

Misha the Gentle Giant

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Misha the Gentle Giant

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Summary

Despite his size, Misha has always been known to be gentle. But, the moment you mess with his sisters, he'll show you how gentle of a giant he is.

OR: Shane and Ilya's eldest son is overly protective of his sisters.

(This is a one-shot spinoff of my original [it's always been you](#). It may be read as a standalone but will be much better understood if the complete series is read first.)

4 Years Old

Just as Shane and Ilya had predicted, Misha turned out to be a large toddler. It wasn't surprising considering both of his dads were tall. He stood nearly a head taller than his peers at daycare and was extremely fast on his long legs when he wanted to. Despite this, it seemed that Misha didn't like to take up very much space. His daycare teachers always remarked that Misha liked to keep to himself, preferring to do activities by himself over group activities. This wasn't a huge surprise to either of them as Misha was a little man of few words, but once he started talking, there was no stopping him. He would have these bursts of energy where his mouth was powered by a motor and he would go on and on. Shane lived for these moments.

Sitting on the couch together, Shane sank deeper into the cushions as Misha sprawled out beside him. Even though he had just woken up minutes earlier, Misha traced shapes along Shane's large stomach and kicked his legs as he expressed his excitement: "hello baby. Is me, your big brother. I so excited for you to come. Daddy says will be long time before I meet you. Can you please come soon?"

"Hopefully not too soon, *Malyshka*," Shane huffed out a laugh. He still had one more month to go before baby girl was coming.

"Okay, not too soon, baby. But still soon. Papa and Daddy say I was big baby so it was ouchie for Daddy when I came out. Please don't make Daddy ouchie. He is very good daddy so I don't want him to hurt."

Shane's heart soared as he listened to his baby talk. He really did try his best to take care of Misha to the best of his ability, so it was beyond nice to hear that he was doing okay. Gently, Shane ran his hands through Misha's soft, dark chestnut curls.

"I show you how good Daddy and Papa are. I show you all of my toys and books. We read together at night for story time. Maybe I take you to school and show you to everyone in my class for show and tell. They will be so-uhh Daddy what do I say for when people want what I has?"

Shane pressed his lips together to not show how overly emotional he was getting. "I think the best word to use here is 'jealous.'"

"Yeah, jealous. Everyone in my class will be so jealous that I has baby sister. I no share you with them, but I share everything I has with you, baby."

"That's so nice of you, Misha." Shane stopped trying to hide his emotions so tears ran down his face. There was no point in trying anyways. He was heavily pregnant and his baby already loved his sister so much.

Suddenly, Misha crawled to his feet and held both sides of Shane's face with his warm little hands. "Don't cry, Daddy. I sorry. I didn't want to make you cry."

“It’s okay, Daddy is not sad. These are happy tears.”

Misha immediately peppered Shane’s face with several kisses just as he’d seen his papa do multiple times. He left little splotches of his saliva over Shane’s face but Shane didn’t mind it at all. His baby boy already knew so much about love and kindness at such a young age that he didn’t know what to do with himself.

“Uh-oh, someone is trying to steal Daddy away from me,” Ilya’s groggy voice came from behind them.

Ilya came into the living room only wearing his boxers, leaving his body out on display for Shane. It wasn’t fair to Shane that his fiancé looked like a grecian statue even straight out of bed. Because they had a toddler and a baby on the way, Shane couldn’t do half of the things he wanted to do with Ilya anymore, but it was a bitter price that he was more than willing to pay.

“Daddy crying so I make him happy,” Misha replied, still holding onto Shane’s face.

“Happy tears, Ilya,” Shane immediately supplemented. “Our *malyshka* is just being way too sweet.”

Just as Ilya tried to pick Misha up to give him his morning hug, Misha let out a small snarl. “I wanna stay with Daddy. I have to stay with him and sis.”

“Why is that?” Ilya laughed, surprised at his son’s actions.

“I protect,” Misha said with the most determined face that Shane had ever seen him make.

“Protect us from what, *Malyshka*?” Shane asked.

“Everything.”

“Okay then. You protect your daddy and sister while I go start making breakfast.”

Shane sat on the sofa for several more minutes, listening to Misha’s fantasies of being a big brother. He was utterly fixated on protecting his sister until Misha decided that Papa’s eggs and bacon sounded more important.

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Marina Yuna Hollander-Rozanov came into the world at thirty-five weeks, far earlier than anyone could have predicted. According to Dr. Patel, sometimes babies naturally came early and it seemed like Shane didn’t have any conditions that could have caused it. Born at five pounds and five ounces, Mari was immediately admitted into the NICU so that she could be treated for her respiratory issues and jaundice.

If Shane and Ilya weren’t already broken hearted enough, the moment they saw Misha’s crumple up upon seeing their hospital room void of their sister sealed the deal for them. Ilya had never seen his son make such a sorrowful face before. Even when Misha’s favourite

teddybear fell apart at the seams, he was sad at worst, not veering towards distraught like he was now.

“Where is baby sis? Is she in Daddy’s tummy?” Misha whimpered with teary eyes as Yuna helped him onto Shane’s hospital bed. “I wanna see her, Daddy.”

Ilya could only watch with a broken heart as his son’s face scrunched up further, the small mole by his eye disappearing in a sad crease.

“I know, Misha,” Shane replied, trying to hold the tears back.

Ilya wholeheartedly knew that this was a traumatic birth experience for Shane. The birth itself went smoothly, but the sheer panic that Shane felt when his water broke as they took a shower this morning was nothing short of terrifying. He knew that Shane continued to feel the panic even until now as that’s exactly how Ilya felt. Mari wasn’t supposed to come for another weeks. She was still supposed to stay inside and develop—she wasn’t supposed to be that small and weak.

“How about this, *Malyshka*,” Ilya said, trying to remain cheerful, “if you wash your hands very nicely, Papa will go to take you to see Mari.”

“Okay,” Misha replied with a deep frown.

While Yuna and David stayed with and comforted Shane, Ilya managed to get a few giggles out of Misha as they washed their hands together. He made sure to lather Misha up to his elbows, which made him laugh as he was just as ticklish as his daddy. Still, that didn’t take away the concern etched on his little face; his brows were furrowed and his nostrils flared as they walked into the NICU. Ilya smoothed out Misha’s brows with his thumb the same way that he often did for Shane.

In a clear box all by herself, Mari had a nasal cannula against her tiny face and had sensors taped over her little body. She looked so delicate and was almost half the size Misha was at his birth. Ilya cleared his throat to remain calm. He needed to stay strong for Misha and Mari.

“*Sad, Papa*,” Misha mumbled in Russian against Ilya’s neck.

“*I know, Misha. But she will get big and healthy soon and then you can hold her.*”

“*I wanna hold her now.*”

“*Me too, Malyshka. Me too.*”

Ilya squatted so that Misha could get a closer look at his sister. Immediately, he put his hand over the plastic as if he could touch her. Misha’s hazel eyes darted to and fro, trying to examine every single detail about her sister.

“*Why don’t you talk to her?*” Ilya asked. “*I’m sure she recognizes your voice. You talked to her all the time when she was in Daddy’s belly.*”

With a shaky huff, Misha started talking. “Hello, baby sis. Is me your big brother.”

Upon hearing his voice, Mari let out a little grunt and squirmed ever so slightly with shut eyes. Ilya still hadn't seen her eyes yet and wondered what colour they were.

"She heard me, Papa!"

"She did! Why don't you keep talking to her? She likes hearing her big brother's voice."

"Please get big and strong soon. I wanna hold you. I wanna show you everything, and I protect you from everything too. Nothing is too scary for your big brother." Misha huffed with as much confidence as he could carry in his little body.

"That's right, Misha will do such a good job of taking care of you, Mari."

"Yeah, I protect Mari."

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## 6 Years Old

The Pikes were visiting on a bright summer afternoon. While Shane was manning the grill, flipping patties and turning hot dogs, Ilya turned on the sprinklers so that the children could run through the cold water to beat the heat.

Shane tried to take in the sights before him. Ilya and Jackie were now talking about what they could expect for Misha when he entered first grade, Hayden was secretly taking a nap behind his sunglasses on a lounge chair, and of course the sounds and visual children of their children pleased him to no end.

Even though the Pike children were several years older than the Hollander-Rozanov children, they all got along swimmingly. Arthur took Misha by the hand as they tried to chase the water while Amber was sitting with Mari in her little splash pad. The twins were pretending to be lifeguards and made sure that nobody got hurt on the slippery grass.

Mari happily splashed about with Amber. Her dark sandy hair was extra curly as it was wet and her dark hazel eyes were fixated on a rubber ducky as excitedly babbled. She didn't seem to grasp speaking the way that Misha did at her age, but Shane and Ilya weren't too concerned. She could string more than two words together and ask questions, but seemed to prefer babbling over talking. Maybe, just like her brother, Mari would randomly start talking and wouldn't stop. Shane sure hoped that would be the case, though he was more than willing to do whatever it took to make sure that his children were developing well.

"*Daddy, Papa! Look!*" Misha exclaimed as sprinted through the hissing spray of water with alarming speed.

Shane and Ilya had previously talked to Misha about using only English when he was around other children. The talk was very necessary after he came back from kindergarten one day and confused everyone in the class, teacher included, when he had spoken in a mix of

Russian, French, and Japanese all day long. Apparently, not a lick of English was uttered the entire day. They explained that there was nothing wrong with other languages, but it was important that others understood him and could easily communicate. But, just like his papa, Misha tended to use other languages, Russian especially, when he was feeling emotions quite deeply.

“Wow, you’re so fast!” Shane cheered.

“Good job, *Malyshka!*” Ilya added.

As Misha and Arthur continued to run around the backyard, Shane couldn’t help but notice how Misha was running nearly just as fast as Arthur, despite being a head shorter in height. They already knew Misha was tall and fast for his age, which they were constantly reminded of. At Misha’s first game for the Timbits program, the coach had to double check Misha was in the right division as he stood out among all of the children. But, compared to Arthur who was four years older, Misha’s speed and stature seemed all the more impressive. If he wanted to, Misha would make a great athlete one day.

Suddenly, Mari’s wail ripped through the air. Her face was near beat red as she held onto the top of her head.

“It was an accident. I’m so sorry!” Amber blurted out.

“It’s okay, Amber. What happened?”

Shane knelt down and held Mari close to his chest to soothe her. His shirt was instantly soaked through from Mari’s wet bathing suit. His baby girl continued to sob despite his soothing.

“We were playing catch and I guess I threw her toy too high and it hit her head. I’m so sorry.” Amber looked like she was close to the point of tears.

Shane took a deep breath and continued to rub Mari’s back. “It was an honest mistake, so that’s okay. Mari, Amber says she’s very sorry.”

Mari let out a little watery-eyed whimper, already feeling better.

Thundering steps immediately came closer and closer to them. Misha stopped dead in his tracks right beside Shane and started to pat Mari’s head. His hazel eyes were so rife with concern—it was the exact same look that Ilya had.

“It’s okay, Mari. Your big brother is here now.” Misha was very close from prying Mari out of Shane’s arms but settled with using one hand to cradle her head and the other to pat her back.

Mari immediately smiled at her brother, showing a little wobbly but toothy smile.

“Mari, say ‘thank you, Misha,’” Shane said, which Mari babbled in response.

As soon as Shane put Mari back down on the splash pad, Misha had his arms around her and glared at Amber. “No, you can’t play with her anymore. Mari is too little to play with you.”

Shane knew that Misha was protective of Mari, but he had never seen him so explicitly defensive of her. Although it was incredibly sweet, Shane didn’t want Misha to feel as though the job of protecting his baby sister fell entirely upon his shoulders. As long as Shane and Ilya were here, there was no need for Misha to feel so responsible for Mari.

“Misha, it was an accident. Amber didn’t mean to hurt her,” Shane explained.

“No,” Misha defiantly huffed, arms still locked around his sister. “Mari’s hurt. She doesn’t want to play anymore.”

Under Misha’s grip, Mari started to giggle, finding her brother’s insistence funny somehow.

“I don’t think she’s very hurt.” Shane smiled. “How about this? You can keep playing with Arthur, and Amber and Mari will continue to play over here. I will watch over all of you and make sure none of you get hurt.”

After several seconds of thoughtful thinking, Misha finally relented. “Okay, but I will also watch her. You have to make sure your eyes are on her, Daddy.”

“I will, bud.”

Misha shot Shane a hesitant look but continued to run through the spraying water, making sure to check in with his baby sister frequently.

Much later, they went back into the house. It was starting to get cold and the mosquitos were coming out. The children were all sat on the couch with Shane and Hayden as they watched *Kung Fu Panda*. Even though the movie was outdated, the children always seemed to prefer the movies made before their births.

After a few minutes, Mari got a little squirmy and started walking laps around the couch. The kids, all accustomed to having siblings, remained unfazed by Mari as she happily babbled over the film. Eventually, she toddled over to Hayden and started playing with him while standing in between his legs. As soon as Hayden picked Mari up, Misha’s head whipped around. Shane had never seen such a fierce look from Misha before.

“Be gentle with Mari,” Misha deadpanned.

Shane had to bite back his laughter.

“The fu-heck, Rozanov? You turned your own child against me?” Hayden exclaimed while securely holding Mari.

“You almost said a bad word, Uncle Hayden,” Misha said with just as much vigour as before.

“That’s my boy!” Ilya shouted from the kitchen. He sounded too proud for Shane’s liking.

“Uncle Hayden’s got Mari, Misha. He’s held you when you were a baby too, you know,” Shane explained as he ruffled Misha’s dark mop of hair.

Misha huffed in defeat.

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## 13 Years Old

Misha was the best goalie in his division, not just his team. That’s what his coach and his dads told him. They all said that his size, speed, and hockey IQ made him some sort of a “phenom.” He didn’t really know what all of that meant. Sure, he was good, but then what? Misha wasn’t sure if he wanted to go pro like his papa did. He loved hockey but there were parts of it that he couldn’t get behind. The violence, for one, was never his favourite. That’s why he liked being goalie so much—he didn’t have to be a part of the fights that he too often saw break out on the ice. Instead, it was often his team who fought for him if the opposition’s players got too close to Misha or even pushed him around.

His dads and sisters eagerly waved to him from their seats. Immediately, Misha smiled and waved back, even if his gear made it hard for them to see his expression. Mari and Emi were all bundled up, and it looked like they had already started drinking Dad’s homemade hot chocolate before the game even started. Dad was already intently scanning the ice and Papa had a big bucket of popcorn in his lap. Misha wasn’t sure where Papa had gotten his popcorn but he was sure that Papa was going to spill it all over the stands at some point in the game. It was a matter of when, not if.

Settling down, Misha touched both of his posts and got into position. With a quick exhale, Misha was ready. He wasn’t going to let any pucks in today. Maybe, realistically, as his dad had said, he should say that he will let as few pucks past his guard as possible. Misha appreciated that both of his dads didn’t put much pressure on him when it came to hockey. Even though they were overjoyed that he played, they just wanted it to be fun for him. It was fun for Misha... most of the time.

As the puck dropped for the face-off, Misha made sure to never let the puck escape his sight. He made sure to keep his body active—to never stand idly. Last night, Misha and Dad had reviewed the tapes from his previous game, which was one of Misha’s favourite ways to spend time with him. Dad pointed out that Misha tended to stand towards the left of the net, leaving a vulnerable hole on the right side, so Misha made sure to plop himself in the dead centre. If he ever felt himself drifting off to the left, he centred himself by touching his posts again.

When the opposing team came barreling through to his side of the rink, Misha made sure to anchor his ankles against the posts. Still, he didn’t lose sight of the puck. It wasn’t a big surprise to Misha when he caught the puck from the centre’s snap shot—he saw how the player hesitated before releasing so it was easy to predict where the puck was going to go. Amongst the loud cheers, Misha could still hear his family the loudest. His papa was especially

loud, screaming in Russian and nearly saying expletives, which nearly made Misha laugh and lose focus.

“Aye, Gentle Giant does it again!” his teammate Jacob cheered while patting Misha on the back.

Somehow, Misha was infamously known as the “Gentle Giant” on ice. Of course he knew that half of the name came from his size. All of the boys in the locker room were jealous that he was taller and more muscular than them. But as for the “gentle” part of the name, Misha didn’t really didn’t get it. He didn’t talk nearly as much as his teammates did, sure, but that was the only thing he could possibly come up with for its origins.

In the corner of his eye, he saw the opposition's centre Richards (#47), whose shot he just blocked, back Misha’s teammate Felix into the dasher boards. No one seemed to notice as everyone was resetting for another face-off. Richards was just about an inch taller than Felix but probably had ten pounds on him. From several feet away, Misha could smell their pheromones—they probably just presented and were hormonal. It didn’t bother Misha as much as it probably should have because he himself hadn’t presented yet, and was therefore not as sensitive to pheromones yet.

“You’re such a bitch—you got in the way of my shot!” Richards snarled.

Felix didn’t look the slightest bit bothered because of course, as a defence man, Felix was meant to get into Richards’ way. Instead, he just spat at Richards, leaving a glob of spit on his visor. Before Richards could land a blow—because Richards hesitated with his hands again—Misha pulled him away by the back of his jersey.

“I don’t think your mother would appreciate that you used such language,” Misha remarked, stepping in between the two players.

“What are you, eighty? You talk like a grandma.” Richards dropped his stick and ripped off his gloves, ready to fight at any given moment.

The three of them were obviously causing a commotion as the referee skated to them and tried to guide Richards to the face-off dot. Still, he didn’t budge.

Red in the face, Richards spat out one of the very few things that could ever get Misha riled up: “You probably talk like that because you’re a cock-sucking omega bitch!”

As much as Misha was his dad Shane’s son, he was also fifty percent Ilya Rozanov’s son. Misha skated right up to Richards’s face, ignoring the referee’s arm that separated them, and threw his gloves off. Up close, Misha towered over Richards. But, with gritted teeth and balled up fists, Misha swallowed his seething anger. His dads and sisters were watching—he couldn’t break out into his very first fight in front of them.

“Are you eighty? You sure talk like you’re from another millennium,” Misha shot back before skating back to his net, picking up his gloves along the way.

It wasn't Misha's finest comeback but he was proud of himself for not fighting like that. Call him the Gentle Giant or whatever, he just didn't want to go home with a black eye or split lip. His dad's always made an elaborate dinner after his games that he wanted to enjoy tonight without receiving a scolding.



After the game, Misha took his little sister Emi to the concession stand to get her a packet of skittles. Apparently, their dad's had promised her candy if she was on her best behaviour. Emi's hand was absolutely tiny in Misha's hand but Misha held on tight. At only six years old, she was already a master escape artist and a complete flight risk, and Misha was too tired from the game to be chasing her around.

At the concession stand, Misha sat Emi on his shoulders so that she could get a better look at the variety of candies they had. He knew they had the skittles that she wanted (the sour kind), but she always liked to gander at all of the possibilities.

"You always like the one in the green bag, Emi," Misha offered as he was starting to feel bone tired. He was already showered, in sweats, and wearing his glasses, which meant that he was very close to passing out. Having her entire weight on him was definitely not helping.

"Okay, green one!"

Misha set Emi down as he paid for the candy with the twenty dollar bill that his papa had given him with. Papa also said that Misha could get anything he wanted, but he wasn't feeling like it. He was tired and he was shocked by the fact that he almost got in a fight today. It was a first for him to have gotten so ire.

He knelt down beside his sister as he carefully opened the packet for her and poured a small handful into her hands. There was no way he was giving her full control of the bag. There were only two possible outcomes if he did that: Emi would try to stuff her face with the entire bag or she'd whip it around and throw skittles in every possible direction. Misha wasn't going to let that happen.

Emi's face scrunched up as the sour skittles hit her tastebuds. "So sour," she giggled.

"Let's go find Daddy and Papa now, okay?"

Hand-in-hand, they started to walk back to the lobby where his parents and Mari were waiting. But, before they could turn the corner, a huffing and puffing Richards marched up to them. His face was just as red as before and his blond hair was matted against his forehead.

"Emiliya, get behind me." Misha shoved the skittles in his pocket and held her behind his legs to make sure she didn't take off.

Richards got right up into Misha's face. Off skates and out of gear, Misha was even more noticeably taller and bigger than him. Once again, the stench of Richards' pheromones evaded his nose. Misha's heart thudded against his chest as he looked Richards dead in his raging brown eyes. Misha was only scared in the sense that he didn't want Emi to get caught

up in this. It didn't seem like Richards was the reasonable type to calm down for a child, though Misha supposed that they were both children too.

"How dare you disrespect me like that on the ice?"

A splatter of spit landed on Misha's face, which Misha promptly wiped away with his sleeve. He just wished he could get the spit off of his glasses too.

"I didn't disrespect you. I just stated the facts, which were that you have outdated and offensive beliefs." Misha had to remain calm, he could feel Emi fidgeting in his grasp as she whimpered.

In a moment's notice, Richards pivoted his body as he readied himself to throw a punch. Right before his fist followed his arm, there was a slight pause, which gave Misha plenty of time to duck. Richards let out a groan of frustration but Misha kept his cool.

"You really need to work on your execution, Richards. You always hesitate before you commit. Maybe that's why you missed your shot," Misha said flatly. "Come on, Emi. Let's go."

When they were only a few steps away, Richards made it clear that he still had unfinished business: "Yeah, leave with your bitch sister like the cowards you are!"

Before Misha's mind even registered what was happening, he landed a jab square onto Richards's jaw. Immediately, Richards stumbled backwards, almost tumbling over from the sheer force of Misha's blow. Misha shook out his hand as it throbbed and burned—he definitely punched him harder than he could have ever anticipated. But he had to. Richards offended Misha's family twice already and Misha wasn't going to let it slide.

"Michael Ilyich Hollander-Rozanov!" His papa's voice boomed.

With wide eyes, Misha turned to his papa, who looked so stern it was almost scary. Richards, on the other hand, immediately bolted and disappeared into the remaining groups of people who were now looking at his papa. Of course he ran off—anyone who was remotely interested in hockey knew who Ilya Rozanov was and would be terrified to be on the receiving end of his wrath.

With Misha's grip loosened from shock, Emi immediately dashed and ran into Papa's arms.

"I'm sorry," was the only thing Misha could say to his papa. He couldn't even look him in the eyes.

"*Malyshka*, what are you sorry for?" Despite his concern, Papa's voice was soft as he held Emi on his hip.

"I punched someone! Aren't you angry with me?" Misha straightened his posture out of confusion.

"Bah, he asked for it. I saw it all—you were just protecting your sister and doing the right thing. You also did the right thing by stopping the fight on the ice earlier. *But don't tell your*

*daddy that I said that.*” Papa winked, which made Misha flush. “Is your hand okay?”

His hand was shaking and red. “It hurts but I don’t think it’s broken.”

“Good. We’ll get some ice for you. Now, I have to say this because I think Daddy and Mari are looking over here,” Ilya whispered before making his voice impossibly loud. “Michael, we do not get into fights. It is not okay to punch people, even if they were calling your sweet baby sister horrible, awful names. It is never okay to use violence as an answer.”

Misha tried his best to look disappointed and ashamed of his actions, but he was happy. Not only did he help his team win today, he had protected his sister too.

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