

The tooth mouse and other ways to fill the silence

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76479236) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76479236>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	M/M , Other
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander , Shane Hollander , Yuna Hollander
Additional Tags:	Family Feels , Family Bonding , Hope , Love , Fluff
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-26 Words: 1,168 Chapters: 1/1

The tooth mouse and other ways to fill the silence

by [MarzgaPerez](#)

Summary

One shot for S1 E6 when Yuna & Shane are having a heart-to-heart outside and Ilya & Mr. Hollander are left alone at the kitchen table.

Ilya's got this.

Ilya grasps the cool tumbler of, what do they call it—*liquid courage*—as Mr. Hollander smiles back at him awkwardly. Though he is seated at the table, Ilya's legs feel wobbly, and his heart feels both light and heavy.

Did he and Shane just confess their love out loud? To other people?

Everything is happening all at once. Does Shane need him? This is a lot. No, Shane and his mother need their space to process things together. Ilya is right where he needs to be, and he's approaching this entire situation with calm. This is Shane's world. Ilya knows and respects how close he is with his parents, and under the circumstances, things could be a lot worse.

Mr. Hollander is the first to break the silence. "Again, I'm sorry about, uh, before," he mumbles.

Ilya takes a sip of his vodka. "Before? You mean, at the cottage."

Mr. Hollander nods. "Yeah, I had no idea. Obviously."

"It happened," Ilya shrugs. "You didn't know. Maybe we owe you the apology."

Mr. Hollander chuckles. "I don't see why. You're grown men. That's Shane's place. I intruded."

"Still, you were surprised. Fortunately, I saw you before, er, uh..." Ilya stops himself before he says something he knows Shane would find utterly embarrassing.

"Yeah, close call," Mr. Hollander clears his throat. "But we're here now. And Yuna'll be okay. She's in shock. She and I process things differently. I'm not worried. When Shane says something, he means it. When Shane wants something, he doesn't give up."

Ilya smiles at this. It's something he's known since Shane told him not to smoke outside of the arena when they first met. The guy has guts. "We have that in common. And I do love your son. Very much."

"I believe you, Ilya. And I've watched you grow as a player over the past few years. Now it makes sense why Shane always watched all of your games so intently. I thought it was all about the rivalry you two have. Now I know differently."

"Probably both things," muses Ilya.

"Can I get you something else to drink?" asks Mr. Hollander, likely noticing that Ilya has now drained his glass. "Let me show you my collection."

Ilya picks up his empty tumbler and follows Mr. Hollander out of the kitchen. He glances over his shoulder and through the front window where he can see Shane and his mother speaking intently with one another. It's a promising sign. Shane has taught him to no longer fear the power of communicating.

Ilya is now standing across from Mr. Hollander in a wood-paneled room with numerous shelves filled with books, pictures of Shane as a young boy, and what appears to be an extensive record collection. Ilya's father had a room like this. There's also a dark mahogany cabinet with an assortment of liquor bottles that Mr. Hollander is sifting through and a table with a crystal tray of additional glasses.

Ilya is immediately drawn to a framed picture of Shane in a school uniform of sorts. He's probably around seven or eight years old, and he's missing one of his front teeth. It might be the most adorable thing Ilya has ever seen. He has half a notion to pocket the picture.

"That was Shane in second grade. He'd just lost his tooth that morning and was angry the photographer made him smile. But he was over it by the next day. The tooth fairy paid him handsomely."

Ilya laughs, brushing his finger over Shane's awkward smile and prominent smattering of freckles. "In Russia, we have the tooth mouse. Similar thing. My mother made sure to always leave a treat for us. Of course, I didn't know it was her at the time," Ilya says warmly. "But what do you do with the teeth? This has always made me wonder."

Mr. Hollander looks unsure himself. "We'll have to ask Yuna. I have no idea. What about your mom. Is she still in Russia?"

"No," Ilya shakes his head. "She died when I was twelve."

"Hey, I'm sorry, Ilya. And I'm sorry about your father, too. Heard about his passing on the news."

"Thank you. Shane was a big help to me afterwards."

Mr. Hollander nods and reaches for Ilya's glass. "How would you feel about trying some whiskey?"

"Sure," Ilya agrees.

"Let me get you a fresh glass." Mr. Hollander fills a clean tumbler about a third of the way with a light brown liquid and hands it to Ilya. "It's one of the things we're known for here in Canada."

Ilya takes a slow sip and gently sloshes the liquid around in his mouth. "It's good. Smooth."

"I'll send you back with a bottle."

"Thank you."

"I've been telling Shane for years that it's better than ginger ale." Mr. Hollander pours himself some as well. "It was brave of you to come here."

"I was happy Shane agreed to let me. I've never done this before. You know, meeting the parents."

”Ha! You don’t do anything half-assed, do you?”

They share in a genuine laugh and clink glasses. Ilya is about to ask Mr. Hollander about his record collection. He’s spotted several of his favorites—Elton John and the Beatles—but he hears a door open from somewhere in the house, and notices that Mr. Hollander has heard it too.

“Sounds like they’re coming back,” he tells Ilya. “I think you two should stay for pasta.”

“Pasta? *Da*. Thank you. And thank you for the whiskey.”

Mr. Hollander pats Ilya’s shoulder. “No, thank you.” Ilya smiles and turns to leave when Mr. Hollander takes ahold of his forearm, as if to steady himself. He has tears in his eyes when he tells Ilya, “Thank you for taking care of Shane. For loving him. He’s so deserving of love. We all are, of course. But Shane is special.”

“He is.” Ilya knows this is Mr. Hollander’s way of giving their relationship his blessing. “And don’t worry. We will take care of each other. We will figure this out.”

“Good,” says Mr. Hollander and gestures for Ilya to go ahead of him. Mrs. Hollander is calling for them, and Ilya is eager to see how Shane is doing. He takes a deep breath, knowing he can be strong for Shane and whatever awaits them.

Ilya walks back into the kitchen and locks eyes with Shane. He knows immediately from Shane’s relaxed posture, his hands in his pockets and a calmness in his expression that everything will be fine.

Mr. Hollander declares that they’ll be having pasta for four, and Mrs. Hollander seems pleased. The two of them begin pulling ingredients out of the refrigerator.

Ilya hopes that this will be the beginning of other shared moments with his boyfriend’s parents. Shane has already felt like family to him for a while now, and yes, the circumstances were far from ideal, but it is a relief to have the full set of Hollanders in their corner.

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