

Shane's Lily

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Shane's Lily

by [midnighttypewriter](#)

Summary

After Shane's accident on ice, Yuna sees Lily messaging him and decides to make a phone call.

- Translation into Русский available: [“Лили” Шейна](#) by [nortland](#), [WTF Heated rivalry 2026 \(fandomHeatedRivalry\)](#)

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

While Yuna waits for the doctors to be done with Shane and for David to come from Shane's place with some hospital stay essentials, Hayden Pike brings her Shane's personal things from the locker room. Shane's suit and his Rolex watch and his phone, all packed into Shane's equipment bag.

Hayden lets himself be hugged tightly and returns the gesture with just as much feeling. Yuna doesn't know him closely, but she knows he's been practically a brother to Shane all these years. His wife, Jackie, sits with them whenever Yuna and David make it to Shane's games. He would stay for as long as he is able, but he has a wife and a flock of small children and he's just played a game. Yuna sends him home, because he's pale and shaken and his eyelids start dropping. He promises to return the next day.

Yuna is glad for his friendship with Shane. Sometimes she can't help but worry her son is lonely, even when surrounded by people.

She's left in the waiting room alone, with just the bag of Shane's things for company.

Just as she opens it to see whether it needs repacking to meet Shane's standards, the bag buzzes. Well, Shane's phone inside it does.

Yuna reaches for it automatically. Just in time to see the notification on screen.

Lily: I know you can't write now...

The message is cut short by the preview window. The phone's screen fades to black again, but just briefly, before it lights up with another notification.

Lily: Please please be ok

Yuna takes a deep breath. She doesn't know of any Lily in Shane's life. There's a neighbor named Lilian, but she is in her fifties and has three sons older than Shane. Yuna doesn't think he's ever talked to her.

This Lily, however...

She sounds like she cares. Shane has her saved in his phone, no last name or business affiliation, which means she can't be a random fan nor a professional contact. Possibly a partner of one of his teammates, but—

No, her pleas sound a little more personal than that.

Yuna feels sorry for her instantly. This girl or woman unknown to her, but who is clearly waiting for updates on Shane's health. It must be nerve wrecking.

And it'll be so long before Shane can respond to her, even after he wakes up.

Feeling a little guilty, Yuna takes a deep breath and unlocks Shane's phone. He's a creature of habit, her son, and she reliably hits the correct combination of numbers for the PIN code on just her second try.

She'll just reply Lily with Shane's prognosis into the existing message thread. That's what Yuna tells herself.

Except she opens the thread and flinches.

Lily

Noo I want to watch

And we both know you can come more than 1 time in hour 🍆💧

Stop trying to distract me!

The game starts in ten minutes.

Are you hard? 😏

Yes.



Today 10:43 PM

I know you can't write now but please text me when you can. They won't tell me anything

Please please be ok

Reflexively, Yuna closes the conversation even as she sees Lily typing. This is not something she wants to read; it's not something *Shane* would want her to read. He'd be mortified.

Logically, she knows her son is an adult. He has adult desires and adult relationships and, apparently, adult conversations. Though if you'd asked her before this moment whether she'd ever expect to find dirty messages on Shane's phone, she'd have—

Well, she doesn't know what she would have done or said, because she's never thought about it before.

She can't possibly reply to that thread, introducing herself as Shane's mother. It would likely be unpleasant to both Shane and—

His girlfriend? He hasn't mentioned anyone since his brief relationship with Rose Landry. Clearly, however, something is going on between him and this Lily, and whoever Lily is, she seems to care. Even if she is a casual relationship, or new, she deserves an update. Yuna remembers the early days of being with David, and she'd have gone to drastic measures to get news on him if something happened.

So Yuna opens up Shane's contacts, searches for Lily – no last name – and presses "Call" before she can think better of it.

Lily picks up on the first ring.

There's a breath of tense silence, then hesitant: "...yes?"

And that's—

Almost certainly not a girl's voice.

"Is this— This is Yuna Hollander. Shane's mother. I found your— I saw your messages, I thought Shane'd want me to call you."

Now that she's on the phone call, she is absolutely certain this is the opposite of what Shane would want her to do. Nevertheless, it's too late now and Yuna braces for the consequences.

There's a brief silence, then a slightly hoarse male voice says: "Is he— Mrs. Hollander, is Shane—"

The person, almost certainly a man, in Shane's phone has an accent and there's something nagging at the back of her mind about his voice, but Yuna doesn't recognize him. What she recognizes is the fear in his tone, the utter terror behind his broken speech. The question he can't bring himself to finish.

"He'll be okay," she hurries to reassure him. "The injury looked worse than it was. They're not done with tests yet, but he is not in any immediate danger."

The man breathes a sigh of relief.

"I think he'd like you to visit when he wakes up," Yuna offers softly. She can't be sure of that, she knows nothing about their relationship, but it feels like the right thing to say.

The man laughs quietly, with an edge of sadness. "I'm not sure about that."

"You're Lily, right? That's how Shane has you saved. You've been... seeing each other?" It's not a shock that Shane would be seeing a man. She and David have long thought that he might be inclined to, but they waited for him to say something. If he ever said something. Some days Yuna has wondered whether Shane was interested in anyone at all; she's heard that some people simply aren't.

She isn't happy that she found out the truth this way. For many reasons.

"It's not—" *It's not serious*, he clearly wants to say, but can't bring himself to. "I want to visit, Mrs. Hollander. I can't."

"He will have a private room. I could introduce you as... his brother, a family friend, whoever."

Silence. Then: "You're very kind, Mrs. Hollander."

She wants to tell him to call her Yuna. She also wants to tell him to man up and come to the hospital, but then it hits her he might not even be in the same city. Shane travels so much that for all she knows, Lily could be from Toronto or Boston or Tampa... She wonders how they've met, but Shane is unwillingly dragged to so many events and there are so many apps and websites these days...

"Thank you for calling," the man says. His voice is steadier now, almost distant. His accent's less pronounced. "Tell Shane— Don't tell him nothing. He'll message me when he's able."

She wants to argue, but the man ends the call.

Yuna wants to be angry with him, but mostly she is sad. And exhausted.

She copies the number into her own phone and shoots him a message just as a nurse steps into the waiting room.

Shane's Lily

We've just spoken on the phone. I'll let you know if anything changes.

Chapter End Notes

Yuna doesn't recognize Ilya's voice because, frankly, I personally wouldn't recognize my own mother over the phone if she didn't introduce herself 🐱

Chapter 2

She's let into the hospital room, where her precious son is asleep, broken and bruised. And completely unaware that his secret has slipped the confines of his phone.

Even when David arrives, and they hug for a long while, she doesn't tell him anything. She wants to. The knowledge is gnawing at her mind and ripping into her heart, the loneliness of it all, but Shane has already lost his chance to tell *her*. It's his secret to share. So although she and David have never lied to each other, certainly not when it comes to Shane, she decides to simply put a welcome mat in front of the door for Shane to come out of the closet himself when he feels comfortable to do so.

Yuna must be more exhausted than she thought. Despite everything, now that David is here, she falls into an uneasy nap in the uncomfortable hospital chair.

It's the phone in her pocket that wakes her up. There's a message from Lily.

Shane's Lily

We've just spoken on the phone. I'll let you know if anything changes.

Today 00:07 AM

You are not angry?

Yuna glances around. The hospital room is dimly lit and quiet, and her husband is sitting by their son's side, one hand gently laid on Shane's better arm.

Shane's Lily

Why would I be angry?

You didn't expect me

"Who are you texting?" David asks, so quiet it'd be inaudible if they weren't surrounded only by the eerie hum of a hospital at night. Not silent, never silent, but somehow dulled. Otherworldly.

"Shane's friend," she replies, only a little guilty. It's not entirely a lie.

David nods and refocuses on Shane.

Yuna turns back to the conversation.

Shane's Lily

We've always hoped Shane would feel safe to tell us himself.

No one knows

Oh, how that hurts. How lonely that feels. Yuna wonders how long Shane has carried this secret, but she refuses to go through his phone again. She considers deleting the call log, too, but decides against bigger deception.

Shane's Lily

I won't tell anyone. It's Shane's to share.

And yours.

On the other end, Lily is typing for a long time.

Shane's Lily

How is he?

He's sleeping now. They want to keep him for observation and we'll have to wake him up regularly for scheduled checkups, but he is good. As good as he can be, given the situation.

He'll be out for the rest of the season, but it shouldn't be a career-ending injury.

She frowns at herself as soon as she hits "Send". What kind of mother thinks about that at all when her only child is in hospital? What does his career even matter right now, or in the next hours, or the next days?

But Lily writes back almost instantly.

Shane's Lily

He'll hate that

Metros are done without him

There are other good players on the Metros

None as good

Despite everything, Yuna smiles. She may be a Montreal Metros fan, but she is Shane's fan first. It's nice to see that Lily shares that sentiment.

Yuna doesn't get to dwell on Lily's understanding of hockey, though, because another message lights up her screen.

And her heart breaks for the sender.

Shane's Lily

I was so scared

No one knows.

No one knows. I was so scared. Please please be ok. They won't tell me anything.

Yuna's eyes burn. How lonely it must have felt. How helpless.

Shane's Lily

Me too.

If you can't visit, maybe we can arrange a phone call. Shane can't look at screens for a while, but we'd figure it out.

There is a long silence. Lily has read the message, but there is no typing back.

Yuna stands up. She places a hand on her husband's shoulder. "You should try to take a nap," she says softly. "I'll stay up with him."

David frees the chair by the bed for her.

As she sits down, her phone vibrates.

Shane's Lily

No

I will visit

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the lovely comments. They really mean a lot to me!

Yuna sends Lily the hospital information, including the visitation hours. She offers to pick him up in the lobby.

It hits her that she doesn't even know what he looks like.

Shane wakes up with light trickling into the room. He's loopy, a little high on the painkillers, but not so much as to not know who he is or where. Just enough that it doesn't break him to learn he won't be able to play for the rest of the season.

There are rules for visiting hours. Otherwise, Shane's entire team would probably swarm his room at some point. Not because they are particularly warm, but in the name of sportsmanship.

Yuna is just thinking of how she'll navigate all of that once visitors start coming, especially with Shane's secret on the roster, when...

Shane's Lily

I'm in the lobby

It's two minutes before the visiting hours officially start.

I'm coming to pick you up.

She kisses her son's forehead and excuses herself to her family before heading down. It's early into the visiting hours so the lobby is quieter and emptier than it would be later. Still, it's not empty.

She doesn't know how she'll recognize Lily.

Until she sees a young man standing alone, shoulders hunched under a brown leather jacket, blond curls trying to escape whatever attempt has been made to tame them.

As if sensing her gaze on him, he turns around.

For a split second, she wants to keep searching.

Because this can't be—

"Mrs. Hollander," Ilya Rozanov moves towards her and his tone is softer than she's ever heard him speak, except—

Except when they talked on Shane's phone.

Her knees buckle and she has to grab the wall.

"Mrs. Hollander." He is by her side, holding her up, his firm arms keeping her steady.

"I'm fine. I'm fine." She waves her hand, unable to look at him directly. "Just lightheaded for a second."

He lets go of her and shoves his hands into the pockets of his jacket.

A clock on the wall ticks away only seconds but it feels like an eternity before her brain resets.

"Alright," she says firmly. "Let's get you a visitor's pass."

In some ways, it's easier that it's Ilya Rozanov.

In *some* ways.

If anyone asks, if anyone recognizes him, he's here as the captain of the opposing team. Sportsmanship. Nothing else.

As if sportsmanship would explain the dark circles under his bloodshot eyes, his ashen skin.

"Cliff... Marleau... He is very sorry," he tells her as she leads him to the elevator.

"It was a legal hit," she sighs. "It's all part of the game. Something like this was bound to happen sooner or later."

It was not the first hockey game she has seen where they had to carry someone out. It was just the first time with her baby on the stretcher.

"He wanted to come visit today, but I told him not to. Hollander... Shane might not want to see him."

"I don't think Shanes holds a grudge." The only person Yuna has ever thought her son was holding a grudge against is the man right here. And apparently she's been wrong in that, too.

The elevator door closes behind them, trapping them in tense silence. She still can't bring herself to meet his gaze.

"You said you weren't angry," Rozanov says in a small voice.

"I didn't recognize your voice." It comes out snappier than she's intended it to.

"Oh. Do you... Should I leave?"

She forces herself to look at him.

He looks hesitant. No, he looks downright scared. And so young. So very young. She forgets how young these boys actually are, compared to how much life they've already lived.

Yuna reaches out and puts a hand on his elbow. "I'm not angry," she says. "I'm not. I'm just confused. A lot has happened in the past couple of hours."

Rozanov nods and his Adam's apple bobs as he visibly swallows.

He's a handsome young man. No wonder he's photographed with a new woman practically every month, he'd probably get them even if he wasn't rich and famous. The thought is confusing to Yuna, at this moment.

She pushes it far back into the darkest corner of her mind.

"Here's what we'll do. I haven't told my husband—"

"Will *he* be angry?" Rozanov interrupts and he sounds *terrified* and he looks like a kid and Yuna—

She squeezes his arm. "No. No, not at all. You've never met a kinder man. I just meant what I said. It's not my secret to share."

Rozanov releases a breath.

"So here's what we're going to do. I'm going to ask my husband to go buy us breakfast, and then I'll let you in to see Shane, and then we'll play it however you want. However the two of you want."

The truth is, she wants to sit him down for an interrogation. She has too many questions and too many alarm bells ringing in her head.

This, however, is not the time.

She doesn't have to lie when she asks David to bring her something to eat, something for both of them. The last time she ate was at sometime before the game yesterday and her stomach growls as soon as she mentions it.

David leaves the hospital room and she steps out to wave in Rozanov. He's standing in a corner, trying to look invisible despite his large frame.

He still looks like a scared child.

But when she gestures for him, he perks up. She watches him straighten his back and square his shoulders, lift his chin up.

He walks past her into the room, looking fully the vision of Boston Raider's star captain.

"Ilyaaaa!" she hears in Shane's high-pitched voice full of medication-induced joy.

Yuna closes the door and stays outside. She allows herself to collapse onto a plastic chair.

It's not that her son is, most likely, gay.

She's considered and came to terms with that possibility already, long before Lily.

Her son, however, is having a secret... well, definitely something with the worst possible man. They have so much to lose, both of them. Their lives, their entire careers are centered around their rivalry. If this came out—

There's a part of her that wants to storm into the hospital room, tell them to say their goodbyes and to never see each other off the ice again. For both their good.

That wouldn't solve anything.

Instead, she takes out her phone. Her conversation with Lily – Ilya – is still open. She closes out of it and Googles yesterday's game.

Boston won, of course. She can't bring herself to care about the score. Not when her screen is flooded with news articles and videos of her son's injury.

In one thumbnail, she sees Rozanov hovering in the frame even as the focus is on Shane on the stretcher. Almost involuntarily, she taps on the video.

She can't watch for long. Yet she sees what she's missed while rushing down from the stands.

Ilya Rozanov, hovering on the ice, shellshocked.

There's a knot in her throat as she closes the window.

She tries watching a few minutes of the resumed game. Rozanov on the screen plays like she's never seen him play before. Without his usual flare, just sharp, vicious precision.

Like a man possessed.

Or—

A man not in possession of his soul.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Before David can return with the food, a nurse comes for a scheduled checkup and Rozanov walks out of the hospital room.

He leans against the wall and lets his head fall backwards with an audible thump.

"He's on many drugs," he says.

Yuna forces a smile. "They gave him the good stuff."

Rozanov nods. His hands are in his pockets again, but there's nothing nonchalant about his posture.

"Can I ask something?" Yuna tries.

Rozanov turns his head towards her.

"This... thing between you two, is it just a fling?"

She knows it's vain hope, but she still hopes he'll say yes. Instead, he says nothing at all.

"Is it serious?"

"It's not nothing."

Which is not a yes. It's definitely not a no.

How has Yuna missed this? Where was she in her son's life? What has she done that let Shane believe he had to hide this from her?

How many horrible things has she said about this man in front of Shane, to Shane?

How many of them were true?

The boy standing against the wall is an enigma.

David returns just then, a bag of sandwiches in one hand, and Rozanov jumps to attention. Instantly, his entire demeanor changes. He is ready to present an award or greet a minister.

Or face a father.

"Hi," David says, gentle surprise written across his features.

"Mr. Hollander," Rozanov nods his head. His voice seems deeper than just moments ago.

Yuna gets up and takes the bag from David. "This is Mr. Rozanov of the Boston Raiders," she says, because she's not certain David recognizes him at all, although he knows the man's name, of course.

"Ilya Rozanov," Rozanov reintroduces himself as he accepts the hand David is already holding out. His given name has fewer syllables and a somehow softer sound than how the press pronounces it. "I am here to visit Shane. To see he is okay. I'm very sorry what happened. We are very sorry."

"That's very kind of you," David says.

"Sportsmanship," Rozanov replies, but his voice wavers, betraying him. He adds, with more honesty: "Not just. I was worried."

Yuna places her hand on Rozanov's arm. "We're very glad you came, Ilya," she says, as gently as she is able, and she hopes she got it right. His name. So much more suitable for the scared young man she sees now, looking at him up close.

He looks at her and his eyes are suddenly watery.

She wants to hug him, like she's hugged Hayden, but she fears that if she does, they'll both crumble.

"Should I have brought more food?" David asks.

Ilya shakes his head. "No. No, I'm not staying. I have a flight, the team is leaving."

David frowns. "I could have gotten you a sandwich for the road."

That startles a sound almost like a laugh from Ilya. "Thank you, Mr. Hollander." He relaxes a little. Then he turns to Yuna. "Thank *you*, Mrs. Hollander. Thank you," he repeats, softer still.

"I'm confused," David says when Ilya has left and they sit down to quickly eat their sandwiches, before they return to Shane's hospital room. "Don't we hate Rozanov?"

"No, at the moment we don't, not really."

Her husband sighs. "I can't keep up."

Soon, she promises herself. Soon, she'll have Shane bring him to the same page.

"We've met Rozanov," David says.

"He was just here," Shane is trying to sound neutral and keep a smile off his face, but it's a lost battle. "He came to see me," he says the last two words as if they had about three times as many vowels.

"You scared him," Yuna says, looking at her boy and seeing him in a new light.

Seeing everything in a new light.

"I'm sorry," Shane says, but he sounds like he would be kicking his feet and giggling into his pillow, if he could.

Shane's Lily

I didn't tell him you know

I should have

I'll talk to him.

Before I give him his phone.

So he can yell at me

Not yell

Scold me? Is the word?

Shane doesn't yell

He yelled at Scott Hunter once.

Chapter End Notes

I don't like keeping David (or Shane, frankly) in the dark, but both Yuna and Ilya looked at Shane high as a kite and decided he's not able to consent to coming out. But! Next chapter. I promise.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the comments. They mean so much to me!

“Sweetheart, can we talk?” Yuna asks, stepping into her son’s room and closing the door behind her. They’ve only just arrived from Montreal. Shane hasn’t had the chance to change out of his travel clothes, which was going to be a struggle with his injury.

“I need to put away my stuff,” Shane replies, frowning at the equipment bag lying on the floor now. “Have you seen my phone? I really hope it’s not been left in my stall.”

“You should rest,” Yuna admonishes. They’ve only let Shane out of the hospital this morning, he has one arm in a sling and he’s still recovering from a concussion. He shouldn’t be doing anything but sitting down and resting in between rounds of painkillers. “But that’s actually what I want to talk to you about.”

“My phone?” Shane asks, bemused.

Yuna sits down onto his bed and pats the space beside her. “Come sit with me.”

Emotional talks have always been David’s forte. Yuna organizes and advises, David reassures and supports. It’s not that she can’t do it, it’s just rarely her role in their family dynamic.

“Did some brands drop me after the injury? Because I won’t be in the playoffs?” Shane asks. He is probably not serious. Probably. “Or did they want me to promote a special kind of sling? Does Reebok make medical supplies?”

But he sits down, watching her warily.

“This is not a business talk.” Yuna reaches for his free hand with both of hers. She wonders if she’s misstepped as a mother when that’s his first idea, even if it’s just deflection. “I’ve been thinking the past couple of days about how proud of you I am. You’re the best son I could have asked for, and there’s not a thing about you I would change. I need you to know that.”

He drops his gaze down to their clasped hands. “Mom, you are scaring me.”

“I know, sweetheart. But I needed to say that before I admit to how much I’ve overstepped. Not on purpose.” Before meeting Ilya Rozanov at the hospital, perhaps she wouldn’t have told Shane she knew about his preferences, or what she suspected them to be. Like this, however, the deception would have been too huge. She knew too much. “When you were injured, many people were concerned about you. Most of them could wait for official

statements, but when Hayden gave me your phone... There was a person who seemed particularly concerned.”

Shane turns his head away. “Is this about...”

His hand is trembling.

“Lily, yes.”

“That’s nothing, Mom,” he swallows thickly. “It’s just someone I meet up with sometimes.”

“I called the number, sweetheart,” she says softly. “Maybe I shouldn’t have, but those messages were so worried and I didn’t know if there was anyone else who would reach out. I spoke to him.”

“Mom...” Shane’s voice breaks.

Yuna lets go of his hand with one of her own and rubs his back instead. “You scared him so much. I’m not sure it’s nothing to him.”

Shane lets out a shaky breath.

They are silent for a while. Shane hovers on the edge of crying, but the tears never spill. Yuna continues to rub circles into his back, gently, avoiding the strap of the sling.

“I love you, Shane,” she says after a while. “I love you so much. Nothing could change that. Nothing, do you understand?”

He gives her a shaky nod.

“I’m sorry you found out like this.”

“I’m sorry, too. I shouldn’t have... I overstepped.”

Shane nods again. “I was going to tell you. That I’m— I’m gay. I meant to tell you. It’s just— Him, you know?”

“That was a surprise. I guess you don’t really hate him, do you?”

“No, not for a long time. I actually— I like him. A lot. It’d be easier if it was anyone else,” his voice is flat and he’s not looking at her. “But it’s him. It’s always him.”

And perhaps that makes perfect sense.

Who else but Ilya Rozanov? The two of them have orbited each other for their entire adult lives. They had undeniable chemistry, it what drew people to their rivalry in the first place.

“I need you to know...” Shane continues. “I need you to know that I tried. I tried to not be this way. To not want him, to want someone else. Someone suitable. I really hoped... I really liked Rose. Just not like that.”

“Shane,” Yuna hears her own voice crack. “I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry you— That I made you feel like you needed to be someone else. Shane, look at me. Look at me.” She doesn’t continue until he does. There are bruises on his face and his eyes are watery and bloodshot. “I mean it. I love you, I’m proud of you, and I will always, always support you. And if Ilya Rozanov is a part of that, then I will support you both. Do you understand?”

He nods. Then he tries to shrug and winces in pain. “I’m not sure how much there is to support. It’s not like we can be together.”

“Do you want to be?”

“I do,” he admits with a small nod. “I think he does, too. It’s just... everything, you know? Our careers, our brands, the rivalry, fucking Russia— Sorry.”

“No, it’s a fucked-up situation alright,” she agreed. “But you’ll figure it out. Figure out what you are to each other. Then we’ll figure out everything else.”

“We?”

“Sure. You’ll need a statement prepared for if anything leaks. I’ll consider which brands would be supportive—“

“Mom. Mom, you’re thinking way too far ahead. I’m not— We’re not going to come out anytime soon. Even if there is anything to come out about.” Shane shakes his head. “No one knows. No one can know. I mean... Rose knows about me... Wait, have you told Dad?” His eyes suddenly open wide.

Yuna shakes her head. “I didn’t enjoy keeping it from him, but I thought you’d want to tell him yourself.”

“Thank you,” Shane says and then it suddenly hits him. “You’ve met him. You and Dad met Ilya, when he came to the hospital.”

It doesn’t escape her notice how easily Ilya’s given name comes to him. “If it helps, he left a very good impression.”

Shane groans. “I can’t believe you met him without me there to supervise.”

“I meant David left a good impression,” Yuna says, which startles a chuckle out of Shane and she’s pleased. “But Ilya did, too. He was much too shaken to be a menace, I think.”

“He can be very nice,” Shane argues.

Yuna nods.

She takes Shane’s phone out of her pocket. She’s turned it off, that very first night, just to resist further snooping. “You still shouldn’t be looking at screens, and you should definitely rest. But perhaps you could call him. Ilya’s worried you’ll yell at him, for not letting you know I’ve found out. In his defense, you were extremely loopy.”

Shane glares. “Oh, so you’re defending him now? And he’s Ilya to you?”

She shrugs, unapologetic, and gets up. “We’ve been through something together.”

“And I don’t yell.”

“You did yell at Scott Hunter that one time.”

“Yes, well, he touched a nerve.”

Yuna smiles.

She knows, suddenly, that whatever comes next, they’ll be alright.

Shane comes out to David over dinner. Quietly, but less apologetic, as if something has settled within him.

David is gentle, supportive, he repeats the same reassurances as Yuna without them ever having to have discussed the words to tell Shane. As she listens to them talk, Yuna’s heart swells with love for the men in her life. And she notes the empty chair beside Shane, the way their table would so comfortably sit four people, and she knows there’s room. Perhaps even for someone as large and full of personality as Rozanov. Perhaps—

For Ilya.

“Oh,” David says, showing surprise only when Shane brings up the fragile relationship with his rival. “So we really don’t hate him?”

“No,” Shane says. “No, maybe— Maybe I actually— I might love him?”

Chapter 6

Hayden calls every few days. He has a baby on the way and three kids already at home, but he finds the time to check on Shane.

“Does he know?” Yuna asks one day. “About you?”

Shane shakes his head. He’s holding his phone against his chest where he sits on the living room couch. Despite Yuna telling him off for the overuse of screens when he’s still resting a concussion, he lives with it practically attached to his hand.

She knows why, now.

The device vibrates with new texts frequently.

“No. No, I haven’t told anyone,” Shane frowns. “He’s noticed the texts, but he thinks that Lily is... well, Lily.”

“Maybe you could tell him,” Yuna suggests. “He’s always been a good friend.”

Shane sighs. “I think he’d understand the... the gay thing. I’m not sure he’d understand about Ilya.”

Yuna isn’t entirely sure she understands about Ilya.

It looks complicated and painful and uncertain. But it’s also important. And real.

“You could tell him that you’re gay, then,” she points out. “You don’t have to tell him you have a boyfriend.”

“I don’t have a boyfriend. I don’t know what I have.”

“A man who has your mother’s number is at least a boyfriend candidate.”

Shane chuckles. “Hayden has your number.”

“Jackie is a lovely woman, Shane. Don’t you dare play a homewrecker.”

While Shane rests and David is at work, Yuna sits in her office and goes down rabbit holes.

It frustrates her that she can’t do any proper planning. She drafts a basic statement regarding Shane’s sexuality, should it ever be needed, but she can’t do anything else. Not when the boys barely know what they’re doing.

So she watches a compilation after compilation. The history of Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov’s rivalry is well-documented, and Yuna watches them meet at center ice again and

again, go against each other in game after game, crash each other against the walls relentlessly.

Watching them play reminds her why she fell in love with hockey as a sport in the first place. The speed, the adrenaline, the skill. Each game is a true battle, and Shane and Ilya are warriors like no other.

No one else can keep up with them.

So of course.

Of course Shane has fallen in love with this man.

It was inevitable.

They listen to Montreal Metros' games, Shane sitting at the kitchen table while David cooks and Yuna cleans up, then they watch the highlights together. But Metros are nowhere as much of a force without Shane and soon there are no more games for them.

They do the same with Boston Raiders, whom Ilya leads into the play-offs.

"Are we rooting for them now?" David asks.

"Absolutely not," Yuna says at the same time as Shane yelps: "No! No."

"Don't we want Ilya to win the Cup?"

Shane shakes his head. "We won't hate it if Ilya wins the Cup, but we are absolutely under no circumstances actually rooting for Boston."

Yuna simply gestures towards Shane to emphasise what he's said.

David nods, then shakes his head to himself, smiling.

Shane's Lily

That was a nasty check.

Did you watch my game?

Not all of it.

Shane should stay off screens more.

Yes

I only text between 1 - 2 pm and 10 to 11

Other screen time is not my fault

Maybe is Rose Landry

“Does Ilya know you’re gay?” Yuna asks, repressing a laugh.

“We’ve talked about it.” Shane looks at her suspiciously. “Are you texting him?”

“I just wanted to know whether he is okay after that game!”

“I kind of hate that you’re getting along,” Shane groans and it’s obviously a lie.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

I've never expected this silly little fic to get so much love and I honestly can't describe how much the kudos and comments mean to me!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

While Hayden calls every few days, he can't visit. Jackie's pregnancy is at the stage where the baby could come any day now and he doesn't want to be hours away when it happens. Rose Landry is doing reshoots for her new movie but might visit in summer when she's done. And Ilya is leading the Boston Raiders into the play-offs.

The one person who comes visit is Shane's friend J.J. and they talk in French, mostly about hockey. When Yuna asks Shane about coming out to him, he gives her the same answer as with Hayden.

Shane's Lily

Are you okay to play tonight?

Me:

[a photo of Ilya lifting up the Stanley Cup]

Scott Hunter:

[five different pictures of various dinosaurs]

Ilya sends the dinosaur images so fast Yuna thinks he's already had them stored on his phone.

"What's Ilya's beef with Scott Hunter?"

Shane snorts. "He likes him just fine."

"Does he?"

"It's Scott Hunter. Everyone likes him."

Yuna sits down to join Shane on the sofa. The tv is still off, but they will be watching the game today. "You've literally fought him once."

For any other hockey player that wouldn't have been a big deal at all. Emotions run high on ice, gloves come off frequently and not all spat out teeth come from stray pucks. Shane, however, never fights. He never breaks rules and he never takes off his gloves and he never lies. Except about that one huge, Ilya Rozanov-shaped thing.

Shane is quiet for a moment. "He hinted that he knew," he says finally. "About Ilya and me."

"Was he being homophobic?"

Yuna is instantly concerned, but Shane just shakes his head.

"Not really, no, not at all, and I don't think he's told anyone. Or that he actually knows. I just think he doesn't like Ilya much."

David pops out of the kitchen then. "Doesn't Ilya have a bit of a reputation?"

"I went down a rabbit hole," Yuna admits, "and it looks like his teammates actually like him quite a lot."

"He's not that much of a jerk away from the cameras," Shane says. "It's his brand more so than his personality."

'Not that much' is not the same thing as 'not at all', but Yuna feels predisposed to like the scared boy she saw at the hospital, who thanked her profusely for the little kindness of letting him see her son. The man who limits his texting to not interfere with Shane's recovery. And, perhaps, she feels fondness for the guy who's sent her pictures of prehistoric creatures to describe Scott Hunter.

"He's protecting his left side," Yuna points out. "He's playing with injured ribs."

"The team doctor said he's good to play," Shane says with a small sigh.

They taped him up and sent him out full of painkillers, which Yuna knows isn't an unusual practice at all, but she still feels a surge of protectiveness towards Ilya. His face in close-ups betrays nothing, any pain masked under that Slavic stoicism, but the way he moves tells a different story.

She pats Shane's knee. "Maybe Scott Hunter can send you both a gift basket when he wins Stanley Cup. He wouldn't have a chance without you getting maimed."

"Sure," Shane leans his head backwards against the couch and closes his eyes as the commentators announce the final score. "We sacrificed ourselves for Scott Hunter."

Shane's Lily

I'm sorry about the playoffs.

You'd hate to see Boston in finals

And winning the cup

Are you icing your ribs?

I live in ice bath now



Chapter End Notes

I thiiiink in the show Ilya might have sustained the injuries during the game against the Admirals, but for the purposes of this fic it was definitely in the game prior.

Chapter 8

Shane shows her a picture of Hayden's newest baby. His expression tells Yuna he wouldn't recognize the child in a lineup.

"Four kids. That's at least two too many, isn't it?" Shane shakes his head.

Yuna keeps her tone neutral. "I've heard that once you have a few, the additional ones make no difference."

She wanted more children. At least two, although she wouldn't have been upset with a third. Fate and biology wouldn't have it, however, so she has only Shane.

She's not complaining. Shane is wonderful and every mother's dream. Smart, polite and hard-working. Independent when he needs to be but still willing to come home. Some people she knows barely hear from their adult children and here her son is, practically one of her closest friends.

No, she couldn't have asked for a better child.

There's a real possibility she'll never have grandchildren. It's not something she and Shane have ever talked about, but Yuna's aware now that even if he wanted children, which she doesn't know, there are many obstacles between him and becoming a father.

She doesn't ask.

It's something she'll plan for later, when it's relevant. There are too many other things now.

"No. Two is the maximum number," Shane says. "Hayden's kids are great but it's already a two-person job to take them anywhere. I can't imagine if there were even more of them."

"Ideally, children are always a two-person job," Yuna points out kindly.

"Right. Of course," Shane shakes his head, and it's obvious he isn't thinking along the same lines as Yuna. He has no intention to discuss the shape his future might take in this regard. "I should send a gift."

"I can help with that if you want," Yuna offers. "And don't forget to congratulate Hayden and Jackie on Instagram."

Gossip mills make the biggest deal out of any public interaction. Or lack thereof.

Out of curiosity, she checks out Ilya Rozanov's Instagram account, which Shane doesn't follow.

She finds it interesting that Ilya has apparently been following Shane for a while.

“Will you see Ilya over the summer?” Yuna asks when they are eating lunch. Just her and Shane, because David is at work.

“I don’t know,” Shane admits. “I invited him to the cottage, but he said ‘maybe’. And it was probably a no. We haven’t talked about it since.”

Yuna sighs. “You don’t see each other much, do you?”

“Mostly only when we play each other.”

“That seems lonely.”

Shane is frowning into his now emptied plate. “It’s what it is. That’s why... It’s complicated.”

“Does it have to be?”

“Things could be very bad. For Ilya, especially, if this gets out. There are no players like us in the league, not openly. If we...” Shane trails off, choking on his words slightly.

“Someone has to be the first,” Yuna points out. There were no Asian Canadians in the league either when Shane was a kid learning to skate.

Shane shakes his head. “It can’t be us. It can’t be Ilya, you see? The guys who come out before they’re drafted are never getting drafted. If the league quietly drops us... If Ilya loses his visa and he’s already out... It’d be bad for me, but it could be horrible for him. He can never go home, if he’s out.” He exhales. “I just want to be together. Quietly. It’s just so hard and the secret is so big...”

Yuna reaches out and squeezes his hand.

Her heart aches. Her mind spins. She wants to make a thousand contingency plans just to calm down the fear in Shane's voice.

“But it doesn’t matter,” Shane says. “Because I think... It’s never going to be anyone else for me. So it’s this, or nothing at all.”

She wants to point out how young he is. He has a full life ahead of himself still. There could be another man for him out there. Someone nice and safe and far removed from hockey.

Yuna doesn’t say that.

She only squeezes Shane’s hand harder.

Later, she goes over Shane's portfolio with a fine-tooth comb, looking at every brand with renewed scrutiny. The ones she can trust in the future, the ones to watch, new prospects to reach out to because their values close align with what her son needs.

And if she's making a mental list of career options for athletes retired early, preferably ones that can be entered into on an emergency schedule, neither Shane nor Ilya need to know

about that now.

That's not Plan A, anyway.

Ideal Plan A is two Hall-of-Famers, side by side.

Shane is taking full advantage of his allotted screentime. The game is playing on the tv and his fingers are flying across the screen of his phone, messages bouncing back and forth. David is seated on the couch with them tonight, watching the game, laughing when Shane relays some of Ilya's comments.

"I'm sorry you've never had a dinosaur phase," David muses. "We could have had this with a side of scientific facts." It's in response to Ilya's assertion that Scott Hunter hasn't played this "okay" since he was a rookie 3 million years ago, followed by a cartoon dinosaur in skates.

There are seconds of the game left.

Yuna isn't sorry that Scott Hunter is about to win the Stanley Cup. What she's sorry for is that Ilya isn't sitting here with them.

It would be nice.

But this—

It's nice, too. She's always felt they were a close-knit family, but now she realizes there's been distance between them for years. One she never noticed. Or maybe she considered it normal.

That's gone now.

On the tv, the New York Admirals are celebrating their victory. The players' loved ones are trickling onto the ice.

Scott Hunter has no one there. Or rather, the only people he has are the team.

Yuna pats Shane's knee. She has thought about it before, that her son deserves more than just parents coming out onto the ice for his biggest victories.

It might never be an option for him.

For him, or for Ilya, who is an orphan same as Scott Hunter.

And then—

"It looks like Scott Hunter is calling someone down from the stands."

They watch, frozen, as a handsome young man climbs down the never-ending stairs.

As Scott Hunter takes his hand.

They watch, breathless, as Scott Hunter kisses a man on national TV.

Shane's phone rings.

The cameras are still on Scott Hunter and his... boyfriend? But Shane is already taking a call in the next room.

The broadcast cuts to commercials and then to post-game coverage and Shane comes back.

He looks shellshocked.

Yuna gets up, she wraps her arms around him before she knows what she's doing.

"I'm okay," he whispers into her shoulder. "I'm okay. I'm... *happy*."

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

There wasn't going to be a new chapter today, because I was out living life, and the next chapter was going to go straight to summer.
But then I had an idea.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Shane's Lily

Will you be at the awards tonight?

Yes

I look very good in my suit, please tell Shane to watch

We are all seated. I've heard Scott Hunter might be giving a speech.

He's winning all the awards and I can't even be upset about it



Are you planning to talk to him?

Yeah

I won't tell him about things

But I will tell him he's very brave

I'm glad he didn't retire before big gesture

And now he can't retire for like 5 years to prove point

But there're no more awards for him

I'm taking all awards next year

What about Shane? 😊

He can have sportsmanship award

Most beautiful freckles award

Best brand deals award

But I think that one is yours

Chapter End Notes

Your comments are honestly the best thing that's been happening to me lately. I can't describe how grateful I am!

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I don’t know why they don’t just come over for dinner,” Yuna complains on the day Ilya is scheduled to arrive. She and David are at their own cottage on the lake, which is pleasant and peaceful, but she’d love to have both boys here, too. “Ilya will have been flying half a day, Shane is driving back and forth... It’d be much easier for them to just eat here with us.”

David laughs quietly and hugs her around her waist in a way that still makes her weak, decades into their marriage. “They haven’t seen each other in months. Let them have some time alone before you force a dinner with the parents on them.”

It takes Yuna a moment to get it. “Oh,” she extracts herself from her husband. “Well. I still hope they visit soon!”

It takes them three days.

But in the end, there is Ilya Rozanov standing in her entryway. Handing her a bouquet of flowers and a gift bag with a bottle of vodka, moving in a way that suggests he’s never done this before. Ilya Rozanov, captain of the Boston Raiders, the man she sees in interviews, is not someone you bring home to your parents.

This young man, however...

He is wearing a Boston Raiders t-shirt like he’s issuing a challenge, but he looks subdued. Not shy. Not terrified the way he’d looked at the hospital. And definitely not arrogant like he does in every press conference.

Just quiet and perhaps a little wary.

“So,” Shane clears his throat awkwardly. “This is Ilya. Rozanov. He’s my...” He trails off helplessly.

“Boyfriend,” Ilya fills in for him, putting his arm around Shane to grip his hip.

“Really?” Shane turns to him, genuinely surprised.

Ilya shrugs, meeting his gaze. “I mean, yes? I think. Is the wrong word?”

“No, no...” Shane shakes his head, cheeks pink under his freckles. “It’s the right word. Yes. If you want.”

“Obviously I want,” Ilya rolls his eyes fondly. He leans in and plants a quick kiss to Shane’s cheek.

Shane’s blush deepens.

It takes Ilya barely any time to relax.

He compliments the food and shovels spoonfuls into his mouth like a man starving and Yuna wonders whether Shane has been feeding him at all over the past few days.

“Oh, he’s a perfect host,” Ilya laughs when she brings that up. He looks at Shane with warmth in his eyes when he says: “He makes me burgers and keeps the loons off the lawn.”

“Ilya thinks loons are manhunting beasts,” Shane snorts.

“They sound like wolves! What do they need to sound like that for! No nice bird sounds like that,” Ilya grumbles into his plate, but he looks a little amused, too.

Yuna’s heart swells.

“So, what’s the plan here?” David asks later. “Keeping this a secret until you retire?”

They are both still so young. They have fifteen, maybe twenty years in the MLH still ahead of them.

They look at each other. Ilya shrugs. “Probably?”

“It’s not like we have another option,” Shane says.

“That’s too sad,” Yuna sighs.

“But we have plans,” Ilya says. “We talked about what we can do to make it, well, less sad.”

“Less dangerous,” Shane adds and Ilya nods. “There’re several things. The distance, the rivalry, the... the—”

“The sexuality,” Ilya supplies when Shane stumbles over his words. He’s already managed to inform them that he’s bisexual, a confession that seems to come much more easily to him than Shane.

“Right, that. And Russia.”

“Yeah.”

“It sounds like you’ve thought about it a lot,” Yuna prompts them gently to continue. She doesn’t want to be the one to say that although they’ve only named four obstacles, all of them are enormous.

“I’ve thought of nothing else,” Shane sighs.

“We’ve talked of nothing else,” Ilya shrugs, refilling his plate. “We came up with some ideas.”

“I came up with some ideas.”

“I had ideas. You shot them down!” Ilya argues, but he sounds almost amused.

“You wanted to— Nevermind,” Shane shakes his head.

They stare at each other for a moment, intense, almost like a face off on the ice, until—

Both of them break into smiles.

“It’s going to take a long time,” Ilya turns back to Yuna and David. “But I will need citizenship. Somewhere that’s not Russia.”

“And we want to ease off the rivalry. Change the story.”

“We’ll change the narrative,” Ilya says and something about that makes Shane grin proudly.

They talk about a foundation they are planning to start, the charity work that would help many and allow them to spend time together, publicly and in private. Both of them sound genuinely enthused by the idea.

It’s only when Ilya mentions moving to Ottawa that Yuna startles.

“You’d leave the team that drafted you... for Shane?”

If anyone has asked her whether Ilya Rozanov would re-sign with Boston once his contract was over, she’d have said yes in a heartbeat. The team drafted him, it made him, he had built a legacy there. Ilya Rozanov is synonymous with the Boston Raiders.

And yet.

Without hesitation: “Yes. Of course.”

“Oh.”

“Mom.”

“Loyalty is important!”

Shane rolls his eyes. “He’s trying to be loyal to me, not Boston!” He turns to Ilya. “My mom takes hockey way too seriously.”

Ilya gives him an amused smile. “Now I know where you get it from.” He turns to Yuna. “Boston and Montreal are very far away. Ottawa is much closer and the rivalry is not so bad. And we can see each other even when we’re not playing against each other. Will be nice.”

“Moving will mean you’ll have to wait longer to apply for citizenship,” David points out.

Ilya nods. A small crease forms between his brows. “It’s okay, I’ll wait. Canada is... friendlier. To people like me.”

Yuna doesn’t know whether he means Russians or LGBT people or possibly queer Russians, but she understands what he’s getting at either way. She doesn’t tell him she’s already looked up at the data, or that she’s done a little bit of research on how to apply for asylum. Should that ever be needed. She hopes it’ll never come to that, but it always pays to be prepared.

Hope for the best. Prepare for the worst.

Prepare for the best, too.

“I have a list of brands that would be enthusiastic to work with LGBT athletes at your level. There’s a market—“

“Mom,” Shane rises his fork. “Mom, no. We’re nowhere near ready to come out.”

“But I will need a new agent,” Ilya says, eyes wide, as if he’s only just thought of it. “Someone without ties to Russia. And someone who’ll be willing to work with me on the Ottawa plan.”

Someone willing to help him make a career move that makes no sense from the outside.

“I can’t represent you,” Yuna says, mournfully, “not while you are still officially rivals. I can help you find someone capable, though. Someone discreet and trustworthy.”

Ilya smiles.

It’s a new smile she hasn’t seen on him before. Soft and surprised, perhaps a little confused, like he’s never considered someone might actually just help him. Just like that.

David puts a hand on Yuna’s back then.

Yuna looks at him, warmth spreading between them.

She knows what her husband is thinking without him having to say it.

This feels nice. This feels right. They’re talking about serious topics, real issues, some of them quite terrifying and yet—

At this table, everyone is safe.

Everyone is at home.

And their problems all have solutions.

They see the boys a few more times over the next few days. Ilya Rozanov slots himself into the puzzle of their family like he’s always been the missing piece.

There's Ilya helping with the dishes. There he is, arguing with David over the best brand of dishwasher tablets. There he is, readily crawling under the sofa when Yuna loses an earring.

He cooks a surprisingly great dinner for them at Shane's cottage, and he makes sure Shane always has ginger ale within reach. He showers Yuna in compliments that somehow always circle to Shane. He asks about David's work and about his hockey-playing history and gets his number into his phone, too.

He complains about Shane's awful protein shakes but drinks them anyway. A city boy through and through, he wears Shane's hoodies because he hasn't realized how cold it would get on a lake in the evening. He yells light-hearted insults at Shane, then cackles when Shane responds in kind.

In the quiet moments, he asks about life in Ottawa.

When he thinks no one is looking, he pulls Shane close, arms wound tightly around his waist, kissing his cheek or neck or shoulder, making Shane blush and squirm, all too aware that other people are nearby.

Late into the evening, when the conversations slowly dissolve into yawns and the first round of goodbyes, his fingers curl around the cross hanging from his neck. The look in his eyes is not quite sadness, but something that makes Yuna want to put him in her pocket and keep him safe.

She understands, much too quickly, why Shane would risk everything for this man.

Ilya Rozanov is much too easy to love.

One day, when Ilya's stay at Shane's is almost over, he sends Yuna a photo.

It's of Shane at the golden hour, sitting on a boulder near the water. He looks peaceful. Quietly happy. It's not the highest quality photo of her son she's ever seen, but it might be among the most beautiful.

Shane's Lily

I shouldn't keep photos on my phone

I can keep it safe for you.

I think the story is technically finished now, but I expect there to be updates in the future. I have ideas, but not quite so neatly chronological anymore, so anything after this might just be standalone chapters.

Chapter 11: Bonus 1: The First Christmas

Chapter Notes

The response to this fic has been so lovely and you've all sent such beautiful comments that I'm a little nervous adding to it in fear of ruining it. But I love this verse (and I'm so happy you do too, honestly the comments and kudos mean a world to me) and I do have a huge pile of ideas.

Note: This chapter includes canon-typical attitudes towards Shane's eating habits.

“Will you bring Ilya?” Yuna asks a few weeks before Christmas on a facetime call with Shane.

It's only as she notes Shane's eyes open wide that she realizes she's assumed the answer would be obvious. By this point, she is aware that the relationship between Ilya and his own family back in Russia is strained and besides, by the time Christmastime arrives to Russia, the hockey players will be back to their regular business on ice. So she doesn't expect her son's boyfriend to have family plans for the short break they get.

Christmas has never been important to Yuna growing up, but then she met David and it was an important holiday to him. So she learned to love it, just like he learned to put more significance on New Year's Day. Their little family has made their own traditions; she wonders how that'll continue to change with the addition Shane's Ilya into the fold.

“We've never spent holidays together,” Shane says.

“You've never been a couple before.” She prefers to not think about the sort of relationship her boys had before this last summer. They've been involved for about ten years and at the same time for only a few months; it's a little messy, but they look entirely committed these days. Even though you'd never be able to tell as much from the coverage of their games against each other.

“I'll have to ask him whether he'd want to.” Shane is frowning slightly, like he doubts Ilya would say yes.

Which is silly. If there's anything Yuna has learned about Ilya Rozanov over the past few months, it's that he would move into Shane's pocket if it was at all possible.

Shane adds: “It's a lot, spending holidays with the boyfriend's parents.”

“Should I ask him myself?” Yuna suggests, even though she has no intention to do so. She

and Ilya text regularly, practically anytime he has a game at the very least, but this is something that should be up to Shane. However, she knows her son a little too well and she knows that sometimes the easiest way to get him to see reason is to ragebait him, as they say. “So that he knows he’s welcome?”

“Mom, no!” Shane glares, his eyebrows knitting together. “You can’t just— You can’t. It’s bad enough that you two are... friends, or whatever.”

“Or whatever,” she laughs. “Okay, okay. I’ll leave it up to you. But hurry, because I do have his number and the need to know how many people I’m hosting.”

Shane's Lily

Do I bring anything?

Just yourself!

And yet, Ilya shows up with a box in his hands. He hands it to David before pulling Shane into a crushing hug right in the entryway of their house. He’s still wearing his parka, which makes him even bulkier, and despite Shane’s solid frame, Ilya seems to engulf him entirely.

It’s been three weeks since Boston and Montreal last played against each other, so Yuna lets her husband pull her into the kitchen. The boys can have their moment. She has to trust Shane to show Ilya where to put his shoes and where to hang his parka and store his scarf and gloves.

She’s sure he’ll get to that eventually.

They’ve only had Ilya visit them at the cottage, and Shane’s cottage of course, in summer. It’ll be nice to have him home.

It takes Shane and Ilya several long minutes before they join David and Yuna in the kitchen. They walk in with their hands linked, fingers loosely tangled together like they are unsure about handholding but can’t bring themselves to separate either.

Ilya is wearing a black and white Christmas sweater which would almost avoid being ugly if the reindeers on it weren’t pulling odd faces.

“Oh, did you make these?” David asks, slight awe in his voice, when he opens the box and discovers a couple dozen gorgeous glazed gingerbread cookies.

Ilya chuckles. “Maybe next year!” He adjusts his hold on Shane’s hand, pressing their palms together. “I ordered these online. I had to stop in a weird dark alley to get them from this very

old lady who makes them.”

This earns him a concerned look from Shane. “Do you think—“

“Yes, moya lyubov, I’m sure she recognized me. This very moment she’s writing to her Facebook retirement group that Ilya Rozanov came to Ottawa to buy cookies for his secret lo — boyfriend’s family.” Ilya lets go of Shane’s hand to pat his face instead. “Don’t worry, no one will know is you. Everyone knows you think banning sugar from your diet will make it you skate faster than me.”

“I am faster than you,” Shane is glaring, batting Ilya’s hand away.

“Nope,” Ilya pops the ‘P’ and turns to Yuna. “Can I help put these on a plate or something?”

“I will make cookies next year,” Ilya says confidently later, when they’re sitting in the living room, the Christmas tree lights filling the space with golden glow. They’ve turned off all the actual lamps. “I haven’t done any Christmas baking, any baking, since I was a kid. But I’m looking at recipes and I think it would be fun.”

“We can make them together,” Yuna suggests. It’s been years since she’s done that with a son. Shane must have been still in single digits the last time he’s helped her with Christmas baking.

She doesn’t dare say out loud that if things go right, according to plan, next year Ilya’s kitchen will be in Ottawa. And he’ll have it close to join Yuna in hers on no-game days, if he’d like.

“Maybe,” Ilya smiles, and it sounds like a shy ‘yes’ rather than a polite ‘no’. He and Shane are sitting on the sofa next to each other, bodies pressed together from shoulder all the way down to their feet. “I’d like to make the kind we had.”

At home, he doesn’t say. In Russia.

“You can show me, if you’d like,” Yuna says. “I’m always happy to try something new.”

“It’s shame this one won’t touch them,” Ilya snorts, putting one arm around Shane’s shoulders and brushing his fingers through Shane’s dark hair.

“I don’t eat refined sugar during the season,” Shane says in the voice of someone tired of repeating himself.

Ilya rolls his eyes fondly. “How are you going to feed that hockey IQ?”

“With actual nutrition!”

David gets up then, unsubtly changing the topic. “Ilya, has Shane shown you where the towels are?”

Even as a child, Shane was stubborn and practical, and much too rational. He refused to believe in Santa. To the point that parents of his classmates complained, and David had to sit him down and gently explain to him that it was unkind to ruin the fun for other children.

Yuna wonders whether that was, in a way, the first lesson Shane got in hiding his truths to protect other people’s comfort.

With a child who had no sense for the Christmas magic, and with Yuna who also grew up not believing in it, there were never cookies and milk for Santa, or stockings on the mantel. There was always a beautifully decorated Christmas tree, a family sitting down together to good food, and a Christmas afternoon with hot beverages and the exchange of gifts.

Shane’s gifts to Yuna circle through the same types of garments: cashmire sweaters, silk scarfs and books.

This year is a sweater year.

“I showed him one in black and gold,” Ilya says, grinning over the rim of his mug. “Was very lovely. But I want to keep dating your son and Shane said that wouldn’t help.”

Yuna laughs. The sweater she actually got is salmon-colored, no hint of Boston Raiders’ branding anywhere.

Ilya hands her a cream envelope. “And this one is from me.”

“You didn’t have to get me anything,” Yuna protests, but is touched anyway. From the envelope she takes out a spa day certificate.

“You work very hard making sure Shane has the best advertisements and I can see his pretty freckles everywhere I go,” Ilya explains, somewhere between sincere and mischievous. “You need some relax.”

“Thank you, Ilya, it’s lovely.”

He beams at her.

David doesn’t escape a Boston-themed present, but Yuna can’t bring herself to glare at Ilya. Under gold wrapping paper there is a 4000-piece puzzle with a map of Boston, and it looks beautiful.

“I’ve seen you had some displayed at your cottage,” Ilya says, looking down at his shoes and sounding almost shy all of sudden, “and Shane says you like them. Puzzles. So.”

“This is great!” David isn’t bothered by the Boston of it all in the slightest as he traces the picture on the box with his fingers. “Do you do puzzles?”

Ilya shakes his head. “No since I was very little, but it looks like fun. And relaxing, maybe?”

It doesn’t escape Yuna that he thinks about relaxation a lot. These boys don’t get to do enough of that.

“You should help me get this started,” David says with genuine eagerness. “We probably can’t put it together in the next twenty four hours, but we can get a good chunk done.”

“You tell Ilya he can’t accomplish something and it’ll be done by midnight,” Shane snorts.

“Make it nine,” Ilya says, shuffling forward where he’s seated on the sofa, looking like he might as well get started on it now.

Yuna pokes her husband. “Give Ilya his gift first.”

“Oh, right!” David blinks. He looks flustered when he pulls out a package wrapped in red and green wrapping paper, with a red bow on top.

Ilya’s ears almost match the color. “You didn’t have to.”

“It’s just a little silly something,” David says. “And it’s for both of you, really.”

Ilya perks up at that. For a second he looks like he wants to tear through the paper, but then he unwraps the present carefully, cautiously, like that wrapping itself is precious.

He pulls out plaid fabric. His eyes widen when he realizes he’s unwrapping two matching sets of Christmas pajamas, the nice kind.

Shane blushes and covers his face with one hand, but Ilya’s face is split by a giant smile the next second.

“Oh! Is amazing!”

“We guessed you wear about the same size as Shane,” Yuna says. “I hope they fit alright.”

“This is perfect, this is the best.” Ilya is already getting up to his feet, gesturing for Shane to follow him. He looks like he’ll never stop smiling. “Come, come, we’re putting these on right now!”

Shane’s obvious suffering is worth it for Ilya’s overwhelming delight.

Shane's Lily

January 7 9:15 AM

Merry Christmas!

Thank you! I’m beating the Admirals’ ass tonight as a little gift to myself



Chapter 12: Bonus 2: The Planning Stages

Shane's Lily

I signed with the agent you recommended

She seems nice

Very understanding

Have you been able to talk to her?

Ilya types for a long time, which likely means that he's been writing and deleting messages.

Shane's Lily

Can I call you?

Instead of Ilya sending an answer, Yuna's phone rings, but when she picks up, Ilya greets her with a small: "Yes?"

"I didn't mean to ambush you," Yuna says sheepishly. She's in her office at home, looking through the window into her garden. It's been a couple weeks since she's seen Shane and a couple weeks more since she's last seen Ilya. If you asked her a year ago whether she'd miss Ilya Rozanov, she would have laughed in your face. In just a few months, in the span of just over half a year, however, Ilya has become an important aspect of their lives. "I just thought maybe there are things you don't feel comfortable putting in writing. Are you free to talk?"

"I'd like to talk," he admits. "I'm home alone, I can talk."

Yuna wonders what home looks like for Ilya. She knows he has a house in Boston, a nice one from what Shane has told her, but she's never seen it. He's never given a house tour to any magazine.

In her mind's eye, Ilya's space looks like Shane's apartment in Montreal, but she knows that's not true. Ilya Rozanov's place is probably a fancy bachelor's pad. Shane's own Montreal place looks like an expensive hotel room, nothing like the cozy cottage.

"How do you feel about the agent?"

"Good," he says simply, then takes a deep breath. "I haven't told her about Shane and me. Of course. But I—"

Yuna can hear him moving around. He's probably pacing.

“I need her to start putting out feelers, you know? And for that I need her to understand why I wouldn’t want to sign with Boston again,” he continues. “Boston would have me. Of course. And it would make the most sense to stay. They love me here and is a great team.”

For a moment, Yuna wonders whether Ilya is about to tell her that he’s changed his mind. That he wants to stay with Boston a little longer, win a few more cups with the team he already knows, in the city where he’s lived his entire adult life. It would make the most sense. She wouldn’t hold it against him, and she doesn’t think Shane would either, although it would be a blow for everyone.

But Ilya keeps talking.

“So I had to explain to her why I don’t want that. I didn’t want her to think there was bad blood with Boston. So I told her. That I’m bisexual and that I don’t feel safe... returning home,” his voice wavers. “That I’d like to move to Canada. That I have people in Ottawa.”

“A support system.”

“Yes, a support system.” He releases a breath and Yuna can imagine him running his hand through his messy golden curls. “I didn’t want to tell her more than that and it was fine. She said it’s not her business to decide what I should want. Just get me it.”

Yuna nods to herself. She’d hoped that he would get positive results from her recommendation. “Are you still thinking of Ottawa as your first choice, then?”

“Yes, absolutely,” he doesn’t hesitate for a second. “That’s why I needed to talk to her now. I don’t know how she’ll do it, but she has to make sure they don’t mess up their salary cap before July. That they can still afford me,” he chuckles. “I told her I’m more interested in a no trade clause than the salary but she doesn’t want me to take a dramatic pay cut.”

“That would look like you’re running away from Boston.”

“Is what she said, too.”

“Ottawa will be lucky to have you. They’ll be ecstatic to hear you’re even considering them.”

“She said that as well. Is she your twin?” Ilya huffs. “Is funny. People think I should stay in Boston, because it’s a very good team. Because we keep winning. But when I first came here, was miserable. So why should I be too good for an underdog now?”

Yuna smiles. “Do you think you can do for Ottawa what you did for Boston?”

“Wasn’t me on my own. Shane’s holding Montreal on his two shoulders alone, but Boston’s got good players.”

Yuna wants to argue, just out of loyalty to her favorite hockey team and because she knows

that Shane's teammates know what they're doing on ice, but this is not the time. "Still. It'd be nice to see Ottawa win a few games."

She thinks that perhaps then she could start coming to Ilya's games. It would be strange and suspicious if she and David did now, although they've briefly considered it. They definitely can't go to games in Boston, and not enough people fill the stands in Ottawa to ensure invisibility in the crowd. But if their city's team started doing well... If their city's team started doing well, there would be nothing strange at all about catching a game or two, not even with Ilya Rozanov on the team.

And Yuna would very much love to see Ilya play in person more often. Now that she doesn't have to hate him on principle, she can admit that there are few other players in the league that are quite as fun to watch.

And she wants to support him. As a person. As a player. As her son's boyfriend. As a member of her family.

Who'd have thought, just a year ago?

"It'll be nice. You can frame my Stanley Cup photos right besides Shane's."

Perhaps not. Definitely not in the living room, where pictures of Shane's victories currently reside. It would be difficult to explain to guests why she has her son's biggest rival's most notable victory on her wall.

But one day.

She hopes that one day, there'll be pictures of the boys on her walls. Sharing frames.

"Ah, I wouldn't go that far," she teases instead. "You'll have to beat Shane first."

Ilya huffs. "I've won the Stanley Cup before," he reminds her. "I did it first."

"And good thing you did," Yuna nods, almost to herself, "I'm not sure Shane could love someone who's not a Stanley Cup winner."

It's a joke.

Mostly.

And yet when she thinks about it, she can't imagine Shane with someone who isn't the best.

When she really thinks about it, she can't imagine Shane with anyone who's not Ilya Rozanov anymore.

"I should call him. Tell him things are moving forward."

"I'll let you do that."

When they end the call, Yuna is smiling.

Ilya is coming home.

Chapter 13: Bonus 3: Party Boy

They see Ilya when Boston plays in Montréal. Watching Shane and Ilya play against each other has always been exciting, but it's much more of a pleasure now. Yuna can see the joy in them both. They make the game fun for each other, and the audience reacts to that energy.

Yuna and David are both wearing Hollander jerseys as they sit in Shane's family seats. They couldn't possibly dress in anything else, and they couldn't possibly do anything other than cheer for Montréal, but she knows she appreciates Ilya Rozanov's hockey in a completely new light. Perhaps she can't cheer his two goals, but she can praise the beauty of them after the game.

Before Ilya has become a part of their small family unit, Yuna and David would take Shane out for dinner on the nights when they drove down to Montréal for a game. Now they find themselves sitting at his dinner table and the food is delivered. Because there is the rival team's captain helping to transfer the food from plastic containers to plates, and folding himself into Shane's personal space whenever he can.

Shane's in good mood. Possibly because Montréal has won 4-2. That his boyfriend keeps brushing against him at every opportunity, though, might have something to do with it, too.

It's not like the boys are handsy with the parents present. If anything, they are extremely appropriate, but the concept of personal space has transformed. Shane's personal bubble now has space enough for Ilya.

Ilya is rummaging through a kitchen drawer when his phone buzzes and he snorts at a text he's just received. Shane gives him a curious look.

"Is Marley. He wants to go clubbing to heal his disappointment from the game."

"Do you want to go?"

Shane sounds like he's trying hard to sound casual, even though he is asking his boyfriend whether he wants to leave.

"I tell him to entertain himself," Ilya rolls his eyes fondly. Holding the knife he's been looking for, he returns to the table and takes a seat opposite David. "I have plans. Why would I want to go clubbing?"

"Montreal has good clubs," Shane says defensively.

Ilya chuckles. "And how would you know that?"

They eat for a little while, making small talk mostly about the meal.

Then David asks Ilya: “Do you ever miss it?”

It takes a moment for the question to make sense. The Boston captain looks at him like he’s nineteen and a reporter has just asked him an extremely contrived question in English he barely speaks.

“Clubbing?” he asks after a few seconds and when David nods, he shrugs. “Is not like I never go. I just—” He makes an awkward gesture with a helpless glance towards Shane, who decides to be unhelpful.

Yuna rescues him: “Don’t take anyone home?”

“That.”

Shane says: “Or don’t make out with anyone at the club.” He seems to startle even himself with that remark, instantly refocusing on his plate instead.

“*Gospodin*, Hollander, you were there with Rose Landry!” Ilya cries out in mock outrage, which easily dissolves the tension, even though it leaves half the table with some questions they know won’t be answered. “Right in front of my vodka.”

It’s not until they are driving away from Shane’s apartment and giving the boys their privacy that Yuna notices David has gone quiet.

“You’re worried,” she observes, putting her palm on his knee, because he likes to drive with both of his hands firmly on the steering wheel.

Her husband sighs. “You know I like Ilya,” he says slowly.

And she does know that. David and Ilya get on very well. The morning after Christmas, Yuna has found them kneeling by the coffee table in the living room, intensely working on the puzzle Ilya gifted David, fully engaged in a conversation about some article they’ve both read. She knows Ilya texts David far more often than he ever texts her.

But now David says, with a slight crease between his brows: “And it’s obvious they love each other very much. But he *is* a party boy.”

The observation is not untrue. Yuna has done enough research into Ilya Rozanov, both before and after she got to know him as her son’s partner, to have seen all sorts of shenanigans. His Stanley Cup celebration was drunken and wild, the kind some people would describe as “legendary”. And he’s been seen with a new girl every other week, models and influencers and beautiful hockey fans hanging off his arms at parties.

Even though when it came to official events, he’s always attended alone.

For some reason, it’s that last bit of information that tells Yuna to not be worried.

“We’re talking about the same Ilya who sent you five different chicken steak recipes the last time the Metros played in Boston,” she reminds David. “To consult which one would be least offensive to Shane’s diet and sensibilities.”

“I know,” David sighs. “I know he’s a good boy. It’s just—”

Yuna can understand the sentiment. It has been a whiplash to go from their knowledge of Ilya Rozanov through his public persona to getting familiar with him as Shane’s committed and very caring boyfriend.

Perhaps she’d be more concerned if Shane was trying to sell to her the idea of a reformed bad boy.

That wasn’t the case.

Everything that Shane said and everything Ilya did pointed to two things: One, Ilya was never just the cocky and rough arrogant star player as his public branding would suggest at a cursory glance. And two, he hasn’t suddenly changed. There have been a lot fewer sightings of him out in the wild over the last year, sure, and none with flings. But the rest of Ilya Rozanov’s image remains the same. He is still cocky, still a smartass in his interviews, he still chirps on ice and fights like he enjoys it as much as scoring. He still ragebait Shane, on ice and off, with obvious pleasure.

He still attends official events without a date.

He’s the same Ilya Rozanov he’s always been, Yuna just has a clearer picture of him now.

So she’s not worried he might get bored of it.

Because ‘it’ is just being himself. Loving Shane is a part of it.

“Has it occurred to you that the reason he’s never settled was because his person wasn’t an option?” she suggests, smiling to herself. “Or ready to be one?”

“Shane?”

She squeezes David’s knee. “Summer before their rookie season, remember?”

Chapter 14: Bonus 4: Ms. Real Estate

Chapter Notes

I realized about an hour after posting the previous chapter that I referenced the "summer before rookie season" conversation, but it's never actually taken place on page in this fic's version of events. Please just assume it has happened at some point during the summer!

Shane's Lily

Yuna!

You sent me so many links they went to spam

I'm sorry! Maybe I went a little overboard.

No!

I am not complaining

I just don't respond because they are in spam

But Yuna! You sent me 20

It's just a few properties for your consideration.

Is 20!

To be fair, three are empty lots. Which might be a little ambitious.

I'm moving in 3 months at earliest

Is ambitious

I don't think even Shane's cottage builders could work so fast!

Her phone rings.

"I sound rude when I text," Ilya says in his most polite voice, the one he sometimes adopts at

the beginning of Yuna and David's visits, before he remembers he's with family.

"It's okay," Yuna assures him, happy to hear him on the phone. They don't talk that often. His schedule is busy and he has no reason to put the mother of his boyfriend near the top of his priorities. "I've overdone it a little."

"No, I'm very grateful," he says. She hears the faint sound of television behind him, which then goes quiet as he must have turned it off to focus on the conversation. "And it's fun to look at. But it may be too early?" He sighs. "I won't be a free agent to sign with Ottawa until July. I can't— It would not look good if I was seen looking at houses before that."

There's been a lot of discussion regarding what would cause the least problematic rumors when it comes to Ilya's transfer plan. How much to show the public about the truth: that he is moving to Ottawa rather than leaving Boston, a subtle but significant difference. It is going to be a top headline of the free agent season either way.

"Maybe I got a little too excited."

"I'm excited, too," he admits. "I just wish I could go look at all of them. But maybe... Many of them are apartments."

"I was looking for places with good access to the arena," Yuna admits.

"Maybe an apartment near the rink would be nice. For late games," he admits. "But maybe I'd like a house better. Not an empty lot," he laughs. "I'm not building. At least not now. But I think I'd like a house."

"A house is nice," Yuna agrees, considering. "It's more private. Issues with neighbors are a lot less likely. There's more space to invite your teammates, if you'd like."

"Yes. Yes, I'd like space. And maybe—" He hesitates before admitting: "A nice yard. I'd like to go outside, maybe with a fence. And I need a big garage and a private driveway," he continues. "When Shane visit. When you and David visit. So that we don't have to be all careful."

Yuna nods to herself. She grabs a notepad and start jotting down the requirements Ilya's listing. It will narrow down her searches significantly and she's not certain Ilya can find his dream house before the start of his first season as an Ottawa Centaur, but she's looking forward to the challenge.

"And I'd like a home gym or somewhere I can convert into one," he muses. "And maybe—" He stops suddenly and laughs. "I ask for a lot! I have so many requests!"

Yuna echoes his laughter. "No, Ilya, it's good to know what you want. It's much easier to shop for something when you have a solid idea as to what it should be."

"I asked Shane what he thinks but he tells me to buy a house I'll like," Ilya huffs. "But— No, forget it. Is silly."

“You can tell me.”

He exhales. “I know we won’t be living together. Not for a long time. But I’d still like...”

“His input?”

“Yes. I want him to spend a lot of time with me. I want him to like it. He likes my place in Boston, but I don’t know. Is different.”

“If it helps, I’m sure Shane’ll appreciate a home gym and a private driveway.”

Ilya chuckles. “I want a lot of space,” he says once more. “But not like a party house. Maybe not a forever home, I don’t think, but... not a single man’s home?”

“A house where your life can start to grow.”

“Yes,” he exhales. “Yes, I like that.”

Chapter 15: Bonus 5: Family Dinner

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all your amazing, kind comments. They make my days so much brighter!
And make writing this that much more fun!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Boston falls out of the play-offs and when Yuna and David visit Montréal, Ilya is there. They eat the dinner he made, because he now has the time, and Yuna says: “You’ve played some of the best hockey of your career in those last few games.”

She’s already praised Shane on the way from the arena. His team is winning their current series 3-1.

Ilya’s smile is a little tight. “Was okay,” he says and pushes the bowl of salad towards her.

“No, I mean it,” Yuna says, but she’s filling her plate, because she has to admit Ilya’s cooking is quite good for a young man. Especially one trying to fit into the parameters of Shane’s diet. “You were really good. It was the defense that was the whole issue. If they just—”

“Yuna,” Ilya interrupts her both more quietly and more firmly than she’s used to from him. “Is okay. It doesn’t matter. I’m not going to be fixing Boston’s defense.”

She inhales and then deflates.

For a second she’s completely forgotten. Ilya Rozanov has become synonymous with the Boston Raiders and she can’t quite imagine the team without him. It’s difficult to think about him in a jersey that’s not black and gold. But he hasn’t re-signed with the team yet and is not planning to if Ottawa will him instead.

“The food is really good,” David says and Ilya brightens up. “Where did you learn to cook this well?”

“From watching,” Ilya replies and Yuna thinks he means his mother, maybe, but he continues: “When I came to America, English was hard, yes? I could speak, but it was difficult to understand what people were saying. Back home, my teachers’ accents were not so good and all the recordings we used were British English. And I came to Boston and no one sounded like that.” He shrugs. “Someone on the team suggested watching tv would help, but watching movies was still too hard to follow.”

“Was this when you discovered reality shows?” Shane chirps. Some of the food on his plate has been made specially for him.

“No, I couldn’t understand what the people were shouting at each other,” Ilya says. “I watched a lot of sports, but then I had a cooking channel and that’s all of the same phrases on repeat, too, right? You dice this, stir that, let that other thing simmer. And I’ve always wanted to know how to cook for myself, so I just started doing that. Is fun. I don’t often cook for other people so I hope it’s okay.”

“It’s really very good,” Yuna says honestly. While it’s not restaurant quality, it’s definitely nice to eat a homecooked meal and clearly, he’s put a lot of effort into it. She’s particularly impressed that it’s a completely different dish than he made at the cottage, meaning he has more than one trick up his sleeve.

“I told Ilya we could just order in,” Shane says, “but he insisted.”

“What was I gonna do while you were at the game?” Ilya says as if it isn’t a big deal that he was alone in Shane’s apartment while they were at the arena. Sure, he had a game to watch, but there was a lot of time around it and Yuna can’t blame him for needing to fill it with something. Not for the first time, she’s hit with a wave of sorrow for her boys, who can’t support each other publicly. But Ilya keeps talking: “At least I know now what to give you for at least three holidays. You need pretty much every kitchen tool.”

“Most of my meals come pre-packaged,” Shane protests. “What do I need all of the utensils for?”

“Apparently,” David smiles, “for when your boyfriend comes over to make you a nice dinner.”

“We’ll cook together,” Ilya says, softly, looking at Shane. “When I live closer and we have more time.”

It’s later, when Shane’s clearing the table and Yuna and David are slowly getting ready to leave, that Yuna turns to Ilya. “I’m really sorry about playoffs.”

She thinks that normally, he would tease her about Boston and playoffs. Now he only shakes his head.

“Is okay, really,” he sighs. “It would have been nice to win one more Cup with this team. But maybe is better. It maybe would be harder to leave then. Or to explain why I’m leaving.”

“What are your plans now?”

What she truly wants to ask is whether he is truly okay. She wants to offer for him to stay with them while Shane plays his next away game. She wants to—

Ilya smiles. “I’ll go back to Boston for the next few weeks, boo Montréal as they win their next Cup because they’re lucky enough to have Shane. Wait for the free agent season.” He

grins suddenly, and this time it reaches his eyes. “I made an appointment for a tattoo.”

“Oh?” Yuna lifts her eyebrows. She’s not sure whether she’s supposed to approve.

“You know what they say about getting your boyfriend’s name tattooed, right?” David jokes.

Ilya snorts. “I don’t know but I think Shane would actually murder me.”

“Yes,” Shane agrees, joining them, then asks: “What for?”

His boyfriend slings an arm around him and pulls him close. “I’m thinking about getting your name inked. In a little heart. Maybe on my thigh?”

Although Ilya is clearly joking, Shane looks at him with true horror.

“Don’t—” he starts before Ilya covers his lips with a finger.

“Am not stupid, Hollander. I’ll get something subtle.”

On one hand, Yuna is not entirely sure Ilya knows how to be subtle at all. On the other, this is a boy who kept a relationship secret for more than half a decade so perhaps she ought to give him more credit. She hates to admit that she’s truly curious.

Shane's Lily

[photo of Ilya's arm with a freshly done tattoo depicting a loon]

I thought you hated those.

I do 🐱

Chapter End Notes

I want to keep writing this, because I'm enjoying it very much. However, I think at this point, spoilers for The Long Game might start cropping up (although I might not stick to the book plotline 100%). I don't want to add a spoiler tag on this fic, given that up to this chapter, it's been all pre-TLG. So I think maybe I should make it a series, with the sequel tagged for TLG. If I do that, I'll post an update to this one for those of you that are subscribed so you know where to find the continuation!

Chapter 16: Sequel Alert!

Hi! If you've come this far, thank you for your support! ❤️ There's now a sequel and it can be found here: [Favorite Son](#), or by clicking the "next work" button below!

The sequel will follow life after Heated Rivalry from Yuna's POV.

Works inspired by this one

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