Ilya Rozanov vs. Canadian Vocabulary

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Ilya Rozanov vs. Canadian Vocabulary

by Honeybees_n_flowers

Summary

> “You named your coin after the stupid wolf bird?”
>
> “*I* didn't. The country did, I guess. I don't know, I never really thought about it.” He paused for a second, then smirked. “A two dollar coin is called a toonie.”

> Or: Four times Ilya Rozanov thought a Canadian word was stupid, and one time he was on Canada's side.

Notes

> Beware, this contains spoilers for late chapters of Heated Rivalry/episode six of the show! Spoiler free for The Long Game as it’s set directly after chapter 27. This is mostly based on book canon, but everything should still make sense if you've only seen the show.

See the end of the work for more notes

1: Loonie

Shane was going to freak out. They were late to meet his parents for dinner. Yesterday had been… a lot. His father had walked in on him making out with Ilya, and an evening of very awkward explanations had followed. Honestly, it had gone better than Shane expected. They didn't suddenly hate him. They wanted to get to know Ilya properly. They had invited them to dinner, which they were now very late for.

They were already running behind when they left ten minutes ago, and they'd been halfway there when Shane realized he left his wallet on the couch. Normally he wouldn't worry about bringing it to his parents house, but they were driving to the nearest town to pick up dinner tonight instead of cooking because it was a "special occasion," and the least he could do is cover the bill.

It was unlike him to be disorganized enough to leave something important behind like that, but there had maybe been a certain…distraction, while he had been sitting down earlier. They had been in a hurry to leave after that, time having gotten away from them. And then Ilya had grabbed Shane's ass on the way out the door, preventing him from checking his pockets like he usually did.

So really, no part of this is Shane's fault at all.

He snatched his wallet off the cushion, fumbling it slightly as he realized the latch was undone, and heard the distinctive *clink* of a coin hitting the floor.

Shit. "I dropped a loonie, hold on."

He knelt down, trying to spot where it had rolled under the couch. He could hear Ilya walking over from where he had been waiting at the door.

"Looney? What is looney? Like the cartoon?"

What?

"Cartoon? You mean Looney Tunes? No, a loonie, a dollar."

He squinted into the darkness. He was pretty sure he saw a glint of gold…

"You call dollar *loonie?"*

"Yeah, hold on…" He stretched his arm under the couch. *Fuck,* it was dusty under there. He should really clean up more often. He added it to his mental to-do list as he finally felt the cool metal against his fingertips.

"Found it! Yeah, see, because it has a loon on it." He stood, holding the coin up. Ilya leaned over his shoulder to look.

"You named your coin after the stupid wolf bird?"

"*I* didn't. The country did, I guess. I don't know, I never really thought about it." He paused for a second, then smirked. "A two dollar coin is called a toonie."

Ilya shook his head. "Now you are messing with me."

"It is! Look it up, I swear to God."

Ilya still looked skeptical. "This is a stupid country. Stupid birds and stupid names for coins and stupid sexy hockey players." He flicked Shane's cheek.

Shane smiled, then quickly schooled his expression into a glare. "*Ow*. Stop flirting with me asshole, we were supposed to be at my parent's fifteen minutes ago."

"You love it."

"What I would love is to be on time to the dinner that is meant to give my parents a good impression of you!"

Ilya sighed, but acquiesced. There would be plenty of time for this later.

More time than they had ever had before.

2: Chesterfield

Ilya and Shane sat on the edge of the dock, dangling their feet over the water. It had been another perfect day, filled with swimming and sex and just plain hanging out. Ilya was still in awe of the fact that that was something they could do now. They had time to just be together without looking over their shoulders, or worrying about missing curfew, or being seen. It was amazing. Perfect.

…And Shane was staring at the water with that expression he got when he was worrying entirely too much over something stupid.

Ilya turned to him, letting out a small sigh. "What do you want to ask?"

He looked up, startled. "Huh?"

"Is obvious you want to ask something. Ask."

Shane bit his lip. "I've just been thinking…Would you really be okay with never going back to Russia? You don't have any other family there? Grandparents, or cousins, or…"

Ilya shook his head.

"My father was very old, and his parents were very old also. I never knew them. My mother…" he trailed off. "Her parents… they were not good to her. I am not sure where they are now. If they are alive. She did not speak to them anymore."

Shane touched his wrist softly.

“I'm sorry.”

“Is okay. I never cared too much.” It was mostly true. He'd never seen much point missing people he hadn't even known in the first place.

He'd hated the way it had weighed on his mother though.

He needed to change the topic. “You knew your grandparents?”

Shane nodded. “Yeah, my *obaasan* on my mom's side, and both of them on my dad's."

“*Obaasan* is Japanese word, yes?”

“Yeah, for grandmother. She was a great lady. It wasn't easy for her, coming here. She hardly spoke any English at first."

Well, Ilya certainly knew how that felt.

“She tried to teach me Japanese, but I wasn't the best learner. I can kinda hold a basic conversation though.” He smiled. I know you're not really supposed to have a favourite grandparent, but she was mine. She made the best miso soup, I've never found any like it since.”

Ilya smiled back. She sounded nice. It was sweet, seeing Shane sentimental like this. Unfortunately, no part of his being was able to avoid teasing him when the opportunity arose. “You say she was your favourite, then you did not like your other grandparents?”

Shane laughed. “No, of course I liked them! We were never super close, that's all. To be honest, I think my grandma kinda hated me ever since I spilled my ginger ale on her chesterfield when I was eight.”

Ilya frowned at the unfamiliar word. After seven years in America, it was becoming rare for him to come across words he had no context for. He had worked hard to improve his vocabulary, and he was proud of it. “Chestfield? What is this? Like the cat?”

“What? No, what are you… do you mean *Garfield*?”

Ilya shrugged. “What is chestfield?”

“*Chesterfield.* Like a couch, or a sofa? It's kind of an old way of saying it, I guess. I associate it with my grandma's house because that's what she always called it.”

His eyes crinkled.

“Honestly, she should have thanked me for giving her an excuse to get rid of the damn thing. It was horrible. Beige and covered in sloppy brown spots that were supposed to be flowers. And it had like, the weirdest texture. It was kinda furry, almost, and somehow it was always cold no matter what temperature the room was.”

Ilya laughed. “You have grudge against old couch.”

“I have a grudge against an old *chesterfield.* And you would too, if you were the one who had to sit on it!”

“Chest-ter-field. Is stupid word. Say couch.”

Shane glared at him. “You're such an asshole.” His tone was undeniably fond.

“Am I? You have not told me this before, I don’t think.”

“Fuck off!”

“Mmm, maybe. By myself?”

Shane laughed. “Oh, do you need help?”

“Please.” He grabbed his cheek, pulling him into a deep kiss, and before long an old chesterfield was the last thing on either of their minds.

3: Homo milk

Shane and Ilya had settled into a tentative routine with Shane’s parents.

Their first dinner together had gone well. Having had a bit of time to process, Yuna and David had welcomed Ilya enthusiastically. There were only two days left until he had to leave, and they had been desperate to see him at least once more before the new season, so Shane had invited them over tonight.

He flicked through his list of things to do before they arrived. Though he had stocked up well two weeks ago, they were nearly out of groceries. He glanced up at Ilya, who was sitting at the island scrolling his phone absently.

“I gotta go to the store before my parents get here. We’re low on groceries and I told my mom I'd pick up some homo milk for her.”

Ilya looked at him like he'd grown a second head. “What the fuck did you just say to me? Homo what?”

“Homo milk, like…” He caught the look in Ilya’s eye. “Oh god, not whatever you're thinking! Fucking pervert.”

Ilya had the audacity to look as if Shane was the one being ridiculous. “What else am I supposed to think you mean when you say *homo milk?”*

He threw his hands up. “Homogenized milk! Milk with a higher fat content than normal! Like, 3.25 percent or something.”

Ilya eyed him suspiciously. “And you are sure the term for this is *homo milk?”*

“Positive! You can ask my mom when she gets here.”

“Oh yes, I am sure your mother would love to tell me all about your *homo milk.*”

“Stop saying it like that!”

He smirked. “Why would we go to store when we have perfectly good homo right here?”

Shane shoved him.

Ilya lifted his arms in mock surrender. “I take it back. We have *okay* homo right here.”

Shane raised an eyebrow. “Oh, just okay?”

Ilya smirked, leaning in. “You want to prove me wrong?”

“No! I need to go to the store, they’ll be here in a few hours.” He sighed. Truthfully, there was nothing he wanted more than to take Ilya up on his offer. But one of them had to be the responsible one here.

Ilya stood. “Then I will come with you.”

Shane hesitated. It had been stressful enough picking Ilya up from the airport. “That's.. what if someone sees?”

Ilya rolled his eyes. “Hollander. Is mostly empty road, nobody will see. I can wait in the car when we get there. Windows are tinted.”

It was true. Still, it seemed a bit of a risk… then again, wasn’t everything they’d ever done together?

Besides, there were only two days left until they were forced apart for another season, and he really didn’t want to spend a second more than necessary outside of Ilya’s company.

Shane slammed the door behind him as he slid back into the car. Ilya took the groceries from his hands and shuffled idly through them, checking that nothing had been forgotten. Not that he really expected Shane to forget anything, he’d obsessively been checking his lists all morning.

Although, there didn’t seem to be a milk carton. Wasn’t one of the main reasons they came that Shane’s mom needed gay milk or something? He opened his mouth to ask, but paused as something caught his eye.

Wait.

The gay milk was in a fucking *bag*.

He held it up accusatively. “Hollander, what the fuck is this?”

Shane glanced over at him, brows drawn together in confusion. “The milk? For my mom?”

Ilya shook his head. “You do not see problem here?”

Shane narrowed his eyes. “No?”

“Your gay milk is in a fucking *bag* Hollander. Where is carton?”

Shane’s eyes widened slightly. “It’s homo milk! Homogenized! Not gay!” He paused, taking a breath. “And the bag is perfectly normal.”

Ilya knew that Shane knew full well It absolutely fucking was *not.*

“How do you even use this? How do you drink without spilling everywhere?"

“It’s not hard! You just cut the corner off and put it in a jug to pour.”

Oh sure. Nice and simple.

“You know how to use a carton? You open the lid. Very easy.”

Shane rolled his eyes. “Well, you’d better get used to it if you want to move to Ottawa. That’s how they sell it here.”

Ilya slumped back in his seat, dropping the milk back in with the rest of the groceries.

It was a small thing, really. He’d be changing much more significant parts of his life than how he stored his milk by leaving Boston for Shane, and he would change even more without hesitation. He was certain now, this was the best decision he’d ever made.

But he couldn’t help but wonder how many more of these small surprises were in store. Coming from Russia to America had been a massive culture shock. Maybe it was naive, but he hadn’t expected to go through it again in Canada. The nations had always seemed so similar on the ice.

It still wasn’t as nearly different as Russia, he knew that. Besides, this wouldn’t be quite the same as last time.

He glanced over at Shane, who was carefully checking over his shoulder twice to ensure the way was clear.

This time, he wouldn’t be doing it alone.

4: Bunnyhug

David Anderson was a filthy liar. There was no way in hell. Ilya stared at the *hoodie* in his hands. *Hoodie.* Maybe a sweatshirt. He still couldn't quite remember the difference. But it was definitely one of the two. Even in Canada, with its stupid language differences that were just subtle enough to trip him up every time, it was a hoodie. Canada was a stupid country. It was not *that* stupid.

He brought it up to Shane later that night. It was their first matchup of the season, and they had met at Shane's Montreal apartment. His real one. Even though Ilya had already seen the cottage, there was something special about being trusted to be here. He had imagined it so many times, walking through the door had almost been surreal. The place was every bit as boring as he'd pictured. Totally boring, and totally *Shane*.

It was perfect.

Shane was lying in bed, poking at his phone without a shirt on. Ilya was pulling on a hoodie, trying desperately to remind himself that he really did need to leave now if he wanted to make it to practice the next morning. Which reminded him—

"I think David Anderson is lying to me."

Shane looked up from his phone, surprised. "About what?"

Anderson was a Canadian defenseman who'd been traded to the Bears earlier that year. He and Ilya weren't friends, necessarily, but Anderson was chatty and they'd struck up a few conversations in the locker room.

Such as the one earlier in the day that had revealed his identity as a filthy liar.

"He is trying to convince me that Canadians call this a *bunnyhug."* Ilya gestured to his chest. "I told him that is ridiculous, but he will not let it go. Says it is only proper name."

Shane snorted. "Anderson is an idiot from Saskatchewan. *Normal* Canadians call it a hoodie like everyone else."

Ilya raised his eyebrows. "So in Saskatchewan it is actually bunnyhug? He is not making things up?"

Unbelievable. Utterly ridiculous.

Shane shook his head. "No, they really do call it that. The rest of us think it's stupid too, don't worry."

Ilya walked over and patted his head. "I am glad you do not call it a bunnyhug. I think I could not suck your cock anymore if you did."

Shane let out a startled laugh. "What does that have to do with anything?"

Would you suck the cock of a man who says he is wearing *bunnyhug*?"

Shane smiled, meeting his eyes. “Well, I certainly hope not. You aren't going to pick it up, are you? You don't think it’s cute?”

Ilya shuddered. *“No.”*

+1: Toque

It had been a while since Ilya had been out with his team. He felt a little weird about participating in team bonding when he knew that soon he would be ending his contract for, as far as they were concerned, absolutely no reason and fucking off to Ottawa.

Plus, he wasn’t exactly picking up girls anymore, and he would really rather not field questions about that.

But they had won their away game that afternoon, and spirits were high. Marlow had practically begged him to come out with them, and he couldn’t call Shane because he’d gone to bed already with an early morning practice the next day, and their schedules hadn’t aligned in weeks, and Ilya was *bored*.

So he was roaming the streets of Vancouver with five of his teammates, looking for a promising bar. Cliff Marlow was showing Ryan Carmichael something on his phone, the two huddling together as they walked. Ilya lagged behind slightly, not really caring to see whatever perverse thing Marlow was on about now.

He surveyed the rest of the group. Brayden Smith, a twenty-four year old forward who’d transferred from the LA Monarchs last year, was wearing a brightly coloured Boston Bears toque with a pom-pom pulled all the way over his ears. He looked ridiculous.

Ilya elbowed him. “Why are you wearing a toque? Is not even cold out today.”

It was about seven degrees. Celsius, because no matter how long he had lived in America, Ilya would be dead in the ground before he willingly used Fahrenheit.

Smith turned, affronted. “It is cold! Just because you’re apparently insane and incapable of feeling pain…”

He gestured vaguely at Ilya's loose fitting shirt and open jacket.

Ah, right. Smith was from the south somewhere. Florida maybe? He couldn’t remember.

“And anyway, *Toque?* You been hanging around a lot of Canadians or something?”

Ilya looked at him like he was stupid. Honestly, he sort of was. There was a reason they weren't friends outside of hockey.

“I am hockey player. In NHL, yes? There are Canadians here.”

“Yeah but like… I don't know, I guess it's just weird to hear a Russian call it that. You live in Boston, man. It’s a beanie.”

“Beanie is stupid.”

Carmichael turned away from Marlow, clearly bored with whatever they’d been looking at. “What are we talking about?”

“Roz thinks this is a *toque*.” He gave the garment an aggressive tug. “I’m letting him know it's a beanie.”

“Oh hell no, fuck off with that bullshit.” He slapped Ilya on the back. “Good man Rozanov. That’s a toque all day.”

Ilya smirked at Smith’s affronted expression.

It wasn’t a completely unfair question. When he was first learning English, he had only known it as a beanie. He'd made the mistake of referring to it as such earlier that year.

He had been lying next to Shane, idly playing with his hair. It was a lazy sort of afternoon at the cottage, and they had been reminiscing on their past together.

After all this time, Ilya could hardly believe he got to have this now. Shane Hollander, with his annoying, amazing freckles he had loved from the first time he saw them, was in love with him. They had a future together. He pressed a kiss to his forehead. “So beautiful, *moya lyubov*. Remember first time we met? You were wearing stupid beanie, telling me not to smoke like boring loser…"

Shane sat up. “I was not wearing a *beanie*.”

Ilya frowned. “Yes you were. It was cold out, I remember.”

Shane shook his head. “No, I was wearing a hat, that's right. But it’s a toque, call it a toque.”

It wasn’t an unfamiliar word, exactly. But Ilya had never really put much thought into the distinction. He certainly hadn’t thought it would be important enough to elicit this response.

“What is the difference?”

“Toque is the Canadian way to say it. And the *better* way. Beanie sounds like an insult a five year old would come up with.”

Ilya laughed. “I did not know you were so passionate about this.”

Shane collapsed back against the pillow. “Look, I have to suffer through my American teammates calling it a beanie often enough. I’m not putting up with it in my own home.”

Ilya paused for a moment. “You said… it is took?”

“No, toque. Rhymes with duke.”

“Tooke… toque.” Ilya stopped to consider for a moment. “Is better, I think. Toque.”

Shane turned to meet his eyes, smiling. “Really? You usually make fun of my Canadian words.”

“Ah, well.” Ilya shrugged. “I will be living in Canada soon, yes? Is maybe time I get used to it.”

Shane grinned and leaned in to kiss him.

Ilya would still be in Boston for another year. One more year of pretending to hate each other. One more year of only seeing each other through stolen hours in hidden rooms. It might kill him.

But the fact that there was an end in sight… Mere months ago he was gathering the strength to break things off, mentally preparing himself to lose it all, and now he just needed to get through *one more year* to have this all the time.

It was better than anything he could’ve imagined.

Even if it meant he had to live in a country that called a dollar a *fucking loonie.*

End Notes

This series has ruined me, I absolutely cannot wait for the episode tonight.

The chesterfield Shane hates is based on a real couch my grandmother had in my childhood. I don't have any pictures, but it was similar to this.

Also, while I am Canadian, I am not from Ontario. I did my best to research regional use, but please feel free to let me know if something is off!

Comments are greatly appreciated! Chat to me on tumblr @honeybees-and-flowers.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!