

Take the Hits

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Take the Hits

by [silvermoongirl10](#)

Summary

Shane has been an Ottawa Centaur for a month and is fitting in with the team. But now he has to face the Montreal Voyageurs for the first time since leaving. At least it is a home again. What could go wrong?

Ilya has made it clear to the Centaurs how this game is going to go. Win the game, watch Shane's back and send Montreal home crying. But Ilya is faced with watching his worst nightmare from 2017 happen again in front of his eyes. Shane gets hit. Bad.

Notes

Warning for mentions of someone vomiting - not too graphic but just in case this will trigger you.

This is my first fic for Heated Rivalry, I was consumed by the show and have read the books, obviously the next step was writing a fic 😊. I have based this of the books, mainly because this is set post-The Long Game.

Hope you enjoy this!

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

Shane wanted to believe that it was going to be any other home game that evening. But that would be ignoring the presence of Hayden and J.J in his home. The Voyageurs were the visiting team, and this was going to be the first time Shane would be playing against his former team since signing with the Centaurs. Thankfully the season schedule had been kind, allowing him a month of playing on the Centaurs, getting the chance to get to know and trust his new teammates before facing his old team.

The Voyageurs had had a morning practice at the arena at the same time the Centaurs held their morning practice at their practice facility. Which allowed Hayden and J.J some free time to come and hang out at Shane and Ilya's house before the game.

Hayden was in the process of taking photos of Anya to send to Jackie. Apparently, the Pike children were jealous of their dad who not only got to see Uncle Shane and Uncle Ilya, but he also got to hang out with Anya. In Hayden's words "I've got to send Jackie pictures of Anya if the kids are going to let me come home."

The four of them had been in the backyard, taking it in turns to throw Anya her ball. But Shane's head wasn't really there. All he could think about was having to face against his former team. Thinking about the seasons he spent with them, thinking he could trust them, that they were family. But being on the Centaurs showed him what being on a close-knit team was really like. It brought it into focus for Shane that apart from Hayden and J.J (once he had profusely apologised) that he hadn't really been close with the rest of the Voyageurs.

J.J seemed as relaxed as ever. Seemingly not finding it strange to be facing Shane later that evening. J.J had gotten over the fact Shane had been in love with Ilya and was chatting to Shane's husband about he was thinking about getting a dog and asking for tips on how to be a hockey dog dad.

But when Shane's eyes flickered over to Hayden, he found his best friend already looking at him. Shane wandered over, patting Anya on the head as she raced back towards Ilya.

"The look on your face is exactly how I'm feeling," commented Hayden, forced cheer in his tone.

"It's going to be really weird tonight," admitted Shane. He had tried to pretend he wasn't bothered about the upcoming game in the weeks leading up to it. His parents, teammates and Coach Wiebe asked him how he was and he replied 'fine'. But he couldn't lie to Ilya. Not only did his husband know him like the back of his hand, but Shane had made a point to never lie to his husband. Ilya had gently forced him to come to terms with how he felt about the game. So now, if anyone asked how he felt about the game, he was honest.

"It will. And don't get me wrong, I miss you like hell." Hayden stated as he wrapped an arm around Shane's shoulders. "But you look much happier. Happier than you ever were before."

"I didn't hate playing in Montreal," Shane felt like he had to say this. He didn't want Hayden to think he hated playing on the same team as him.

Hayden smiled fondly at him. "I know you didn't. But now you are playing on a team where you can feel comfortable to truly be yourself. Yes, the rest of the Voyageurs should have been decent human beings with you, but you've been given the chance to play with your husband. It's okay to not miss Montreal."

"I really miss you," Shane murmured, leaning against Hayden a bit more.

"I really miss you too buddy."

They stayed leaning against each other, watching the last few remaining autumn leaves floating across the grass.

"We've got to head back," came the quiet regretful voice of J.J. Shane shook himself to clear his head. "Good to see you Shane," murmured J.J. as he hugged him tightly.

"You too," Shane said into J.J.'s shoulder. He hugged Hayden but didn't follow them into the house. Instead, he dropped down to the grass, grasping his hoodie sleeves tightly. Anya came to sniff his face before rolling her ball towards Shane with her nose. He huffed slightly with a small smile, before throwing the ball.

Ilya paused by the back door. Watching as Shane lowered himself down to the grass before throwing Anya's ball. He knew tonight was going to be weird for Shane. He had been through this himself with Boston, but something told him that their experiences weren't going to be exactly the same.

"Make sure you keep an eye on him." Ilya turned slowly at Hayden's serious voice. This wasn't the tone Hayden used when threatening Ilya that he'd better look after Shane as his boyfriend or suffer the consequences. The look in Hayden's eyes suggested the other man was scared, and that unsettled Ilya.

"During game?"

Hayden nodded, his eyes flickering to Shane and then back to Ilya. "The guys are planning to go after Shane. They still believe he tripped on purpose; they blame him for the last playoff run."

Fury rose up within Ilya, and he tried to tamp it down. "Have you told Shane this?"

"No." Hayden shook his head. "I didn't want to stress him out even more. But you need to know. Comeau is looking to land as many hits on Shane as he can. So, just keep an eye on Shane."

Ilya nodded, his mind running with this information. Coach Wiebe had been considering changing up the lines for this game, mainly to keep the Voyageurs guessing as they knew Shane's style of play so well. But Ilya was now going to suggest moving Shane to be the first line centre and Ilya would move to the wing. Ilya knew he was a good centre and wouldn't normally consider moving positions, but the thought of Shane being on the second line with

Comeau and the others targeting him, Ilya would not be happy sitting on the bench watching it play out in front of him.

“Normally I hate losing a game,” Hayden’s voice brought Ilya back to the present. “But on this occasion. Make sure you win tonight.”

Ilya smirked, usually he would mock Hayden about being a shit player, but he just clapped Hayden on the shoulder. “Just make sure you don’t trip. Don’t want your team blaming you.” Hayden snorted in amusement before waving and heading down the drive to where J.J and the taxi were waiting.

He then turned and walked back through the downstairs of the house out to the backyard. Shane didn’t turn around so Ilya sat down behind him, bracketing Shane’s legs with his own. Ilya encircled Shane’s waist with his arms, pulling his husband back against his chest.

“It will be okay moya lyubov,” Ilya stated.

Shane rested his hands on Ilya’s, leaning his head back on Ilya’s shoulder. “I hope so.”

“It will,” he stated firmly. He wouldn’t let it be anything else. He kissed the top of Shane’s head, watching with a smile as Anya came bounding across the grass, ball forgotten as she snuggled against them. Shane gently carded a hand through her fur and with his free hand he reached up to rest a hand in Ilya’s curls. Ilya leaned his head forward, Shane’s hair tickling his nose as he just breathed his husband in.

The arena was a cacophony of noise that reverberated within Shane’s skull. And this was just the warmup. The Ottawa fans had turned up in their thousands, signs showing their support for Shane and their contempt for Montreal. The Voyageurs fans had also made the two-hour journey, their vitriol at Shane was clear to see and hear. The booing was intense and the signs calling him a traitor hit like a punch to the chest.

So, for warmup Shane kept his eyes on the ice, he didn’t dare look across the ice to his former team. Ilya, Troy and Boodram tried to catch his eye, but he just avoided them, he *needed* to get his head in the game. He *couldn’t* look weak in the eyes of Montreal.

He practiced his shots on goal and when the buzzer sounded Wyatt skated out of the crease and patted him on the back. “We’ll get them Holzy don’t you worry. I’ll make sure to shut them out for you.”

Shane felt a small smile pull across his face. “Thanks Wyatt.”

As he skated back towards his bench, he caught sight of a young girl in his jersey waving a sign that said *Montreal gave us the best gift. Number 24 Shane Hollander!* The girl wasn’t even looking at him; she was too busy sticking her tongue out at a nearby Montreal fan. It brought a genuine smile to Shane’s face. So, he reached down and scooped up a puck and diverted over to the glass in the corner. The fans in the corner began to cheer, getting the girl’s attention. She turned and gasped seeing Shane skating over. He threw the puck up and was glad to see the girl caught it, he could see Montreal fans eyeing it up which made him

want to roll his eyes. He could just make out the girl shouting “thank you!” at him. He then pulled a hand out of his glove and made a camera signal. The girl just gaped at him, but her mother and father laughed and turned her around, so she was facing them. Shane came closer to the glass and smiled for the photos. He waved as he then continued on his way to his bench. Thinking that the weirdness of the game had faded. The vitriol of the Montreal team, media and fans after the last playoff game he played for them had controlled him for months, now he was ready to let it go. Ottawa was his hometown and they had embraced him fully on his return; it was time to show Montreal what they had lost.

He found Ilya waiting for him on the ice by the bench, a soft smile on his face. “Who knew you could be so sweet,” he teased.

“Shut up,” Shane rolled his eyes and pulled himself off the ice, Ilya close behind him. Then he stopped before the tunnel.

“Shane?”

Feeling spontaneous, Shane smirked to himself before he broke one of his own rules and pulled Ilya in for a kiss. The arena erupted with cheers that were almost deafening. He leaned back to smile at the dumbfounded look on Ilya’s face. He then turned to wave at the crowd, laughing when he saw them on the jumbotron. Which allowed him to see Ilya’s lovestruck expression.

“Come on Captain,” he smiled and clapped Ilya on the shoulder as he turned for the tunnel and the locker room.

Ilya had watched Shane during the warmup with barely hidden concern. Shane had shut down and didn’t look up from the ice once. So, while Shane was distracted, Ilya had gone up to everyone on their team, including Wyatt. Giving them all the same message in the same firm tone.

“Every hit against Shane. You hit twice back. Clear?”

Troy and Bood grinned, their teeth showing as they nodded. Luca nodded seriously, then glared across the ice to Montreal. Wyatt hit his stick across the pipes of the goal, “just let me at them. Haven’t had a goalie fight in a while.” It filled Ilya’s heart to know how loved Shane was by this team and how they were all ready to fight for him.

As the buzzer sounded, Ilya headed for the bench, catching Hayden’s eyes across the ice. Hayden had clearly clocked Shane’s behaviour and was struggling at not being able to help his best friend. So, Ilya nodded slowly at him, letting him know it was okay. Hayden smiled and nodded in return, ignoring the glares of his teammates.

Watching Shane brighten seeing the little girl in his jersey told Ilya that it would be okay. Shane kissing him surprised him, and watching Shane wave at the crowd was unexpected but seeing Shane have fun before this game in particular eased the tension he had been carrying.

The locker room was buzzing with anticipation. Ilya found he didn't need to make a speech, not for this game. Everyone knew what they had to do. Win the game, watch Shane's back and send Montreal home crying.

From the first puck drop, the game was intense. Montreal were clearly targeting Shane and trying to get the puck. But they hadn't anticipated Ilya playing right wing. By the end of the first period Ilya, Shane and Troy all had a goal each and Montreal scored nothing.

The second period was more intense. Shane was checked hard into the glass. Troy checked two Voyageurs with one hit, both of them flopping to the ice. Troy grinning the entire time.

The third period was when the tension was palpable. Montreal hadn't scored a single goal, while Ottawa was sitting nicely on seven goals. Ilya with a hat trick, Bood and Troy with a goal each and Shane with two goals. Montreal were clearly desperate and the hits were getting desperate. And ruthless.

In the dying minutes of the third period, Ilya had received the puck from a no look back pass from Shane, he was able to weave around J.J and Hayden, passing the puck back to Shane who was flying down the right side. Ilya could just feel that Shane was going to get a hat trick and was grinning ready to celebrate.

But then Comeau came out of nowhere, shoulder slamming into Shane. The force of the hit lifted Shane off his skates. Ilya could only watch, his mouth hanging open as he tried to scream. Shane hit the glass, his head bouncing before he heavily landed on the ice his body nothing but a crumpled heap.

Comeau shrugged and smirked at his teammates as he turned his back on Shane and Ilya saw red.

He flung his gloves and stick to the ice, racing towards Comeau ready to kill him. But his view was blocked by a white jersey bearing the number 35. Hayden flung himself at Comeau, his fists flying as he screamed at him.

Seeing Comeau being taken care of, Ilya turned to Shane. But Shane was lying exactly where he had landed. Ilya's heart seized in fear, his mind taking him back to 2017 when he watched Marleau hit Shane. That was just a clean hit to the ice. Comeau had clearly went out to injure Shane, his husband hitting the glass and the ice. Troy was at the bench guiding the medical assistant onto the ice, but Ilya reached Shane first, dropping to his knees beside his husband. All sounds in the arena silenced in his fear.

"Shane? Moya lyubov? Please say something," Ilya begged his voice cracking, his hands coming to rest on Shane's shoulders. But his husband remained motionless. Shane was unconscious his head turned to face Ilya; bruises already formed across his face and head. His arms trapped underneath his chest. Ilya could see Shane was breathing but that was of little comfort when Shane was unresponsive. "Shane?" his voice broke. He barely resisted the temptation to shake Shane, knowing that it would only make things worse.

A faint wheezing sound reached his ears and he leaned closer, thinking Shane was fighting to regain consciousness. But then he realised *he* was making the noises. His eyes were stinging

and the crumpled picture of Shane in front of him blurred with his unshed tears. Chest tightening, Ilya tried to take calm even breaths, but that was impossible with Shane lying in front of him. Ilya wasn't a religious man by any means, but right now he found himself praying to his mother. Asking her to help Shane. *I can't lose him. Not like this mama.*

"Rozanov, you need to let me check him," came the gentle but firm voice of Bob Waite, their medical assistant came from behind him. Ilya knew he had to, but he couldn't force himself to move, worried that if he stopped touching Shane's shoulders his husband would be lost to him. He couldn't even pull his gaze away from Shane. Afraid that if he looked away even for a second, he would never see his husband again.

"Come on Roz," Troy gently pulled Ilya back by his shoulders, his knees dragging on the ice, his arms reaching out to try and keep his hands on Shane's shoulders.

"Troy-" what Ilya was going to say was interrupted by a broken sob, eyes stinging. From his position of kneeling on the ice, he could only watch as Bob waved an arm beckoning for a stretcher. Ilya's shoulders began to shake as he couldn't hold back his sobs. There was something freeing about being able to show his worry for Shane, but he didn't need his nightmare from 2017 playing out before his eyes again. He felt Troy wrap his arms around him, but he felt nothing, just the breaking of his heart as he watched the medics put a neck brace on Shane and gently turn him onto his back on the backboard.

As the stretcher was pushed off the ice, the faint smattering of applause broke through the ringing in his ears. Leaving his stick and gloves on the ice, Ilya shakily pushed himself to his feet and began to follow the stretcher, no one stopping him. A referee crossed his path pushing a bristling Hayden towards the penalty box as he continued to spit insults at Comeau. Much to the shock of everyone in the arena apart from Ilya.

He cast a glance to centre ice where Comeau was being tended to. Blood streaked down the left side of his face and his right eye was already swelling. Luca was trying to hold Wyatt back in all his goalie fury from going for Comeau, who Ilya was satisfied to see looking at the goalie with fear in his one working eye.

It was as if there was a rope connecting him to Shane, he followed the stretcher like a lost dog. Feeling unmoored and shaky Ilya tried to listen to what the medics were saying but they were speaking too quickly and with too many complicated words for him to translate quickly enough.

On exiting the ice, the blades of his skates making a clapping sound on the ground. Ilya only had eyes only for the parts of Shane he could see. His feet, his hands crossed over his chest and his dark hair sticking up over the neck brace. Suddenly, Ilya's vision was blocked by Yuna and David. He had completely forgotten they had been at the game.

"Ilya sweetheart, you need to get changed," Yuna spoke softly to him, her dark eyes so like Shane's shining with unshed tears.

"I need to be with Shane," he whispered, his voice raw as if he had been screaming. Perhaps he had, maybe he didn't hear it over the sound of his heart breaking.

“I know,” Yuna stated, she rubbed a hand up and down his arm. “But you can’t go to the hospital in your gear.”

Another sob bubbled up Ilya’s throat, he tried to swallow it back. He just needed to be with Shane, but Yuna was right.

“Come on Ilya,” murmured David a hand on his shoulder. “Go back to the locker room, get changed and I’ll drive you to the hospital.”

“Shane...” Ilya couldn’t find the words to express how worried he was for Shane. His husband had said he didn’t remember the Marleau hit, but he remembered talking to the medics, feeling lost and confused. Ilya didn’t want Shane to go through that again.

As if she could read his mind, Yuna stated “I’ll be with him Ilya. I promise.”

Ilya looked at the comforting gazes of his in-law parents. He could see how worried they were for Shane, but they were also worried for *him*. Knowing they were right, he pulled them in for a hug. Then forcefully pulled himself back, sparing a glance at Shane on the stretcher being put into the ambulance. Then he was marching through the back corridors of the arena to get back to the locker room, he could hear David’s even steps behind him. Neither of them said a word, but the love and support was there.

Ilya changed the fastest he ever had in his life. He refused to look across the room at where Shane’s street clothes were hanging under his name plate. Knowing even if he looked for just a second that he would be nothing more than a sobbing mess on the floor. He was out of the locker room before the team had returned at the end of the game. As he left the locker room, the door slamming shut behind him, he found David waiting for him, gripping the car keys tightly in his hand.

They drove to the hospital in silence. Ilya’s leg bouncing in time with the rapid beating of his heart. They hit traffic five minutes from the arena. Bad enough traffic they were at a standstill.

“Roadworks,” was David’s terse statement.

Ilya just keened, pressing a fist against his mouth. David rested a hand on his shoulder and just squeezed comfortingly. Inch by agonising inch the car drifted forward. With each passing minute, Ilya felt his self-control starting to crack. So, he leaned forward, putting his head between his knees as he just tried to *breathe*. Trying not to fall apart. He couldn’t do that to David who was navigating the car with a white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel. Who was worried about his son. Ilya forced himself to sit up when he felt the car travelling more than its previous snail-pace. Tightening his hands into fists and forcing them to relax, this repeated until the hospital came into view.

David quickly parked the car. Then guided Ilya into the hospital building with a gentle hand behind his shoulders. Ilya didn’t say a word. All he could see and hear was Comeau hitting Shane and the sound of Shane hitting the glass. Over and over again. He had no knowledge of where he was going, just knew he could trust David to guide him where he needed to go.

Eventually David led him to a hospital room. Looking through the glass window in the door, Ilya had a clear view of Shane lying in the hospital bed. His mind was trapped somewhere in the present and back in 2017. Then he had to sneak into Shane's room and had to leave when the nurse entered. But now he could stay. Now he could sit with Shane during the night instead of tossing and turning alone in a hotel bed.

Yuna was sat beside the bed, her hand resting on Shane's free hand. The other hand had an IV connected to the back of his hand. As Ilya and David entered the room, Yuna stood up and smiled tiredly at them. Not leaving them waiting she began to speak. "The Doctor has just left. Shane woke up briefly." At Ilya's sharp, hopeful breath, Yuna reached out to hug him. "He wasn't coherent. But he was awake enough for the Doctor to assess his concussion. He has a severe concussion. So, it is going to be awhile until he is steady on his feet to play."

"Shane will hate that," came Ilya's garbled reply. His eyes stung as he looked over at Shane, he had known a few players over the years who got severe concussions. So, he knew Shane was in for a terrible few weeks of dizziness and headaches.

David and Yuna had a hushed conversation, but Ilya left them to slowly lower himself into the chair Yuna had been sat in. He reached out to hold Shane's hand; he lifted it up to his face so he could kiss Shane's knuckles and then just held his husband's hand closely. At some point Shane's parents left, promising to come back in the morning. But the hospital had a strict policy on the number of visitors who could stay overnight, and they weren't about to force Ilya to leave. They promised to stop by their house to pick up Anya and take her back to their house.

As the lights faded and there was just one low light in the room, Ilya began to speak. He talked in Russian, confessing his fear and terror, reminding Shane how much he loved him. He looked at Shane who still wasn't conscious but was at least twitching so was asleep rather than still knocked out. Confessing his feelings in Russian took him back to that phone call after his father's funeral when Shane suggested he speak his mind in Russian.

Ilya still clutched one of Shane's in his own and with his other hand he gently ran his fingers through Shane's dark hair. "Mmphf." Ilya jumped and looked closely at Shane's face to find his husband slowly opening his eyes with a grimace.

Ilya leaned closer and brushed his fingers across Shane's face while he kissed the back of Shane's hand. "How are you feeling moya lyubov?"

Shane hummed, his eyes half closed. "Like shit," he slurred. Shane flickered his eyes open enough to squint at Ilya. "Guessing the Voyageurs checked me. I'd bet on Comeau."

It was too soon for Ilya to joke about what happened, but he nodded. "Hayden dealt with Comeau."

Shane smirked as he leaned his head towards Ilya, so he leaned closer so he could rest his forehead gently against Shane's. "When my head's better, I want to watch the video of that," Shane murmured, his voice still slurring slightly.

Seeing Shane's eyes fighting to remain open, Ilya brushed a thumb under his eye. "Rest moya lyubov." Shane faintly nodded and drifted off. Ilya leaned back enough to kiss Shane's forehead and then whispered, "ya tebya lyublyu."

Then suddenly an overwhelming rush of relief flooded over him, Shane was hurt and had a long road to recovery, but he had been awake and coherent. A sob broke free from between his clenched lips, tears rushing down his face. He covered his face with his free hand and let his head drop down until his face was resting on the bed. *Thank you mama.*

It was two days until Shane was discharged from the hospital. He had been itching to be home but had been suffering from severe headaches that almost resembled migraines. Also keeping food down had been a problem, just the smell of the food from the trolley dropping meals off to patients on the corridor set Shane off on vomiting what little there was in his stomach.

But Ilya had been there through it all. Sat beside the bed and refusing to leave at any point. He was still wearing the clothes he had worn to and from the game. Shane couldn't remember much from the game. The last thing he remembered clearly was giving a puck to the girl in his jersey and kissing Ilya in front of the packed-out arena. That was it. He had known the Voyageurs had been angry at him, but it was sobering to know one of them hated him enough to check him into the boards with enough force to give him a severe concussion.

His mom, after his pestering questions, admitted that Comeau was not being suspended due to the hit being determined as clean. But Hayden had been handed a five-game suspension for his attack on Comeau. While Montreal fans didn't know what to think about Hayden's actions, some media outlets blasted Hayden as disloyal. Ottawa fans had rallied around him and there was even a campaign on social media to get Hayden traded to Ottawa.

But Shane was finally home. He had been home for a week and today was the first day he felt good enough to leave their bedroom and come downstairs. Ilya had taken a leave of absence from the team to help Shane at home. At first he felt guilty but then considered if their roles had been reversed there was no way Ilya would have convinced him to get on a plane to go on a five-day road trip. And hopefully he would never be in Ilya's position, but he did feel guilty for putting Ilya through watching him get stretchered off the ice twice.

Shane had woken up first and found Ilya hugging Shane to his chest. He had laid there for a few minutes just basking in his husband's embrace. Ilya looked exhausted with dark circles under his eyes and the curls of his hair looking limp. Knowing Ilya hadn't been sleeping well since Shane's concussion, Shane decided to leave his husband in bed and felt up to cooking them breakfast.

Over the summer he had discovered, when he had given up his strict performance diet, that both of them enjoyed a stack of pancakes each on their off days. As he pulled himself out of bed, kissing Ilya's forehead and not getting a response, Shane felt quite good. Not good enough to play a game of hockey, but good enough to go downstairs and make them pancakes. He still had problems with strong smelling food but figured pancakes should be safe enough.

On entering the kitchen, he fed Anya her breakfast and then let her out into the backyard. He then went about preparing the ingredients and making the pancakes. It started off well, Shane made sure to drink water and take his painkiller to help with his concussion. But as the stack of pancakes grew, so did the smell of cooking food. It wasn't as bad as some of the strong-smelling food he smelt in the hospital, but the smell was starting to fill the kitchen.

Suddenly, Shane heaved, the force of it bringing tears to his eyes. He rushed to the downstairs toilet where he dropped to his knees. Then the smoke alarm started to blare. "Idiot," he cried to himself, he had left the frying pan on the heat with the batter. He clutched his hands over his ears as the smoke alarm pierced his skull. Retching as the burning smell from the kitchen wafted into the toilet. Shane heaved and heaved, his stomach cramping as tears streamed down his face.

The sound of running footsteps sounded from upstairs and down the stairs. A Russian curse came from the kitchen. Shane could hear Ilya opening the windows, cursing at the smoke alarm, Shane was almost certain he heard Ilya threaten to kill the smoke alarm, and turning the alarm and stove off. Shane could only sob in pain as his stomach rebelled and his head pounded.

Then gentle arms embraced him from behind and a hand was running through his hair. "It's okay. You're okay."

"M'sorry, m'so'sorry," Shane sobbed between heaves, still covering his ears. This couldn't be pleasant for Ilya.

"Don't be silly. It's okay," Ilya rubbed a hand up and down his back.

"I just wanted to make us breakfast. Be normal for once," Shane muttered.

"Small steps," whispered Ilya as he kissed the side of Shane's head, managing to avoid his elbows and hands.

Eventually the heaving stopped, leaving Shane with a pounding head as he leaned back against Ilya, finally dropping his hands from his ears. He closed his eyes as he tilted his head back slightly, finding the pressure of Ilya's shoulder against the back of his head a little helpful. Ilya repeatedly kissed the side of his face and his head while rubbing a hand up and down his back.

"Come on," Ilya soothed as he reached forward to flush the toilet. He slowly helped Shane to his feet and guided him out of the downstairs toilet. Shane had to stop as he felt himself wobble, his head pounding to the beating of his heart. So, he leaned his back against the wall, closed his eyes and tried to force himself to stay upright. "Shane?"

"M'okay. Just give me a minute."

Ilya's hands pressed against his shoulders, not enough to hurt but enough pressure to keep him standing. Just as Shane opened his eyes and went to take a step forward, he was hit by another dizzy spell, and his legs started to buckle. Ilya's worried face flashed before his eyes

as he started to go down. His fall was halted and then he found himself falling up? It took a second before Shane realised Ilya had picked him up, cradling Shane against his chest.

Ilya took it slowly upstairs, and Shane shut his eyes letting the gentle rocking of Ilya's body soothe him. When he felt himself being lowered down, Shane peeked his eyes open to find them in the bathroom. He was now sitting on the toilet as Ilya was at the bath turning the taps on. Ilya turned to face him and kissed him on top of his head. "I will be back. Don't move."

So, Shane waited, the sound of the taps running the water soothing to his head. He closed his eyes again and let himself drift, his heart rate slowly and the pain in his skull receding. If he strained his hearing, he could faintly hear Ilya talking to Anya, so at least she was back inside. A stab of guilt pierced Shane as he realised, he had basically left Anya out in the cold, hopefully she forgave him for that.

Then there was a gentle hand brushing across his freckles. Shane flickered open his eyes to find Ilya smiling softly at him holding up a bottle of water. Wordlessly, Shane took the bottle and took a careful sip, washed the water around his mouth and then leaned over to the sink to spit it out. He then stayed sat on the toilet seat as he slowly sipped his water, Ilya stood next to him, gently running a hand through Shane's hair as he watched the bath slowly fill with water.

Once the bath was filled and the temperature just right. Ilya took the almost empty water bottle from Shane, perching it on the side of the sink. He then helped to undress Shane, taking the time to fold his hoodie, t-shirt and jogging bottoms. Shane smiled fondly at his husband's care, usually Ilya teased him about folding clothes that were probably going to end up in the laundry basket, but Ilya never begrudged Shane's habit. After helping Shane into the bath, Ilya quickly divested himself of his own clothes and then sat himself behind Shane.

"Better?"

"Much," Shane sighed in contentment, leaning his weight against Ilya.

"Good." Ilya then brought one hand up to gently scratch Shane's scalp as his other arm wrapped around Shane's stomach. "Don't scare me like that."

Shane paused for a moment. "Like the game or this morning?"

"Both," croaked Ilya. "Game was bad. But woke up without you and alarm shouting. Downstairs could not see you anywhere."

Shane craned his head slightly to look up at Ilya, reaching a hand up to brush his thumb across Ilya's cheek. "I'm sorry."

Ilya smiled, but there was a hurt twist to it. He cupped Shane's face, "not your fault." Ilya leaned forward to brush his nose against Shane's, "but no more hospitals, yes?" Shane kissed Ilya softly on the lips in agreement and then settled again against his husband's chest.

They soaked in the bath for a little while, not needing to say anything, just taking the time be close with each other. For now, hockey was forgotten it was time to be just together. Shane

knew the team wanted to see him when he was up to it, from the messages passed along via Ilya. Hayden had also called, Ilya holding the phone and putting it on speaker, so Shane didn't have to look at the screen. Shane felt for his friend, apparently the Voyageurs had frozen Hayden out and now his best friend was looking for a trade, wanting to go on his own terms to a team he wanted to go to. Jackie was also happy to leave Montreal. From what Hayden was suggesting Jackie had gotten into an argument with Comeau's wife, almost coming to blows like their husbands on the ice.

They then moved to the bed, Shane resting as Ilya made them some smoothies and brought Shane another painkiller to have with the smoothie as it wasn't a good idea for Shane to take them on an empty stomach. After their smoothies, they just curled up together, basking in the dim light. Ilya had kept the curtains drawn all week, so in the little light that crept in through the gaps, Shane was able to observe a much more relaxed look on Ilya's face. After a little while, Anya jumped up on the bed, in the past Shane hadn't liked it, but on lazy mornings it was nice to be surrounded by his husband and their dog. Anya settled behind Shane's back, bracketing him between her and Ilya.

Ilya and Shane shared lazy kisses and Shane found himself drifting into a light doze. While it was going to be a while before he could even go to practice let alone play a proper game, he knew he would get there with Ilya's support. During his last concussion he had powered through alone, yes, he had his parents, but he had desperately wanted Ilya, now he had him.

Epilogue – 2 months later

Shane was finishing his first week back playing hockey games. It had been a long recovery, thinking he was back to being fit and then realising he wasn't. His first practice led to him lying in Harris's office to recover from a headache while Ilya finished practice. When he had convinced Ilya to go back to playing games and going to practices, Shane had taken to visiting a local cat shelter to help out. Wanting something productive to do, but also get to hang out with cats. He loved Anya, but there was just something so cuddly about cats. Ilya joked that he was going to come home from practice to find out Shane had smuggled a kitten home in his coat pocket.

He felt good and thankfully all headaches were gone and he was back to flying on the ice as the second line centre. They were playing away in Montreal, the booing echoing. But this time it was not totally directed at Shane. Most of the booing was directed at Hayden who was now back on Shane's wing. On the Centaurs.

A trade deal had been struck, Montreal traded Hayden to Ottawa for a couple of future draft picks, as no one on the Centaurs wanted to go to Montreal. Ilya had been teasing Hayden about dragging the second line down, that he was a pity pick just because he was Shane's best friend. But Shane knew while Hayden and Ilya were not close friends, Hayden going for Comeau so viciously and Ilya's care for Shane had softened the relationship between them. They wouldn't admit it, but Shane knew they considered each other a friend. Ilya had complained when Hayden moved into a house on their street but was clearly happy every time the Pike children just turned up at their house.

Some of the Montreal players, including Comeau, were at the centre line during warmup glaring at Shane and Hayden, Shane snorted when Hayden just waved back with a big grin on his face. Then Ilya skated in front of them, flanked by Troy and Bood. The message was clear. Montreal didn't touch Shane or Hayden.

When the game was almost over, something happened that Shane felt giddy about. He and Hayden were battling to score, both of them with a goal each. When unbelievably when Comeau tried to clear the puck. He tripped. Sending the puck to Shane who was able to take a shot on goal and score. Winning the game.

Shane and Hayden hugged, laughing as Comeau stared down at the ice in disbelief. On reaching the bench to fist bump the team, Ilya, at the end of the line reached out to kiss Shane's cheek.

Unsurprisingly, Shane was picked to speak to the media. He was usually calm when talking to the media, but when he was asked about his last goal of the game, he couldn't resist saying. "Well, Comeau tripping certainly helped."

After the interview, Shane re-entered the locker room to find everyone laughing, Bood had the interview playing on the TV. Ilya pulled Shane in for a tight hug. "I love you so much."

"I love you too," smiled Shane. They ignored the good-natured jeering as they leaned in for a deep kiss.

End Notes

I was tempted to write more of Shane's recovery but felt this fic was too long. So, if you want any more of this story I might get around to posting snippets in a second chapter.

Also I had to get Hayden off the Montreal team, so he gets to reunite with Shane and gets to deal with being on the same team as Ilya.

moya lyubov = my love

ya tebya lyublyu = I love you

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