

calloused hands in a velvet glove

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76638976) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76638976>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Yuna Hollander , Yuna Hollander & Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Mentioned Shane Hollander , POV Ilya Rozanov , Found Family , The Hollanders adopt Ilya basically , Parental Love , Light Angst , Fluffy Ending , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Ilya Rozanov is pampered as he should be , Post-Episode: s01e06 The Cottage (Heated Rivalry) , Ilya feels parental love after a LONG time , Character Study
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-29 Words: 1,329 Chapters: 1/1

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by [scotthunterssocks \(rxbinsnest\)](#)

Summary

*Show me how I can
Get this calloused hand
In that velvet glove*
- Learning how to love - Rumer

Love comes with condition, or so Ilya Rozanov thought. Until he met the Hollanders.

Notes

Wanted to write about Ilya getting so much love from the Hollanders because he deserves it
<3

When Ilya joined the Centaurs, he thought he was going to spend more time with Shane Hollander. Definitely not Shane Hollander's parents. But there he was, 7 PM on a Thursday night, knocking on the Hollander residence because Yuna texted him they were making borscht and beef stroganoff and that was enough to get Ilya up from his doomscrolling.

"Hey Ilya! How was your day today!" Yuna greeted Ilya, stepping aside from the door so he could walk in.

"Good, thank you." So many years in North America and he still was not used to the small talk.

The kitchen smelled familiar, earthy and sweet, punctuated by the occasional clanging of pots and pans..

"Wow, this looks really good." Ilya commented, watching the bubbles slowly rise to the top in the pot. "You guys sure you are not secretly Russian?"

David chuckled as he wiped his hands on a tea towel, "Nah, son. Full disclaimer, I followed this YouTube tutorial so I don't know how accurate this actually is."

"David has tortured me with five days of borscht because he wanted to perfect the recipe before he allowed me to tell you about this," Yuna chimed in as she joined the two in the kitchen.

Ilya cracked a genuine smile. A warm, tingly feeling bubbling in his heart. He hasn't felt like this in ages, until he stepped foot in the Hollander's house and Yuna served him with a massive plate of pasta, to which he generously dug in and asked for seconds sheepishly.

He also hadn't had Russian food in a long while. Not authentic Russian food anyway. Ilya wasn't a big food person, he ate whatever came his way so he rarely sought out a specific diet or dish. Unlike Shane, who meticulously writes down and tracks what he eats in the name of "sports science".

Ilya called bullshit. Because who in their right mind would refuse a hot bowl of borscht and the god-graced stroganoff that David just placed in front of him. And instead turn around and eat his disgusting salmon and quinoa or whatever the fuck was on his menu.

His stomach growled embarrassingly loud which earned a chuckle in the room.

Ilya took a cautious bite of the stroganoff that was on his fork. The hot, creamy sauce hit his tongue, and he had to bite back the moan that was about to escape his mouth. He will save the lewd sounds in the bedroom, not in the dining room of his boyfriend's parents, or in-laws, if they kept feeding him like this.

"Holy shit, this is so good." Rozanov managed between bites. The speed at which he devoured it probably looked like starvation. What could he say, he was a professional athlete with an appetite. And good food demands his attention.

“Slow down, son, there is plenty more,” David said, laughing slightly as Ilya basically cleared his plate within seconds. Yuna reappeared with the pot, already refilling his plate. Ilya barely noticed her absence.

“I’m glad you love it, you know Shane, he doesn’t really eat our food. So it’s nice there’s someone here that appreciates it.” David added.

“Are you implying that I don’t like your food, David?” Yuna, pretending offense, but the curl that sat at the corner of her mouth had betrayed her. She placed the pot on the table (on top of a coaster of course, she was no monster), and sat down next to her husband.

“There is also dessert in the fridge, so don’t get too full now.” David said, refilling Ilya’s glass of vodka.

Ilya nodded in thanks, food still in his mouth, and let his eyes wander around the room. He hadn’t observed the Hollander house before, he was usually preoccupied with a view of a different sort. The one provided by Shane.

The walls were plastered with reminders of Shane: baby pictures, numbers carved onto the doorway arch documenting his growth, trophies lined on shelves, framed jerseys in almost every corner. A Montreal game schedule peeked out from between a magnet and the fridge door.

Ilya felt his chest tighten as if the air had gotten thicker, thick with affection that was not meant for him. The house practically breathed love for Shane in every corner, and Ilya, despite being welcome, felt like an intruder in the warmth. He shifted in his seat, trying to breathe past it, while a small part of him ached at the realization of what he had never had, and what Shane clearly had in abundance.

He had always known, in theory, what parental love could feel like. When his mother was still alive. She would come to every hockey game, cheer on the stands as loud as she could. When Ilya brought home medals and trophies from his numerous games, his mother would examine it closely, praising him while pressing a big kiss on his forehead.

“You’ve done well, my love,” She would say.

And all that was ripped away when the accident happened. And parental love mutated into control and expectations. His father was never satisfied with him, not even when he was crowned MVP for three seasons in a row. Not when he became the youngest captain in his team. Not when he got the number 1 draft.

Ilya was never good enough for his father’s love.

“You okay there, kid?” David asked, nodding toward Ilya’s untouched second helping.

“Yeah,” Ilya cleared his throat quickly, then amended, softer, “Yeah. Just, hot soup.” He blew on his spoonful of borscht a couple of times to prove his argument.

Dinner went by with the light banter and discussions about the current season. Shane was away in, wherever he was (New York) playing against god knows who (the Admirals) the next day, and from the look of it, Shane might be winning another cup this year.

Ilya did not have practice or a game the next day, so the Hollanders invited him to stay for a movie. He got cozy on the couch, cookies and cream ice cream tub in his hand and a comfy blanket over his legs. Yuna and David were on the other end, Yuna's legs draped over David's, both munching on apples she'd cut.

The movie blurred somewhere around the halfway mark.

Ilya wasn't sure when his eyes started drifting shut. One second he was vaguely following the plot, spoon half-melted into the ice cream, and the next his limbs felt heavy, like someone had turned the gravity up just a notch. The couch was warm. The blanket pooled over his legs in a way that felt intentional, even if he didn't remember pulling it higher.

He told himself he was still awake. Mostly.

Movie dialogue floated around him, the TV volume low and careful. Yuna's laugh, soft and contained. David murmured something he couldn't quite catch. He was a bit too comfortable now, it was as if the couch was slowly swallowing him whole.

At some point, the spoon slipped from his fingers and clinked faintly against the tub. He made a note to grab it before it made a mess on the pristine wooden floors, but his fingers were too slow, his eyelids were heavy, and he saw the metal spoon tumble out of the tub and onto the ground.

Ilya was about to get up before he felt a hand on his shoulder to keep him where he was. A fabric settled over his shoulders, light but deliberate. A blanket, warmer than the one already on him. Someone paused, like they were checking if he'd stir.

"It's ok, go to bed." Ilya was too tired to make out who it was. He sank deeper into the couch, exhaustion finally winning. He felt the faintest possibility that he could be something more than "never enough." That maybe, just maybe, he could learn to breathe in love that wasn't conditional, that didn't demand he perform to earn it. And he, himself, was enough.

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