give peace a chance

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give peace a chance

by Pale_Blue

Summary

While Shane and Yuna have a heart-to-heart outside, David and Ilya make lunch and some important conversations are had.

Notes

Title from Say Yes To Heaven by Lana Del Rey

See the end of the work for more notes

Ilya tapped his fingers nervously against his half-empty mug as Shane grabbed his mother's cardigan and followed her out of the door.

Mr. Hollander was staring at him over the rim of his own mug. Like he still couldn't believe Ilya was really sitting at his dining table, drinking tea he'd been too awkward to ask for milk for. Ilya wondered if he should apologise somehow. For the first impression he'd made. It wasn't exactly ideal, that Mr. Hollander had only ever seen him antagonise his son on the ice or make out with him against a window like a horny teenager.

He knew he should say something, but it was like his English had fled the room along with Shane.

"How long are you staying?" Mr. Hollander asked into the heavy silence.

Ilya scrambled desperately for the unsaid insinuation between the lines like his life depended on it. All he could land on was that Shane's father wanted to know when he was leaving again. When he would be safely across the ocean in Moscow, away from his son. When things could go back to the way they had been.

"I leave next week," Ilya said cautiously.

It probably wasn't the time to mention that he and Shane had talked about extending his stay by a few days.

Mr. Hollander nodded and took another sip of tea. The clock on the wall ticked in an obnoxiously loud way that made Ilya want to rip it down and break it in half. He furtively wiped his sweating palms on his shorts.

"Are you hungry?" Mr. Hollander asked, unexpectedly.

Ilya stared at him, unsure of what to say. In all honesty, he was struggling to even finish his cup of tea, his stomach twisted with nerves even though he was fairly certain they were through the worse of it. No one was shouting, no one was demanding anyone leave. He hadn't been punched. But the thought of eating made the nausea creep up again.

His confusion must have shown more clearly than he'd thought.

"We were about to get started on some pasta for lunch when you showed up," Mr. Hollander explained, not really meeting Ilya's eyes. "I think I'll carry on now."

Ilya could recognise an offer of an easy out when he saw one. He could agree, Mr. Hollander would go to the kitchen, and Ilya would wait and hope Shane came back quickly to save him. No need for awkward small talk or polite questions.

"Do you want help?" he asked.

Because let no one say Ilya Rozanov ever took the easy way out.

Mr. Hollander was clearly as surprised by his offer as Ilya was by his making it. He blinked at him a few times, like he was making sure Ilya had actually just suggested they make lunch together.

“If you’re offering,” he said evenly, and then made his way to the kitchen. Ilya quickly tucked in his chair and followed him.

The kitchen was airy and modern, all sleek surfaces and shiny tiles. Framed pictures of Shane hung on the walls, and Ilya made a mental note to examine them more closely later. If he got the chance. There was a calendar hanging beside the fridge, and Ilya could see that all of Shane’s games were neatly noted and highlighted in bright green.

He hovered awkwardly by the doorway as Mr. Hollander began pulling out ingredients from the well-stocked fridge.

Mr. Hollander handed him a large pot.

“Put some water in that, will you?”

Ilya nodded and did as he was asked.

The next few minutes passed in uncomfortable silence, each of them working on their own tasks. Ilya stared down at the warming water in the pot, debating whether or not to add salt to the water. There was a teaspoon resting beside the salt jar and he fiddled with it as he considered.

“How did your parents react?” Mr. Hollander asked, awkwardly. “When you told them you…”

He trailed off uncertainly.

“That I am bisexual?” Ilya asked, and Mr. Hollander nodded.

It wasn’t the first time he’d said it out of loud. Not by a long shot. But this time seemed important, somehow. Like it had weight, in the kitchen where Shane’s parents cooked every day. Ilya ran the small teaspoon slowly through the pot of salt.

“I did not tell them,” he said, after a few moments.

“But you plan to?”

Ilya put down the spoon.

He imagined telling his father that he liked men as well as women. Then he stopped, quickly, because it was an impossible scenario to picture. At best, his father would simply tell him never to speak of it and never so much as look at another man again. At worst? He didn’t want to know.

“I cannot,” Ilya said carefully. “They are dead.”

“Oh,” Mr. Hollander said.

He sounded…upset. Ilya watched him carefully out of the corner of his eye as he put down the knife with which he’d been chopping some fresh tomatoes for the salad. He wondered if it would help to explain that in many ways, his father’s passing had come as a relief. That his mother’s death had been long ago, for all that it was still a wound that would never close.

“I didn’t know,” Mr. Hollander said. “I’m sorry, Ilya.”

He still pronounced his name awkwardly, with the stress on the wrong syllable, clunky English phonetics at odds with the foreign combination. It had stopped bothering Ilya years ago that his name sounded different in English. The sounds never quite right. Not really him.

“Is okay,” Ilya said quickly.

“I’m sure they would be very proud of you,” Mr. Hollander said, turning to face Ilya properly. He looked so distraught about his parents. Like he was genuinely troubled by the fact Ilya had lost them so young. Ilya didn’t know what to make of it and his first instinct was to push it away as fast and hard as he could.

He swallowed it down and tried to imagine again. His father. *Proud* of him. Impossible. He didn’t even know how the sentiment would have looked on his face. He was fairly certain his father had never looked at him with pride. As for his mother, he could only hope. She had been, she had told him, back when she had still been able to attend his games and take him to the school gates. But that had been before so many things.

Ilya hummed in response because he didn’t want to tell Mr. Hollander. It embarrassed him, almost, to stand before a man so clearly proud of everything his son was and admit that he had been found lacking by his own blood.

This was important to Shane. Ilya refused to ruin things for him.

“Where is the pasta?” he asked instead.

“It’s over in the cupboard,” Mr. Hollander said, gesturing with his knife. “It’s all wholegrain unfortunately.”

Ilya would have eaten fucking *cardboard* if it would make Shane’s parents tolerate his presence.

“You don’t have any other family then?” Mr. Hollander asked. “In Russia, I mean.”

Ilya wondered how he could derail their current topic of conversation. Talking about his family never failed to put a damper on things and, with Shane currently out of the room, he felt adrift. He didn’t know how to spin things nicely, how to make them sound appealing.

“There is some,” he said slowly. “I have a brother, some nieces and nephews. A stepmother. But we are not close.”

He hadn't spoken to his brother in years, not since they'd almost come to blows at their father's funeral. Polina had taken the money and taken over Ilya's childhood home without so much as a thank you. *Not close* was putting it kindly. He sure his remaining family would only acknowledge him again when he was dead and there was money to squabble over.

Ilya poured a package of pasta into the boiling water and tried to keep his face carefully blank and neutral.

"It can't have been easy for you," Mr. Hollander said. "You and Shane."

Loving Shane was not the easiest thing Ilya had ever done but it was the thing he cared most about. The most worthwhile. And Shane was so easy to love, so easy it hurt. Ilya had watched him folding his clothes before their first time and fallen, long before he'd been willing to admit it to himself.

"Shane is very easy to love," he said, because surely that couldn't be the wrong thing to say. "He is worth any difficulties."

Beside him, Mr. Hollander smiled.

"That he is," he said.

Then he sighed and ran a hand across his forehead. Like he was gearing up to something.

Ilya quickly put down the empty bag and prepared himself for whatever would come next. In a way, he knew it wouldn't be good.

"Look, Ilya," Mr. Hollander said. "I'm-"

He broke off and stared out of the window. At the pristine garden, at the cloudless blue sky. At the breeze rippling gently through the trees beyond the flowerbeds.

"I'm not good with words, never have been," he said.

Ilya went to interrupt, to tell him he was mistaken, desperate to somehow score points, but Mr. Hollander waved a hand at him to wait.

He did.

"Let me finish. I won't deny that this, you and Shane, isn't a surprise. I certainly didn't see it coming. But I saw you and Shane at the cottage. And I haven't seen him so happy in a long time."

He swallowed and Ilya didn't dare to move a muscle. He barely even dared to breathe.

"As long as Shane is happy, that's good enough for me," he said, with a curious air of finality. "And I look forward to getting to know you better."

Oh.

Ilya hadn't been expecting it to be so easy. He had expected to be questioned about his team, his schedule, about his family some more. About his passport, his English, what the fuck he was doing with Shane in the first place.

Not this.

"Thank you, Mr. Hollander," he said, stiff and uncertain.

"David, please."

Ilya had never called his father anything other than father or sir to his face. Not as child, not as an adult. There had always been that distance between them, steeped in fear and respect and a desperate need for acknowledgement.

"David," Ilya said.

It felt awkward on his tongue.

"I think you'd better add a second bag to that pot," David said, obviously relieved to have said his piece. "I've been around enough hockey players to know how much you can probably put away."

Ilya allowed himself a nervous laugh at that.

"Yes, better to be safe," he agreed, making his way to the cupboard to get another bag.

Shane had been outside for a long time, he suddenly thought, looking towards the door he'd rushed out of. He wondered if he should go outside as well. If his presence would be helpful or just make things worse.

"Best leave them to it," David assured him.

Ilya nodded and re-took up his position at the stove, pouring more pasta into the pot. The water rose close to the edge, threatening to spill over any second. He added the salt, carefully.

There was still one last worry he needed to put to rest.

"You do not have problem, with Shane?" he asked, the words coming out halting, wrong. "I mean, that he is gay."

David smiled and shook his head. Like Ilya was asking a silly question.

"Of course not," he said. "He's our son."

As if it was that simple. As if acceptance was something to be quickly gained over a cup of tea and then never doubted again. As if it was a ridiculous thing to have asked.

"Okay."

“I meant what I said, Ilya,” David said suddenly, looking at Ilya seriously. And suddenly Ilya saw so much of Shane in him, in the determined set of his jaw, in the way his eyebrows had knitted together. “I really do look forward to getting to know you.”

Ilya looked down at the overflowing pot of pasta, hating himself for the tears he could feel pricking at the corners of his eyes. He turned a way slightly, trying to hide the weakness from Shane’s father.

And then he nodded, a little too quickly, with a little too emotion.

“You are good parents,” he said, staring intently into the pasta. “Shane is very lucky.”

In another time, years ago, he would have hated Shane for this. For his perfect family, his perfect house. For having parents that loved him even when he was different to what they thought he was. For having all the things he had never had. But now he was just relieved. Relieved that Shane was so loved, so accepted, by those closest to him. That he would not have to lose anything because of Ilya.

And then suddenly, unexpectedly, there was a solid hand on his shoulder.

He turned, and David was looking at him with warmth. And something else that Ilya couldn’t properly place. But he was sure it was not bad.

“Relax,” David told him softly. “This isn’t a test, alright?”

Ilya nodded again and rubbed a hand subtly across his eyes. He would blame the steam, the heat. Invent some sort of allergy. If anyone asked.

And then, incrementally, cautiously, he allowed some of his barriers to drop.

Just slightly.

End Notes

thank you so much for reading!

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