

now that I've found you, stay

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by [princebutt](#)

Summary

A snapshot of Christmas galas held to benefit the Irina convention, and the tender moments they hold.

Flufftober day thirteen: hosting a holiday event

Notes

Thank you forever and always to Anna and dntat for betaing!! This one is a little out there but I hope you enjoy it!

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

They're thirty four when they host their first Irina Foundation Christmas Gala. It's partially Harris's idea, and it's hard, with the NHL season in full swing. But with the help of Yuna and a hired event planner, they pull out all of the stops. The planner, Antoine, finds a beautiful venue and the best catering, and between Ilya and Shane, they stack the guest list with all of the most famous hockey people they can think to include. The night includes a silent auction, a live band, and plenty of champagne, and it's a great success. People are feeling charitable and make sizable donations. The booze flows and suit jackets are shucked in favor of working up a sweat on the dance floor. It's a fun group of people, and Ilya feels proud of what they've created here.

It's late in the evening and he's lost track of Shane. Ilya had gotten wrapped up talking to Antoine about some final details on payment for the band, and when he turns to look for his husband, he's surprised he's... gone. Ilya's brow furrows as he scans the dance floor and finds Yuna with David, and Harris with Troy, but no Shane. Shane isn't in any of the chairs, and he's not at the bar, so he must have needed some fresh air. Ilya makes his way over to the door to the balcony, and sure enough, through the window he can make out a figure slouched over the railing. Ilya conspicuously exits the room and steps into the sweetness of the December evening chill. Small snowflakes are starting to fall, and he tucks his hands into his pockets as he approaches Shane and rubs a hand on his husband's back.

"How'd you find me?" Shane teases as he straightens up and turns, back now pressing against the railing, hand finding Ilya's. His skin is cool to the touch, and Ilya takes both of Shane's hands and rubs them between his own, promoting circulation and trying to warm him.

"Was easy, knew you'd want some fresh air. This is the only exit besides the front." Ilya shrugs, and leans in to press a sweet kiss to Shane's cheek, which is rosy from the cold. He takes in the starkness of the snowflakes against Shane's dark hair, how one snowflake falls onto the bridge of his nose and melts into his freckles. Ilya wipes the water droplet away.

"This turned out well, didn't it?" Shane asks, his voice hinting at the nervousness brewing beneath as his fingers move against Ilya's palms. Ilya tugs Shane's hands to his chest and places them there, and a small shiver runs down his spine as he feels the cool of Shane's skin through his thin shirt.

With a nod, Ilya exhales and places a kiss on Shane's forehead. "It went very well," he agrees as he looks up at the stars which peek out from clouds, thick and gray with the snow they bear.

Shane's fingers twitch against Ilya's chest, and he stands up straighter from leaning against the balcony railing. He takes a few steps into Ilya's space, and Ilya briefly marvels over the beauty of Shane's snow-soaked eyelashes which shine like the stars under the string lights strung up around the balcony. "We're doing good work here," Shane murmurs, before leaning in and pressing a gentle, knowing kiss to Ilya's lips. Ilya savors the warmth of Shane against him, how their hands press into his chest, and how perfect this whole night has been.

“She would be proud of what we are doing,” Ilya agrees. He sighs, and it leaves him as a small puff of white from the cool evening. “Come, we should go dance,” Ilya says with a cheeky grin. Shane nods in agreement, and they go back in to join the party.

They’re forty four and this is the tenth annual Irina Foundation Christmas Gala. It’s easy now – they’ve had ten years to perfect it, they’ve strengthened their bond with Antoine who is now a friend as well as their event planner, and it’s smooth sailing this year, throwing this event. Dinner goes off without a mishap, and Shane knows he needs to go up and make his remarks, but he’s not sure where Ilya is. He’d left for the bathroom five minutes ago, and it’s unlike him to just... disappear. Shane’s about to go looking when Yuna nudges Shane, and he turns to find Ilya striding over, his grin confident, his notes in his hand. He gestures to the small stage and Shane nods, standing to meet his husband at the two little steps that lead up to it where the band is situated and a mic waits for them.

They thank everyone for coming, and Shane twists his notes in his hands as he waits for Ilya to finish up his remarks. As Ilya speaks Shane’s eyes scan the room. They sold twice as many tickets this year as the first year, and their foundation is growing, with hockey camps in more cities now, with more NHL stars wanting to help, with bigger donations from more people in power. The NHL might be a good ol’ boys club, but they’re stepping up and out, and Shane feels like times are changing.

Ilya turns the mic over to Shane, and he thanks everyone for coming, as well. He reaches out and takes Ilya’s hand as he speaks about these years, how much they love this community even now that they’re two years into retirement, and how much this gala means to them. The hockey camps will always be the core of the Irina foundation, but this part matters too – spreading awareness, gathering as a community, and talking about what they can do together. Ilya squeezes Shane’s hand and Shane gives him a smile. “I couldn’t do any of it without my husband,” he concludes weakly, which earns them a round of applause. Ilya leans in to kiss his cheek, and to murmur in his ear.

“Ya tebya lyublyu.” I love you. It brings a smile so earnest and bright to Shane’s lips that his cheeks hurt from it. They exit the stage to applause, and Ilya tugs Shane through a side door and down a hallway. There’s a stairwell which they duck into, and next thing Shane knows, he’s pinned against the wall, his hands held above his head, Ilya’s lips on his jaw, and oh. He is so fucking gone for Ilya it isn’t even funny.

Forty four. He’s forty four and he’s known Ilya since he was eighteen – twenty six years. So many of those years were spent pretending like they didn’t care about each other, but so many more of those years have been full of love. Shane presses back against Ilya, and moans when Ilya’s lips capture his own. “I’m so lucky to have you,” Shane whispers against Ilya’s lips, and they both still. Ilya’s grin is radiant when he pulls away, and the thumb of his free hand traces Shane’s lower lip.

The band starts to play, and the sweetness of the music wafts to them. Ilya kisses him again, deeply, desperately, and Shane moans into it, then whimpers when the warmth disappears and Ilya pulls away. With gentle hands, Ilya straightens Shane’s collar and bowtie where it had been knocked askew.

“More of that for you later, Hollander,” he says with an eyebrow waggle that suggests plenty more to come tonight. “Come. We should go back and enjoy our party.”

They’re fifty five and it’s the twentieth anniversary of the Irina Foundation Christmas Gala. Oliver, their oldest who is now fifteen, is wearing his first tuxedo, and Irina, now thirteen, has chosen a sparkly pink gown that doesn’t necessarily scream Christmas, but she’d let Shane take her to the salon to get her hair done, and she’d even painted her nails for this, and considering her usual tomboyish ways, they aren’t going to complain.

This is the first year they’ve allowed the children to come along – it’s an adult affair, after all, but Oliver had begged, and Ilya has always had a hard time saying no to him. Or Irina, if he’s being honest. With promises of being on their best behavior they’d won themselves an invite, and Ilya is secretly very happy to have the whole family here. This year’s gala is their biggest yet, and they’d even graduated to a larger venue about five years back. The band is bigger and better than ever, they’ve stepped it up with the catering, and they charge more per ticket, with tickets flying off the shelf when they go on sale. It’s become the event to attend, in the hockey world, and in Ottawa, and Ilya is proud to see players young and old, rookies and seasoned veterans and ageless retirees alike, all mingling, enjoying good company and good food, and giving to a charity that is so near and dear to him.

It’s been a wonderful night, and everyone is slowing down. The band strikes up ‘Can’t Take My Eyes Off of You,’ and a lovely young jazz singer croons as couples get up to slow dance. Ilya stands, and holds out a hand to Shane. “Dance with me?” He asks, eyes pleading, as his husband looks towards the children.

Yuna waves her hand at Shane, gesturing for him to go with Ilya. “I’ve got them,” she promises as Oliver digs into his piece of cake and Irina scans the room of familiar faces of the people she’s spent her little life idolizing.

Shane takes Ilya’s hand, then, and Ilya grins as he tugs his husband onto the dance floor. They made their welcome remarks earlier in the evening, and their responsibility for the night is done – now they can just enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Ilya’s hand finds Shane’s waist, the other staying clasped around Shane’s hand. They sway to the music, and Shane’s cheek finds Ilya’s shoulder, and Ilya presses a tender kiss to his temple. “Another successful year,” Ilya murmurs as he nuzzles into Shane’s hair, savoring the feel of Shane pressed against him, living for the way they move as one. Shane nods against Ilya’s shoulder, and sighs into the fabric.

“Outside of camps, I think this is my favorite. It’s always so nice, and so good to see so many people rally around our cause,” Shane says softly, only for Ilya’s ears. It’s Ilya’s turn to nod, and he does so, grinning brightly.

“I am so proud of us, of everything we have done,” Ilya agrees. They continue dancing even as the dancefloor thins, until it’s only them, swaying gently, wrapped up in each other.

End Notes

Would love it if you commented and kudosed to let me know how you liked it!

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