

After the snow fall

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After the snow fall

by [penpen_xo](#)

Summary

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“Anya.” He managed to get out, and the dog in question nudged at his head, another groan eliciting from Shane's lips at the movement.

He was struggling to understand what was happening, but everything was fuzzy and scrambled and he couldn't hold onto a single thought for long enough to string anything tangible together.

“Ilya.” He exhaled as Anya nudged him again. “Get Ilya....Anya, find Ilya.”

or

Shane slips and falls on ice while out walking Anya, and Anya is just your everyday Lassie.

Notes

Well, like many many other people out there, Heated Rivalry is basically consuming my every waking thought. and I'm not even mad about it.

Spoilers if you haven't read The Long game as this is set after that, but really you need to, it's amazing, so what are you even doing!? :P

I always saw Anya as an Australian Shepherd, just from the way she is described in the book, so that's what i'm rolling with :)
(i'm so excited to see them with her in Season 2!)

Anyway, hope you enjoy this little winter fluff between our two fav boys and their dog.
xoxo

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

It was a rare few days at home for Shane and Ilya— The Centaurs had returned home from a round in New York to dropping temperatures, snow storms, and 3 whole days before they had their next home game.

They'd spent the first day in bed, smooshed against each other as they slept, cuddled and fucked each other into sweet bliss, leaving only to obtain food and ensure Anya had everything she needed.

It had felt like a long last few months, the bags under their eyes almost as dark as the constant bruises that were tattooed across their bodies— prizes for being slammed against the boards too hard as they fought for the puck. But that was just part of it all. This is what their lives were, and though they were only half way through the season, they now at least got to do it together.

This was Shane's second season with the Centaurs and he was feeling so certain that they were on the right track for the Cup this year. The last thing he wanted to do was jinx it, but the team was just working so well together that Shane couldn't stop himself from feeling elated at their progress this season.

Ilya was a great captain. Hard when he needed to be, fair and supportive always, but mostly, he was considerate, and smart, and believed in every single one of them with all his heart, and that somehow lifted each and everyone of them.

No, Shane loved this team, he loved working with Ilya, loved how well they worked together both on and off the ice, and was excited to see where they could go.

Ilya who right at this moment was snoring softly against Shane's shoulder, the curls he'd been growing out almost long enough to cover his eyes. He'd started wearing a headband to keep them out of the way while playing, and despite the teasing from him and their team mates, Shane secretly loved how he looked and was already mourning the day post season when he'd chop them all off.

Shane inhaled deeply, eyes still shut as he shifted in the large King size bed he shared with his husband. Despite all the room, they still slept draped over one another, and Shane wouldn't change that for anything in the world. Not when they'd spent so many years not being about to do this, not when they'd had to deny themselves of happiness for too long. No, he'd never take this for granted.

He hadn't been ready to wake up yet, but Anya let out a low whine from her bed and he couldn't stop the sound from forcing itself into his brain, pulling him further away from the dreams he'd just been having.

He rubbed a hand through his eyes, pressing perhaps a little too hard against his eye sockets as he yawned awake. Anya, padded over to him, and he felt two paws on the edge of the bed followed by a cold, wet nose on his cheek.

“Okay sweet girl.” He sighed, casting a soft smile in her direction.

Ilya grumbled something incoherently as Shane slipped out from his hold, moving his pillow down and his husband immediately burrowed into it subconsciously, face disappearing amongst the soft fabric and surrounding curls. Shane smirked and pressed a kiss to his head before pulling himself out of bed and heading into the bathroom.

They'd normally walk her together, but Shane was determined to let Ilya rest if he needed it — and the fact that he hadn't even woken up means he definitely needed it.

Everyone always assumed the Russian man was annoyingly unbothered by things, that he didn't let anything get to him— was cocky and overly confident, and unfazed by the noise. And none of these things were necessarily untrue, but Shane knew the truth. Ilya took being captain very seriously, more seriously than anyone gave him credit for.

Shane saw the work that he put in behind the scenes, in the locker room and on the ice, to make sure that his team and the staff that looked after them were all in a good place. Shane helped where he could, helping them sort out plays and strategies, because that was his strong suit. But Ilya took on a lot by himself, and though he knew his husband wouldn't dare have it any other way, he also understood how exhausting it was for him.

So he'd let him sleep in, while he walked their lovely, darling dog.

He dragged on his winter gear and made his way through the house, Anya hot on his heels, an extra bounce in her step as she realised that they might actually be going outside.

“Are you sure you want to go out there?” He glanced down at their dog as they stood in front of the floor to ceiling glass doors, gazing out across the snowladen world around them that dropped off to the Ottawa River, all frozen and silvery in the morning light.

The storm had eased up a little overnight and now the sky was a little brighter, casting a dim, pearly glow over the expanse of snow that surrounded them.

Anya merely tilted her head to the side and whined again, showing her eagerness to be outside.

“Fine,” Shane sighed, knowing full well that she was probably going stir crazy being cooped up inside with them this last day. “Come here then.”

He quickly got her snow boots on and coat, and was about to attach her lead when he ran back to the kitchen bench. He hastily scribbled out a note to Ilya, letting him know they’d gone for a walk and would be back soon. He pulled on his snowboots and coat before letting them outside, shivering into the blast of frigid air that hit them fast.

They set out on one of Anya's favorite paths, their speed considerably slower due to the inches of snow now blanketed across their route. Shane welcomed the burning feeling in his legs, his boots moving with a satisfying, soft crunch as he followed the energetic Australian Shepherd.

The world around them was so still, so silent, and Shane couldn't help but relish in the peace it brought, wrapping around him like a warm blanket, something he normally only felt when he was safe in Ilya's arms.

He loved where they lived. He loved their house and its position right on Ottawa River with dozens of nature trails around them, and very welcomed privacy.

Shane sometimes couldn't believe that this was his life, that this wasn't some wild coma dream from taking a puck to the head that he was going to have to wake up from some day.

Anya barked, pulling Shane from his thoughts and back to the present. She bounded through the snow, chasing after a squirrel who had dared to poke his head out and enjoy the quiet morning.

“Anya.” Shane laughed, and she halted, turning to him, ears perked in question—the squirrel darted up a nearby tree and out of sight. He grabbed at a branch and broke it easily, snapping it up into a few shorter sticks.

He threw the sticks for her, one by one and she bounded after each of them, barking in delight and chewing them up as soon as she could get them in her teeth,

They continued like this for a while, slowly walking and playing, working their way along the trail, following the path of the frozen river beside them. It looked nice out there, and was definitely frozen over enough. Maybe he and Ilya could go for a skate later on if the weather behaved.

As he went to throw another stick for Anya, he lost his footing slightly which completely threw off his aim, the stick sailing over towards the embankment. Anya leapt after it anyway, eagerness thick in her shining eyes.

“Anya!” Shane yelped as she misjudged a mound of snow that gave way under her weight, causing her to slide down the embankment, a high pitched whine filling the air.

He scrambled after her quickly, his only thought about getting to her as he slid down behind her, entirely ungraceful, a panic sitting heavy on his chest all of a sudden. The river was frozen over, so it wasn't like she was going to go into the water, but he hated that awful look on her face as she fell, and he didn't want her to be stuck down there, so he couldn't help but panic in return— that was just how his brain worked sometimes.

He landed unceremoniously hard on the ice with a huff, and Anya immediately crawled into his lap, warm tongue managed to catch his cheek.

“Okay, okay,” He ruffled the fur behind her ears, pulling her back so he could look at her. “I'm sorry girl, that was a terrible throw from me. Are you okay?”

She merely licked him again, tail wagging so much that it made her butt wiggle. Yeah, she was okay.

Shane shifted where he sat, suddenly all too aware of the dampness to his pants, the snow seeping through his layers. He scrunched his nose up in displeasure, hating the feel of the soggy sweatpants he now had to sport for the rest of the walk.

“Let's get back up to the trail hey?” He murmured down to Anya who was waiting patiently for him to decide their next move.

It happened quickly, far too quickly for Shane to really register what had happened. One second he was heaving himself up carefully, and the next his feet were sliding out from underneath him as he slipped backwards.

And then all he knew was darkness.

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Shane groaned, eyes cracking open with great effort, the distant sound of barking getting closer and closer, and he couldn't help but wince at the volume as it pierced right through him.

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"Ilya." He exhaled as Anya nudged him again. "Get Ilya....Anya, find Ilya."

The barking grew more distant again as his eyes started to close and darkness consumed him once more.

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Ilya woke slowly and easily, eyes still closed as he stretched out his long limbs like a sleepy cat, all content, lazy and happy. He immediately clocked the cool section of bed next to him though, eyes snapping open as he noted the absence of his husband.

They didn't often wake up separately, but man he'd needed the few extra hours this morning and he wouldn't have put it past Shane to have noticed this as well.

He smiled to himself at the thought of Shane slipping out quietly, pressing kisses to his hair as he always did when they were in bed, before leaving him to sleep.

When he eventually made it down to the kitchen, socked feet padding against the cool floor as he dragged a soft hoodie over his bare chest, he couldn't help but frown at the quiet house that met him.

He'd been expecting to see Shane perched at the kitchen counter, glasses on, drinking his coffee as he watched something on his phone, or read another Hockey book. But he was nowhere in sight, there was no smell of brewing coffee, and it was just quiet... far too quiet.

A piece of paper in the centre of the kitchen counter caught his eye however and he plucked it up, smiling as he read the familiar scrawl telling him that Shane had taken Anya out for a walk.

He cracked open a pack of pop tarts and nibbled on the corner of one as he stood in front of the fridge, trying to decide what he'd cook for breakfast. Shane would want his regular breakfast smoothie, full of everything far too healthy and gross, but Ilya was sure he could also talk him into some poached eggs on toast at least.

While he waited, and finished off the blueberry pop tart that his husband would absolutely disapprove of, Ilya busied himself making coffee, letting the slow drip of the brewing pot and the caffeine laced puffs of steam wake him up even further.

He smiled as he heard Anya's bark in the distance and grabbed two towels from the laundry before bringing them over to the door, knowing both Anya and Shane were going to need to dry off after braving the elements.

He moved back to the kitchen and pulled down two mugs from the cabinet above him, ready to pour— a large, deep green mug with Anya-like cartoon dogs patterned across it, and a

sleeker, smaller mug in navy and white stripes for Shane.

Anya's barks grew louder though, and this caught Ilya's attention. She wasn't the type of dog who barked incessantly and for no reason at all. He glanced over to the door in time to see her bound up the back steps, feet tracking small pools in the shimmering snow. She continued to bark as she caught sight of him and Ilya frowned again, making his way to the door quickly.

She burst inside, barking at him as she danced round his feet, and Ilya crouched down to pick her up, ignoring the dampness that seeped into his hoodie from her wet fur. She whined in his arms but her barking did stop as he held her.

"What's wrong?" He asked her, and suddenly realised that Shane had in fact not appeared behind her.

He poked his head outside, waiting for his husband to show. Surely Anya had just run ahead and he had been lagging behind, weighed down by trodding through the thick snow.

"Where's Shane my love?" He asked, as if she was going to be able to give him a full Lassie response.

Anya whined once more, wiggling in his arms until he put her down. She ran back outside, barking loudly at him once again.

Something was wrong. He could hear it in the tone of her barks, higher in pitch than her normal, playful sound.

Fuck.

Fuck fuck fuck.

Ilya hastily dragged on his boots, not even thinking about the fact that he was in his sleep shorts still. He pulled on his thick winter coat, swiped his phone off the kitchen bench and followed his dog outside. She ran ahead and he dashed after her, fear fueling him as his long legs pushed through the snow.

He had no idea what had happened, and his mind was running a little too wild with scenarios. Whatever had happened though, he just needed Shane to hold on.

“I’m coming baby.”

*

Shane brought a hand to his head, rising just a little, a long groan easing from his lips as he attempted to sit up. Fuck, his head hurt so much.

The pounding across his skull only got worse as he dragged himself into a seated position, a wave of nausea washing over him suddenly. His hands were shaking and the world around him felt muffled and too soft for him to hold onto anything solid.

He isn’t sure how long he sat there, seconds, minutes, days, but eventually something clicked in place and was suddenly aware of the coolness beneath him, his brain finally catching up to the fact that he was sitting on ice that was the frozen Ottawa River.

It came back to him in small fragments, flashes of moments— home, going for a walk, Anya. ANYA!

“Anya!’ He glanced around suddenly, pain rippling across his face at the movement. “Anya?” he said again, weakly.

But the pup was nowhere to be seen, nothing around him but the stillness of the morning and the dove grey sky above.

“No,” tears burned into his eyes. “No, no....Anya!”

He'd lost her. He'd fucking lost their dog. Ilya was never going to forgive him. His beloved dog, his best girl, the dog who had given Ilya so much support with his mental health journey. Shane had to find her. He couldn't go back home until he found her. No...he had to find their dog because how else was he going to be able to show his face to his husband, to the love of his life, if he didn't.

Shane used this singular thought to spur him on as he managed to drag himself up, ignoring how the world spun viciously as he straightened. It took him a moment to gain his footing, but with the help of a sturdy tree branch he managed to pull himself up the embankment and back to the path.

“Anya!” He called out desperately, a sob catching in the back of his throat.

He glanced around, searching for her, but everything was fuzzy around the edges, and he was having a hard time recognising the path they were on. The snow was so bright, so harsh against his eyes, and just everywhere...it was throwing off his sense of direction. And his hands couldn't seem to stop shaking.

Find her Shane, you need to fucking find her, he berated himself and shook his head, eyes squeezed tightly shut as he tried to get a grip of himself.

And so he urged himself forward, stumbling up the path, calling out every now and then for Anya, hoping by some miracle that she'd just run off chasing one of her beloved squirrels.

He trod onwards, trying to ignore the throbbing pain that was pulsing through his head, or the tightness behind his eyes that was becoming harder to ignore.

“Anya!” He cried out, hearing barking in the distance, and somehow he managed to pick up his speed, pushing forward in relief.

He came to a section of the trail that opened up to a clearing and a small boat ramp, giving people access to the river in the warmer months and somewhere to park their cars safely. A dog ran around a couple who were unloading gear from their car, skates slung over their shoulders. He pulled up short, realising that wasn't Anya.

Fuck.

Tears pricked at his eyes and he felt his knees buckle as adrenaline drained out of him. That wasn't her. He'd lost her. He'd lost Ilya's dog and it was going to destroy him.

"Hey, are you okay there?"

Shane glanced up and noticed the couple approaching him, their dog, a black labrador, at their heels obediently.

"I..." He puffed out, brain struggling to wrap around the words he needed. "I..."

"You're bleeding I think, did you hit your head?" The woman pressed forward, motioning at the growing stain on the neck of his jacket.

Shane brought a hand to the back of his head and winced sharply. When he pulled it away it was slick with crimson.

"Oh," he acknowledged woozily, and he had to bring both hands to the ground to stop himself from tipping over. Yes he was bleeding, pretty profusely, but why? "I...I don't remember. I need to find....I need Anya. I....I lost her."

The next few moments blurred together for him. He can tell they are speaking to him but he isn't sure he actually hears anything they say, his brain is feeling too rattled to take any of it in.

He's helped into the back seat of their car and something soft is pressed against the back of his head. He drifts in and out of consciousness as they drive, and he barely registers the head of the black Lab sitting soft and grounding in his lap.

He thinks he mumbles Anya's name a few times, the word sitting hot and heavy on his lips, whirling around his brain like a broken record. He can't go home without her. He can't have lost her. He can't...

Before he knows what's happening, he's being placed into a wheelchair and the scene around him suddenly shifts into a whirl of bright lights, probing questions and prodding nurses.

Everything is too much though. Too bright, too loud, too blurry for him to concentrate on other than the fact that he had failed.

"Sir what's your name?"

"Sh-Shane...Shane Holl...Hollander." His head lolled against the pillow he was placed upon.

"Good Mr Hollander, do you know where you are?"

No. Maybe. The hospital perhaps. But his tongue was too heavy to get the words out.

"Mr Hollander, can you tell me what day it is?"

Shane groaned, the throbbing behind his eyes reaching an entirely new level at the volume of everything.

"Any...my dog. I need—" He managed to get out.

"There was no dog with you Shane," The voice told him and he shook his head violently. "You've sustained a head injury, we need to treat you first."

"No, no..I need to find her." He made to move from the bed, but in his weakened state, hands pushed him back down very easily.

They didn't understand. She was out there, alone and lost. Ilya would never forgive him.

“He won’t...” Shane felt the tears on his cheeks now, hot and thick. “Ilya won’t...”

Maybe he’d worked himself into a state, or maybe his head injury was rearing its ugly head and making itself known, but his brain wasn’t able to take much more at that point and the last thing he heard were raised voices calling to him before he passed out.

*

Ilya ran, his bare legs burning from the cold, all red and prickling in a harsh static, but nothing could pull his focus right now as he dashed after Anya. The Australian Shepherd leapt through the snow with ease, her ears alert and focused, glancing back occasionally to make sure Ilya was following her.

She led him further and further down the trail and with every minute that passed Ilya’s heart clenched a little tighter in fear. He attempted to ring Shane’s phone but it rang out each time, meeting his voicemail in frustration.

Eventually Anya slowed and Ilya could see a disturbance in the foliage on the embankment—something, or someone, had disrupted the settled snow, sliding downward towards the frozen river.

“Shane!” He yelled, hurrying to the spot and glancing down. He could see the marks in the snow against the ice, the distinct shape of where someone had been lying, but Shane was nowhere to be found.

Ilya whirled around, calling out his husband's name over and over, Anya sniffing at the ground and barking at him. She set off on the path again, and Ilya noticed the footsteps in the otherwise untouched snow leading further away.

“Good girl, find him for me.” He called out, setting off again after Anya, her nose to the ground as she tracked her other favourite person.

They emerged into a clearing and Ilya almost cried when there was yet again no one around. He could see tyre marks and foot prints, but no Shane. Anya darted around, nose to the ground still, weaving back and forth from the boat ramp to what was normally the small parking lot, now just a rug of white with the tell tale signs of a car coming and going.

Ilya inhaled with a shudder as he saw a flash of red on the white snow a few feet from him—a small swipe, but bright enough to have caught his eye.

“Fuck, Shane.” He whirled around desperately, pulling out his phone once again, attempting to call his husband's phone, only for it to buzz in his hand with an incoming call.

“Hello?” he answered desperately, holding his breath in fear.

*

Shane drifted, floating through distant noises and a dream of a barking dog that clung to the edges of his mind, all soft around the edges.

“Shane.”

He groaned, sighing long and deep, the dream feeling further away, the beeping of a machine creeping in closer.

“Sweetheart, wakeup.”

“Ilya?” He mumbled, too weary to attempt to open his eyes. Shane knew that voice well. He’d know that voice anywhere, know the feel of the large, calloused hands in his, even without seeing him.

“Yes, I’m here now, can you open your eyes for me?”

It took Shane more effort than he felt he was capable of— his eyes sensitive and weighed down by pain. Eventually though he managed to pry them open, the vision of Ilya’s own beautiful eyes swimming into view, pinched in concern, all raw around the edges.

“There you are.” Ilya’s hand came up to carefully caress his face and Shane melted against the warmth.

“What happened?” He sighed into the touch, letting his eyes flutter closed again- just for a little bit.

“You slipped on the ice and hit your head,” Ilya told him, thumb grazing softly over his cheek in a circle. “They think maybe you hit a rock perhaps...hard enough to give you a pretty decent concussion.”

“Oh...” Is all that Shane could come up with, because words were still feeling too hard right now. “I’m sorry.”

Ilya chuckled then, sadly and softly. “You Canadians apologise too much. It was accident.”

“Yeah I...” Shane swallowed, meeting Ilya’s concerned gaze once more. “I remember Anya slipped—”

Ilya sat back quickly with a surprised yelp as Shane bolted upright, panic washing over him, his chest heaving as he eyed his husband wildly.

“What’s wrong?” Ilya’s eyes were searching his, hands hovering like he was ready to catch him, or force him back into bed.

Shane could only stare in horror though, his breathing quickening, heart pounding rapidly in his chest. “Anya....she....Oh Ilya i’m so sorry.”

“What?”

Shane buried his head in his hands, unable to bear looking at him, a sob pulling from his mouth with a strangled cry. “I lost her, oh god Ilya I'm so sorry. When I woke up she was gone. I tried to look for her. I tried, I promise you but I couldn't find her. I’m so so—”

“Shane!” Ilya grabbed his hands now, eyes wide and shining. “What are you talking about? Anya is at home.”

All Shane could do was stare back at him, confusion still hanging heavy in his eyes as he tried to understand. No, she had been nowhere to be found. He’d lost her.

“Sweetheart, look at me...Shane, look at me.” Ilya forced him to meet his gaze, pulling him out of his haze of panic, the blue eyes bright and firm in their stance. “Breath with me now... come on. In...and out...that’s it. Good boy.”

Shane melted into Ilya’s touch as the two strong arms wrapped around him, holding him close as they breathed together, Shane's shuddering breaths eventually dissolving into something far more steady and calm.

“Are you listening now?” Ilya whispered into his ear, hand petting through his hair and avoiding a bandage that Shane suddenly realised he had on the base of his skull. He nodded, entirely under his husband's spell. “Anya ran home and found me. She tried to lead me to you, but you unfortunately had already wandered off.”

“I was looking for her.” He mumbled into Ilya’s shoulder, a flash of the morning coming back to him suddenly and with it the fear for what he’d done.

“Silly boy, all concussed and worried.” Ilya scolded him fondly, tightening his embrace ever so slightly.

“I thought I'd lost her.” Shane admitted when Ilya finally let him settle back against the pillows of the hospital bed. “And I...I couldn't bear the idea of having to tell you.”

He hadn't realised he was crying still, until Ilya reached up and wiped away the hot tears from his cheeks, his own eyes shining.

“*Moy lyubimyy*,” He said so gently that Shane couldn't help but blubber as Ilya leant forward and pressed a kiss to his lips. “It was an accident. And even if you had lost her, we would have looked for her...together. But, she's also a very smart dog and knows the way home.”

Shane hiccuped and Ilya hushed him like a child once more. “How did I get here?”

“They said someone found you wandering, brought you here in their car and dropped you off. Recognised you of course, so they were able to reach out to me. Got the call while I was trying to find you.”

“I don't remember...I don't know who....”

“I know, that's the concussion talking,” Ilya reassured him. “The doctor said they wanted to run a few more tests once you woke up, but if they all looked fine we could go home.”

Home maybe, but a concussion meant...

“And no, you won't be able to play hockey for a few weeks. And yes I've already updated coach Wiebe.” Ilya grimaced, reading his mind entirely and Shane sighed heavily. He was feeling far too weary right then to protest any further though.

“You have to stop scaring me like this.” Ilya whispered, staring at him intently, eyes ablaze with love.

“I’m sorry,” Shane let his eyes drop to his hands that were held tightly in Ilyas.

“Accident remember.” Ilya shook his head, leaning down once more, but pressing a long, deep kiss into his forehead instead. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” Shane replied immediately, because it was the truest and easiest thing his brain would ever be able to conjure, concussed or not.

*

Ilya shut off the light in the kitchen, letting just the ambient glow from a small lamp fill the space with a soft gold wash. He made his way through to the lounge room where Shane was spread out on the couch, Anya lying across his legs, dead to the world.

Shane had rules about where Anya could and couldn't go, mostly just that she wasn't allowed on beds and couches, which is why they had set up several plush dogbeds across the multiple rooms of their large house. But right now, they'd both needed this and Shane had barely even blinked when she jumped up and settled in against him. He'd let her and Shane have a moment to themselves as he went and made tea.

Ilya set down the tea on the coffee table and lowered himself down next to his husband, who immediately shifted so his head was resting in Ilya's lap.

“How are you feeling?” He asked, sweeping a hand through Shane's soft hair before leaning down to kiss his head. “Headache?”

Shane nodded, exhaling deeply. “Yeah just a little, but not too bad.”

Ilya nodded and pulled out his phone as it buzzed in his pocket.

“Just Yuna, checking in.” He said and Shane smiled to himself, eyes closed.

“Tell her I'm fine.” He murmured, sounding dangerously close to sleep as he nestled even further into Ilya's body.

Ilya typed out a response, filling her and David in on the situation. They had been with the boys in New York for their games but had stayed on a few extra days to catch up with some friends and see a few shows, so had been eager for updates from Ilya.

“Do you want to go to bed?” Ilya smoothed back Shane's hair and the man in his lap shook his head lightly. They'd normally watch something on TV but the concussion meant no screens for a few days.

“No?” Ilya was surprised, considering how sleepy he was.

“Can you read to me?” Shane asked, voice barely a whisper from where it was muffled against Ilya's soft sweatshirt.

Ilya smiled then, leaning down to press a kiss to Shane's head. “Of course I can, if you don't mind my silly voice.”

“Is not silly,” Shane protested gently. “Don't be mean to your accent, I won't allow it. I love it, like I love you.”

Ilya felt his heart melt, and allowed himself a moment to steady himself, a wave of emotion rising up thick and fast inside as he realised how scared he'd been that day for the man now curled up against him.

“I love you so much.” he replied, voice wet and full.

Ilya reached over to grab the book he'd been reading from the side table, some Sci-fi romance that Shane had crinkled his nose at previously, opening it to where he'd left off and began to read. It wasn't long before he felt Shane's weight grow heavy as he drifted off to sleep, but Ilya kept reading, his little family sleeping around him.

As the snow fell silently outside, Ilya revelled in nothing but the flickering fire, turning of pages, soft snores from Anya, steady breaths from his husband, and his very full heart.

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

Kudos and comments always appreciated

xoxo

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!