

serendipity

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by [ummrys](#)

Summary

"Something... happened at lunch."

That was surprisingly ominous, even for Ilya. Shane was immediately freaking out. Something was wrong. Very wrong. Shane's mind immediately went to very dark places. Someone got traded. Someone was seriously injured. Someone was dead. He tried to keep his voice even as he said, "Okay."

"I don't—" Ilya's face crumpled as he knelt on the floor in front of Shane. "I'm so sorry."

Okay. This was an Ilya thing. Oh god. Shane couldn't stop the spiral. One of them was getting traded. Or their sex tape had been leaked. Or he was dying. Or—

"I think I have a kid."

Or, Ilya had a kid with a one-night stand. Shane handles this a whole lot better than anyone (even himself) expected.

Notes

so this fic takes place in an alternate universe where brunch doesn't exist in russia because when i posted a wip of this someone said that brunch in russian is just brunch. so sorry to the russians of this universe for taking brunch away from you for one joke that isn't even that funny

this fic is kind of sloppy and realistically should be longer, but the idea has been living inside my brain for over a month so i needed to write it otherwise i would. like. fucking die. it was a lot harder to write than i thought it would be

thank you to the lovely [izzy](#) and [faith](#) for technically beta-ing this

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

Ilya came back to the world slowly. He yawned, stretching a little as he opened his eyes.

He'd slept well. That used to be a rarity for him. Before Shane had moved to Ottawa, he really only got good sleep after an even better win. Now that they shared a bed every night, he'd been consistently getting the best sleep of his fucking life.

Shane was still asleep. Another rarity. He was on his stomach with one arm slung over Ilya's waist and his face half-buried in a pillow. The sunlight was coming in through the curtains onto Shane's side of the bed, giving him an almost ethereal glow. He looked golden.

Seeing Shane like this still made Ilya's breath catch in his throat even after all these years. He couldn't stop staring. It wasn't something he got to do often, since Shane pretty much always woke up before Ilya.

"Mm." Shane shifted slightly after a few moments, tightening his arm around Ilya's waist and pulling him closer. He opened one eye lazily. "You're staring."

Ilya splayed a hand in between Shane's shoulder blades. His skin was warm and soft. "Yes."

Shane's hair was rumpled from sleep, faint creases on his face where he'd been nestled into the pillow. Ilya thought he'd never looked better.

"What time is it?" Ilya asked, not bothering to take his eyes off his husband.

"I don't know. Probably around eight?" Shane turned to grab his phone, but Ilya pulled him tight to press soft kisses to the nape of Shane's neck. He could feel the way Shane's chest rose and fell with every breath. "What the— Ilya?"

"Is too early." He squeezed Shane. "Especially for our day off. Back to sleep, yes?"

"You don't even know what time it is."

Ilya grinned softly. He couldn't keep it in, even if he'd wanted to. These days, his love for Shane just flowed out of his body without his consent. "Time does not matter. I know you need to stay in bed with me. We can be lazy for one day."

"Maybe you can." Shane wriggled, trying to get out of Ilya's arms. Ilya just held him tighter, keeping Shane flush against his chest. "*Ilya*. It might be a day off, but we have things to do. I have to go work out."

Ilya's voice was low and raspy when he murmured, "I know something else that could count."

"I am *not* fucking you until you brush your teeth."

"Are you okay?" Ilya pressed a hand to Shane's forehead, trying to portray a look of concern. He was probably smiling too hard for it to be effective. "You do not feel sick. Who are you and what have you done with my husband?"

Shane rolled his eyes. "Fuck off. Let me go."

"You never turn down morning sex. Or any other kind of sex. I would be a terrible husband if I did not make sure you have not been replaced with a clone who hates sex or something."

"You watch too many movies." Shane managed to loosen the death grip on him just enough to turn back around and face Ilya.

"You do not watch enough." Ilya leaned in for a kiss, momentarily taken aback when Shane put his hand over Ilya's mouth, giggling when his eyes went wide. Ilya played up his reaction even more just to see Shane's smile grow.

"Morning breath." Shane reminded him.

"Yes, yes." Ilya pressed a kiss to Shane's nose instead. "You never allow me to forget."

They didn't get up. Ilya rolled onto his back and let his eyes drift shut for a little longer, savoring the moment with his husband. They'd left the cottage to go back to their house in Ottawa two nights ago. The camps and their obligations for sponsorships and the Irina Foundation had kept them bouncing in and out, but now, summer was officially coming to a close.

For the last few seasons, some part of Ilya had always dreaded going back to hockey. It had meant leaving the cottage. Leaving *Shane*. But now... now they were finally together. Married. Living in the same city. Sharing a house and a dog. Playing on the same team. Winning the fucking cup.

God. Hadn't that been a wild fucking ride. They'd triumphed over the New Jersey Pines in the series 4-1. Somehow, they'd ended up on the power play in the last few minutes of the fifth game. Ilya had scored the cup-winning goal off an electrifying assist from Shane right before they went into overtime. When the final buzzer went off and the stadium went insane, Ilya had thought he'd never feel as happy in his life as he did at that moment. That was until Shane came careening across the ice and into his arms, kissing him while confetti streamed from the ceiling and their teammates celebrated around them. Ilya had been riding that high for the last three months.

Shane's weight shifted on the bed. Ilya felt his thighs settle on either side of his hips. He couldn't keep the smug smirk off his lips, even as his eyes remained shut. Shane kissed him slowly, clearly trying to wipe it off his face.

It didn't work.

"What happened to morning breath?"

"I can go brush my teeth, if you want—" Shane moved to climb out of Ilya's lap. Ilya grabbed his hips, anchoring him in place.

"No. You are good where you are."

"Exactly." Shane kissed him again, remnants of morning breath aside. This level of domesticity was still a novel concept, even after a year of marriage. Boring things like waking up and making a grocery list still made Ilya feel a little giddy. They were still boring, but they were doing them *together*.

Ilya slid his hands underneath Shane's shirt, feeling the ridges of his spine as they kissed. Shane's hips started moving, just barely. Like the movement was unconscious.

It was definitely going to be that kind of morning then. Ilya loved his husband and how absolutely desperate he always was.

The slow pace got old pretty quickly, so Ilya took matters into his own hands. Shane gasped as Ilya flipped him onto his back. His pupils visibly dilated as he looked up at Ilya hovering above him. God. Ilya would literally never get sick of that.

"Ilya— you— you have to stop." Shane said, like he hadn't climbed into Ilya's lap and grinded all over him.

Ilya raised an eyebrow at the audacity. "You cannot finish what you started?"

"We can't." Shane mumbled, chewing on his lip. "You have that brunch with Bood and Hazy."

"What the fuck is a *brunch*?"

Shane's brow wrinkled. Ilya resisted the urge to press a kiss to his forehead just to see the lines fade away. "You've lived in North America for over a decade and you don't know what brunch is?"

"There are so many English words. God forbid I do not know them all."

"It's like... breakfast and lunch at the same time, I think? Honestly, I don't know what makes something *brunch*, I've literally never thought about it." Shane absentmindedly rubbed a thumb across one of Ilya's collarbones. "Actually, you know what? Ask Hazy. I'm almost 100% sure he has a very accurate and in-depth answer for you."

"You've lived in North America for your whole life and you don't know what brunch is?" Ilya tilted his head, putting on his best Shane Hollander voice. It was a really terrible impression.

Shane's laugh was quiet, his forehead rolling to rest on Ilya's shoulder. "You're such an idiot."

Ilya didn't bother responding. He shoved his thigh between Shane's legs and pressed soft kisses against Shane's neck. It was difficult to resist the urge to bite down and leave a fresh hickey among the half-faded ones. Shane adamantly did not let either of them leave marks during the season. At least, that was what he told himself. Ilya's back typically told a different story.

"Ilya." Shane whispered. His hands tightened in Ilya's hair as he tugged his head away from his neck. "We have *things to do*."

"Bah. Who cares? I cancel brunch, you take a day to be lazy for once in your life."

"*Ilya*." Shane said again, a little firmer. Like Ilya couldn't feel how hard he was.

"*Shane*."

"If you cancel brunch for this, they will *know* and literally never let you live it down."

It was definitely true, but with his needy husband pinned underneath him, Ilya found that he really didn't care. "So?"

"They will never let *me* live it down." Shane shoved at Ilya's shoulders. He didn't budge.

"You started it." Ilya reminded him again. Shane did not look impressed as he tried to wiggle his way out from under Ilya. "Marriage is compromise, no? How about I fuck you in shower? Solve both of our problems?"

Shane let out a put-upon sigh, but he was grinning. "I suppose I could allow that."

Ilya was off the bed and heading towards the bathroom in record time.

The shower was long and slow, just the way Ilya liked it on a morning like this. Shane was as needy as always, and Ilya was more than willing to indulge him. They'd both stepped out of the shower thoroughly sated, cheeks pink and eyes bright.

Unfortunately, Shane was right and Ilya did have to leave for his 11:00 plans with Wyatt and Bood. Letting Wyatt pick the restaurants they went to was a gamble. There was a 50/50 shot that he would pick the best place you'd ever stepped foot in or some weird experimental place that served food nobody should ever have to try.

This place seemed to lean more towards the former, thankfully. It looked like one of those traditional American diners, with the colorful plastic booths and sticky linoleum tiles. Bood and Wyatt were sitting together at a table in the corner, opposite the door. Ilya spotted them immediately.

"Hazy." Ilya dropped down into the empty side of the booth unceremoniously, accidentally scaring the shit out of Wyatt. "What the fuck is brunch?"

Bood gave him an unamused look. "Hello to you too, Roz. I had a great summer, thanks for asking."

"Good to see you. Hazy. Brunch. Explain."

"How do you not know what brunch is?" Wyatt looked visibly confused.

"Shane said the same thing. Then he told me to ask you."

"I'm not, like, Wikipedia. I don't know the answer to everything."

"Do you know the answer to this question?"

"How do you *not*?" Bood cut in, his eyebrows raised.

"There are like one billion words in English."

Wyatt sighed, like Ilya being right caused him physical pain. "Brunch is a meal eaten in late morning or early afternoon. It's basically just breakfast, but drinking is socially acceptable. And, for your information, there are approximately 450,000 words in the English language in the dictionary. It really depends on which dictionary you're looking at. Most aren't even in use. I think that number is closer to 150,000."

"See. That is an answer." Ilya smiled wide. "You are very useful, Hazy."

"I resent this dynamic you've created between us."

"You resent being smart?" Bood dug his elbow into Wyatt's ribs.

"I resent being used as Google."

"No, you do not." Ilya flipped through the menu. It was an even split of breakfast and lunch foods. Brunch foods, apparently. Shane wasn't here, so Ilya could order the most sugary, disgusting pancakes on the planet without a beautiful and annoying voice in his ear telling him to eat healthy. "You enjoy knowing things and being useful. Is why you are goalie."

Wyatt blinked a couple of times. "It is way too early for you to be psychoanalyzing me."

"Dude," Bood laughed. "It's almost noon."

"It's always too early for Roz to be staring into the depths of my soul."

"I do not *stare*. I am just—"

Bood cut him off quickly. "I swear to god, if you say you're perceptive, I'm going to kill Troy."

"All he did was teach me word." Ilya shrugged. "Not his fault it is a very good word."

"People need to stop teaching you English."

Ilya suppressed a smile and held up his hands in surrender. "No, no. I will be good. I promise."

"Has anyone ever believed you when you said that?" Wyatt asked, looking unimpressed.

"Shane does if I tell him very, very..." Ilya trailed off as something in his peripheral vision caught his eye. A girl approached their table slowly. Tentatively. Surprise was written all over her expression, and she hardly spared a glance for Bood or Hazy. Internally, Ilya groaned. This was not a conversation he was interested in having right now. He was here to have a meal with his friends, not meet fans.

But, Ilya was nothing if not professional, so he gave her his undivided attention as she approached. She was looking at Ilya like she wasn't sure if he was real. It was a common face people made when they saw him, but there was something deeper to her expression. She looked at him like he was a ghost.

"Hi. I'm so sorry to bother you. I'm Hana." She stood in front of them, awkwardly shifting her weight from foot to foot. Belatedly, she held out her hand. Ilya shook it. "You probably don't remember me. We met... once. At a New Year's party in 2017."

Ah. No wonder she was looking at him weird.

Ilya definitely did not remember her. She looked a tiny bit familiar, with dark hair and freckles that reminded Ilya a lot of Shane. Actually, basically everything about her reminded him of Shane. She probably could have passed for his twin. Maybe that was why Ilya had hooked up with her in the first place.

Bood and Wyatt had clearly come to the same realisation, if their shit-eating grins were anything to go by. Ilya gave them a look. Bood raised his eyebrows a little. Wyatt covered his smile with his hand. Ilya narrowed his eyes, trying desperately to convey that they should absolutely *not* say anything about this to anyone. Clearly, that did not work, because they shared a knowing look before they both broke down laughing.

Ilya gave this Hana what he hoped was a polite and apologetic smile. "I am sorry. I do not... I met a lot of people."

Bood laughed harder. Ilya kicked him under the table.

"No, it's really fine. I won't hold it against you. I probably wouldn't remember you either if it weren't for—" She cut herself off, her face flushing. Ilya frowned a little.

This was... a strange interaction.

"So, Hana." Wyatt leaned forward. "You said you met in January 2017, right? That would be right before—" He looked at Ilya with an almost manic grin. "And obviously you know that she—"

Ilya turned his gaze to Wyatt slowly. "Choose your next words carefully, Hazy."

"Someone has a type." Bood snickered. Ilya kicked him again, this time aiming for his balls. Bood grunted, but his smile didn't fade as he mumbled, "Worth it."

"I'm sorry, would you mind if we—" She gestured vaguely towards the door.

"Oh." Ilya couldn't think of a reason why she'd want to talk to him, but he supposed that it would probably be kinder to take her away from Bood and Wyatt. "Yes, I guess."

Ilya followed her outside, stepping into the back corner of the restaurant's patio. On his way out, he felt his phone buzz repeatedly in his pocket. Probably Wyatt and Bood making fun of him. He switched his phone to Do Not Disturb as he watched Hana stare at the wall.

"I really am sorry to pull you away from your friends." She finally faced him, looking tense. Her shoulders were practically next to her ears. "This is... I promise I can explain. I just need—"

"Explain?" Ilya asked, blinking.

Something was clearly happening, but Ilya didn't know *what*. Hana was quiet for a long time, studying Ilya's face. Finally, she sighed, and instead of something coherent or helpful, she just blurted out, "I don't really know who you are."

"Oh." Ilya blinked. That didn't clear anything up at all. He didn't really know how to respond to that or where this conversation was leading. He felt a little bit like he was walking the plank, like one of those pirates. "I should be offended?"

"No. I don't— Fuck. This is really hard."

"What is?" He looked down at her, brow furrowed.

"I sort of..." She sighed. Winced a little. "I sort of had your kid."

Ilya's phone slipped out of his hand, clattering to the ground. He didn't care because he was pretty sure that Hana had just said that she'd had his *kid*. "What?"

"Not sort of. Definitely. She just turned five last week."

He opened and closed his mouth a few times. His voice was broken when he finally said, "She?"

"Yes. Her name is Alina." Hana pulled her phone out and showed him the background. An adorable little girl stood in a forest. Her expression was so familiar that it took Ilya's breath away.

Ilya did not have many pictures of his mother. He'd been able to take barely a dozen with him when he'd left Russia. One of his most cherished was a photo of her when she was a child, before she'd been overwhelmed with the weight of living.

The smiling toddler on Hana's lock screen was the spitting image of that picture. Of Ilya's mother. Only, she had dark eyes and freckles.

"Oh. She looks—" He took a shuddering breath, unable to tear his eyes away from the photo. "And she is mine? You are sure?"

There was absolutely no doubt in Ilya's mind that this little girl was his daughter, but he still figured it was worth it to ask. That was probably the responsible thing to do.

Hana let out a small laugh. "You can get a DNA test, obviously. I don't expect you to just trust me out of nowhere. But... there's no other option. Barring, like, immaculate conception."

"I do not know what that means."

"It's really not important. I don't even know what I'm saying. I just sort of dropped this on you out of nowhere. I'm a stranger and you're—"

"Alina, you said?" Ilya swallowed. Even though he was a 6'3" hockey player, he felt like a strong breeze would knock him over. "Russian name?"

Hana smiled softly and shrugged. "All I knew about you was that you were Russian. I figured... If I never found you, at least she'd have some of her own culture."

Ilya made a noise. It felt like her words had physically damaged him. This was not something that he had ever thought that he would have to deal with. Kids, yes, but not conceiving one with a one night stand. Not missing out on years of his daughter's life because he didn't leave his number or any identifying information.

The idea of Hana trying to keep their daughter— *his* daughter— connected to Ilya in the only way she knew how sent him over the edge. Twenty minutes ago, he hadn't known that she existed. He'd seen *one picture*, but he was already attached.

Ilya could feel his eyes burning with unshed tears. His throat felt tight as he said, "Thank you. I do not know the correct way to do this. There... I have seen no guide for this. If one exists, I have not read."

"Neither have I. Maybe we should make one." Ilya chuckled, which made Hana chuckle. When they lapsed back into silence, Hana looked serious. "I don't expect anything from you. I've been managing fine without you for five years, but that's not your fault. I just... thought you might like to know."

"Why did you not find me earlier?"

"I was not kidding when I said I didn't know who you were. You never gave me your name. I'm not really invested in sports. It took you winning the cup for Ottawa to end up on my radar, and that's really only because my coworker is a massive sports fan."

"You live in both Boston and Ottawa without ever seeing my face?" He felt a little surprised. Maybe it was conceited to assume that everyone would have seen him, but he was in a lot of ads. He had seen himself on posters and billboards across both cities. "Not even once?"

"I definitely saw it *once*." She grumbled. Ilya let out another laugh.

"Is there... Do you have plan? I am not the planner, that's—" Ilya cut himself off, mouth dropping open in horror. *Shane*. He'd completely fucking forgotten about factoring Shane Hollander's reaction to all of this into the equation. "I need to speak with my husband."

Fuck. Shane hated surprises. Sudden, dramatic changes were pretty much his worst nightmare. This news was very sudden and *very* dramatic. He liked a strict routine in a way that Ilya really did not understand but still respected. Even twelve years later, the way Shane's brain worked often seemed more foreign to Ilya than English. The most minor change could be enough to throw off Shane's entire day. Introducing a *child* into their life with absolutely no warning was a lot more than a minor change.

"Okay." Hana shoved her phone back into Ilya's hands. The page to create a new contact was open. "Put your number in. We can arrange the paternity test later. Talking to your husband is priority number one."

It was odd and refreshing how easily she'd accepted everything. Ilya's hands were visibly shaking as he typed in his information. When he handed it back, there was another awkward silence.

"I will... be there now." Ilya finally said. He tried to pretend he wasn't a little hurt by the shocked and relieved expression that melted onto Hana's face.

"You will?" She chuckled softly. "Of course you will. Let's do the paternity test, and then we'll talk."

Ilya nodded. "Yes. Talk."

In a daze, Ilya headed back to the table. He'd picked up his phone at some point. It had fallen face down onto the bricks. He was lucky it wasn't broken, but he could barely spare a thought for that right now. His brain was stuck on a constant loop of that picture. His daughter.

"What was that about?" Boob asked, giving Ilya a cursory once-over. He had a wide smile, but it slowly faded as he took in Ilya's shocked demeanor. "Do I have to defend Hollander's honor?"

Ilya grabbed his wallet and keys without responding. Wyatt grabbed him by the wrist before he could walk away, a confused look on his face. "Dude, are you okay? You look like shit."

"Will explain later. I need to go home."

After he started therapy, Shane learned very quickly that he was not good at being a person.

During his years in the NHL, he'd become completely intertwined with hockey. He was more of a brand than a person. It was probably why everyone called him boring all the time. But after a few years of being #24 Shane Hollander, starting center for the Montreal Voyageurs, he'd completely forgotten who he was without hockey.

Obviously not healthy. He'd been not-so-subtly told to get a hobby less than a quarter of the way through his first session. A hobby that was completely disconnected from hockey in all ways.

It had been difficult. Turns out there were a lot of hobbies to choose from. Mostly, he wanted to find something that seemed even the vaguest amount of interesting. Then he'd quickly learned that he didn't want to do it without Ilya, so they'd slowly incorporated baking and hiking into their lives. But the whole point of Shane finding a hobby was for him to learn

who *he* was off the ice. Unfortunately, that meant he couldn't do literally everything with Ilya.

His hunt had ended with mind puzzles, oddly. Crosswords, sudoku, solitaire. They were too boring for Ilya, but just interesting enough to keep Shane engaged for hours. Sometimes, he even did them in Russian— which was insanely difficult— but they made him feel equally as fulfilled when he finally finished.

Most of the time, he did his crossword books while Ilya watched TV quietly. He'd put his feet in Ilya's lap and they'd sit together in relative silence. Occasionally, Shane would ask for his help with a clue and Ilya would give him the most outlandish answer possible. Shane always laughed a little too hard.

The door unlocked. Anya hopped off the couch and bolted for it. Her collar jingled as she jumped up on Ilya's knees, desperate for his attention. Sometimes, Shane wished it was socially acceptable for him to do the same thing. Ilya had only been gone two hours at most, but Shane still missed him. The more he settled into married life, the more he wondered how he ever lived without Ilya's constant presence at his side.

His parents had been the ideal of marriage for Shane's whole life. They were so happy and in love that Shane had been chasing after what they had for their entire life. Now that he'd found that with Ilya, he was learning that he'd had no idea how absolutely *breathtaking* being in love really was. There was nothing else like being able to laugh at his husband's dumb jokes, knowing they were only funny because Ilya was the one telling them.

Shane closed his crossword book and smiled at Ilya as he walked towards the couch, Anya trailing behind him. It was a nice surprise. Shane hadn't been expecting him for at least another hour. "Hey. You're back early."

"Shane." Ilya stopped short a few feet in front of Shane, his face pale and serious.

"Ilya?" His tone made Shane instinctively sit up a little straighter. "What's up?"

"Something... happened at lunch."

That was surprisingly ominous, even for Ilya. Shane was immediately freaking out. Something was *wrong*. Very wrong. Shane's mind immediately went to very dark places. Someone got traded. Someone was seriously injured. Someone was *dead*.

He tried to keep his voice even as he said, "Okay."

"I don't—" Ilya's face crumpled as he knelt on the floor in front of Shane. "I'm so sorry."

Okay. This was an *Ilya* thing. Oh god. Shane couldn't stop the spiral. One of them was getting traded. Or their sex tape had been leaked. Or *he* was dying. Or—

"I think I have a kid."

Or he had a kid.

Shane blinked. "Oh."

"I do not— A girl found me today. She said she knew me in Boston." Ilya's breathing was uneven and he wasn't looking at Shane. "We... met right before All-Star game in 2017. New Year's Eve."

"You can say hooked up."

"Fine. We *hooked up*. One night. Apparently, she got pregnant. Did not know who I was. Found me because we won the cup and she now lives in Ottawa. With a daughter who is five. Named Alina."

"Okay..." Shane cupped Ilya's face in his hands and forced him to make eye contact. "Hey. Ilya. Are you okay?"

Ilya melted into the touch. His breathing was short and unsteady. "I'm so sorry. I did not mean for this to happen. If I had known I would have told you, I promise. I promise I did not know."

"Ilya. Babe," Shane leaned down, pressing their foreheads together. "You need to breathe. Can you do that for me?"

"I am so sorry. So, so sorry." He said again, eyes wide and fearful. Still not breathing.

It was a little strange to be on the other end of this. Ilya's typical style of freak-out involved a lot more staring silently at the wall than hyperventilating. Shane was so used to Ilya talking him down from his panic attacks that, for a second, he completely forgot all of his coping mechanisms.

"Okay. We're doing deep breaths. Come on." Shane patted Ilya on the cheek, forcing him to make eye contact.

Several long, overexaggerated breaths later, Ilya was slowly calming down. His eyes looked less glassy, and his breathing was a lot more even. Shane moved to grab him a glass of cold water, but Ilya put his hands on Shane's hips to keep him in place. "Do not go."

"I just want to get you some water."

"Fuck water. Who cares about that?" Ilya wrinkled his nose, resting his head on Shane's leg. "Stay. Please."

How was Shane supposed to turn him down? "Of course I'll stay. I'll stay forever."

That seemed to be the reassurance that Ilya needed, because he broke down into tears. Shane let him cry, whispering that everything was okay and softly running his hands through Ilya's hair. His sweatpants were absolutely going to need to be put in the wash after this, but in the moment, Shane found didn't care about them getting covered in tears and snot. He just wanted to let Ilya get his emotions out.

"You do not seem surprised like I was." Ilya's voice was raw and nasally when he finally spoke a few minutes later, sitting back on his hands. "I thought that you would be... upset. Not exactly in our future plan."

Shane felt himself flush. It wasn't that he wasn't *surprised*. This definitely wasn't how he'd expected his day to go. It was just... Shane was a very prepared person. He didn't like to be caught off guard by anything, especially not life-altering information. Rose had told him to come up with a Plan B well before they were outed. At the time, Shane hadn't listened. He regretted that more than anything. Obviously, he couldn't predict when things were going to happen. That was completely out of his control. But, his *reaction* to those things wasn't.

Maybe it was a little insane to let himself fall down an endless spiral for a few hours. He put every possible situation that his anxiety could come up with on a spreadsheet and set about finding reasonable ways to respond. It was something like a compromise between his desire to live a regular life and desperate need for control. His therapist had called it an "unconventional coping mechanism" when he'd told her.

He'd honestly never thought they would be useful. The spreadsheet had been sitting unopened in his Excel for months. It wasn't even in his recent files anymore. He'd pretty much forgotten about it until right now.

Shane swallowed. "So, about that."

"You knew this?" Ilya's red-rimmed eyes went wide.

"No, no. I definitely did not know. But after the fanmail thing..." Shane bit his lip, a little embarrassed at his past anxiety. "I sort of came up with a couple of contingency plans. Just so we wouldn't get caught off guard like that again."

"A couple?"

"Maybe more than a couple."

Ilya finally smiled, just a little. "I guess I should have expected that. Very Shane Hollander to create plans for things that might never happen."

"The *point* is that I'm not mad." Shane caught the chain around Ilya's neck with one finger, pulling the ring out from beneath his shirt. "I know who I married. Or who you *were* before I married you."

"You are not freaking out?"

Shane laughed. "Oh, I'm definitely freaking out. You just happen to be freaking out more than me for once."

"Very strange day for me." Ilya wrapped his hand around Shane's wrist and pressed a kiss to his fingers. "Thank you. I thought you would... be uncomfortable with the surprise. I did not know you were anticipating problems."

"I like to be ahead of things."

Ilya's face did something funny. "You made manual for dealing with this?"

"I guess you could call it that if you wanted to." Shane shrugged. "It's more of an outline than anything. Just some bullet points on how I think we should deal with this."

"I am so in love with you."

10/09/22 14:41

Unknown Number: Hey, It's Hana. This is my number. Let me know how you want to proceed when you know.

Ilya: making manual not necessary

Hana: ?

Ilya: i have overprepared husband

Ilya: we will do test and such

Ilya: shane wants me to tell you that we are not trying to take her from you

Hana: I wouldn't let you.

Ilya: best answer

It took a week for the paternity test to come back. Ilya was the father. From the moment he'd seen Alina's face, he never had any doubt. The more pictures and videos that Hana sent, the more he was fully convinced that she was his daughter. He saw his mother in her smile and himself in her overdramatic attitude and her dedication to athletics, even if she did gymnastics and not skating. The test was just a legal formality.

Not a single person had let go of the fact that Hana looked like Shane, not even Hana. She'd laughed herself hoarse when she met Shane for the first time and then proceeded to make fun of Ilya *with Shane* for having a type. Seeing them together in person was honestly a little scary. Their personalities couldn't be more different, but they genuinely looked like they could be siblings. Even Yuna and David did a double take when they saw the pictures of her.

Ilya couldn't lie, it *was* funny. He'd probably fucked every girl in every NHL city that had even a slight resemblance to Shane. Love did strange things to you, and sometimes, those things ended with a ridiculously high body count and, apparently, a child. A child that looked like both him and Shane. Obviously, Hana was the mother— Ilya absolutely would *not* let anyone forget that— but she had made the joke herself a few times. It was undeniable.

"I think it's sweet." Shane admitted one night, his head pillowed directly on Ilya's bear tattoo. "You were so in love with me that you looked for my traits in women."

"Was not a very good idea. None of them ever compared to you." Ilya kissed the crown of his head, feeling Shane's face heat up a little against his skin.

"Was Hana the only one?"

"Far from." Ilya laughed quietly. "Many girls, in many cities."

Shane shot upright, his eyes impressively wide. "You had a *roster of Shane Hollander lookalikes*? In 2017?"

"We have never talked about this?"

"I'm pretty sure I'd remember if you told me you used to fuck people who looked like me before we got together."

"I think it started in..." When *did* it start? Ilya trailed off, trying to remember the first girl who reminded him of Shane. "I will say 2015. Started with girls who had freckles and ended with Hana."

Shane's face went through about a hundred emotions, before landing on a smug expression that Ilya had only seen on the ice before. "Jesus. You were really into me, weren't you."

"What is that face?"

"What face?" It melted away, replaced with cute furrowed eyebrows.

"You were looking all pleased with yourself."

"I like reminders that you were thinking about me as much as I was thinking about you those days." Shane admitted, ducking his head a little to hide the deepening blush. "It's easy for me to forget that you were obsessed with me because I can't read your mind."

Ilya gaped. "Me? Obsessed with you? Never."

"You just admitted that you actively sought out hookups who looked like me." Shane said, unimpressed. His eyes were still sparkling.

"Bah. Was not me. Was my clone."

Shane returned his head to Ilya's chest, running his calloused hand up and down Ilya's abs. "Sure it was."

Two weeks and a whole lot of complicated custody discussions after the paternity test results came through, Hana agreed to let Ilya meet Alina. It was a lot sooner than Ilya had expected, based on his largely Reddit-based research on situations like this.

"I told her about you," Hana admitted when Ilya asked why so soon. They were standing outside her front door. Alina was just inside the house. Ilya was very nervous about this. He was not doing a good job of hiding it. "She knew something had happened, and I don't like to lie to her. She's really perceptive. Makes things hard."

Ilya couldn't hold in his smile. "Like father, like daughter. What does she know?"

"She knows that you're her father. I showed her Daddy and his husband winning their game on TV."

"You told her about Shane already?"

"I mean, you two *are* married." Hana said dryly, as if Ilya had somehow forgotten. "You're a package deal now. Besides, Alina thought the game was super boring. And I think she was a bigger fan of your goalie than either of you."

Ilya shrugged. "Well, at least she has good taste in players. Hazy is my favorite player on the team too."

"She will probably tell you to your face that she thinks you're boring, just so you know."

"I love children." Ilya chuckled. "Always so honest. One of Shane's best friend's seventeen children once asked me if my hair always looked bad on purpose. Was not even an insult. She just genuinely does not like my hair."

Hana laughed as well. "Seventeen?"

"More like four. Their youngest is the same age as Alina. We were the go-to babysitters when Shane still lived in Montreal."

"Well, at least you have some experience." She settled her hand on the doorknob. "Are you ready?"

"As I'll ever be." Ilya breathed out.

Hana opened the door. Ilya followed her inside the cute house.

"Alina? Honey?" Hana shouted, cupping her hands over her mouth. "Can you come here? There's someone I want you to meet."

The only warning Ilya had was the sound of quick footsteps. Then, a tiny body was careening into his legs, almost knocking him over.

"Who is this?" She asked, looking between Ilya and Hana as she steadied herself.

"Hello." Ilya knelt down to be on her level. Alina's eyes were wide as she looked at him. "I am Ilya. I am... your father."

End Notes

sorry for cutting it off there. i literally don't know how to write kids and trust me, you do NOT want to see me try.

my search history for this one was kinda crazy actually. i ended up down a whole lot of google rabbit holes. i read a whole academic paper on how many english language words there are

once again, i already know what my next fic idea is so if you want to keep updated you can subscribe to me here or follow me on [twitter](#) / [tumblr](#)

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