

christmas at the cottage

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Summary

Ilya feels breathless as he walks into the cottage.

The living room is a magic, Christmas wonderland. The lights covering the cottage cast a warm, golden hue all around, beams are covered in tinsel and garland. The tree is so big and beautiful, standing tall in the corner of the living room. The fireplace has been lit and is burning hot, the soft sound crackling of wood filling the air.

He can't help but think about the first time he walked into this cottage and how much has changed since then. Back then, when it was just Shane's cottage. When it was a place where they came to hide, to finally love each other the way they both so desperately been craving for years.

Now, it is their home.

aka a cottage fic, just a few years down the road

The drive to the cottage is long.

So boring and long.

It doesn't help that there is a thick blanket of snow covering the roads and Shane is driving ten miles under the limit. Ilya can practically feel the anxiety radiating from his body, by the way his shoulders are tense and how hard he is gripping the wheel.

"You drive like grandma. We would be there by now if you put foot down." Ilya jokes from the back seat.

Shane's eyes briefly shift to the mirror so he can shoot daggers at his husband before turning his attention back to the road. "I'm being *careful*. We have precious cargo in the car."

Ilya rolls his eyes and smiles fondly.

Because he is right, there is precious cargo in the car.

And said precious cargo is too busy watching the snow flakes fall from the sky through the window — giggling and babbling away to herself as her father tries his best to not freak out in the driver seat.

"Your papa, he worry for no reason. Isn't that right, Iris." Ilya says gently as he taps his daughter on her nose. Her soft button nose with speckles of freckles covering the bridge.

So beautiful just like her father.

Iris Hollander-Rozanov, 9 months old and the light of Ilya's life. She is practically Shane's twin, soft dark hair and twinkly wide eyes — not that Ilya is complaining.

She rolls her head so she is looking up at Ilya now rather than out of the window. A smile spreads across her face, gummy and bright as she reaches up to press her chubby fingers into his cheeks.

He lets out a soft gasp and Shane momentarily whips his head around. “What? Is she okay? Do I need to pull over?”

“She’s *fine*. Eyes on road.” Shane huffs as he turns back round, his shoulders hitching up closer to his ears.

“Sorry, I just-“

“I know,” Ilya cuts him off, because he does know. Shane has been freaking about this trip for nearly a month now. Getting himself worked up over the what if’s and worse case scenario’s. He is an over-thinker, has always been. So naturally, when they became parents, his anxiety increased by 1000%.

“Is okay. Only ten minutes until we are at the cottage.” Ilya says softly as he leans forward, reaching to rest his hand on Shane’s shoulder. He brushes his thumb over the soft skin of his neck and the tension begins to melt away.

“I bet is looking very Christmassy.” He changes the subject as he leans back to sit more comfortably. Iris is still quietly babbling away beside him as she grabs for his finger.

“Yeah, mom said she has gone all out. She wanted to make Iris’s first Christmas extra special.” Shane replies with a smile.

It would be extra special, Ilya thinks. They don’t really come by the cottage during the winter, there really isn’t much point when the lake is frozen over. But Yuna thought it would be nice for them all to get away for a few days, to be able to celebrate together as a family in private — which both Shane and Ilya agreed easily.

Since their coming out and since the wedding, their fame and celebrity has skyrocketed; everyone wants to talk about the arch-rivals who have been secretly in love for over a decade. Every social media post, every interaction at games, even them strolling through the quiet streets of Ottawa; all of it is just talking points for fans and the media.

The tipping point for Ilya was when their birth announcement he posted on Instagram reached over a million likes within minutes. That's when they both decided that they needed to keep their family life private, for the sake of their daughter.

Ilya would love to hide away from the limelight and enjoy the quiet life. He loves hockey, he really does. But he loves his family more. He thinks he will retire soon, maybe not this season but the next. He has had the career of a lifetime, maybe it's time to step back and enjoy being a dad.

Let Shane be the best NHL player for a change — Ilya can just imagine his husband's face if he said this outloud and can't help but laugh.

For now, escaping to the cottage will have to do.

As Shane pulls up outside, Ilya can already see the twinkling lights on the Christmas Tree shining through the window. Yuna and David are standing by the front door, with Anya sitting by their feet — wearing a Santa hat that Ilya knows would have been a battle to put on.

“Ah. Look! Anya is Santa!” Ilya says excitedly, pointing out of the window towards the pup. Iris's eyes follow his fingers and she starts laughing at the sight of the dog. She wiggles in her seat and starts smashing her palm against the window trying to get Anya's attention.

Once Shane is parked and the engine has been turned off, they both peel out of the car, beginning with unpacking the trunk of the car first. Ilya is still adjusting to the amount of stuff they had to bring with them now Iris is in their life. Who knew such a small human needs so much stuff for three days away.

“Where’s my baby?” Yuna says as she approaches the car. Ilya pokes his head around the corner and smiles. “I’m right here.” He jokes as he steps around the car with his arms spread open. She laughs as she falls into his arms, hugging him tightly.

“Nice to see you, Ilya. But I am talking about my granddaughter.” Yuna says as they pull apart. Ilya clutches his chest, pretending to be hurt by her words before laughing and reaching to open the back door of the car.

“Wow, she’s gotten so big since the last time I saw her.” Yuna coos as she leans in to unbuckle the car seat.

Shane shuts the trunk and comes to join them. “Mom, you saw her four days ago.”

“Exactly, she’s growing up way too fast. You need to stay a baby forever,” Yuna quips back as she stands back up straight; car seat in hand. She steps forward and delicately kisses her son on the cheek before turning back towards the cottage.

“Come on Anya, let’s get her out of the cold.” Anya happily follows Yuna into the house, with David not far behind with half of their luggage.

Shane then follows with the rest of the bags, shouting out to his mother about something that Ilya can’t quite catch.

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they came to hide, to finally love each other the way they both so desperately been craving for years.

Now, it is *their* home.

A place that has pictures of them from over the years covering the wall. With a living room that has dog toys all over the floor, a travel cot set up beside the arm chair and a high chair tucked underneath the dining table. Laughter bouncing off the walls and the smell of home cooked food filling the air.

“Hey, are you okay?” Shane asks him softly as he hugs him from behind. He gently rests his head on Ilya’s shoulder and squeezes him tight. Ilya hums as he tilts his head back, just enough to kiss his husband on his temple.

“More than okay. Just reminiscing.” Ilya sniffs as he turns in Shane’s arm and brings his hands up to cup his face. His thumb gently runs across his cheek, over the beautiful freckles that he loves so much.

“Yeah, it's been a crazy journey.” Shane mumbles quietly. He tilts his head up and kisses Ilya; soft, tender, gentle and loving.

“Would you have changed any of it?” He then asks as they separate, a pinch of insecurity in his tone.

“Not a second.” Ilya answers immediately, so sure and certain. He kisses Shane again, much deeper and firmer than before. He feels Shane smiling into the kiss and he can’t help but smile back.

“Come on, I promised Hayd that I’d FaceTime once we arrived.”

“Ah yes. I wonder if he opened my present yet.” Ilya laughs as he allows Shane to drag him into the kitchen.

He thinks about the small package that he knows is sitting underneath the Price's Christmas tree. A cotton shirt with *the worst uncle ever* written on the front and *Montreal sux* on the back.

Ilya really loves this life.

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