

**Christmas 2026; or 3 times the Centaurs told Shane they thought Ilya hated Christmas + 1 time
Harris realizes he really loves it**

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Christmas 2026; or 3 times the Centaurs told Shane they thought Ilya hated Christmas + 1 time Harris realizes he really loves it

by [stabthroughme](#)

Summary

Shane knew Ilya had spent as much of his free time in Montreal as possible, and Shane had done the same going to Ottawa whenever he could, but a few months into his first season with the Centaurs and he's finding himself realizing how much Ilya had saved for just them.

Namely, Ilya's adoration of any and all things Christmas.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

"Holy shit, is Roz possessed?" Dykstra asked from his stall, watching Ilya help Harris get Chiron and Anya into the Centaurs-branded dog Christmas sweaters.

"Not last time I checked," Shane answered easily, finding it incredibly difficult to focus on gearing up with his husband laughing and baby talking two really adorable dogs. Including *their* dog. "Why?"

"Oh I just never got the vibe that he was really into the whole Christmas thing is all." Dykstra grinned wide at Shane. "Hey, maybe it's just married life, eh?"

"Yeah, maybe," Shane answered to avoid any awkward pauses.

Ilya *loved* Christmas. Always had, as far as Shane could tell. They'd mailed a Christmas card to Ilya's niece in Russia, mailed a few out to the friends that had stood by them (Marleau was a welcome surprise among that number), and Ilya had personally wrapped every carefully chosen gift for the team and staff of the Centaurs. Shane had, to Ilya's delight, been his escort who was more than happy to carry the bags around the busy shopping centres for the pure pleasure of watching Ilya's near giddy excitement.

Shane leaned over to Troy who was *also* moving slower with his gear. "Why does Dykstra think Ilya's not into Christmas?"

"Oh uh," Troy blinked and blushed. "Sorry can you repeat that?"

Shane smiled. "Barrett I am also staring, you're fine. I asked why Dykstra thinks Ilya doesn't like Christmas."

"Yeah he made like, pained faces every time one of us played Christmas songs in the locker room, and he did like, bare minimum for the team Secret Santa, dropped off his gifts and then went MIA for the three days we had off." Troy's head whipped away from staring to look at Shane. "Wait! Holy shit, he was MIA cause of you, right?"

It was Shane's turn to blush. "Oh. Yeah, we uh. We do Christmas Eve together, then my parents for Christmas day, then alone again on Boxing Day. Have for the last five years, at least..."

"So it wasn't hating Christmas it was him sprinting to your bed," Troy bumped his knee against Shane's, "like always."

"Shut up Barrett," Shane grumbled.

"Okay!" Harris clapped his hands. "Secret Santa after practice, don't forget we're filming it!"

A chorus of agreements filled the room and Harris left with Anya and Chiron.

The last five minutes before practice ended Shane felt Anya's paws jump on on his leg. He bent down and scooped her up, she was a little too large to hold comfortably but the little knit sweater with the Centaur's logo and repeating simplified beaver motifs was too cute to resist.

"Hey girl," he cooed, holding her to his chest. "Did you have a fun time with Harris?"

Ilya's skates scraped to a harsh stop and his ungloved hand reached out to scratch behind her ears. "She was perfect model I know it!"

"Of course she was," Shane agreed, leaning into Ilya's side to get Anya closer to him. "Y'know, Dykstra said the team thinks you don't like Christmas."

"What? How could they think that? I *am* Christmas!"

Shane rolled his eyes fondly. "Well lets go over how you've spent the last five Christmases, shall we?"

Ilya thought for a moment and Shane watched the realization dawn on him. "Oh, *you* were hogging my Christmas."

"Hogging isn't the word I would use," Shane teased. "You're the one who insisted on moving to Ottawa in the first place."

"Oh so you do not want me around for Christmas, I see, I bet the Drovers would take me in even with their new children," Ilya started skating backwards. "They would appreciate my carefully constructed Christmas playlist and I could hold babies without you."

"You have three versions of Silent Night, none of them are in English." Shane did not acknowledge the threat that Ilya would hold a baby (or several) without him around to witness him being fucking spectacular with them.

"German is the traditional, French for you, and Russian for you to practice!" Ilya defended.

"What are you guys arguing about now?" Wyatt asked, joining them as they skated to exit the ice.

"Ilya's Christmas playlist," Shane answered. "It's insane," he spoke fondly, adoringly, but Ilya gasped in offence anyways.

"It is *not* insane it is perfectly balanced so long as you do not press shuffle!"

"Wait, Rozy has a Christmas playlist?" Wyatt laughed. "Oh my god, is it like, death metal?"

Ilya scowled. "No, it is carols and Christmas songs that Shane vaguely remembers."

"The one with the boats," Shane nodded.

"I Saw Three Ships sung by Bruce Cockburn," Ilya supplied. "I got a list from Yuna."

"Oh my god," Wyatt opened the door and shoved Dykstra away from the cord. "No shut up, Rozanov's got a Christmas Playlist."

A handful of their teammates looked at Ilya like he'd grown a second head.

"What? Is two hour drive to Ottawa from Montreal," Ilya defended. "Is good to be in the spirit and Shane does not know music."

"But you don't like Christmas?" LaPointe turned the statement into a question.

"I love Christmas." Ilya crossed his arms across his chest defensively.

"But you run out of Christmas events all the time!" Bood pointed at Ilya like it was a court case.

"I was busy driving to spend the 48 guaranteed hours off with Hollander," Ilya said it like it was obvious.

At this point, it kind of was. Every team event, formal or informal, that Ilya had missed was because he was driving to Shane or Shane had driven to him. It had become a bit of a recurring thing, pointing out that Ilya was not being suddenly social he just didn't have to hide anymore. *They* didn't have to hide. They didn't have to savour scraps and crumbs of time together wedged between two hour drives and long plane rides and injuries and losses and wins. For once they had *exactly* the same schedule.

"Do. Not. Press. Shuffle," Ilya spoke like he was talking to a roomful of toddlers as he plugged his phone into the AUX cord and pressed play.

Haas perked up instantly. "This is Stille Nacht!"

Ilya pointed at Haas while looking at Shane, the Swiss kid singing along in quiet German already. "See!"

Shane rolled his eyes and dumped the gear he'd been talking off in pieces into his stall, sitting down to untie his skates and head for the showers.

"Is everyone clothed?" Harris asked, sticking his head into the door half an hour later. A chorus of affirmations answered him and Gen started to carry some camera equipment into the room.

"I can't believe you saved all your Christmas insanity for a concentrated 48 hours," Shane muttered, grabbing Ilya's sweater and pulling it over his own head. It was only fair, since Ilya had finished showering and stolen Shane's. "And the thousands of texts and calls and shared movie streaming," Shane counted out each on his fingers, "and the baking and the decorating and the- mmf!"

Ilya had grabbed Shane's waist and pulled him into a quick, relatively chaste kiss that was firm enough that it was nearly a punch. And then Ilya was sitting down while Shane blinked and stared at him.

"Ilya," Harris sighed, "stop breaking Shane right when we start filming."

"Sorry Harris, was too cute. Could not resist." He didn't look at Harris, smirking up at Shane.

"Okay thanks Shane for volunteering to get us started!" Harris said with a teasing tone.

"What?" Shane blinked, looking at Harris and the camera set up with a red blinking dot. "Oh my god please tell me you'll delete that."

"If you're nice I'll edit it out." Harris waved his hand. He wasn't going to edit it out. "Get started, Hollander."

Shane grabbed the carefully wrapped book from his bag and handed it to Wyatt with a quick "Merry Christmas" and then he sat back down and kicked Ilya's shin. Wyatt opened the wrapping and grinned at the Batman comic omnibus with annotations in the margins from different artists, inkers, colourists, and writers that Shane had found while scrolling through search results.

"Well done, Hollander," Ilya praised, voice quiet and head turned to speak in Shane's ear as Wyatt handed his secret Santa gift to Dykstra.

Shane barely repressed a shudder and kicked Ilya's shin again. "Stop it."

Ilya leaned back and grinned, Shane just shook his head.

Haas stepped up to Ilya and held out a large bag then went to sit down, fiddling like a nervous squirrel as Ilya pulled the tissue paper out. Inside the bag was a bottle of Russian vodka and a collection of snacks in bubble-letter Cyrillic that Shane couldn't translate.

"My sister helped," Haas explained as Ilya cradled the bottle. "She knows someone who has clearance to travel to Russia so..."

Ilya stood up, crossed to Haas, and crushed him into a hug.

"Thank you," Ilya said, voice deep and monotone in a way that probably seemed off-putting. It would seem impersonal on camera, Shane knew that. But he heard Ilya's tears in that tone of voice, heard the homesickness he didn't talk about, heard the betrayal he felt watching his country refuse to allow his existence within its borders.

Ilya handed his gift off to Chouinard, and returned to his seat, looking at the bag like it was the Stanley Cup.

"You okay?" Shane asked, placing a hand on his husband's back.

"Da," Ilya replied, voice still deep. "*I wish I could give you more of my home than just snacks,*" he said in slow Russian, looking at Shane.

"*I know,*" Shane replied, in careful Russian. "*One day you'll show me everything you didn't in Sochi.*"

"*I should have,*" Ilya's solemn, serious tone made Shane smile sadly.

"*There is a lot we should have done.*"

Bood held a present out to Shane, it was awkwardly shaped and Shane unwrapped it carefully. Inside were two plushie toys about the size of Shane's hands, one was a hockey puck with a face, arms and legs, and the other was a can of ginger ale with similar facial features, arms and legs.

"Saw them in a shop and thought they summed you up pretty good, couldn't find a pride flag one otherwise it'd be perfect, y'know?" Bood's good humoured tone was accompanied by a laugh that made Shane feel like he was being laughed *with* instead of *at*.

Shane grinned. "They're adorable, thanks Bood. Seriously."

Harris double checked his list and grinned. "Okay that's everyone, can I get all of you to gather in front here with your gifts," everyone moved to follow Harris' instructions, "wonderful, okay on the count of three when I say *go* can you all say Happy Holidays." Harris' voice didn't carry it as a question. "Okay, one, two three, go!"

A synchronized cheer of "Happy Holidays" rose up from the Centaurs team.

"Hey, you guys still okay with Harris and I crashing?" Troy asked, packing his gift (a gift set of different coffee beans from around the world) into his bag.

"We would not have offered if you were not welcome, Barrett," Ilya sighed, clapping a hand on Troy's shoulder. "You are our friend. You are my best friend. And Harris' sisters are still tending to very new babies, right?"

"Yeah."

"Good if they were not I would be worried," Ilya joked and Troy smiled despite himself.

"If you want to tell my Mom that you backed out of Christmas Dinner when she's already got everything planned out and bought so my Dad can work his magic then you are *welcome* to call her. I'm not poking that bear."

"Me either," Ilya agreed. "I do not wish to feel Yuna Hollander's wrath today. Or ever."

"Yeah no just... It's all good." Troy pulled his toque on like it would save him from the conversation.

"Hope you're liking the playlist, there's another four hours of it and my parents decided to host at their cottage this year." Shane smiled.

Harris recorded a good fourth of the drive to Shane's parents' cottage and posted the pieces to his Instagram story. Shane's favourite was the one where Ilya was singing along to the fucking Sugarplum Fairy ballet song with his finger tracing a separate line of the music whenever they hit a spotlight on the way out from Ottawa. It was Shane's favourite not just because he loved watching Ilya's brilliant mind separate the different melodies without words, but also because Harris had panned between Ilya and Troy who was watching with his mouth agape like he had been transported to a different dimension.

The fact that Ilya wore a Santa Hat the whole drive was another plus.

They pulled into Shane and Ilya's cottage and opened the back trunk to let the snoozing Chiron and Anya out. They took off, sprinting around like crazy dogs.

"Oh my god," Harris crooned, taking a video of the two dogs frolicking in the snow.

"Mom said she'd be happy to have you two stay over but we already live together 50% of the season," Shane said as he moved up the shovelled steps.

"And we do not judge you for fucking," Ilya added, his bag slung over his shoulder.

"Mom doesn't judge it's just awkward."

"She judges little bit."

"Because you tried to fuck me in my childhood bedroom, Ilya."

"Was fun idea!"

"Ilya!" Shane's face was burning as he shoved the door open.

+1

"Okay yeah, he definitely loves Christmas," Harris declared as he flopped next to Shane on the couch at the Hollander's cottage.

"Told you." Shane smiled, watching as Yuna and Ilya drafted Troy into baking more cookies.

"He's always been this nuts?" Harris asked.

"Mhm. Long as we've spent Christmas together, at least." Shane didn't ask about the Christmases when Ilya was in Boston, before they figured their shit out, or the Christmases Ilya spent in Russia, or the couple Ilya spent in Canada between Juniors matches.

"Huh." Harris looked at Shane. "You know how we sometimes do Q&A boxes on the team's Insta story?" Shane hummed his affirmative. "We've had a couple that try to needle stuff about you two out, some are more... mean than others. A couple have been in good humour but obviously I pick the questions that get asked so it doesn't matter anyways." Harris took a

breath. "People ask all the time what you see in him, because he's so good at being a frigid asshole. But you've had these warm mushy parts of him the whole time."

"He's still an asshole," Shane said fondly.

"Well yeah, but he's our asshole," Harris agreed, grinning. "I dunno I'm just... Glad the team gets to see these mushy parts. Like, we all thought he was avoiding team stuff outside of working hours cause he wanted to keep us at arms length which I guess is true in a way but it's because he was trying to spend every spare second with you. And now we get to have both of you and the situations that got us all here sucks but..." Harris shrugged. "It's nice."

"I considered the Metros my brothers," Shane spoke to his wine glass. "I thought, y'know, it wasn't fair to think they'd be anything other than neutral to me coming out. JJ and Hayden were chill, JJ tried to find me dates and Hayden knew the whole time and then they were suddenly not at all neutral and super fucking assholes about it."

Harris placed his hand on Shane's shoulder. "They were," he agreed firmly.

"It's nice, to have a team that knows everything and doesn't care. Or, well, that's not right. I know everyone cares but it's a good thing that you care, it's not something that gets poked or prodded at." Shane swirled his glass and watched the way the small wave of red coated the sides in a gentle ebb. "It's nice to have a team that reciprocates. That feels like a family and shows it, instead of just saying it." Shane looked back at Harris. "My parents tried to have other kids, it wasn't in the cards for them so they focused on me. I know they see Ilya as a second son, but it's nice to have actual brothers."

Harris looked like he was going to cry.

"Shit sorry, I get sappy-"

"Don't you dare apologize Hollander," Harris ordered, eyes watery. "I'm glad you have a family now too. You and Troy both."

"You're included in that, y'know." Shane nudged Harris with his elbow. "You might not be on the ice with us but you're just as much a part of the team as the rest of us."

"Oh no! Why is Harris crying?" Ilya shouted from the kitchen and Troy's head shot up.

"Crying? Is he- Are you okay?" Troy abandoned the cookies.

"Oh my god I'm fine, keep making cookies for me!" Harris shooed Troy away.

Troy dropped a kiss to Harris' head before he returned to the kitchen.

"More wine?" Shane offered. "I'm less likely to get fawned over in that kitchen right now."

David laughed, sitting down in his chair with a beer in hand. "Your husband would beg to differ, Shane."

"Yeah well if I can play professional hockey while ignoring him I can get more wine." Shane took Harris' empty glass and returned to the kitchen.

Ilya's arms were wrapped around his waist the second Shane set both his and Harris' glasses down, his flour covered hands leaving hand prints all over Shane's clothes.

"What were you talking about?" Ilya asked quietly, his chin resting on Shane's shoulder.

"How much we all love playing on a team that's actually a family," Shane answered, turning to brush his lips against Ilya's temple. "It's nice."

"Yeah," Ilya agreed. "It is."

End Notes

Merry Christmas! I had the thought of Troy and Harris joining Shane and Ilya and the Hollanders for Christmas and the roadtrip with Hollanov and Trover felt like the tiniest little nugget since a couple hours drive to the cottages is like, nothing. So then it grew and now here we are!

Cottage in t-minus 23 hours as of posting!!!!

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