

## Only the good kind of hurt

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# Only the good kind of hurt

by [HappyWinterbell](#)

## Summary

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Shane snorted. “I am not so sure about that last part.”

“Is true,” Ilya claimed with absolute certainty. “Told me to add extra cheese. Because cheese helps build hockey muscles.”

“Oh, does it? Never heard about that before.”

“Never question Coach. That’s, like, the first rule.”

OR

Shane gets overwhelmed after being forced to spend a full day doing nothing but media appearances, photo shoots, and interviews before starting training camp with the Centaurs. Luckily, Ilya is there to save the day – as always.

## Notes

Am I depressed that we have to wait until 2027 for the next season? Yes.

Did I need to write some cute fluff because my whole life seems wrapped around those two beautiful people? Yes.

Do I care? Not really.

Enjoy :)

(And ignore the fact that English is not my first language...)

“Okay, one last sequence and we’re done.”

Shane did his best to hide his growing discomfort and forced himself to smile. He couldn’t decide which was worse—the annoying clicking sound of the camera, which had been causing him a headache for at least an hour, or the blinding studio lights that made his eyes water.

“Move your upper body a little more to the left. Yes, a little more... perfect. Hold that pose.”

Harris was a nice guy, and Shane had liked him since the first time they’d met a few weeks back. But if he didn’t finish this never-ending photoshoot soon, Shane was going to start *screaming*.

At least internally.

“Aaaaaaand...” Harris finally looked down at his camera, nodding to himself. “We’re done. Great job, Shane! Those pictures look absolutely stunning. The fans will freak out!”

Shane couldn’t help himself and let out a relieved breath. “Does that mean I can...?” He held up both hands—one gripping a hockey stick, the other his new helmet.

“Oh, sure! Just put everything back on the table.” Harris said hurriedly, waving toward the other side of the room. “You can go change, if you like. I’m pretty sure you can’t wait to get out of those clothes.”

Normally, Shane didn’t mind wearing hockey gear and his jersey. But after a whole day with the Ottawa media department, three different interviews, and photo shoots, he really craved some alone time—even if that meant hiding in one of the locker rooms.

Shane put down his hockey stick and helmet, then added his gloves as well. He took the sharpie from one of Harris’s coworkers—a nice woman named Sara—and started signing every single item.

“Do you need me to sign anything else?” Shane asked, handing over his helmet and watching as she put everything into a separate box. He already knew they were planning some kind of charity auction.

“No, not right now. We’ll probably meet you guys after training tomorrow. These here,” she said, pointing at his box, “will be auctioned separately. We do that with every new member of the team.”

Shane felt somewhat relieved not to be getting any special treatment—at least in that aspect. Being the captain’s husband and being, well, Shane *fucking* Hollander, involuntarily outed as gay, accused of cheating by his former team, and unofficially kicked-out ex-captain of Montreal, was already drawing more than enough attention.

After exchanging a few last words with Sara, Shane waved Harris goodbye before quietly slipping out of the room. It took him a moment to orient himself in the still-unfamiliar surroundings of Ottawa's arena. Being there as a guest? No problem. Finding his way through the other parts of the building? Way trickier. It would get easier—but that would take time.

Following an empty hallway, Shane started fiddling with the collar of his jersey. He felt hot. Uncomfortable. All the new impressions, the new people—it was all starting to be just too much.

Reaching the locker room was a blessing. Checking the showers and restrooms and realizing he had the place to himself almost rivaled the feeling he'd had when he lifted the Cup for the first time years ago.

With a groan, Shane collapsed in front of his new cubby and let out a long, shaky sigh. It felt ridiculous, humiliating even, to be this exhausted when he—at least physically—hadn't really done that much all day. Peopling was fucking brutal.

With heavy, leaden arms, he yanked his jersey over his head. His protective gear followed, dropping with a soft thud until he was left in nothing but his compression shirt and pants. Shane's eyes flicked to the mess he had carelessly strewn across the floor. He wasn't a slob—far from it. And yet, seeing his crumpled jersey lying there, twisted and wrinkled, made irritation spike in him.

But he couldn't move. Not a single muscle.

Trying to hold onto some semblance of composure, Shane closed his eyes, leaned forward, and rested his elbows on his knees before burying his face in his hands. He just wanted to go home—back to the cottage, where everything had been fine. No journalists. No social media teams. No photoshoots. No anything. Just him, Ilya, and Anya.

*God.* What the hell was wrong with him? He loved hockey! And being able to play on the same fucking team as his husband should be thrilling!

And it probably would be.

As soon as he was done with all the “welcome-to-the-team” and “all-this-stuff-needs-to-be-done-before-you-can-play” bullshit that had kept him occupied for the last couple of days. He just wanted to train with the team, dammit. And try to fit in. God, he *needed* to fit in.

But what if he didn't?

What if the team didn't like him?

Sure, he had met quite a few of the guys at his wedding, and they seemed nice. But in a professional environment? Completely different story. Those were Ilya's teammates—and friends! *His work family*, like Wyatt often said.

Shane sighed in frustration. God, he was going to fuck it all up. Everything! He was always so awkward and unnaturally stiff around new people. To this day, he had no freaking idea how he had managed to befriend Hayden and JJ back in Montreal—the only two people he still dared to call his friends despite the huge hit their relationship had taken following all the drama at the end of last season.

He wouldn't fit in. He just knew it. He would destroy everything he and Ilya had planned.

And the worst part?

He would disappoint Ilya. And then Ilya would hate him. He would regret their marriage. He would regret leaving Boston to play in Ottawa to be closer to Shane. He would blame Shane for all of it!

Shane didn't realize he'd started rocking himself back and forth, completely lost in his own head. Some wheezing sound echoed in the empty locker room. He only became subconsciously aware that it was him making those noises. His chest felt unnaturally tight, and his breathing had started to stall.

He couldn't breathe properly. His body decided to no longer cooperate.

“Moy lyubimyy.”

There was a hand in his neck, gently pushing Shane's head father down between his knees. Lips were pressed on top of his head and he could smell a familiar cologne.

“Breath, moy lyubimyy. Take a deep breath for me, yes?”

Shane tried his best to follow the gentle order. He kept his eyes closed in concentration, while his hands moved forward, feeling around blindly. Warm fingers enclosed his trembling hand. “Il- Ily-” He didn't manage to form the words he desperately tried to force out. “I- I'm-“

“Is ok.” Another kiss, this time on Shane's forehead. “No words necessary, moy lyubimyy.”

Shane could feel the tears forming behind his closed eyes. Ilya was here. Everything would be alright. He would take care of him, like he always did. With Ilya, he didn't need to be strong, didn't need to be this perfect role model everyone expected him to be. He didn't even need to use words. Ilya knew that sometimes using his voice was harder for Shane than any hockey game he could ever play.

Soft Russian words were whispered in Shane's ear. Some he understood. Some he couldn't translate. Both helped his mind to calm down.

He panicked for a second when Ilya's hand released his fingers, but instantly relaxed when a pair of strong arms wrapped around him. But Ilya wasn't done and kept moving, and suddenly Shane was moving as well. The hard bench beneath him disappeared, and Shane was pressed against a firm but warm—oh, so warm—chest, straddling strong thighs he knew too well.

Shane buried his face in Ilya's neck, breathing in his husband's scent.

Finally—*finally*—his body started loosening up. His muscles didn't cramp anymore, and his shaking fingers stopped digging into the soft denim of Ilya's shirt. Still, several more minutes passed before Shane's head started clearing as well.

It took him even more time to realize the slow rocking motion in which Ilya moved them gently from side to side.

But it took Shane only a few seconds to notice something completely different.

"Why are we sitting on the dirty locker room floor?" His voice sounded weird, even in his own ears, and for a moment Shane wasn't sure if he had actually managed to say the words.

Ilya's chest moved when he laughed softly. "There you are, moy lyubimyy." He pressed another kiss to Shane's forehead before carefully leaning back, until they were finally able to look at each other. "How are you feeling?"

Shane blinked, tired but back in his head, no longer lost in blind panic. He couldn't believe what had happened. "I'm so sorry," he croaked, feeling utterly humiliated. "I don't know what came over me. I just wanted to change my clothes and suddenly—" He shook his head. "It just started and I couldn't stop it. I'm so pathetic—"

"Stop it." Ilya's harsh words cut him off before he could work himself into another panic attack. "My husband is not pathetic. My husband sometimes fights with anxiety, like I do. Nothing to be ashamed about. He told me himself."

Shane once again felt tears forming in his eyes. He swallowed the lump in his throat, trying to keep them from falling. "What are you doing here?" he asked after a while. "You told me you would be busy with Wiebe for the whole day."

"We finished early." Ilya said, pressing soft kisses to Shane's cheek, nose, and finally his lips. "Coach said I'm not useful anymore. Too distracted with thinking about some new player with freckles. Told me to finally free him from social-media tyrants and run for our lives." He stopped for a moment. "Told me to go home and eat chicken parmesan."

Shane snorted. "I am not so sure about that last part."

"Is true," Ilya claimed with absolute certainty. "Told me to add extra cheese. Because cheese helps build hockey muscles."

"Oh, does it? Never heard about that before."

"Never question Coach. That's, like, the first rule."

With a small smile on his lips, Shane leaned forward and rested his head on Ilya's shoulder. "I'm so happy that you're here."

Ilyas held him even tighter, closely pressed against his chest. Some people might find it weird, but for Shane, the pressure of his husband's arms helped keep his anxiety at bay. It helped him feel grounded.

"Did something happen with Harris?" Ilya asked after a while. "Did he make you feel uncomfortable?"

"What? No! No, absolutely not." Shane shook his head. "The opposite, actually. He's probably the reason I managed to survive this whole social media and PR nightmare in the first place."

While all the others hadn't seemed to notice Shane's growing discomfort throughout the day, Harris had picked up on it right away, even though he hadn't said a word about it out loud. He simply made sure to add additional breaks between the different appointments to give Shane some time to collect himself.

Shane was more than thankful for that.

"Then what was it? What made you get panic attack?" Ilyas's lips lingered on Shane's forehead before he pressed another kiss to it. "Was a bad one. Was really hard to get you out of it. It made me worried."

Shane grimaced, feeling even more guilty. Ilya already had more than enough on his own plate, even though therapy had helped a lot. Still, Shane hated being the one adding even more to it. "I'm really so—"

"Do not finish this sentence."

He sighed. "I can't pinpoint what exactly made me freak out. I think... it was probably a mix of everything. I'm used to social media stuff, taking photos and all that." He'd been doing that kind of thing for more than ten years by now. "It's just... I'm meeting so many new people I don't know anything about. I know it's irrational but I have this weird feeling they know everything about *me*. About *us*. Like they're judging me without actually saying anything?"

"Hm." Ilya nodded. "I understand. But you don't have to worry about any of them. If they work under Harris, they are good people. I'm sure of that."

"Rationally, I do know that. It's just..."

"Your whole life got turned upside down in the last few months. It's normal to feel overwhelmed. I felt the same way when I came here from Boston."

"Really?" Shane frowned. "You never said anything."

"Well..." Ilya clearly tried to play it cool while searching for the right words.

Shane's face crumbled, devastated. "And I never asked."

Sure, they had talked superficially about Ilyas's first days in Ottawa. Shane had asked about the team, the first training sessions, and his first impressions in general. But Ilya had acted completely unfazed—like he always did. Shane knew he wasn't the most observant person in the first place. But how the hell hadn't he noticed that Ilya had been struggling? He was a horrible partner.

Shane furrowed his eyebrows and took Ilyas's face in both of his hands. "Why didn't you say anything?" he asked quietly, his thumbs drawing soft circles.

"Because I was happy. And sad. And happy again." Ilya made a face. "Hard to say in English. It was hard, yes. Sometimes. But I was finally able to be with you. In the long run, you know? Made everything bearable. Centaurs made it easier as well. They are good people, and I made new friends quickly." Without breaking eye contact, Ilya moved his head to the side to kiss the palms of Shane's hands. "But that is in the past. Everything is fine now, so do not worry about me."

Shane still felt bad.

"No worries, moy lyubimyy. You can make it better when we get home, yes?" The corner of Ilya's mouth twisted into a cheeky grin. "You can suck my cock nice and slow. Then you can cook me chicken parmesan. And after that..." He nuzzled Shane's neck, carefully biting down on the sensitive skin. "After that I will make you scream my name so loud your throat will hurt in the morning. And you will probably walk funny for a couple of days."

Shane could practically feel his face flushing. He often pretended not to like it when Ilya whispered such dirty promises to him. But his suddenly uncomfortable tight pants proofed him otherwise.

"You can't say things like that to me," he said, slightly embarrassed and turned on at the same time. "We talked about this. Not if we're at work, remember?"

"You said I only have to behave in front of other people." Ilya looked around the empty locker room. "I don't see anyone."

Shane shook his head, laughing softly, before brushing a quick kiss across Ilyas's teasing smile. "God... I love you so much it actually hurts."

Ilya tilted his head slightly, studying him closely. "But only the good kind of hurt, yes?"

Shane smiled, warmth spreading through him, and nodded. "Only the good kind."

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Around thirty minutes later, Shane had changed into his regular clothes. After putting away

his protective gear neatly, he bent down to pick up his crumpled jersey.

Feeling his husband's observing eyes on him, Shane did his best not to show how irritated he felt.

"Admit it."

Shane bit the inside of his cheek. "Admit what?" he asked, acting clueless.

Ilya, standing a few feet away with his arms crossed and leaning against another locker, grinned. "You know exactly what I mean."

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

He eyed the jersey skeptically. Those were a lot of wrinkles. There was no way they would disappear simply by hanging it on a hanger.

"Really?" Ilya strolled toward him. "So, you have no problem if I do..." He took the jersey from Shane's hands, keeping eye contact before letting it carelessly fall back to the floor. "... this?

Shane had to fight every muscle in his body not to catch it midair.

He knew Ilya loved trying to get a rise out of him, especially when it came to Shane's little clothes-folding obsession.

At first, Shane had felt insecure about the teasing, unsure whether Ilya meant it playfully or was actually mocking him. Realizing Shane's uncertainty, Ilya had quickly reassured him that he thought his little quirks were absolutely adorable.

To this day, Shane vehemently denied that folding his clothes was some kind of tick. And to this day, Ilya tried his best to make him admit it.

Shane took a deep breath, not breaking eye contact. He would not give in. The jersey could stay on the floor. It didn't matter. It...

"I hate you," he grumbled, bending down to pick it up again.

Ilya grinned in victory. "No, you don't. And I win."

"You didn't win anything," Shane argued. "I just picked it up because I want to make a good impression. I don't want to look like a total slob, leaving my stuff all over the locker room."

"Keep telling yourself that," Ilya chirped, amused. "Whatever makes you happy."

Shane carefully hung the jersey on a hanger and placed it inside his locker. Then he grabbed his already packed bag and turned to leave.

Ilya was waiting by the door, still grinning, holding it open with one hand while reaching toward Shane with the other.

Shane glanced at it, surprised that he felt only calmness instead of the nervousness that normally arose at the mere idea of public displays of affection. Fuck his stupid self-imposed “no-touching” rule. He smiled, took his husband’s hand, and squeezed it slightly.

There was no need to hide anymore. They could finally be a couple out in the open. Holding hands was completely normal—especially for spouses. It would take some time to get used to, but Shane couldn’t wait to make new memories with Ilya.

“Ready, moy lyubimyy?”

Shane smiled and rose onto his tiptoes to place a soft kiss on Ilya’s lips. “Yes. Let’s go home.”

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