

Welcome Home

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Summary

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And yet...there was one thing standing in the way of perfection, and Ilya was trying very hard not to think about it too much in case it gave him a heart attack.

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The summer had gone the way it always had. They spent all of it at the cottage, commuting to the camp together. Ilya had waited, wondering if Shane was going to take a weekend while their time was their own and bring his stuff up from Montreal, but he hadn't. He hadn't talked about it at all.

Ilya had asked, when the first day of pretraining arrived, if they needed to go to Montreal first and Shane had just said, "Nah," eyes fixed on a text to Rose. They'd driven to Ottawa and Shane had slipped in Ilya's space like he always did, any time he visited.

A routine came about naturally: practices, workouts, taking Anya for a walk, cuddling in front of the TV, fucking Shane's brains out. But time slipped away and Ilya abruptly realized a month and a half had gone by and Shane still hadn't moved in. He couldn't think of a way to ask about it that didn't sound accusatory. They'd lived apart for their entire relationship. The summers at the cottage were wonderful but they were frantic and stolen and fraught as well. And last summer, their first one out, had been almost entirely absorbed by wedding planning and running the camp.

They'd never done this before - coming home to each other every night after practice and waking up together every morning before a game. Ilya couldn't help thinking...maybe it was too much for Shane. Maybe it was too much of Ilya's chaos for Shane's perfection. Maybe he was keeping one foot planted firmly in Montreal because he wasn't sure yet if he wanted to be here full time.

So Ilya tried to make Shane feel welcome in quiet ways.

"I moved the chest over so you could put a desk there," he said, as soon as Shane came home from his run. God, he looked delicious, all sweaty and pink-cheeked.

"Hmm?"

"I have my office upstairs but you do not, so I thought you could put a desk here."

"Oh. Yeah? I don't think so. I only really need a desk in the summer and I have my office at camp for that. I'm fine with my laptop." Shane pressed a kiss to Ilya's cheek. "Did you have breakfast yet?"

Ilya frowned at Shane's retreating back. "No, not yet."

"Okay, I'll make eggs."

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A few days later, Ilya tried again. "We need more towels. I make you come so much you take many showers."

Shane rolled his eyes. "Yeah, it has nothing to do with us both being professional athletes who work out for a living."

"We need more sheets, too. Is that also an athlete thing?"

"Shut up."

"Which ones should we get? We could go shopping." Ilya felt like an idiot, sitting there like a lost puppy, hoping his husband would suggest a trip to Home Sense, as if that would mean something.

But Shane just shrugged. "You can just order more of what you already have. I like the green ones."

"Right, okay." What *you* already have. Cause they were Ilya's towels, and Ilya's sheets. And Shane was just a guest. Still.

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"We could get a new place?"

Shane chewed on the end of his pen, eyes rolling up from his notebook to meet Ilya's. He frowned, confused. "Like another cottage?"

"No, a different house. Leave this one."

"You want to move?"

Ilya shrugged. "Not really. But we could pick out somewhere new. We are married now."

"I like it here. It's an easy drive to the arena. Plus I wouldn't want to uproot Anya." Shane scratched her behind her ears and she stretched out long.

"Alright. You know I am happy to move for you, right?" He'd already moved all the way to fucking Canada for Shane, so that felt like a stupid thing to say.

"I know." Shane yawned and tucked his toes under Ilya's thigh. "Think Coach will have us working on the PK tomorrow?"

Ilya rubbed his thumb over the jut of Shane's ankle. "Yes, I think so."

**

One of the best things about being together all the time - even though Ilya still couldn't call it *living together* - was not needing to cram as much sex as possible into every spare moment they had. They could spend nights curled up on the couch reading or watching movies, take Anya for long, lazy walks, and fall asleep side by side, fully clothed, after a brutal game.

This was not one of those nights.

Shane's hole clenched around Ilya's cock and he moaned, driving back to push Ilya in deeper. Ilya gripped his hips and thrust harder, setting a punishing pace. Shane's hands twisted in the duvet cover and he shoved his face down to bury his moan in the sheets. Ilya felt him shudder, then he cried out again, no doubt making a huge mess of their bed as he came, squeezing and releasing Ilya's cock. That was enough to push Ilya over and with a few more deep drives into Shane's hot, slick body, Ilya followed after, pumping his release inside Shane.

"Oh, fuck," Shane groaned as he rolled out of the wet patch and on to his back. Ilya stumbled down beside him, stretched out long, but propped up on one elbow.

Ilya looked down at the man he loved more than anything in the world - more than hockey - who he *needed* to spend the rest of his life with or he might actually die, and before he could stop himself, he blurted out, "Why don't you want to move in with me?"

Shane blinked for a moment then sat up. "What?"

Ilya shuffled to the side, creating some space between them, and scrubbed his hand through his sweaty hair. "Sorry. I did not mean to ask that."

"You didn't mean to ask it, or you didn't mean it entirely?"

Ilya clenched his teeth then released them on a sigh. It was one thing to keep his feelings to himself, it was another to outright lie. "I didn't mean to ask it."

"So it's a real question."

"Yes."

"You think I didn't want to move in with you?"

"It seems like you still don't." Now that they were talking about it, the anger Ilya had been squashing down flared up. Ilya sat up too. "I know we have spent our whole relationship long distance, but I thought maybe you would be excited that it was over now."

Shane frowned, heartbreak creasing his brow. "I *am* excited. I've been loving every minute of this. What makes you think I don't want to be here?"

"You still live in Montreal! You never brought your stuff here. You never emptied your house. Is like when you came to stay on breaks when we were a secret but just longer. Like the summer, feeling like a countdown until you leave again." Ilya's chest felt tight. His hands flexed on his knees. "I need you to stay here - or - or I can't -" The tight feeling worsened.

"Hey, hey." Shane pushed both hands up into Ilya's curls, holding either side of his face. "You're panicking a bit there, Ilya. Take a breath."

Ilya sucked air in then forced it out again. It wasn't like him to panic. "The panicking is usually your job," he said with a shaky laugh.

"Yeah, so I know how to handle it." But once Ilya was breathing normally again, Shane sat back, out of his space, and twisted his fingers together with a frown. "I didn't think I had to move in, because I thought I already lived here. Apparently you didn't."

It was Ilya's turn to be stunned. "What?"

"I thought you bought this place for us. When you first moved to Ottawa, we talked about retiring here and you bought this huge fucking place with that in mind. So to me, this is our house, it's always been our house. I know you technically own it but we're both millionaires so it didn't seem to matter who owned it on paper. I didn't need to make a big deal out of moving in, because I've always lived here and I was just waiting until it was fulltime. My apartment in Montreal was never home to me. It was always just where I had to stay for work, even before we got together for real. And the Brossard house -" Shane shrugged.

"But - but all your stuff is there."

"Not really. Most of my stuff is here. Or at the cottage. Every time I've come for the last three years, I've left half the stuff I brought here anyway. I moved most of the shit I care about here when I bought the house in Montreal."

"Really?" Ilya thought about the hoodies in his closet and the games next to his Playstation, the pictures on his walls and the books snuggled on his shelves. *Their shelves.*

"Yeah." Shane was still curling away. "You really didn't think of this as our place?"

Fuck, now Shane's were the hurt feelings.

"I did. I *wanted* to. But I thought you were the one who didn't want to. So I was being careful with it. Every time I picture our future, I picture us here together, old with bad knees, saying, hey remember when Ilya won all those cups for us?"

Shane snorted.

"I bought this house for you and then I got very scared that maybe you did not want to live in it. Or maybe just with me."

"Ilya, I *married* you. Of course I want to live together. I want to do everything together. Live together, play hockey together, win cups together, retire together, raise a family together."

"I'm sorry. I know that." Ilya hooked the back of Shane's head, drawing him in for a hug, heart skipping one terrifying beat before he was sure Shane would lean in; but he did. "I guess I thought there would be this moment, where you showed up with everything and we could say, finally, now we live together, like I have wanted to for so long."

Shane visibly softened. He climbed into Ilya's lap, legs straddling his thighs. Ilya's hands snaked up Shane's back, feeling every bump of his spine. "This is my home."

Ilya's heart skipped several beats, and he had to suck in a tight breath. "You are my home," he scraped out. "Wherever you are, I am home."

"Do you want me to sell my place in Montreal? Bridey is staying there right now."

"The new Voyageurs centre?"

"Yeah. He knew J.J. from Juniors and asked if I had a recommendation for a place to live and I told him my old place was just going to sit empty so he's been staying there while he looks for an apartment."

"You did not tell me that."

Shane shrugged. "Didn't seem important. I got that place so we'd have somewhere private to have sex when you were in Montreal and you got this place so we'd have somewhere to be a family some day."

Ilya swallowed hard. "Well, when you put it that way..."

Shane poked him in the chest. "You play it so cool but you are an enormous hot mess."

Ilya nibbled at Shane's ear lobe. "When you say enormous..."

"Fuck off."

"And when you say hot..."

Shane broke into laughter and Ilya just watched the way his eyes scrunched closed and his throat bobbed.

"You do not need to sell the Montreal house if you don't want to."

"I really don't care."

"Probably best not to make Bridey homeless."

"Okay." Shane tipped sideways off Ilya's lap onto the bed and Ilya took a moment to enjoy the view. "So what do I need to do to convince you I live here? I can rent a huge truck and drive it all the way to Montreal, and fill it up with four shirts I left there and a second cheese grater. We need two cheese graters to feel properly settled, right?"

Ilya laughed. He loved it when Shane was the snarky one. "Yes, maybe we will do that. Or maybe I just need to make sure to make you come in every room in this house. So it really feels like ours."

"I think we're pretty much almost there."

Ilya watched Shane silently counting off rooms.

"Does the pantry count as a room?" Shane finally asked.

"I sucked you off there when you were trying to make couscous for that dinner at your parents'."

"Oh, yeah." Shane grinned up at Ilya. "Guess I live here then."

"I think maybe...it feels too good to be real," Ilya admitted on a soft sigh.

Shane stretched out long and Ilya's hand skated up his thigh. "I think too good to be true doesn't usually involve eleven years of not getting to be together the way we want."

Ilya folded down over Shane and set to work making yet another memory in *their* house.

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Three Weeks Later

The door clicked open and Ilya tried to catch sight of Shane over the back of the couch, but Anya was curled up in his lap pinning him down. "How was the party?"

"Good," Shane called back. "Hayden was bummed you couldn't make it."

Ilya snorted. "That is a lie."

"Jackie was bummed you couldn't make it."

"Maybe true."

"Ruby and Jade cried when I showed up without you."

"Okay, that is definitely true." Ilya was released when Shane pattering around in the kitchen had Anya standing and stretching, then hopping down to the floor. Ilya got up and followed her. "Did the twins at least like the drum kit we got them?"

"*You* got them. They were thrilled. Hayden looked like ten years of his life had been knocked off."

Ilya grinned. Score one for Rozanov.

Shane put a tote bag on the counter and drew out a container of leftover cake and put it in the fridge. No doubt for Ilya, though he wondered if he could get Shane to eat some of it, if he licked it off Ilya's abs. Ilya hooked Shane's hips and backed him up until he fit in the curve of his body then nuzzled his neck. "I missed you."

"I missed you too." Shane turned in Ilya's arms and kissed him sweetly. "I got you something."

"Oh, yes? Something fun?"

Shane bent and pulled something out of another bag. "I stopped at the house." He dropped a well worn cheese grater in Ilya's hands.

Ilya burst out laughing. He tossed the grater into the sink and hauled his husband up into his arms, making his way towards the nearest flat surface he could lay him out on. "Welcome home, Shane Hollander."

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