Hayden Gets The Message

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/77236971.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV), Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Shane Hollander & Hayden Pike, Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov, Hayden Pike/Jackie Pike
Characters:	Hayden Pike, Shane Hollander, Ilya Rozanov, Jackie Pike, J.J. Boiziau
Additional Tags:	POV Hayden Pike, Texting, Good Friend Hayden Pike, Shane Hollander & Hayden Pike Friendship, Hayden Pike isnt as dumb as people think he is, Hayden figures it out, Fluffy, Secret Relationship, Relationship Reveal
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-07 Words: 4,942 Chapters: 1/1

Hayden Gets The Message

by KarsKars

Summary

He hadn’t meant to look. Honest. He really hadn’t. But Shane was in the shower, and Hayden had picked up what he’d thought was HIS phone. In his defence, the phone in question had been tossed onto the bed closest to the window, which they both knew was always *his* bed. Both of their phones were the same model, and neither of them had bothered to change the ringtones from the default notification. He’d picked it up without a second thought and, well, had immediately realized his mistake. But it was too late. Hayden had seen the text chain.

OR
Hayden starts to put the pieces together and figures things out much sooner than expected.

He'd met Shane in 2008.

It was the International Prospect Cup, and they'd hit it off almost instantly. Hayden had seen his raw talent and knew, even then, that he'd go far. He'd joked around with a very shy eighteen-year-old Hollander, calling him the new Crosby, who had himself once been dubbed the new Gretzky. It was a sort of passing of the generational torch, if you will. And anyone who'd ever watched Shane Hollander play hockey had to admit there was no denying he was their generation's Great One.

Of course, some contested that, predicting Russia's Ilya Rozanov as the next Great One of hockey. But Hayden knew, like the rest of the world should, that the greatest players were *always* Canadians. It was their sport after all; no stupid, arrogant, pain-in-the-ass Russian asshole was going to take that title.

He had been ecstatic to learn they'd been drafted to the same team. Growing up in rural Ontario, Hayden had always had a soft spot for Toronto, but ultimately didn't care where he got drafted as long as he *got* drafted. So, learning that a Canadian team had chosen him was an incredible moment. But learning he'd be teammates with none other than Shane Hollander had been surreal.

They'd become fast friends.

In the beginning, Shane had been fun, and he'd enjoyed going out with the team after games or particularly gruelling practices. Though he rarely drank, he'd still show up and have a good time. It had been on one of those nights out that Hayden had met Jackie.

He'd been sipping a beer with Shane, watching Drapeau make a fool of himself on the dancefloor, when two gorgeous girls slid into their booth. A peppy little redhead had plopped herself next to Shane, while her stunning brunette friend dropped in next to Hayden. He'd bought a round for the table, then took his shot with the girl smiling up at him. Shane had been a killer wingman, politely chatting with the other girl as Hayden and Jackie drank their asses off and tore up the dance floor. An exhilarating few months later, they were Mr. and Mrs. Pike, and Hayden could hardly believe his luck. Shane had stood up with him, of course, supporting the relationship everyone else told him he'd rushed into. But Shane could see their connection; he could see how happy Hayden was and how amazing Jackie was and how perfect their life together would be. He understood and supported Hayden.

"I just want you to be happy, man," Shane had said, "if Jackie makes you happy, then fuck what anyone else says. Be happy."

And Hayden was. He had the woman of his dreams and the career of a lifetime. Nothing could touch him.

They'd gone from good friends to *best* friends after that. Shane had been there to help put his new place back together after the housewarming party got a little out of hand. Shane had been there to celebrate the birth of all of Hayden's kids. Shane had been there to console him when

he'd traded in his sweet-ass Hummer for a Dodge Caravan. And Shane had been there countless other times.

Hayden had tried to be a good friend in return. He'd repaid the favour when, after Shane bought his first place, some of the guys from the team had shown up to the housewarming with a keg. It had gotten a bit rowdy despite Shane's best efforts, and Hayden had stuck around till morning to help him clean up the mess. Unsurprisingly, that had been the last time anyone from the team had been invited to Shane's condo, aside from J.J. and himself.

It was why he had jumped at the opportunity to be invited to Shane's cottage the summer it was completed. He'd packed up the minivan with Jackie and their kids, then driven out to spend Canada Day long weekend at Shane's ridiculously fancy, custom-built, lakeside cottage.

Suffice to say, Hayden and Shane were best friends. Ride or die. A True bromance. Which was why he noticed when things were … *off* with Shane long before anyone else.

It had started with a simple text message.

LILY
> Come over

He hadn't meant to look. Honest. He really hadn't. But Shane was in the shower, and Hayden had picked up what he'd thought was HIS phone. In his defence, the phone in question had been tossed onto the bed closest to the window, which they both knew was always *his* bed. Both of their phones were the same model, and neither of them had bothered to change the ringtones from the default notification. He'd picked it up without a second thought and, well, had immediately realized his mistake. But it was too late. Hayden had seen the text chain.

LILY
> Come over
> will be worthwhile
> 2886 Beacon
> Text me. I will let you in

There was a moment of silence that stretched for several minutes before another series of pings, and Hayden couldn't help but look down at the phone he'd still been holding.

LILY
> You are coming, yes?
> Do not make me beg
> SHAAAAAAAAANE

He'd snorted at the girl's desperation, but immediately felt bad for looking. Shane was notoriously private and probably would have been pissed if he knew Hayden had seen. Plus, at 10¢ a message, she must really like Shane. Or at the very least, really *want* Shane. Damn, Hayden was impressed.

Shane had eventually emerged from the hotel bathroom and picked up his phone as yet another ping sounded. He'd blushed approximately eighty shades of pink and shut the phone with a VERY audible snap.

"I uh," he'd started, despite Hayden not prompting for an explanation. "I'm gonna just … go out. Probably be back kinda late so ..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but rather trailed off as he awkwardly searched for a hoodie.

"K, um, I'm gonna -" Shane gestured over his shoulder, but didn't actually make a move to leave. "You're good here?"

Hayden had rolled his eyes and smiled at his awkward but sweet friend. "Alone? In a nice hotel room? Just me by myself, with no one around? No interruptions? Yeah, dude, I'm good! Get out already." He'd laughed, and Shane blushed again at the implication.

Shane didn't come back until nearly one in the morning.

Hayden noticed a hickie hiding just below his shirt collar.

It was the night before a game, and they were in Boston, relaxing in their hotel room. Shane was texting either his parents or his mystery girl, and Hayden was trying not to be too obvious as he sexted Jackie. It was getting progressively harder (pun intended), and he'd been hoping Shane would slink away to meet his Lily girl and give Hayden the room for a few hours.

Jackie had already taken off most of her clothes, sending him teasing pictures of her blouse half hanging off the chair near the closet doors. Then one of her bra draped casually over the nightstand. And another of little lace panties bunched up on the floor beside the bed. God, Hayden really needed Shane to fuck off for a bit. But how did he tell him without being rude … or obvious.

Shane suddenly slapped his phone down on the mattress beside his thigh, startling Hayden and causing him to glance over. Shane looked flushed and a little scandalized. Had they been doing the exact same thing? Hayden and Jackie, and Shane and Lily? Shane smiled awkwardly at him and attempted to laugh off the weirdness, picking up his phone and casually resuming his conversation. But not before Hayden caught a glimpse of pale skin on his screen.

It looked like it could be a leg … possibly? It had been hard to tell from his terrible vantage point, but a fucking leg was a weird body part to be flustered about. But hey, who was he to kink shame? Oh, SHIT! Did Shane have a foot fetish? Was this Lily girl sending him shots of her legs and feet? Hayden shuddered at the thought and felt his semi start to deflate. Shane was again fully absorbed in his texting, now with a *very* noticeable blush across his whole face and one leg bent at the knee, blocking Hayden's view of what he suspected was a semi. He was a little uncomfortable at the thought of Shane getting hard while sexting some girl in the next bed.

He was also a total hypocrite.

His phone vibrated in his hand with another photo from his incredible wife. Hayden forced his thoughts away from his roommate and whatever kinky, fetishy shit he got up to. He opened the photo and *oh fuck, Jackie.* She was seriously going to be the death of him. All thoughts of Shane left his mind at the stunning expanse of soft, smooth, pale skin that graced his screen. How, HOW, had Hayden gotten so lucky? His wife was the fucking best.

He replied, graphically describing his admiration and was rewarded with another photo, this one leaving much less to his imagination. Hayden had nearly groaned. Just as he was about to give up and leave the room in search of an unlocked conference suite or a fucking stairwell or anything, Shane jumped to his feet and made some halfhearted excuse as he awkwardly slid on his shoes and bolted out the door while ordering a cab.

Fucking FINALLY, Hayden had thought! His pants flew across the room faster than Shane had run out the door.

The next incident came after they'd been kicked out of the playoffs. Hayden had invited a few of the guys from the team over for beers and to watch Boston hopefully get annihilated.

Rozanov's cocky-ass-grin drifted across their screen, and J.J. made an offhand comment about him. Honestly, Hayden didn't even catch the whole thing, just that it had something to do with Rozanov getting fucked on the ice instead of off it. Mitty had commented that he felt sorry for the poor puck bunny that regularly sucked his dick, and Shane had quite literally choked on his ginger ale.

Unfortunately for everyone, Boston had pulled through and won the cup, Rozanov's stupid face plastered all over their screens, cheering loudly as he held the Stanley Cup high.

The guys had all groaned and booed and tossed pretzels at the TV before getting up from the couch and preparing to leave. Hayden had turned to ask J.J. a question when he'd caught a glimpse of Shane. There, on his otherwise stoic face, was the smallest hint of a smile.

They'd been ripping on Shane all night, using his well-known rivalry with Rozanov to tease him. They'd made plenty of comments about how Shane hated him, how Shane wished it was anyone but Rozanov playing for the cup, how Shane was probably going to need to have a real drink if Rozanov won, etc. And Shane hadn't disputed any of it. He'd just sat there and laughed.

Hayden had gotten up to clear away the food and empty cans, leaving Shane alone in the living room. When he returned, he'd caught a glimpse of Shane's phone over his shoulder. He hadn't meant to; it just kind of … happened.

Congrats. <

LILY
> Thank you
> Going out for celebration drinks. you are in boring Montréal?

Montéal is not boring. <

LILY
> Does Montréal have Stanley Cup this year?

Fuck off. <

LILY
> Ahh, so you admit Boston is better, yes?

Hayden frowned. He'd suspected Lily lived in Boston and was a big-time hockey fan. But maybe she was associated with the team? It was one thing for Shane to meet up with a girl who lived in Boston, but Lily seemed to summon him even in Montrèal. He'd checked, and the games where Shane and Lily would sneak away were Boston games. Not *all* Boston games, but *always* Boston games. If she were associated with the team, possibly as a nurse or in management, it would certainly explain how they'd hook up exclusively when their two teams faced one another. It also made more sense why Shane would congratulate her on Boston winning the cup.

Still, it surprised him that sweet-but-awkward Shane Hollander would text like *that* with some girl he obviously liked. If Hayden ever said *fuck off* in a text to Jackie, he'd be sleeping on the couch for more days than his poor back could handle.

Shane closed his phone and tucked it away in his pocket just as Hayden rounded the couch. "Want a hand cleaning up?" He'd offered, and Hayden sighed with relief. Thank fuck for thoughtful, considerate, good-boy Shane Hollander.

J.J. had a wild social life. He was one of the few single guys on the team (not that something like "marital status" stopped some of them) and lived for the Montréal night scene. He'd managed to pull Hayden out a few times, but he had the excellent excuse of a wife and kids to fall back on. Shane, on the other hand, just flat out refused to go. So when J.J. called to say he and Shane were drunk and in no position to drive, Hayden thought maybe he was still sleeping.

"HAYD!!!" A *very* intoxicated Hollander had cheered into the speaker of Boiziau's phone; Hayden actually bolted upright in bed.

"Hollzie?" he'd stupidly asked, and Shane laughed like a lunatic in the background.

"Shane is a little … how you say … *saoul comme une botte.*"

Hollander argued back in Québécois, and Hayden was not nearly awake enough to wrap his brain around French at … he glanced over to the alarm clock on the nightstand … ugh, three in the fucking morning. He was going to kill them both.

He was going to get out of bed and drive to wherever their drunk asses were, THEN he was going to kill them both. He'd make it quick and painless at least; he wasn't a monster.

When Hayden had pulled up, J.J. was passed out on the grass, while Shane was talking on the phone. No, correction, Shane was GIGGLING on the phone. What the fuck was going on? Hayden ran a hand down his face and took a deep breath before getting out of the van.

“Hollzie, J.J.” he called, and Shane nearly dropped his phone in surprise. He fumbled a hurried goodbye to whoever was on the other line and shoved the phone in his pocket.

“HAYDEN!” he cheered again, and Hayden smiled. This was a pain in his ass, but at least Shane was happy to see him.

“Hey, man,” he greeted and tossed a thumb in J.J.’s direction. “Help me get Boiziau in the van?”

It took substantially longer than necessary, but they’d managed. Hayden had died laughing several times watching an absolutely wasted Shane try to lift J.J.’s dead weight into the middle bucket seat. He kept flopping over like *Weekend at Bernie's,* and Hayden could have sworn he heard laughter come from Shane’s pocket when he’d voiced the comparison.

It took far too long to get tweedle-dee and tweedle-dipshit back to his place. Hayden struggled to get J.J. out of the back and seriously considered just leaving him there since it was such a nice night. Ultimately, his conscience got the better of him, and Hayden dragged J.J.’s drunk French-Canadian ass inside and down to the basement, where he dropped him on an old futon. Shane came stumbling down after them, not nearly as quiet or graceful as he clearly thought he was being.

Hayden groaned when he heard Arthur begin to cry.

“OH SHIT!” Hollander practically yelled. “I’m so sorry, man.”

“Why were you even out with Boiziau in the first place?” Hayden snapped. "You never go out."

“He needed a friend,” Shane answered and dammit if Hayden didn’t feel bad now. “He got dumped, and everyone was busy. Brigitte broke up with him. ” He’d said it in total seriousness while swaying so badly he looked more like Jack Sparrow than Shane Hollander.

Hayden sighed. “So he went to drown his feelings or find a hookup?”

“Both,” Shane shrugged bluntly and flopped down onto the couch. “I think he was just sad, needed some company. He made me take too many shots. Felt bad saying no, you know?” His eyes drifted closed, and a soft smile spread over his face as silent thoughts raced through his mind. “I’m not boring.” He declared, and Hayden had no idea where that had come from, but didn’t have a chance to respond. “Night, Hayd,” Shane said as he promptly passed out.

Hayden would have left there. That was his cue. But Shane’s phone had slipped out of his pocket and slid under the couch, and Hayden knew he’d panic trying to find it in the morning. So he reached down and fished it out.

It was still on an active call. The contact name LILY boldly displayed across the top of the screen.

“Hello? Lily?” He said into the receiver and heard a muffled *“Блять”* before the call disconnected. Two seconds later, a text came through.

LILY
> thank you. You are good friend Hayden Pike.

He stared at the phone for a beat. Lily knew his name? Of COURSE Lily knew his name. Shane had yelled it in the parking lot, and she had apparently been on the phone this whole time.

He texted her back through Shane’s phone, knowing full well he would see it in the morning.

Thanks, Lily <
Give him shit for this tomorrow, would ya? <

LILY
> of course 😈
> He is passed out now, yes?

IMG_5371.png *delivered*

Hayden had taken a quick shot of Shane passed out, catching J.J. in the background, and sent it to Lily. Boiziau was lying face down on the futon, looking shockingly reminicent of a dead body. Hollander was lying supine on the couch, his head bent uncomfortably on the armrest with his right arm draped over his forehead, while the fingertips of his left grazed the concrete floor. She replied with a laughing emoji, and Hayden closed out of the chat. He placed the phone on the side table and went back upstairs to reclaim as much of the night as possible.

Three hours later, an exhausted Hayden was stealthily opening the basement door for Jade and Ruby to pounce on their unsuspecting victims.

He picked up the phone and hit the messages app. It opened on a text chain with LILY, and he immediately knew he’d done it again. Hayden quickly tried to swipe away, not wanting to read anything private, but the panicked motion sent the messages scrolling on the screen. It stopped on a photo that was definitely NOT a leg. Holy fucking god. Was that Shane’s … Hayden practically threw the phone across the room and shuddered. Why the fuck was Shane sending dick pics? He didn’t seem the type. But - the image had been on the left side, which meant it had been *received* by Shane’s phone, not sent. Hayden stared at the dent in the hotel room wall where the phone had connected. Why was Lily sending Shane pictures of a dick?

Unless …

Holy Mary Mother of Fuck. Yup. It made sense. It made total and complete sense. Hayden was smacked with the sudden and obvious conclusion that LILY probably wasn’t really a

Lily. But then who? It definitely made his “associated with the Boston team” theory more plausible. There were, like, three women who travelled with the team. Obviously, the team employed more women than that, but only three regularly accompanied them on away games. But if Lily were a dude, it would open up so many more options for who it could be.

He pondered that for a moment. He didn’t see very many details in that quick glance and absolutely refused to take a second look, so there wasn’t much else to go on. He would have to let it simmer in the back of his mind, maybe analyze Shane’s interactions with the Boston players, or see if any of the Boston staff kept a particularly keen eye on him.

Shane’s Lily was totally a guy. It made no sense, but it made *so much sense*. All those nights out where he didn’t take any girls home. His inexplicably short-lived relationship with Rose fucking Landry. How incredibly private he was about everything and anything to do with his personal life. Hayden was actually ashamed he hadn’t realized this before and embarrassed that it took a surprise dick pic for him to notice.

They really needed to get different phones. Or at the very least, more identifiable cases.

It was Rozanov.

It fucking *had* to be.

They’d been playing Boston (more like they’d been kicking Boston’s ass) and everything was fine, totally normal. Hollander had been playing a fire game, and the rest of the team were feeding off that momentum. Hayden was gliding up the ice, watching for an opening, when he saw Hollander battling Rozanov for the puck. He’d won, of course, and was on a breakaway when Marlow smashed him into the boards so fucking hard Hayden could hear the crunch from where he waited near centre ice. Shane had turned to look over his shoulder at Rozanov and hadn’t seen Marlow coming. It had all happened so fast.

And then Shane was down, and he wasn’t getting back up, and Hayden had just … reacted. He didn’t even realize what was happening until he had his gloves off and felt Marlow’s nose break under his fist. The rest of the Montréal team poured onto the ice to avenge their captain. Instantly, every single player from both teams was involved in a massive brawl. Every single player, except their two captains.

Shane was being loaded onto a stretcher, and Rozanov was just standing there, hovering over him. Hayden could just make out the words through his heavier-than-usual accent as Rozanov checked if Shane was alright. Normally, he would have chalked it up to good sportsmanship, but this was Rozanov, and he had never checked in on any player ever. Plus, the look of absolute terror in his eyes was pretty damn telling if you knew what to look for.

Especially after Hayden had caught him coming out of Shane’s hospital room.

Naturally, he’d gone to check on his best friend after the game. The nurses almost didn’t let him in, but Hayden and Shane had put each other's names down as backup contacts for when they were at away games, and Jackie, Yuna and David couldn’t be there. He was surprised to be told he had to wait his turn to go in and was ushered to take a seat in a separate, more

private waiting room. He'd suspected their coach, or Shane's parents, had beaten him there, so he settled in and checked his phone.

There were a few unread messages from Jackie.

THE MRS. ❤️
> Good luck, baby 😘
> NICE GOAL! I'm so proud of you! ❤️❤️❤️
> HAYDEN! Stop chewing on your mouthguard. It's so gross.
> omg Shane
> OMG!!!! SHANE!!!! 😱
> Is he okay?
> Fucking Marlow!!!
> YEAH!!! GET HIM, BABE!!!!

At the hospital <
Shane is awake. Nurse said he's gonna be okay. <
Just waiting to be let in to see him. <

THE MRS. ❤️
> I'm so glad! Tell Shane I love him and to get better so he can kick Boston's ass sooner rather than later.
> Love you, baby. Thanks for letting me know. Keep me posted!! ❤️😘

Yup <

Hayden had been looking down at his phone when the door opened. Which is probably why Rozanov hadn't noticed or recognized him right away.

He glanced up and caught Ilya fucking Rozanov pressing the palms of his hands hard into his eyes. He just stood there, right outside Shane's hospital room door, for nearly a whole minute without moving a muscle. He took deep, steadying breaths and appeared to gather himself before lowering his hands and finally noticing Hayden watching him.

His expression shifted from surprise to guarded apprehension in an instant.

"Pike," he greeted, measured and wary.

"Rozanov," Hayden responded.

"I am checking on Captain Hollander. Apologizing for my teammate." He explained, not that Hayden had asked. And, look, normally he would have accepted the justification at face value and let it go. But he knew better. Everything suddenly solidified for Hayden as the absolute terror that had crossed Rozanov's face on the ice flashed in his mind. The *years* of back and forth between him and Hollander. The way Shane had been utterly gutted when he and "Lily" had broken up. The smile Shane would get when he'd text with "Lily". And the current raw emotion hiding just below the surface in Rozanov's eyes. It all came together to sucker punch Hayden right in the gut as he took him in.

“Sure, makes sense,” he agreed, not wanting to call the other man out in the middle of a hospital waiting room while his situationship of nearly a decade was lying injured on the other side of the door.

Rozanov stared at him. His piercing gaze locked onto Hayden, and he felt a little like he was being analyzed. He probably was. After a minute, Rozanov chuckled. It was a dark, humourless sound that Hayden didn’t know how to interpret.

“Okay,” he said dismissively. His hazel eyes locked onto Hayden’s again, penetrating through all the bullshit and conveying far more than his words ever could. “Shane is awake. You need to talk to him, yes?”

Shane. Not Hollander. Not your Captain. But, Shane. Hayden took a deep breath and nodded. This was *not* going to be an easy conversation.

Hayden had debated letting the whole thing slide. He really had. But Shane had dreamily said “Ilya?” when he walked through the hospital room door, only to follow up with a *very* disappointed “Oh, hey Hayden.” Which made it all too obvious what was really going on. And low-key hurt his feelings.

Shane, not Hollander. *Ilya,* not Rozanov.

“Hey, to you too, dude,” he teased, and Shane blushed in obvious embarrassment. Hayden took a deep breath and decided to rip off the band-aid. “Sorry to disappoint, but your boyfriend went back to his hotel.”

Shane sputtered a bit, but it was clear he was on enough meds to slow his processing power. It made Hayden feel a little guilty about immediately jumping into this conversation, but if he didn’t do it now, he might chicken out. And he didn’t want to pretend he didn’t know when he *did*. It felt like lying.

“I - he -” Shane tried, struggling to find his words over the combination of his own anxiety and the painkillers.

“Dude, it’s cool, you don’t have to explain anything.”

“Can we not do this?” Shane panicked. “I - I can’t think straight and I .. FUCK. How -”

He trailed off and squeezed his eyes shut. He said something about this being his worst nightmare, and muttered about possibly being in a coma; that Haden was a figment of his imagination, or a medication-induced hallucination. Either way, Shane was dissociating HARD.

“Shane, bud, listen,” Hayden placated. “We can talk about this later, and we *will* talk about this later, but I need to say one thing while you’re trapped in a hospital and can’t run away.” He took a deep breath and met Shane’s terrified eyes. If he thought Rozanov looked afraid, it was *nothing* compared to the spiralling happening in Shane’s mind.

“No matter what, I just want you to be happy, man,” he finally said, “if -” Hayden struggled to say the name, catching himself and starting again, “if Rozanov makes you happy, then fuck what anyone else thinks, myself included. Be happy. I don’t get it, I may never get it, but I will support you like you’ve always supported me.”

Shane openly stared at him. Speechless.

“You’re my best friend, nothing - not even you hooking up with Rozanov - can change that. Got it?”

A tear slid down Shane’s cheek, and he nodded. “Yeah,” he whispered, and Hayden nodded in response.

“Good,” he said before tacking on “but fucking *Rozanov*, bud? Really?” and Shane laughed.

It broke the tension that had been building to a suffocating degree, and Hayden felt lighter than he had in weeks; ever since he’d figured out Lily was a dude. They laughed for a while and discussed Shane’s recovery and discussed Shane’s confusing relationship and discussed all the ways Hayden had figured it out. It was a good chat; an honest chat. He just had one more question he needed answered.

“Do you love him?” Hayden asked out of the blue. There had been an extended break in conversation as Shane’s attentiveness had begun to wane, as the meds pulled him down. Hayden was going to leave, but he couldn’t go without knowing this one thing. He *had* to know. Shane being into dudes was one thing, but being into Rozanov? If it were just a hook-up, he’d get it. He’d judge the ever-loving-shit out of Shane for his choices, but he’d get it.

But if it were more than that, if it were deeper than that …

“Yes,” Shane whispered, and Hayden nodded. A decade. This had been going on between them for nearly a decade. Of course it was more than a hook-up. He took a deep breath and looked at his friend. REALLY looked at him.

“Okay,” he said, “but just so you know, I have some killer stories for my best man speech at your wedding.”

Shane groaned, and Hayden laughed all the way out the door.

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