her. And if he can't do that-

Christ.

Shane exhales again, rubbing his hands deliberately over the aching stretch of skin on his belly. He pushes against her stubborn little foot, low on his side.

"Why don't you wanna flip, little girl?" he asks softly, brows furrowed. "I did the stupid elephant walk and I burned moxa at my feet. I've done the stretches, I let your dad massage my belly, I've tried everything. What am I doing wrong, hm?"

-or, shane is 36wks pregnant with their first baby, and she's being stubborn about flipping head down-

Notes

YE BE WARNED, MPREG, PREGNANT SEX, COMPLETE AND UTTER FUDGING OF HUMAN ANATOMY FOR FUN!

this is simply a stupid domestic slice of life fluff piece that i wanted to write because shane hollander is so fucking cute sometimes it makes my teeth ache and my bones tremble. unbeta'd written in one hollanov-induced late night trance. probably ooc, if it ain't your jam, just keep scrollin man!

thanks for reading!! please be nice in the comments im sensitive aubrey!! this is all just for
funsies bc im insane and horny!

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

Shane exhales, allowing the hot water to beat down on his back, droplets moving down his spine like the rivulets of condensation on a glass. He feels a bit like that, right now- like glass. Like he's something fragile and breakable, like even the gentlest pressure, applied too tightly, might shatter him.

He looks down at his protruding belly, skin stretched over his growing baby, water pirouetting off his swollen shape. His back throbs, sciatica absolutely killing him. Wet strands of hair fall into his eyes and he brushes them back with shaking fingers, blinking droplets of water off his eyelashes. The baby shifts, pressing a firm kick to his side, and he ghosts his fingertips over the movement, breathing out again.

It was a long day. He's thirty-six weeks pregnant, and his baby still hasn't turned head down. He has tried everything under the sun to get her to flip, the stubborn little thing, but she just won't rotate properly. They've scheduled him for what his doctor nonchalantly called a "baby flip" next week, though he knows that isn't the medical term for it. There are (albeit, small) risks with the procedure, but the doctor seems confident it'll be successful, and will keep them on track for a natural birth, which is what he wants. He wants to avoid surgery.

Still, there's something that sticks in his chest about all of this, feeling like somehow, he's failed. Baby should have turned on her own by now. What is he doing wrong? Everything else about the pregnancy so far has been textbook. He's done everything right- his diet, his exercise routine, prenatal yoga, Lamaze class, protein shakes, oil massages-

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"Why don't you wanna flip, little girl?" he asks softly, brows furrowed. "I did the stupid elephant walk and I burned moxa at my feet. I've done the stretches, I let your dad massage my belly, I've tried *everything*. What am I doing wrong, hm?"

"You've done nothing wrong, moy lyubimyy."

A voice from the doorway startles him, and he curses under his breath, seeing Ilya walk into the bathroom. He's wearing a pair of black joggers and a t-shirt, arms crossed over his chest thoughtfully as he approaches the shower.

"I thought you were in the kitchen," Shane mutters, cupping his hands under his belly to help lighten the weight as he shifts his heels.

"Kitchen is clean," Ilya assures him, "what does baby have to say? Did she enjoy dinner?"

“I think so,” Shane tells him, speaking over the rush of water from the showerhead, “she’s been kicking the hell out of my kidneys. I swear, she’s too big to be moving around like this.”

“How rude of her,” Ilya muses, stepping closer until he’s resting his shoulder against the shower door. “What do you think? There is room for one more?”

Shane arches an eyebrow with confusion. “One more baby? Inside of me? Are you crazy?”

“Oh my god, Hollander, I meant one more person in the shower. You are insane.”

“Oh, thank god. Yeah there’s room.”

Chuckling, Ilya strips out of his clothing and pulls the shower door open, quickly stepping in and closing it back up. Steam rises between them as he steps forward until their bellies are pressed together, Shane’s a much more obvious obstacle. The baby kicks again, as if somehow sensing Ilya’s presence, and he beams, feeling her against his own stomach. He loves to do this, press their tummies together and feel her movements against his skin. He says he likes when she’s safe here, squished between them. He feels close to her, and to Shane.

“You know,” Ilya murmurs, reaching out to gently stroke his thumb over the thick indent of a stretch mark on Shane’s side, “doctor said there was nothing more you could do. You already have tried everything to get her to turn.”

Shane sighs. “Yeah, I know.”

“So why are you still blaming yourself when it is not your fault?” Ilya reaches out with his other hand and brushes his fingertips lightly over the spray of freckles across Shane’s nose and cheeks. His touch lingers, something yearning and seeking in the soft press of his fingers against Shane’s flushed skin.

“I’m not,” he lies, like a liar.

“Mm. You are bad liar.”

“I know.”

“Then why attempt?”

Because I don’t want you to worry about me anymore than you already are.

“I’m fine,” Shane insists, shaking his head. “I’m just overwhelmed, I think. The baby flip thing is scary. And if it doesn’t work, that’s scarier.”

“I know,” Ilya murmurs, leaning in to gently move his lips against the bone in Shane’s cheek. The kiss is featherlight, soft and sweet like a lush strawberry. Shane laments the loss of contact when Ilya pulls back. “But you are brave, and strong, and so is she. It will be okay.”

“I wish that kind of pep talk would work on me right now,” Shane replies briskly. He feels bad for being such a Debbie Downer, but right now, he just needs to wallow. This isn’t going

the way he hoped. He has a detailed, ten-page birth plan, and nowhere in it is a c-section his chosen method.

“What will work on you, hm?” Ilya asks, leaning in again to part Shane’s lips with his own.

The shorter man lets out a shuddering exhale, feeling the tension in his muscles soften at the feeling of Ilya’s mouth on his. This always has a way of breaking down his walls, unwinding his tightly coiled tension, pulling him apart like sticky bread.

“More...more of that,” he breathes, eyes closing as he feels Ilya’s lips begin to decorate his jaw and cheek with kisses. He moves slowly down to the sharp edge of his chin, then the column of his throat, stretched back to show each curve and delicate line. His mouth nestles in the hollow space between his throat and chest, kissing and sucking gently. One hand still cups Shane’s belly, the other one coming up to squeeze his chest, though delicately, so as not to encourage any unwanted milk stimulation.

The back of Shane’s head thunks against the glass wall of the shower, breaths speeding up as Ilya slowly lowers himself to his knees in front of Shane, still trailing his lips and tongue down his warm, wet body.

Once Ilya is eye-level with Shane’s navel, he cups his hands around both sides of his swollen belly, sighing in a way that’s dripping with affection. His lashes flutter, almost dreamy as he takes in his eyeful of tummy.

“You are so beautiful,” Ilya breathes, pressing a kiss to Shane’s stomach, smiling against the harsh foot that thuds into his nose. “So strong, so brave, so perfect, growing our baby.”

“Stop,” Shane insists, though his eyes flutter closed, lost in the sensation of Ilya touching all over his sensitive skin.

Ilya hand glides around, fingers trailing along the stretch marks on his sides and hips, tracing the curving indentures of skin. He glides around until he’s got a palm full of Shane’s thick ass, grunting as he pulls Shane closer to him.

“So fucking beautiful,” he practically purrs, gripping the skin greedily. “Pretty belly, perfect fucking ass, fuck, Hollander. You are so good for me, can’t believe you are real.”

“Ilya,” he whines quietly, hips tensing and flexing as he feels his cock draw to attention from both the praise, and the touching.

“Fuck, you’re hard already,” Ilya coos, bringing his lips down to the dripping head of Shane’s cock. He smirks, tongue extending to slowly drag along the wet slit. Shane gasps and shudders, fists clenching.

“Shit,” he gasps, “Ilya, fuck.”

“Mm, is good? Want to make you feel good.”

“So good,” he manages to scrape out through his suddenly blinding arousal. “More, more.”

“You beg so pretty.”

“Fuck, Ilya, please.”

Nonchalantly, Ilya wraps his hand around the thick, hard heft of Shane’s dick. He pumps it once, experimentally, and Shane whines with desperation.

“Want to taste you,” Ilya tells him, shuffling back so they can make eye contact without the obstacle of Shane’s belly in the way.

Shane huffs a breath, frowning. “Then, do it.”

“Not what I meant.” He shakes his head, teasing a finger around the crack of Shane’s ass, eyebrows arching suggestively.

“Oh, oh fuck yes.” Shane nods eagerly. “Um, should I-” He falters, unsure of how to position his large, confusingly shaped body.

“Let me help.” Ilya swiftly rises to his feet and takes Shane by the hips, bending him over. He helps guide Shane’s left knee until it’s resting on the little ledge in the shower, hands braced above that to keep himself steady. His knee resting on the ledge helps relieve him of too much pressure, and spreads his hips beautifully. His back throbs, but the thought of Ilya eating him out is too enticing to care.

“Is okay?” Ilya checks, gliding his hand down the curve of Shane’s spine. His back is arched deeply from the weight of his middle, and it hurts, but he doesn’t care.

Shane nods hungrily. “It’s fine. Please.”

“You tell me to stop, for any reason, yeah?”

“Of course, I know Ilya.”

“Promise me.”

“Yes, I’ll tell you to stop if anything hurts.”

Ilya nods, bringing his lips down to press against the scar on Shane’s shoulder. He smiles against the warm skin, kissing down his back until his mouth finds Shane’s ass. He bites roughly into the dimpled flesh, and Shane whines.

“Such a pretty fucking ass,” Ilya murmurs, “want to touch and lick that beautiful hole.”

“Please,” Shane repeats pathetically. His dick aches, yearning for some sort of relief, but the waiting is so good.

He feels the flesh part, and Ilya’s expert finger glides in, calloused tip of his index finger gently brushing Shane’s rim. He shudders, body tensing up eagerly. He presses down on Shane’s hole, and he whimpers.

“So pretty,” Ilya purrs. “Have to taste.”

Then, his tongue replaces the pad of his finger, and Shane yelps at the sudden feeling. His eyes fall shut, and his head drapes forward, his hips push back involuntarily against Ilya’s face.

It feels so fucking good. His tongue pressing and teasing just the right way, circling his hole and nudging inside. God, fuck, it feels so fucking *good*.

Ilya’s hand comes back around to carefully wrap around Shane’s aching cock, and the pregnant man whines loudly, throat vibrating with the expressed sound. Ilya chuckles quietly, and begins to stroke his hand down the length of his dick.

It’s overwhelming, the sensations. His tongue and lips, kissing and teasing in just the right rhythm. His big, warm hand and all the friction of a dry handjob stimulating his achingly hard cock. Shane moans lewdly, knees trembling. He isn’t going to last long. Everything is so sensitive these days, and this is going to push him over the edge.

“Ilya,” he whines, unable to help the bucking of his hips back against the other man’s face.

“Taste...so...nice...” Ilya breathes, alternating his tongue and his finger at attention to Shane’s hole. “So pretty, so fucking good for me, fuck.”

“I want you to fuck me,” Shane whines. “Please Ilya, fuck me like this.”

“Fuck, I have to go get-”

“Go! Hurry!”

The sensations are removed abruptly, and Shane finds himself crying out with discomfort at the sudden loss of feeling. A flush of cold air invades his warm cocoon as Ilya opens the shower door to carefully step out and shuffle toward the adjoining bedroom. Shane pants heavily, unable to move from his position without any assistance.

Ilya is back like lightning, lube bottle in hand. He soaks his finger and Shane’s hole, then drives his finger inside. Shane whines out greedily.

“Please,” he begs, hips bucking again, “fuck me, Ilya. Need you.”

“So greedy,” Ilya murmurs, kissing Shane’s shoulderblade tenderly. “Need me?”

“Please.”

Ilya nods again, and Shane hears the lube bottle expressed once more. Ilya lines up behind him, hard cock pressing into the lush shape of his ass. “Tell me how you are feeling, da?”

“Fine, fine, just do it.”

Ilya gradually presses forward, the tip of his hard dick just teasing Shane’s entrance. It’s quiet, just the beating of hot water against their bodies, and the heavy panting from their

slack mouths. His hands grip Shane's ample hips, and he slowly drives forward, sinking, sinking deeper and deeper until Shane feels him bottom out.

"Ohhh," he whines, forehead falling forward into the shower wall.

"Shane? Is okay?" Ilya asks with what sounds like tremendous self-restraint.

Overcome, Shane can only nod his assurance. His brain feels fuzzy, empty of any thoughts that aren't Ilya's cock inside of him, or his hands on his skin. It's just Ilya, and Shane in this tiny, serene, steaming little nook of the world.

Carefully at first, Ilya begins moving his hips. He rocks against Shane, still holding the other man steady by the waist, allowing him to stretch nicely and adjust to the rhythm. It's good, so good, just what he needed. Ilya, filling up all of his senses.

He feels lips press into his back, hands glide down his wet skin- touching him all over. Something that's a nightmare in any other circumstance, he welcomes right now. Ilya's hands all over him, hungry, seeking, yearning for closeness that surpasses that of a simple cuddle. They need this now, to share Shane's body, to connect at their most base level.

"Fuck," Shane whimpers, forehead still pressed against the glass wall, "oh...Ilya..."

"So fucking tight for me, baby," Ilya groans, "feel so fucking good."

"I love you," Shane whines, gasping as Ilya's pace speeds up.

"Fuck, I love you more." Ilya is kissing him again, teeth grazing the skin of his shoulder, his neck, the back of his head, anywhere he can reach with his desperate mouth. It goes quiet then, just the running water, the sound of skin slapping against skin, and Shane's broken moaning, growing more intense with each second.

Ilya reaches around again, gliding his hand up and down the length of Shane's cock. It's so hard it feels like he could actually die, all the blood in his body entirely redirected to that one, pulsing, aching area. Nothing will fix him, nothing except for Ilya. He needs this like he needs water, or oxygen.

"Oh god," Shane's voice hits another octave as Ilya's thrusts deepen, accelerate, harder and harder. He forgets everything. He forgets baby flipping and self-blame and c-sections, he forgets all of it. There is nothing in the world except this warm, steamy shower, and Ilya's cock inside of him.

"Come for me," Ilya murmurs against his cheek, teeth nipping at his earlobe.

Shane whines, feeling the callousness of Ilya's thumb brushing over the dripping slit of his cock as he continues to pump up and down. The sensation is overwhelming as is.

Then, Ilya gently presses down on his lower back, bending him even further in half. It's difficult with his swollen belly, but he does as he's instructed, pushing his hips back against Ilya's pelvis, crying out when the hard head of his dick presses firmly against his prostate.

It's that sudden, unexpected jolt of sensation that drags him over the edge. Shane cries out, cock spurting all over Ilya's hand, and the underside of his swollen belly. His palms press flat against the shower wall, bracing his trembling body as Ilya continues to slam against his prostate.

"Oh fuck, Shane, you're so pretty when you come," Ilya moans, his forehead falling between Shane's shoulder blades as his hips jerk, and he too finds his release inside of Shane.

It takes a few moments for them both to come back into their bodies, panting heavily, breaths ragged, bodies like licorice against each other. Shane feels utterly boneless, he's not even sure how he's still holding himself up. His mind is a blank slate, filled with only thoughts of his husband.

"Shane?" Ilya whispers gently, brushing his fingers through the wet hair on the back of his head. "Are you okay? Anything hurting?"

"My back," he rasps out.

"Okay, okay, let me help."

Carefully, Ilya maneuvers him so he's sitting on the ledge instead of bent over it. His thighs spread almost involuntarily from the weight and shape of his belly, and he exhales a breathless sigh.

"I clean you up, then we will get out." Ilya smiles at him, blissed out and gentle.

Shane nods, giving him a syrupy smile.

Once they're all cleaned up, Ilya helps Shane out over the lip of the shower door and dries him off with a fluffy white towel. It's all very quiet and domestic, tender motions of caretaking that leave Shane swaying on his feet with ease. Ilya squats in front of him to rub cocoa butter over his stretched skin, delicately rubbing it into the stretch marks. It's doing absolutely nothing for them, but it does help relieve the itch of his flesh, so Shane lets him. And, Ilya insists it makes him feel closer to the baby.

He dresses in soft cotton pajama bottoms and an oversized McGill t-shirt his dad left here years ago. Shane's pretty sure he has a photo of his dad wearing it the year he met his mom, somewhere in the cottage. The photo makes Shane feel nostalgic for a time he wasn't even alive for, if that's possible, knowing how long his parents have loved each other.

It's the kind of love he knows his own child will get to see in her parents.

"Are you hungry?" Ilya asks as he follows Shane's slow waddle into the bedroom.

Honestly, the answer to that is sort of always *yes* these days. Shane hesitates though, because they did already eat dinner a few hours ago, and he had a really big breakfast and-

"That hesitation is yes," Ilya says, "go sit down, I will bring snacks."

He disappears before Shane can object.

Obligingly, Shane waddles over to the bed and carefully lowers himself down against the stacked pillows. He grabs the long, plush pregnancy pillow and threads it through his thighs, trying to keep his aching hips open as he spreads his legs in a butterfly shape. The pressure on his hips and lower back is nothing short of agonizing, but he can't complain.

It's moments after that Ilya returns with a freshly filled water bottle and armful of snacks that he sets carefully on the bedside table. Shane sips from the ice cold water and watches as Ilya unwraps a Snickers bar and passes it to Shane expectantly.

The baby kicks hard against his side, and he sighs. It's no use arguing with his stubborn child. He wants the Snickers more than air.

He accepts the candy bar and begins devouring it while Ilya settles in beside him with his own snack. Post-coital cigarettes have long since been replaced with snacks for him, because he always worried about the secondhand smoke around Shane. Ilya bites into his own chocolate bar, scooching down until his head is resting on Shane's lap, cheek smushed into the swell of his belly under the t-shirt.

Shane uses one hand to hold his candy bar, and the other to thread his fingers delicately through the thick, wet tresses of curls on Ilya's head. It's quiet for a few moments, serene and gentle between them. The baby kicks happily and they enjoy their snacks in the soft orange glow of lamplight in their bedroom.

After a few beats, Ilya murmurs, "you know you are doing a good job. The best job. You know that, da?"

Shane swallows, throat tight and dry. "What?"

"You have been so strong, whole pregnancy. So brave. Following all the rules and doing the hard things. Throwing up every morning, and then so tired and achey, but still exercising and eating so healthy and going to every doctor visit, taking every test. You are doing every possible thing you can do."

His grip tightens in Ilya's hair fractionally, but he forces himself to relax. He knows Ilya is worried about his tendency to self-blame, especially about things that are out of control, like their baby flipping.

"I'm scared," he admits, voice rough around the vulnerable words. "And I feel responsible for her, right now. I mean, I *am* responsible for her. I'm literally sharing my body with her. How could I live with myself if-

"If what?" Ilya interjects, looking up at him over the swell of his belly with his forehead crinkled in concern. "You would blame yourself, if she needed to be taken out by surgery? You would think was your fault?"

Shane hesitates. Logically? No, of course not. How could that be his fault? He knows that, in his brain. But his heart doesn't. She's of his body, he should be able to-

“That is crazy,” Ilya informs him matter-of-factly. “Shane, seriously, what are you not doing that you *could* be doing to turn her?”

He pauses at that, trying to process Ilya’s words. Trying to think about this logically. He supposes his husband makes a valid argument. There is nothing else he *can* do right now. Nature will either take its course, or he’ll be in the doctor’s office next week, praying the baby flip thing works.

“Look at me, Shane,” Ilya continues when he finds himself wordless. Shane immediately meets his eyes, and tries to ignore the subtle pleased glimpse in Ilya’s gaze at the immediate obedience. “You are doing every single thing right. You have given her everything. Your strength, your bravery, your body, your love. There is nothing else to give, moy lyubimyy.”

Tears threaten the corners of his eyes, as he brings his hands down to cup the round shape of his middle. Her kicks flutter against his palms, and he swallows the lump in his throat. It aches going down, sticks in his chest like concrete. Ilya is right, he knows. Shane has given everything to their daughter. He’s scarified his comfort, his safety, his body, everything he could give, he gave.

So why does he still feel so guilty?

“I’m sorry,” is all he manages to get out, “I don’t know how to stop feeling like this. I feel like if it isn’t perfect I’ve failed her somehow. I- I don’t know why. I just want her to be okay.”

“So do I, sweetheart,” Ilya says, pushing himself until he’s upright. Their eyes meet, solemn and somber in the soft, glowing lamplight. “But you can not start her life by feeling guilty for things that are not your fault. There will be plenty of mistakes we make that we can feel bad for, da? But not the things that we try our best at.”

Shane breathes out, chest expanding, skin flushed. He knows Ilya is right. He has to stop beating himself up so much for the things he can’t possibly control. If he starts out in the negatives, he’s going to make all of this stuff so much more difficult on himself.

“I don’t know why I’m so hard on myself,” he mutters, reaching out to catch Ilya’s fingers in his.

“Because your entire life, you have had too much weight on your shoulders,” Ilya answers a question he wasn’t *really* asking. “Too much pressure. Too much responsibility for things that you could not always control. So did I. But we do not do that to ourselves anymore, da? Fresh start. For her.”

He brings their joined hands down to rest over Shane’s belly, feeling her active movements under their fingers. Shane likes the idea of that- a clean slate for their family. No more unnecessary pressure, no more pushing yourself to the boiling point, no more demanding more of yourself when you’ve already tapped everything you have.

“I guess that would be a good move,” Shane agrees quietly, “I really don’t want her to feel the way I did, growing up.”

Ilya hums quietly. “How did it feel?”

“Just, so much pressure, like you said. My parents didn’t mean to do it, you know, they love me. But I always felt like if I messed up, I’d disappoint them. Hockey especially but...well, it bled into other things, as you know.” He smiles weakly, then his face grows serious. “I would...feel fucking sick to my stomach if she ever thought she had to hide a piece of herself from us. Her mistakes or, or anything else.”

“We will teach her by example,” Ilya says confidently, “we take it easy on ourselves, we are allowed to make mistakes. So is she. It will be okay.”

“Okay.” Shane nods, unable to help the spread of his lips into a bright smile. “You’re gonna be such a great fucking dad, you know.”

Ilya’s eyes warm, his own face darkening with a blush he tries quickly to hide with an eye-roll and a flippant comment. “Of course, I am perfect at everything.”

“Ilya.” Shane squeezes his hand where it’s still resting over their baby, “we’re so lucky to have you.”

The other man looks at Shane like he’s just flicked on the sunlight and illuminated the world after an endless darkness.

“I am the lucky one,” Ilya whispers, words catching in his throat with emotion. “No matter what happens, I know is all okay, because I have you. And her.”

“Fuck.” Shane shakes his head, tears spilling out over his cheeks. “Not cool to make the hormonal man cry, you know. Kinda shitty.”

“Da, yes I am terrible.” Ilya rolls his eyes and leans in to press their lips together.

The kiss is sweet and salty with tears, tender in all the right ways. Chaste, but intense at the same time. Filled with things that are too scary to say, but spread between them in the brief heat of their embrace.

“I love you, Shane,” Ilya says against his lips, foreheads still pressed together.

“I love you too,” Shane replies softly.

For a few breaths, they stay there, foreheads together, mouths sweet with chocolate residue, bodies warm and cozy beside one another.

Then, because of course it does, Shane’s bladder reminds him that he’s currently in his third trimester of pregnancy, and he hasn’t peed in far too long.

“Hold please,” he says, shuffling awkwardly to the edge of the bed. “Your kid is stomping on my bladder.”

“She is rascal,” Ilya says as he helps Shane to his feet.

After he's finished with his business, they brush their teeth and climb back into bed, flicking off lights as they go. Exhaustion is starting to pull on Shane's body, the heavy weight of their long day dragging him down.

He nestles into the mattress on his side, back pressed into Ilya's chest while the other man spoons him. He feels lips brush against the back of his neck, big hands splayed out over his round belly, a security and comfort in this proximity he knows he'd never feel with another soul.

"Ya lyublyu tebya," Ilya whispers in his ear.

Shane lets out a dreamy sigh, eyes drifting shut as he murmurs back, "ya-loo-blue-tee-baa."

Ilya chuckles softly. "A very good try, sweetheart. Very good."

Shane falls asleep with that praise still ringing in his ears.

It's a feeling that wakes Shane from his dream.

The vision was a pleasant one - water lapping at his toes, a brilliant sun in the blue sky, Ilya's laughter drifting out from the lake, alongside the squealing giggle of a little girl.

Instead though, he now looks up through the darkness of night at their ceiling. He feels the baby inside him, shifting and squirming, and it's really uncomfortable. With a huff, he scooches upright, careful not to jostle his snoring husband beside him, and presses his back against the headboard, rubbing his belly to try and calm her restless movements. It's rarely so intense that it wakes him from a sound sleep.

"Ow, take it easy," he whispers, grimacing as her arms wriggle against his insides. It's such a bizarre feeling, to have an actual living human inside of you, moving around and shoving organs out of the way for their comfort.

"Shane?" Ilya mumbles himself into awareness, propping up on his elbows the second he sees Shane is upright.

"I'm fine, sorry I woke you." Shane winces, pressing his hand to the shifting skin of his belly. "Jesus, she's moving around like crazy."

His furrowed brow illuminated by moonlight, Ilya leans in, joining Shane's hand on his stomach. "Oh! Wow. Is it okay?"

"Kinda hurts," Shane admits, "but it's fine. This is just- weird- *oh*."

"What?" Ilya's voice is instantly alarmed, and he sits upright, studying Shane.

"Oh, shit, shit," Shane gasps, hands palpating his middle as he feels her adjusting, a strange sensation inside of him, but he tries to track the motions with the flat of his hand. The pressure shifts and wrestles within him, and his hips ache, a strain on his back. He can

physically feel some of the tightness of his lungs release, as she drops lower and relieves his upper body of some pressure.

“Shane?” Ilya presses, more urgently this time.

“I could be wrong, but, I think she’s turning,” Shane says, blinking rapidly as he feels around for her feet. The movement settles slightly, and he presses into his skin, trying to locate her head.

“Are you serious?” Ilya’s eyes go wide.

“Mhm.” Shane nods, still chasing her with his hands. His brow furrows, and he shifts his hips as she finally ceases her restless motions. He presses down, trying to get her to kick.

It takes a moment, but he finally feels the telltale nudge of her little foot against his palm. This time though, the movement is up above his ribcage, meaning...

“She flipped!” he exclaims, eyes going wide. “Shit, Ilya, she flipped! Her head is down here, feel.”

He grabs Ilya’s wrist and smushes his hand into his belly, sliding it until the heavy weight of her head on his pelvis is noticeable. Ilya looks shocked, though there’s the beginnings of a beaming smile tugging at his beautiful lips.

“Oh god,” Shane breathes out raggedly, “I’m so fucking relieved.”

“Da,” Ilya murmurs, words tender from his lips, “you did such a good job, moy lyubimyy.”

Shane blinks tears from his eyes, laughing in an elated sort of disbelief. “I didn’t really do anything, she kind of did all the work.”

“No, my heart,” Ilya says with a shake of his head, eyes swimming with an incalculable devotion. “You did *everything*.”

Shane takes his hand, kisses each of the knuckles underneath his soft skin, and smiles. He supposes, Ilya is right. Maybe he should let himself feel good about the wins, and not beat himself up so much for the losses.

“I’m so fucking glad I’m doing this with you,” he tells Ilya, voice tight with emotion, “you’re- you’re-”

“No.” Ilya shakes his head, leaning in until their lips brush. “*You* are.”

Shane doesn’t even feel the need to ask a million follow up questions to that vague statement, because somehow, he feels like he understands exactly what Ilya is trying to say.

You are everything. To me. To our baby. To our family. You are everything.

And, well, to him, Ilya is everything too. Or at least, *almost* everything.

“I love you, too,” he sniffs, cupping his hands around his belly, thumbs tenderly stroking over her wriggling little legs. “I love you so much, it almost fucking kills me.”

Ilya kisses him, and the baby kicks him, and even though he’s exhausted and uncomfortable and still has a long way to go when it comes to unlearning all of his self-blame, he knows it’s all going to be so worth it.

Maybe being glass doesn’t make him fragile- maybe it just means he was forged in fire.

And he should cut himself some fucking slack. If nothing more, to teach his baby girl that she should be kind to herself, too.

End Notes

he is a man -a beautiful man- and he's pregnant, ask no more of me when it comes to justifying any of this <3

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