

to keep it for you in sweetness

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by [lizook12](#)

Summary

It's a softball game for five and six year olds, they should probably keep the four letter words to a minimum.

Notes

Back already; they have taken over my brain and I'm not mad at it.

Title from *Robin* by Taylor Swift.

“Wait...” Ilya turns, his fingers tightening on the bleacher below him as he faces Shane. “Are they allowed to do that?”

“Hmm?” Pocketing his phone, Shane looks down to the softball field, tracking their daughter as she taps her foot at her spot on second base.

“The catcher, she was almost at third when she caught the ball.”

Shane smiles, waves goodbye to his parents, who are headed back to their house to let out Anya and start dinner. “Oh, yeah, that’s allowed. Anyone can make an out even if they’re not standing where their actual position is.”

“Why couldn’t she have at least picked soccer? This might as well be fucking curling—”

“Ilya.” Suppressing a laugh, Shane gestures to the other parents around them. No one seems to have heard or cared but... it’s a softball game for five and six year olds, they should probably keep the four letter words to a minimum.

“What, is true! There’s just so many...” He pauses, trying to find the perfect word to express his frustration. “Ridiculous rules. It’s absurd.”

Shane can’t really argue. Softball is complex—the infield fly rule alone is enough to make him go cross-eyed—but there’s something about those intricacies that he appreciates, enjoys getting to dig into.

And he gets it, at least he had a base knowledge of the sport. Somewhere to start, unlike his husband, but it’s still very funny.

The way two months into the season, Ilya is somehow completely lost in the game and also coaching from their spot in the stands, ready to challenge whatever the poor mother acting as umpire has ruled against their team.

In a way, it’s great that Breanna has chosen something completely hers though. She does love to skate, has a pretty deadly backhand, but that’s something for all of them. Family time where they can joke and play and bond.

This she found on her own.

“Hey, you liked curling.”

“Was fine.” Ilya elbows him, taps his foot against the metal beneath it. “I liked fighting you with the broom.”

“Yeah, no one was surprised by that.”

It had derailed the team event for at least fifteen minutes, Harris grinning as he took photo after photo of them jousting. It only ended when Shane’s feet slipped out from under him and Ilya, broom flung behind him, righted him the second before he hit the ice.

It was hot (because having Ilya Rozanov's speed unleashed in an attempt to save you from bodily harm was something to behold) and mortifying (because what kind of professional hockey player was he really) all at once.

"Bree, go! Go go go!" Ilya is on his feet, practically screaming as the ball trickles through the infield and their daughter takes off. She makes it to third with no problem and Shane lets out a breath he didn't realize he was holding.

How did his parents do this?

Go to countless games and not have a complete meltdown just wanting to see their kid succeed and thrive.

He's grateful for it, loves being a dad, but he's afraid he's going to be grey before Breanna is a teenager; Ilya claims it'll just make him even hotter.

"See, you get this more than you think." He settles back next to Ilya, twines their hands together as their shoulders bump.

"Is not hard on offense, the defense..."

"Yeah, well luckily Bree has one of the more straightforward positions." He bites back a sigh as Ilya's thumb brushes across his palm. "Lots to do at third, but they're the obvious plays. Nothing like the catcher needing to cover first at times or the pitcher deciding what to throw."

"Why does the catcher... actually, just point it out next time it happens, yes?"

"Sure."

Everything slows for a few minutes, the early evening air stirring slightly as the pitcher and catcher on the opposing team debate back and forth and back and forth. It's slightly hilarious because they're six, there's not much strategy to this game yet, but they're building habits for the future so Shane can't really blame them.

Still, Ilya starts muttering about pace of play in Russian and Shane is helpless against the laughter, muffling it against Ilya's hair as he grips his hand tighter. "Stop."

"What? I can't help that hockey goes—"

The sentence dies as contact is made again and their daughter rushes home, scoring a run and putting her team up by two. She high fives her coach, looks up to the stands and waves to them, and is heading back to her dugout when the clearly frustrated catcher from the other team kicks dirt at her.

"What the fuck was that?" Shane is on his feet immediately, almost dizzy from how fast he's stood.

"Shane."

“No, I mean, what the fuck *was* that? She could have actually made contact or gotten dirt in her eyes.”

“Shane.” Ilya’s hand tugs at the hem of his shirt, flattens against his stomach.

“Who are that girl’s parents? I want to—”

“Shane, she’s *our* daughter, she can handle it.” He finally succeeds in pulling Shane back down to the bench next to him, his leg pressing to Shane’s, hoping to settle him.

“Right, she definitely... right...” He pulls in a breath, looks back down to the field where some of the adults are having a discussion. His gaze flicks back to Breanna and his shoulders relax.

She *does* have it. She’s not yelling or trying to get back at the other girl, but the angle of her head, the Ilya-like cross of her arms, is more than enough.

She’s dealt with it.

“You definitely taught her well, Rozanov.”

He means it to sound joking, but here, with play resuming and night starting to descend, it comes out earnest.

Full of pride and love.

“Well...” And now it’s Ilya fighting a wave of emotion, his lips pressing together as he slides closer to his husband. “She is the best of both of us.”

Shane nods, his arm snaking around Ilya’s waist as the inning ends and their team streams back onto the diamond to finish the game out. Bree is standing back on third while their pitcher throws the ball back and forth with the catcher, she’s chatting with the shortstop, one of her best friends on the team, but still manages to send them a furtive thumbs up right before the game gets back underway.

“You know...” Shane taps his fingers against Ilya’s hip, lets his head fall against his shoulder. “I’d like to be more involved next year. It might be a little tricky towards the end of the season with the start of ours but...”

“Oh, so this isn’t your retirement year?”

“Screw you.”

Ilya isn’t quite sure when he realized insults like this—*shut up* and *stop it* and *fuck you*—are basically Shane telling him he loves him, but he can’t unlearn it, will never get enough of it.

Always wants to push Shane as far as he can to hear the heat in his voice.

“Yes, yes, Hollander, I know the retirement plan.”

Basically, soon, just not that soon.

He cannot wait.

He wants to travel and do more work with the charity and maybe have a sibling for Bree.

He knows Shane is ready, too.

“Considering mom laminated it and hung it up in your office I would think so.” Shane’s mouth turns up even as his eyes drift back down to the field. “Anyhow, we couldn’t coach and, honestly, I want Bree to have her space so I wouldn’t want to. But maybe we could do something with the boosters? We know our way around a fundraiser, which I’m sure they would appreciate.”

“Yes, I think that could be good; that I would like it.” Ilya stands as the final out is recorded, brushing his lips over Shane’s and pulling him close as they start down the bleachers.

“Maybe you could volunteer to be team mascot.”

Syncing their steps, Shane rolls his eyes, presses a kiss to Ilya’s jaw. “They don’t have mascots at this age group.”

“Well,” Ilya tucks him tighter into his embrace, reaches out his free hand to take Bree’s bag as she sprints over from the field. “It wouldn’t be the first time we’ve done something revolutionary.”

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