

under a borrowed sky

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by [colorfulreverie](#)

Summary

On christmas morning, Ilya finds himself awake before everyone else, restless under the weight of the holiday. As the day unfolds with Shane, their daughter, and a family built from choice rather than blood, christmas stops feeling like something borrowed, and starts to feel like his.

Ilya had been awake since five in the morning, that wasn't anything unusual for him but in the past it had been for training or because of Shane's insane workout routine— and most recently, their daughter screaming at all hours of the morning.

This morning he wasn't awake because their daughter had woken him up— miraculously, she was still asleep in her room, curled around the stuffed bear Yuna had given her last week, but because Ilya couldn't stop thinking. Like his brain wouldn't shut off, and of course it was about something specific.

Christmas.

The word still felt strange on his tongue, like a borrowed thing he hadn't quite earned yet despite all the holidays he'd spent with the Hollander family over the many years he and Shane had been together. He lay on his back staring at the ceiling, one arm thrown over his husband's side of the bed, listening to the steady sound of his breathing. Outside, the sky was still dark, snow falling heavily. Everything felt quiet in a way that made his chest ache.

Ilya slipped out of bed carefully, like he was sneaking away from something that couldn't be, or shouldn't be disturbed. He pulled on a hoodie and padded down the hall, pausing outside their daughter's room. He cracked the door open just enough to look inside.

She was sprawled across her bed, dark curls sticking up in every direction, one sock kicked off in her sleep. Her nose crinkled as she breathed in and out. There were already too many toys in there with her. Ilya knew that. Shane had told him that many times. He had said, *"she's one, Ilya. She doesn't need seventeen stuffed animals."* Ilya had nodded, agreeing with him, and then ordered five more.

He closed the door softly, leaving her to sleep and went to the living room, where the christmas tree glowed faintly in the early morning light. The presents underneath it were.. excessive. Even by his standards.

He crouched down and adjusted one of the bows, frowning at himself as he remembered dinner the previous night, he'd been fretting over the wrapping and Shane had told him it didn't matter. She wouldn't remember her very first christmas anyway.

But it did matter.

All of it mattered.

Back in Russia, he of course did not celebrate christmas in the same way. No lights. No tree. No stupid matching pajamas that David made them wear. New Year's Eve had been the big thing, and even that had been.. quiet. Heavy. Something to get through because the person who made it special in the first place was no longer with them, and Ilya was not allowed to talk about that.

This was different, though. This was theirs. A day that he got to spend with the family he created, and loved more than anything.

Shane shuffled in a few moments later, hair sticking up much like their daughters, eyes fighting to stay open, wrapped in one of Ilya's hoodies.

"You're up early." Shane whispered through a yawn, voice thick with sleep.

Ilya startled, then relaxed. "Could not sleep."

Shane leaned against him, arms slipping around his waist, forehead pressed between Ilya's shoulder blades. "You're vibrating."

"Vibrating?" He repeated, his brows furrowing.

"Mhm." Shane whispered against his skin. "You've been *restless* since, like, December first."

Ilya turned, pulling Shane against his chest. "I just want it to be good."

Shane looked up at him then, really looked, his expression softening. "It will be."

"I want it to be perfect."

Shane didn't hesitate to comfort his husband this time. Nodding against his chest. "Yeah. Me too."

Their daughter woke up an hour later, announcing it by babbling at the top of her little lungs. Shane laughed as Ilya bolted upright, nearly tripping over the dog toys scattered around the floor in his rush to get to her room first.

She was wide awake, big brown eyes staring up at him, a big smile on her face as Ilya scooped her up into his arms.

"Good morning, solnyshko." he grinned, pressing a kiss to her messy head of dark curls. She crinkled her nose, reminding him of someone else he loved more than anything in the world.

Shane leaned in the doorway, watching them with a smile that made Ilya feel almost naked. Like his husband could really see him, something that no one else had ever been able to do and even after all these years, it still made him a little nervous. Uncomfortable, maybe?

"You ready?" He asked.

Ilya swallowed, nodding. "Da."

They sat on the floor together in front of the christmas tree, their daughter between them, having more fun with the paper than the gifts that were inside, shrieking with delight every time they helped her rip it. Ilya watched her intently, like he was afraid she might disappear if he blinked for too long.

"You went overboard." Shane murmured under his breath, fond, as she opened her fourth present in a row. Ilya could tell he didn't mean it. He was just as happy sat watching her as he

was, he just wanted to pretend to be the strict parent which Ilya thought was no fun. Boring, infact.

He didn't argue or call him out. He just shrugged, eyes bright. "She deserves everything."

Later, after breakfast and too much coffee, they bundled up and drove to Shane's parents' house. Snow crunched under their boots as they walked up the path. He swore he would never get used to the Canadian weather, no matter how long he lived there for.

Inside, it was warm and chaotic, full of people who loved Shane loudly and easily. He watched as Yuna scooped their daughter up immediately, cooing over her, while David clapped Ilya on the shoulder and handed him a drink. The Hollanders' knew him too well.

Dinner was.. nice. Plates passed back and forth, laughter bouncing off the walls, their daughter babbling happily from her high chair. Ilya sat there quietly for a moment, taking it all in. And if his eyes got a little teary, he would claim it was from how boring their dinner conversation was, which wouldn't have been a lie, it was boring.

Shane noticed

He always did.

"You okay?" He asked softly, his foot nudging Ilya's under the table.

Ilya nodded, throat feeling tight. "I am.." he tried to look for the right word, but he could only settle on one that didn't even begin to describe how he felt. "*Happy*."

Later, when everyone was settled, their daughter sleeping against Shane's chest, Ilya finally let himself say what had been weighing on him since he'd woken up that morning.

"We did not do this when I was a kid." He said quietly. "Obviously not christmas, but any holiday. We never had perfect days like this."

Shane's hand found his, squeezing gently. "I know."

"I was scared." Ilya admitted. "That I would fuck it up. That I would not know how to make it good. That I would maybe be like my father."

Shane raised one eyebrow, waving his hand around the room. "Look around."

And Ilya did.

He saw Shane's parents chatting quietly on the sofa opposite them. Their daughter with her thumb in her mouth, clutching the stuffed animal Yuna and David had gotten for her. Shane beside him, warm and solid, and real. Giving him a look that made him feel nothing but loved.

Ilya smiled, small and honest. For the first time, christmas didn't feel like something he was watching from the outside, like past years when he felt like a guest intruding.

It felt like his.

Not just his but theirs.

His family's.

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