

A Mother Always Knows

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A Mother Always Knows

by [stardustchenle](#)

Summary

Yuna Hollander rounded the corner and finally came in view of the door to Shane's hospital room. Her hand was almost on the handle when she noticed someone was already in the room, and she stopped in her tracks.

At first she thought it might be one of Shane's teammates checking in on him, but the blonde curls at the back of the man's head told her he wasn't anyone she would have recognised from the Metros. Thinking about it, it made no sense, but he almost looked like—

A clipped voice, slightly muffled by the door but with an unmistakable Russian accent confirmed her bewildered assumption. "Could have been worse," she heard Ilya Rozanov say.

When Ilya goes to visit Shane in the hospital in episode 5, Shane's mother sees him. They talk.

Notes

edit: omg, the reception this fic has gotten in less than 8 hours has completely blown me away, it was to the point i thought there was a glitch because i had already received the kudos, comments and bookmarks i usually would get in total on a fic in the first 30 minutes before ao3 even was able to register any hits! and now it has 750 kudos and nearly 4000 hits? that's more than any fic of mine has ever gotten even after 8 years of it being up.

thank you so much everyone, i love this fandom and how much love it gives to fic writers <3

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

Yuna Hollander checked her phone one-handed as she speed-walked down the hospital corridor to go visit her son. There were no pressing e-mails that she couldn't answer in a couple of hours, so she locked the screen, slipped the phone into her bag, and adjusted the strap of it over her shoulder.

She rounded the corner and finally came in view of the door to Shane's room, and strided up to it. Her hand was almost on the handle when she noticed someone was already in the room, and she stopped in her tracks.

At first she thought it might be one of Shane's teammates checking in on him, but the blonde curls at the back of the man's head told her he wasn't anyone she would have recognised from the Metros. Thinking about it, it made no sense, but he almost looked like—

A clipped voice, slightly muffled by the door but with an unmistakable Russian accent confirmed her bewildered assumption. "Could have been worse," she heard Ilya Rozanov say.

'Could have been worse'?! Oh, the nerve on that guy. Was he implying that the hit hadn't been that bad? That her son was making a big deal out of nothing?

Had he come to visit Shane just to *chirp him*?

She was going to open the door, march in the room and tell him to shove it—

Except. Yuna had a direct line of view to Shane laying in his own hospital bed from above Rozanov's shoulder, and her son hadn't stopped smiling when the Russian man had said it. Instead, Shane simply nodded and seemed to echo the same sentence back, from the way his lips moved.

Mmh. Maybe it hadn't been a gloat then, just an observation.

It was a true enough statement, it *could* have been worse. Yuna knew how bad hockey injuries could get and they had been lucky with just a minor concussion and a fractured collarbone, despite how blood-curdling terrifying it had been to see Shane's body crumpled and unresponsive on the ice.

She wrestled down her irritation for the time being, and didn't make a move to enter the room. She still wanted to know why Rozanov was there, and she felt that quietly observing would have probably been the best way to get an honest answer.

"Marlow feels terrible. He didn't mean to hurt you," Rozanov said next.

Ah, Yuna thought, *that was it then*. He was just doing his captain duties and going to check in on his biggest rival after an injury. She wouldn't have expected it from Rozanov, but it was a sportsmanship-like gesture. To his credit, she hated to admit, for how much he liked to antagonise everyone and act cocky and full of himself on the ice and in interviews, there had never been signs that he was a bad captain. Quite the opposite, in fact. The Raiders trusted him, loved him even, she had always been able to tell from how the team played and interacted during matches.

Still, Rozanov could have at least *tried* to come across a little more genuine. The way he spoke to Shane sounded like he was the one in pain.

Yuna couldn't hear Shane's response, but she saw his lips move as he was slumped back against the pillows, leaning slightly towards the side of his good collarbone. He finished his reply with a dopey, uncharacteristic smile on his face, and Yuna's heart ached a little. Shane must have been on a really heavy dose of pain medication to smile like that in front of Ilya Rozanov, of all people.

"Right," Rozanov presumably replied, short and stiff.

Then Shane confirmed Yuna's suspicions of being seriously doped up, because he widened his smile even more and lifted his good arm towards Rozanov, looking eager and needy for contact in a way Yuna hadn't seen from him since Shane had been a toddler asking to be picked up.

Was her son even *more* out of it because of the drugs than she had initially assumed? Oh, her poor baby. He wasn't even realising who was in front of him, clearly.

Her eyes nearly bugged out of her head and she stopped herself once again from entering the room when Rozanov, instead of just staring at Shane in disbelief or doing something extremely rude like laughing at him, crossed the room at lightning speed. He took Shane's outstretched hand and held it in both of his own, like it was a natural thing and not the weirdest sight Yuna had ever witnessed in her life.

Well. She supposed it was unexpectedly nice of him, to humour a man who was not fully holding onto his brain capabilities for the time being.

Shane, for his part, closed his eyes like everything was finally right in the world and smiled again, serene and fond. It was strange, to be unfamiliar with the expression she could see on her own son's face at the moment. It looked like pure, unburdened bliss.

Now that Rozanov was standing to the left of Shane's bed instead of giving his back to the door, Yuna could see the man's side profile. He looked serious and as tense as she would have expected him to be while holding hands with Shane, but alongside it... In the furrow of his brows, in the tight set of his lips, in his eyes flitting all over Shane's face—Rozanov looked *scared*. It was a concoction of fear, pain, and something else underneath it all that Yuna couldn't quite grasp.

She felt a bit like she was in one of those frustrating dreams where nothing really made sense and the threads of recognition kept slipping through her fingers like water. What did that *mean*?

Rozanov said something else, glancing down at their joined hands and readjusting his grip. Shane replied while opening his eyes to look up at him again, and Rozanov shook his head minutely as he seemingly contradicted him. Then, he moved one of his hands towards Shane's cheek with a delicacy and carefulness he never carried himself with on the ice, and Yuna's brain stumbled.

Rozanov first traced his thumb under Shane's left eye, where Yuna knew her son's freckles currently stood out starker than usual between his injury-induced pallor and the bruises his helmet had left over his nose and under his eyebags after the impact, then he caressed down Shane's cheek with the back of his fingers, light and gingerly.

Yuna's mouth had fallen open sometime during the act and she couldn't bring herself to close it even once she realised.

Finally, the missing piece of the puzzle slotted into place inside her mind.

She realised that the one emotion in Rozanov's expression that she hadn't been able to read before was a profound, unshaken *fondness*. Now that she had recognised it, she couldn't stop seeing it in his eyes.

Yuna remembered how Rozanov had frozen on the ice after Shane had fallen down, skating aimlessly as close by as the referee let him be even after multiple warnings, not engaging in the brawl that had been involving the rest of both their teams. The camera had focused on Rozanov's face again and again and Yuna had been so angry, just wanting to see if her son was okay and not giving a shit about the rivalry when Shane was *hurt*. She had been worried sick and furious at Marlow at once, ice filling her veins. Now, she wondered if Rozanov's expression on camera had been carrying the same emotions as she had felt at the moment.

Ilya Rozanov, cocky and insufferable hockey prodigy and career-long rival to her son, *loved* Shane Hollander.

Yuna felt a little dizzy with the knowledge, like the room had tilted and she couldn't find her footing anymore.

Did Shane love him back?

Yes, Yuna decided, watching through the tiny window of the hospital room door. The two of them were continuing their conversation, Shane had opened his eyes again and appeared to be doing most of the talking. His whole face was giddy, hopeful while he looked up at Rozanov in a way that Yuna didn't believe could have been brought on solely by the pain medication. Yes, her son clearly cared deeply for Ilya Rozanov.

Yuna's heart lurched. Oh, her poor baby. She and David had suspected before that Shane might have been gay, but had never even considered the option that he might have been friends with Rozanov, let alone *this*. She had always believed she knew her son so well, and yet she hadn't had a clue about any of this.

Had she been too intense, too incensed in her dislike for Rozanov compared to her son that she had made Shane feel like he couldn't tell her something as wonderful as finally having found someone he loved? Shane had always been extremely competitive too, but maybe for him the rivalry had only ever mattered when they were on the ice.

The rivalry that also explained why Rozanov's posture was so stiff, shoulders drawn and forehead furrowed even when his eyes were so full of unbridled affection and pain that it was staggering, clear as day even just glimpsing it from the side and that far away. He was

terrified of them being found out, probably also because of Shane's current loopy state and probable lack of a brain-to-mouth filter.

And yet, Rozanov had shown up to the hospital in person, like he needed to see Shane for himself to believe he really was fine. Yuna felt a sudden surge of empathy for Ilya Rozanov, in a way that would have seemed unfathomable to her just ten minutes prior.

A figure in peacock green approached from Yuna's right peripheral vision, and she turned her head away for the first time since she had seen the man standing in Shane's room. It was a nurse in short-sleeved scrubs with tan skin and south-east asian features, her dark brown hair tied in a bun behind her head.

"Oh, hello Mrs. Hollander," the nurse greeted casually once they made eye contact, already seemingly reaching for the door handle. She must have been a hockey fan, to recognise her as Shane's mother and know who she was even in Boston. Or maybe she had been there the night before, when Yuna and David had finally come rushing from their last-minute flight and had been allowed to go see Shane even outside of visiting hours. Yuna had been too preoccupied with her son to really register the faces of the medical staff around them.

Yuna immediately shifted her position so that her back was to the door and her body would block the view of the inside of the room through the window. "Sorry, could you come back in a few minutes? He's having an important conversation and I don't want to interrupt him. Thank you." She challenged her best mix of politeness and manager-like conviction, and luckily the nurse listened to her.

The nurse blinked for a moment, slightly taken aback, but then smiled placatingly and nodded. "Of course. I'll be back shortly, though, Mr. Hollander needs to take his medicine."

"Of course. Thank you."

As soon as the nurse started walking away down the corridor, Yuna whirled back towards the door window again, but this time positioned herself slightly to the side so that she couldn't be spotted as easily from the inside. She saw Rozanov raise Shane's hand he was holding towards his mouth, give a quick glance to the door that she made sure to retreat further back for, and then lay a small kiss to the back of Shane's knuckles.

Afterwards he made to leave, slow and still halfway turned to look back over his shoulder at the bed, but it seemed that Shane wouldn't let go of his hand, because Rozanov took a stumbling step back and found himself even closer to the bedside than before. Trust Shane to still have enough strength for that even while drugged up and with a fractured collarbone.

Rozanov said something and tried to pry Shane's hand from his, but Shane just shook his head stubbornly before replying, and then puckered and extended out his lips in a comically exaggerated request for a kiss. Yuna's heart melted and gave a twinge of pain at once.

Rozanov looked panicked at that, glancing towards the door once more and renewing his efforts to detach their hands while still seeming so, so careful of Shane's condition and to not jostle him. When it became clear that was a futile attempt, Rozanov kissed two of his fingers and then pressed them against Shane's lips.

He talked again and that seemed to finally get through to Shane, as her son took his hand away and nodded, not looking pleased in the slightest. His fierce pout and furrow of his brows made Shane resemble the kid Yuna still remembered from when he was six years old, her little angry kitten. Rozanov's fond smile looked like it physically pained him to leave.

Yuna stepped to the side before Rozanov started walking towards the door and shook her shoulders. Okay. She would come up with a plan, figure out ways she could help the two of them keep this a secret for longer, organise ways they could meet more often away from the public eye, how to handle it if it ever got out before they wanted it to... She had failed in making Shane feel safe enough to tell her before, but she could help now that she knew.

She waited, shoulders rolled back and chin high, until Rozanov stepped out of the room and closed the door behind himself.

"Mr. Rozanov."

The man whirled towards her and then froze, eyes wide and terrified as a deer in headlights.

Unbidden, Yuna suddenly got hit with a sense of déjà vu, a memory of standing face to face with Rozanov like this so many years prior, divided by the open doors of a hotel elevator. She didn't even remember when it had been exactly, or where.

"I was... Doing my captain job," he said, steeling his face and closing off his expression again.

"Would you mind talking with me for a moment, Mr. Rozanov?"

"I was leaving—"

"Come talk with me," Yuna repeated, in her stern mom voice. It tended to shut down any protests, but it was slightly more welcoming than her manager voice.

Rozanov nodded, looking both like a kid caught misbehaving and like he was about to puke. God, Shane and he were both so *young* still.

Yuna led him to a small, enclosed room she and David had been shown the evening before, set up for the families of patients to have more privacy than sitting in the large waiting rooms or in the corridors. She sat down in a squared dark blue armchair and gestured for Rozanov to occupy the one perpendicular to hers, on her right.

Or, Ilya? She should probably start to refer to him with his first name, rather than Rozanov. Not out loud yet, probably, but in her mind at least.

Yuna looked at Ilya, who was carrying himself like he would have rather been anywhere else. His right leg bounced a few times at lightning speed, before he seemed to consciously stop himself and instead stayed as still and rigid as he could.

Yuna tried to muster the most gentle tone she could. "You care about Shane."

“Team told me to check on him—” Ilya tried to explain, but immediately shut up when Yuna softly shook her head. His accent was thicker than Yuna remembered it being in interviews. Maybe it was the nerves.

“I saw it, I saw *you*,” Yuna told him, still treading carefully as if she were approaching a spooked animal. She had thought it impossible, but Ilya tensed up even more, his gaze pouring with fear.

Of course he was scared. Their careers were at stake, and she knew some of what Russia’s views on homosexuality were. She wanted to offer him a comforting touch, but it probably would not have been well received. Rozanov didn’t know her.

She continued softly, “You care about each other. More than rivals. More than just friends too, I think. Am I right?”

Ilya leaned stiffly forward with his upper body, his light blue eyes wide and worried and almost pleading above pronounced dark circles. “Please. Mrs. Hollander. Do not tell Shane that you know. Not now. He will have panic attack, it is bad for his head. He needs to be better before, it is not his fault.”

That was the moment where Ilya Rozanov finally, irrevocably endeared himself to Yuna Hollander. His first worry and thought was to *Shane* instead of to himself, despite how afraid he clearly was as well. A wave of fierce protectiveness rose inside of Yuna’s chest, roaring inside her ribcage.

“Oh no no, dear, don’t worry. It’s no one’s fault, no one. But you are right, we will wait until the meds are not affecting him so much.” She tilted her head slightly to one side. “And you can call me Yuna.”

Ilya nodded somberly, still looking like he had been run over by a truck. “You call me Ilya, then.”

“Ilya,” Yuna repeated gently. She swept her gaze over his body and looked at him with sympathy. “You really love each other,” she whispered.

At that, Ilya slumped forward like a puppet with its strings cut, resting his elbows heavily on his knees and hanging his head low. “I do. I love him,” he answered, voice thick with unshed tears. “He— I do not know if he loves me too. Maybe. He should not. We can’t.”

He loves you too. I saw it, Yuna wanted to say, but it might have just sounded like empty words to Rozanov if he hadn’t realised it himself. Maybe he knew, but did not want to acknowledge it. ‘*We can’t*’, he’d said.

“Since when?” she carefully asked instead.

“For me? Since first time he smiled at me, probably. Summer before rookie season. But if you want...” He gave a jerky shake of his head, as if looking for the right word, “...timeline of us, you have to wait. Shane deserves to tell you how he wants.”

Yuna felt stunned, falling back against the back of her seat. *The summer before rookie season.* Ilya Rozanov had loved her son for almost a decade, while having to keep everything hidden as the world constantly pitted them against each other in everything.

She leaned forward again, extended a hand and rested it over one of Ilya's clothed forearms. The kind of mother's comfort she always offered Shane, solid and caring but unobtrusive, and that now she wanted to extend to this scared, brave boy who was in love with her son. *We will figure it out.* She hoped the message came across to Ilya as well.

"Does anyone else know?"

Ilya stared down for a few moments at her hand on his arm, in silence, then shook his head minutely. "No."

No one? But then did that mean...

"How did you know which hospital he was at?"

"I read it in article," Ilya replied quietly, and his voice cracked with emotion in the middle of the sentence.

Yuna's heart lurched painfully to the bottom of her stomach and back up again. "*Oh. Oh, dear.*"

She slid her hand further down to hold onto Ilya's properly, and it was confirmed to be a good decision when, after a moment of hesitation, he gripped her fingers back. This poor, poor boy. Yuna and David had been frantic and worried sick after seeing Shane go down on the ice on their tv, and hadn't calmed down during the whole journey from Ottawa to Boston until they had been able to see that their son was conscious and talking to them with their own eyes. But they had had Hayden on the phone with them multiple times during that period of limbo, relaying developments and doctors' communications and test results until they had been able to be in the same room as their son.

But Ilya had seen the man he loved go down right in front of his eyes, and hadn't been able to get any updates until a full day later, even having to wait to learn the hospital Shane was at from probably some random sports news site. Nobody had called Ilya or told him anything, because they hadn't known he even *needed* to be informed. If no one knew, then Ilya probably hadn't even had a shoulder to cry on about his fears and worries the night before. From his dark circles and how pale he looked, he probably hadn't been able to sleep at all.

Yuna tightened her hold on his hand. "I'm so sorry that you were alone through this. From now on I will tell you everything the doctors tell us, okay? We'll exchange numbers later." Right now, she didn't want to let go of Ilya's hand. He was holding onto it like a lifeline, like a scared child would.

Ilya let out what sounded like a choked-down sob, and finally raised his head to face her again. His eyes looked misty. "Thank you."

Yuna felt her face go even softer at his tone. She wrapped her second hand around their joined ones as well.

“And about telling Shane, he should be cleared to go home in a couple of days. We can bring him to our hotel room before flying back to Ottawa and calmly talk with him there. Will you please let me know when you have time? I know Boston doesn’t have an away game for the rest of the week, but you still need to go to training.”

Ilya looked at her like he could understand all the words coming out of her mouth, but none of them made sense. “When I’m free?”

Yuna smiled at him gently, feeling her own eyebrows tilting with her expression. “Ilya. I think you should be there too, if you feel up to it. This is both of your relationship.”

Ilya’s face did something complicated at the word, but Yuna just held his hand more firmly. It didn’t matter if they thought they couldn’t be together because of their jobs and fame, because of the homophobia from the league and in Russia, if they had never allowed themselves to dare name it even after all those years. Ilya and Shane loved each other, and she would do all that she could to protect the something precious that they had found in each other.

“And I think it would help Shane to have you there. To have someone with him who understands, who knows how it all went.”

That seemed to finally convince Ilya. He nodded as if to steel himself and then shook off his shoulders, even though he still looked like he might puke any second. “Yes. Okay. I don’t know if he will want me there, but... I will come. I want to try and help, if I can. Offer support, yes?” He sounded like he was trying to convince himself more than her, but Yuna still nodded encouragingly. “Thank you... Yuna.”

“Thank *you*, Ilya,” she replied. He glanced at her awkwardly and somewhat embarrassed, like he wasn’t quite used to receiving a mother’s affection, and Yuna felt the protectiveness and fondness for him hit her once again. In a moment, she had made another decision.

“And... you have a season to finish, of course. But after, during the summer, you could come visit us at our house in Ottawa, if you want. You could check in on Shane, relax and stay for a while, if you have the time. Our house is pretty private and peaceful, and Shane’s even more. It would give you and Shane some time to just... catch your breath.”

Ilya’s eyes widened as she talked, and he let out an ironic huff once she finished, turning his face away.

“What is it?”

“I am sorry,” he apologised, shaking his head and looking at her again, “It’s that— Before, in the room. Shane invited me to spend summer at his cottage.”

Yuna’s face melted into fondness. She still understood her own son, when it mattered. “And what did you tell him?”

“I told him *maybe*,” Ilya answered, expression troubled. It sounded like he had meant it as a *no*.

Yuna smiled reassuringly and squeezed his hand once. “It’s okay. We’ll see how the talk with Shane goes. But think about it, okay? Please.”

She searched to meet his eyes with her own.

“You both deserve to be happy,” Yuna Hollander told Ilya Rozanov, and she meant it more than she could have imagined just an hour before.

End Notes

kudos and comments are greatly appreciated! thank you for reading and I hope you enjoyed. read my skip fic too if you'd like and I'll see you with more hollanov that should come out next week (and the weeks after that too, because I love this fandom and all of its characters and I have so many ideas). - La ☆

also come find me on twitter at [emo5kz](#) if you're cool, i need HR moots

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