

The Mysterious Mrs Jane Rozanov

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The Mysterious Mrs Jane Rozanov

by [Frostberry](#).

Summary

When Ilya signs with the Ottawa Centaurs, everyone wants to know why he moved. Turns out, he married a Canadian. Her name is Jane.

Or so the team believes - because Ilya never bothers to correct them.

It was the start of a new season, so Coach got up with a clipboard and announced the new members of the team. “We aren't getting any drafted rookies. This year. We've got some veterans coming in. Our new players this year who will be joining the Centaurs are Wyatt Hayes and Ilya Rozanov.”

The meeting room went silent. Did the Centaurs hear that right?

“...Wyatt Hayes is a goalkeeper,” said the captain, Zane Boodram, slowly, while the other players unfroze and looked around at each other. “But did we hear the second one correctly?”

“Yes,” said Coach. “Ilya Rozanov.”

“Why is Ilya Rozanov joining the Centaurs?” Asked Evan Dykstra.

Coach shrugged. “Don't know.”

“Can you *afford* Rozanov?”

“We can. We're not capped out yet,” said Coach, putting his clipboard down, “Rozanov requested to be put here. For some reason, I have no idea why. At this point in time, it would be good to have him on our team. Perhaps he might be able to change that losing streak of ours.”

At this point, there was a knock on the door, and Wyatt came in, looking a bit nervous, whereas Rozanov strode in confidently behind him. Was there something wrong with Rozanov's visa? Did he commit a crime in the United States and was on the run? Did he get thrown out of Boston? The other players knew how he played on the rink. He was one of the biggest ice hockey Pests of all time according to a recent poll on ESPN. Wyatt Hayes on the other hand had come from Toronto Guardians, and had no controversies.

Did the Centaurs really want someone with a history like Rozanov on their team?

The team didn't even greet them. They just stared at Rozanov, not even noticing Wyatt Hayes who was starting to look a bit confused.

“Stop making them uncomfortable. You men are usually the chattiest, freakiest lot I've ever coached. Get over the fact we've got Rozanov now. Now, you take your new team members to Monk's,” said Coach. “That's an order.”

Monk's was a tavern not far from the practice rink. The team migrated to the dark sports bar that smelled faintly of cigarette smoke. Neon signs flickered in the corners, and the walls were covered with framed jerseys, autographed pucks, and faded posters of long-forgotten championships. A large screen over the bar showed an American football game. Rozanov felt quite cheerful to be with a different team, even though the rest of the team seemed uneasy with him. Wyatt Hayes stuck close, and he poked at a plate of chicken wings, while Rozanov appeared completely relaxed, like he owned the place. The bar was also used as their training

cafeteria, so it had dished out the usual orders - fries, buffalo wings, pickles - and also pregame/training meals that were crimes against humanity.

“So... why exactly did you move here, Rozanov?” one of the forwards asked, trying to sound casual but failing.

Rozanov shrugged. “Needed to be closer,” he said, voice calm, almost bored. He took a chicken wing from Wyatt's plate, getting buffalo sauce all over his fingers.

“Closer to what? We have no secrets.” Said Mile LePointe, leaning in closer.

“Ignore LePointe. He's a slut for gossip. Closer in Canada, Rozanov? To what? Closer to... a lady friend?” Another player suggested.

“Hmm,” said Rozanov, not giving anything away, licking his fingers. “Good wings.”

Oh yes. The team recognised that tone of question - *avoidant*. When a close team like the Centaurs knew each others gossip, because, as Coach stated, they were freaks. “Wife? Partner? Spouse?” LaPointe said, slowly. “Are you married?”

Rozanov didn't say anything. “Oh he definitely is,” said Harris, the Centaurs social media manager, who was sitting on the other side of Wyatt. “That silence is usually a bit fat fucking yes.”

Rozanov took a sip of his drink. He sighed, then slowly took out his necklace, a crucifix. There was a ring threaded through the chain.

“You're not to tell,” he immediately said to the team. “Don't you *dare*. ”

Harris put his hands up. “We're not blabbers!”

“You look like one.”

"Technically, that's my job-"

"No telling! I mean it!"

“Hey,” Boodram snapped at Rozanov, “You may be a Pest, but don't take it out on Harris. He's new, too.”

“Oh.” Then, almost to himself, Rozanov looked at his fries and muttered under his breath something like, “*Jane*.”

The room went silent, except for the football on the television.

“Wait... Jane?”

"Who's Jane, Rozanov?"

Another player leaned across the table. "There's a Mrs. Jane Rozanov? That's... who's that? Your Missus?"

Rozanov looking up and in his eyes, he seemed a tiny bit panicked. "I - what?"

"Your spouse?" someone he didn't know the name of said, gesturing at him. "Jane Rozanov. Congratulations!"

Rozanov blinked, confused. Instead of correcting them, he smirked and picked up a pickle. "Thanks."

"To the Rozanovs!" The team's chatter erupted, clinking their glasses together. Somewhere between the wings and the beers, they had completely rewritten Rozanov's personal life in their heads.

And Rozanov? He leaned back, grinning. Let them figure it out.

Eventually, Wyatt and Rozanov settled down with the team. It didn't take long. Wyatt was an amazing goalie and always great to talk to. Rozanov was the best player by far on the ice.

The Centaurs were very lucky to have him. Rozanov's personal life did not come up much during the season, at least not officially. He was told, repeatedly, that yes, Jane was more than welcome at team functions, dinners and wives' brunches.

But she never showed.

"Jane travels a lot," Rozanov told the team. "I spent more time with Jane's parents than Jane does."

If Jane was home, however, which wasn't very often, the lunches were impeccable. It arrived in Rozanov's training bag in a reusable glass container, and always heavy on greens. Spinach and arugula settled at the bottom of the glass, with cucumbers and carrots shaved into julienne ribbons. Tuna was flaked across the top with a pot of mayonnaise or some other dressing.

The team agreed it was *too much salad*.

"I have a wife who eats that rabbit food everyday," Wyatt said one afternoon, staring at the salad. He himself had a sandwich from the vending machine by the locker rooms, bread curling slightly at the edges and very dry. "That looks like something she'd make me."

Rozanov unzipped the side pocket to his bag and, with the careful secrecy of a magician revealing his final trick, produced a large red McDonald's carton full of salty fries. He dumped them directly onto the salad, added the mayonnaise, and mixed everything together with a fork.

"Jane is a health freak," Rozanov explained. "I want to be sponsored by McDonalds all day, every day."

Wyatt poked at his salad. "Looks cold."

"The fries were snuck in last night."

"Have they been in the fridge?"

"No." Right. It seemed that Ilya Rozanov was good at avoiding food poisoning.

They started calling it Jane Day, the days when Rozanov arrived with a pristine lunch and no visible grease stains. When it was not Jane Day, he went to Monk's or used the vending machine like the rest of them ("Jane wouldn't let you eat that!")

Rozanov looked very grumpy the day they had to play against the Montreal Voyageurs. He glared at his salad, as if it personally offended him. He was having it outside, sitting on the low concrete wall outside the rink with Dykstra and Wyatt.

"No fries?"

"Hmpf."

Wyatt peeled the top slice of bread off his sandwich. "You need a carb?"

"I need more than a carb," and out of Rozanov's pocket was another smuggled item: a coke can. "I want to also be sponsored by Coke."

"Didn't Shane Hollander get sponsored by them?" said Dykstra. "I swear I saw a billboard about it the other day."

"He does the sugar free advertisements," said Rozanov. "That doesn't count."

Shane Hollander was Canada's most famous ice hockey player and a twice Stanley Cup winner. He was Canada's Sweetheart according to every sports magazine and Twitter user, and was due to have his own postage stamp set soon. He was also painfully polite off the ice and wasn't the best at chirping, but still was a good sport all in all. He always shook hands, and sometimes offered tips after games before leaving the ice. Unlike some players, he seemed like a genuinely decent human being. He was also Ilya Rozanov's rival, and was his complete opposite.

"Is Jane coming to the game?" Dykstra asked.

Rozanov grinned. "Maybe."

Dykstra told LaPointe the news of a potential Jane sighting, and the gossip spread through the team like wildfire. They decided those on bench were doing Operation Jane. Those on the ice had to concentrate on kicking Montreal's ass, while the rest watched Rozanov's eyes all

game. Those in on Operation Jane watched as Rozanov didn't look once at the seats. He was too busy scanning teammates, referees, even the penalty box.

Did his eyes stray towards the crowd? Nope. Not a flicker. Not even a twitch. He was far too busy antagonising Shane Hollander, his famous arch rival. He jabbed at the puck with a kind of gleeful menace, and his every movement a little performance for an audience that could or could not have included a Jane.

On the benches, LaPointe and Dykstra were scheming, watching Rozanov get nearer with the puck to where they were sitting. "Maybe he's imagining Mrs Jane Rozanov is sitting there, watching him. That's his motivation- Shit!"

It was then that Hollander came flying out of nowhere. He skated hard on the side, with Rozanov shoulder to shoulder, and before anyone could react, Hollander checked into the glass in front of the bench with a loud clatter. The plexiglass shook violently, a vibrating shockwave running through the boards. Rozanov pivoted sharply, skates screeching, but still managed to smack into the barrier. Rozanov's stick clattered against the boards as he fell into him, Hollander on his knees.

The referee skated over, whistle raised, but no one moved. Everyone in the box just stared while the crowd booed at Rozanov. He had clearly tripped Hollander. "What the fuck, ref!" Hollander yelled, using the barrier to haul himself back up. His skates scraped against the ice, sending ice shavings flying. "That was tripping!"

Rozanov leaned on the glass, hands loose on his knees. He looked serious for a second, before grinning. "You tripped over your own skates, Hollander."

Dykstra burst out laughing. Rozanov flashed a grin at his team.

"Stop being an asshole!" Hollander snapped.

"Stop falling down, then!" Rozanov shot back.

Pike, another Voyageurs player, had come along to join the commotion. "That was definitely a trip, ref."

"Fuck off, Pike."

"Get fucked, Rozanov."

Rozanov gave them the middle finger and slid open the bench door to the team in time for commercial break.

"Is it always like this with Hollander?" Asked LaPointe as Rozanov sat down next to him. "I've seen the YouTube clips."

Rozanov hummed. "Usually a bit more than that. He was very calm today, actually."

"Did you actually trip him, Rozanov?"

“Yep.”

Eventually, they lost 3-1. The Centaurs sulked at the hotel restaurant, poking at plates and picking at fries, the kind of quiet defeat that made everyone feel a little stiff. They’d lost plenty of times before to Montreal, but never 3-1.

Rozanov, on the other hand, was quite cheerful.

“You’re cheerful because you got to trip Hollander,” Wyatt pointed out.

“Yes!” said Rozanov, popping a fry into his mouth. “And also, Jane was in attendance. I’ll be seeing them after.”

“Why can’t she come here?”

“Too busy.”

It had been a few months, and the team still was dying to meet Jane. Even the wives of the players were curious, because some players, who didn’t know how to keep their mouths shut around WAGs, wanted to know about Jane. Luckily, it hadn’t spread past the wives that Rozanov was a married man.

“We should meet her parents then,” Dykstra joked. “If you aren’t going to show us a picture?”

“Or,” interrupted Boodram, “We respect Rozanov’s privacy, and stop asking questions.”

The table went quieter after that. Forks hovered over plates for a moment before clinking down again. Later, after dessert, Rozanov checked his phone, stood up. “Okay. Bye.”

They watched as he left without a backward glance. Wyatt, Harris, Dykstra and LaPointe immediately jumped up, abandoning their half-finished wine.

“No!” Boodram warned them, waving hand at them. “Don’t follow-”

Too late. The four had already grabbed coats and scarves. It wasn’t every day the gossip they wanted was near them (and they lived on that shit). So if Jane was in their vicinity, they had to *know*.

A bit of gossip couldn’t hurt nobody, right?

“I wish we had some deerstalker hats,” said Harris. “We’d be like real detectives. Anyone got a magnifying glass?”

“I’ve got a phone with a good zoom function,” Dykstra said, squinting down the darkened street where Rozanov had walked down. They put their hoodies up and approached, very silently, the taxi rank. They peeked down the quiet street. Rozanov was talking with two people, an older man and a woman with long, flowing black hair and a fluffy coat.

“Could that be her? And her father?”

“Could be. Let’s get nearer.”

They hovered around the bushes in front of a florist. They could not hear anything, only the hum of traffic, then Rozanov’s voice, faint and calm, and also laughter from the three of them.

“What if that’s Jane’s mom?” Said LaPointe, peering through the leaves. “She’s like, sixty.”

“Or maybe that’s why we haven’t met Jane,” said Wyatt. “She’s a cougar.” It made sense. Rozanov had been seen and rumoured many times in the years with many women. Usually club girls and models. Maybe he didn’t want her hanging around the younger WAGs. Maybe she preferred privacy?

A cab turned up, and the three got in and left. The street seemed very quiet now. There was something about the two people that seemed familiar to Wyatt. They drunkenly walked back to their hotel, where more beer and wine came out of the minibar in Wyatt and Harris’s shared room. Wyatt sat on the edge of the bed with his phone, scrolling.

“Oh,” Wyatt said slowly. “...oh no.”

“What?” Harris asked.

“I think that was Yuna Hollander. Shane Hollander’s famous hockey mom.”

There was a few seconds of silence as Wyatt showed the other three a picture of Yuna Hollander, wearing her fluffy coat. It matched the woman's attire at the taxi stand.

“So,” LaPointe said carefully, “Shane has a sister named Jane?”

“Everyone knows he’s an only child,” said Harris, looking at his phone. They had reached the point in the dark, drunken night where embarrassment was inevitable for tomorrow morning.

“This is bad enough as it is, us finding out about Rozanov.”

Wyatt put his phone slowly down on the bed. “What if Shane is actually Jane?” He whispered to the others.

“...He’s a woman?” LaPointe whispered back.

“Okay,” Dykstra said quickly, and loudly, to stop them from whispering. “If that’s the case, that’s fine. Totally fine. Obviously. We support everyone. We’re an inclusive team, remember? We have pride nights! My best friend's second cousin's girlfriend's was originally a dude. We play for those people.”

“Of course,” LaPointe added. “Completely.”

“Wildly supportive,” Harris said, nodding seriously, as if he wasn't wearing several of his usual pride pins on his jacket.

The room was tense with the weight of their collective agreement.

“Shane - or Jane, is very private,” LaPointe said slowly. “Harris, should we do a bit of... internet stalking...”

"No," Harris said sharply. "We're already stalkers as it is."

They paused. "...Yeah," Wyatt said. "No. That would be fucked up."

They drank in silence, the quiet only broken by the faint hum of the minibar fridge. Somewhere far away, Ilya Rozanov was probably laughing.

They were about to take the bus back to Ottawa early in the morning. The coach had just rocked up. The air in the hotel lobby was thick with the smell of stale coffee and eggs from the breakfast buffet. The four stalkers shuffled around, hair mussed, eyes half-closed, and hungover in a way that made every movement feel like wading through molasses.

They fucking panicked at the sight of Rozanov, who looked very pleased with himself, chatting to Coach nearby, about something or another.

“We fucked up,” they muttered to Boodram, voices small and guilty, barely above the hum of the bus idling outside.

“Good,” Boodram replied, flat, not even looking up from his phone.

“We found out Rozanov’s secret Jane,” they whispered, huddling together like a coven of guilty children. They looked around at Rozanov to see if he was listening (he was not).

Boodram raised an eyebrow. “Go on.”

They took a deep breath, as if the weight of the world rested on this confession. “It’s Jane Hollander.”

“Who?” Boodram’s voice was level, almost bored, but his eyes betrayed the tiniest flicker of interest.

“Jane. I think... we think... Shane Hollander is secretly a woman.”

Boodram stared at them for a long few seconds. Then deadpanned, “A woman.”

They explained their theory of a Jane being secretly a Shane. The four exchanged glances, shuffling their feet, awkward. It was a *huge* thing to discover last night.

“You’ll need to tell Rozanov you’ve been stalking him,” Boodram said finally, arms crossed. “Your game play will be off until this conflict is resolved. You act like adults to him. Or at least as close as you can get.”

“I’m sorry,” said Harris miserably. “I’m not even a player.”

Boodram shrugged. "Honestly, it would be bound to come out, sooner or later."

"Rozanov. We want to support you in any way you can."

"What?" Rozanov's mouth was full of burger. They kept it quiet the entire trip back to Ottawa until they cornered him at Monk's after they all left the bus. When he'd sat down with his lunch, he'd been pounced on by the Centaurs who had followed him last night. They crammed all four together into one booth, with Rozanov on the other side. Rozanov looked a bit puzzled. He wasn't used to this sort of attention.

"We found your secret Jane." Harris looked away. "We are horrible. So we followed you."

Rozanov raised an eyebrow. "Okay...?"

"We... didn't realise Jane Hollander was Shane," Dykstra said, shuffling in his seat.

Rozanov looked surprised. So that was a yes, then.

"Are they planning to come out?"

"Don't think so," he said. Rozanov's eyes flickered around the diner, but nobody was near them. "We'd rather keep it a secret."

"Trans people don't have many Canadian sports role models, you know."

"Trans? You're saying Jane was Shane, or Shane was Jane?" Rozanov looked genuinely confused.

"Umm..." they hadn't thought too much into that retrospect. "...Shane was born Jane?"

"Well, you never said the gender of your partner," Wyatt said. "We assumed it was a woman. Because you said Jane."

Rozanov laughed. "I have Russian accent. When I told you about my marriage, I said Shane under my breath. So then you all assumed it was Jane. I just played along." He swallowed, wiping his hands on a napkin. "So you followed me here, instead of going home. Really?"

Harris looked down at the table. "We didn't mean to be creepy. We just wanted to understand. And support you."

"So he's... a guy?"

"Yes, one hundred percent born with good dick. Relax. I know exactly what you think. You assumed Jane. I said Shane. You all misheard. Russian accent problem, yes?"

"...Yes?"

Rozanov chuckled and leaned forward. "Yes. Shane Hollander and I have been together for a long time. It's our business. You may poke fun at Shane like any rival. But leave him alone. If he ever want to come out, he will. Until then, if you ever try to stalk Shane like you stalked me, I will inform Monk's of the worst combinations for pregame and training meals. I know plenty, and one day, you will receive a plate of something so disgusting, you will want to eat it."

That was the worst punishment they'd ever gotten, and they'd had plenty of penalties before, because everyone knew what some of these players ate. Rozanov put his phone on the plastic booth next to his half eaten burger. It was a picture taken of them, with Hollander's head on Rozanov's shoulder. Rozanov was kissing the top of Hollander's head. "This was last night."

Harris gasped. "That's so cute. He should definitely play for the Centaurs."

Rozanov smirked. "Maybe. Give it a few years. Until then, you lot can watch me keep tripping Hollander on the ice, of course. Even my love life comes with a penalty."

LaPointe shook his head, grinning. "You're impossible, Rozanov."

Rozanov just winked and took another bite of his burger.

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