

life is what happens to you (while you're busy making other plans)

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Summary

David doesn't have any recollection of leaving Shane's place. He sort of comes back to himself halfway down the gravel road, settling back into his body, into reality, and has to pull over at the turnaround where the gravel meets pavement so he can breathe. It's only ten minutes back to their cottage, eight when Yuna drives and she will immediately know that something is wrong so he has to get himself together and pray she's distracted enough not to notice that something is wrong.

No, he thinks, slamming his palms on the steering wheel, not wrong. That isn't the right word. It's just not his story to tell.

Notes

I have so many feelings. This is a bunch of alphabet soup trying to give them shape.

David doesn't have any recollection of leaving Shane's place. He sort of comes back to himself halfway down the gravel road, settling back into his body, into reality, and has to pull over at the turnaround where the gravel meets pavement so he can breathe. It's only ten minutes back to their cottage, eight when Yuna drives and she will immediately know that something is wrong so he has to get himself together and pray she's distracted enough not to notice that something is wrong.

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He doesn't really clock that it was Rozanov that Shane was—was, *well*—until he's back on the road, and has to pull over again for a minute—but only just—and take a couple deep breaths.

They're not so different, he and Shane, even if Shane is so very often the very spitting image of Yuna. They both have to have a plan, have to know every step to their next destination, but Shane is quieter, like David, needs space to panic before he can actually plan things out.

He's damn sure Shane has never told anyone about his, er, *preferences*, not that David, as his father, hasn't at least considered it a possibility. Some people aren't interested in having a partner, and Shane is an adult. He's twenty-six years old, highly successful, and driven to go after what he wants. If he wanted to find a wife—a *husband*, he mentally corrects, trying not to feel faint—he would do so.

He's still so young. There's a good chance whatever David had seen wasn't serious.

And yet, the low swoop in his belly suggests it might actually be a reckoning.



“Did you see the way Rozanov—”

“Ilya,” David corrects gently. The boys had left a little more than an hour ago and they're lounging on the couch with the rest of the wine. He sets aside his iPad and turns his head so he can meet Yuna's gaze. His wife is the strongest person he knows, protective, kind, and steadfast. She's always looking out for her people, wanting the best for them.

“You know what I mean,” she glowers at him. It's not as effective with her eyes ever so slightly swollen from crying, gaze going watery every so often.

When she'd come back inside before dinner, Shane in tow, they'd both looked a little weepy. He'd had thirty more minutes to process the shock, enough time that while Yuna was still reeling he could think of other things. Could notice other things.

Like the way Ilya had stood a step back, protective but not overbearing, letting Shane get out what he needed to say but not afraid to step in when he started to spiral. The way the young man held himself so still as if to hide the fact that his hands were shaking.

“I can’t say I’m not worried,” she admits. “It *looks* like he’s serious about Shane, and he said all the right things, but,” she trails off.

He hums, wrapping an arm around her shoulder, pulling her in. It’s been thirty years but she still melts into his side like she did way back in the beginning, a larger presence than her petite frame gives her credit for. “It would be easier for him to be with a woman,” he supposes, getting that ugly thought out in the open. He knows she’s thinking it, that she doesn’t want to say it, but she needs to reason through the problem.

“It would.” She sighs, flustered. “I mean I get it. He’s good with Shane and Shane trusts him, I can *see* it, I just—” She scoffs. “I want to be supportive. I *should* be supportive.”

“You were supportive, Yuna.” He hugs her a little closer, hand resting over her heart. There’s no guidebook on how to parent, no cipher you can use to read your kid’s mind or figure out how to handle things. There’s always going to be a bit of a mess no matter what you do. “We’re going over to Shane’s tomorrow and you can interrogate the poor boy all you want. He’ll tell Ilya to expect it, if he hasn’t figured it out already.”

She tilts her head back, dark hair messy from being tucked under his arm. They share a look. “Did he look scared to you?”

The redirection isn’t necessarily unexpected—Yuna does this. She’s sharper than most people give her credit for.

“He *is* Russian,” she continues, dropping her chin to his chest so he can smooth out her hair. “It would be worse for him than for Shane if they were found out.”

“I think he’s made his peace with that,” David says. If anything, he thinks Ilya had been afraid for Shane, afraid they would react poorly, or worse, make Shane choose. They would never, but how would he know that? They were strangers until a few hours ago. “The kid’s got a plan.”

“It was Shane’s plan.” She isn’t wrong, but he has a feeling she isn’t right, either.

“You think Shane told him to leave his team? *Shane*.” He could feel his eyebrows rising. “Our one and only son, who lives and breathes hockey just like you?”

She’s silent for a moment, thinking.

David can’t help but think back to their earlier conversation, the way she’d called Ilya’s loyalty into question, the way Shane had defended him and the young man had shrugged it off. He seemed resolute, settled in his decision. In highlight packs and press conferences, he had always struck David as a young man who refused to do anything he didn’t want to do. He might have the affectation of an arrogant jerk throughout the league, but that was not the same young man carefully choosing each word at their dinner table.

When he tells her this, she nods and shimmies down to rest her head on his thigh. Her cell phone comes out and she's on YouTube pulling up one of their shared press conferences from 2009. She needs time to study, to process, and he can respect that. This is going to be a long, difficult road for both of their boys. They're going to need all the support they can get.

He reaches for his iPad, shaking his head. *Both, already?*

He supposes that makes sense. What he doesn't tell Yuna, what he cannot, because she needs to figure it out for herself, is that Ilya Rozanov, whether he realizes it or not, loves Shane more than he loves hockey.

And that, David had decided at dinner, watching a man he'd previously thought of as the enemy give their son some calm and ease through his unexpected reckoning, had been enough to solidify Rozanov as *Ilya*, the young man his son had fallen in love with, rather than the upstart hockey player who had been Shane's arch-rival from the onset.

Yuna will manage, David is sure of it. This isn't how any of them expected the day to go and he'd be lying if he said it wasn't going to be an adjustment, that the reality of the situation isn't heartbreaking, but they'll get through it. By the end of the week she'll be up to date on Ottawa's abysmal stats, prospects and draft picks, playing devil's advocate about his decision as if Ilya was always part of their family. She's good like that.

He opens a new tab on his iPad and navigates to REALTOR.ca. It's probably too soon to really dig into available properties, but it's a good idea to get a good feel for the area, see what's available close to the practice facility and arena before Ilya needs to relocate. Shane's always saying that you never know when the right listing will hit the market, like David hadn't been the one to teach him how to read listings in the newspaper in the first place.

He zooms in on the map, wondering if Ilya will want to build or buy, if he'll manage to beat Shane to asking.

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