

family day

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76341966) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76341966>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , David Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , David Hollander , Harris Drover , Nick Chouinard , Wyatt Hayes
Additional Tags:	Canon Compliant , Family Dynamics , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Found Family , Ottawa Centaurs (Game Changers)
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-24 Words: 4,236 Chapters: 1/1

family day

by [jacemorgensterns](#)

Summary

Just like every season, the Ottawa Centaurs organise a family day. And just like every season, Ilya intends to skip it. He's convinced otherwise and surprised once he gets there. Set between Heated Rivalry and The Long Game, but not spoiler-free for TLG.

“Fine,” Shane said, leaning in to kiss Ilya. “But you’ll have to go to the Centaurs’ family day, or this is all off the table.”

If this was how all blackmail worked, then Ilya was suddenly very much a fan of the concept.

“I will go to the Centaurs’ family day,” Ilya promised solemnly. “And then you will be naked in a hotel room for me. Are you happy now? Can we continue making dinner?”

Notes

inspired by [this](#) reddit post on the heated rivalry subreddit about father’s trips in the nhl. i took the concept and ran with it, as one does.

if you’re subscribed to me from the rwrw fandom or even the hp fandom and wondering what i’m up to now; go check out heated rivalry! the story is incredible, the cinematography is beautiful and the soundtrack is absolutely stellar. could not recommend it more.

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

It was family day at the Ottawa Centaurs.

Ilya appreciated that they didn't make it a father's trip like some other teams did. It was not just with fathers, even if to his understanding any mentor figures were welcome. It was not a trip either, even if to his understanding it would be a couple of days at best. It was, arguably, way less of a spectacle than some of the other teams made it, but a celebration of family and companionship regardless.

Rookies brought their parents to show them their place of work and meet some of their more experienced teammates. Those more experienced teammates were a mixed bag; some brought their parents as well, while others took their wives and sometimes kids too. Some even did both. Their coaching staff was fine with all of it, because it at least kept the atmosphere good. It sure wasn't going to help them win enough games to make the play-offs because they never did.

After a midday practice a few days ago, Harris came over to ask him about a social media segment he wanted to shoot that he thought of. He wanted to highlight the Centaurs' hobbies so the fans could get to know the team on a more personal level. Harris explained that was how the fans could further connect with them.

"You are going to make barbecue with Bood, yes?" Ilya guessed. Bood took every excuse to invite the team over to eat his barbecue food, especially in the winter. Not that Ilya showed up most of the time, though.

"You know it!" Bood hollered over the sound of their teammates talking excitedly, like he had radar for someone talking about him.

"Yes, it will be another excuse for Bood to turn on the barbecue and make his favourites," Harris said with his characteristic laugh. "And I will have to help him eat some of it. It's a tough job." He grinned at Ilya like it wasn't. "I assume you want to do your segment about your cars?"

Ilya thought about that for a moment. His teammates as well as Harris knew about his liking of sports cars. He supposed it would make for an interesting segment to watch. He couldn't say he really had a hobby of his own that Harris could highlight. His house had traces of Shane all over it, often including Shane himself, and when Shane was on the road Ilya tended to spend his evenings watching hockey. It was nothing that could be considered a hobby realistically.

Ilya put the last few items in his bag, grabbed his jacket and made a beeline for the hallway, gesturing for Harris to go with him. Shane was going to stay at Ilya's house until tomorrow morning before going on the road for a week. He would probably beat Ilya by getting home, since their practice ran long.

“Cars is fine,” Ilya said, mostly noncommittal.

If Harris noticed that Ilya was in a rush and would probably say yes to most ideas he had just so he could get out of the building, he didn’t let it show. He smiled and said: “I’m looking forward to it, Ilya!” like it was the most exciting thing he’d do that year. “We can schedule it soon, I think. Ideally when it’s not freezing and snowing.”

Ilya had lived in Ottawa long enough to know that was like wishing for miracles. “I do not think that will happen, Harris,” he said.

“I have some faith that the weather will hold up for a bit longer,” Harris said, still walking with Ilya although they had passed the exit to the offices by now. “I saw that you didn’t sign up for family day.”

“I never do, Harris,” Ilya reminded him, sure that Harris was well-aware of that by now. Ilya was on the ice for every mandatory and optional practice, was present for every team meeting and made a point out of attending everything the Centaurs did for charity, especially the visits to the hospital. He wasn’t known for attending many social events, though.

The entire league also knew that Ilya didn’t have a father that could attend the father’s trip with him. Though the Bears kept the reason for Ilya’s quick trip back to Moscow quiet at the time that it happened, it came out pretty fast once Ilya came back to Boston. Ilya hadn’t really cared. Some players from other teams offered him their condolences and he’d mostly been nice about those. Then the interest blew over and he could go back to playing hockey. The knowledge remained and Ilya was sure that Harris knew it too.

Thanks to the existence of the Irina Foundation and Ilya choosing to speak about it when he did the first press conference about the foundation with Shane, most of the league was also somewhat aware of the situation with Ilya’s mother. It wasn’t something that anyone ever chose to speak about unless prompted. Harris, who was more knowledgeable about players and their backgrounds than most, definitely knew about it.

Harris nodded. “I just wanted to make sure,” he said. “Have a good one, Ilya. Maybe try posting yourself on your Instagram sometime.”

“Maybe,” Ilya said vaguely. “Thanks! See you tomorrow.”

Harris’ words about family day, though he said very little of them, lingered in the back of Ilya’s mind as he arrived home. He found Shane’s car already parked in the garage, confirming his suspicions that Shane beat him to getting home. When he walked into the house, he found Shane in the kitchen chopping vegetables.

After Ilya kissed him about ten times, happy to have him there for another night and more than eager to let it show, Shane asked: “How was practice?”

“It was fine,” Ilya said. “Hazy was really good. Another All-Star season.” Wyatt Hayes, the Ottawa goaltender, proved during every practice session why the Centaurs had been so intent on trading for him from Toronto.

“That’ll make it even more fun to put a few goals past him,” Shane said with a grin on his face. “Hayden was doing really well at practice as well.”

“Hayden?” Ilya asked incredulously. “Hayden Pike? Are you sure about this?”

Shane rolled his eyes and nudged him in the ribs before kissing him again. “Come help me cut these peppers,” he said.

Ilya peppered some kisses down Shane’s neck, just to make a point, before moving to get a cutting board and a knife. Cooking with Shane was probably the most fun domestic activity that they did. Ilya liked to think they were both good at it. They understood each other and what they needed to do in the kitchen much like they did on the ice or in the bedroom.

“Does Montreal have family days?” Ilya wondered. He would understand why Shane never mentioned it, but they tended to talk about everything.

“Family days?” Shane repeated, frowning until he understood what Ilya was getting at. “Like a father’s and mentor’s trip? Sure. They do that sometimes.”

In the past few years, Shane and Ilya talked about everything. They messaged each other all the time. They called almost every day. If their schedules permitted it, they saw each other every week. It was therefore odd that Shane had never mentioned it before. It could be old hat to him because surely both David and Yuna had attended these sorts of events multiple times by now. They already skipped the end-of-the-year award gala and the All-Star weekend because they’d seen it multiple times before, so it might be the same for these occasions. Still, it was unlike Shane not to at least mention it.

Of course, the reason he wasn’t mentioning it could also be fairly obvious. It could be Ilya. But he had to know that Ilya wasn’t bothered by it, right?

“You never said anything about them,” Ilya said.

“I didn’t know you expected me to say anything about them,” Shane replied.

“I don’t mind,” Ilya replied with emphasis.

Shane glanced aside at Ilya for a moment. He put the knife he was cutting with down on the cutting board and turned to look at Ilya directly. “You’ve put a lot of things in perspective for me about the league,” he said.

Ilya, sensing that this was important to Shane, put his knife down too. He turned so he was standing with his back against the counter and looked aside at Shane from there. He wasn’t sure what Shane was getting at yet.

“You and I are very different,” Shane elaborated and Ilya nodded in agreement, so Shane continued to talk. “Not just in personalities, but also what our lives looked like and what our families looked like.”

“Yes, you are an only child and I have an older brother,” Ilya agreed.

“Things like that. My parents both live here. But we have so many European players, Russians and others, and players that move halfway across the country or even from the United States to Canada to play hockey, and not all of them have their families here. Not all of them can fly their mentors in for a mentor’s day.”

“Yes, I know all of this. This is why I don’t mind you talking about it.”

Shane grimaced a little, but whatever reason he was grimacing for didn’t come up. Instead, he asked: “What do the Centaurs do for father’s trips?”

“They do family day,” Ilya replied. “The players invite their families. It does not matter who, as long as they matter to them. Most of them take their wives and sometimes their children. We get a few parents and mentors, but not so much.”

It wasn’t as big of a deal as they made it in Boston, back when Ilya played there. Family day was on a sign-up basis as well, so it wasn’t mandatory to even show up.

“You should go,” Shane said, suddenly determined.

“Shane,” Ilya said, the voice of a man who was long used to their partner wanting the best for them and not always agreeing with their perception of it. What a thing to get used to.

“No, Ilya, I’m serious,” Shane protested. “I’m going to be on the road and you always talk about how good the atmosphere at your team is. You’re their captain and they all speak highly of you. They will want you there.”

“It does not matter if they want me there,” Ilya replied. “I will go to morning practice and then go home.”

Shane looked at him in a certain way that Ilya found very hard to resist. He was pouting a bit and his eyes were wide, like he wanted something so badly that he almost needed it and was about to admit that. Admittedly the context was usually sexual so Ilya wasn’t sure why he was looking at Ilya like that now.

“Hollander?” Ilya asked, raising his eyebrows. “What do you want?”

“I want you to go to the family day event,” Shane said. “You’ll have fun. I’ll even -” he hesitated for a few seconds, making Ilya impatient, before adding: “I’ll kick Hayden out of the hotel room and videocall you after. Or I can make sure he leaves late after practice, I’ll figure it out.”

“Is good for Hayden, he needs the practice,” Ilya said. “You will wear your glasses, yes? And be naked when I pick up the call?”

“Fine,” Shane said, leaning in to kiss Ilya. “But you’ll have to go to the Centaurs’ family day, or this is all off the table.”

If this was how all blackmail worked, then Ilya was suddenly very much a fan of the concept.

“I will go to the Centaurs’ family day,” Ilya promised solemnly. “And then you will be naked in a hotel room for me. Are you happy now? Can we continue making dinner?”

Not quite yet, because Shane had to pin Ilya to the counter and kiss him first. It was another excellent argument in Shane’s favour. It also made Ilya want to drag him to whatever place was nearest that had lube - Ilya had it hidden all over the house, naturally, but not in the kitchen unfortunately - but that would have to wait until after dinner.

And so it was that Ilya stayed for lunch at the club after the morning practice. A few players left, but most of the team was still present. He got one or two raised eyebrows for still being present, since they seemingly expected him to have disappeared as per usual by now, but the players who did it also lingered around him, so Ilya figured they might not mind.

After lunch they went back onto the rink, but this time with far less padding on. The reason why was swiftly revealed; some of the family members that showed up early were already there, gathered around the rink, at the front row seats or in some cases even on the ice. Ilya watched from the boards alongside Nick Chouinard, one of their defensemen, how the rest of the team went and found their loved ones.

“Is this what you do for family day? Skate on the ice, like you do every day?” Ilya asked.

“It sounds a lot less fun if you put it like that, Roz,” Chouinard replied. “No, we go out, play some games and then go out to eat at a restaurant.”

“Ah, games with a team of NHL players, fun and not at all competitive.”

“You’d be surprised at how competitive some of the girlfriends and wives are,” Chouinard replied, seemingly eyeing a few of the family members he was talking about. “I think we are competitive on the ice, not so much off the ice.”

Chouinard should really speak for himself. Shane and Ilya made a competition out of everything these days with the exception of their team’s performance in hockey. Since Ilya moved to a team that they both knew was bad from a team that was good, a move for himself and for Shane both, Shane had kept the remarks about the teams they played for to a minimum. Everything else was fair game and that was exactly how they liked it.

“So I play against your wife if I want a challenge in a game, yes?”

“She would beat you in cards, Rozanov. No question.”

Well, Ilya liked a challenge. If he managed to beat Selena, Nick’s wife, Nick would never hear the end of it. If he didn’t manage it Nick would never hear the end of it either. There was no bad outcome.

At that point Selena came walking towards them at the other side of the boards, but she wasn't as upbeat as she normally was when Ilya came across her. She made her way over to Chouinard to kiss him, but then turned towards Ilya.

"Ilya, security says there's a man waiting for you in the hall," she said. "For family day. I told them I would tell you."

Ilya didn't give Nick a chance to say something. He quickly said "I will go deal with it" and skated back to the side of the tunnel of the rink, where he went over the boards. He quickly took off his skates, leaving them by the ice for now since he intended to get back soon, and made his way towards the hall.

As he walked, he couldn't help but go over who could possibly be waiting for him and he came up completely empty. The most logical answer was Shane, but the guards would have recognised Shane Hollander without a problem. They would have let him through. But Shane was on the road right now. Ilya was almost one hundred percent sure it was a travel day for the Voyageurs after winning from Detroit.

Also, and this was an important point: Shane would never do this, because Shane wouldn't want to draw any attention to them. He was very focused on keeping their relationship a secret.

Realistically, neither his father nor his brother had ever come over to Boston for any father's trip or any game to begin with. Ilya found it hard to even try to imagine it.

Ilya's father always despised Ilya's choice to go into the NHL draft rather than staying in Russia. He thought of the Russian league as far superior to the NHL. Of course, he didn't know that the NHL draft was Ilya's ticket out of Russia. His father probably wouldn't have understood why he wanted to get out of Russia at all. Did Ilya have no love for his home country at all, he would have wondered. He probably had wondered that at some point. That the money that Ilya made in Boston had paid for his healthcare and had financed Andrei's lifestyle for years too was only duty to them. It was a given.

Andrei was the only one of Ilya's family members still alive. Ilya hadn't spoken to him in years and he was fine with that. He preferred it, even. They never had a good relationship. If Andrei showed up at the Ottawa rink Ilya would probably tell the guards to kick him out.

Ilya had always wanted things to be different so badly, but it simply wasn't. He didn't have a family member that ever showed up for him. He wanted an older brother who would brag to his friends and watch his games, instead of one that just asked him for money. He wanted a father that was genuinely proud of him, instead of wanting to show him off to other government officials for the sake of it.

As he arrived in the hall, though, he was met with proof of the exact contrary. David Hollander was standing there talking to one of the guards. It sounded like he was explaining how his wife knew everything about hockey and that he was just here to support his son's friend.

His son's friend? Ilya would take it.

“Mr Hollander, what are you doing here?” he asked, even if it was fairly obvious.

The guards, who had just been talking with David, immediately moved away to let Ilya have a conversation with David in peace. They seemed to understand that Ilya knew the man that had been asking for him and that it was alright. The guards were very much used to him by now and knew that if he addressed someone respectfully by name, it was completely fine. Both Ilya and David watched them walk away until they were out of earshot.

“It’s family day, isn’t it?” David said. “I wanted to surprise you.”

“Well, I am very surprised,” Ilya conceded easily. “Do you want to go to the rink?”

They walked back to the rink together. David explained that he didn’t bring skates but that he was comfortable enough on the ice on normal shoes if Ilya wanted him to join him. Ilya didn’t really know what to say to that, so he just nodded. He felt like he was existing in a haze.

It didn’t occur often that Ilya Rozanov was out of his depth. He just wasn’t. He already saw so much in his life that he had a response ready for anything. A parental figure showing up for him was so out of his depth that he didn’t quite know what to do with it, yet. He settled for putting his skates back on, since that seemed to be what most players were doing right now. He sat down on the bench nearest to the rink and saw David join him, as if it was the most normal thing in the world to him.

Thankfully, at that point Wyatt Hayes showed up. “Roz, who did you bring?” he asked, already taking in David from the other side of the boards on the ice.

“This is David Hollander,” Ilya said without any context whatsoever.

“Hello, Mr Hollander,” Wyatt said, as per usual chipper and not needing to know what was going on to respond to it. “Have you been on this side of the ice before, or is this your first time?”

“This is my first time in Ottawa,” David replied. “I’m usually invited to Montreal.”

With the connection to Montreal, Wyatt seemed to realise who was standing in front of him. Funny how it didn’t click with the last name, Ilya thought. “Oh, you’re Shane Hollander’s father! Tough guy to block shots from.”

Ilya could feel David look at him for a few seconds before he answered. “I can imagine he is. Shane is such good friends with Ilya. We see Ilya so much as well thanks to my wife’s involvement in the charity he started with Shane. So when Ilya suggested that we come to the family day from the Centaurs, I was honoured.”

If Wyatt thought that was odd, he didn’t voice it. “Well, it’s an honour to have you at our rink, Mr Hollander,” he said. “Please come over and meet everyone. We are happy to have you. There might be some rivalry about your son playing for Montreal, but it’s all in good spirits.”

“I live in Ottawa with my wife, so I can’t help but root for your team,” David told him. “Of course Ilya is a big part of that for us as well.”

“So Roz is busy converting fans to our side,” Wyatt said, playfully pleased. “I’m not surprised he’s convincing. I hope you enjoy the day, Mr Hollander!”

As Wyatt skated away, Ilya finished putting on his skates. He quickly made his way onto the ice before turning to look at David. David had walked over to the boards and was leaning over them a little. He took a look around the rink before his gaze settled back on Ilya. When he caught Ilya’s gaze, he smiled.

“I hope I’m not overstepping,” he said.

Ilya considered that, then shook his head. “You are not,” he said. “Shane is not going to be happy with you.”

“Why won’t Shane be happy with me?” David asked.

“Because,” Ilya said, gesturing around him like that made it obvious. It didn’t seem obvious to David, so he clarified. “You are here. It will draw attention. People will ask questions.”

“Ilya, this was Shane’s idea,” David told him. “He told us about the family day event and that you mentioned it. He asked me to go.”

Ilya immediately fished his phone out of his pocket and sent Shane a message with five hearts. He was sure that Shane would understand what it meant. Then he turned back to David and leaned over the boards on his side of the rink, giving the idea to the rest of the team that he and David were having a private conversation that shouldn’t be disturbed. It was mostly true.

“I have never been attending these events,” Ilya said. “It did not apply to me.”

David nodded. “Yuna and I never wanted to exist in spaces where you didn’t want us to exist,” he said. “And taking into consideration what Shane and you are working towards, it’s a balance of a different kind as well. We want to be there for you in spaces where attention is drawn, so we can’t always do that. But when Shane brought this up, we realised this was a function where we could show up for you. Shane was convinced that you would want us to. So I volunteered to go.”

It was a lot of vague English from a man that was far more comfortable with the language than Ilya was, but Ilya thought he got the gist of it. It was a touching gesture. He never had anyone care for him the way Shane did, or show up for him the way David just showed up for him. He thought his mother had, but he was too young to remember most of it.

Ilya reached out over the boards to briefly hug David. “Thank you,” he said softly before abruptly turning away. “It is good that you can finally see a real rink, instead of the ice they call a rink in Montreal. Is not a good example.”

David laughed. “I’ll make sure to enjoy it,” he said. “And to take pictures.”

“We need to take a selfie for Shane,” Ilya said immediately. “I will take one.”

He got his phone from his pocket again and turned away from David so he could get them both in the shot. Ilya pulled a silly face for the first one as David just smiled, whereas he actually tried for a genuine smile in the second one. He sent the first picture to Shane, intending to show him the second picture when they were together again.

“He’s going to be convinced you turned me into an Ottawa fan,” David said.

Ilya glanced over at the rest of the rink and grinned. “Is only a matter of time, David.”

When Ilya looked at his phone later, he saw that Shane sent him five hearts back. The second message just said **Ya lyublyu tebya.**

He couldn’t wait until tonight. He couldn’t wait until Shane was back. **I miss you, moy lyubimyy**, he sent back.

But admittedly, he also couldn’t wait to get back to his team, to their families and to the representative of his family, so that was what he did.

End Notes

happy holidays for those who celebrate!

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