

Russians quirks

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77712871) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77712871>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander , Hayden Pike , Jackie Pike
Additional Tags:	Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , Shane Hollander Loves Ilya Rozanov , Soft Ilya Rozanov , Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers) , Pre-Book 6: The Long Game (Game Changers) , Established Relationship , Fluff , Domestic Fluff , Hollanders almost adopted Ilya , Family Fluff
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-15 Words: 2,645 Chapters: 1/1

Russians quirks

by [Myyyr_miu](#)

Summary

Yes, the world is beautiful because it's so different... but what the hell is wrong with Russians?

After Shane and Ilya move in together, Hollander suddenly starts noticing strange Russian habits, rituals, and little bits of madness that his Canadian brain needs some time to process. And somehow, all of it makes him feel equally confused and... completely in love with the chaos that so effortlessly comes with his boyfriend.

// Ilya is already playing for Ottawa

Notes

So, guys... I really wish I could be this productive with my actual work. Let's make Ilya even more Russian, and Shane even more... confused. I'm proudly presenting to you this... whatever it is.

I also decided to give away some of our secrets. Even though I firmly believe in Hollanov supremacy and nothing else, I do make spitting sounds over my shoulder too. Sour cream is essential, and back at my parents' place in Russia we always have at least two tubs in the fridge.

All the superstitions mentioned here are real, even if they sound absolutely unhinged. I can totally explain where they come from and why we do them, if you're interested.

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

Shane didn't actually realize just how Russian Ilya was until they started living together.

If, of course, a life split between two cities could even be called living together. Ilya had shocked the public by “randomly” transferring to the long-forgotten Ottawa team, sparking a full-blown meltdown on Twitter. Shane would never admit this to anyone, but sometimes he scrolled through those threads, laughing into his pillow at the sheer insanity of the theories. One post alone had racked up over five thousand likes, confidently claiming that Rozanov had been exiled from America after spreading an alarming number of venereal diseases.

Still, they almost always managed to spend at least a couple of days together. Their toothbrushes stood side by side in the bathroom, and the bedroom closet was neatly divided in two: one half a creative—or not so creative—mess, the other arranged almost obsessively by fabric quality and color.

And now all of his boyfriend's “quirks” were impossible to ignore.

Okay, Shane had grown up in a Canadian-Japanese family, so he'd been exposed to different traditions from a young age. But Russians... sometimes it felt like these people had arrived from another planet in a rocket fueled entirely by vodka.

About two weeks into living at the cottage—which had quietly become their main home—Shane began to notice strange eating habits he'd never really thought about before. Every time he remembered that this place marked the beginning of a new chapter in their lives, something warm settled beneath his ribs. And he knew Ilya felt it too, considering how often he'd half-jokingly mentioned wanting a tattoo that would let him carry “his home” with him everywhere.

After everything that happened that summer, the impeccably disciplined Hollander had slowly started to relax, no longer following his famous diet quite so strictly. It still felt strange to stumble across videos online titled “Eating Like a Hockey Star for a Day,” knowing full well his vegetables hadn't sacrificed themselves for a smoothie in weeks. Not that he'd stopped taking care of himself entirely—but the guilt of eating something before bed, especially since Ilya was always snacking in front of the TV late at night, or ordering something decidedly unhealthy when out with friends barely registered anymore.

And of course, the main culprit behind all of this *drumroll please* was ILYA ROZANOV.

That man ate like a small football team, mowing down anything in his path. This was no secret. Online jokes ranged from “Ilya's future spouse better be a millionaire to keep him fed” to “For my next birthday, I'm wishing for Rozanov's metabolism, because what the hell.”

Shane agreed wholeheartedly. His boyfriend had a serious sweet tooth and had recently developed a dangerous addiction to Nanaimo bars, demolishing five or six in one sitting. Just for reference—one bar was around three hundred calories.

Naturally, Shane couldn't resist drifting outside the boundaries of his microbiotic diet. And the most insulting part? It didn't affect his game at all. Years of meticulously calculating macros with a nutritionist felt like a waste. If anything, he felt healthier now—fully immersed in shared joy whenever they gathered with friends and family. Food, after all, was an essential part of social life. And while he still aimed for more protein and less fat to maintain muscle mass, ordering takeout after a brutal workday no longer felt like a moral failure.

Which is exactly what they did a couple of weeks ago, sometime around one in the morning, ordering an obscene amount of food from a Chinese place. Ilya didn't exactly have a refined palate—his food critiques ranged from “edible” to “good” to “very good”—so Shane took full responsibility for choosing the cheat meal. Sweet-and-sour chicken, moo shu pork, noodles, spring rolls, and about twenty fried dumplings.

When Shane stepped away to use the bathroom and returned to the living room where they were stretched out in front of the TV watching season highlights, he froze.

Ilya was dipping dumplings skewered on a fork into a tub of Greek yogurt.

Shane just stood there, mouth open.

“Am I hallucinating,” he asked slowly, walking toward the food, “or are you eating dumplings with yogurt? What the hell?”

“Mmm?” The curly-haired man tore his attention away from the TV. His hair was still damp from the shower, despite Shane asking him a million times not to go to bed with wet hair. Ilya lifted both eyebrows, looking at his lover with a soft smile. Even months into a normal relationship, Shane still felt weak every time Ilya kept that half-smile in private, betraying his legendary Russian resting bitch face.

Shane sat down on the couch, wiping a smear of yogurt off Ilya's face with his finger, earning an even wider grin.

“I asked why the fuck you're eating dumplings with Greek yogurt. Are you trying to get diarrhea?”

“Oh! Lubimiy, that's smetana.” Ilya lifted the container, squinting at the label. Somehow, this explanation didn't help.

“Svetlana?” God, how had this conversation descended into pure nonsense. Had Svetlana taught him this?

Ilya finally found what he was looking for and turned the label toward him proudly.

“Sour cream. Smetana. This is sour cream” he read, in a tone that suggested the matter was now closed.

“Okay,” Shane said carefully. “But why are you eating them with sour cream?”

“What else would I eat them with?” Ilya popped a piece of chicken into his mouth, genuinely confused.

“Vinegar? Soy sauce? The special sauce that came in the bag?”

The Hollanders were already used to the idea that food habits varied wildly across cultures. Yuna and David had figured out very quickly that their son’s partner ate everything with bread, so they made sure to buy a fresh loaf before every visit. Rice was carbs. Bread was carbs. Rice equaled bread. Simple.

But sour cream?

“Vinegar?” Ilya frowned. “That’s weird. Want some?” He held a dumpling up to Shane’s mouth.

“No, thanks, baby.”

And that was when Shane finally understood: Russians ate everything with sour cream. Sweet or savory—it didn’t matter. Pancakes with sour cream. Cottage cheese with sour cream. Even bread with sour cream and sugar when they ran out of sweets. (Bread and sour cream sounded like the most aggressively Slavic combination imaginable.)

The line was officially crossed when sour cream started appearing with soup.

Soup?

It wasn’t bad—after several attempts and much internal resistance, the captain of Montreal admitted it was... fine. Still, every grocery run triggered a brief mental shutdown.

Ilya’s “Russianness” also revealed itself in his speech. Though his language skills had improved exponentially over ten years abroad, some things simply couldn’t be erased. Shane, honestly, loved that. If Ilya ever got too deep into *The New Yorker*—which David had recently started pushing on him because Ilya couldn’t say no to his parents—and lost his accent, Shane would personally kill his father.

He would never admit it to anyone, but he found every grammatical and phonetic mistake unbearably charming—and sometimes downright hot.

But that wasn’t the point.

The point was Ilya’s habit of translating things literally. Calling Russia the Motherland mid-conversation (which had Shane laughing to tears while Ilya puffed in confusion). Or that unforgettable moment when, meeting Shane’s parents, he referred to them as lovers, turning Shane’s ears bright red. As it turned out, in Russian the word carried no sexual implication—it simply meant beloved people.

The most memorable incident happened at Yuna’s birthday dinner, with just close family present. Mid-meal, Ilya suddenly shot to his feet. They’d planned on drinking red wine, but halfway through the evening David—recently fascinated by all things Russian—produced a bottle of high-end vodka. Naturally, only the two of them drank it.

Standing there in a button-down and black jeans, Ilya raised his shot glass.

“Miss Hollander, you are a very kind and smart woman. Thank you for...” He gestured helplessly with his hands. “...for your son. Thank you for accepting him. And me. You are an excellent mother and manager.”

He paused, staring at the ceiling, clearly searching for something. Yuna’s face softened, on the verge of tears. A year ago, she never would’ve believed this—but now Ilya was almost like a son to her.

Finally, he seemed to decide something.

“Anyway—to the health!”

He downed the shot.

The dining room fell silent. Then Shane burst into hysterical laughter.

He’d nearly cried during the first half of the toast—at how open Ilya was, how safe he felt with Shane’s parents—but this?

“What’s wrong?” Ilya tried to pull Shane’s hands away from his face, searching for answers. The rest of the Hollanders were barely containing themselves.

“What did you mean?” Shane asked, muffled.

“When you drink. You say a toast, then drink. I forgot the word you usually say.”

“You mean "cheers" ?”

“Cheers... yes. Why is that funny?”

“Sweetheart,” Yuna said gently, “we were just surprised you toasted "to health" and then immediately drank sixty-proof alcohol.”

“Oh,” Ilya nodded. “That’s how we do it in Russia.”

From that moment on, Shane’s parents adopted "to the health" instead of "cheers".

And maybe you didn’t know this, but Russians are deeply superstitious people. It didn’t really matter whether you genuinely believed that an animal of a certain color could ruin your entire day, or whether you did it purely out of habit—there were endless variations of these “rules.” It sometimes felt like they’d been passed down to Ilya genetically, carefully preserved somewhere deep in his DNA.

Hockey players weren’t exactly in a position to mock rituals. Shane knew at least two guys who wore the exact same underwear for every big game “for luck,” and even thinking about that made his face twist in mild horror. Still, many of Ilya’s ingrained habits continued to genuinely shock him.

He remembered the first time he noticed it with absolute clarity.

They'd just finished an "individual training session" in the bedroom and were sprawled over each other, spent and barely breathing. Ilya's body was dusted with dark moles that looked almost indecently beautiful against his pale skin. Despite Shane's repeated reminders—and even Yuna's—Ilya somehow always "forgot" to use sunscreen, tanning aggressively every summer. Now, in the softer light, it was barely noticeable.

Ilya's eyes were half-closed as he watched Shane through his lashes, absently tracing fingers along Shane's bare lower back.

No matter what happened in the future, moments like this were worth every complication.

Out of nowhere, Ilya started talking about tomorrow's game.

"Tomorrow we're playing Boston," he said casually. "It's going to be a fucking pizdets."

The last word was in Russian, and no translation was necessary. Swearing was Ilya's second—if not first—native language.

"You think they'll play dirty?" Shane asked, though it was mostly rhetorical. Hockey valued loyalty, and a "random" team change like that didn't go unnoticed.

"I think someone's definitely going to the hospital tomorrow."

And that would've been fine—except the second the sentence left his mouth, Ilya turned his head to the left and made the sound of spitting. Three times.

What the fuck?

"What was that?" Shane pushed himself up on his elbows, staring at him like he'd just witnessed a magic trick.

Ilya squinted at him and explained, gently and completely seriously, "So nothing bad happens. You spit three times over your left shoulder, okay?" He even demonstrated the motion, as if that added credibility.

"You're messing with me, right?" Shane managed, eyes bright with both laughter and disbelief.

"Absolutely not. It always works."

Ilya smiled, lazily wrapping an arm around Shane's back and pulling his full weight closer. "Well... almost always. If it doesn't, then you should knock on wood or something."

Shane dissolved into laughter, arms wrapping around his shoulders. He didn't even try to hide how much he adored every single unhinged habit this man had. He loved all of it—from the strange rituals to the way Ilya could be terrifyingly powerful on the ice and ridiculously soft with him.

And if only that had been the one instance.

Ilya always “sat down to the road” before long trips—a ritual involving sitting in silence for around one minute. If you’re looking for logic, you can stop right here. In their house, spilling salt was forbidden (it caused fights), and eating off a knife was absolutely not allowed. Not that Shane had ever even considered doing that—but according to Ilya, that was precisely why he’d been in a foul mood all weekend.

Damn cream cheese.

Shane was sitting in the kitchen, deep in a text conversation with Rose, who was once again complaining about filming another arthouse movie. He nodded to himself, snorting quietly at her outrage over the script. Ilya had left for a hangout with his new teammates about five minutes earlier, leaving a trail of Bleu de Chanel lingering in the living room.

And then—

The sound of tires crunching outside.

Shane frowned, listening. He leaned forward, trying to peer into the darkness beyond the window. His eyebrows pulled together in pure confusion.

He wasn’t expecting anyone.

He barely had time to react before the door quietly opened and an irritated Ilya stepped inside, scanning the apartment.

Shane’s eyes immediately landed on the plastic card lying on the table.

Driver’s license.

He bit back a laugh as Ilya—mildly annoyed but otherwise perfectly calm—headed toward the hallway.

“Forgot your license?” Shane asked, fighting not to laugh directly in his boyfriend’s face.

Ilya nodded lazily, slipped off his jacket, and moved into the entryway. And then it happened—something Shane had almost expected, yet still couldn’t quite believe.

Ilya stopped in front of the mirror. Studied his reflection for a second, as if making sure he looked serious enough.

And stuck his tongue out at himself.

“...What are you doing right now?” Shane choked, nearly dropping his phone.

“It’s a rule, solnishko,” Ilya said calmly, like he was explaining basic arithmetic. “If you leave and forget something, when you come back you have to show your tongue to the mirror. So nothing bad happens.”

Shane stared at him, doing his best not to look too stunned. How many more surprises did this man have?

“Okay?” he said weakly through laughter. “I’ll try very hard not to tell anyone that the big, scary Ilya Rozanov likes making faces at mirrors.”

Ilya raised an eyebrow, dead serious.

“And then what?” Shane asked, attempting to regain composure.

As if it were the most normal thing in the world, Ilya suddenly broke into a smile and sprinted across the kitchen toward him.

“To make extra sure nothing bad happens,” he said, leaning in, “you also have to kiss your boyfriend before you leave. Okay?”

Shane’s smile refused to fade. It was absurdly adorable.

Their lips met briefly, just long enough for the cold from outside to disappear from Shane’s skin.

Ilya turned to leave again—only to be stopped by an outraged shout.

“Rozanov, why the hell didn’t you take off your shoes?!”

Yes. Russians definitely had... quirks.

At least his Russian did.

That was the conclusion Shane Hollander, captain of the Montreal Voyageurs, came to while sitting at breakfast with Hayden and Jackie.

“I swear, I’m just waiting for the day my luck runs out and my teeth go flying across the ice,” Pike complained, shoving a salmon-and-capers bagel deeper into his mouth. “I went to the dentist last week, and fixing one stupid cavity cost a small fortune.”

“I’m pretty sure I’ll lose a couple soon too,” Shane said with a grin, turning slightly and making spitting sounds over his shoulder.

“What the fuck, dude?”

Jackie slapped her hands over her mouth, desperately trying not to give herself away.

She already knew exactly what the fuck.

And more importantly—who that fuck was.

End Notes

First of all, I'm sorry for putting you all into a sugary, fluffy coma — the fluff master is here, and yes, that's me.

Secondly, I'd love to hear your headcanons about Ilya as a Russian guy. Maybe you have some ideas or scenarios of your own — I would genuinely love to read them.

And of course, Jackie already knows about them (who read my last work, you know) by this point, which is exactly why she reacted the way she did. 💖

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