

Family Hockey Game

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Family Hockey Game

by [perachdavida](#)

Summary

A rainy week at the Lake House and two bored kids. What are parents supposed to do? Play hockey, of course.

Notes

While not strictly necessary, my Shane/Ilya fics are all conceptually linked and are best enjoyed in chronological order, which is as follows:

The Interview

The Offer

Two Are More Than Twice As Much Work As One

A Day In Disney

Date Night

First Day Of School

A Perfect Christmas

The Mouse House

The Hit

Family Hockey Game

The Changeling

Sasha's Story

It was the third rainy day at their summer cottage, and while the kids had done really well for the first few weeks of their time there, boredom was beginning to set in. With no outdoor activities to occupy them, Shane and Ilya had pulled out all their tricks, including baking, board games, puzzles, movies, a visit to Grandma's, and finally, in a fit of desperation, electronics time. When Sasha started yelling, "Hey, no fair, Eva's not letting me fight the boss!" and Eva spit back, "That's because you suck at this level, and I know what I'm doing," Ilya knew that objects would start getting thrown if he didn't intervene immediately.

"OK, everybody listen up!" he yelled in Russian over the racket of fierce bickering, hissing, and accusations. That shut the twins up quickly. Shane, who had been banging his head against the kitchen counter in the background, abruptly stopped and looked up. Though Ilya had always spoken to the kids in a mix of Russian and English, and they were reasonably fluent, angry yelling was done in Russian 100% of the time.

"Family hockey game!! Put down the controllers and go to the rink. The first one all geared up and ready for play will get to pick the teams." In a flash, two ten year olds were streaking across the room and out the back door like cartoon roadrunners. Ilya turned to Shane, grinned smugly, and sauntered over to stand opposite him at the counter.

"You," Shane said, leaning over to kiss Ilya, "are brilliant."

"You say that now. When everyone has 500 bruises later, and possibly there is a trip to the emergency room, you will maybe not thank me."

"I'll chance it. I was thinking of begging my mom to come over and save us."

Ilya gave him a wry smile. "She would roll her eyes and say 'If you can handle a hundred kids at a sports camp, you can take care of two in your house.'"

"Exactly. Like I was saying, I was desperate."

Ilya kissed him again, then backed away. "OK, let's get out there before they break things."

Shane had installed an indoor hockey training rink behind the house many years before. First he, and then he and Ilya, had used it to keep their skills up during the hockey off-season while they vacationed at the cottage.

Unsurprisingly, Eva and Sasha had learned to skate around the same time they learned to walk. They were both highly talented at hockey, which made sense given their genes, but they had very different playing styles. Sasha was thoughtful, cautious, strategizing. Eva was a beast - highly aggressive and confident, with the Hollanders' fierce sense of competitiveness. Sasha was tall like Ilya, but lankier, which made him fast, light on his feet, and sneaky. Eva ran on pure power.

Since both Shane and Ilya had retired from professional hockey a year ago around their 40th birthdays, they finally had enough time to volunteer coach on the kids' U11 elite team, in

addition to the charity camps they still ran every summer for The Irina Foundation. The twins had been coming to the hockey camps since they were toddlers, but last summer had been the first year they were old enough to attend as students.

For now, Eva chose to play co-ed. Both Ilya and Shane regretted that women's hockey as a career was not as popular, prestigious, or well-paid as men's hockey because Eva had the raw talent, spirit and hunger to make it professionally. They were certain she'd be playing for Team Canada in the Olympics one day.

As Ilya and Shane approached the rink, they saw both kids gathering their last pieces of equipment haphazardly. Sasha's shoulder pads were hanging drunkenly off to one side and Eva was holding one of her gloves in her hand. Both kids yelled, "Done!" at the same time and then turned to argue in each others' faces about who was actually first. Ilya whistled, and they abruptly stopped talking, turning quickly toward him. A whistling Ilya was "Coach Ilya", not Papa, and they were conditioned to pay attention.

"OK, it looks like it's a tie. So we go by birth order. Eva picks teams for the first game. Sasha picks teams for the second game. And if we need more games, then Dad and I will pick the teams." When the twins were smaller, their team choices were as simple as which father they liked better that day, or who was wearing their favorite color shirt. Now they'd learned to be strategic. Ilya watched Eva thinking furiously, with Shane's stubborn chin and set mouth and narrowed, beautiful eyes; her straight and silky dark hair pushed roughly behind her ears, her determination rolling off her in palpable waves. Every time he looked at Eva and saw his husband looking back in her features, it took his breath away.

Finally, she pointed at Ilya. "Me and Papa versus Daddy and Sasha. And I want to take the face-off with Daddy."

Ilya smiled widely at her choice. She knew that Ilya would be soft on her, whereas Shane would give no quarter. Their daughter was not one to take the easy path.

She and Shane set up at center ice. Ilya dropped the puck, and after a real dust-up involving some probably illegal stick wrangling and body checking, Eva came away with the puck. The game was on.

An hour later, they all collapsed on the floor after Sasha scored the final goal in their third round. For the second round, Sasha had chosen kids against adults. For the last game, the adults had chosen Shane and Eva versus Ilya and Sasha. They were all sore, tired, and smiling. Sasha had a bit of a black eye after meeting with an errant stick, and Shane needed to ice his knee after being tripped, but no one had lost a tooth or a limb, and no trips to the hospital were required. To Ilya, that equaled success.

"Can I make a suggestion?" Ilya asked, and received three vague grunts in response. "Let's all take showers, and then go out for pizza, and then come home and go to sleep very, very early because Dad and I are old men and need our rest after a beating like that."

“You’re not old,” Eva started to say, then stopped to reconsider, frowning. “Well maybe you’re old in age—“

“Gee, thanks so much sweetie,” Shane interrupted wryly.

“—but you won an MVP award two seasons ago, so you’re not, like, old in your body.”

“Shows what you know,” Shane muttered. Ilya wanted to laugh but his ribs were a little sore, so he didn’t think that would be a good idea.

“Can I get a Hawaiian pizza?” Sasha called out, leaning back on his elbows on the ice. “No one will ever share a Hawaiian pizza with me, so can I get my own?”

Everyone groaned. “That’s it, you’re out of this family,” Ilya said halfheartedly. “No one is allowed to like Hawaiian pizza. It is - what is the word? Like, against God?”

“An abomination,” Shane supplied helpfully.

“Yes,” Ilya confirmed. “An abomination.”

“But Anya likes my Hawaiian pizza when I give her some at the table,” Sasha countered.

“Anya is a dog,” Ilya deadpanned. “Dogs will eat a dead rat if you give it to them.”

Shane gingerly sat up. “Ilya, we all agree that Sasha’s love of Hawaiian pizza is disturbing and gross, but I think comparing it to a dead rat is even more disturbing and gross,” he offered.

“Fine. Whatever. I need some help to pull my old-man body up off the ground.” He switched to Russian. “Kids! Come here.”

The twins knew this game well. Ilya had invented it when they were little to encourage them to eat their vegetables. They tittered and jumped to their feet, running over to Ilya, each grabbing one of his arms with both of theirs.

“Brussel Sprouts!” Sasha yelled. Ilya lifted one knee.

“Spinach!” Eva yelled, and Ilya lifted his head with a grunt.

“Kale!” The other knee lifted. “Red peppers!” Ilya sat up. “Asparagus!” He got into a crouch.

“Kohlrabi!” This last one from Eva. Ilya stood up and brushed off his hands, shooting her an admiring look.

“Eva, you get extra points for the Kohlrabi,” Shane said, also impressed.

“I don’t even know what Kohlrabi is,” Sasha whined.

“That’s because you don’t pay attention like I do when Grandma cooks,” she shot back with a smug look.

“OK, gloves off,” Ilya said. “Showers. Pizza. Bed. In that order. Let’s go.”

They had a good time at their favorite pizza place, playing “I Spy” and debating who was going to win the Stanley Cup this season. Everyone made fun of Sasha for his Hawaiian pizza, but he just stuck out his tongue at them and kept eating. Shane and Ilya were silently grateful that he was not the kind of kid to care about what others thought of him. You couldn’t go very far in sports, or as the child of two famous parents, without a thick skin.

Ilya took Shane’s hand under the table and squeezed. They looked into each other’s eyes and smiled. They had a good life. A wonderful life. Better than most people could dream of having. Now all they needed was a sunny day tomorrow so these damn kids would have something to occupy them, and things would be perfect.

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