

Does It Have To Be Him?

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Does It Have To Be Him?

by [hist0ry_huh](#)

Summary

Five times Hayden's perception on Shane and Ilya's relationship is changed and one time he finally admits that it just might not be that bad.

-Spoilers to The Long Game-

Notes

My first fic for this amazing fandom!

Prompt:

Moments where Hayden starts to understand Shane and Ilya's relationship, or slowly bonds with Ilya, starts to see the good in him, starts to see how happy Ilya makes Shane and how perfect they are.

Maybe a 5+1 or something?

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

October 2018

Shane blinked, shaking his head and willing himself not to succumb to the fatigue that settled deep in his bones when his phone vibrated on the nightstand. It had been a long stretch of away games, with Montreal ending the series with a final game in Toronto before heading home for a well-deserved weekend off. Shane pulled the warm blanket off and reached for his phone, expecting it to be a text from Hayden - too lazy to leave his room with Jackie who'd surprised his best friend at a rare away game since her sister had shown up a day earlier than expected to watch their kids - asking if he'd forgot his phone charger (which he had), but to Shane's surprise Ilya's name read across the screen. He pushed down the soft feeling in his chest that rose when he saw his name, still used to the years of reading 'Lilly' on the screen, only changing it when they announced the foundation.

[Ilya]: Room number?

Shane felt his brows pinch together in a brief moment of confusion. Ilya was in Buffalo, though it was close there was no way he'd driven the four hours before his game the next morning, though Shane didn't question it. Ilya used to have the habit of sending Shane random things from room services, though with his performance diet, Shane wasn't too sure what Ilya was up to but he sent the number nonetheless. Minutes ticked by and Shane watched a light steady rain turn to sleet outside his window when there was a knock at the door. Shane didn't bother to check the peephole, expecting room services or maybe Hayden had forgotten his wallet with the room key along with his charger. He pulled the heavy door open, and standing in the hallway was the last person he expected. Ilya.

"The fuck?" Shane said, reaching out to grab his boyfriend's hand to pull him inside. Ilya laughs, shaking his head, cold drops flying off and landing against Shane's cheek.

"Buffalo is stuck in Winnipeg with the weather, the game was postponed for tomorrow."

"And your response was to rent a car and drive four hours to see me for less than twenty-four hours?" Shane asks, his hand finds Ilya's waist, fingers running over the hem of his shirt while Ilya shrugs out of his jacket.

"Is worth it, yes," Ilya says, letting his jacket fall to the floor, before quickly opening the door and slipping the do not disturb sign around the door handle and shooting Shane a cheeky grin. Any complaints Shane might have about the wet garment being left on the floor die when Ilya's lips cover his.

The beginning of the season was always the hardest, after going from a summer spent wrapped up in each other to going weeks with only FaceTime. They both had thought it was going to be the end of October before they saw each other, instead just a few days between when Shane had left for Montreal's pre-season opening series of games in Toronto while Ilya flew to Buffalo the day after. Ilya kisses him like it had been a full month apart, his tongue easily slipping into Shane's mouth while he backs him into the room and towards the bed when the hotel door bangs open.

“Yebat,” Ilya curses in Russian, taking a step back from Shane while his boyfriend jumps, his calves hitting the edge of the bed.

“Sorry man, just forgot my charger,” Hayden starts before he realizes who is standing in front of him. “What the fuck is going on?” Hayden asks, his voice a harsh whisper, Shane thankful that his best friend at least had the thought to keep his voice low in the hotel.

“Um,” Shane starts

“Please don’t tell me I just walked in on you making out with fucking Rozanov.”

“Lucky you didn’t show up later, would have seen a lot more,” Ilya says, his tone light, smirking at Hayden while Shane groans.

“Ilya,” Shane says, not missing the way Hayden grimaces when Shane says Ilya, when he finally turns to look at him. “Who are you texting?” Shane asks, voice rising to a panic.

“Jackie, I told her I’ll be a bit.” Hayden says, shoving his phone into his pocket and crossing his arms across his chest while glaring at Ilya.

“I think I will take a shower,” Ilya says, stepping towards Shane and pressing a kiss to the top of his head. “Ya tebya lyublyn.”

“Ya tovhe tebya lyublyu.” Shane mummurs back, watching Hayden’s glare deepen when the Russian words leave his mouth.

Hayden sinks to the bed that would have been his had Jackie not shown up, rubbing his face with his hands and letting out a long sigh before finally looking up to Shane. “What the actual fuck, man?”

“It’s not what you think.” Shane tries, not sure where he is going. He hadn’t expected to go from his team finding out that he’s gay to his best friend walking in on him making out with probably the one man he’d never understand Shane being in a relationship with.

“Yeah, and what do I think this is?”

“We’re dating.”

“For how long?”

Shane sighs, “That depends on what you consider dating.” He starts, before launching into the full explanation. With the hook ups starting in 2010, to Ilya staying with him at the cottage last year, where they’d finally admitted just how in love they were with each other.

“Eight years?” Hayden says, his voice cracking. “You’ve been having sex with Rozanov for eight god damn years?” He flops backwards onto the bed. “Every time we were in Boston and you’d disappear for hours and here I thought you had a secret hook up. God man, I don’t care that you’re into dudes, but why is it him?”

Shane pauses, tugging his bottom lip between his teeth. "He loves me." He says, his voice almost a whisper. Outside of his parents this was the first person he'd admitted the feelings he and Ilya shared for each other. Shane looks up, watching Hayden's eyes go wide before he quickly schools himself.

"So," Hayden stops, searching for the right words. "Holy shit man, he signed with Ottawa to be closer to you, didn't he?" Shane nods. "So it's serious?"

"Very," Ilya says, stepping out of the bathroom, steam pouring out behind him and Shane finding it hard to take his eyes off the drops of water trailing down his abs and onto the towel wrapped tightly around his waist. "Had enough time, Pike?" Ilya asks "I think so, time for you to leave. Unless you are wanting more of a show." His smirk turns into a grin when Hayden gags behind his hand.

Hayden points to Shane, "We're talking more after this ass hole goes back to whatever hole he crawled out of."

Shane rolls his eyes, "Sure, fine."

"And I'm telling Jackie."

"Hayden," Shane starts.

"Dude, she's my wife, I can't not tell her." Shane purses his lips, considering before finally nodding his head.

"Now where were we?" Ilya says, fixing Shane with a knowing look before dropping his towel to the ground.

November 2018

"That was the weirdest night of my fucking life." Hayden says, sliding into the driver's seat of their Mercedes SUV.

"You're such a prick." Jackie says, laughing. "Poor Shane having to play mediator between the two of you all night, isn't he supposed to be your best friend? You could have cut him a break."

"But it's Rozanov," Hayden says, his face scrunching like he'd just told his mom one of their kids had come down with a deadly disease.

"You say that like we just had dinner with two completely different people. Yeah, sure, he's a snarky ass hole, but you were so focused on that, so stuck on the player you've hated for years that you couldn't see the man that loves Shane."

Hayden groans, gripping the steering wheel, refusing to look over at his wife. "Cause I saw a man who was nervous to be around his boyfriend's friends after hiding their feelings for years. I saw a man who helped his boyfriend make a delicious dinner to impress his friends and while he was, what did you say? A prick. He's still Shane's boyfriend and you trust Shane, so I think maybe you should give him a chance."

“I’m not going to like him.” Hayden grumbles, finally looking over at Jackie. Annoyed that every word that had come out of her mouth had been right.

“Sure, honey.”

December 2019

“Rozanov hating Ottawa yet?” Hayden finally asks the question he’d been dying to as the last of their teammates filed out of the room after they’d watched Ottawa lose (again) during the team's conditioning session.

“He’s,” Shane pauses. “Adjusting. The team has potential if they can just get their plays pulled together and get the line stronger. Ilya is a good captain.”

Hayden rolls his eyes at that, earning him a light smack to the arm. “Gotta suck going from a team with a chance at the Cup to this, though.”

“Not everything is about the Cup.” Shane says before squirting water into his mouth.

Hayden shrugs, making a noncommittal noise before whipping the sweat from his bench. “Things going okay, ya know? With all that?” He asks, motioning between Shane and a muted Rozanov on the screen, talking to reporters.

“Um, well, yeah?” Shane questions, not used to Hayden independently bringing up his relationship with Ilya.

“Come on man, I’m trying to be, I don’t know, supportive?”

“Then yeah, a two hour drive is a hell of a lot better than counting the days until we had a game or by week just to see each other.”

“Fuck man, I never thought about how hard that must have been, and you did it for years.”

It was now Shane’s turn to roll his eyes. “Don’t remind me.” He says, turning away and hiding the hurt that still lingered even after over a year of having Ilya close.

“Something else going on?” Hayden asks, Shane guessing he didn’t do as good a job hiding his emotions as he thought.

“No, we’re good. It’s good. Ilya and I. Maybe. I don’t know. He’s been off, a little weird, kinda distant for a while.”

“Want to talk about it?” Hayden asks, Shane not realizing that his friend was truly asking and not just doing so out of obligation.

“It’ll be fine, I’m driving up there tonight then we have Christmas in two weeks.”

Hayden watches his best friend walk out, shoulders slumped and face buried in his phone.

May 2020

“Is that a loon tattoo?” Hayden asks, raising his third beer to his lips. Montreal and Ottawa had a rare weekend off, and somehow Shane had convinced Ilya to eat slightly burnt burgers at the Pikes' house, promising he wouldn't leave him alone with Hayden only to sneak inside with Jackie to help with a side dish not twenty minutes after they got there.

“Stupid Canadian wolf bird, is what it is.” Ilya says, huffing and turning away from Hayden, who snorts laughing into his beer.

“But why, dude?” Ilya glances sideways at the word. He was used to Hayden calling Shane ‘dude’, his other teammates, sure. But never him.

“Would you really like to know?”

Hayden leans forward, grabbing another beer from the cooler and passing one to Ilya. While the burgers might be questionable, at least Hayden had good taste in beer, Ilya reluctantly thought, waiting for Hayden to answer. “Why the fuck not, Jackie told me to ‘play nice’ so tell me something that might make me think about considering to start liking you.”

“You’ve been to Shane’s cabin, yes?” Ilya waits for Hayden to nod before he continues.

“Shane asked me to come to the cabin when he knew I didn’t wish to return to Russia for the summer after my father died. It was where I told him about my mama, Irina.” Hayden knew the story, he’d read the website and volunteered at the camps. “Shane and I sat on the dock for hours. I talked and he listened, this stupid bird never shutting up in the background. Was when I, what’s the word, I made the connection?”

“Realized?” Hayden supplies.

“Yes, realized, it is when I realized that it was love. That I would no longer hide that I love him. And then the next season started, we were alone, away from each other.” Ilya sips his beer, shrugging. “Is reminder of that. Of not hiding our love, one day.” He says the last two words as a whisper, almost as if they were meant just for him.

“And here I thought you were campaigning for Ottawa to change their mascot to the loons, gotta keep up the trend of you having mascot tattoos alive.” Hayden says, giggling into his beer.

“Bear is for Russia, you idiot!”

June 2020

“Shane, buddy, you gotta help me out with the keys,” Hayden says, propping up his drunk friend against the wall.

It wasn’t often that Shane drank, and Hayden was sure he could count on one hand the number of times he’d been drunk, but he guessed winning their third Stanley Cup was as good a reason as any. Hayden was shocked when Shane agreed to stay out with the team (especially since he knew Ilya was at Shane’s apartment waiting for him) instead of just for his normal beer or two whenever he or the team convinced Shane to go out. They’d done shots and drank some of those alcohol filled fruity drinks Hayden would deny liking if

anyone ever asked, Shane's competitive side coming to the surface anytime someone bet he couldn't take another or wouldn't drink a specific drink. But finally, as the night came to an end, Hayden shoved his best friend into an Uber and convinced their teammates to let only Hayden accompany Shane home.

"Are you trying to wake the whole building Pike?" Ilya says when the door flies open, Hayden stumbles back while Shane giggles.

"Tell that to your boyfriend."

Ilya's focus shifts, his gaze landing on Shane, "Trying to wake the whole building moy malen'kiy p'yanitsa?" Shane continues to giggle until Ilya wraps a hand around his bicep and drags him inside.

"Care if I use the toilet before heading home?" Hayden asks, following them into the apartment, Rozanov just waving his hand in the direction of the bathroom.

Hayden rolls his shoulders, blinking hard and doing his best to push the alcohol to the back of his mind before washing his hands and walking back out to the kitchen. Stopping only when he hears low voices, he'd half expected Shane to be passed out on the couch.

"I am very proud of you," Rozanov says, unaware that Hayden can see their shadow cast against the wall from the low kitchen lights. "You played so well, fucking killed it." The rest of his words are lost in a low rumble as Hayden watches the shadow move, Rozanov's face disappearing into Shane's neck.

"I love you." Shane mumbles, "wanted you there."

"Next time, next time one of us wins the Cup, we will kiss on the ice."

"Like Scott?"

"Better," Rozanov says, closing the space between them and kissing Shane. Hayden almost retreats into the guest room he knew was just at the end of the hall, hesitating only when he watches Shane's shadow pull away and walk away, only to hear the sound of one of the bar stools being roughly pulled across the hardwood.

"Talk to me in Russian." Hayden hears Shane say when he comes around the corner, his eyes going soft in a way Hayden didn't particularly want to see as he looked at Rozanov across the breakfast bar.

"Skazhi svoyemu drugu, chtoby on ushel, chtoby ya mog otvesti tebya naverkh i trakhnut' tebya." Shane giggles and blushes, while Hayden looks between them, confused, as he orders himself and Uber back home. "Ty by khotela etogo, moya lyubimaya? Chtoby ya pozabotilsya o tebe?"

"Da, pozhaluysta." Shane says, though Hayden didn't understand a lick of Russian, but from Rozanov's low chuckle, he was sure Shane hadn't said the second word correctly in his drunken state.

“Goodbye Pike, thank you for returning my Shane.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Hayden says, waving his hand over his head

October 2020

“Jade told me something pretty interesting while I was putting her to bed,” Jackie says while she pulls down their duvet, a little bitter that Hayden had gotten Amber and Arthur down before she’d gotten the twins to go to their separate beds.

Hayden grunts in response, looking up briefly from his phone. “Our children performed a wedding.”

“Which one of their stuffies got married now?” Hayden asks, putting his phone down and fully looking up at Jackie. It was a pretty common thing in their house for Jade and Ruby to marry off their stuffed animals after watching one too many Disney movies.

“Try your best friend and his stupidly sweet boyfriend.” Hayden sits up, phone bouncing off the bed and onto the floor.

“The fuck?”

Jackie just shrugs, not phased that their four children were now in on the biggest relationship secret of the NHL. “Think they’ll do it for real someday?”

Hayden chews his bottom lip, leaning over the edge of the bed to retrieve his phone. “While I still think Shane could do better, I guess it wouldn’t be that bad.”

End Notes

Comments and kudos are always appreciated, come talk about these boys (and a few other ships) with me! [twitter](#)

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