

just a boy and his squash

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by [dressedupliketheking](#)

Summary

Yuna remembers the elevator incident "the summer before" rookie season. She decides to send a thank you gift to whoever the bright spark was at CCM who suggested Shane and Ilya should do a joint shoot. This is what happens when she tells the boys her plan.

Notes

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

Yuna and David arrive at precisely 5pm, as the matching warning text messages they had sent Shane and Ilya indicated they would. To her surprise, it is Ilya who descends the front stairs to greet them. Yuna thinks he looks relaxed but she can't be sure yet this isn't an act. She wants to believe in the vision of him that Shane sees, that the brash persona is the performance rather than this one, but she doesn't know him well enough yet to be wholly convinced.

"Hello," Ilya calls, tea towel thrown across his shoulder. "What can I carry?"

"Hey, Ilya. Give Yuna a hand will you?" David who already has his arms full of split firewood, indicates towards the back of the car. After a brief greeting Yuna threads the handles of a cooler bag onto one of his elbows, then begins stacking things on his outstretched arms.

"Beer, salad, flowers. I'll bring the chicken myself."

Ilya heads back in to the kitchen with an "okay", leaving the door propped open for Yuna on his way. She carries the casserole dish inside, places it onto the stove carefully and kisses her son, up to his elbows doing dishes in the sink, on the cheek.

"Hi, Mom. Ilya there's a, um, vase kinda jug thing in the top of the pantry cupboard, can you get it down?"

Yuna is placing the potholders in a neat pile on the counter as David steps through the patio door. They watch as Shane and Ilya move around each other in a scene of perfect domesticity, Ilya retrieving and filling the vase halfway while Shane collects plates and cutlery. They swap wordlessly so Shane can arrange the roses to his liking, Ilya locating the bottle opener in the second drawer without needing to ask where it's kept.

Yuna raises her eyebrows at David with a close-lipped smile and turns back to the boys.

"I thought I might send a bunch of flowers to whoever it was at CCM who had the bright idea for your joint campaign," Yuna says. "You know, anonymously, as a thank you for getting this started."

"Ah," says Shane, wiping his hands, "you figured it out."

"Yes," David all but growls, "at 2am. Apparently it was information that couldn't wait."

This earns a chortle from Ilya, who is now opening four of the beers and distributing one to each person.

"Another thing in common, huh? Intense for hockey. Can't keep ideas inside until morning."

Shane smiles sheepishly. "I may or may not have woken Ilya up with the charity idea at 2am."

"Finally," David says, looking heavily at Ilya, "someone else who feels my pain."

Yuna and Shane both make to protest but are cut off by Ilya's booming laugh. It's the first time she and David have heard it and it's a warm and buoyant thing, the opposite from the ice cold, ultra-competitive Rozanov she sees so often on screen. She is honoured that he feels able to laugh like that in her company, and imagines how wonderful Shane must feel when he draws a laugh like that out of him.

"Is okay." Ilya says happily. "If this is the price, I pay it. And no need for fancy flowers. Ones from your garden do fine."

"Oh no, a grand love story like this? They need to be stunning. And champagne too. The good stuff." Yuna finishes with a nod. She has already been considering how she will find the details of the staff member who proposed the combined shoot, how she might track them down if they've left the company. Ilya's voice startles her out of her planning.

"No, no, beer is okay," he says with a shrug.

Shane raises one eyebrow at him and smirks with a meaning neither Yuna or David can interpret. Yuna studies them, curiosity piqued. To everyone's surprise, it is David who breaks first.

"Okay you too, what am I missing this time?" He asks.

Shane looks like he is fighting back a smile, and gives a "go ahead" nod to Ilya, who turns to Yuna.

"Shoot together was my idea, I tell it to CCM. So, nice plan for thank you gift, but no need for fancy things. I am happy with roses from your garden and beer."

For the umpteenth time in the last 36 hours, Yuna is rendered speechless. Of all the revelations that have blown her away to date, this one takes the cake. Her business brain is breaking. Ilya Rozanov, the athlete with the bare minimum of sponsorship deals for someone of his superstar status and reputation for his profound distaste of all media obligations, had contacted CCM with a direct campaign request at *eighteen years old*.

"Hellooooo, Mooommm. Earth to Yunaaaa." From somewhere far away, Shane is calling to her. She shakes her head and realizes that no, he is just across the kitchen island from her, wearing a faint blush and her favorite dorky smile.

Ilya looks decidedly pleased with himself. Yuna, who had thought she had it all figured out, realizes she absolutely does not.

She tilts her head, looks at him with brows furrowed. "Huh. So. You. Wait. Then? Before?"

"Does it matter, Mom? It's still the most I've *ever* laughed on a shoot, and I've done *a lot* of shoots. It was fun. A good idea. Thank you." Shane raises slightly to plant a kiss to Ilya's cheek on his way to get the beer coolers.

Yuna has to admit that no, it doesn't really matter. David however, knows better. She can feel him watching her, close to laughing for a minute longer, until she cracks.

“Oh god, please tell me the details or I will never sleep again.” It comes out in a rush, Yuna essentially pleading. Whether it’s to Ilya or Shane or both of them, she doesn’t know or care.

Shane makes a choking noise and Ilya gives her a look which she correctly interprets as “do you really want details?”

“Oh, no! No. Not *those* details. Just tell me from having the idea until the elevator.” She says simply.

David swings towards Yuna at the same time Shane turns to Ilya, with a simultaneous: “Elevator?”

“Ah,” says Ilya, grinning, “I wonder if you remember.”

Yuna purses her lips in a half-smile and raises her eyebrows at Ilya.

“I do.” She says.

“Okay, okay! I explain.” Ilya says, meeting Shane’s glare with a two handed ‘calm down’ gesture. He turns back to Yuna and David and begins.

“Shane says hi at first Prospect Cup, winter 2008. I think “this guy is very cute, and nearly as good at hockey as me.”” Shane slaps his arm playfully but doesn’t interrupt. “My English is bad then. I don’t know all the things he says, how to say things back. Soon I will move for MLH, so I practice. After draft, I can’t sleep. Big day, too much energy. I go to hotel gym but Shane is there already. Very lucky for me, not planned. He is still very cute. We work out together. My English is still slow but Shane is patient, let’s me take my time. I am nervous about moving to new place, he says people like living in Boston, we will meet often on ice, is calming.”

Shane raises his eyebrows and gasps minutely at this. Given Rozanov’s usual bluster, she suspects he perhaps he didn’t realise Ilya was nervous about his upcoming move. She also suspects she is being given a somewhat censored account of the story which, truth be told, she considers a blessing. Ilya presses on.

“I go back to Russia after for long time. We play Prospect Cup again but only see for games. Will be a long time before Boston and Montreal play, and these freckles, gah! They not get out of my head. CCM contact me in summer, they want to make ad. I ask when. They say they book two days to shoot next season rookies, but first day already is taken. Is pretty simple guess who the other rookie is they book for campaign, no? I tell them best shoot, best value for them is to have me and Shane Hollander do ad together.” He looks to Shane now and gives a cocky smile similar to the one Yuna recognizes from a thousand interviews, but with every ounce of aggression replaced with tenderness. “Also I say I can’t do the other date. Is not true but I am wanting them say yes so I see my... squash?”

“Crush?” Shane supplies bashfully.

“Da, yes, crush. If CCM want me for ad, Shane Hollander and me are package deal.”

Shane cheeks are bright red by this point, clearly enjoying the memory of his now-boyfriend's teenage bravado. No matter how enthralled Yuna is by Ilya's story, it's hard to concentrate on it when Shane is looking so utterly besotted and *happy*. She kicks herself for the hundredth time in two days, wondering how on earth she missed this.

"So we meet on ice, make ad. Spend most of time trying to act serious because serious rivalry, but we are laughing. After shoot we change out..." Ilya pauses and Shane shoots him something like a warning look, to which Ilya smiles gleefully.

"My English is okay now, so I ask if we talk more hockey after dinner. So later, I am going up in elevator, and it stops on another floor. Doors open and who is there?" He gestures palm up to Yuna, who is looking at him with a twinkle of amusement in her eyes. "Yuna wants elevator going down, but I am going up. She starts to introduce herself but doors are closing."

Shane rounds on Ilya. He sounds incredulous, his voice somewhere between a yell and a squeak. "You shut the elevator doors on my Mom?!"

"No, no," Ilya shakes his head, voice placating, "not on purpose. They close automatically, but I not try stopping them. I know then probably is rude to polite Canadians but I am eighteen and do not want Shane's mom to find out I am on way to her very cute and not straight son's room, where we talk and if I am lucky I get phone number. Maybe kiss if I am extra lucky."

Ilya turns his attention to Yuna. "Sorry about elevator. Not great first impression, huh? I do my best impress you now instead. But that is story of how we start, so now I hope you can sleep again."

The apology seems genuine, and it is Yuna's turn to shake her head. She is utterly gobsmacked by this turn of events, and there is no point trying to pretend otherwise.

"Wow," is the best response she can muster.

"Looks like you made the right call that night, son." David chuckles as he speaks, and Yuna can see something akin to hope flicker across Ilya's face at the term of endearment. "Getting that number was top priority."

Ilya slides his mask of confidence back in place before he responds jovially.

"But he holds out on me! I get my hockey talk, and very lucky, kiss. But apparently I am bad idea. He makes me wait another *six months* for number." Ilya motions being stabbed in the heart, groaning theatrically. "Still, I am like boomerang. Persistent. He throws me away but I come back again."

Shane snorts at the first part, but Yuna notices his face falls on the second. She suspects that the truth of who pushed who away, when and why over the last seven years is a much more complex and harder conversation than they're willing to have openly right now, so she lets it slide.

"Well, thank you for explaining. That is truly something, Ilya." Yuna says.

“It is,” he replies with a coy smile, and places a hand gently on Shane’s lower back.

Yuna expects him to lean into the touch, but instead Shane stills.

“Why have I never heard of this until now?” Shane asks him flatly.

“What you mean? I told you on shoot day ad together was my idea.” Ilya says, eyes searching Shane’s face as if it holds all the answers to every question he’ll ever have.

“About my mom, Ilya, seeing her in the elevator.”

“Well, technically I am the one in elevator,” Ilya’s tone is light and Yuna can feel her own amused smile on display, but Shane is clearly unimpressed. Ilya withdraws his hand, takes a step back.

“Okay, okay, sorry. I decide Shane’s mom seems like nice lady, sensible. Would know teenage boys can be silly. I take chance she will forget it happens-”

“Which to be fair I did, until last night,” Yuna interjects.

“See, not big deal. But I decide even if she not forget, is better to apologise to her than tell you. You love your mom, yes? You are good son, care what she thinks. If you know I am rude to her one time I am the bad guy forever. I am blocked in your phone, you never get my texts, we don’t meet up, I am never invited to cottage. Or maybe I’m here, but you freak out worse when your dad sees and we go talk to your parents. Is no help to know before now, da?”

Yuna can see Ilya has a point, and hopes Shane can too. It’s careful reasoning like this that shows he has thought of Shane, really *cares about him*, that are sanding the pointy edges off her shock and warming her heart instead. The likelihood of them getting to this point, where the four of them are standing relatively comfortably together in Shane’s kitchen, slim as it was already, would have been even closer to zero had her son known of this early interaction.

“But there were so many times you could’ve made it right, Ilya. All those awards nights and All-Star Games. Why didn’t you introduce yourself or apologise then?”

Shane sounds... hurt. On her behalf or his own, she can’t tell. Yuna watches Ilya’s eyes almost bulge out of their sockets before he schools his features into what she is already learning is a practiced “playing it cool” face. When he speaks again, he is clearly putting in effort to do so calmly without any of the heat or irritation that inevitably gets Shane further on the defensive. Why worry about a chance meeting in an elevator years ago, she thinks, when her son is *known*?

“You and your big secrets really want me to act nice to your parents at public event? While I am busy being asshole to everyone else and hope no one asks why they get special treatment? I tell you about elevator, you are angry and get rid of me, I talk to them, you are scared and get rid of me. I decide waiting and say sorry direct is the best way.”

“For what it’s worth,” Yuna says, “I accept your apology, Ilya. If anything I’m glad seeing me didn’t scare you off from your plan that night, and I’m glad I never mentioned it either. If that was the start, I’m thankful for it. We’re happy you’re both here with us now, so that’s what matters.”

“What she said,” David said, pointing the neck of his beer bottle towards his wife. “Now, who’s making the cheese board?”

“Uh, yeah. I can,” Shane says, a hint of overwhelm creeping into his voice. He turns away from Ilya to get the round wood slab from its nook by the stove and a series of small bowls from a cupboard near the rangehood. David is unpacking crackers, dips, cheese and olives from their cooler bag onto the bench, seemingly unaware of the tension that hasn’t fully resolved in the room. Yuna watches Ilya watch Shane, his arms hanging limp at his sides, seemingly unsure of what to say or do with his hands now the conversation is over. Shane hasn’t explicitly forgiven Ilya’s behavior or secrecy in the way she and David had. Shane can be prickly, and she knows the poor kid probably doesn’t know where they stand right now. She also knows Shane will come around if he hasn’t already, but that’s not something that can be said out loud without attracting ire. There is another route that might work, but strategy be damned, it’s something she wants to do anyway.

Yuna catches Ilya’s eye and beckons to him, and he rounds the kitchen island. He stops close to her, a couple feet between them, and she steps slowly, telegraphing her movements. He is clearly nervous, but when she finds no real resistance, she winds her arms around his waist and presses her cheek to the front of his t-shirt. After a second she feels the tension bleed from his shoulders. A moment later, his solid arms circle her upper back, holding her firmly but without force. She wonders how long it’s been since this boy who is so special to her son, who looks at him with such reverence, was held by a parental figure like this, if there had been anyone at all on his side since his mother died. These thoughts dissolve when she feels his cheek drop to the top of her head, and a contented smile splits her face. Whatever happened in the past, she is here now, and she will hold him like one of her own.

After a few deep breaths she opens her eyes to find Shane watching them, cheese board assembly task is clearly forgotten. The heels of his hands are resting on the edge of the bench, fingers trembling slightly, and his eyes are brimming with unshed tears.

“I love you,” she mouths to him, and Shane’s face contorts into something painful, one salty droplet now sliding silently down each cheek.

Ilya chooses this moment to pull back from the embrace. He holds her upper arms gently, looking earnestly into her eyes.

“We are good, yes?” he asks quietly.

“Yes, *Ilya*, we are good.” She smiles up at him. “I can’t wait to know you.” And as she says the words, she knows that with every fibre of her being, she really, truly means it.

End Notes

So my initial idea (in part one in part one of this series) that Yuna would remember the elevator incident during their first sit down conversation together didn't eventuate on screen, so this is the more TV canon-compliant version. There'll be at least two more of these "all the things they (finally) said" conversation fics of the chats they really need to have, likely from Yuna's POV. I have already drafted the next one and dot pointed the one after that. I was considering doing them as chapters of one work but they stand alone as one-shots, so I've set it up as a series if you want to subscribe to that.

Open to feedback on any errors, I have looked at this too long to find and fix any more for myself.

A note also that I haven't read The Long Game, so there won't be any intentional spoilers for that book or season 2 of Heated Rivalry in this series.

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