

Dawning of the Season

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Dawning of the Season

by [EarnestEcho](#)

Summary

My take on what David and Ilya talked about while Shane and Yuna were outside. Ilya is not used to healthy parental domesticity...

Notes

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

Ilya was, to put it succinctly, freaking the fuck out. Sure, he was nowhere near Shane's state of mental turmoil (albeit for entirely different reasons), but he was trying to stay calm.

Everything Shane had said about Yuna, and the short conversation they had had inside, made him believe that she would be okay with him being gay, but what if she was out there disowning him? And he was inside drinking vodka. Useless.

He supposed he would have to wait and see.

Maybe sensing his stress, or more likely noticing the way Ilya's nails were nervously tapping on his glass of vodka, David gave him an olive branch.

"Seems like the Russian stuff was worth it?"

"Ah, yes. It is very good."

David just hummed at that. Ilya was instantly reminded of Shane. He really did get his boring from his father's side.

They fell into awkward silence. Ilya thought through his options and settled on the one that would probably kill him the most, but would maybe get him into David's good graces. Which was what he wanted. All things considered.

"So...Shane tells me you like the New Yorker?" Ilya tried not to fidget or roll his eyes as he indulged in dreadful small talk with Shane's father.

Small talk was the right option, Ilya could immediately tell, considering Shane's father got the most animated he had all night.

"Oh! I read this article recently on the New York Botanical Gardens! The walkway was inspired by the path made by Roberto Burle Marx, who was a Brazilian landscape architect, at Copacabana Beach! He's been terribly influential on 20th century tropical garden design. I want to take some inspiration for our vegetable garden out back. Who says cool design has to be saved for tropical gardens?"

Ilya tried to keep his eyebrows as far from his hairline as possible as he deadpanned, "Ah yes. Sounds fascinating."

"It is! I'm thinking of using the geometric modernist designs he was known for to separate different vegetables. Yuna and I have been big into gardening recently, although it's a bit difficult considering we aren't always here. We're straying from the more perennial plants we tend to keep at our house. Anyways! I could send you the article."

Shane must have also got his inability to detect sarcasm from his father as well. The reminder of Shane, however, just endeared him to David more. He was glad the man didn't seem to want him to reply to anything because he didn't understand half the words. Seriously, what the fuck was a perennial. Still, he was here to make friendly with Shane's parents, so he

agreed to exchange numbers with David. He figured he wouldn't ever have to read it. He passed his phone over for David to put his number in.

"I'll email it over when my phone has some charge to it." David immediately blanched at the reminder of why they were here and turned to his glass of vodka for solace.

Fuck. Ilya couldn't even carry a two minute conversation without fucking it up. He wished he could blame his own father for this shortcoming, and maybe he could, partially, but he had never made a particular attempt to make nice when conversation was on his own terms. He didn't think teasing David on not knowing an email from a text would help, so he stayed silent.

David ground out something that sounded too much like an apology.

Ilya waved a hand. "It is not your fault. Both of us ignored the phone all day," he said with a gesture outside to where Shane presumably was.

"Yes, but I didn't need to stay. I already had the charger when I saw you, um, together. I wanted to ask Shane how his silent retreat was going. Which, I know, would have broken the whole thing, but I miss my boy."

Ilya's heart squeezed at the open display of affection. He had never once heard his father say he missed him. Hell, most times his father hadn't even opened calls with hello. Just Ilya and then whatever he needed. Straight to the point.

Shane's father must have misinterpreted the poorly disguised hurt flash on his face, because he babbled on. "I just. The hockey season is so long. And we usually only really get him in the summers. And, well, I figured I was there. I could see if he needed anything. But that's just me making excuses and-"

"Hey," Ilya cut him off gently. "You do not need to blame yourself. It would have happened eventually and..." Ilya thought for a second, before figuring what the hell. "I am honestly happy it happened now. Rather than later. It should have been, how do you say it, on his own terms?" He looked up to David for a nod of confirmation before continuing lamely, "But it was weighing on him. Not telling you."

David poured himself another two fingers and sighed heavily. "I noticed he was getting more withdrawn." Ilya nodded at this. "There were a couple times he was clearly dealing with... something. He would snap at us and get moody like he did when he was younger. He's usually so quiet so it was, well, uncharacteristic. When Scott Hunter kissed his boyfriend on TV...I looked over, trying to gauge his reaction. He was staring at the TV like a kid on Christmas. Or...maybe not the right analogy." David thought for a moment. This silence was more companionable than earlier. Ilya got the sense that the man did not usually speak so much.

David continued, "He was more like a kid who just found out that Santa didn't exist. Without the disappointment. It was like...he was piecing together that the world could be different than he thought. That just because he'd always been told something didn't necessarily mean

it was true. And then he got that call. I figured it was his boyfriend with how fast he picked up. And, I mean, I guess I wasn't wrong. I just, well, I didn't think that could be you."

Ilya pushed down every urge in his body that was screaming to make a joke about not realizing Santa was not real and decided to try his hand at emotional vulnerability.

"Yes, well. I had the same realization. He asked me to the cottage when he was injured." If his voice caught on the word, David was kind enough not to point it up. "I had to try. I would regret it if I didn't try."

"You make him happy," David said simply with a look of unadulterated, underlying respect. Ilya had to tear his gaze away. It was not a look a father should have.

Voice dripping with emotion, Ilya changed the subject. "Tell me more about, what was the fake job you said? Garden architect?"

David laughed, but it came out syrupy. Whether that was from emotion clogging David's throat or Ilya's ears, neither one could say.

David talked at length about different styles of gardens that Ilya couldn't even begin to pronounce, but he nodded along like he understood. He even threw in a question here and there to show he was keeping up. It may have been the most boring conversation he had ever had. When David started to dip into how garden design could impact commerce, especially in terms of the housing market, Ilya decided he had had enough.

Ilya waited for a natural pause before he interjected. "Should we be worried about them?" He asked with a nod to the glass door that separated them from Yuna and Shane.

David looked out the glass and shook his head slightly. "I think they need this. I can nearly guarantee Yuna is giving Shane a rundown on which brands have the best pride campaigns. She's been, uh, asking google a lot about different brands."

Ilya hummed and leaned his head against his hand. "I'd ask you what her findings were, but she will tell me soon I expect."

David laughed lightly. "Probably," he said with a crinkle of adoration decorating his eyes. It was nice to know that Ilya wasn't the only one in too deep when it came to Hollander neurosis.

Ilya changed the subject, looking for something to do besides awkwardly passing his glass from hand to hand. "Do you want to make lunch? Shane is always hungry after emotions."

David chuckled "Yuna too! I'm not much of a chef, but Yuna and I were going to make a simple carbonara tonight. I usually deal with any grilling and cleaning and whatnot, but she's better at recipes and such. Surely I can't mess up pasta. Do you eat pork?"

Ilya smiled, feeling more content in a home than he had in a long, long time. "Yes. And I can help. I cook a lot." He and Shane had pasta last night, but there was no way he was going to complain. If he was right, and he usually was, he thought David was maybe starting to like

him. Besides, he liked pasta. He only asked for hot dogs earlier to see how many different things he could get Shane to make him before his time here was over.

“Perfect. I think they’re nearly done out there anyways. Yuna will probably come in, take over in the kitchen, and kick me out before I light something on fire. I hate to say it, but it’s happened before. I hope you don’t mind being demoted.”

Ilya laughed with more brightness than he had mustered all evening. “Not at all!”

David gave him a lopsided smile that was all too familiar. “Good. That will give Shane some time to calm down. It also may be good for him to see you with Yuna. I think you two are similar.”

Ilya gasped dramatically which just made David make a gesture that could only be interpreted as “see?”

The ice which was constricting his chest melted at hearing how loved Shane was by his family. It helped to know how he could support Shane when he inevitably had a breakdown about this whole day later. He quietly stood up and followed David to the kitchen, happily humming to himself as David handed him things to cut. He was, he realized, for the first time in a long time, happy.

The feeling dissipated slightly when Shane and Yuna came back inside. Shane’s eyes were tear-streaked in a way that was entirely unfamiliar to Ilya; Shane fought like all of hell was on his tail to never let a single tear fall. Shane shook his head slightly, then tilted it to the living room when Ilya raised an eyebrow in question.

“I will be back. Take over for me please, David,” Ilya said as he passed the knife over and followed Shane out of earshot.

“How is it-” Ilya did not get to finish as Shane tucked his head into the crook of Ilya’s shoulder. Whatever conversation he had outside must have been emotionally wrought: this was the loosest he’d ever seen Shane’s shoulders. It was like all the fight had been wrung out of him. Ilya wrapped his arms loosely around Shane; he knew constriction would not do him any good right now.

“I’m good, sorry,” Shane said, slightly muffled by Ilya’s collarbone.

“It is okay if you’re not.”

“I am. I swear. Just. Ugh.”

Ilya hummed, and didn’t miss Shane’s contented exhale of breath at the rumble of Ilya’s chest. Ilya responded by gently rocking them by shifting his weight from side to side.

They swayed like that for a second before Ilya spoke. “Your father and I started making lunch, but we can go if you need.”

“I’m good.” Shane drew back his head to look at Ilya with a small smile. It may be the first time he smiled all afternoon. Ilya was glad to see it. “I can’t pass up a meal you helped to

make.” His smile fell. “I just. I need a second.”

“I understand. Yuna was good? About it?” Ilya asked carefully

Shane nodded. “Too good, maybe. It’s just. I wanted to do it myself. To tell her I’m gay before I told her about you. Ease her into it.”

“I know. I wish I could change time and have you tell her yourself, but now she knows we are 2-for-1. Package deal.”

Shane rolled his eyes. “I see you’re learning English from stickers at the supermarket.”

“Yes! It is very helpful. I know all kinds of words. Peach. Carrot. Eggplant...”

Shane pushed his shoulder and untangled himself from Ilya’s arms with the crinkle between his eyebrows that he got when Ilya teased him. Ilya wanted to kiss it. “I lied. I want to leave.”

“No, no. You’re eating my pasta. Come.”

They walked back into the kitchen with a healthy couple feet of space between them. No uncomfortable PDA in front of the Hollanders.

Yuna saw them walk back in and raised the spoon she was stirring the pasta with. “Thank god! Ro-” She cleared her throat, “Ilya! Come here. I need a better sous-chef. David tried to snap the pasta in half because it ‘wouldn’t fit in the pot otherwise.’ I tried to let him cut, but no two diced onions are anywhere near the same size!”

Ilya turned to Shane, who was already waving his hands in a ‘go ahead’ motion as he settled in the chair Yuna was in earlier. David passed him the knife with an utterance of “told you.” Yuna must have heard that, or just really wanted him out of the kitchen, because she threw a towel at him.

“Go clean the table.”

“Yes Ma’am!” David said with a mock bow. Yuna huffed and turned back toward the boiling water.

“So, Ilya...tell me about yourself.”

“Um. I am from Russia.” All three Hollanders let out an identical snort. “Ok. Wow. I see how it is. 3 on 1.” He played up his broken English to make a point, “Is unfair. I am just poor man who is cutting your food.”

Yuna shook her head fondly. “I meant something I couldn’t read off of a hockey card.” Gosh, Yuna could probably tell him his exact height and how much he weighed. He didn’t want to think about that.

What could he tell them about himself? His life was kind of reduced to hockey and Shane Hollander, who he assumed they knew well. “I, well, I like dogs.”

“Oh no. Shane’s allergic.”

Ilya turned his head to Shane with a smile. “Oh, that is a deal breaker. You will have to sleep outside. Our dog will get to share the bed with me.”

Shane sullenly crossed his arms, “That was a weird test from my mom, which I think you passed. I’m not allergic.”

Ilya sniffed—surely the onions were getting to him—as he thought about the fact that he didn’t know if Shane had any allergies. Now was not the time to ask though, so he played it cool and glanced at Yuna.

“You’re funny,” she said simply as the white countertop timer ticked down. “I suppose I expected Shane’s type to be funny.”

“Mom-” Shane cut in.

“No no, let her talk.” Ilya said with a laugh.

“Oh, I like you.”

Ilya hummed happily as he finished chopping the onions. Yuna drained the pasta while she pointed him to the scale to measure out cheese for the sauce. He was happy to see the scale was in grams as he shredded parmigiano over the metal plate.

Despite his claim that Shane was the one who got hungry after big emotions, Ilya found himself wolfing down the food like his life depended on it. It was really, really a good meal. He found himself included in David’s earlier joke as Yuna went over which brands she would let run pride campaigns. It may have been the best parental interaction he had ever had if not for Shane’s clear distress next to him.

Ilya tried to help ground Shane any way he could: a foot resting next to him, a knee pressed against knee, rubbing circles on his back as Shane had a panic attack.

As he heard soft murmurs from Yuna and David as he kissed Shane (a move he was apprehensive of in front of Shane’s parents) he knew it would all be okay. It was just a question of how to convince Shane of this fact, a task he knew he would have to do the second they returned to the cottage. Still, labeling the relationship seemed to help Shane. He was lighter after that.

A hug, a promise of dinner, a tupperware of leftovers, and one text about landscaping later, Shane and Ilya were on the way back to the cabin, hand in hand.

End Notes

So deep into this fandom that I'm reading articles from the New Yorker from JUNE 2019!!!!
Gosh I need to be sedated

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