

i'm of good cheer 'cause i've been checking my list

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by [SingingGuy](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov hated western Christmas with every part of his orthodox communist soul.

Not that those two things could logically coexist, of course.

“Are you sure we have to make this?” Shane eyed the biggest pack of mayonnaise he had ever seen like it had personally offended him. Which it probably had.

“Oh yes,” Ilya nodded enthusiastically, unloading canned tuna (fine), eggs (fine), fake crab sticks (thin ice), herring (what?), *more mayonnaise*—

“You're going to murder me,” Shane's forehead pressed into its favorite spot between Ilya's shoulder blades. “I'm feeling ten pounds heavier just from looking at this.”

“Is authentic Russian experience,” Ilya deadpanned.

or

Hollanov's 5-step guide to the perfect winter holidays.

Notes

nothing has ever made me more proud to be russian than ilya rozanov istg

the movie mentioned is called "Ivan Vasilyevitch Changes His Profession", it exists with eng subs on yt and is the funniest thing ever filmed

title from "Yule Shoot Your Eye Out" by Fall Out Boy

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“Is authentic Russian experience,” Ilya deadpanned. “Enough that I’m having *olivyé* with no sausage this year. The sacrifices I make for you, Hollander.”

“Your liver will thank you later.”

“My liver has survived so far, no?” Ilya put a jar of pickles on the counter with a certain finality. The forehead creased noticeably even through two layers of fabric.

“At least mom promised to bring something green and *not* canned. The amount of sodium you’re about to consume could kill an elephant or something,” Shane mumbled weakly. He was annoyed, and helpless, and annoyed at himself for being helpless when Ilya asked for things.

Even when it meant a week of cholesterol coma.

“Eh, no, you’re being dramatic now. More sodium in Gatorade.” The forehead left. Ilya stifled a celebratory smirk.

He wasn’t *that* Russian about it, of course. He loved his boyfriend and his, albeit strange at times — what was the word? Preferences. If making Shane eat well for once meant no sausage in his favorite salad or the lowest-fat mayo he could find, then so be it. Fuck, Ilya would gladly make *Steamed Salmon under a Coat* instead of herring every day if that meant Shane enjoyed their first Christmas together a little more.

He’d already traded teams and countries to make it happen, after all. What difference would a salad make?

In all his years of playing for Boston, never had Ilya spent so much effort on Christmas. He had never spent so much effort on any winter holiday period, if he really thought about it.

First, back home, he had been too young to do more than help mama and Alexei — *Lyósha*, then, — decorate the tree; and when mama had left, magic followed. In America, he'd buy some fancy vodka and a couple of pre-made salads from his go-to Russian store, watch a mandatory Soviet movie and call it a night. Though, yes, a few times he'd invited Svetlana over, and she had cooked for them, and it had been nice. Almost homely. Ilya had never found the right words to thank her after.

“How is it connected to the winter holidays, again?” Shane adjusted his glasses, freckles crumpling underneath in the most adorable manner when he frowned.

On screen, a black-and-white guy in similar glasses was chasing a cat.

Ilya shrugged. “It isn't. It takes place in summer.” The guy had managed to catch the cat, but was now lying knocked out on the floor of his smoke-filled apartment. Shane leaned a little forward to follow the subtitles. “You can turn them off, I'll translate,” Ilya offered quite genuinely. “They're shit anyway.”

“Really?” Shane looked at him. “There's hardly been any dialogue yet, how can you know?”

“Muscle memory.”

“You mean... your brain.”

“What, is muscle,” Ilya popped a vein on his neck to illustrate, for the lack of a better option. Shane replied with a groan. “Look!”

“I am, Jesus...” which Ilya was very pleased to admit was true. Shane watched the movie the way he treated everything important to Ilya — like his own life depended on it. More so, he was proud to admit he understood certain words and phrases by ear now. Like,

“*Podayú na razvód?* She's trying to fuck with him or something?”

“Kind of? *Razvód* also means divorce, like in this case. Same thing, huh,” Ilya smiled. “Don't remember this word. Won't need it.”

Shane dropped his head onto Ilya's warm, bare shoulder, eyes already shut in familiar delightful obedience, as if looking at the scary word could accidentally etch it into his memory somehow. “Nah, I know the right one. *Svád'ba*...”

“*Kogdá-nibúd'*,” Ilya murmured, one hand playing with the longer strands on the back of Shane's head. The other found the crucifix and held on. “*Ya nakonyéts-to tebyá nashyól i nikogdá nye poteryáyu.*”

A wedding. One day. I have finally found you and will never lose you, ever.

Shane fell asleep even before the main characters made it back to their own century.

Ilya didn't mind. He could always recite what he'd missed by heart.

“Now *this* one you made up.”

Shane was staring at himself into a pocket mirror with an X-Squad emblem on the back. His favorite forest-scented candle was flicking excitedly on his right, making Ilya's shape just behind seem even longer than it actually was.

“Nope. *Svéta* taught me it, you can text her and ask,” Ilya said, knowing full well that Shane never would. For reasons. “So, you look at yourself and try to imagine the love of your life standing behind you. Which isn't hard, given that I'm here,” he smiled, smug as ever, “and then you must say '*Súzheny-ryázheny, priydi ko mnye naryázheny*'. Meaning, ugh... Fancy pants, come and marry me?”

Shane gasped so hard he nearly blew off the candle. “Who taught you that phrase?!”

“Hayden. He calls me that all the time.”

“I'm killing both of you, Rozanov.”

“Okay, but I'm still gonna show up in the mirror.”

Shane took a deep breath in. Maybe, if he tried hard enough, he could convince himself he was at the cottage, alone and sane and, well. Wouldn't that be heartbreaking.

“Tell me the words again?” he asked instead, pulling Ilya further into the frame so that his silhouette swallowed the rest of the empty space. “And don't move until I'm over. Please.”

“Nowhere I would rather be, Hollander.”

Ginger ale could easily be mistaken for champagne, if one held their breath and drank fast enough, Shane thought with not a small amount of relief. What a burnt piece of paper could be a substitute for, however, he refused to imagine.

“You want to do this here, yes?” Ilya looked at the lighter in his hand, having gotten a little rusty at the edges from sitting at the bottom of a sock drawer for too long. “Still doesn't mean we have to. Shane?”

Shane chewed on his lower lip as if it were the paper in question. “What if there's too many things I wanna wish? If it's too big it doesn't fit into the glass, and one of us chokes?”

Ilya actually looked impressed. “Well, I know one thing that's *too big* to fit in—”

“Oh, fuck off, Rozanov.”

“Mhm, yes. Where do you want me? On the counter next to the herring? Or couch, tangled into the lights and tinsel?” Ilya grabbed Shane by the waist, his semi already poking excitedly into his thigh. “Anything you want, sweetheart.”

Shane would probably purr, if he could.

“Shower first. I’m not fucking a lumberjack.”

“You didn’t say that last year when we beat your ass in the playoffs.”

“Okay, I’m fucking writing down my wish,” he clicked the pen and shielded his work from Ilya’s laughing eyes with a free hand.

Ilya watched, for some reason certain that the first thing on the list would be another Stanley Cup, or an Olympic medal, or anything hockey-related, really. And, well, it was. In a way.

Ya hochu byt’ s Ilyom vseгда.

I want to be with Ilya always.

He didn’t even notice the messed-up case ending.

“Shane...”

Ilya kissed him. It tasted a lot like ginger ale and not at all like ash, but wasn’t that the exact symbolism they had prayed for?

“*Ya vseгда búdu s tobóy,*” he whispered, their lips still brushing. “Don’t need stupid excuse to tell you that.”

“I know. So, ugh. You’ll drink it for me, then?”

Ilya’s smile shone brighter than all the lights still left forgotten on the couch. “Yes. I’ll drink it.”

“Shane, baby, you must try at least a forkful, it’s so good!”

If Yuna Hollander was nagging him to try a salad that wasn’t ninety percent grass, then maybe it really was a damn good salad.

Shane still eyed it suspiciously and settled for much more familiar (and almost just as deadly) chicken parm.

“Oh, here it is,” Ilya rolled his eyes at the TV where *very* pompous music started playing. Shane wasn’t sure how Ilya had found a Russian channel, given that he showed little interest in politics and pretty much anything that usually made it on the news.

“Dorogiye rossiyánye... Etot god byl slózhnym dlya vseh nas...”

“Yeah no shit,” Ilya rolled his eyes, like actually rolled them. Shane’s parents politely watched the screen, not understanding a single word and therefore engaged. Shane himself would have probably been impressed if not for Ilya, who sat through the entire segment with a face distorted by what looked a lot like grief, pain, anger — but Shane wanted to believe that there was closure somewhere, too.

He squeezed Ilya’s thigh as the chimes began their countdown.

“Happy New Year, boys!” David stood up. “I wish you many, many new years like this one. Hell, even better! Mom and I love you so much.” He clinked his glass with theirs and took a big sip. “Ooh, bubbly!”

Shane giggled, already a little love-drunk, with Ilya’s arm now hanging over his shoulder like a weighed scarf. “Thanks, dad. You too, yeah? Ilya?”

“*Da*,” Ilya nodded with a growing smile of his own. The Russian anthem played softly in the background, and Shane reached for the remote to turn off the TV. Enough bad Russian experience for one night.

When he settled back, it was instantly into Ilya’s perfect arms. He now smelled of fish, eggs, pickled vegetables and *strongly* of mayonnaise.

“So. Russian-style holidays next year?”

“I have so many more Soviet movies to show you, and you still haven’t tried all the salads—”

“I’ll take that as a yes.”

Ilya kissed him.

Outside, the first blizzard of January danced, joyous.

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