Rings within rings within rings

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by eventhisacronym

Summary

5 times Yuna Hollander thought Ilya Rosanov’s mom should be with him, and one time she and Ilya agreed

Winter 2008

Yuna had been listening to Shane talk about this Ilya Rosanov kid for weeks. Every day after hockey practice, he had film review to prep for the World Juniors, and every night at the dinner table, he'd tell his parents about another play he saw by this Russian phenom, his eyes bright.

He'd been quieter about hockey after he was named to Canada's junior international team - Yuna worried maybe it was too much. He's just a kid, sports should still be fun, they shouldn't be this intense yet. But seeing how animated he was explaining to David how he'd replicated a backhand shot of Rosanov's that he'd overheard a scout raving about, Yuna felt confident this was the path her son wanted for himself. She'd support him no matter what.

The week ahead of their flight from Ottawa to Regina for the tournament had been a flurry of logistics. She had to make sure Shane packed all of his favorite equipment and clothes and backups of each, even though Team Canada was also providing uniforms and gear when they arrived.

Shane was a ball of nervous energy on the plane, but now that they approach the arena, Yuna sees him almost bursting with excitement. His cheeks were flush in the cold, the sun highlighted his freckles, and his smile beamed toward her.

He'd been taller than Yuna for a couple years now and was still growing. People treated him like an adult, expected him to make decisions about his future, but to her, he was still her little boy.

Yuna stops at the door to the arena as Shane notices someone down the alleyway.

"Mom, I think that's Ilya Rosanov - I'm just going to go over and say hi, I'll be right back."

She follows her son's line of sight toward the kid in the distance smoking and sighs. She'd heard the Russian delegation sends over all these boys with coaches, but no parents. They'd be better behaved if their mothers were here, she's sure.

But she knows Shane is excited to meet the only boy people say might actually be faster than he is. They are going to be in the same draft class, might even play in the NHL together one day if this all continues. Coaches and scouts are already been trying to pit them against one another. But they're both just kids, and it'd be nicer for Shane to have a friend.

"Okay, honey, I'll just be inside with the other parents."

When Shane finds her again in the bleachers of the arena, he's making the face Yuna knows means he was in his head about something.

"How'd it go?"

"Oh, uh, fine. He said he was going to beat us."

That's all he says, but he looks flatter than he did outside. Deflated, maybe. For Shane's whole mood to shift, Yuna thinks that kid really must've been an asshole. Well, so much for the plan where they're friends instead of rivals.

Summer 2009

Yuna has to be honest: she's glad her son was the second overall draft pick. First would've been exciting, and obviously historic, but she's overjoyed that Shane went to a Canadian team instead of Boston.

She just wishes first hadn't been Rosanov. He was so cocky, holding up the stupid #1 in photos.

As they speak with Shane's new coach at the after party, she knows she's being too effusive about her love of the Metros, but she's just so relieved it all worked out.

She'd been on edge for months with all the anticipation for the draft. Even yesterday, she was up all night trying not to wake David, worried it wasn't the right choice, letting Shane pursue hockey without going to college first. He could've had more time to grow before joining the league, while getting a degree as a backup plan.

But all of the experts they'd talked to said with his skill level, this would be the best route, with the most impact on the game and the most benefit for Shane. Shane is so talented, and he loves hockey, and she just wants him to be happy.

Yuna excuses herself from the conversation to go to the bathroom. Crossing across the ballroom, she sees Rosanov standing with an intense man in a uniform who must be his father and the Boston Raiders' coach.

His mom must've not wanted to make the trip from Russia, Yuna thinks to herself. She knows it's far, but she can't imagine not being next to Shane for this moment.

When she's crossing back toward her family, she notices the Rosanovs again. Ilya looks quieter than he did earlier at the post-draft photo opportunity. And younger, standing next to his father. She watches as a scowl come across his face in response to something his father says, and then sees him glance over to where Shane and David are standing. They must be talking about beating Montreal this season.

She hopes Shane beats him for rookie of the year. That'll show them.

Summer 2014

"David, how are you so chill about this? Rosanov looked right at Shane when he held up that MVP trophy. I swear, he smirked. The constant interview chirps are one thing, but openly taunting him in a room filled with basically every player and coach in the league?"

Yuna paces across their bedroom, vaguely getting ready for bed but too wired hating Ilya Rosanov to commit to it.

“I think you’re overreacting,” David says. He's in bed already, flipping through the latest New Yorker and pretending he might still get a quiet moment with his magazine before falling asleep. “He couldn’t have known where Shane was sitting. He just looked excited to win.”

“No way! He was absolutely taunting Shane. Shane has put up with so much from that kid. It’s not fair that he constantly has to share the spotlight with someone so infuriating, when he’s already got so much on his plate.”

"Mmm," David pauses for a second. “It must be harder for him, though.”

Yuna stops to give her husband a practiced glare.

David finally puts down his magazine and looks at his wife. “I mean, he was always alone at those tournaments when they were kids. In a place where he couldn’t even speak the language.

“Then moving to a whole new country when he wasn’t even 20. I’d have been scared.”

Yuna thinks about how she would’ve felt if Shane had moved to Russia to play hockey, instead of being drafted a relatively short drive from home. She'd been relieved he wasn't in Boston, which is still technically drivable. No oceans to cross.

"At least Shane has us, you know?"

She was able to move Shane into his new apartment and make sure he had everything he needed, and she and David attend home games whenever they want. Rosanov’s mom wouldn’t have been able to do any of that. She probably missed so many moments with her son.

“And he did play great hockey this season. It’s undeniable. Shane’s had so many wins, we can let this kid have one.”

Yuna is quiet as she finishes her nightly routine, thinking it over.

“He’s still an asshole,” she says as she finally climbs in bed with David.

May 2017

Yuna is on her way back to Shane's hospital room, having acquired what she knows will be one of the worst coffee's she's ever had. She’s exhausted, though, and hopes at least the warmth will keep her awake. She's almost to Shane's hallway when she notices a tall man with curly hair walking out toward the elevators.

"Rosanov?" Yuna asks, not really even to him, just shocked he's in her path at all.

Rosanov recognizes her and stops in his tracks. He stands up even straighter, claps his hands in front of him. "Mrs. Hollander, hello."

"What are you doing here?"

"Came to see Hollander. As Captain. Marlow feels terribly. I wanted to wish him quick recovery."

"That's very kind of you."

"Is nothing. I must get back for flight. I hope you are out of hospital soon."

"Thank you," Yuna offers. Then, "I was sorry to hear about your father, by the way."

Rosanov nods toward her, appreciating the sentiment but clearly not wanting to say more, and turns to walk toward the elevator bank.

As Yuna watches, she remembers the first time she tried to speak to him all those years ago. She'd thought he was rude at the time, but seeing him now, she realizes he was probably just a nervous kid in an elevator. Away from his home, away from his family, trying to get back to his room.

She had been surprised to learn his mom had passed away when he was young. It was buried in a few of the stories about his father passing away. He's done so much of this alone, and he shouldn't have had to.

It was nice of him to come. People have made such a big deal about his and Shane's rivalry, but they've known each other for almost a decade. Played against each other 100 times by now.

Shane wouldn't be the skater he is today if he didn't have Rosanov to beat, and she's sure the same goes for him. When they played together at the All Star Game, David had even said how happy Shane looked to have someone on his line who could keep up with him. She imagines there's no one on the planet who can understand what Shane is going through more, actually.

The realization hits her harder than she'd have expected. She hopes their visit can be the start of something good.

June 2017

As she watches the Raiders play the Admirals, Yuna realizes Rosanov is favoring his left side. It's unlike him, and makes him easy to predict for once. He hits the boards on his right trying to get the puck out of the corner. She notices Rosanov take an extra second to recover after he loses the puck to Hunter, and put his hand on his side briefly as he skates back toward the midline.

"He's playing hurt. It's his ribs, I bet," she says to Shane.

"How do you know that?" Shane asks.

"Am I right?" She watched him take a bad hit in his game a few days ago. She knows she's right.

"I don't know."

She hadn’t realized she’d been tracking Rosanov enough to know his tells, but she guesses it's a habit after all these years. And with none of Shane's games to worry about at the moment, she's been watching Rosanov's.

Since the hospital, she’d thought more about what his experience must have been like. Coming to North America barely knowing the language. No mom to help. She knows how hard it was for Shane with all the pressure on a young captain, and he could drive home whenever he wanted.

She doesn't know how Shane would've been able to manage this injury without her. Does Rosanov have anyone checking on him?

Over dinner, she decides to ask. She’d want someone to ask after Shane if she wasn’t here.

“Shane, do you think Rosanov has anyone to help with his ribs?”

“They’ve got a team doctor in Boston just like here,” Shane says, matter of fact. "I'm sure he's talking with them."

“I know, but at home, I mean. I know his parents both passed away. Do you know if he’s got friends or a girlfriend in Boston? Would his teammates help?”

Shane’s quiet for a second. “Um, probably, yeah. I mean, I think he has someone looking out for him.”

“I hope so. I can’t imagine you having to go through this injury without your dad and I to help.”

“I’ll text him if you want -”

“You have his number?” David interjects, surprised.

“Uh, yeah, I got it at, um, some event we did together a few years back,” Shane says and David nods.

“It’s okay, Shane. I don’t think he needs to know I’m watching that closely. He’s still the enemy after all.”

As she says it, she realizes she doesn’t mean to like she used to.

+ Spring 2021

With Shane still in Montreal, Yuna is happy Ilya asked her to help with some of the wedding planning around Ottawa. Together, most easy decisions had been figured out, but the more Yuna thought about it, the more she worried the whole thing was too... Hollander. Not enough Rosanov.

They are sitting at her dining room table, having tea after a meeting with the caterer before Ilya heads off to practice, when Yuna decides this is her moment.

“I’ve been thinking about how to make sure more of you is represented at the wedding, not just Shane or you both together, and I'd like to run some ideas past you."

"Okay," Ilya nods, clearly unsure of where she's heading.

“First, I had David put together a list of vodkas he knows you like for the bar, can you look it over and make sure it’s acceptable?” Yuna starts with, sliding Ilya a piece of paper. That puts a smile on his face, just like she hoped.

“Yes, Yuna, thank you.”

"Second, I know we decided on simple decor, but I've been thinking - do you want to do anything to honor your mom? Something she’d have liked to see, maybe flowers?”

“Peonies were her favorite,” Ilya says. “Maybe peonies.”

“That’s perfect. I’ll make sure the florist focuses on peonies. I was also thinking - I know you and Shane want to walk down the aisle together, no one giving anyone away, but - could I sit on your side of the aisle?”

Ilya is quiet and looks away, and Yuna is concerned she's overstepped.

“I don’t have to, honey, it’s fine, but I didn’t think it would be fair for both David and I to be on Shane’s side when we love you both so I thought -“

Ilya turns back toward Yuna, and takes her hand.

“Is not - I mean, yes, I would like that. Very much,” Ilya says, eyes glassy.

“It’s done then. I’m on your side.”

Yuna senses Ilya needs a moment, so she squeezes his hand, sips her tea, and waits.

“I wish my mother were here with us,” Ilya says finally.

“Oh, sweetheart, me too,” Yuna’s eyes water as she looks at her new son, and she puts her hand on his cheek. "And I know I can’t replace her, but anytime you need a mom, I’ll do my best.”

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