

the apple and the tree, how far can it be?

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/79351181) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/79351181>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	F/M , M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander/Yuna Hollander , Yuna Hollander & Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Yuna Hollander
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Mpreg , Male Pregnancy , Pregnant Shane Hollander , POV Yuna Hollander , POV Outsider , Established Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Protective Ilya Rozanov , Birth , Parents Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Future Fic , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Fluff , Hurt/Comfort , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Domestic Fluff , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-02-12 Words: 7,378 Chapters: 1/1

the apple and the tree, how far can it be?

by [imbihesgay](#)

Summary

“Is he really okay?” Ilya asks, voice broken with worry.

“He is, I promise honey. I’m looking after him.”

“Okay.” There’s uncertainty still in his voice, but obviously Ilya is aware there’s nothing more he can do from afar right now. “Okay. Thank you. Please. Please just...”

Yuna knows his next words before he even gets them out.

“Please keep them safe.”

And she’s all too quick to promise him. “Of course I will.”

-ilya calls yuna when he's at an away game to check on a heavily pregnant shane.-

(or , shane giving birth to his first baby, through the POV of yuna hollander)

Notes

BIG BRIGHT WARNINGS FOR-

mpreg, birth, labor, depictions of pregnancy and all that, and general mature content

THIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE A PARADIGM OF REALISM . IT IS A FANFIC ABOUT A MAN GIVING BIRTH. SO, PLEASE DO NOT EXPECT IT TO BE REALISTIC. THIS IS FOR FUN!

this is unedited so ignore any mistakes, i dont have a team of editors <3

if you leave a comment, please choose kindness!

thank you for reading and i hope you enjoy!!!

Shane Hollander came into the world screaming.

Seven pounds and five ounces, nineteen inches long, jet black hair and a pair of lungs that rivaled an air raid siren. He came early, he came fast, and he was the most perfect baby Yuna had ever seen in her life.

Despite the aforementioned screaming, of course.

She held him, swaddled in her arms, tears dampening her own cheeks in tandem with his. She kissed his scrunched up little face, told him she loved him, that Mommy was here, that he was safe.

His cries got quieter, after a while.

He was an easy baby. Not too fussy, not too demanding. He ate well, quietly snuffling and breathing in contentment. He slept through the night most nights, not often crying for much else outside of seeking necessities.

As a boy, he was playful, rambunctious, but never misbehaved. He liked sports, listening to NPR with David and watching hockey games, nestled on the couch between his parents, watching them pass around commentary and nodding like he was one of the grown ups. He liked that- blending in seamlessly to his surroundings, never looking out of place, or different.

This continued throughout the years, if she's being honest. Shane never liked to make a scene, make himself noticed for anything other than being exceptional, never liked to disappoint anyone in his life. He tried so, so hard to be what he deemed perfect in whatever ways he could.

Yuna can still recall the way he looked standing in her living room, hands shaking, voice trembling, apologies in his eyes for something he should never have felt a shred of shame for.

And then, beside him, that steady grounding presence. Six feet and three inches of Russian bulk, a terror on the ice, a man so many people could not comprehend as being anything besides a vicious womanizer, holding her son like he was the most valuable thing in the world. Something precious. The way *she* sees him.

Shane got louder after that. More free. More bold, unafraid, more...more *himself*. Yuna knows she has Ilya Rozanov to thank for that- for giving her son the safety to truly exist as the Shane he was always meant to be. Out, proud, in love with that big scary Russian man, who as it turns out, isn't so scary after all.

And now, as she puts her cell phone to her ear, surprised to be getting a call from that big Russian man who is now her son-in-law, she can't help but smile knowing that her son is so deeply loved, the way she'd always tried to do herself.

"Hello," she answers easily, phone between her ear and shoulder as she finishes scrubbing pasta sauce off a pot. Ilya is in Toronto today for a game, but he was planning to drive back

late tonight. Shane had tried to encourage him not to take on four hours in the car after a grueling game, but Ilya was insistent.

Shane is thirty-eight weeks pregnant, so he isn't too fond of being far away, even though he hadn't shown any signs of labor at his latest appointment. Yuna would know, she attended in Ilya's reluctant absence.

"Yuna."

She's instantly set alert at the tone of Ilya's voice. He's urgent, though clearly trying not to sound too alarmed.

"Ilya? What's going on?" Yuna drops the dish into the sudsy water and immediately begins drying her hands on a towel. She has a feeling she's about to be in the car, on her way to do something.

"I need you, please, to drive to the cottage and be with Shane. I am getting in the car now, but still in Toronto. Going to take a few hours to get to him."

"Okay," she agrees, heading for the living room to find her keys, "what's going on? Is Shane alright? Why didn't he call me?"

"Shane told me he has had three contractions, and lost his...how is it called? Mucal plug?"

"Oh, right. *Oh!* His mucus plug. He thinks he's in labor?"

"*He* does not."

Yuna pauses at the front door, keys in hand, purse hanging off her shoulder.

"Now you've got me confused, honey," she admits.

"Yuna, you know how he is. He does not want me to miss game on the "*off chance*" he is in early labor. He says he is fine, but I heard him on the phone have a contraction and it- I'm-" Ilya's voice falters, hesitation drawing up at the ends of his words. Yuna knows him well enough by now to fill in the blanks.

I'm scared.

"Okay sweetheart," she says easily, "I'll head over and check on them."

"Thank you." Ilya exhales heavily. "I told coach I am missing the game already. I do not want to be away any longer. Do not want to risk missing the baby."

"I understand," Yuna says. "Just, drive safely, please. Don't be stupid."

"I won't. Please call me when you see him."

"Of course. Talk soon darling."

“Thank you.”

Yuna hits END on the call, texts David where she’s going, and heads out to the car. She’s pretty certain that Ilya is overreacting, considering Shane’s still a few weeks away from his due date, *but* if he’s truly had his bloody show, it could be time.

It’s a quick drive over to the cottage, where she sees Shane’s car parked out front. She kills the engine and gets out of the car, making her way up the drive and knocking gently on the front door.

She waits, hands on her hips, chewing on her lower lip worriedly for a few moments, before concern gets the better of her. What if he *is* in labor in there and can’t get to the door?

The spare key on her ring comes right in handy as she unlocks the door and steps inside, scanning the front foyer for her son. He’s hard to miss these days, with his pronounced waddle and swollen belly.

“Shane?” Yuna calls into the house, hearing her own voice echo off the spacious walls. “It’s Mom! Are you here?”

She hears nothing in response, which is quite concerning since she knows Shane is here. She heads into the kitchen, finding it empty. Then the downstairs bathroom, living room. Nothing.

Halfway up the stairs, she’s stopped in her tracks by a sound coming from the master bedroom.

It’s her son, groaning in discomfort.

Few things move a mom into motion faster than the sound of their child in pain.

Yuna is up the stairs in a matter of seconds, finding herself in the doorway of the master bedroom, where Shane is currently bent in half, gripping the edge of a dresser with one hand. His other hand is cupped around the weight of his middle. His eyes are squeezed shut, nose wrinkled against the pain. He’s wearing a pair of gray sweatpants and a thoroughly stretched out *Ottawa Centaurs* t-shirt. He’s got his earbuds in, which is probably why he hadn’t heard her yelling.

Yuna approaches him carefully, resting her palm on his bicep once she’s close enough. That startles his eyes open and he yelps, jolting back almost reflexively. His eyes go wide, until he registers that it’s her, and then he exhales shakily, straightening out.

“Hi,” Yuna greets him with a smile when he pulls the earbuds out of his ears. She can faintly hear the sounds of some hockey podcast blaring through the speakers.

“What are you doing here?” Shane huffs, cupping both hands under his belly as his back straightens. His face looks flushed, and a bit damp with sweat. Ilya says it’s his glow. Yuna remembers how it felt. It’s definitely sweat.

“Your husband called me,” she says carefully, “because you’re here having contractions by yourself. Why wouldn’t you call for me, honey?”

“Mom, I’m fine,” Shane insists, just like he always does. “It’s Braxton Hicks. They said this would happen. I’m not due for two weeks.”

“Mm. But you lost your mucus plug.”

Shane recoils. “He *told* you that?!”

“Um, yes!”

“Oh my god. I’m going to kill him. That’s private!”

“Really, Shane? You know *you’re* the reason I lost *my* mucus plug, right?”

“Oh my god. Mom. Stop. Please stop.”

“Shane, are you in labor? How far apart are these contractions?”

He looks up at her through his eyelashes, breathing heavily. A stab of sympathy courses through her chest. She knows this face he’s wearing. Pain, fear, denial, uncertainty. She remembers it all too well.

“Hey,” she murmurs, “relax, honey. I’m here. Ilya is on his way. It’s going to be fine.”

“He left Toronto?” Shane demands, cursing under his breath. “He shouldn’t have done that. I’m not in labor!”

“He’s worried about you,” she says gently, “both of you. This is a big deal, Shane. The baby could be coming. Especially if you lost your-”

“Do *not* say the words “mucus” or “plug” again for the rest of the day, Mom. Seriously.”

“Shane, if you can’t use those words, how are we supposed to-” Yuna falters as Shane’s face wrinkles up again, teeth gritting together as he bends over.

“Ow, ow, *Mom*.” He grinds out, hands reaching for her. She allows him to grip her palms, wide-eyed as Shane lets out a low, deep noise of pain.

Yuna counts in her head, heart breaking at the lines of discomfort contorting Shane’s features. It takes a solid forty-five seconds for him to exhale raggedly, and open his eyes again.

“You were not honest with Ilya,” she realizes, “how long have you actually been having contractions?”

“Mom-”

“*Shane*.”

He exhales, guilt written in his dark eyes. “All day.”

“Shane!”

“I didn’t want him to miss his game! This is supposed to take a long time!”

“Oh my god.” Yuna shakes her head, exhaling patiently. “You are in labor.”

“I...” His shoulders sag. “I think so, yeah.”

Yuna’s heart begins to race, looking at her son with his flushed cheeks and terrified eyes. This is it. She’s going to become a grandmother. Her son is having a *baby*. It’s never been closer than it is now.

She’s about to reply when her phone buzzes in her back pocket, and she realizes she hasn’t called Ilya to update him. He must be losing his mind.

“That would be your very worried husband,” she says flatly. Shane winces.

“Hi,” she answers the phone, still keeping one hand on Shane’s arm protectively.

“Hi,” Ilya replies, sounding tense. “Is everyone okay?”

“Everyone is okay,” she assures him, “but Shane is definitely in labor. How far away are you?”

A string of Russian words fills her ears, and she’s sure they’re profanities.

“Can I speak to him?” Ilya asks.

“Of course.” Yuna holds the phone out to Shane. “It’s for you.”

Shane huffs in complaint, but accepts the phone. “Hi Ilya.”

There’s a quick response and Shane replies, “they are kind of getting closer together.”

Another reply.

“I’m okay,” Shane insists, “it doesn’t hurt that bad yet. You didn’t have to bother my mom.”

“Bother?” Yuna demands.

Shane waves her off, listening to Ilya’s response before he speaks again.

“Yeah, I think so. No, it will be fine. I want to wait for you. We don’t go to the hospital until it’s way closer.”

Another hurried response from Ilya.

“Ilya, babe, you think my mom’s gonna let me just sit here and get worse? She’ll take me if I need to go. It’s still early right now. My water hasn’t broken. You’re only a few hours away.”

The rest of the call is brief, and Shane hands her the phone back with a muttered, “your turn.”

“Hey,” she says into the receiver.

“Is he really okay?” Ilya asks, voice broken with worry.

“He is, I promise honey. I’m looking after him.”

“Okay.” There’s uncertainty still in his voice, but obviously Ilya is aware there’s nothing more he can do from afar right now. “Okay. Thank you. Please. Please just...”

Yuna knows his next words before he even gets them out.

“Please keep them safe.”

And she’s all too quick to promise him. “Of course I will.”

Shane’s morale is significantly improved by merely the sound of the front door opening downstairs.

Currently, he’s seated criss-cross on the bed in front of Yuna while she pets his hair, trying to soothe him through the ever-worsening bursts of pain that only seem to get closer and closer. It’s about to be time to head to the hospital, but he’d insisted on waiting for Ilya.

“Is that him?” Shane asks raggedly, unable to lift his head from where it’s lulled forward. Yuna pets his hair gently, and passes him his water bottle.

“Shane!” Ilya calls from downstairs, before she can reply.

“In here!” Shane shouts back, voice hoarse.

Footsteps thud the stairs and then Ilya is in the bedroom, taking up all the space in the doorway. He’s wearing a pair of jeans and a black hoodie, his curly hair is disheveled like he’d been wearing a helmet, and his bright eyes are frantic. That gold crucifix he always wears glints against his chest, bright in the sunlight outside.

He moves toward Shane like a magnet being pulled. Yuna might as well not exist anymore, for the way they’re looking at each other.

“Shane, *moy lyubimyy*,” Ilya breathes out, cupping Shane’s face in his hands and tilting his head up to examine him. “I am so sorry I wasn’t here, sweetheart.”

“*Net*,” Shane huffs out, shaking his head. “I should have called you sooner. Ilya, it really hurts.”

“Oh, *solnyshko*, I am so sorry. You are doing so good, you look beautiful.”

At that, Shane scoffs. “Stop.”

“No, it is true.” Ilya shakes his head, mesmerized. “I have never seen someone so beautiful in my life. Can not believe you are giving us a baby. I do not know what I did to deserve this.”

“Me- *either*-” Shane gasps out, bending forward as another contraction overtakes him. His lips part and he lets out another deep, pained groan. Yuna rubs his back the way he’s been asking her to, and Ilya goes still, suddenly looking terrified.

“Shane?” he asks in a small voice.

“Mmmmmm,” Shane replies unhelpfully. “Ow, ow, *fuck me, shit, ow!*”

“Just breathe,” Yuna reminds him, inhaling slowly, and letting it out in a long puff, “like we practiced, honey, breathe through the pain.”

Ilya looks at Yuna frantically. “Is he-”

“This is normal,” she assures him, “but we need to leave for the hospital. The contractions are five minutes apart.”

“*Mom*,” Shane wails, eyes squeezed shut.

“I’m here honey.”

“I- I need-” Shane gasps, a little incoherent as he struggles to speak through the contraction.

“What do you need, sweetheart?” Ilya asks softly, kneeling before him, “I will get it for you, anything you need.”

“I want-” Shane’s breath finally releases and he lets out a haggard exhale. “I- I think I want the epidural. I know I said I was gonna try to do it naturally, but I can’t- this really hurts.”

“Oh, baby.” Ilya kisses his hair, eyes closing for a moment as he lingers there. “We will get you whatever you need. We will make the pain stop. I promise, *moy sladkiy*.”

Yuna is feeling a little lost with all of the Russian terms of endearment, but it seems to relax Shane whenever Ilya does it.

“I’m sorry,” Shane whines out, “we were gonna do this naturally, I was gonna-”

Before Yuna can interject and tell Shane that’s *ridiculous* and there’s no pride in suffering, Ilya cuts him off.

“No, baby.” Ilya shakes his head, kissing Shane’s fingertips, the knobs of his wrists, the soft skin of his jaw. “You are in pain, we are going to make it better. You are bringing our baby into the world, it will be hard enough. We do not need to add suffering. I do not *want* you to suffer, Shane. Do you hear me?”

Shane nods, sniffing. “I-I hear you.”

Good boy, Yuna thinks proudly.

“Okay.” Ilya stands up, hands on his hips. “Hospital bag is by the front door, I am sure you two already double checked it?”

“Triple checked it,” Yuna assures him.

“I want my headphones,” Shane says tiredly.

“Honey, we got them, don’t worry,” Yuna says, rubbing his back.

“What about the charger for them?”

“We got that too.”

“Are you hungry?” Ilya checks, brushing the backs of his fingers along Shane’s cheek.

Shane shakes his head. “No.”

“Are you sure?” Yuna asks. “You won’t be able to eat once you’re in the hospital.”

“Is almost dinner time,” Ilya adds.

“Maybe we stop for something on the way?” Yuna suggests.

“What do you say, Shane? Something for your strength?” Ilya cups the back of Shane’s neck, thumb brushing gentle lines along the sharp contours of his hair.

“Okay.” Shane nods, hesitating. “Can we get cheeseburgers? And fries with barbecue sauce?”

Ilya smiles at Shane like he’s just invented daylight. “Of course we can, my sweet.”

Yuna is about to comment that cheeseburgers and fries are not exactly good workout fuel, which is what Shane is going to be doing, running a marathon essentially.

But, Shane finally looks relaxed, and Ilya would probably kill everyone in the world to get Shane his cheeseburger, and her baby is about to have her grandbaby. So, she keeps her mouth shut.

At least a cheeseburger has protein.

“Mom?”

Yuna glances up at Shane, perched on the edge of the hospital cot, clad in his gown. There’s an IV port in his hand, and a wireless monitor on his belly. They’ve been here a few hours now, Shane pacing around in his grippy socks, groaning through contractions while Ilya held him and Yuna supplied him with ice chip refills. His labor has stalled, and he’s waiting on the epidural list, and he’s pretty miserable. They broke his water a half hour ago, hoping it would help move things along.

Ilya has just stepped out to find someone to check on Shane’s status on the epidural list. He’s afraid he’s going to be too far along by the time they make it to him. They’d warned him it’s a busy evening.

“Yes honey?” Yuna asks, stepping closer until her hand is resting over his.

“Can you please get my glasses?” Shane gestures to the hospital bag.

Quickly, she finds his glasses tucked away neatly in a small gray case. She procures them and helps him situate them on his nose.

“Thank you.” Shane offers her a small, hesitant smile. Then, his face screws up in pain, and he wheezes out a few huffing breaths.

Yuna holds his hand, letting him squeeze her as hard as he wants -which, for a professional hockey player, is *quite hard*- until the contraction subsides.

“You’re doing so well,” Yuna murmurs, cupping his cheek lovingly.

“I am?” he asks, sounding genuinely curious.

“Very well,” she assures him.

“Was it like this for you?” Shane rubs a hand over his belly, looking down at himself with his brows furrowed.

“It was faster for me,” she admits, “I went from my water breaking to pushing you out in under two hours. It was intense.”

Shane winces. “Is it bad that I’m kind of jealous? This has been going on for so long.”

“I know honey. But you’re doing amazing.” Yuna squeezes his hand.

“She’s kicking me so much.” Shane laughs dryly. “She’s probably ready to get here and is wondering what’s taking me so long.”

“You’re perfect and she will be too,” Yuna assures him. Her phone buzzes and she glances at it before saying to Shane, “Dad’s checking in.”

“Ask him if he has an epidural,” Shane muses.

“I’ll check.” Yuna chuckles and holds the phone to her ear. “Hey hon.”

“Hey babe,” David’s voice comes warmly through the speaker, and Yuna feels the tension in her body relax a bit. He’s always been good at that, calming her nervous system with just the sound of his voice. “How’s our boy doing?”

“He’s being very brave,” she says, ignoring Shane’s eye roll. “We’re almost there, he’s about six centimeters dilated.”

“Mom!” Shane exclaims, face red. “Don’t tell him how dilated I am!”

“Why not?”

“I heard that,” David says.

“Because that’s- that isn’t- *mmm, fuck, oh god.*” Shane’s complaint is interrupted by a contraction that has him inhaling sharply and bending over again.

“Okay, okay just breathe honey. You’re okay. Breathe.” Yuna sets the phone down and allows Shane to grip her hands again.

“Oh my *god, where is Ilya?!*” He cries, eyes squeezed shut behind his glasses.

“Honey, you sent him to find the anesthesiologist.”

“Why didn’t *you* go?! I want Ilya!”

“You said you wanted him to use his *big scary Russian voice* to intimidate them into coming to you first.”

“I don’t remember doing that!” he wails.

“You probably won’t remember a lot of today, honey.” Yuna reminds him softly.

Shane just groans.

When the contraction subsides, Shane leans back, huffing his breath out tiredly. Yuna’s heart wrenches. Her poor baby.

She cups his cheek delicately, eyes soft. “You’re doing great, sweetheart.”

He manages a weak nod. “Thanks, Mom.”

Yuna hears faint noise and realizes David is still on the other line on her phone. She picks it up quickly.

“Sorry, Shane had a contraction.”

“I heard. Is he okay?” David’s reply is tense.

“He’s okay, just in the thick of it.”

“I hate this, Yuna. Can’t stand to hear him hurting like this.”

“I know. Me too,” she agrees quietly, glancing at Shane, who looks downright exhausted.

“Can’t they get him an epidural faster? He’s in pain.”

Yuna can almost picture David pacing back and forth in the living room, phone to his ear, expression all twisted up and nervous. It’s the same face Shane makes when something is bothering him.

“Our big scary Russian is on it,” Yuna assures him.

“Mom,” Shane breathes, “I’m so thirsty.”

“Okay honey, let me get your drink. David I’ve got to call you back in a bit, okay?”

“Okay honey. I love you. Please keep me posted. Tell our boys I love them.”

“I will. I love you too.” Yuna disconnects the line and grabs Shane’s big water bottle, passing it to him carefully. He sips from the straw, holding the bottle with both hands.

For a moment, Yuna is transported. It’s a cold winter morning, early hours before school, and Shane’s home sick with the flu. Her poor baby had been awake all night, throwing up, crying, unable to keep anything down.

He’d woken in her bed, limbs askew, head resting on David’s shoulder. Their eyes met in the pale sunlight, and Yuna had smiled briefly at him.

“How are you feeling, baby?” She’d asked him quietly, brushing her fingertips along his freckly little cheek.

“Icky,” Shane had replied simply, his face and voice like a flat plain. He wasn’t ever one to make a fuss, or complain, but he also wasn’t much of a liar.

“I’m sorry,” she’d whispered, expression softening. “Is there anything I can do, sweetheart?”

Shane, all of eight years old, a little delirious with his fever, had looked at her and said, “no. Being here helps. With you.”

Now, she looks down at her little boy’s face, no longer that tiny little sick kid. Now a man, married, successful, and about to become a father himself. It’s surreal, even as he curses again and grips her hand to steady himself through another contraction.

“*Mom,*” he gasps, reaching for her in his desperation.

Yuna holds him tightly, letting him squeeze her, letting him know that she is here.

“I’m here with you,” she says. “Just breathe.”

The epidural is administered just minutes later, immediately after Ilya bursts into the room and announces that he’d successfully “*scary Russian’ed*” the anesthesiologist into prioritizing Shane.

The relief on Shane’s face lasts all of five minutes, until he sees how large the needle going into his spine truly is.

He’s never been the best with needles. Vaccines were a necessary thing, and he never argued because he wasn’t that kind of kid, but Yuna recalls how quiet and stiff he’d become at the mere sight of the needle. He’d be silent for a long time even after the appointment was over.

Today is no different. Shane’s eyes go wide, and his entire body stills, and his hands are reaching out for someone to steady him.

Ilya takes hold, soothes him with quietly spoken words of comfort. “Hey, is okay, Shane. This man is professional. I asked him, he has done...how many was it, Randall?”

“Over a thousand,” Randall replies boredly.

“Da. Over a thousand epidurals,” Ilya says to Shane in a soft tone. “That is almost as many cups as you’ll get before you retire.”

Shane snorts.

“Hold still now,” Randall says.

“Oh god,” Shane wheezes. “Randall?”

“Yes?” The doctor asks with respectable restraint.

“Can you please not paralyze me? I’m a hockey player.”

“And you’d want to be paralyzed if you weren’t?” Ilya demands.

“Yes, obviously.” Shane bites back.

“I have never paralyzed anyone,” Randall assures him.

Shane squeaks. “So you’re overdue?!”

“Shane!” Yuna exclaims.

“Shane,” Ilya says gently, “look at me. Not at Randall. I am much prettier. No offense Randall.”

“None taken,” Randall says.

“Look at me.” Ilya gently nudges Shane’s chin until their eyes are meeting. He smiles briefly. “Did you know you have the prettiest eyes I have ever seen? Even right now when you glare at me.”

“Ilya-“ Shane starts, tone argumentative.

“Hold still Shane,” Randall says. Yuna watches, transfixed, as he begins the epidural.

“Oh god, oh god,” Shane breathes.

“Is okay,” Ilya repeats, “keep looking at me. You are doing *so* good, Shane. Wow. You are so fucking brave.”

Yuna doesn’t even bother to correct Ilya on his profanity in front of this stranger. Not when it’s helping Shane stay focused.

“Stop calling me brave,” Shane mutters, “I’m scared.”

“Being brave does not mean you aren’t scared,” Ilya says, “it means you do it anyway. You are doing it anyway.”

“*Randall* is doing it,” Shane argues.

“Actually, I’m done.” Randall steps back. “You’re going to feel much better in a minute here, Shane.”

“Oh, it’s done?” Shane asks, cupping a hand under his belly and stroking his fingers along the swell of it experimentally. “I’m not paralyzed?”

“No, you aren’t,” Randall replies. “But your next contraction will feel a lot better.”

Shane looks happily at him, lips spreading in a smile. “You really have done a lot of these.”

“I’d agree. Hit the button if you have any questions.” Randall nods and heads out of the room, waving politely at the calls of thanks from the trio.

Shane’s next contraction does in fact, go a lot differently. They all watch with awe as the numbers on the monitor fluctuate, and Shane holds his belly, grinning in a dopey way.

“Oh my god, Ilya, thank you,” he breathes, relaxing against the pillows, “you made the pain go away.”

“Ah, no, that was Randall.” Ilya strokes his cheek, smiling down at Shane. “But I am very glad to see you smile, *moy lyubimyy*.”

Shane reaches up and catches Ilya’s hand in his, still grinning. “I love you.”

“Mm. I love you too, sweetheart.” Ilya leans down and kisses his forehead, tender, but lingering. “Try to get some rest. Big show still has to happen.”

Shane nods. “Can I have my headphones?”

“Here you go honey.” Yuna grabs them from the bag and passes them to him.

“Thanks, Mom.”

An hour later finds Yuna and Ilya seated beside Shane’s bed, both nursing crappy cups of coffee from the hospital cafeteria, narrowed eyes meeting over a pair of cards.

Shane is taking, what Yuna hopes is a very killer epidural nap, completely zonked. She’s glad to see her baby resting, eyes closed contently, soft breaths huffing from his chest. The monitor on his belly still reads positively, but he’s finally getting some rest after many long hours of misery.

Ilya is, surprisingly, about to beat Yuna at their second round of rummy, and she’s getting a little frustrated at the repeat losses.

“Four of a kind,” he says, laying out his final cards.

Yuna curses, dropping her own cards on the small rolling table between them. “Damn it.”

Ilya grins, wagging his eyebrows. “Maybe I have father-to-be luck.”

“That’s got to be it,” she replies, passing her cards to him to allow him to reshuffle.

In his sleep, Shane makes a soft noise, and Ilya’s head snaps to the side, scrutinizing him for a few moments. Shane adjusts lightly, but remains asleep, breathing in slow and soft- relaxed.

“He’s okay,” Yuna murmurs, seeing the tension on Ilya’s face.

He glances back at her, smiling bashfully. “Ah, yes. Of course. I know that. It is just…”

“Scary, when your partner is going through something like this,” she fills in knowingly.

Ilya nods. “Yes. And the baby. I just want them both to be okay.”

“They will be.”

“Are you not nervous?” he asks, arching an eyebrow.

Yuna chuckles. “Of course I am. He’s my baby. But I have to be strong, for him. I have to know everything will be okay, so he can see that on my face, and he can know it too. That’s what being a parent is, sweetheart.”

“Mm.” Ilya nods again, glancing back at Shane before he looks down at the cards he’s shuffling. “You are right. My parents did not get to give me that, so much.”

Yuna’s expression softens a bit. Ilya doesn’t like talking about his parents much, if he can help it. She knows his mother had died by suicide when he was just a kid, and he was the one who discovered her. She knows his father was a bastard, who died a few years ago. He hasn’t told her much about exactly what his father was like, but she’s seen him flinch unintentionally when David’s raised his voice, even if it was done playfully. She’s seen him watching David and Shane with careful, cautious eyes when the two of them disagree on something, as if ready to step in should David cross a line with Shane. She’s seen the way it’s been battered into him to expect the worst from a father, to fear what they can be capable of.

So, he may not say it, but Yuna has some ideas of what it must’ve been like for Ilya growing up.

“Well, you have a very lucky baby,” Yuna tells him gently. “She’s getting not one, but *two* great dads. What a gift.”

Ilya ducks his head a bit, dealing the cards out with a solemn expression. “Shane will be a very good dad. He had a good childhood. Has good parents to show him the way.”

“He will be,” she agrees, and this time a bit more forcefully, “so will you, Ilya.”

His gaze dances up to meet hers fleetingly, before he distracts himself with the cards again. "I...hope that is true. But I sometimes find myself getting...what is the word in English? Um-" Ilya hesitates, frowning. "Ugh. I know it in Russian. I cannot find word."

"You have doubts?" Yuna guesses. "Because of your upbringing?"

"I guess, yes, that is what I am saying," he agrees quietly. "I know I will love her, more than anything. And Shane too. I will always love him, more than I love living. I just...I want better for her, than I had. Than what my mother had."

"Your mother?" Yuna prompts.

Ilya nods, jaw clenched. "She had nothing. She grew up very poor and-and she only married my dad because she didn't have choices. He was so terrible to her and it made her- it made everything she already dealt with so much worse, you know?" He shakes his head, eyes darkening. "Maybe if she had choices, she wouldn't have ended up-" He stops himself short, glancing at Yuna like he's just remembered she's there listening.

"I can't speak on her behalf, honey," Yuna says softly, "but I am sure the one thing your mother never regretted, was you."

He swallows audibly. "You are kind to say that to me."

"It's the truth. You are a wonderful man, honey. A wonderful person. She would have been very proud to see you now. Speaking as a mom, and someone who loves you dearly, that much I can say."

"I love you too," Ilya replies without missing a beat, like he wants to make sure she knows it.

"I know sweetheart," Yuna tells him, reaching over the cards to squeeze his wrist.

"I want her to have choices," Ilya says, looking back over at Shane's swollen belly. "I want her to get to do whatever makes her happy. I do not want her to be trapped, or feel alone, or end up with anyone who treats her like she is less."

Yuna nods. "That's what we all want for our kids, hon. You and Shane will give her that, I know it. She is so loved already and she's not even here yet."

Ilya nods fiercely. "Yes, she is. I will do whatever I can to protect her, and to make her happy. And, for Shane too. I hope you know."

"I know." Yuna nods back at him. "And I want you to be happy and protected too. That matters, Ilya."

He smiles at her. "As long as I have them, I am happy."

"You have us all," she reminds him.

Ilya smiles at her, a bit more full-bodied this time, and Yuna feels her heart clench looking at this man's sweet face. She wonders what he was like as a child, those big sparkly eyes and that curly hair on a much younger boy. So innocent, so gentle, forced to endure horrors that no child should ever have to be faced with.

Yuna doesn't know Ilya's mother, doesn't understand the pain she was in, so she cannot judge her for the way she left this world. Still, she'd meant what she said. She is sure that if Irina Rozanov could see the man her son grew up to be, she'd have nothing but the fiercest pride. Despite it all, he is a kind, wonderful human being, with no true malice in his heart. That is a feat in and of itself, she thinks, considering what he's been through.

"My Shane is very lucky to have you," she adds quietly, gripping his wrist a little tighter. "I know, at first, we were all sort of dubious. But Ilya, you are the most wonderful person we could ever have chosen for our son, and our granddaughter. I hope you know that."

"Oh god." Ilya laughs quietly, wiping at his eyes with the back of his hand. "Stop it now, Yuna. It will get me crying and that is the baby's job now."

Yuna chuckles fondly. "Oh, we'll all be crying, honey. Trust me."

Before he can reply, there's another noise and Shane shifts on the bed with a soft groan. Ilya is at his side the next second, moving like he's diesel powered.

"Shane?" he asks softly, cupping his fingertips lightly underneath Shane's jaw.

"Ilya..." Shane murmurs, still half-asleep as his eyes groggily flutter open, "mmm, pressure."

"What, sweetheart?"

Shane cups his belly, blinking up at Ilya with his nose wrinkled. "*Ah*. Feeling... a lot of pressure."

"I'll call for the nurse," Yuna says, getting up to press the button.

"How was your nap?" Ilya asks gently.

"Good," Shane affirms, smiling. "No pain. I'm okay."

A sigh of relief sweeps out of the other man. "That is very good, Shane."

"I agree." Shane chuckles once, then winces. "Ugh, god, this *pressure* though. She's really low, I think."

"It might be time to push," Yuna says.

At that, Shane pales a little.

"You can do this," Yuna tells him. "It's going to be okay."

A dilation check confirms Yuna's suspicions. Shane is fully dilated, and ready to push.

The energy in the room shifts a little, once he's in position with the doctor between his knees. Yuna stays up by his head, holding one of his legs back for him, glancing over as Ilya whispers sweet nothings in his ear.

Tension fills the air, but it's undercut with something more exciting. Her grandbaby is about to be born. Shane is about to become a father. It's surreal, even as she listens to her brave, sweet boy, grunting with effort.

"You can do this," Ilya is whispering to him, "you are so strong. Second draft pick. Fucking amazing."

Shane huffs a tired laugh. "Why would you bring that up?"

"Is an accomplishment!"

"No, *first* is!"

"Oh my god, Shane. Keep pushing!"

Shane truly is amazing. Yuna has watched him excel at so many things in his life. Science fair projects with big blue ribbons on them. Gold stars on spelling tests. Trophy after trophy and awards filling an entire room in his home- monuments to how incredible her son is. What a powerful, fierce person he is. That little boy who entered the world loudly announcing his presence, refusing to ever be unextraordinary.

Delivering his daughter is no different.

Shane is calm, and powerful, and brave. He holds Ilya's hand, he breathes and pushes and groans with the effort. He does not give up. Like he has with every single thing he's ever done in his life, he pushes through, and he gets the job done.

Yuliya Hollander-Rozanov comes into the world screaming.

She's a tiny thing, shrill and crying. Dark hair is plastered over her little head, her chubby little arms wiggle, searching, as if already trying to find home in this bright and scary new place.

She lands on Shane's chest, and he lets out this sound, almost like it's punched out of him. Half-sob, half laugh, all disbelief.

"Oh my god," Shane cries, "Ilya, she's here."

"She is so perfect," Ilya weeps, kissing Shane like it's his last day on earth. He blubbers a few sentences in Russian that Yuna doesn't catch, but Shane seems to understand. Her son's always been a fast learner.

Yuna has a hand clasped over her mouth, her own disbelief and awe overcoming her. She knows she's crying too, unable to help the flow of hot tears that track down her cheeks. She can't believe she's looking at the sweet, scrunched up little face of her first *grandchild*.

“Mom, I did it,” Shane says, turning to her with an exhausted smile, holding the baby the same way he did when he had an impressive art project to show off. “Look, look what I made.”

“You did such a good job honey,” Yuna sniffs, brushing hair off his forehead and smiling through the hot tears, “I’m so proud of you.”

Shane beams, like he’s been lit from within.

Then, he looks down at his baby, and shushes her softly, kissing her face. “It’s okay sweetie, Daddy’s here. I love you, you’re safe. I’ve got you.”

And somehow, Yuna thinks her cries get quieter after that.

David is a mess when he finally gets to hold her. Yuna can’t blame him, because she is too. There is a lot of crying, just like she’d warned Ilya.

Things do settle down a bit, later that day. Or, she thinks it’s daytime. She’s actually not sure, by now.

It’s quiet in the hospital room, lights dimmed, the distant humming of an air conditioner beating in the background. Shane is sleeping like a rock in the hospital cot, with Ilya curled around him after Shane *insisted* they cuddle because he can finally be spooned without his large belly being a barrier. Both men had fallen fast asleep, Ilya’s nose pressed into Shane’s neck.

Yuna looks down at Yuliya, fast asleep in her swaddle, being held by her *obachan*. She already favors Shane, that much is clear right away, but Yuna is sure she’ll get some of Ilya’s features. Maybe his big bright smile to go with Shane’s warm brown eyes. Either way, she’s going to have them all wrapped around her little finger.

“I can’t believe she’s here,” David murmurs, resting his head on Yuna’s shoulder as he looks fondly down at her. “She’s so beautiful.”

“She really is perfect,” Yuna says softly. “He did such a good job.”

“I can’t believe our son just had a baby,” David replies, shaking his head. “God, to me he’s still that buck-toothed kid getting his first pair of skates.”

Yuna swallows the lump in her throat as she glances over at Shane, sound asleep, safe in his husband’s arms.

“It doesn’t feel real,” she agrees softly. “But he did it. He was so brave.”

“He always was,” David says.

Yuliya snuffles in her sleep, nose crinkling, lashes fluttering, though she doesn’t awaken. Yuna tucks her a bit tighter against her chest, relishing the warmth and weight of a baby in her arms again after so many years.

“There was a time where I never thought we’d be here,” David muses thoughtfully.

“What do you mean?” Yuna asks.

“Before we knew about Ilya. He was so...I don’t know. Closed off. Lonely, I guess. I wondered sometimes if we’d ever get this. If *he*’d ever get this. What we have.”

Yuna smiles warmly at her husband, brows pulling together. “We got pretty lucky with our son-in-law I guess.”

“We did. I never worry about Shane, not like I used to.”

“Me either,” Yuna agrees, looking back down at Yuliya. “And I don’t worry about our grandbaby either. She’s gonna have the best parents.”

“And the best grandparents,” David adds with a grin.

She chuckles. “Yes, definitely that. Shane will hate how much we’ll be spoiling her.”

“Eh, tough tuchus. She’s our first grandbaby. She gets spoiled.” David reaches out and draws his index finger down her soft, sleeping face. “God, she’s cute. I thought Shane was always gonna be the cutest baby I ever saw, but look at her. Now I don’t know.”

Yuna grins down at her granddaughter's face. She remembers the first day she saw her son, when he was this small, this fragile and new and utterly perfect. Back then, he truly was the most flawless baby she’d ever seen, and she’d figured, like her husband, that he always would be.

But now, looking at the baby her son *made*, that he grew, and fought for, and created with all the love in his body, Yuna thinks, maybe that’s not so true anymore. Yuliya is all the best of Shane, and the best of Ilya, and in a small way, the best of herself and David too. She wouldn’t be here, without all of their love. It makes her...well, it makes her goddamn perfect.

“I think you’re right,” Yuna murmurs, “I think Shane would agree too. She’s the cutest baby we’ve ever seen.”

“Damn right,” a soft voice mutters from their right, and they glance over to see Shane stirring awake. He doesn’t move from his spot, curled up in Ilya’s arms. The other man shows no signs of waking.

“You okay?” David asks him quietly, moving like he’s going to get up. “Need anything?”

Shane shakes his head. “Nope. Just, keep being cute with my daughter. This is a mental scrapbook moment.”

Yuna and David both chuckle softly. Shane grins at them, all sleepy and soft and...happier than Yuna ever thought her son could look.

She thinks back to all of those years of Shane shrinking himself, hiding who he was, masking his true self to fit in and blend into the cracks of society seamlessly. Looking back at this

man, this brave, beautiful, incredible father he's grown up to be, she knows that will never be true again.

"I love you, Shane," Yuna tells him, voice wavering a bit, though she fights for composure.

He flashes her that big beautiful smile. "I love you too, Mom. Thanks for being here. Always."

Yuna tucks the baby a bit tighter against her, nodding back at her son, hoping he knows even before she says it.

"Always, Shane. I will *always* be here."

End Notes

you can find me on x @ imbihesgay or tumblr @ boopernatural

thanks for reading! please be nice in the comments im not a professional im just insane!

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