

the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose

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by [alchemystique](#)

Summary

There hadn't been a whole lot of tape, back then, not on a bunch of kids who were likely to get chewed up and spit out by the KHL, but Rozanov was a special case – his agent had clearly known his aim was for North American leagues, and there'd been a few tapes leaked here and there of the fourteen, fifteen, sixteen year old phenom who had more trick plays up his sleeve than Yuna, personally, thought was true hockey. The video of his spin on the Michigan had made the rounds in David's McGill email chain, and Yuna had tipped her chin up and sworn up and down he'd be a one-trick pony who'd be flat on his ass the first time he tried that shit in the pros.

Shane had downloaded the video to his desktop and studied the tape like he did old games of Scott Hunter.

Yuna Hollander works through years of memories in attempt to discover when she should have *known* her son didn't trust her with all of himself.

Notes

Special shoutout to all the Canadians who gave me context for a throwaway line in this that was giving me grief, I appreciate you all!

This has been a labor of love that I ended up trimming and paring and then adding to until it turned into the beast that it currently is. I will still never understand the momager but I feel like I got somewhere with Yuna, at least.

I cannot entirely help myself adding at least a bit more hockey than the universe implies, sorry in advance.

There are a number of people, places, and moments here that take place in the context of the Game Changers series, so if you haven't read them there may be some slight spoilers ahead!

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

There are moments she's begun to look back on in a wondering haze, in quiet confines of her own mind. Memories grow hazy over time, and it's been almost a decade, but –

She remembers the flush in Shane's cheeks as he slid the toque off his head and blew out a breath, coming back in from the cold with some look in his eyes she couldn't quite place: frustration and amusement rolled into something she knows now must have been admiration, even if she couldn't spot it then. He'd slipped away with some comment about wanting to introduce himself to the competition, and Yuna had watched him go and decided *not* to mention that she didn't particularly want her son chumming it up with any of those Russian fucks less than a full day before a game.

There hadn't been a whole lot of tape, back then, not on a bunch of kids who were likely to get chewed up and spit out by the KHL, but Rozanov was a special case – his agent had clearly known his aim was for North American leagues, and there'd been a few tapes leaked here and there of the fourteen, fifteen, sixteen year old phenom who had more trick plays up his sleeve than Yuna, personally, thought was true hockey. The video of his spin on the Michigan had made the rounds in David's McGill email chain, and Yuna had tipped her chin up and sworn up and down he'd be a one-trick pony who'd be flat on his ass the first time he tried that shit in the pros.

Shane had downloaded the video to his desktop and studied the tape like he did old games of Scott Hunter.

Nothing strange about that, in the scheme of things. Nothing that should have pinged her interest. Shane was constantly finding styles of play to learn from, improve upon, perfect. All the buzz around Rozanov surely had her son interested in his play style.

Not then. Obviously. They'd barely even met, then.

But she wonders if Shane had known, back then. If he'd *let* himself know. God, she'd been so excited when he'd asked Stacey Burns to Grad – so ready to take ten million pictures of Shane in his suit and Stacey in her dress and the two of them together because it was the first time Shane had shown *any* interest in... anything unrelated to hockey. In years.

She wonders if she'd pressured him, at all. If in some way she'd made him think he *had* to ask a pretty girl to a dance, just to appease his overbearing mother.

She has to remind herself that Shane has forgiven her, before she spirals

She remembers the vague outline of the glass, a reflection of light off a helmet and the murmur of David excusing himself up the stands while Shane watched the Russian team practice. She'd been surprised they'd been allowed, if she's being honest – had fully expected the Russian coaches to kick up a fuss about private practices and demand they clear out.

Shane had been so *young*, but she'd been managing him for years, already, five steps ahead, scoping out endorsement deals and brand partnerships and curating the Hollander brand before Shane had ever even slipped his head through the Rimouski sweater. And he'd been so good. Never someone she had to worry about, or check up on, so disciplined she'd sometimes wondered if she could *force* him to accept a later curfew, the few times he hung out with friends from the neighborhood, or from the school he really only attended for a third of the year.

Yuna pulls up the video of their draft day, stares at the smile Ilya Rozanov shoots at her son, and remembers at the time wanting to wrap her hands around his shoulders (his throat) and shake him until the smug superiority fell away.

But she knows Ilya, a bit, now.

There's a genuine tip to the smile she hadn't noticed then, as focused on Shane as she'd been: something that looks... mostly excited to be standing next to a player who challenged him. Maybe there'd been attraction, then, for one of them. Maybe both. He's still smug, yes – the man will never lack in confidence of talent – but there's something behind his eyes she's seen since then, something that seems reserved for Shane and Shane alone, although she's already seen echoes of it directed at both David and herself. Pale imitations of the one he directs her sons way, and yet they brighten the entire room, all the same.

Shane looks so miserable she has to move on before she starts berating herself for being so fucking overbearing that her son had taken being the second pick overall as an abject failure. She remembers assuring the Metros GM that they were all so thrilled, and brushing past the comments on Shane's race like they didn't effect her, like they didn't effect Shane.

She remembers the thrill of Canada winning, that second year, and a flash of red down the handshake line, but she doesn't know if she's remembering anything there, or making it all up because she knows Rozanov – Ilya – was there to accept his defeat, and she's trying to *understand*.

Not then, not then, but –

The summer before, Ilya had said.

She'd been so busy fielding calls from Reebok reminding her that they'd overnighted ten pairs of shoes that she'd only caught the tail end of that MLH promo shoot. The two of them, giggling together as they skated into the faceoff circle, the gleam of lights off the ice and the silhouette of a director who seemed aware he was asking too much of two teenage boys months out from the start of their likely illustrious careers. She wonders if any of them had had a clue, really: rooms filled with trophies, names that would hang in the rafters, maybe even numbers retired, except – except maybe that wouldn't happen, now. Maybe the league would be shitty enough to retaliate, in some way, and maybe Yuna would end up with half a law degree while she hired the best of the best to sue the league into bankruptcy.

At least that's what Shane seems to think is likely. Yuna – Yuna knows commissioner Crowell well enough to understand why Shane might have that fear.

Jesus, she'd ragged on Shane to finish up, ragged him about wearing his dumb fucking shoes, ragged him about what a role model he had to be for little Asian kids growing up with him as their only representation. Every fucking day since he'd been sixteen he'd carried that fucking weight around, and Yuna had just kept adding on to it, never checking to see if the last stone had made him strain, or threaten to buckle.

("He is grateful, for you," Ilya had told her once, a quiet night out in their backyard, orange-gold light dancing off the angles of his face as the two of them stared at the fire and waited for David to return with the marshmallows. "It is – stressful, sometimes, for him. To be... Shane Hollander. But I think you are beating yourself up for many things, and making him very rich should not be one of them.")

And Yuna had been grateful, in that moment, for the blindingly silly smile Ilya shot her that told her he wasn't just talking about money.)

She's thought this through so many times, and it feels almost like an invasion of privacy, trying to figure out how she'd missed it for so long. Like beating the dead horse and then displaying the corpse on the lawn. She'd really, genuinely believed that Shane didn't like him, that he hated the boy; the rival; the cocky, slick-smiled pest of a man Ilya Rozanov had grown into. She knows that must have been by design, but she's not some schmuck making assumptions about Shane Hollander's likes and dislikes; she's his fucking mother.

She knows she shouldn't, but she brings it up with David, and her beautiful, number-minded teddy bear of a man mostly shrugs his shoulders and corrects faulty memories.

("No, Shane didn't present at the awards that year." and "I think Rozan – Ilya was already in Russia after Boston lost round one." and "I had all those conferences, in 2012, remember? We didn't make it over the border that year.")

"That time we drove down for his game in Boston and he told us he couldn't have dinner because –."

"Yu, we went to hundreds of games, and we understood when Shane was busy. We went to so many dinners together." And it's not like Yuna is upset about being second fiddle to.... Whatever specific 'just' Shane and Ilya were getting up to that particular time, she's just... trying desperately to figure out when she should have *known*.

"You know I lose my train of thought when you interrupt," she tells him, not so much a snap as a way to nudge the conversation back to her inappropriate speculation. David's mouth tips up on one side, goofy and apologetic, and she presses her hand to her thigh so she doesn't get distracted by his somehow *still* boyish charm. It's the same wry smile Shane always has on his face when he's calling Ilya Rozanov an asshole, and *oh*, if she'd just paid more attention...

“The Boston game Shane didn’t come to dinner for,” he prompts, although he does tack on, “There have been *so many* Boston games.”

And yet, not enough, have there? Not for Ilya and Shane.

“It was right before the All-Star break, and we had that vacation planned, so we weren’t going to see him for a while.”

“That happened this year,” David notes, and Yuna shakes her head, because it had been *years* ago. They rarely made the trip to Boston, or many of his other road trips, besides Ottawa. In fact, the only time she could remember for certain was when Shane had played his 500th game, and he’d been antsy at dinner that night, staring at his phone, nodding along while Yuna went on and on and on about the significance of such a milestone, pressing kisses to both their cheeks as he walked them to their Uber, declining a ride back to the hotel because he was going to hang out with some of his teammates, and Yuna hadn’t even questioned it when she’d seen at least half those boys at the hotel bar twenty minutes later.

He’d gone to Ilya, then. If Yuna had to guess. And at the time, they’d still been just — Just.

A decade. She can’t wrap her mind around it. Ten years, they’d been *something* to each other, no matter how hard they protested the claim the first time around. And for ten years Yuna had hated Ilya Rozanov on her son's behalf.

And – okay, a little on her own. The competition had always been neck and neck between them: milestones crossed, goals scored, trophies and Cups and neverending comparisons of their careers. She’d been so smug, the day she really sat down to take in the fact that Shane had more Cups than him. Had wanted to stand in front of Rozanov and rub it in his face and chirp him until that stupid grin drooped and died.

She'd seen a video of him and his cocky little smile as someone asked him about being ten points ahead of Shane in the scoring race, and she'd seriously thought about sending it to Shane to ask him what, exactly, he was gonna do about it.

Yuna sighs, and unfurls her fingers from the fist they've formed. "I suppose it doesn't matter, really," she says, and David hums like he knows she's going to dwell anyway. Of course he knows.

"They got there in the end," he reminds her, and smiles wistfully, ever the romantic. And they did, mostly. Keeping it private, keeping it from seeing the light of day to the rest of the world – that's a problem she'd like to tackle sooner than their retirement, but.

Ilya is the type of partner to Shane that Yuna couldn't have dreamed up in her wildest imaginings, and Shane loves Ilya with the sort of quiet desperation Yuna hates to think might be her fault. But what if she'd noticed sooner? What if she'd been the sort of mother a son could go to with their deepest secret, instead of the mom who made her son a multi-millionaire before he'd played his first professional game?

"Remember that time you told Shane to fuck him right up the butt?" David asks, eyes twinkling teasingly, mirth in his voice. Yuna has to really, really think about it, but yes. Mortifyingly, yes, she does remember that.

She smacks him across the chest and basks in the gentle chuckle that rumbles from his throat.

She doesn't mean to eavesdrop. As much as she's become mildly obsessed with dissecting the *how* of it all when it comes to Shane and Ilya, she genuinely does try to give them space to just *be*, in the few places they allow themselves.

It's just –

Shane's laugh hasn't sounded like that in a long time.

When Shane was six – when skating was mostly just a fun way for their kid to blow off steam, before David started paying attention to his edge work and Yuna still had to help him

with his laces, sometimes – they'd taken him to the cottage and slathered him in sunscreen and let him have the run of the yard.

He'd wandered off, gone in the moment between Yuna tilting her head up to glance at the dappling sunlight chasing through the leaves and turning back to ask Shane what he wanted for lunch. Two options, always, a concrete either-or that wouldn't send her kid into a spiral, tuna or peanut butter and jelly and then no reply.

She'd panicked. Called out for him a dozen times, torn through the yard and the shed and then remembered him spending breakfast *begging* to go out on the lake.

They weren't right off the water, but Shane knew the path like the back of his hand already, and he was smart, too smart, had already figured out how to press his weight just right while his little hands squeezed the lock on the gate, and in the seconds Yuna lost to that panic she imagined every worst case scenario known to man.

The gate was swinging wide, when she ran to check. Precious more seconds lost, enough time for him to dash through the neighbors yard and down toward their dock, and god, god, she'd spent her entire sprint begging for him to be fine.

His smile when he saw her running towards him had been bright enough to outshine the sun. And then there was the goose, happily accepting the hand he kept patting gently along its wing.

He'd made friends with a goose.

(The spark of a memory, a lunch somewhere with Shane, talking about unlikely pairs, and had he been thinking of Ilya Rozanov then, too?)

As a rule, Yuna had always considered geese to be right up there with moose, as far as dangerous-animals-to-keep-far-away-from, in the lexicon of indigenous wildlife. But Shane had spent the summer fascinated with birds, since the moment David had tried to teach him a loon call. They'd spent hours in the library checking out every book on birds they could find, even the ones Shane had no hope of comprehending.

And there he'd been, fat hands gently patting at the goose's feathers like the thing couldn't turn and attack him at any moment.

With the clarity of hindsight, it's really almost comical that the things Shane has always gravitated towards were the things Yuna always wanted to drag him away from.

She'd said his name, she remembers. Quiet, unassuming, terrified the damn bird would spook. And the stupid thing had turned, caught her eye, and squawked, so loud with its beak so close to Shane's face that Yuna had frozen where she stood.

And Shane had laughed – a bright, unencumbered peal of laughter so sweet and warm that Yuna still remembered it decades later. The bird hadn't appreciated being laughed at, apparently – had shaken out its wings and squawked once more before tottering off half a meter and taking flight off towards the water.

And maybe there was something to that, as well – the gentle way that mean fucking bird had just accepted Shane's attempt at being friendly.

He'd laughed the entire walk home, sweet little giggles mixed in with heavy guffaws and a stream of consciousness monologue about the *teeth* inside a goose beak, and when she'd bent at the gate to remind him with a steady voice not to wander off to the lake, he'd stuck a fist to his hip and reminded *her* that he wasn't allowed to go swimming without Mom or Dad, so she didn't need to worry. Solid, dependable Shane Hollander, even before he'd reached double digits.

Shane's laugh rises over the murmur of voices out on the back patio, and Yuna pauses halfway toward the back door, casserole dish in hand and a lump in her throat.

"...not a fucking princess, asshole," he's saying, incredulous mirth in his voice, and Ilya makes a scoffing noise. They're just beyond the edge of her vision, two heads of hair bobbing just over the rock wall that blocks out the patio stairs, headed towards her but still out of sight. They know she's here, at least. She's not *spying*, she tells herself.

“Oh, Snow White and Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty and Shane Hollander *don't* talk to birds?” When she catches them speaking to one another sometimes, she has to wonder exactly how much of Ilya’s accent he exaggerates to the public at large. It’s his own business, but he seems to have a better grasp than he lets on.

The head of curls dips and slides to the side, and Yuna has seen them interact enough to *know* Shane has just shoved him, or shoulder checked him. The competitive spirit translates off the ice, with these two.

“I know a few bird calls, dickhead, so what?”

“So I should learn bird, yes, instead of you learning Russian?”

“Fuck off,” her son says, and there’s so much goddamn fondness in his voice. And then he murmurs something, low and soft, and the heads circle closer, and then together, for a moment. It’s Shane’s voice again, then: not in French or English. And she’d known, hadn’t she, the work he’d been putting in to add a third language to his repertoire, but.

She’s reminded all over again how serious this is, for both of them. Ten years of falling in love one divisional away game at a time.

She wishes they’d had more time.

“David will teach me wolf-bird, you know. He loves me.”

“Yeah, you’re a real hit with the Hollander’s in general.”

“Yuna maybe not so much,” Ilya says, and Yuna wishes like hell she were anywhere else. Doesn’t want to intrude on this moment, doesn’t want them to round that corner and realize she’s standing there with a hot Pyrex and a ten step plan already forming to make sure Ilya Rozanov knows she fucking likes him. Adores him for being the man who has coaxed laughter and happiness from the shadows of Shane’s intensity.

The voices pause, for a moment. Golden curls tip toward dark sleek locks. His hair is getting too long and Yuna hates it, but she's seen Ilya playing with it enough to know that's a battle she has no hope of winning.

Yuna should go. Turn around and set this dish on the counter and pretend she was just about to join them outside.

“Hey. She’s – she likes you. No, Ilya, really, she –.”

“She is like you. Hard to read. All business.”

“You read me just fine.” It’s a devastating observation, but Shane says it like it’s nothing, like it’s expected.

“I cannot figure her out like I figured *you* out,” Ilya murmurs, and Yuna rolls her eyes even as she hears her son groan. *Lovers* was the tamest thing she’s overheard Ilya murmuring to her son.

“Gross, Ilya.”

The sound of a wet smack is all the warning she gets before they’re rounding the corner and meandering up the stairs, and they both give her bright smiles the moment they catch her silhouette through the windows.

Yuna implements Family Dinner the moment the season starts, at least once every homestand: David and Ilya and herself and Shane whenever he can make it, and eventually, Ilya stops giving her careful looks before he lets his personality shine, prickly thorns and all.

The first time Ottawa plays Montreal, Yuna and David slide into their usual seats. They're well known in the section, well liked, and the fans who actually know who they are tend to leave them be unless Shane is hitting another milestone and they can't contain the desire to celebrate like part of the family.

She wonders how they'd treat them, if they knew.

"Do we... cheer for both?" David had asked, on the drive over, because David was a fucking sap. He'd laughed at Yuna's offended look, dopey grin and sparkling eyes, and patted her knee without taking his eyes off the road. "A polite clap, at least. If he does something good."

"David, with all the love in my heart: I would rather drop gloves with Ryan Price than cheer for *anything* Ottawa does well."

It's not quite true, not really. In the weeks and months she's known Ilya Rozanov as anything other than her sons arch nemesis, she's grown quite fond of him, actually. His sparkling wit, his intensely focused devotion to her son, the wry turn of his smile when he thinks he's misstepped with either one of them. The obsession with Shane's baby pictures, and the way he brings Shane out of his shell without ever seeming like he has to try. His genuine effort to get to know Yuna and David, and the gentle but ultimately firm way he refuses to tell either one of them an outright lie. The way he looks at them sometimes, out of the corner of his eye, like he can't quite believe they've given him the grace to be himself, soft spots and dry humor and all.

She remembers being in Montreal for Ilya's hundredth goal. Those were the early days, really, and she'd hated it at the time, because that had been the game winning goal, but at dinner, Shane had spent twenty minutes talking about the seam pass Rozanov had made and the bumper Marlow had shot back right as Rozanov flew into the right circle; the backhand he'd lifted over the Montreal goalies shoulder. At the time, she'd assumed Shane was beating himself up for blowing his defensive coverage, and she'd spent a large majority of that dinner bitching about Theriault and the horrible timing of his changes.

She remembers after dinner Shane had tipped his phone sideways to read a text, and she remembers the smile he'd had on his face. Remembers asking him about it – the smile, because even when he was in a good mood smiles like that were rare – and she remembers he'd given some vague response about his jackass friends. She remembers not fully believing him, but not wanting to push it.

Ilya is having a rough night. He's already -2 with six penalty minutes, and it's not the first time he's had a bad game – everyone has to have them on occasion, even Ilya Rozanov – but from her spot across the rink from the box she can see the twist of his mouth, the clench of his jaw, and Yuna thinks, not for the first time, how fucking unfair it is. How unfair it is that she can't cheer on her son's boyfriend, can't call off the boo-birds three rows down who have started a Brooklyn chant every time Ilya's stick has touched the puck in the last forty minutes.

She can't push them to come out. She *wouldn't*. But every once in a while, something smarts, reminds her all over again that her son is terrified of losing his entire career – his entire life – because the person he loves doesn't fit in with the culture of hockey.

She's loved hockey as long as she could remember. Her parents learned half a new language watching games. Hell, she'd married into hockey, too. Shane becoming interested in it had started young – evenings on the couch, the only time he was ever willing to actually sit in her lap without grimacing like he was having teeth pulled, eyes on the back and forth, following players and puck and stick like they were the most fascinating things he'd ever seen. As he grew older, the focus shifted from chanting out players names any time they landed on the score sheet to studying footwork, researching stick tape, lacing up his skates and practicing skating backwards until his legs were jelly and his nose was pink.

She has *loved* hockey down to her bones, even when the idea of an Asian player making it to the show was a distant dream. Even when Scott Hunter kissed his boyfriend on an internationally broadcast Cup final, because even with the suspicions she had about her own son's preferences, she'd never really spent any time thinking through what that might mean for his career.

She has loved hockey.

There are days now where she wants to dismantle the entire system just so that she wouldn't have to stop herself from going down to the visitors parking lot after the game and wrapping Ilya up in a hug.

Shane sends a text after the game is over, when they're making their way through the throng of celebrating fans.

Shane: *Dinner at my place. Have to stop at the store for Coke. Ilya knows you're coming.*

Since the foundation, they've taken a few – a very few – opportunities to go out to dinner in public. With Yuna running things, and Shane and Ilya working them together, it's no longer seen as completely insane for the Hollander's to be seen out in public with Ilya. They'd planned another one, at a nice restaurant in town where tables were hard to come by and reservations were months out, but she can't imagine Ilya feeling up to a public appearance, right now. She thumbs open her email to cancel the reservation.

Yuna: *Don't be ridiculous, dad and I will pick it up on the way.*

Shane: *Thanks.*

It's a small thing. Shane has had a *hell* of a night, for himself. Two assists and a goal, and he'd drawn two penalties on Ottawa just by the nature of his speed through the neutral zone. But his first thought after a beat down of the Cens had been what he needed to do to take care of Ilya Rozanov. She *is* a little shocked that he doesn't have a whole wall of his garage lined with 12 packs of Coca-Cola so he doesn't run into exactly this situation, but.

Ilya's smile when he opens the door for them is strained and dim. He chews on his lip, and clenches his jaw, and then offers them both a glass of wine, and Yuna can't quite help herself.

He goes stiff as a board when Yuna goes in for the hug, but unfortunately for them both, she's already committed. The first thirty seconds are unbearably awkward, and then Ilya melts, arms coming up tentatively even as his shoulders slump and he lets out the longest sigh she's ever heard. "This is weird," he announces to the room at large, and she hears David hum somewhere in the kitchen. Yuna starts to pull away and Ilya's arms tighten, just a hair. "I did not say it was bad weird."

He does eventually let her go, to rifle through cabinets and dig through the fridge in search of whatever Shane has in there that might make a meal all four of them would eat. After a full minute and a half of huffing and puffing, Ilya looks ready to tear his own hair out.

“We could order a pizza,” David offers, and Ilya stares at him like he’s threatened to run over a box of abandoned puppies with one of Ilya’s few remaining sports cars.

“Shane cannot eat pizza.”

“I’m sure he’s got a meal prepped in there he can munch on.”

“Would have been easier to have a picky eater at the restaurant,” Ilya announces glumly, and then his eyes catch on something, a bit of spark returning to his expression. “I will make us salmon.”

Shane curls a hand around Ilya’s neck when he comes in, squeezes, turns to Yuna and David with a hint of question in his eyes.

“I don't want to talk about game,” Ilya announces. “Game is over. Wash your hands of it.”

“Shane had a really good game.” Yuna winces. She just can't fucking help herself sometimes.

When Ilya turns to look at her, there's a grin on his face. “Shane did have a good game. Talk about that while I make the salad.”

The stiffness in Ilya's shoulders seems to settle, as David uses hands to reenact the deke Shane had executed in the neutral zone that led to the Metros first goal, as Shane shakes his head bashfully and announces that he was going five-hole on the goal that had hopped over the goalies blocker. Yuna spends twenty minutes complaining about the Ottawa goalie and by the time they've settled down at the table, Ilya is fully present and barely even grumpy at all.

It concerns her, sometimes. She wonders how often he settles into the discomfort or the anger or whatever the hell else he feels that he doesn't exactly share with them. The only person less likely to tell her about his feelings than Shane is Ilya. She hopes they talk.

She has a sinking suspicion they're keeping as many things from each other as they are from her.

Shane's pregnancy had been a difficult one, shadowed by the two she'd lost before. David had been terrified most hours of the day, and she'd had to be the steady one, the one who wasn't constantly catastrophizing over a few spots, a strange cramp.

The last month they'd recommended bed rest, and David had caught her up on her feet, doing things, moving because if she spent another minute tied down to the couch or the bed or the ugly ass recliner he'd ordered specifically to get her to fucking rest, she knew she'd go completely insane.

The birth hadn't gone much better, and she loved David, she did, but for a few hours there he'd nearly been a widower, and she can't imagine the life he and Shane would have led if him having to choose baby or wife had actually come to fruition.

"The last time Shane was *difficult* was when he came out of the womb," Yuna snarks, reading through some shitty article by a shitty journo who has no idea what's really going on in the Metros room. She's on her third glass of wine, and Ilya's eyes light up, because there's nothing he loves more in the world than when Yuna gets reminiscent about a young Shane. He's known Shane for such a long time, but these are the years he's missing, the years he eats up like they're the first meal a starving man has seen in weeks.

"*Gross*, mom," Shane says.

"You and I know different Shane," Ilya says, which earns him a smack on the thigh and a look that Shane is trying to make look annoyed, but mostly looks fond. Shane murmurs something in slow, tentative Russian, like he's not sure he's getting the syntax right, and Yuna wonders if she should be learning it too. There have been times Ilya seems like he wants to say something but can't excavate the words, where he translates something that's more idiom than flat language and only Shane could possibly understand.

She thinks he's much sadder than he lets on.

“I’m just saying, this—” she scrolls back up to the byline “– Dater person is washed.”

Ilya grins and Shane rolls his eyes. “Where did you even learn that word?”

And maybe she has a funny definition of *difficult*, if she really thinks about it. Shane’s snark has never felt mean-hearted, to her, and she’s always enjoyed debating him, being challenged by him, letting that attitude he keeps far away from the press and the public really shine, when she’s sitting across a table from him and he’s being...kind of an ass.

He gets to be that person with Ilya more than anyone else, and god, some days she’s so fucking grateful for that she wants to scream.

“Your mother is very...” He grimaces sometimes, when the words don’t come easy. “With the times,” he says with a vague gesture.

“Knowing youth slang in your fifties is actually more embarrassing than not knowing it,” Shane challenges, which earns him a hum from David, who definitely agrees with his son but isn’t willing to say it, and an outright cackle from his boyfriend.

“Oh, the *youths*,” he teases, and Shane gets that look in his eyes like he knows he’s about to get ganged upon.

Yuna turns the conversation back to this dumb fucking article she’s reading, speculation about the Metros mid-season slump. It’s rare, so early in the year, for all four of them to be together like this, and she probably shouldn’t be so caught up in something a beat reporter has to say about the captain of the Metros, but she’s nothing if not consistent.

“He thinks you and Hayden have had a falling out.”

Ilya says something else in Russian that earns him a second smack.

“Mom, they won’t even let that guy in the media scrum, anymore.”

And he’s taken that to mean he can write hit pieces based entirely on fan speculation. Yuna hates this piece of shit. She’s halfway through composing a response to this stupid fiction, one she knows won’t – shouldn’t – see the light of day.

“Shane is winning Cup, this year,” Ilya announces to the room at large, “Dater can eat that all alone in his sad little bachelor pad.”

“And now you’ve jinxed it.”

Yuna lets them squabble for a minute before she reminds them that they are both adults (or so they’ve told her).

Ilya ends up being right, is the thing. Three months later she watches her son lift the Cup for a third time, and has to stop herself from tweeting Dater directly with the gif of Shane passing it off to Hayden.

Instead she squeezes her sweaty, bright eyed and pink cheeked son, and tries to show him a little extra love, because this is the first time she’s *known* that there is someone missing from this celebration.

She’s seen Shane panic before. Once or twice, in the early years, before he hired a sports psychologist who taught him grounding techniques. She’s known the signs for over a decade – when the game stopped being just fun for him. And for a long, long time, she’d thought he somehow *cured* it, even though she’s a smart woman who *knows* that’s not how brains work.

She’d thought it right up until Shane’s head dropped to the kitchen table and Ilya fucking Rozanov spared half a second to glance at her and David both before stepping in and getting

the whole thing under control.

She's not great with remembering conversations – give her an entire contract and she'll have it memorized after one read through, but anything verbal just doesn't stick quite the same.

But she remembers Ilya's words then. *Your family is here. Your boyfriend is here.* The comical way Shane's head had popped up, the murmured question of “*Boyfriend?*” and the way she'd known that while this wasn't *new*, this – the honesty, maybe, or the label, at the very least, was new.

And she thinks about all the times Shane had snapped at her, at David, shoulders hunched up and in and a snarl to him that she didn't know how she'd provoked. How she'd always seen that as a sign that here, at least, with his family, he didn't have to uphold the shining golden boy the public knew. She's always chocked it up to work stress. Shane always held himself to such high expectations, and she hasn't seen him really lose his cool since he was twenty-one.

Ilya has.

It strikes her for the first time that he'd only felt comfortable losing his shit (even for a moment) in front of his parents because *Ilya was there*.

She gets the news alert about the Centaurs emergency landing and her heart squeezes so fucking tight in her chest she considers telling David he might need to take her to an emergency room.

It's the first time she's really acknowledged how much Ilya fucking Rozanov means to *her* specifically, and not just for what he means to Shane. Sure, she's joked about him being the favorite son. Sure, she's seen more of Ilya than she has her own son in the last few years.

The last time she felt this clawing panic was watching her son being strapped to a board, unmoving on the ice while Rozanov hovered nearby, looking shell-shocked in a way she hadn't had the context to understand yet. She tries to remember the breathing techniques Shane had explained once. She tries to remember how she'd fucking grounded herself in the hours after Marleau had slammed into Shane.

But she hasn't lost Ilya. He has gone through something scary, and she didn't know about it until it was over and done and he was *fine*.

She shows David the headline with shaking hands and watches him shove his readers on and tilt his chin down to read over his nose. She loves him so much. She loves her boys so goddamn much it kills her sometimes. He makes a soft, broken little noise and gathers her in.

They're both a little teary-eyed when they break apart, and the notification dashes across her screen as they're both laughing at themselves and wiping at their cheeks.

Ilya: *I am okay*

Yuna: *We're here if you need to talk.*

And then, after debating it for a second longer than she should.

Yuna: *We love you very much and we're glad you're safe.*

He doesn't respond for a long time.

Ilya: *Love you. Plane engine knew David and I still need to finish 1000 puppies*

When she tilts the screen to let David read, he lets out a wet laugh that sets them both off again.

The panic sits behind her ribcage for days afterward, gnawing on muscle and sinew and tender nerve endings, until Ilya lets himself in a week later and crashes into her arms before either of them has said a word.

“Ilya, I’m not creating *garage-full-of-expensive-cars* money, I’m creating *Hollander-and-Rozanov-great-grandchildren-living-comfortably* money.”

“You could have said generational wealth,” he snarks, after a moment of running the words over in his head. “I have not had too many concussions, yet.”

It’s not the first time in the last year that they’ve acknowledged that Ilya is a permanent fixture of their family, but it is the first time she’s acknowledged it while knowing there’s a second glint of metal nestled next to the Orthodox cross on Ilya’s chain.

Shane seems more annoyed than Ilya that, upon discovering their full plan, she’d immediately reached out to Farah to tell her about every single endorsement she’s scouted for the last three years.

Whatever happens from here, the four of them are a fucking team. And David, too – he’s been putting in the work with the McGill boys, behind the scenes. Sending them links to Scott Hunter’s foundations and charities and activism. She’d been thrilled when he turned his laptop screen around to show her that Jason Northup had sent the group the link to Troy Barrett’s coming out post.

“You should know, though, that I am Adidas man.”

That’s fine, if she’s being completely honest. Reebok had quietly let Scott Hunter’s exclusive contract with them expire, and it left a bad fucking taste in her mouth. Adidas, on the other hand, just snagged a campaign with Eric Bennet and Ryan Price – something trite about retirement being another step in the journey. It was dumb, but well executed, tastefully done. Mostly she had wondered how the *hell* they’d managed to convince Price to engage with professional sports again, but she thinks that, at least in some small part, Shane and Ilya’s camps have helped him hate the game a little less.

“That’s not a problem. Besides, we’re not looking for exclusive sponsorships.”

Ilya squints at her. “Shane will be very mad if you use this to make Lululemon pay for our wedding. We are both very rich. And wedding will be small and intimate, anyway.” She’d fought them on that, a little, before giving up because both of them were still in the thick of their seasons and refused to be distracted. They’re both stubborn as hell. It’s a trait that drives her crazy specifically because she shares it with them.

Lululemon, please. Like she hasn’t already contacted half a dozen Canadian fashion houses.

“And I’m very picky about headphones,” he points out, gesturing with the rolling pin in his hand. He’d been insistent on learning her recipe for cinnamon rolls, and she’d indulged him without much of a fight. “And watches. Shane’s watches are travesty.”

She flicks a bit of flour at him just to watch the way his expression dissolves into a parody of outrage.

Yuna likes Farah. She *swears* she does. She’s competent, smart, always adds in at least two riders even Yuna wouldn’t have thought might be important for her sons continued success and sanity.

“I want to go full scorched earth,” Yuna says, and Farah lets out the tiniest squeak of a laugh before she gets herself under control.

“That’s not what Shane and Ilya want.”

Well *fuck* Shane and Ilya, Yuna thinks. The league deserves to fucking pay. Sitting two players for having the audacity to be outed? On terms not their own? Yuna wants to storm the MLH offices and punch Crowell in the motherfucking face. She wants to contact every company she knows and make them pull their league endorsements. She wants every manager and every player who have a problem with her boys to get meningitis. She wants...

Fuck.

Ultimately she just wants her boys to be happy. “Fine,” she says, clipped, and Farah pauses for a long, long moment, like she’s considering whether she wants to tell Yuna what’s on her mind.

“The commissioner received an email from our agency this morning. A reminder of the contributions Ilya and Shane have given to the league, for a start. Merchandise revenue, viewership numbers, the works. I also made sure to provide him with the name of our law firm, should he wish to...continue pursuing his current line of thought.”

This is better. This is... more productive than scorched earth. Yuna loves Farah.

“Adidas called this morning,” Farah says, once they’ve let the dust settle. “I think Ilya in particular will appreciate that.”

“Oh, let them be, for a bit,” Yuna says, completely out of character but meaning every word. They need support and love and the status quo, right now. The dollar signs behind her eyes can wait until the season is over.

Farah goes quiet. They’re lucky, really, to have so many people in their corner. “My gut reaction was to leak the story about Crowell’s affair with the PM’s daughter in the nineties. So I get the urge.”

“Crowell’s *what* with *who*?”

When Shane was seventeen, he’d taken a girl to Grad, and Yuna had fixed his tie three times while he fidgeted and stretched his wrists against the cufflinks David had let him borrow. She’d imagined a whole life spanning out – the awards he’d receive, the milestones he’d hit, the girl he’d marry who would support him through the ups and the downs.

Standing in front of him now, she feels the tears at the corners of her eyes and blinks like that will keep them from falling. Can't cry if they stay in her eyes, she reminds herself, and then tells herself *fuck that* and blinks a little harder.

Shane's as much of a mess as she is.

"Do you remember that girl I took to prom?" Shane asks, because at the end of the day they are a little too much alike. Yuna rolls her eyes and doesn't correct him – everyone nowadays calls it prom.

"I remember taking a million pictures."

His smile is soft, warm. Despite the nerves, he seems settled, down to his bones.

"I remember being that crazy mom who could see your whole life spanning out from that point," Yuna says, and fixes his tie again. "I remember hoping that faceless girl in my fantasies made you stupidly happy."

Shane chokes on a laugh. Shakes his head and clenches his jaw to clear the tears. "It is actually stupid that he makes me so happy."

They're keeping it together, now, so she doesn't do something silly like pat his cheek and burst into tears. Instead, she lets him walk across the room and pull back the curtain to stare into the yard.

"Holy shit," he says, and Yuna tips her head away to wipe at a stray tear before he sees. She follows him across the room to fix his boutonniere, which doesn't really need fixing, but she needs *something* to do with her hands. "Are you surprised? You're both very popular."

The whole wedding has felt terrifyingly underprepared in a way her brain doesn't enjoy, and she'd been apoplectic when they told her they were just sending out general "be there if you

want” invitations. Half because she’d wanted a full to-do of an event, and half because she thought they were both underestimating exactly how many people would *want*.

David is somewhere saying something overly sappy to Ilya, she knows. They’re both probably crying. She and Shane are about to have a snark off, she can feel the hum of it in her bones.

She’ll cry later. Quiet, happy tears, because all those years ago she hadn’t come close to imagining how beautiful Shane’s life could possibly be.

The Centaurs opening night is a sell-out crowd.

She hasn’t seen the arena this packed in...ever, actually. Being over .500 last year had brought in plenty of fans that hadn’t particularly cared, before, but this.

This first game with Shane and Ilya on the same team.

She’s bumped into a few fans in Metros gear, Boston gear, newly minted and printed Cens gear with *Hollander* scrawled across the back. She’s seen the 2017 All-Star sweater with 24 and 81 on the sleeve.

She’s seen the rainbow flags that dotted the glass during warmups before slowly flooding up into the stands all around.

She’s already met two dozen people in Club level who just want to shake her hand and tell her they’re big fans of her son.

She takes a little extra time with the ones who say ‘*sons*’.

The first period is a disaster. Hayes lets in two he should have had, and Shane's line clearly hasn't worked out their chemistry yet – missed passes, missed assignments, Shane's left winger failing to see him speeding through the neutral zone and turning over the puck instead of sending it flying in for a breakaway.

Luca Haas steals one back on a lucky bounce with twenty-seven seconds left in the period.

Yuna makes casual conversation with the couple next to her that has had season tickets since the inception of the Cens, and tries not to think about what's going on in the room.

She remembers the first game Ilya had played here. Sitting on the couch with David at her side, yelling at the screen, the officials, the goalie, the coach management had taken two years to replace. It'd been a blowout. And they'd barely known Ilya, back then, so no matter how much she'd wanted to reach out, she hadn't quite figured out how to word "Sorry you love my son so much you're willing to play for a tanking team."

She'd spent almost a whole month watching the corners of Ilya's mouth pinch while they lost game after game after game. They'd squeak a win, here or there, but there was no denying the team sucked.

This team doesn't suck. Haas looks ready to explode, this year, and Ilya and Barrett have lightning-in-a-bottle chemistry on the ice. Wyatt Hayes had a breakout year last year, and the backup they'd acquired in the offseason has potential. This is a team ready to win.

Ilya draws a penalty in the opening minutes of the second. It's the Cens first powerplay of the game, and the first time since All Stars that she's going to have an opportunity to see Shane and Ilya on the same unit.

The air in the building seems to get thinner as the rest of the crowd realizes the same thing, like everyone has sucked in a breath to prepare themselves.

This is what they're there to see, at the end of the day.

It takes less than thirty seconds. Ilya wins the faceoff, connects with Barrett on the slingshot. Haas avoids the offsides and Shane beats three Admirals to the crease just in time for Ilya to send a wrister straight at the net. The ping is loud even through the rise of the crowd noise, and the puck bounces on the ice for half a second before Shane cleans up the rebound and sends it right over the goalies shoulder into the back of the net.

And suddenly it's a tie game, and Ilya is across the ice and gathering Shane up in a celebratory hug.

("No kissing," Shane had said last night, jittery with nerves and holding his husband's gaze. "We end up on a weird line change and score together, you keep it professional.")

"I always keep it professional when we are *scoring together*."

Yuna had been prepared when she caught the dinner roll Shane tossed at him.)

It's Barrett who smacks a wet-looking kiss to Shane's cheek, and she just *knows* Shane hadn't considered the possibility that Ilya would look for reinforcements when he was banned from showing whatever he deemed the appropriate amount of affection for playing good hockey.

And that's that, really. Shane's first point as a Centaur just so happens to have his husband's name listed right next to his. She's going to find a box score and frame it.

"I'm going to print off that box score and frame it!" David yells in her ear, his phone out and his eyes a little misty.

The Cens score three more in the second, and four more in the third. It's the highest scoring game they've had in a decade. Scott Hunter spends a good portion of the third trying to ignore Ilya leaning over the boards to chirp him on the bench.

She can already see the headlines. “Ottawa’s Gamble Pays Off In Twenty-Two Minutes”
“Hollander and Rozanov Stun Admirals” “Haas Hat Trick Tops The Night”

Then the press get a hold of Ilya in the postgame. “Every team should have superstar husbands,” he says with that press-ready grin of his. “Sad for them there is only one Shane Hollander in the world.”

They frame the Citizen headline “Superstar Husbands Beat Admirals” with Shane’s first point box score right below it. It hangs between the family photo someone shot in the late hours of the evening on their wedding day, and a photo of Anya that Ilya had gifted them for Christmas.

She’s standing in the elevator bay, watching the numbers above the middle doors tick up, up, trying to ignore the odd, itching sensation of deja-vu, when two memories hit her simultaneously, with the sort of startling clarity she hasn’t been able to manage with so many of the ones she’s spent the last three years mulling over. They play out like a movie reel, so specific she knows her mind must be filling in blanks where she hadn’t paid quite close enough attention before.

The first: Ilya Rozanov, quietly but insistently correcting her son on the timeline of Them – the sunlight from the window outside gilding the curl of his hair, something severe in his expression like he was making certain there were no more secrets between the four of them – *No, the summer before*. The shift of David at her side, cataloguing that new piece of information so that he could parrot it back at her later.

And the second: An elevator door opening. Yuna’s mind on the thousand things she had to do before meeting with a sports drink brand – one that had gone under less than a year later, and thank God she’d noticed the signs before Shane ever penned a deal with them. And there, five steps away, leaning back against the far end of the elevator, a cocky nineteen year old Russian with a flop of curls and the sort of posture Yuna would have pointed out to Shane as bad for his brand, if he’d been there with her. The full denim look, like he was bound and determined to mock everything about Canada he could get his hands on by making a Canadian tuxedo look like a fashionable decision. The way she’d wondered where he got the patchwork jacket and if she could ever convince Shane to wear something like it. The uncomfortable stretch of his smile, a tight ribbon of lips she’s since seen crack into painfully happy grins.

The awkward exchange, because Yuna had already chosen to hate the boy who had the audacity to be chosen before her son in the draft – such an arbitrary thing, in hindsight, with the knowledge that both of them turned shitty teams into absolute juggernauts; with the knowledge that *Shane* was the one with three Cups to show for it. How he'd been more modest in the face of her clipped tone than he was for the next eight years. The last minute attempt at politeness on her part, to introduce herself, because even then she'd realized what an ass she was being, except the doors were closing, and Ilya Rozanov was disappearing behind them, a look of surprise on his face like he hadn't expected kindness from her, headed up, and not down where she needed to go.

Up in the same direction her son was.

David answers on the second ring. He must have been playing Sudoku – it's the only time he ever picks up before it's gone through to voicemail at least once.

"The photoshoot for CCM, before their rookie year," Yuna says, and tips her head back. "I could never figure out how Rozanov's team seemed so much better prepared than we did."

David hums over the line.

"He set it up to seduce our son."

David barks out a laugh. "That feels like a stretch."

But she's sure of this now. Certain she's right. The timeline matches up. How had she never put two and two together? When *else* would they have seen each other the summer before rookie year? "It's not a stretch, it's what happened." The words are out of her mouth before she's had a chance to really think them through, which is strange for her. She doesn't particularly enjoy it, especially when she immediately admits: "It's exactly the kind of shit I pulled to get your attention, a million years ago."

David had always been the spontaneous one. It was Yuna who went at everything with the next ten years already planned out. She'd calculated so many happenstance meetings with the cute third line winger that eventually he'd asked her out just to stop running into her unawares.

"You think they..."

"Yep," Yuna says, curtly, because after more than three years she's finally realizing exactly how much she didn't need to know *exactly* when 'Just' started.

"And Ilya schemed it up so they could..."

"Uhuh."

David blows out a breath.

She's admitted to him, over the years, exactly how many of their random meetings weren't exactly by chance. He thinks it's *romantic*. Yuna has yet to play him the new Taylor Swift song she'd caught on a rabbit hole of her own that had made her think of all her machinations to get a date with David Hollander.

He laughs. It's one of those long, drawn out chuckles that make her heart all warm and gooey. "I always thought Shane was more like you," he says, delight in his voice. "But a little bit of me must've squeaked in there at the buzzer, too."

End Notes

Come say hi on [tumblr](#)!

I lifted a few lines of dialogue directly from The Long Game because I had a whole before-the-wedding scene plotted out that I refused to get rid of entirely when I remembered that that scene already existed. I've been too busy crying over David and Ilya for ten thousand years to remember Shane and Yuna had a sweet bit there, too.

Thank you to the anon on tumblr who pointed out that every 'Rozanov' in this fic autocorrected to 'Rosanov' - if you saw that before I had a chance to Ctrl+F no you didn't. 🙄

Also I recognize that my subtle nod to Sidney Crosby's juniors team does not fit canonically or geographically. I should change it but I probably won't.

Works inspired by this one

[Podfic] [the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose](#) by [semperfiona_podfic \(semperfiona\)](#).

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