

Chemistry, huh? (or how Ilya Rozanov gets added to the Hollander family group chat)

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Chemistry, huh? (or how Ilya Rozanov gets added to the Hollander family group chat)

by [you-cant-spell-subtext-without \(ayreisha\)](#)

Summary

“Uh, Ilya? More vodka?” David offers tentatively.

“Sure, okay. Maybe one more,” Ilya says. He’s not entirely sure what's considered an acceptable drink limit for the occasion of ‘Surprise! Your son is gay and I’ve been fucking him in secret under the nose of the entire MLH and Scott Hunter in the hotel room next door, and I’m in love with him, actually,’ but given the look on his face, well - David might need the second drink more than Ilya does at this present moment.

Notes

I keep thinking about the conversation Ilya and David had while Shane and Yuna outside, and then a lovely person on threads pointed out that David tells the boys to check their PHONES (plural!) when they leave for the cottage and well, this story kind wrote itself from there. It's un beta-ed so apologies for any errors in any fashion. My first hollanov story so please be kind in the comments; I just love these two and want to write more in their world <3

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

“Shane?” David Hollander calls after his son as he rises from the table, clearly intending to follow his mom’s retreating footsteps. Shane’s shoulders are tense, and Ilya can already see the shimmer of tears lining his eyes.

“I’m just - going to bring her a sweater. It’s chilly,” Shane says quickly, his rushed voice masking the emotion that’s written all over his face. He locks eyes with Ilya, and subtly shakes his head.

No.

Ilya’s nod in response is equally small, though every molecule of his body wants to lunge out of his seat, grab Shane’s hand, and walk outside with him. He has a feeling this particular conversation is going to be even harder than the ones they’ve been having with both of Shane’s parents since David Hollander’s accidental venture into lake front voyeurism.

All of this because of a phone charger. Ilya can’t fathom a sillier way for them to be outed. He has a nagging feeling he’s going to spend the rest of this week on edge in case one of Shane’s parents runs out of Tide pods or decides to meander over for a cup of flour.

If the ‘rest of the week’ is even in the cards for them, now.

Ilya frowns at the twinge of doubt underscoring that thought. If anything good has come out of this, Shane has shown him that this time - he’s sticking around. This thing between them, the puck they’ve both been chasing for years - it’s finally nearing the net, and neither seem to be backing down from attempting the goal.

Gospodi. The fact that Ilya’s thinking in hockey metaphors probably means he’s definitely been spending too much time around Shane.

Not that he minds that, at all. In fact, there may be no such thing as ‘too much’ time with Shane Hollander.

Chert vozmi. These new and annoyingly recurring sappy thoughts Ilya’s been having recently are borderline disgusting.

The sound of someone clearing their throat interrupts his mental calisthenics, and Ilya suddenly realizes he’s been lightly spiraling in pensive silence at the Hollanders’ living room table with the patriarch of the family still sitting directly across from him.

“Uh, Ilya? More vodka?” David offers tentatively.

“Sure, okay. Maybe one more,” Ilya says. He’s not entirely sure what’s considered an acceptable drink limit for the occasion of ‘Surprise! Your son is gay and I’ve been fucking him in secret under the nose of the entire MLH and Scott Hunter in the hotel room next door, and I’m in love with him, actually,’ but given the look on his face, well - David might need the second drink more than Ilya does at this present moment.

David rises to get the bottle, refilling their glasses and takes a sip before sitting back down. His free hand starts tapping the top of the table.

The tiny nervous tic reminds Ilya of Shane.

Huh. Perhaps it's not just Shane's 'boringness' that is genetic.

Something in Ilya's chest clenches, and he suddenly wants to try and lighten the mood, for both of their sakes.

Unfortunately this requires the act of having an actual conversation, and presently the topics at Ilya's disposal are lacking. He considers bringing up David's comment on their chemistry at the All-Star game, mainly because it gave Ilya some personal pause, as well as a feeling of genuine fondness - that someone had actually *noticed* what Ilya himself privately considers the turning point in their relationship. God knows that weekend is a memory Ilya often returns to on days when things feel gloomier and he needs just a glimmer of light to pull through.

No. Stupid.

"So, Shane told me you spend all summer here, together?"

Yuck. The shallow small talk feels flat across the thick atmosphere of the room, still weighted with all of the secrets they've recently unleashed. Ilya practically cringes at his own words.

"Yup, yup. Every year," David replies. He pauses. "Though recently Shane's spent most of that time on his phone." David tilts his head, looking at Ilya. "I suppose I know why, now."

His tone isn't necessarily cold, but Ilya's shoulders tense in an almost pavlovian response, waiting for the slight that will surely follow.

"I'm sorry," the words slip from Ilya's mouth inadvertently, because Ilya doesn't even truly know what he's apologizing for - approaching Shane all those years ago, after that photoshoot? Taking him away from his family in more ways than one, whether it's the additional screen time or the years of secrets Shane kept about their informal arrangement? Being the very reason Shane couldn't have this conversation with his family sooner and on his own terms?

David's eyes seem to soften.

"Hey," he says, reaching a hand across the table slightly, though not far enough to touch Ilya's. "I'm happy he had someone to talk to. About...everything."

Ilya gives him a tentative smile in response, and takes a sip of his drink, slowly. "Yes. He - he does like to talk. Asks many questions."

This topic is better. It feels nice, to be able to actually talk about Shane - openly and without pretense.

David's lips stretch into a wider smile, his expression growing fond. "Yeah, he's been that way since he was little. Always a 'yapper' - like the kids are saying these days. He wanted to know the ins and the outs of everything and anything. So curious."

Their first night together comes crashing through Ilya's mind.

Curious?

Curious.

And you make me curious.

"Yes," he says slowly, feeling the smile starting to stretch across his face like it always does when he lets himself think about Shane unrestrained. This time, he doesn't try to cover or hide it. "That sounds like my Shane."

And *oops* - Ilya didn't intend to verbally add that small additional possessive, the one that always precedes Shane's name in his mind these days. His lips immediately clamp shut, the feeling of worry rising in his chest at clearly having said too much, too soon, to Shane's father - of all people - Shane's father who Ilya's only met a few hours ago in a jarring manner for them both.

Blyat. Shane is really going to regret leaving Ilya alone here, probably.

He looks up at David expecting a reprimand or a reproach and meets a gaze that's lined with the same glint of tears that so often fill Shane's when he's having trouble expressing a very large emotion.

"I'm sorry," Ilya says again, unsure if David's tears are happy or sad.

David wipes moisture from his right eye, shaking his head. "No, no. Please. You don't need to apologize. You've done nothing wrong."

Ilya appreciates the words but he's not sure they're accurate. The dizzying spiral of Shane's panic in response to David's unannounced visit to the cottage remains engrained in his mind, as does Shane's earlier insinuation that his parents don't necessarily harbor positive opinions when it comes to the person of his archrival, much less the idea of the two of them together.

Sometimes I think I would have told them already.

It's silent for a moment, both men seemingly searching for something to say.

"I'm - um, I'm sorry about your father," David comes up with finally, because of course just when Ilya thinks the conversation couldn't take a worse turn, the universe tells him to fuck all the way off.

"Yes," he says carefully. This is the part where Ilya should follow that word with an '*I miss him*' or '*he was a good man*' but he's not sure more lies need to be added to the pile already disassembled on the floor of this room.

He finally goes with:

“He is no longer suffering. At peace.”

The words are very similar to the ones he had to say over and over as a child, repeating them like a mantra to concerned looking adults for months after Irina passed, and suddenly Ilya’s throat feels tight. A light ringing fills his ears, and he shakes his head slightly, hoping to dissipate it.

He reaches for his vodka like a life preserver - only to realize the glass is empty.

David picks up the bottle and refills it without being asked, then tops off his own, his expression pensive. He takes a breath.

“Listen, Ilya - none of this is ideal -”

Here it comes. Ilya braces again, taking another swallow of his drink, readying himself for the dressing-down he surely deserves for ruining Shane’s - well, whole fucking life, as far as his father is probably concerned.

“But you’ve done nothing wrong.” David Hollander’s voice is soft.

Ilya’s gaze darts up at him in surprise. Deep sympathy is lining the older man’s brow.

Suddenly, Ilya feels a little drunk - and he’s not sure if it’s the burn of the vodka or the small, tentative trickle of relief that’s cooling the buzz of his nervous system.

Still, because Ilya is Ilya - he has to push the question, just a little.

“Well. I have feeling that perhaps this is not the tender family moment you have always dreamed of,” he says, gesturing around the kitchen table and then at himself.

David shrugs. “When it comes to Shane, my dreams aren’t the important ones. It’s his.”

Ilya blinks at him, trying to comprehend this manner of parental thinking.

“Look,” David says. “Does Shane make you happy?”

“Yes,” Ilya says immediately, without reservation. He tries to remember the last time his father asked him a question like that. Memory fails him - or perhaps it succeeds, and the answer is actually ‘never.’

“Do you make Shane happy?”

That query gives Ilya some pause. A flood of images fills his mind.

Shane, opening the door for Ilya in Montreal before shoving him into the wall, the two of them laughing as they run up the stairs. Shane’s eyelashes fluttering after they kiss in the stairwell. Shane’s shy, needy smile in the awards show bathroom. Shane’s face filled with sunshine as Ilya plants a kiss on his cheek during the All Star Game. Shane intoning Ilya’s

name from his hospital bed like it's his favorite song. Shane stocking the cottage fridge with food so they don't have to leave. Shane's smile against Ilya's lips when they kiss. Shane asking if Ilya is okay with tenderness in his eyes. Shane asking Ilya anything at all, really - those little questions Ilya always pretends to hate but has secretly come to adore, especially when Shane's eyes light up after Ilya has answered one. The way that when Shane accuses Ilya of being an asshole, now it sounds more endearment than insult. Shane staying up all night to plan a future that Ilya can be a part of, them alone - together.

And is that what you want? To be together?

So much. So much it scares me.

"Yes, probably." Ilya says slowly. Then he meets David's gaze and says more firmly. "I think so. Yes."

David is smiling. "Well, that's enough for me." He puts down his glass, and stands, opening his arms. "Welcome to the family, Ilya. Can I give you a hug?"

Oh. Ilya's not sure how to react to this abrupt display of familial closeness. Thank god for the vodka loosening some inhibitions of what the 'norm' should be, because he's standing before he knows it and suddenly David Hollander's arms are wrapped around him and Ilya finds himself fighting back tears yet again in the space of the past twenty-four hours.

This effect of Hollanders must also be genetic.

The onslaught of emotion is more visceral and overwhelming than could be expected, and Ilya firmly decides in the back of his mind that he is never, *ever* letting David Hollander pour him vodka again because clearly he's been - overserved.

He tries to keep his shoulders from shaking so David doesn't notice, but the more he pushes against the deluge of feelings, the more they take on a life of their own, and suddenly Ilya Rozanov finds himself making a very embarrassing sniffing noise into Shane's father's cotton-clad shoulder.

"Hey, hey," David says softly, rubbing Ilya's back. "It's okay. It's okay. You're safe here. Okay? Everything is going to be okay now."

This time, Ilya pushes back the 'I'm sorry' and instead gruffly mumbles "Thank you," his voice muffled. He takes a quick breath and pulls himself out of the hug, quickly rubbing his eyes dry.

He looks up to see David doing the same. Ilya wants to say more to him, but English is too hard right now. "Thank you," he says again, hoping that somehow those two words will contain the vastness of the relief that's flooding his entire body. Thinking for a moment, he adds:

"I see why Shane is such a great guy. Raised by good parents."

David's smile goes wobbly and he rubs one of his eyes again. "I'm going to put some pasta on. I think we may need to soak up the alcohol. But first -"

He pulls out his phone, handing it to Ilya. Ilya looks at him, confused.

"Shane's sharing texting privileges with all of us now. Put in your number, and I'll add you to the group chat."

Ilya takes it with a grin. "I see. It's - what is word - self-preservation?"

David laughs. "Yes, very much so. There are some things a father genuinely never needs to see again. Would you like to help me get dinner started, Ilya?"

Ilya follows David to the kitchen, pure joy exploding in his chest like a ray of warm, glowing sun. His face turns sassy as he hands David the box of noodles, his entire body no longer tense or on alert.

"Oh, I meant to ask earlier - the All-Star Game - so you think Shane and I had *chemistry*, David? I'd like to hear more about that." He says it playfully, a bright grin across his face.

David rolls his eyes but his expression is good-natured. "Don't make me replace your number in Shane's phone with the one of those nice men in Montreal." He hands Ilya a bottle of water, then pauses to add earnestly:

"But there was something lighter about Shane that weekend. Even watching on TV, I noticed. So yes, you had *chemistry* - just not the kind I was thinking of at the time, I guess."

Ilya claps him on the back amicably. "David Hollander, I like you. And after dinner, I will teach you how to win at cards."

End Notes

this work and any other in the hollanov universe that i write is forever dedicated to rachel reid and jacob tierney. thank you for giving us this beautiful world.

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