

the blade of father and son

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76634166) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76634166>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	David Hollander & Shane Hollander , David Hollander & Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander/Yuna Hollander , Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	David Hollander , Yuna Hollander , Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	POV Outsider , Canon Compliant , Episode: s01e05 I'll Believe in Anything (Heated Rivalry) , Episode: s01e06 The Cottage (Heated Rivalry) , Autistic Shane Hollander
Language:	English
Series:	Part 7 of if we collect all the pieces, maybe we can make a quilt
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-29 Words: 4,157 Chapters: 1/1

the blade of father and son

by [rubyjean_jacket](#)

Summary

David loves hockey, he does, he just doesn't love it the way Yuna and Shane do, in that all-consuming, world-defining way of theirs that binds the two of them together tighter than just blood. Sometimes, David feels like he's missing out. Mostly, though, he's glad they have something to share, something that's uniquely theirs.

David loves hockey, he does, he just doesn't love it the way Yuna and Shane do, in that all-consuming, world-defining way of theirs that binds the two of them together tighter than just blood. Sometimes, David feels like he's missing out. Mostly, though, he's glad they have something to share, something that's uniquely theirs.

David doesn't have something like that with Shane. He loves Shane, he really does, loves him more than breathing, but... Shane knows that Yuna loves him because they speak hockey to each other and understand each other perfectly. David should be able to keep up with them—he played hockey at McGill—but he can't, somehow, because his relationship with hockey is fundamentally different. For Yuna, hockey is as intrinsic to her as her Japanese heritage: something deep inside her, tied to ideas like belonging and identity. For Shane, it's much the same. For David, hockey is a sport he was good enough at that he kept playing it until he couldn't play it anymore, and then he did something else.

When Shane is three, Yuna buys him skates.

“Isn't it a little early?” David asks.

Yuna shakes her head. “You've got to start them early,” she says, unlacing the skates, “so that skating is as natural as walking.”

David wants to ask why any of that is necessary, but he doesn't, because he knows why, even if he doesn't understand it. Because Yuna loves hockey with her whole self.

In those early days, David finds himself praying to a God he hasn't believed in since childhood that Shane will love hockey like Yuna does, because David's pretty sure it would break her heart if Shane saw hockey the same way David did, through unromantic eyes.

His prayers are answered. Hockey is everything to Shane; he loves it with his whole self. He is a difficult kid, or maybe David and Yuna are just unpracticed parents. Shane is particular. He cries a lot, and he fusses over everything, and he doesn't have any friends because he doesn't like talking about anything but hockey, doesn't like doing anything but hockey. And Yuna is happy to indulge him, and David is happy to indulge her.

So Shane heads down the same path David was on, some twenty years before, only the world has changed a lot since then. Things are a lot less private. Strangers have opinions on Shane's style of play and make predictions about where he'll fall in the draft. Shane is a child. He should be playing Grounders with his friends, laughing and smiling until his face hurts. He should have friends. Instead, he has teammates and coaches and spectators and tag-alongs and rivals, and David doesn't think any of it is very healthy at all, actually.

Shane melts down all the time, over everything. He doesn't want to eat dinner. He doesn't want to have a bath. He doesn't want practise to be over. He doesn't want to miss a game. He doesn't want new shin pads. He doesn't want to go to school early. He doesn't want to go to school at all.

Surely, this behaviour isn't normal. Surely, David and Yuna aren't just failing at every turn. Surely there's a reason why Shane is so... impossible. Why the world seems to stymie him.

"I think Shane might be autistic," one of Shane's teachers says at Parent-Teacher night, and David doesn't know what that is, but he's filled with relief that there's a word for what they are struggling with, that there are families like theirs out there, children like Shane; that they aren't alone.

Yuna doesn't see it that way. David should've known she wouldn't. "Don't tell me what my son is," she says, angry in the way that she never is. "There's nothing wrong with him."

But there is something... maybe not wrong with Shane, but different. David tries to bring it up to Yuna, but she shuts it down every time. "How would you know?" she says, with that same anger. "You're never here. Don't tell me what my son is."

Yuna's son. Like David is nothing to Shane, nothing to either of them, intruding on the two of them. Sometimes, at practises, other parents ask David which kid is his, and they are always surprised when the answer is Shane. *He must take after his mother*, they say, which is their way of saying that he doesn't look white.

"Our son is hurting!"

“He’s fine! Look at how he plays. Would he be able to play hockey like that if there was something wrong with him?”

“You’re focused on hockey?”

“What else is there?”

David can’t find the words to articulate how there is so much more, so much beyond hockey: literature and medicine and academia and religion and culture and heritage and history and politics and friendship and family and David. He can’t find the words, so Yuna wins, like always, and David forgives her, like always.

David grew up Catholic, but his family lapsed when he was a teenager. He was in the church long enough to internalize all the wrong lessons: he is broken. He is not enough.

His victim complex, Yuna called it, during one awful, mean-spirited fight. Shane had melted down when he got home from practise and David had broken down right alongside him, crying in a way that his father would’ve beaten him for, telling Yuna that he didn’t know how much longer he could do this.

“This isn’t about you!” Yuna shouts. “It’s about Shane!”

And Yuna is right. But David is right, too. “It isn’t about you, either!”

And then Shane breaks a lamp. He feels bad right away, and starts trying to clean up the mess, but he cuts himself on the glass and then he’s bleeding, and Yuna grabs him and shushes him and brings him to the bathroom to bandage him up.

David sweeps the pieces up into a dustpan. He feels hollowed-out. He dumps the shattered glass into the garbage and thinks about how he doesn’t regret his lapsed faith, except for

when he does, like when he breaks down during his forty-five minute commute home from work and the house is empty when he gets home because it's six o'clock on a Tuesday and Shane has practise. Like when he's sweeping up glass and Shane's cries are still echoing through the house. When he wishes there was someone listening who cared enough to help.

Eventually, though, it gets better. Shane stops melting down as frequently. His hockey is as good as ever. His French is impeccable: one of his teachers had convinced him that being good at French was basically like being good at hockey, and that had made Shane so excited that he actually did his homework.

"I told you things would be okay," Yuna murmurs into David's shoulder one night, and it turns David's stomach so badly that he has to step outside into the brisk February night air and breathe.

Is this what being okay is?

Because Shane might not understand David, but David knows his son. He knows that Shane is hurting, even still, even though he doesn't know why or how, or how to make it better.

Shane melts down about Wimbledon. Not like he used to as a kid, screaming and crying and trying desperately to breathe, but differently, a more adult sort of breakdown. He gets snarky. Short. Works himself up until he has to step away and compose himself.

"Swedish princess?" David asks Yuna, in a tone of voice that he hopes isn't too judgemental.

Yuna sighs. "I don't know."

And then Cliff Marleau knocks Shane onto LTIR for twelve weeks. Out of the playoffs, unless the Metros go all the way and Shane makes a miracle recovery for the Finals. They don't, so it doesn't matter. Shane is home for the first time in years: the last time he was home for any significant amount of time was... God, before Juniors, probably.

David is glad Shane's back. He cooks all of Shane's favourite foods and keeps the lights in the house low so as to not aggravate his migraines. He keeps the living room TV on SportsNet every evening so Shane can lay on the couch with his eyes closed and listen to the playoff games as they happen. Eventually, when he's feeling better, he sits up and watches them with the TV brightness turned low. That's how he and Yuna watch the Admirals eliminate the Raiders in the second round.

"Okay, the Raiders have lost," David says. There's a few minutes left in the third still, but the Raiders are down multiple goals and apparently, Rozanov is playing hurt, so they're just circling the drain, waiting for time to run out. David has no desire to watch the last listless minutes play out, not when food is ready now. "Dinner to celebrate."

"Dad!" Shane protests.

"What? We don't hate him anymore? I can't keep up!"

It's been a staple in the house for as long as Shane's professional career has even been a consideration: the Russian phenom tearing it up across the pond, challenging Shane for draft positioning. Beating him. The rivalry hasn't faded yet, and it's been almost a decade.

Shane flushes. "No, we do, just..."

"Rozanov went to see Shane in the hospital," Yuna says, heading into the kitchen. She, too, has decided this game is over.

"Oh, so now you like him," David says.

"Now I hate him less," Yuna corrects him.

By the time the Cup Finals roll around, Shane is all but healed. They watch Game 6 at Shane's cottage. The TV is on full brightness and he's sitting fully upright on the couch texting. The Admirals win, and Scott Hunter kisses his boyfriend live on national television.

Shane sprints out of the room to take a phone call, and suddenly, something slides into place. Something he's been thinking about, subconsciously, since the Swedish princess comment. Something that makes a whole lot more sense now.

"David," Yuna asks.

"Yes?"

"Do you think...?"

Yuna trails off. She sounds almost guilty.

"I think Scott Hunter is being incredibly brave," David says, speaking slowly and considering each word before he says it. "I don't know if I'd be."

Dinner is a solemn affair. None of them speaks, really, and the air is heavy with a realisation none of them wants to name.

"Um," Shane says finally, putting his fork down. "I've been thinking about doing this, uh, silent retreat later this summer? Like a meditation thing. So I'll need total silence for two weeks. I'll just do it here, at the cottage, but you guys can't come by. Because I need silence, you know? For meditating."

"Of course," Yuna says quickly. "Whatever you need."

Meditation. Shane probably has lots of things he needs to think about right now. "Right," David says. "Whatever you need."

And David means it, he really does, but he forgets his charger at Shane's house and he can't be bothered to drive all the way to town to get one, not when Shane's place is so much closer, so much more convenient, and he'll just sneak in and sneak out, and if he sees Shane, he'll just wave and it'll be fine.

It is not fine.

David is grabbing his charger from the kitchen and about to head out when Shane approaches the house from the lake. He's with someone. Someone who pins him against the glass wall of his patio door and kisses him like he's starving.

Someone who looks a whole lot like Ilya Rozanov.

Shane turns and makes eye contact with David through the glass.

Suddenly, David is very aware that he should not be here. This isn't for him to see. This is... this is the worst violation he's ever committed against anyone, and it's his own son. His own son, who doesn't understand how much David loves him because David can't say it any way that Shane can understand.

David turns and leaves. He gets in his car and drives off, mind screaming, stomach churning, and berates himself for breaking the one boundary Shane set.

The drive goes quickly.

"Good, you're back," Yuna says when he comes in, tossing his charger onto the kitchen counter. "What were you thinking for dinner?"

David sighs. "I'm going to be honest, I can't really think about that right now."

Yuna's brow furrows. "What? Why not?"

David remembers Scott Hunter's MVP acceptance speech. It was short and sweet, heartfelt and to the point. It was a reminder of everything that hockey culture continues to reinforce: it hasn't changed all that much since David's time at McGill. Things that didn't bother him at the time, but should have. Things that he is ashamed of, because times were different but he still knew better than to spew hatred just because it was expected of him. Things that turn his stomach now when he thinks about Shane, his little boy, coming home crying and refusing to tell anyone why.

When I was a teenager, I realised that I may be that thing that hockey players like to throw around as an insult. The kind of language that I heard on the ice and in the locker room every day was a constant reminder that I was different. When you have a secret that you work as hard as I did to protect, it's exhausting. It's a nonstop effort. And it's also really, really lonely.

David puts his head in his hands. "I can't talk about it, Yuna. I just need a minute."

To her credit, she doesn't push, even though David knows everything in her is screaming at her to push. "Okay," she says. "I'll see what we have for dinner."

A few minutes later, Yuna is sitting with David in the living room. They watch through the big windows as Shane and Rozanov approach the house.

"What—" Yuna breathes, because she doesn't know.

The front door opens. "Hey, it's me, Shane." He walks in. David hears the sound of someone coming in after him, closing the door. Rozanov. Here. With Shane. In a Boston Raiders shirt. Good God.

David takes a breath. "I left my charger at your place, and it's the old one that fits into my phone, and all the other chargers we have are newer, so..."

"It's okay, Dad," Shane says, even though it's not. And then Shane's apologizing, which is awful because none of this is his fault, not even a little bit. "I'm sorry. You shouldn't have

found out that way.”

Yuna looks stricken. She can’t stop looking between Shane and Rozanov. “Found out what, exactly?”

“I’m gay,” Shane says, his voice remarkably steady, like he’s been practising this moment like it’s just another one of his puck handling drills. “Which I was going to tell you soon. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you sooner,” he says, apologizing again, and David would tell him to stop, only he thinks he’s interrupted enough for one day. Shane clears his throat. “And this is Ilya. Rozanov. But you already know that.”

Rozanov smiles, sort of. “Hi.”

Shane barrels on. “He’s visiting, and we’re…”

“Lovers,” Rozanov supplies, when it’s clear Shane has run out of steam.

Shane makes a distressed face. “No, Ilya, that’s gross.”

“But you hate him,” Yuna says.

“No.” Shane exhales loudly at that, like he would laugh, if the situation weren’t so tense. “I mean, I get that, but no, I actually, uh… I love him.”

The silence echoes.

Now Shane does laugh, a small one that’s less of a laugh and more of a sigh. “I did not want this to be how I told you.”

No, David imagines Shane didn't.

"I'm sorry," Shane says, and again, David hates that Shane feels the need to apologise when the whole thing is so clearly David's fault. "Can we just sit down, please?"

They do, arranging themselves around the dining room table in near-total silence. Yuna slides easily into hosting, because it's familiar enough, getting water for the four of them.

"I think we thought maybe you were gay," Yuna says, settling into her seat.

"You did?" Shane asks, genuinely surprised.

David finally finds his voice. "I think we thought it was certainly possible."

Of course they knew it was possible. They'd known it was possible since the moment Yuna showed him the positive pregnancy test. Since the first ultrasounds. Since the sonographer had said, "It's a boy!" and Yuna had turned to David and asked, "What do you think he'll be like?" and they'd spent hours pitching alternate versions of their son to each other. A painter. A cellist. A trapeze artist. A gay man with effeminate mannerisms. A roided-out muscle man. A world-renowned detective.

Shane digests this. "For how long?"

"For a while, I guess," Yuna says, because things like this aren't easy to pin to one exact moment. There were plenty of signs, looking back.

"We both know you pretty well, Shane," David says. "What we did not suspect was that you were so friendly with Rozanov."

"Ilya," the man in question corrects.

“Ilya, sorry.”

Shane takes a breath in. “I know. It’s a long story.”

He doesn’t say anything past that. David hadn’t expected him to. So David gets out his conversational crowbar and starts prying away at his son. “When did this happen?”

Shane doesn’t answer.

David waits for pieces to start falling into place. After a while, they do. “The All-Star game. You two had so much chemistry.”

“No, it was before then,” Shane says slowly.

Oh, wow.

“So, when?” Yuna asks. David just knows she’s so curious she’s bursting with it, desperate to know all the facts. He doesn’t blame her. He is, too.

“Since our rookie season,” Shane mumbles.

Yuna is stunned. “Since your rookie season?”

Rozonov—Ilya—who has been so quiet up until now, speaks up. “No, it’s not true. Since before that.”

Shane frowns. “Not helpful.”

“Before?” Yuna asks.

“The summer before,” Ilya says, in that tone of voice that screams, *how did you forget this?*

Yuna takes a big, steady breath in. “So you’ve been in love since—”

Shane and Ilya both cut her off, issuing denials pretty vehemently. Ilya laughs. “No, just...” he says, and then trails off. He makes a strange, non-committal hand gesture.

“Just what?”

And then Yuna gets it. “Lovers,” she tells David, and Shane groans.

“Okay, no one is allowed to use that word again.”

“Well, I would love a drink,” Yuna says briskly. She gets to her feet. “David, come with me.”

They hurry off to the liquor cabinet, which is a full room away. Once they’re behind a closed door, Yuna blows out a breath. “So, when you went to Shane’s...?”

“I saw them,” David confirms. “Kissing. And learned a valuable lesson about respecting people’s boundaries.”

“God.”

“Yeah.”

David gets the vodka out. It seems like the move, given their houseguest. But maybe that's a stereotype? David didn't play with any Russians at McGill, so he'd have no way of knowing.

"And there were no nice men in Montreal?" David asks Shane as he pours the vodka. He gives Ilya a nice generous serving. He could probably use it.

"I don't know. Probably there were."

"And do your teammates know?" Yuna asks.

"No, nobody knows."

"This is good vodka," Ilya says, accent thicker on the word.

"Thanks," David says. "I try to buy the Russian stuff." *It's better*, he doesn't say, but maybe Ilya hears it, anyway.

And then the question that has no doubt been swirling in Yuna's head since this whole mess started. "You never let him win, did you, Shane?"

Shane scoffs. "Do you let Dad win at cards?"

"I'd rather die."

"Same here."

"Okay," Yuna says, placated.

David sighs. “So is your plan to, what, just keep doing this in secret until you both retire, or...”

“Probably. I don’t know.”

Ilya smiles at David. It’s more like a grimace. “Probably yes,” he confirms. He doesn’t seem very comfortable at the table with them. David doesn’t necessarily blame him, but he’s still trying to wrap his head over the fact that he’s here at all, and that he’s Shane’s... that he’s Shane’s.

“Oh, no, that’s sad,” Yuna says, and she sounds genuinely heartbroken.

Shane shrugs. “I know. We know.” He breathes out. “We just can’t come out and, like, announce it.” He does a very good job at keeping calm and unemotional. David doesn’t believe it for a second.

Shane is starting to look very grey. David decides to change the topic, just a little, and answer a question that’s been burning in him for the last few minutes. “Ilya, I’ve got to say, I’m surprised. You have such a reputation as a ladies’ man.”

Ilya hums. “Is not untrue.”

Whatever David was expecting, it’s not that. He blinks a few times.

“Ilya likes both,” Shane says, glaring at Ilya.

“It’s true, I’ve been with many women, but...” Ilya smiles, just a little bit. He looks at Shane, then to his drink “I have only been in love with one person.”

Subdued, almost embarrassed, Shane says, “Same here. Only one.”

It’s quiet for a long moment. Shane and Ilya do that thing where they don’t look at each other but seem to make eye contact anyway, and Shane’s shoulders relax just a bit.

It’s too much for Yuna. “Okay,” she says quietly, and heads for fresh air.

Shane makes a wounded sound and moves to follow her. He stops halfway between sitting and standing. “Should I— Do you think—”

“She left her cardigan,” David says, pointing to the back of Yuna’s chair. “You could bring it to her.”

“Okay. Yes. Okay, I’ll do that.” Shane grabs the cardigan and hurries outside.

“Do you need more?” David asks Ilya, pointing to his drink.

“Oh, yes, please, sir.”

“You don’t have to call me sir. David is just fine.”

David refills Ilya’s drink, then his own. He takes a sip and thinks about Shane, moving things around, reorganizing the picture he’d had in his brain into the truth. Nothing load-bearing shifts all that much: Shane is still his son, and David still loves him. Shane still loves hockey, still hates processed food, is still too hard on himself. Shane is still the pride of David’s life, his baby boy, his beautiful, sensitive, lonely, wonderful son.

“Shane tells me you played hockey at McGill,” Ilya says.

David tries not to wince. It makes sense that Ilya would try to bond with him over hockey, given how Shane and Yuna are. It's an understandable assumption. It's not Ilya's fault that David doesn't love hockey the way the rest of them do. "I did."

"It is a good school, yes?"

David nods. "Pretty good, yeah."

"Hockey school?"

"No, not a hockey school, per se. Just a school with a hockey team. It's more of an academic school than anything. I got my MA there."

Ilya looks at him blankly.

"My Master's. It's a higher-level degree."

"Ah. So you are smart."

David laughs. "Most days. I was a better student than hockey player, that's for sure."

"That cannot be true," Ilya says, shaking his head. "You are father of Shane Hollander, second-best hockey player in the league."

David's stomach twists. Ilya is just trying to connect. He is reaching for what feels safe, what is familiar. Hockey is that for everyone here but David. "What would you be," David asks, "if you weren't a hockey player?"

Ilya freezes, drink halfway to his mouth. "What?"

“If you weren’t a hockey player. If you never made it, or you got injured, or you found something you liked better. What would you be?”

Ilya puts his drink down. “No one has asked me this before.”

“I’m asking you now.”

Ilya frowns. “Hm. I like sports cars. Perhaps I would be Formula One driver. Or perhaps I would be salesman, selling sports cars to rich men with too much money. I have a friend, Svetlana, who does this. I think maybe I could do it, too.”

David nods. He’s not sure what he expected. He always thought that Shane would be with someone every inch as practical as he is, but maybe that was naivety. Maybe Shane needs someone more fantastical, a man who, when asked what could have been, says *racecar driver* with total sincerity.

Shane would never be able to answer that question. For him, it’s always hockey. David looks at Ilya and realises that might not be true with him.

Maybe Shane will never understand how much David loves him. That’s fine, even if it’s not fine, even if it tears David up inside. But if Ilya can understand him, maybe that’s enough. Maybe it will be enough, eventually.

So David finishes his drink and stands up from the table. “You want to help me with supper?”

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!