

simmer.

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by [jujuups](#)

Summary

"Do you like spicy food?" David asks.

American spicy was always questionable. Ilya's been to restaurants where the pinnacle of spice was ominous salty, orange, vinegar-y sludge souped over chicken wings. But he's also had his fair share of dinners cooked by Marlow's wife who put exotic peppers in *rice*. When he tried to cool the fire burning an ulcer in his belly with her homemade drink, he was disastrously surprised by the added torture of ginger down his throat.

"Yes," he lies, coolly. Because now was not the time to be an asshole. David Hollander just watched him press his son up against a glass door and caress him in ways no parent needs to see. Ilya can take the stupid gamble on what the man calls spicy.

Notes

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"Great," David claps his hands together and leads Ilya to the kitchen, "Yuna and I were going to make some dinner. Some spicy chicken parm spaghetti dish we stole off this TV chefs website."

Ilya blinked, tapping his finger idly on the cool counter top.

"Hence why I needed the charger for my phone,"

"Charger?"

"What I came to pick up at Shane's spot before..."

"Oh!" Ilya cringes, "Sorry. *I am* sorry." Hopefully he sounds sincere. He *is* sorry they were found in such circumstances.

He's not sorry for loving Shane. He's spent so long being ashamed and scared that he did. But Shane loves him too. It would be silly now to regret it. He wants to spend more days just like that. Splashing lazily in the lake, watching Shane's skin glisten in the warm sun. Feeling the stutter of his heart crack through his chest when Shane's lips curve around every soft, rounded syllable when he says *I love you*. No. Ilya would die before he regrets that.

But family is important to Shane. A late night phone call from David or Yuna Hollander never made Shane fear for what part of him he would have to rip out to appease them. His parents were woven into every crevice of his life. Brand deals, family vacations, glass lake-shore houses with shared keys and no need to knock. Everything in the open. Everything honest. Just not Ilya.

"No need to be sorry. We're all adults." He hands Ilya a measuring cup and a saucepan, muttering for him to fill the pot up with 5 cups of water while he diced up onions, "I don't think the glass is graded for slamming up against like the ones around the rink though."

Ilya's cheeks burn, "Yes, sir."

David's nose wrinkles and his eye's crease up familiarly, "David is fine."

It's quiet for a moment. The rhythmic tapping on the cutting board and soft purring of the gas stove fills the silence.

Ilya should be saying more. Something profound and romantic like they do on soap operas. *I love your son. He is all I need. I will love him to tears. My love for him is inexplicable, but it's the only love I have.* But the words do not come. In a better situation, Shane would probably laugh at his speechlessness. But Ilya's been putting his foot in his mouth since he got here. And for once, he actually cares to not be misinterpreted.

"It took us ten years to have him," David begins, "We got married at 22 and Yuna had the whole thing planned out. Step one, get married, skip the honeymoon in Hawaii and save our cash. Step two, buy a house by 24 in a nice respectable spot in Ottawa. Step three, have our first of four kids by 25."

"Steps one and two were easy. Yuna plans and the world bends to her will. But the kids... It was hard on her. If Shane never held strong and entered our lives at 35 I don't know what would've happened to her..." He snuffles, readjusts his posture to evade the onions, "My point is, everyone says their kid is special. Everyone with some sports megastar for a son thinks their kid is special, I'm sure your parents do too,"

Ilya stares into the noodles thrashing violently in the boiling water.

"But Shane is really *really* special to us. More than a miracle. So I just want to know what your plan is here."

They've already spoken about his plans to trade to Ottawa and their plan to start a charity together. How every off season will be spent together until they can have to rest of their old, wrinkly lives together. What other plan details do the people in this family need? Ilya's eye catches on the steel of the blade in David's hand and finds it in himself to come up with a more respectable answer.

"Do you wish for me to marry him?"

David nearly misses the tip of his finger with the knife, "What!? No! I mean not *no* but what-" He seems to catch Ilya's eyeline down to the sharp blade in his hand, "Jesus, Rozanov- *Ilya*. No. This isn't a shotgun talk. Tell me your *plan*."

"I will join the Ottawa Centaurs. Travel between two cities with Shane, become Canadian citizen-"

David shakes his head, "You guys told us that. It's a great plan and even if it wasn't, Yuna would make a great plan *for you*. What I want to know is what your plan is *for you*. Not Boston's Rozanov and Montreal's Hollander. Ilya and Shane."

The conversation isn't making sense to Ilya. Marriage is not the answer. The move plan is not the answer. The plan. Not the plan *for you* but the plan *for you*. The stress of the day must've fucking fried whatever part of his brain understands english. The question is the exact same.

"I don't know a lot about *this*," David motions his hands in a circle, "But is it not a big important thing for guys like you to... come out? Is that the right word? I don't know. It just seems painful to keep everything hidden."

"It is not painful," he answers instantly, "I love him. The only thing I need from Shane is to love me. He does. So s'okay. What everyone else thinks? Does not matter." Ilya dumps the water into the colander perched in the sink, steam fogging over his head.

He has no plan to return to Russia. He won't, not even in a casket. He's not worried about punishment there. People hate him in hockey regardless. Players throw slurs at center ice anyways, knowing the words they say are true won't change anything. Ilya has known himself for years. And he's never told anyone he *was* straight. If they made assumptions that was their own fault.

The only thing he cares about is Shane.

Their meetings are secretive. The cottage is private. And at no point in the 3am ramblings of his trade plan did Shane mention coming out during the prime of his career.

If the only thing Shane wants from Ilya is to keep quiet while they hold onto each other? He'll do it.

"I love him," he repeats.

"I believe you," David nods, "Love is good. And no one is saying you both need to follow in Scott Hunter's footsteps and kiss over a puck on center ice but."

He sighs. The tomato sauce simmers as he increases the flame under the pan. David carefully adds his diced ingredients. Peppers, garlic, onions. Each addition carefully scrutinized. Ilya's sure it doesn't matter too much if a small slice of onion goes in before the pepper, but David curses under his breath when a sliver escapes him before the rest.

"But?"

"But if you have people in your life you feel safe enough to share this with? Feel comfortable enough with to tell them you love him?" He laps his hand around Ilya's shoulder and squeezes, "You should tell 'em"

Ilya isn't sure who he could possibly tell. His family is dead or deranged. His team mates have boneless tongues and his other friends in the league right now are all questionable at best. He could tell Svetlana. But she clearly already knew, and her sneaky little smile would annoy him more than relieve him.

The cross on his chest flutters as he moves across the kitchen. Hm. Maybe he could whisper all about his love to his mother. He feels silly, but resolves to give it try when all this is over.

"We couldn't be that for Shane," David continues, "And that's on us, we've put him on a pedestal and under pressure all at once over the years. Spent more time being agents than parents. He didn't think he could lean on us and I accept that. But I can also thank you. For

being with him all these years. For being a support to him and loving him where we couldn't."

Ilya's eyes prickle. And he clears his throat to cover the watery wobble of his voice. "You raised him very well. Shane is easy to love"

David beams, "He isn't he! I told Yuna public school was the way to go. All the hockey bastards in private school grow up to be absolute terrors!" He playfully looks over his shoulder, "Don't tell Shane I said so, but that Hayden kid? Yeesh."

Ilya's grateful for the change in topic, finally smiling and laughing with David comfortably. Time passes easily, pieces of chicken are breaded and fried gently in the oil, David shows Ilya numerous pictures of Shane over the years. Spotty little cheeks puffed up with baby fat and ill fitted hockey gear hanging off his body. Always so cute and pretty.

The first bite of the parmesan is fucking amazing, Ilya can't hold back the pleased groan that slips between his lips. David chuckles.

"Not too spicy?"

"David, You are a chef, yes?"

Another bright laugh, "Not at all, but flattery works well. I'll have double the amount waiting for you when you touch down in Ottawa next season, How's it sound?" Ilya nods vigorously, David claps him on the shoulder with a smile, "If you like chicken parm you'll do just fine. Welcome to the family, kid."

End Notes

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