

The Softest Place to Land

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The Softest Place to Land

by [PrincessOfTheDesert](#)

Summary

Barbecues. Pancakes. Movie nights. Emergency bakery runs.

Shane and Ilya didn't plan to become the emotional centre of their team.
But somehow, their house is where everyone ends up when they need a place to stay.

OR a glimpse into the lives of Ilya and Shane as married NHL stars playing for the Ottawa centaurs.

A lot of domestic bliss, married life, teasing and locker-room chaos.

Notes

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

“Party at my place tonight,” Bood announced loudly to the room.

“No! I'm still feeling sick from yesterday. I really can't,” lamented Hazy.

“Nope. Harris will kill me if I come home as drunk as I was yesterday,” complained Troy.

Shane could hear quiet murmurs from the other players. He wasn't entirely convinced about going to another party either.

Bood sat down on the bench in front of his stall and pouted. “How about a barbecue?” he asked hopefully. His face lit up and a smile spread across it.

But even this suggestion didn't seem to convince his teammates. Bood slumped his shoulders. “Okay, then, never mind.”

Shane was glad about that. He was still feeling the effects of the night before. Bood had invited the whole team over the previous day. With a few days off in Ottawa ahead of them, everyone had been drinking. A lot. Shane too.

Team events like this were fun, but now he was looking forward to a quiet evening at home. With Ilya. Just the two of them. He'd been holding onto the image of them both on the couch all day.

Then Shane noticed that Ilya was looking at him intently. Then his eyes flicked to Bood's slumped shoulders. Shane didn't quite understand, but nodded cautiously nonetheless.

“Bood, come with us,” suggested Ilya.

What? Shane looked at Ilya, who just shrugged.

“Really?”

“Really,” added Shane, albeit somewhat hesitantly.

“Yes!” Bood's face lit up.

“We can throw something on the grill. Shane knows a good recipe for burgers, yes?”

“Fuck off,” Shane interjected.

“And you'll show us the recipe for your infamous sauce?”

“Roz, you know very well that it's a secret family recipe. But I'll bring it can bring it.”

Once they were alone in the car, Shane was finally able to ask why Ilya had invited Bood. “Why did you invite Bood to join us? I thought we'd have some time to ourselves today.”

“Bood doesn't like being alone,” Ilya replied as he reached across the centre console, took Shane's hand and kissed his fingertips.

This felt nice.

“And what does that have to do with tonight?”

Ilya rolled his eyes. “Cassie and Milo left.”

“What? Why? Did something happen?”

“No, she's visiting her sister in Vancouver.”

“Ah.” Shane thought to himself that Cassie couldn't be away for too long. Besides, when they were on the road, Bood sometimes didn't see his wife for a week or two. He didn't quite understand what the problem was. But then again, Shane loved having time to himself.

Ilya laughed beside him.

“What?”

“Do you ever listen when we talk during training?”

Shane concentrated on the road. “It's training. Why would I talk?”

He felt a little bad for not knowing that Bood's wife was away, but that was probably why Ilya was captain and not him. He never noticed things like that. Still, it was nice that he and his teammates had such a good captain.

The barbecue had actually been fun. Even though Bood had stood next to Shane at the grill the whole time, trying to give him tips.

Now they were sitting outside, enjoying what was probably one of the last warm evenings in Ottawa this year.

“How's Milo?” asked Ilya.

“He's fine. He's grown so much. I can hardly believe it.” Bood took out his phone and showed Ilya videos of Milo playing.

The two of them were so engrossed in the videos that Shane could watch Ilya from across the table. How his gaze softened, a small smile played around his lips, and how he kept pointing out things he noticed, while Bood just nodded proudly. It was so obvious that Ilya would be the best father a child could wish for. This filled Shane's chest with warmth.

“What about you? Do you want to have children?” Bood asked, laying the phone on the table.

Shane took his eyes off Ilya. They had never discussed the timing. They had also never seriously discussed having children. At most, they had joked about possible names.

“Yes, probably,” replied Shane. Ilya looked directly at Shane and said yes.

“That's great. I bet you'll be great fathers one day.”

Shane smiled. He thought it was rather unfair that he and Ilya would need to plan so much if they wanted to have children, whereas his teammates could just say, ‘Sure, let's try.’ They also wouldn't be able to have children and continue playing ice hockey. And that felt even more unfair.

He could imagine having children in the near future. But he also wanted to play ice hockey for as long as his body allowed and he could keep up with the rookies. And he didn't see that changing anytime soon. But that was far too complicated a train of thought for a cosy evening like tonight, so he said, “First we have to win the Cup with Ottawa.”

“Hell, yes!” exclaimed Bood and continued, “Roz will spoil your children rotten.”

“Da,” agreed Ilya. “And Shane will make sure they turn out to be decent human beings.”

After the conversation, they soon cleared the table and the three of them took Anya for her evening walk. As their house slowly came back into view, Bood indicated that he wanted to make his way home.

“Stay the night,” said Shane.

“Are you sure?”

Ilya looked at him sceptically, too.

“Yes, I'll get the guest room ready.”

“Thank you, Hollzy.” Bood patted him on the shoulder. Judging by how happy he looked, he really didn't like being alone at all.

The next morning, Shane woke up with Ilya cuddled up to him. After brushing their teeth, they stayed in bed for a while, kissing without letting things escalate. After all, they had a whole day off and plenty of time. Shane just didn't feel comfortable having sex while there were guests in the house.

Later, they went into the kitchen. Bood was obviously still asleep. Ilya started making pancakes that Shane could eat too. Meanwhile, Shane cut up various fruits.

Suddenly, Ilya sneaked up behind Shane, hugged him so that he couldn't move his arms, and started kissing him all over. Shane squirmed and twisted so he could finish cutting the fruit for breakfast.

At that moment, Bood shuffled sleepily into the kitchen. "Good morning, love birds."

"Ilya, please!" Shane broke free from the embrace and took a step away from Ilya. His pulse was racing, but Bood just grinned at them.

Ilya and he had often discussed the fact that none of their teammates at the Ottawa Centaurs had a problem with them being married. They had also agreed that showing a little affection in front of their teammates was okay. In fact, their teammates had even encouraged them to do so. In theory, Shane knew it was fine. Yet every time a teammate saw them together, he briefly feared that this time it was too much. That someone would make a comment and he would lose his place on the team.

"Bood doesn't mind, does he?" Ilya said and wrapped his arm around Shane's waist.

"I don't mind," Bood shrugged, smiling. "As long as I get my pancakes."

And with that, the subject was closed for Ilya and Bood. They set about drenching the pancakes in so much maple syrup that they turned completely brown and immersed themselves in NHL gossip.

"Oh, shit!" Wyatt had gotten off the bus before Shane and was holding his phone in his hand.

"What's going on?"

"Lisa's in quarantine."

"Eh, what?"

"Oh, it's not as bad as it sounds." Shane could hardly believe it, but then again, he wasn't married to a doctor.

"They had a case of norovirus at the hospital. Since she had been in contact with an infected person, she had been sent home. She just said it might be better if I kept my distance until it's clear whether she's infected."

"That sucks."

"You bet. After this road trip, I just want to go home, not back to a hotel."

"Come and stay with us," he heard Ilya say behind him. Ilya looked at him questioningly and Shane nodded. He'd actually had enough of other people, but he also felt for Wyatt. Having to go back to a hotel again sucked.

"You guys don't mind?"

"No, it's fine," replied Shane.

Later, they sat in their kitchen and ate a reheated lasagne. When Ilya asked, “Hazy, is there a new comic book adaptation we could watch later?”

“Yes, the new X-Squad is supposed to be pretty good. I haven't gotten around to watching it yet.”

“Oh, I'm not sure we can watch that. Shane's ex plays a leading role.”

Wyatt looked at Shane questioningly. But his attention was on his lasagne.

With his mouth full, Ilya added, “Did you know that Shane dated Rose Landry even though he's super gay?”

“I'm not super gay,” Shane protested. Wyatt asked, “Really? I remember the gossip articles, but I never paid much attention to them.”

“Well, is true.” Ilya said with a smirk.

Then Wyatt took another bite of lasagne and stopped. “Wait? Weren't you two already together back then?”

He raised his eyebrows and looked at both of them.

“No, Shane was afraid of his feelings and tried to date a woman. But in order to have sex with her, he had to think of me.” Ilya laughed. “Super gay.”

Shane groaned. “Fuck off. I regret ever telling you any of this.”

“And what did you do, Roz?” Wyatt wanted to know.

“Nothing, I was very chill,” answered Ilya, scratching his nose.

“Oh my God, Roz. I don't believe you for a second. You were probably devastated.”

“Okay, you're right. I thought Shane was going to marry Rose. I was so sad that I didn't sleep with any women for several weeks, even though they were all throwing themselves at me.”

“Ilya, please.” Shane put down his fork. Sometimes he really wondered why Ilya couldn't have a normal conversation with friends.

“No, is true. But yes, I was sad. But then we talked and...”

“Yes, because I finally had the courage to talk to you. And I didn't accept any more excuses.”

“Really?” Wyatt looked at him in amazement. “I wouldn't have expected that from you.”

“Is true. When Shane wants something, he doesn't give up. That's why he's such a good hockey player.” Ilya reached for Shane's hand and squeezed it. “Second best in the league. Right after me.”

Shane huffed.

In the end, they decided to watch the X Squad film. Wyatt was already sitting in the middle of the sofa and Ilya was lying on one corner when Shane emerged from the kitchen carrying a tray of healthy snacks. He placed the tray on the coffee table, then sat down in the empty corner of the sofa.

Wyatt looked back and forth between them. “Really?”

Shane didn't see the problem. He didn't want Wyatt to feel left out if he and Ilya were too affectionate.

Ilya patted the seat next to him. “Come on, Shane. Hazy is a big boy. He can handle it if we cuddle together on the sofa.”

“Definitely.” Wayne nodded. “And Shane, the team has no problem with seeing you as a couple either.”

Shane was now feeling a little embarrassed. “I know. It's just... it's still a little hard for me sometimes.”

“That's okay. You should just do what's right for you,” Wyatt reassured him. “But don't let us stop you.”

With that, Shane got up and settled down next to Ilya. He put his arm around Ilya's shoulders, and Ilya snuggled up to him. With his hand under Shane's shirt, he gently stroked Shane's abs. Ilya's warmth felt nice.

Wyatt started the film and after about five minutes, Ilya had fallen asleep.

When the film was over, Wyatt stretched and turned off the television. “Go to bed. I'll try to wake Ilya up, but then we'll go to sleep too.”

“Good night. And thanks again for letting me stay here.”

“Anytime.”

“How is he?” Ilya asked as soon as Coach Wiebe entered the locker room.

“A mild concussion and a broken rib. The medical team wants to keep him here overnight.” Wiebe looked back and forth between the players. Haas had collided with an opposing player and had remained lying on the ice. “It could have been worse, but they don't want to let him go home alone.”

“He's coming to stay with us,” Ilya declared without consulting Shane. At this point, it didn't matter anyway. Word had already spread among the Ottawa Centaurs that Shane and Ilya always took in players in need. They could take care of Luca Haas, too.

Before they were allowed to leave, the medical staff instructed them to wake Haas up every two to three hours. They should go to the emergency room immediately if he became confused, vomited repeatedly or his condition worsened. After Ilya and Shane assured them that this wasn't the first time they dealt with mild concussions, they were finally allowed to go home.

“Roooz! Hooollzy!” Haas shouted joyfully when he saw them. Haas was sitting on the examination couch in the sickroom and had apparently been given painkillers. It smelled like it always smelled in these rooms.

“So nice of you to visit me!”

“We'll even take you home with us,” Ilya retorted.

“Are you adopting me?”

Shane couldn't help but smile. He knew that Haas would find this conversation very embarrassing once he was back in his right mind.

“Is that what you want?” asked Ilya, grinning.

“Yes!” Luca beamed.

“What about your family?”

“They're not here. And who wouldn't want two hockey gods as fathers?”

“True.” Ilya winked. “We'll take you home, and when you're feeling better, you can decide if you still want us to adopt you.”

“I don't think that's possible. Haas, you're already of legal age, right?” Shane chimed in.

Luca pouted and crossed his arms over his chest. “Stupid rules. Can we go?”

Luca slowly got up and stomped out of the room. Shane and Ilya gathered all his personal belongings and then helped Luca into their car.

When they arrived home, Luca made himself comfortable on the sofa. Ilya took Anya for her evening walk, while Shane made some broth and brought it to Luca. Then he prepared the bedroom next to their master bedroom. He laid out some comfortable clothes on the bed, along with towels and a toothbrush.

When he came back downstairs, Ilya was sitting next to Luca on the sofa, with Anya in Luca's lap, letting him pet her.

Shane sat down next to Ilya just as he asked, “Do you miss home?”

“Yes, terribly. But also not at all.”

That surprised Shane.

Ilya smiled faintly. “Why not?”

“I mean, I play in the NHL. What could be better than that? Sometimes my home felt so small. Almost claustrophobic. Everyone knows each other and I felt like I couldn't be myself. But then I don't know if I can be myself here.”

Shane had never heard Haas talk so much before. He just hoped he wouldn't be embarrassed the next day. But he also believed that it was important for Haas to have someone to talk to. And who better than Ilya?

Ilya then said, “We have good team. I think you can be yourself.”

Because he knew that feeling all too well, Shane added, “Sometimes the thought of being yourself is much more frightening than just doing it.”

Luca huffed. “That's easy to say when you're Shane Hollander.”

Ilya put a hand on Luca's ankle. “Believe me, except for ice hockey, nothing is easy when you're Shane Hollander.”

Shane grimaced, but Ilya wasn't wrong.

“What do you miss most?” Shane asked.

“Good bread and real cheese. The one Swiss cheese is not a thing.”

“What's wrong with bread in Canada?” Shane was slightly irritated.

“Too sweet and too soft.”

“Aren't there any good Swiss bakeries in Ottawa?”

“Yes, there are, but they're so far away. It's just not worth the effort.”

“How's the dating going?” Ilya asked conversationally.

“Ilya,” Shane hissed. Luca didn't seem to be as high as he had been a few hours ago in the sickroom, but Shane didn't want Luca to feel pressured to talk about his love life.

“What? Is normal question. And if Haas doesn't want to answer, then he doesn't. You know that, yes?”

Ilya looked intently at Luca. And Luca nodded. “Have you had any luck meeting people lately?”

Luca blushed. "You don't have to answer if you don't want to," Shane reiterated.

"It's okay. But no, not really lately."

"Why not?" Ilya pressed.

Luca shrugged. "I've been finding it difficult to meet people."

"You're a hockey player and cute. If you wanted to, half of Ottawa would probably sleep with you."

"It's not that simple," Luca muttered.

"Well, was for me."

"I'm not you. I don't know how to go about it. Besides, I'm not sure if I want to just take someone home for sex."

"Have you tried dating apps?" Shane wanted to know.

"Yes, but not very successfully."

"Next time we're at Monks with the team, I'll be your wingman and we'll find someone nice for you," offered Ilya.

Luca ducked his head. "You don't have to do that."

"I know, but I'm going to do it anyway."

The next morning, Shane and Ilya had taken turns waking Luca up every two hours, and now they stood together in the kitchen while Luca was still asleep.

Ilya sat at the breakfast bar drinking his cappuccino. Shane stood next to him, wrapped his arm around Ilya's shoulders and kissed him on the head.

"I think we're officially wise mentors for the team."

Shane laughed and Ilya added, "But at least we're hot wise mentors. Is okay, yes?"

"Yes. Strangely enough, I don't mind. It's actually nice to be needed by the team like that."

Ilya looked at him. "I cannot imagine playing for another team. Feels like family.»

Before Shane could reply, Luca came into the kitchen, clearing his throat. Shane took his eyes off Ilya but kept his arm around his shoulders.

"Good morning," whispered Luca.

"How are you? Are you still in pain?" inquired Shane.

“My rib still hurts a bit, and I still have a headache. But otherwise, I'm okay.”

“Do you still want us to adopt you?”

Luca groaned and buried his head in his hands. “Oh my God, this is so embarrassing!”

“Is okay. Who wouldn't want to be adopted by hockey gods?” Ilya grinned broadly. And it really felt a bit like family.

A few days later, Shane and Ilya were on their way to training when Ilya took a wrong turn at an intersection.

“Where are you going, Ilya? That's not the way to the ice rink.”

“I know, Shane.”

“Then where are we going?”

“To the Swiss bakery.”

“Won't we be late for training?”

“How nice of you to think of Luca, Ilya.”

“Yes, it is very nice. But won't we be late for training?”

“Shane, relax. We have more than enough time.”

When they got to the changing room, Ilya threw the bread towards Luca. When Luca realised what it was, his eyes grew wide and a laugh burst out.

“Wow, thank you, Roz.” He stood up from his bench and he went up to Ilya to hug him.

A few weeks later, they had a few days off again in Ottawa. Ilya and Shane watched tennis together on their sofa. Or, at least, that's how it started. Within half an hour, Shane was spread out and gasping for air while Ilya gave him the slowest, laziest blowjob ever.

“Fuck, did you forget how to do this or what?” Shane complained.

“Are you in a hurry? Do you miss coming too quickly?”

“Oh, fuck off!”

Ilya laughed as Shane repeatedly smacked him with a throw pillow. This led to them wrestling, then kissing.

That's when their phones notified them that someone was at the front gate. Ilya grabbed his phone from the coffee table and checked the security camera.

“Who is it?” Shane asked.

“Troy.”

“What's going on?” Shane hurried off the sofa, adjusting his sweatpants

“I don't know.” Ilya hit the button to open the gate.

Ilya straightened his shirt and they both walked to the front door. He glanced towards Anya's bed to make sure she wasn't going to make a run for the door, but she was still fast asleep after the long walk they'd taken her on that morning.

Shane opened the door just as Troy reached their front steps.

“Troy, is everything all right?”

“Yes, sorry to come here unannounced.” Troy looked down, playing with the hem of his shirt.

“It's just... Harris is away for a few days. And I hate being alone.”

Shane had an idea where this was going. Their house kept collecting lonely people.

“I heard the Hollander-Rozanovs look after teammates in need. Could I stay here?” he asked sheepishly.

“Hey, it's Rozanov-Hollander. Much better this way around,” muttered Ilya. But Troy and Shane ignored him. Shane looked at Ilya, smiling. Ilya shrugged.

“Yeah, come in.”

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!

If you feel like sharing your thoughts, I'd love to read them! Your kudos and comments make my day!

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