

Home and Not Alone on Christmas

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Home and Not Alone on Christmas

by [BrigidFaye](#)

Summary

Ilya decides he and Shane should celebrate their first Christmas as a public couple by hosting the holiday at their cottage with friends and family. And then there are friends and family everywhere, and emotionally charged salads and its all a little too much. Good thing Shane is practiced at soothing out the too muchness.

tl;dr Christmasy smut. Vague spoilers for The Long Game. Don't come for me if I messed up some Long Game details - it was lowkey devastating and I have yet to gear up for a reread.

Notes

Hiiii all i can think about is heated rivalry like i am in so so deep, happy finale eve eve, i hope this helps tide you over.

Italicized speech is Russian.

Many many thanks to Mash for their insights into Russian holiday traditions and movies and feelings. Ilya's description of 'The Irony of Fate' is basically just a directly quoted voice note.

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

Ilya fucking loves Canadian Christmas.

Or maybe it's American Christmas he's into? He's not really clear on the distinction. His introduction was a few watches of badly dubbed *Home Alone* as a kid and then Christmas in Boston, so maybe he leans toward the American side. Christmas in Boston is colorful and loud - the Quincy market tree that blares music along with its lights, carolers in the Commons and church bells clanging competitively. Sometimes he'd pick out one of his cars to drive around the suburbs and look at the aggressively festive displays of lights and giant blow up Santas and snowmen. It was a way to take up time on the Christmas break when most of his teammates were with their families. It hadn't been a long enough break - just three days - to justify traveling all the way back to Moscow, where the holiday wasn't a big deal, anyway.

Back in October after a practice, Ilya was standing in the locker room and looking through the Centaurs schedule for the year. His eyes fell on that three day stretch in December and he had a brilliant idea.

"Hollander," he called out, not turning to look for him, thrilling in the knowledge that he was close enough to hear him. Being in the same locker room was still very new.

"Yeah? What?"

Ilya only remembered then that Shane had asked - a couple times - that they keep things relatively professional at the rink and maybe making plans for the holidays together wasn't very professional. It was a fair enough boundary that Ilya was trying to get better at following. So he turned and walked to where Shane was seated and unlacing his skates. He tapped his own skate against the one Shane still had resting on the floor and Shane looked up at him, sweaty and disheveled and distracting. Ilya blinked and tapped his skate another time.

"What?" Shane said again.

"Christmas," Ilya said. "We could host at cottage?"

Shane's initial reaction was blank confusion and Ilya thought he knew what that was, and tried to wait instead of getting annoyed; after ten years of closely guarded secrets, it was sometimes hard to remember that they didn't have to be careful anymore.

"Oh," Shane breathed out after a moment. "Oh. That could be. Nice?"

"Could be nice," Ilya responded. "Is fucking winter wonderland palace with ten bedrooms, Hollander, better than nice."

"It's six bedrooms."

Ilya raised both eyebrows.

"Okay, yes," Shane said, a smile starting. "Yeah. Let's do it."

So now almost three months later, it's Christmas Eve and the cottage is full of family and friends and also Hayden Pike and Ilya isn't sure if he feels too warm because it's crowded or because his heart is very full.

The cottage is decked out in rainbow lights and tinsel. There's a huge tree in front of the big windows in the main room, and two more in the halls upstairs. Ilya spent a lot of time on a ladder nailing up garland ("If you get injured hanging fucking Christmas lights, Coach is gonna-" "Shane. Calm down." "Okay, then let me up there with-" "No.") and Shane and Yuna put a menu together. The outside is the same, draped in multi-colored lights and probably visible from space. Everything is colorful and glittering; Ilya cleaned out a Dollar Store and a half to get enough. ("Ilya, I... feel weird that we drove here in your bimmer," Shane said as Ilya cleared a shelf of cheap snowglobes.)

Ilya had looked, before opting for dollar store decorations, at the Christmas decor from the sorts of places he usually shops. He found white lights and tasteful evergreen and tapered cream candles. He supposed the house would have looked beautiful in those, but they evoked an austerity he wasn't interested in embodying. They reminded him of cold Moscow winters and colder people. He didn't want that in his life right now, especially not this year. The last year was a net positive, but it had also been very hard and Ilya and Shane were tired. They deserved a holiday with their loved ones where no media was going to bother them.

Today that is exactly what they have. Most of their guests arrived late last night (the 23rd), so they could have the full day together on Christmas Eve. Ilya and David make a huge breakfast of pancakes, bacon and eggs, and they'd spent the rest of the morning outside, sledding and snowman building and having an elaborate snowball fight (Svetlana gloated for hours after her and Ilya's team beat Shane & Hayden's). Jackie's sister, brother-in-law and two kids join them as well (they lived nearby), and the two of them, David, Yuna, and Svetlana's current boyfriend (a mild-mannered Harvard professor who Ilya definitely did not enjoy intimidating) watched the more active guests and hosts from their huddle around the bonfire, hot cocoa and mulled wine in hand.

The afternoon is a lazy lunch. Ilya puts on a movie for the kids, the 1957 classic *Snow Queen*, which Disney absolutely ripped off to create *Frozen*. The movie proves too scary for four-year-old Amber Pike and her cousin Nora, both of whom go running to their parents in tears when the titular Snow Queen appears.

"What Slavic horror movie did you show my children?" Hayden grumbles as he cuddles Amber in one of the chairs at the kitchen island.

Ilya, seated next to him and rubbing Amber's back, glares at Hayden, stung by the implication that he frightened the little girl on purpose. Shane is at the sink washing glasses, his head half turned toward them. Ilya continues trying to comfort her. Hayden narrows his eyes, presumably because Ilya's speaking Russian, and Ilya's patience snaps, though he keeps his voice level for Amber's sake.

"Right, Pike, you want to know what I'm saying? I tell her it is great movie because just like in hockey, Russia is superior at-"

Shane puts a hand on Ilya's shoulder, pulling him back a little, but he frowns at Hayden, too. "Hayden, come on, cool off, it was a snowball fight, not the cup. And he was saying something like 'precious innocent sunshine baby, never change.'"

Hayden looks at Ilya, the fight going out of his shoulders, his wide green eyes wincing a little in apologetic embarrassment.

Ilya slouches in his seat and looks at Shane. "You were not meant to translate that for him, but good job."

Hayden leaves with Amber in his arms, muttering "Sorry, Ilya" and looking confused. Shane watches him go and then sighs and leans into Ilya. Ilya slumps toward him, suddenly feeling drained, and grateful that with Hayden gone, it's just the two of them for a moment.

"If you two could go the next 24 hours without antagonizing each other," Shane says into Ilya's hair, "you don't have to get me a single other present. That would be enough." Ilya stiffens. "He does know you didn't mean to scare his kids, Ilya." Shane nudges him. "Amber knows you weren't trying to scare her."

Ilya sighs and the tension leaves his shoulders, both embarrassed and relieved that Shane so quickly guessed what was really bothering him.

"I did not think it was scary," he says sheepishly, looking up. "Maybe was not so scary to me because it was always *Die Hard* and then *Snow Queen* so was, seemed like... nice movie."

Shane grins. "Should I just be happy we didn't show *Die Hard* to a four year old?"

Ilya snorts. "Welcome to the party, pal."

Shane laughs and Ilya's spirits bounce back up. He pulls Shane closer and kisses him, quick and chaste.

"Did I really get it right, though, what you were saying to her?" Shane asks, pushing back. "Thought I missed something."

Ilya smiles. "Yes you are very smart best student ever, is that what you want to hear?"

A blush spreads under Shane's freckles. "No, come on, I know I missed something, what was it?"

Ilya bites the inside of his cheek before saying, "The sunshine bit you were right. Second part was more like, 'I hope your life is always this... gentle. Happy. Hope nothing is ever scarier than a cartoon witch.'"

"Ilya..."

"Sh," Ilya says before kissing him again. He suddenly and rather desperately wants this kiss to lead somewhere; he pulls away quickly, aware of the house full of people. "Sh. Do not let him think I am soft."

“You are a marshmallow and everyone here knows it.”

The rest of the afternoon passes without more tears. Ilya retreats to the gym for a bit to beat Svetlana in foosball and then is trounced, instead. Just before sunset Jackie and Svetlana orchestrate a festive, early happy hour. Ilya steps away from the cocktails early to help Shane and his parents set up dinner. He is feeling happy in a giddy, too caffeinated way that he distantly recognizes as a warning sign of a crash. His therapist has suggested he should do grounding exercises when he feels like this, but there isn't time for that right now, and it's an up, bubbly feeling, anyway, he can ride it out a little longer. But he tries to take care with the dishes he's pulling out of the fridge, aware he is clumsier (and less good at hockey) when he feels wound up like this.

But then he sets an innocuous tupperware on the counter and pulls off the lid. The sight and scent of the dish inside freezes him in place.

Olivier salad. He's only had it in Canada or the US with Svetlana, or occasionally at the house of a Russian teammate. It's simple enough - veggies like potatoes, carrots, and peas with ham, mayonnaise and dill. It's a common dish at New Year's celebrations. His mother always made a batch so enormous that the leftovers were part of winter meals for weeks after the holiday.

“Did you make this?” he asks Yuna when she appears next to him with a platter of rice.

“What's that, honey?” she asks.

Oh, he asked in Russian, because it is bizarrely difficult to summon English words when all he can smell is this salad. *“Who made this?”* he asks in the correct language.

“I did,” Shane says. He's toasting almonds in a tiny skillet on the stove and can't spare much attention for Ilya, but he sounds pleased with himself. *“Do you like it? I asked Niki for a good recipe,”* he elaborates, naming a Russian teammate of theirs (Nichushkin). *“I mean I hope you like it, recipe made way more than I thought it would, and, um, honestly I hate dill and I'm not gonna touch it so - Oh, hey,”* he says, tone abruptly shifting to concern; he must have seen Ilya's face. *“Hey, hey, Ilya...”*

Shane is suddenly there, fitting himself in the not-big-enough space between Ilya's chest and the counter. He has his hands on Ilya's biceps, squeezing, and ducks his head, trying to make Ilya meet his gaze. There are quieted, rushed sounds of David and Yuna making themselves scarce.

“Hey, look at me,” Shane says gently. *“What's going on, did I miss something?”* He glances at his watch like there might be some terrible breaking news blaring there. *“Or is it the... salad?”*

Ilya blinks and breathes, laughs a little. *“Sorry. Just salad.”*

Shane shoots the salad a glare like it's the Dallas defenseman who tried to pick a fight with Ilya last week. *“I'm sorry. I asked Svetlana too and she thought- I just wanted it-”*

“No no, is good,” Ilya says. “I do like it. You are right, you will hate it. Thank you for making my gross food for me.”

Shane just looks at him. Ilya drops the forced levity.

“It is a dish my mother always made for New Year,” he says quietly. “I just was... surprised.”

Shane looks stricken. “I’m sorry.”

“No,” Ilya says quickly, sincerely. He moves to hug Shane but then adjusts and tucks his face into his husband’s neck; he doesn’t want to hug Shane, he wants Shane to hold him. “No,” he says again as Shane’s arms go securely around him. “Is nice just... also sad.”

Shane kisses his hairline. “I get that.”

“And I’m very tired,” Ilya mumbles into Shane’s skin. “I love everyone but I am very tired.”

Shane chuckles, chest jumping against Ilya’s. “This might make us terrible hosts but... do you wanna go for a walk after dessert and avoid the bedtime meltdowns?”

“God Hollander, yes.”

“Okay, perfect,” Shane says, and gently eases Ilya off his shoulder. “It’s a date.”

Dinner is easy then, the noise and chaos of the present fun to dive into now that it’s balanced out by the promise of solitude later. David gives a toast that goes on too long; Yuna tugs him down into his seat and says no more champagne for him. The food is delicious and Ilya enjoys watching the others try the salad - they are spilt about 50/50 on whether it is good or not. There is a lot of good natured argument around the table. Hayden sits at the kids end of the table to keep his two youngest from murdering each other. Ilya wins a flimsy whistle in a popper and Shane folds simple hats for everyone out of cloth napkins.

It is happy and cozy. It is a marvel that they can have this in peace now.

By the end of the meal, Ilya is content and sleepy. He has all but forgotten the planned walk when Shane tugs him aside in the kitchen as the cleaning wraps up. He follows automatically, feeling dreamy and warm and safe. He accepts the coat, hat and gloves Shane hands him out of the closet.

Shane opens the door and cold slaps Ilya in the face, jolting him to wakefulness. He lets out a sound of disgust and takes a step back toward the glowing house. “Fuck, it’s cold, Hollander, maybe we-”

Shane grabs his arm and yanks him forward. “Sorry, forgot I married a beach volleyball player. Put a coat on, Rozanov, Jesus.”

Ilya laughs, delighted, and does as he’s told.

*

Shane keeps their hands together as he pulls Ilya away from the house. The fresh air is bracing against Shane's face after the stuffy warmth of the house; he feels clearer and more alert. He leads Ilya down the shoveled path away from the door and then ways down the driveway. Ilya makes to turn left, probably anticipating a walk on the plowed road. Shane turns right and tugs him toward the hiking trail that goes around the lake and feels Ilya tug back, hesitating.

"I want to go this way," Shane says. "It's prettier."

"The snow is two feet deep," Ilya protests.

"We're not going far, city boy, you can make it."

Ilya yields and follows. "Oh, you have a plan, is that it?" he asks, sounding more optimistic.

"I... No."

"Terrible liar, Hollander."

"I am demonstrably not a terrible liar."

"Well, no. But you are terrible teammate, I fear you will be traded."

Shane looks over his shoulder at Ilya, knowing this is a set up for a joke but unsure where it's going. "Traded for what, exposing a hockey captain to snow?"

"No, not that, traded from volleyball team. You are very short for volleyball."

"Oh fuck you, I'm above av- Don't pick me up, dontpickme - Ilya!"

But Shane is already airborne and being tossed into a snowdrift, and it's still annoyingly hot that Ilya can do this, because yes Shane is shorter than Ilya but he definitely isn't built like someone who gets casually thrown around. He lands in the snow with a grunt and swings a foot out, clipping Ilya's legs out from under him, bringing Ilya tumbling down on top of himself.

Shane expects a wrestling match, but Ilya bypasses that. He doesn't shove snow in Shane's collar. He kisses Shane with the breathless urgency of years ago, that 'I haven't seen you in months' feeling. Shane knew - from the hurt in Ilya's eyes when Amber was sad, from the salad reaction, from the tone of Ilya's laughter at dinner - that Ilya was feeling rattled, and this kiss confirms it further. Shane gives back the intensity, gloved hands around Ilya's face and then slows them down, relaxes in Ilya's grip, tries to telegraph *we have time, we're alone, we're okay*.

It takes a minute but Ilya follows his lead. The kisses get gentler, still intense but less frantic. Shane shifts, trying to get closer but instead disturbing the snow and sinking deeper. Their lips come apart and then Shane is left gazing up at Ilya framed by pine trees and diamond bright stars in the deep velvet sky. There's just enough light from the half moon and distant house for Shane to make out Ilya's short, slightly chagrined expression. Ilya lowers his forehead against Shane's.

“Hi,” Ilya says, his breath close and warm against Shane’s skin.

“Hi,” Shane answers. “You okay?”

Ilya nods.

“Can you give me more than that?” Shane asks uncertainly. “It’s okay if...”

“No, is okay,” Ilya says. He raises himself up enough to glance at the house and then back to Shane. “I wanted them all here. It is wonderful, having them here, I just... This time of year is... hard, a little.”

“I know.”

“And I think I forgot, when I say we should host, that this break is so short and it...” He grinned a little, crooked and chagrined. “Now is not a break so much.”

“Yeah. Right around noon I was seriously considering sending them all packing.”

Ilya laughs, loud and relieved. He kisses Shane again and this time it is half wrestling match. The only leverage Shane can manage as he sinks further into the snow bank is to grab an icy handful and shove it down the back of Ilya’s jeans. It’s underhanded but it works; Ilya recoils, yelping and Shane flips them, ends up straddling the other man, breathless.

Ilya grins and gets his hands on Shane’s waist. “This is your grand plan? Have your way with me in a snow bank?”

Shane disentangles himself, stomping down snow and standing. “Not this snowbank.”

Ilya’s face lights up with Shane’s favorite incredulous smile. “Not... this snowbank? Which snowbank?”

Shane offers his hand; Ilya takes it and gets to his feet.

“Not this one,” is all he says, and resumes pulling Ilya into the woods.

“It’s not that much,” Shane is saying, blushing fiercely. “And I guess it’s not a snowbank, really.”

Ilya knows his mouth is hanging open, but he can’t change that. They are under the sheltering boughs of a very large pine tree. The branches start at about Ilya’s eye level and sweep out long and graceful to the snow several yards away, creating a sort of awning that has kept a lot of the snow out. Shane is standing sheepishly five feet in front of him, on the other side of several blankets he must have layered on the ground hours ago. A few camping lanterns are hanging around them. Those and the moonlight off the snow around them mean the space is reasonably well lit.

“And it’s still cold,” Shane says apologetically. “I mean, obviously. It’s not like we can sleep here but I thought-”

“When did you run away from your family to make us a sex den, Hollander?”

The blush deepens. “When Svetlana was destroying you at foosball.”

“No! She was in on it? Traitor,” Ilya says. This is delightful.

“I didn’t tell her details, I just asked her to-”

“Jane. She knew what you were doing.”

Ilya can see the nickname catch Shane off guard, watches his smile go sweet and a little shy.

“It is cold,” Shane mutters, apologetic.

“So come warm me up.”

Shane wrinkles his nose at the line but he steps forward onto the blankets, knocking his boots together to kick off gathered snow, but Ilya doesn’t have it in him to be careful anymore. He shakes his gloves off impatiently and reaches out, grabs Shane’s coat and drags him to him, greedy to shove his fingers in his hair.

Then they’re kissing and everything is simple again. Shane’s lips are cold, and so is the tip of his nose against Ilya’s cheek. Ilya has been at least half hard since he tackled Shane in the snow bank and he’s embarrassingly eager now. Between practice, team meetings, Christmas preparations and hosting, they haven’t done anything in ages. Well, four days. If he didn’t count the hand jobs in the shower three days ago. Which had been very good, so he probably should count that.

Anyway. Too long. How the fuck did he used to go months without this man’s mouth on him? Unbelievable.

Shane appears to feel similar. He’s unzipping Ilya’s coat and pushing it open, though not off. Quick, calloused fingers find the edge of Ilya’s sweater and slip under it, go flat against his abs. Ilya hisses from the shock of cold fingers against his skin, but it isn’t entirely unpleasant. It’s nice to have sensation somewhere; his dick, beneath jeans and bunched coat, isn’t getting much.

Ilya’s nipple is tweaked and then Shane’s hands go in the other direction, kiss turning messy as Shane struggles against the zipper of Ilya’s jeans. And then fuck, yes, Shane is on his knees and pulling Ilya’s jeans down just far enough to free Ilya’s cock. Cold air on hot skin zings through Ilya’s nerve endings.

Shane licks him, a board and flat stroke, and the contrasting warmth of Shane’s tongue is so heady that Ilya throws his left arm up around an overhanging branch to steady himself. His right hand goes into Shane’s hair, shaky and reverent.

“Shane,” he breathes. “Perfect, so fucking perfect.”

Shane hums approval or agreement and sucks Ilya into his mouth just a little, toying with his tip. Ilya grunts and tries to thrust deeper. Shane moves, staying shallow.

“Tease,” Ilya gasps.

“Mhm,” Shane hums, and swallows him.

Ilya groans and drops his head back. It is very quiet on this still night, in this frozen forest, and the sounds of Shane sucking him seem very loud. After ten years of furtive hotel hookups and carefully concealed devotion it still feels rebellious to smile at Shane on the ice, to drive with him through town, to walk Anya together. Shane knows Ilya gets off on a bit of risk, but there’s really never been a need to introduce more risk to this. Getting on his knees 20 feet from a hiking trail is Shane playing with risk to turn Ilya on and to ground him after an emotionally complicated day and Ilya has never loved him more and is confident he will love him even more tomorrow.

It’s also hot. It’s really fucking hot.

“Stop,” Ilya says abruptly, too close to the edge. “Stop, stop.”

He drops to his knees, too, and kisses Shane, heavy and hungry, and they don’t last long like that, end up tumbling to their sides on the blanket. Ilya pins Shane quickly, unzips his jackets and pushes down his sweatpants.

“Fuck,” Shane yelps as Ilya wraps his hand around his already leaking cock. “Fuck! Cold!”

“This isn’t even my cold hand, is the one that was in your hair!”

“Ah, fuck, is this revenge for the snow in your pants?”

“Maybe a little,” Ilya says, and lowers himself to kiss him. It wasn’t at all intentional, he’d forgotten in his haste to get his hands on Shane. “Here, I’ll fix it, wait.”

He fixes it by shifting so that his own cock drags against Shane’s. Shane groans and arches under him and Ilya wraps his hand around both of them and oh-okay-yeah his hand is a little cold, but the end result is that Shane’s cock feels radiantly hot against his by contrast. He rocks them together; watches Shane’s head drop back against the blankets, his eyes flutter closed.

“Beautiful,” Ilya says in Russian. He kisses Shane, pressing the words into the soft skin of his neck. “So beautiful, sweetheart, so good for me.”

“All for you,” Shane answers, still clumsy in Ilya’s native tongue and fuck if that doesn’t set Ilya on fire. He rocks into Shane with more purpose, thumb swiping precum for lubricant and-

“Wait, stop,” Shane says. “Stop, fuck me, I want you to fuck me.”

Ilya laughs, groaning and gasping, burying his head in Shane’s shoulder with his hand still around them both, trying very hard to somehow also think unsexy thoughts.

"Fuck, Shane," he manages, delirious. "You-you know better than saying 'fuck me' when you want me to last..."

Ilya reclaims his hand carefully and tries to get his wind back. His breath puffs out white and thick between them. Shane is nearly giggling under him. Ilya swats ineffectively at his hair.

"Don't use Russian on me if you don't want me to come," Ilya grumbles through a smile.

Shane grins. "Back at you."

Ilya huffs and looks around at the lanterns and blanket. "That is my trick, you are not supposed to use against me. And what? You and Svetlana hid lube out here? It is probably frozen."

"Pocket," Shane says, pressing his hips up and wiggling slightly.

What ensues is another wrestling match as Ilya searches every pocket Shane has instead of the one he was trying to indicate. What he eventually emerges with is a condom and a travel size bottle of lube from the pocket of Shane's sweatpants. He laughs as he kisses Shane's embarrassed, scrunched up face.

"How long have you been secretly carrying these around? Just today? Yesterday too?"

"When are you going to stop being surprised that I'm prepared for things," Shane asks, smiling.

It is never going to stop being surprising to Ilya that Shane is always thinking about him. He pushes that thought away as something to talk to his therapist about, and gets to work.

There are a number of interesting minutes of Shane squirming as Ilya tries to be gentle with fingers that are definitely too cold for this. Shane is on his back and Ilya stays close on top of him, trying to trap the warmth between their chests. Frankly if the roles were reversed Ilya would have decided to get off in some way that didn't involve cold fingers in his ass, but it is also rather unsurprising that Shane is maybe into it.

"I'm not 'into it'," Shane says, words sex drunk and slurred. Ilya curls his fingers and Shane cries out. "Is just-just different - Ah!"

"Sh," Ilya says, kissing him quiet. "The house is not so far..."

"No, s'okay, it's fucking midnight on Christmas Eve, no one's... and the-the little hill, the sound echos the other direction, there's no one over - Fuck, fuck, Ilya..."

But Ilya has lifted his head, looking around them at the slight depression the tree they are in, remembering the rise and fall of the trail as they walked and wondering...

"How long have you been planning to get fucked under this tree, Hollander?"

"Long enough to start begging if you don't get a move on."

Ilya growls and nips at Shane's neck, pulls back and nudges Shane with his knees. As he pulls on a condom and slicks himself up, Shane gets on his hands and knees, his sweatpants pushed down barely far enough, the waistband stretching across his thighs and Ilya realizes that even Shane's choice of pants was deliberate, chosen because he could keep them on while Ilya fucks him in the winter air and Christ he already had a thing for Shane in sweats and now Shane has elevated this staple of his wardrobe to near fetish territory, which might complicate future days when Shane is in sweats, which is most days.

Whatever. Ilya can't really think anymore. He puts his hands on Shane's waist and tugs him back, entering him sure and a bit fast. Ilya groans and Shane tosses his head back, arching and gorgeous. Like this, no longer chest to chest, the cold is rushing back into Ilya's open coat, and Shane's body around his feels molten and holy.

"Shane," Ilya groans as he thrusts into the heat of him over and over. "Oh God, oh fuck, sweetheart..."

"Ah-Ilya, Ilya..."

Fuck the way this man reacts to him always makes Ilya feel like some kind of sex god, but here like this, chasing down pleasure in the crystal clear winter woods, surrounded by starlight and flickering lanterns, that plane where they are something else - something transcendent and eternal - feels even closer.

Ilya needs to pull his focus closer than the stars. He stops, pulls away.

"Wha-why?" Shane protests.

"Face," Ilya manages, falling back on the blanket and trying to pull Shane with him. "Want-want to see-"

Shane fumbles to kick off the sweatpants, stretchy but not enough to accommodate him straddling Ilya. They're both clumsy and urgent and unused to wearing this much clothes for this.

Shane fumbles a bit and then sinks down on Ilya hard and fast and Ilya's the one crying out probably too loudly. He reaches up and hauls Shane down to him, kissing messy and desperate and thrusting up into him as Shane rolls down and fuck this is beautiful and it's not going to last. He opens his eyes, grasping the moment as it happens, locking gazes with the beautiful, impossible, precious person above him. Shane is flushed and happy and framed by pine boughs and starlight and biting his lip and opening his mouth to speak and saying-

"Come for me."

In Russian.

Oh.

Fuck.

Ilya comes hard, nearly sobbing with the rush of it, face pressed up into Shane's cheek. Shane's arm wraps around his shoulders so he can grind down on Ilya's pulsing cock, once, twice, and then warmth is spilling over Ilya's heaving chest. Ilya groans, shuddering and somehow more in love than he was ten minutes ago. Shane is shaking and groaning, gasping, collapsing on top of him. Ilya gets his arms around him, tangles them both up in his jacket.

Ilya doesn't know how long they lay there, panting out white breath and holding on to each other.

Finally, Shane says something. Ilya thinks he repeats it a couple times before the words work into his brain.

"Huh?"

"I said I'm not cold anymore," Shane mutters against his throat.

Ilya laughs weakly. "No. Not cold. Dead but not cold."

Shane gives the same kind of strung out laugh and eases himself up a little. There are gentle fingers in Ilya's hair and he closes his eyes. Shane presses a kiss to his nose.

"Ilya," he says quietly. "Let's go to bed. Actually bed, inside. We're gonna freeze to death if we stay out here."

Ilya blinks and looks up at him, catches the hand in his hair and holds it against his chest. "Oh well," he says, still breathing a little hard. "And so end our illustrious careers. I would be happy frost mummy with you."

Shane grins. "I would be happy frost mummy with you, too, but we should win Ottawa a cup first."

"Yes. Yes I suppose."

He lets Shane pull him to his feet. He stands there as Shane folds blankets and piles them in his arms, and then he follows his husband back to their house.

A short while later, Shane is tucked in their bed, half asleep against Ilya's chest, blearily watching the screen of their unnecessarily large television as Ilya searches youtube.

"Can we maybe sleep?" Shane asks after Ilya makes a cross, disappointed sound.

"We go to sleep to the movie, I know it's here somewhere, it - Aha!"

Shane is not wearing his glasses and isn't sure they would help him decipher the Russian title page anyway. What he sees are white words over an image of two white people, a brown haired man looking at a blonde woman. It looks at least several decades old. Ilya clicks play and sets the remote aside. He wiggles himself deeper under the blanket and then eases Shane back onto his chest.

“What are we watching?” Shane asks.

“Great Russian classic. ‘The Irony of Fate.’ I have not shown you before, yes?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“Okay, is great.”

“I... Ilya I don’t know how much Russian I can follow at the moment.”

“I will tell you. Basically - is very fucked up premise. Moscow man gets so drunk in sauna that instead of flying home to Moscow, he flies to St. Petersburg and tries to go home to his house, which is not there, obviously. But there is similar address in St. Petersburg so he goes into wrong apartment and he falls asleep-”

“Wait, he’s still that drunk after a whole flight?”

“Yes, I know it is shocking. He falls asleep in a strange woman’s bed and... well in the end she dumps her fiance and marries random drunk trespasser.”

“That’s a weird start to a love story.”

“Mmm, maybe yes,” Ilya says, and presses a lingering kiss to Shane’s foreheads. “But I think I have heard less likely ones working out.”

Shane’s heart skips a little. He turns his face enough to kiss Ilya’s chest. “Mmm. Yeah. I guess I have, too.”

Ilya strokes his hair and sighs, his body under Shane’s relaxed and content. “Merry Christmas, Shane.”

“Merry Christmas, Ilya.”

End Notes

Sad thought: I can't remember if this is an original thought or based in TLG, but I think Ilya finds Hayden slightly triggering because what do you meeeeee a kid might go running to their father for comfort, what is that (: so he purposely ruffles Hayden to break up the perfectness.

Happy thought: This shoowoow these books omg this fandom makes me so emotional and hopeful?? Thank you for coming by <3

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