

so, rookie year, huh?

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by [theresidentmartian](#)

Summary

Yuna could not have predicted she'd be sitting beside Ilya Rozanov in the warm breeze of a July evening, tucked behind the rock wall in Shane's cottage backyard, grass tickling the backs of their legs. He wasn't what she had expected. Quieter. Every bit as gorgeous as the TV screens sold him to be, and then some—baked into crooked grins and lopsided curls and sun-kissed skin and tilted accent. Beneath it all, a well. Too much, spilling over. She could see why her son fell so hard.

In other words: Ilya and Yuna have a conversation when the Hollander family meets for dinner the day after Shane comes out.

Notes

got consumed after watching (read: crying through) the finale with the idea of what yuna and ilya's first real conversation would look like. she already knows he loves her son, and that he feels comfortable with them (anyone else catch that when ilya said "we're good here" he looked to yuna for confirmation? just me?) but yuna being yuna, and being a good mother, I know she wouldn't be able to leave ilya alone without getting to know him and his relationship to shane. so voila. fic.

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

If you had asked Yuna Hollander two days ago, she knew hockey. She had known that Rozanov had competed with bruised ribs in the playoffs and she had known Scott Hunter was going to lead the Admirals to a win. She could recite the likelihoods of each team winning this next year. In fact, her ability to predict and analyze the world of hockey was something she prided herself on.

And if you had asked Yuna Hollander two days ago, she knew her son.

Now, she wasn't so sure. Of all the things she could have predicted, Ilya Rozanov in her house was not one of them. Her son confessing love for his sworn rival, another. And since rookie season...

And she could not have predicted she'd be sitting beside him in the warm breeze of a July evening, tucked behind the rock wall in Shane's cottage backyard, grass tickling the backs of their legs. He wasn't what she had expected. Quieter. Every bit as gorgeous as the TV screens sold him to be, and then some—baked into crooked grins and lopsided curls and sun-kissed skin and tilted accent. Beneath it all, a well. Too much, spilling over. Yuna could see why her son fell so hard.

Her son, who had worried she would scare away the lonely man he loved, whispering, "Go easy on him, please."

But Ilya hadn't been afraid of her questions the way Shane was, and answered them all with startling honesty, his hazel honey eyes drizzling over the shoreline. When she'd sat herself down beside him, she said, "So, rookie year, huh?"

He just laughed, an uncomplicated sound. "Summer before. It was not much, really. It was just... curious. Curious and dangerous. And Shane was, well... beautiful and reliable and eager and secret. One time turned into two, turned into three, turned into more. Before Rose Landry, it was every time we played, mostly."

"How did Rose arrive in the picture?" What she really wanted to ask was, *How'd it stop? Or did it not?* She'd heard the meet-cute from Rose herself, watched Shane corroborate it with the same half-smile he used when cracking a joke in front of the press. But she wanted to hear it from Ilya, who was perhaps the only one who knew the truth of that time.

Softly, Ilya breathed, "It got too real. I loved him more than I should have, and he was so scared. I was, too, but different. Scared less of being gay than being alone. Shane has never been alone and I don't want him to be. Is okay that he panicked. He learned to be perfect before he learned to be himself." He said it simply, like it was just part of Shane he'd long come to terms with, blaming no one. But Yuna couldn't help the stab of guilt. Then, gritting his teeth like it pained him to admit, Ilya added, "Rose was good to him. For him. Kind enough to help where I could not."

Yuna picked a blade of grass at her side, lush and vicious, inspecting the rich green folds and edges. "Rose helped him realize he's gay?"

“Yes,” said Ilya. “And that we were more than just good sex. At the All-Star game, we talked. It was terrifying but good. Then my father, *мудак*, went and died. On the phone from Moscow, I said to Shane that I love him.” Suddenly, he took on a teasing air, as if the evening breeze had switched direction, switched scent. Ilya winked. “In Russian, of course. He does not need to know.”

This, of course, drew a laugh from Yuna, the glimpse into Ilya’s disarming humor lightening their conversation, for the moment. But then his gaze, kind, drifted behind her to the man with dark hair standing at the barbeque grill, and she couldn’t help but follow it. Wordlessly, lovingly.

“Shane got hurt the next game we played. I thought maybe this was all we were meant for, yes? Pain, distraction.” His accent coiled around the *t*’s, pooled at the *a*’s. “He asked me at the hospital if I would come here. I was going to say no...”

It changed things, for me at least. Maybe for us. “Until Scott Hunter?”

Ilya’s eyes snapped back to hers. Surprised, like he hadn’t quite expected to be seen. “Yes. Ancient dinosaur Scott Hunter,” he said drily, bracketed with a wry smile.

“He *is* getting up there in hockey years, isn’t he?” said Yuna, meeting Ilya where he was at. Scott Hunter may have been in top shape, but that didn’t mean he wasn’t on the older end of the MLH age spectrum.

“I keep trying to tell Shane. He does not listen to me when I say Hunter is old. He says Hunter is only few years older than us.”

Nudging him with her shoulder, Yuna said, “Well, let me tell you a little secret. No matter what Shane tries to tell you, I know more about hockey than him.”

That little smirk twisted Ilya’s lips again. “Oh, I know.”

They both chuckled, then lapsed into gentle silence. Yuna watched the forest ripple, abundant blossoming emerald in the squall. She heard the waves lapping low, licking the rocky shore. She smelled the promise of char on the air, chicken being cooked. Beside her, Ilya was playing with the chain around his neck—golden thread tethered to a golden boy.

“I’m sorry about your father,” she said finally.

But he just shook his head. “Don’t be.”

Quietly and carefully, like pressing a thumbprint into a bruise, Yuna asked, “Do you have a mother, Ilya?”

“I did,” he replied, still fingering that orthodox cross, staring far away past the horizon.

“How did she die?”

Somehow, from the tilt of his lips, she knew Shane had solicited the same question.

“My father always said it was an accident...” he sighed. “But nobody swallows that many pills by accident.”

Sorry felt like an empty word, cut to pieces from meaningless repetition. Yuna could only imagine the number of times Ilya had heard the word in English, from people who cared less than nothing about his grief. So instead, she wrapped an arm around his shoulders, felt his muscles tense in shock and unsurety, then felt him relax into the touch. “I know I can’t replace her,” she murmured. “But I’ll be a mother to you whenever you need. For as long as you love my son.”

“Forever, I hope,” Ilya said. “I hope I love him forever.”

Surprisingly easily, his head fell to Yuna’s shoulder, settling into home. They stayed like that until David called over, “Dinner’s ready!”

Ilya—reluctantly, if Yuna’s insight was correct—extracted himself from her embrace, rising to his feet and holding out one of his large hands in offering. She took it gratefully, and as soon as she was steady, he swept her into a hug. “Thank you,” he whispered in her ear.

As they sat down to eat, Shane asked warily, “So what did you two talk about?”

“Oh, you know,” said Yuna. “How old Scott Hunter is getting. Stuff like that.”

“You were right, Hollander,” Ilya said with the teasing smirk she hated on seeing on the ice but was starting to love off it. “Your mom is *scary*.”

“Fuck off,” Shane complained, doing his best to look annoyed, but when Ilya kissed his cheek, a dazzling grin broke containment. Yuna couldn’t remember the last time she saw her son smile like that.

With a clap of his hands, Ilya said, “Let us eat, yes?”

Yuna observed the two closely during dinner. Hands flitted across forearms and thighs, kisses across hairlines, glances across skin and sky.

By the time the sun set, streaking in brilliant fire, they had enveloped one another in casual intimacy. *I hope I love him forever.*

If you asked Yuna Hollander in this moment, she’d say that no family could ever be perfect. But she sure thought that hers came pretty damn close.

End Notes

posting in a new fandom is always scary and I hate to make early promises, but I have a couple more ideas cooking around for these characters that I'd really love to see come to fruition. we'll see what happens. whether you see me in the future or not, thanks for reading :)

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