

Every End (Is A New Beginning)

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Every End (Is A New Beginning)

by [SummerRaine14](#)

Summary

They were always competing, in a league of their own, but always together. Every conversation they'd had about their future involved their careers ending the way they'd started.

Together.

Ilya had been with the Ottawa Centaurs for over eight years. He had turned a dying franchise into a team to be reckoned with. The addition of his husband only further cemented Ottawa's place in the league.

But as the crowds grew bigger, and the team's points got higher, Ilya felt the flame within him dwindle.

-- OR --

Ilya retires, featuring his final game and jersey #81 retirement ceremony.

Notes

Hi, hello friends!

How are we doing without a new episode? I am not doing well. I have been eating, sleeping, and living off of Hollanov fanfiction for the last week.

This idea was conceptualized by my love for WAG Ilya fics, but the retirement part of the story got away from me, and I just adore writing from Ilya's POV. WAG Ilya will make an appearance eventually, but for now please enjoy a slightly angsty Ilya grappling with his choice to retire & all of his messy emotions!

For the better part of two decades, Ilya Rozanov had been certain of one thing.

He was never going to be alone at the top, not when Shane Hollander stood there with him.

They were untouchable in their successes - Ilya was first draft pick, Shane was rookie of the year, Ilya won the cup, Shane won it the next year. They were always competing, -:in a league of their own - but always together. Every conversation they'd had about their future involved their careers ending the way they'd started.

Together.

Ilya had been with the Ottawa Centaurs for eight years. He had turned a dying franchise into a team to be reckoned with. The addition of his husband only further cemented Ottawa's place in the league.

But as the crowds grew bigger, and the team's points got higher, Ilya felt the flame within him dwindle.

He had accomplished everything he ever dreamed of - and beyond. He stood on the ice, a crowd of 25,000 people, and kissed his husband as they held the Stanley Cup above their heads.

That was their second season together, in the spring of 2023. Three years ago.

Since then, they'd won another cup, Ilya earned himself his third career MVP, and he'd cheered his husband on as he earned his 800th career goal.

On the ice, they were on fire. Off the ice, they were even better.

Ilya had felt most like himself in the comfort of their home, laying on the couch with Anya at his feet. He valued the weekly family dinners at Yuna and David's, and against his better judgement, he even enjoyed the monthly double dates they would have with Hayden and Jackie.

For the longest time, hockey was everything Ilya had. It was the thing that kept his heart beating, and the one thing he couldn't imagine living without.

But despite his love of accomplishment, the fondness he held for his teammates, and the joy of playing alongside his husband, hockey hadn't been what made him happy in a long time.

He loved being a husband, a son in law, an uncle, a dog-dad (even if Shane told him that wasn't a real thing), and he longed to be home more often than he enjoyed being on the ice.

Of course, that wasn't something he had told Shane about. Not until the worst possible time, as their team was gearing up for the beginning of the play-offs.

They would be facing Boston in their first game, and while most of Ilya's past teammates had been traded or retired, there was still an uneasy feeling inside of him anytime they played. He had to put aside his memories in the Boston jersey, the first seven years of his career, and do anything it took to win.

That was his focus. Train, practice, win. He could worry about everything else later.

Until the thoughts kept him up at night, guilt creeping into his chest as he realized he didn't share the same happiness that his husband and teammates did. He wasn't depressed, it wasn't like before. But when the sinking feeling left him frightened, he rolled over in bed and lightly nudged Shane awake.

"Shane." He whispered, and then he repeated, louder this time.

"Ilya? What time is it?" Shane rubbed his eyes.

Ilya sighed, he had no idea. He hadn't fallen asleep yet. He leaned over and checked his phone. It was almost three a.m. "Late. I'm sorry, moya lyubov."

Shane must have sensed his anxiety, because he immediately sat up and gave Ilya his full attention. "What's going on?"

"I think I am done." Ilya admitted, breathlessly, afraid to look at Shane.

"Done? Done what?"

"My contract is up after this season."

Shane nodded, "Yes...I know..."

"I think I am done." Ilya repeated, unable to find the right English words to explain. It was late, and he was exhausted.

Realization and understanding flashed across Shane's face, "Okay." He said, pulling Ilya into a hug. "Whatever you want, if you're sure. I'll support you."

"You will?" He exhaled a breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding in. Tears swelled in his eyes, "You're not disappointed?"

"Hey, hey, of course not." Shane repositioned so he was straddling Ilya now, "I love playing with you, being on the same team. It's...everything I never knew we could have. But I want you to be happy, Ilya."

Ilya held Shane's face and kissed him softly, "You make me happy."

"Good. I'm not going anywhere." He smiled, "Besides...if you retire, I'll be the best active player in the league. No doubt about it."

"You are the best, moya lyubov." Ilya assured, his fingers lightly tracing Shane's back.

They fell asleep like that, Shane in Ilya's arms. And Ilya knew no matter what happened next, he was going to be okay.

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Ottawa cruised through the first two rounds of playoffs. They had taken Boston out mercilessly, with a clean four straight wins in their first round. Shane led the team to their first win in game two of the second round, scoring a hat-trick, and Ilya added another two goals to their final score.

Shane and Ilya had spoken with Coach Wiebe, not sure of how to tell the team yet, but they'd made an agreement between themselves that they would play the best play-off games of their careers. It was only right that someone of Ilya's legacy would go out on a high note - something Yuna liked to remind them before every game.

Yuna had been the most surprised by the news, but she and David stood by Ilya with nothing but support. Selfishly, they wouldn't mind him being around more during the season, an admission that made Ilya smile softly.

Ottawa was up against Edmonton in the Stanley Cup play-offs, and they'd been down 2-0 at the end of the first period in their seventh game. They were tied three-three, with everything on the line. Ilya stood in the center of the team's change room, memorizing the faces of his teammates, his brothers. Playing for Ottawa had made hockey fun again, and he refused to let his last game be anything but that.

"I'm going to tell them." He whispered to Shane.

Shane looked at Ilya, eyes wide, "Right now?"

"Why not?"

"Because we're down 2 in the cup finals?" Shane muttered, as if the reason wasn't obvious. Though he knew Ilya had never been the best with his timing.

"We already know, Captain." Boodram piped up from his seat, sweat dripping down his forehead. The rest of the team looked up at Ilya with sad eyes, "Harris let it slip to Barrett, he told us."

"Fuck." Ilya murmured another string of curses in Russian. A call came from the refs, they had five minutes. "Alright, this isn't how I wanted to tell you...but nothing we can do now, yes? It's true, I am retiring."

The room erupted in arguments, "No, listen. We have not built this...this legacy, for it to end like this. We will win, we will hoist that cup together one final time, until next year, when I come on the ice as a wag-" Ilya laughed, tears swelling in his eyes. He felt Shane's hand against his own, supporting him. "But today? We will put our gloves on, go out there...and show them who the fuck we are."

Shane released Ilya's hand and clapped first, raising his hands in the air. Boodram, Hayes, and Barrett followed, and then the rest of the team began their chant. They banged their sticks against the ground, clapping and pulling each other into hugs.

If one thing was for certain, this team was family.

Midway through the second period, Ilya led the team to a tie with two goals, one assisted by Shane. Luca Haas brought them up by one, and doubled the win with his second goal with ten seconds left in the third.

Ilya jumped from the bench, climbed over the boards and skated straight for Shane, they embraced in a bundle with their teammates. Gloves were thrown, sticks dropped, and the only thing that mattered was each other. The arena erupted in joyous celebration, fans hats being thrown onto the ice in the midst of the chaos. Wives, partners, children, and parents joined the players on the ice, and Ilya, for one last time, hoisted the Stanley Cup above his head. Tears swelled in his eyes as he handed the cup to Shane, he skated around the ice, taking in the cheers and chants of the fans. He raised his arms, waving to the people in the stands - and sent a prayer up to his mother.

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Ilya stood in their trophy room, the accolades of both his and Shane's near twenty long careers staring back at him. It was October now, and he'd officially announced his retirement in late June, a week after Ottawa took home the Stanley Cup.

The days following had been chaotic, reporters on their tails, endless calls and countless emails. Ilya knew his retirement would stir up commotion, but he'd never expected to find the attention...draining.

Ottawa would be retiring jersey #81 in a ceremony before their season opening home game. He was prepared for this, but a part of him wished he could turn off the noise and hold Shane in bed a while longer before the new season began.

He knew it was too late for that now. As he adjusted his jacket and tie, he went to the bedroom where Anya was laying on the mattress and kissed her head. Shane had driven separately to the arena, he had to be there early for a pre-game meeting with Coach Wiebe, and Ilya wouldn't see him until the ceremony.

Ilya drove his very practical Range Rover to the arena, rolling his eyes at the thought of Shane scolding him when he suggested one of his sports cars.

"It is my retirement! Pleaseee."

"I'd like you to make it to the arena alive, Ilya. No."

And, as always, Ilya was putty for Shane. He thought the occasion called for a better, classier ride, but his husband said no. So, no it was.

There had been a snowfall the night before, patches of white snow glistened on the ground and road around him. Ilya tapped his fingers anxiously against the steering wheel, the feeling of his tie suddenly suffocating. He did as he'd practiced for years, a deep breath in, deep breath out. Slowly, his anxiety began to subside.

The traffic was, unsurprisingly, a shitshow. Ilya was at a full stop on the highway, he noticed the car in front of him dawned an Ottawa Centaurs bumper sticker. As traffic slowly moved through, he noticed more cars that were clearly going to the arena. To his surprise, he'd even seen fans in his Boston jersey. He hadn't kept in touch with anyone from the Raiders except for Marlow, who he knew was going to be there tonight.

When the conversations started about retiring Ilya's jersey, he wondered who he would see. If anyone from his life before would take the time to celebrate him, to celebrate his accomplishments. It had been a foolish, fleeting thought. Aside from Svetlana and Marlow, every person that would be there to support him was someone he'd met since making the switch to Ottawa almost a decade ago. Not including, unfortunately, Hayden Pike. He was grateful that Jackie could make it, her husband on the other hand...well, Ilya wouldn't have been too upset if Montreal had a game that kept him away.

Ilya took the back entrance through the arena, shaking the hands of security guards he'd seen daily over the last eight years of his life. Noise vibrated through the walls, conversation and cheers all around. He knew the moment he stepped out of the back hallway, he would be bombarded with reporters and rapid fans.

Shane had texted him while he was driving to warn him that the commotion was worse than usual, which they'd both expected. Yuna and David were waiting for him by Coach Wiebe's office, and for the first time since he left the house, Ilya finally felt himself relax.

"Hi sweetheart." Yuna smiled, "Hayden and Jackie are here with the kids. They're in the booth but Ruby is demanding to see her uncle Ilya."

Ilya laughed, "Maybe I will take her on the ice with me. She will never see her dad be celebrated. So."

“Didn't take you long to insult Hayden.” David remarked.

“What can I say? He makes it easy.”

The three of them made their way to the booth where the family would be for the game, sneaking through the hallways and avoiding as many fans and reporters as they could. Ilya was greeted by his favorite people in the world, Jade, Ruby, Arthur, and Amber. Every time he saw them, which he hoped would be more often now, he couldn't believe how much bigger they were getting. Watching the kids grow up had felt like watching life flash before his eyes, and he'd hoped, with everything in him, that he could be a father one day. A possibility that seemed more hopeful now that he and Shane wouldn't both be on the road for the better part of the year.

Ilya conversed with his family and friends, welcoming the distraction to calm his anxiety. He didn't know what he was so worried about. It's not like he was the one who had to go on the ice and put his all into another game. He had done that now for almost twenty years, he had nothing left to prove. Of course, that didn't stop his mind from going frantic. Fuck, he couldn't wait to see Shane.

The crowd roared for him as an announcer called Ilya's name. He adjusted his tie and navy blue suede suit, stepping onto the black carpet that was rolled out on the ice. Ilya looked around him, taking in the moment of joy, he waved to the fans. He walked down the carpet, shaking hands with the owner of the Ottawa Centaurs, Coach Wiebe, the trainers and assistant coach he'd worked with for the last eight years, and he nodded at the Commissioner, refusing to shake his hand. A move that earned applause from the crowd.

As Ilya stood in the center of the ice, he waved once again to the fans, and then, to his relief, Shane skated over to his side. He was in full uniform, except for his helmet and gloves, and held onto Ilya's hand.

Yuna and David were called down to the ice, with Ruby in tow. Before the ceremony, they had asked if the other kids wanted to join, but it wasn't much of a secret that Ruby was always Ilya's favorite.

Ilya smiled, basking in the moment. This was everything to him. His family.

The president of the Ottawa Centaurs took the mic and began his speech, "Ilya, what a phenomenal experience it has been. It is no secret that when you joined this team in 2017 that Ottawa had long been struggling. But you proved, through hard work, passion, and determined leadership, that we could be great. The legacy of Ottawa does not exist without you, and the skill you've brought to this game." He smiled at Ilya, "So, on behalf of myself, the Centaurs organization, and all of the fans, we say thank you."

Ilya squeezed Shane's hand, emotions overcoming him.

The microphone was handed to Coach Wiebe, "Rozanov, you know I tried to convince you otherwise when you came into my office and told me you were ready to hang your skates. Coaching you has been a career highlight, to watch someone who has the pure talent you possess is a gift I will never take for granted. I would also like to thank you for marrying the best player in the league, and bringing him to Ottawa with you."

The arena erupted in laughter, Ilya's own tears pushed back by the roll of his eyes.

"It is my honour to call everyone's attention to the rafters, for the unveiling of jersey number 81."

Ilya's tears finally flowed as he watched his jersey shine above the ice. His number, name, and legacy, forever cemented in a part of hockey history.

He received the microphone and let go of Shane's hands, wiping his tears. His cheeks flushed red hot from the attention on him. Not from the officials, or the crowd, but the most proud, beautiful smile his husband was giving him. At that moment, he had never felt more loved.

"Thank you." Ilya said, his accent thick as he choked back tears. "First and foremost, I would like to wish Coach Wiebe and the Ottawa Centaurs luck with this season. They will need it without me." He winked, and he could feel Shane's eye-roll in the back of his skull. "When I moved to Ottawa, I had no idea what to expect. I had hoped that we could win a cup, but it did not seem possible. I did not know if my legacy would die before I did, but I had to take a

risk. For love-" Ilya turned, smiling at Shane, "Hockey is a beautiful game, but beyond that, I am grateful for what it has given my life. Some of my best friends, who stand before you tonight, and most importantly, my husband. It has been the greatest honour of my career to be Ottawa's Captain, but the greatest honour of my life to be loved. So, thank you to the fans, to my wonderful parents, Yuna and David, for welcoming me with open arms. And thank you, to my husband, Shane Hollander, the second greatest Ottawa Centaur player."

Ilya handed the microphone off and embraced Shane in a hug, shocked when his husband cupped his face and embraced him with a passionate kiss.

"Ya tebya lyublyu, Rozanov." Shane whispered.

"Ya tebya lyublyu, Hollander."

End Notes

As always, thank you for reading.

Comments and kudos always appreciated.

Come talk HR/fandom things with me on Tumblr @srainebuggie

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!