

home for christmas

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by [winterberry_\(snapdragon_scholar\)](#).

Summary

Shane manages not to miss his son's first Christmas, which is good because Ilya's been scheming in the backyard.

Notes

good luck with the cottage episode folks. enjoy some christmas fluff set like 5 years after The Long Game or something.

The cab's digital clock told Shane that he'd make it home before Christmas as promised, but with only 10 minutes to spare before midnight. A win is a win, he thought to himself. A freak storm in Vancouver had grounded him on the other end of the country after a road trip he'd already been sick of.

"Thanks," he said, leaving the driver a huge tip. "Merry Christmas."

He clocked Anya in the front window, her paws and nose against the glass. Mercifully (or, as Ilya put it, because she was *such a good girl*), she did not bark as she watched him haul his suitcase up the driveway. The door had been left unlocked for him. The house was flooded with Christmas lights. He heard a fire crackling in the fireplace and didn't bother taking his boots off before going to find his family, although he did pet Anya under the chin. He was rewarded with the sight of Ilya's muscled back in the firelight, sweatpants hanging low on his hips. The baby slept soundly against his chest, held close by a sling. Ilya raised a finger to his lips, *shh*.

This motherfucker had no business getting hotter while holding a baby, this was getting out of hand.

"Colic," Ilya explained. "But he sleeps to fire sounds."

Quietly, Shane crept across the living room and gently cupped the baby's back, tilting his head to catch Ilya's kiss. His shoulder unclenched for the first time in days.

"You made it on time," Ilya said.

"Told you I would," Shane said, as if he hadn't been puking in the Vancouver airport at the thought of missing his son's first Christmas twenty-four hours ago.

"Good. Your Christmas present was ready, and it would have been big inconvenience to put you on the naughty list," Ilya said.

"Hey, bullshit. We said we were investing in Mik's trust fund instead of presents this year," Shane said, as if he hadn't wrapped a Russian fairy tale collection and a fresh pair of sneakers weeks ago.

"Yes, but your gift is also an investment in next generation," Ilya explained. "Keep your coat on."

"I assume that means you need to put a shirt on for this. Pass me the baby," Shane said.

They slowly, carefully, slipped Mikhail into a fleece bunting with orange fox ears on the hood. He fussed only briefly, when he felt that he wasn't being held anymore, and stopped when he was back against Shane's chest. The world felt so right with Mikhail's weight on his chest and the smell of baby shampoo in his nose. Later, he'd want to hold the baby skin to skin: he was so impossibly warm and soft, and Shane had time to make up for.

Ilya wrapped Shane and Mik in a blanket for good measure before suiting up, waving Shane over to the backyard. He grabbed a remote hanging by the back door that Shane didn't recognize. At the push of a button, strands of lights lit up over...

"You built an outdoor rink while I was gone?" He asked, a grin splitting his face. "Fuck Rozanov, it wasn't even that long of a road trip."

"Thankfully, the weather cooperated," Ilya said.

The rink was big: the ice remarkably even and smooth given the Ottawa Valley's temperamental weather. Plastic walls surrounded the rink, with bales of hay placed strategically around so you had a place to sit when you switched from boots to skates. Shane's childhood hockey net was at one end of the rink, waiting to play again.

"My dad used to build one every winter," Shane said, smiling. He'd spent hours outside shooting pucks or shuffling cones on the ice to run drills and sharpen his footwork.

"I know, he helped me." Ilya said matter-of-factly.

"He did?" Shane asked. His dad and Ilya had, by coincidence, had retired at the same time: his dad when he could clock his full pension, and Ilya when he'd decided to end on the high of his third Stanley Cup and an MVP trophy. Ilya had more good hockey years left in him, Shane was sure of it, but he'd said he was ready to have a baby, and they couldn't both be on the road all the time. Shane had been nervous that Ilya would regret his choice at first, but life at home with the baby suited him beautifully.

"He showed me how to line and flood it so it freezes even," Ilya said. He looked at the rink with satisfaction.

"The ice is pretty even for an outdoor rink," Shane said appreciatively, in the spirit of Christmas.

"Thank you, this is why it is called the Ilya Rosanov Best Husband Commemoration Arena."

Shane rolled his eyes but brought Ilya to him in a hug. Ilya kissed Mikhail's head and then Shane. He'd missed them, even knowing they were always with him. In his heart, in the pictures in his wallet, and also on his bicep because of an impulse tattoo he'd gotten during what must have been a bout of insanity during his first road trip away from them. It was a loon to match Ilya's, but with a little chick riding its back. He would never forget the look of pure delight on Ilya's face the first time he'd seen a loon swim by with three chicks on her back at the cottage. Just like he would never forget the first time they'd lowered Mikhail in his arms, or this: their first Christmas together.

"Kids are coming over tomorrow," Ilya said.

"What kids?" Shane asked.

"Willa and Andrew and some neighbourhood ones. They want to play before the Juniors game," Ilya said. "We are reffing."

"Is that why this is 'an investment' in the next generation?" Shane asked.

"Also important for the baby to get on ice young. My mother believed in this," Ilya said. "And she raised wonderful hockey player."

"I doubt they make skates sized for babies who can't walk yet," Shane said.

"True. But he comes with me every time I even the ice," Ilya said, gesturing to the water-gallon-topped wagon contraption his dad called his outdoor Zamboni. The image of Ilya working on the ice with a baby strapped to him did things to Shane.

Since the baby was strapped to him, he got to enjoy the sight of Ilya on his knees, tightening his skates for him. Ilya winked when he looked up, and Shane rolled his eyes, pretending unsuccessfully that he wasn't looking. He placed a hand on each side of Shane on the hay barrel, ducking down to claim his kiss. They could get carried away so, so easily after being apart: Shane put an end to it before they derailed.

His skates glided the way they only did on outdoor ice. The kind of ice that people had invented skating to feel under their feet; the kind that connected you to the cold and the snow and made you part of winter, not against it. He cupped a hand over the baby's head as he skated. The night was so quiet that the sound of his skates was crystal clear. It reminded Shane of everything he had first loved about hockey rinks: the cool, quiet stillness that helped the world make sense. The world made the most sense now, with Mik drooling through Shane's shirt as he slept.

When he finished his first lap, Ilya had a smirk on his face.

"What?"

"Nothing," Ilya said. "It's just perfect."

"What is?"

"Your face. Like a child in a Christmas movie, so happy."

"I am happy," Shane said, skating backwards onto the ice. Breath puffed out of his mouth as he skated back, gliding into Ilya's arms. He caught him easily.

"Me too," Ilya said. "We can play together again. Maybe remind you how to pass."

"Oh, fuck off," Shane said. But he did smile. They could, in fact, probably get an hour or so of babysitting from his parents tomorrow. "I like that idea. I miss you, on the ice." And on buses and planes, in hotels and locker rooms, during drills and in all the quiet moments between games...

"Not this one," he said, kissing Shane's gloved hand. He tugged on his hand and brought Shane for another loop of the ice together. It felt better than dancing, and snow started falling.

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