

I think I love him

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I think I love him

by [Ef02](#)

Summary

“How’d it go?” Hayden asked, grinning sleepily. “You in love?”

In such a panic that he didn’t think about the words, Shane replied “Fuck, yes, I think I love him”

That certainly got Hayden’s attention. He sat up in bed and looked at Shane in shock. Shane debated turning back around again at the look on Hayden’s face but instead just stood there frozen.

With some apprehension Hayden replied with “Okay... do you want to talk about it”

Or: Shane accidently comes out to Hayden post tuna melt and it goes from there

Shane – November 2016

What is happening?

This was bad. This was really fucking bad. Shane's heart was racing, and it wasn't from taking the stairs. Every fiber of him wanted to run right back up those stairs and into Ilya's arms. To wrap himself around him and go to bed with him and *wake up with him*.

And that was why Shane marched straight out of Ilya's building, and didn't stop walking until he was safely back in his hotel room.

In his panic, he wasn't careful enough about not waking Hayden. He wasn't in the room for ten seconds before the bedside lamp was turned on.

"How'd it go?" Hayden asked, grinning sleepily. "You in love?"

In such a panic that he didn't think about the words, Shane replied "Fuck, yes, I think I love him"

That certainly got Hayden's attention. He sat up in bed and looked at Shane in shock. Shane debated turning back around again at the look on Hayden's face but instead just stood there frozen.

With some apprehension Hayden replied with "Okay... do you want to talk about it" and then seemed to look at Shane more closely and asked "Hey, are you okay?"

Shane didn't feel okay; in fact, he felt like he might either throw up or pass out. Slowly, he sank to the floor, back against the door, unable to process everything that had happened that day. He wasn't sure if he was more surprised about being in love with Ilya or sort of accidentally coming out to Hayden.

He was vaguely aware of movement in the room and looked up when Hayden hesitantly touched his shoulder.

"Um, hey Shane, don't freak out, okay? It's okay, I, we're cool and we can talk about it if you want or not"

Shane thought about it and figured that now that the words were out there, he needed to talk to Hayden – he didn't want to feel awkward every time he saw him, and his shocked brain had managed not to use Ilya's name during his confession. "I, sorry to drop that on you I just freaked out. I, um, like guys, obviously..."

"You being gay or whatever is fine by me and I won't tell anyone, I swear"

"I don't think I am exactly, it's complicated"

"Okay, you want to talk about this guy, whoever it is? I can see how it would be difficult"

This was not something that Shane was okay to talk about, even without names. “It doesn’t matter, okay? We can’t be together so there’s no point thinking about it”

Hayden looked at him with a mixture of sadness and exasperation, “Shane…”

Shane was unwilling to have this conversation in case he said something that was incriminating. Hayden seemed to be dealing with the idea that Shane was into guys, but he didn’t think he would handle who exactly Shane was into. “Look it’s fine, I’m gonna have a shower, and obviously you can’t tell anyone about this”

“No, I would never”

With that Shane got into the shower and stared at the wall for a long while.

Hayden – November 2016

Hayden had thought a lot about what Shane had told him the other night. A few things obviously made sense now – Shane’s unwillingness to date or share anything about his dating life, how closed off he was at times, why he was so secretive about meeting people. Hayden was sympathetic to all of this, but what he couldn’t figure out was what was up between Shane and the guy that Shane clearly had in his life. He’d been sneaking off to meet someone in Boston for a good while – Hayden had only realised the pattern recently, but he wouldn’t know if they were meeting at other times. He couldn’t understand the nature of the relationship either, they’d clearly been hooking up for a while and from what Shane had confessed in his panic the other night his feelings, at least, went deep. So why couldn’t they be together, especially since they’d clearly been successful at hiding whatever relationship they had so far? It didn’t make any sense.

What made even less sense was a week later when there started to be press about Shane and Rose Landry. Hayden knew they’d both been at JJ’s party the other week – JJ had come into practice bragging about it the next day. Shane had refused to say anything about it to the guys, claiming that he was just respecting Rose. Hayden didn’t know what to make of it. There’s no way Shane had gotten over his mystery guy in the space of a week; Hayden had seen the look on his face in that hotel room, Shane definitely had deep feelings for the guy. That meant that either Rose was helping Shane cover or he was leading her on, neither of which felt very likely. Hayden had always felt like he knew the man very well and, while he might not have figured out all of the key facts, he knew Shane would never intentionally hurt Rose. Seeing as Shane had known Hayden for 7 years and never mentioned he liked guys, it seemed unlikely he’d told Rose in the week he’d known her, but maybe Shane’s guy was a friend of hers? Mystery guy being an actor would explain why absolute secrecy was needed. Hayden decided not to say anything for now out of respect for Shane’s wishes.

Shane – January 2017

After the game on Saturday, Shane was delayed in getting ready because of an interview and when he got back the changing room was almost empty. Hayden was there and he seemed to be waiting for everyone to leave. Shane knew that Hayden was confused about Rose, but he hadn't said anything to Shane yet. He'd been quiet around Shane all week though. He figured if he wasn't getting out of this conversation, he'd better get it over with.

Once everyone had left, Hayden double checked to see if they were alone and said to Shane in a low voice "What's going on Shane? I get you don't want to talk about it but I'm not sure I can ignore what we talked about"

Shane sighed and told Hayden a truth, or some of it anyway "Look, I like Rose, I really do. She's fun to be around and great to talk to and pretty"

Hayden looked at him for a minute, seemingly considering what to do then said "Shane, you can't get over someone in a week. Whoever your mystery guy is, you've clearly been in some kind of relationship for a while, and I just don't understand what's going on with you"

Shane felt a bit sick at that; Hayden had clearly put together that whenever he was out in Boston it was with the same guy and Shane didn't want him to think about who that could be. "Nothing's going on, okay? I was seeing this guy casually and things got a bit... complicated... last week, but it's not possible for us to be anything and I like Rose so I'm trying to be happy." Shane ran a hand through his hair and looked around for a minute then added "I really can't talk about this"

Hayden looked unconvinced but said "Fine," and left the changing room.

Hayden – March 2017

Hayden had just finished talking to Jackie when he walked back to his room with Shane. It had been an unfortunate loss for them and Hayden knew Shane was upset about it. He also knew that Shane was seemingly waiting for a text, judging by the way he was staring at his phone. Hayden assumed that meant that he was back with his mystery man, although still in secret.

Back in the room, after Shane had frowned at his phone for about the 10th time, Hayden decided he couldn't take it anymore.

"Since you and Rose are just friends now, does that mean you'll be seeing your guy friend person?" he tried to ask casually.

Shane frowned at him and then said, "Why are you asking now?"

Hayden sighed dramatically "Because I'm not stupid, I know he's in Boston and you've been staring at your phone as if it holds the secret to life since the game"

Shane stared at him for a minute then "I don't know. Maybe. We had a chat, recently, but it's not like we can be together, so I don't know."

Hayden didn't know what to say to that, so he said "okay" and then got in the shower. He wanted his friend to be happy, but he didn't know how to achieve that. Shane was still awake watching his phone an hour later when he went to sleep.

Hayden – April 2017

Hayden loved playing against Boston. Due to the history between the teams, everyone played their absolute best, feeding off the atmosphere in the arena. Shane especially was looking forward to this game, Hayden noted. He wondered if mystery man was in the audience.

Before the game he watched Shane talk to Ilya Rozanov. They seemed to be having a semi pleasant conversation, which was a surprise.

"What did Rozanov want?" He asked Shane when he skated back over.

"Nothing," Shane said, blinking and turning to face Hayden. "I was just...offering my condolences. You know."

It made sense that despite the history between the two men, Shane would be nice to him. Hayden supposed he should have done the same, he just couldn't imagine being nice.

"Oh. Yeah. That's nice of you," Hayden said. "I should have thought to do that. It's just...Rozanov, y'know?"

"He's not a bad guy," Shane said "It's mostly an act."

Hayden wasn't convinced by that, and he was a little surprised by Shane's defence of him.

"Pretty convincing one." He grumbled.

Hayden watched Shane steal the puck from Rozanov and skate off with a smile on his face. Then he watched in horror as Shane crumpled to the ground. He frantically started skating towards him to see if he was okay, but someone got there first.

Ilya Rozanov was standing by Shane asking repeatedly if he was okay. Hayden couldn't make sense of it. Most players, no matter their history, wouldn't want their opponent to be injured, but this seemed to be more than that. The ref directed Hayden to sit on the bench while the medical team took Shane away and Rozanov returned to his bench, concerned. Hayden played the rest of the game in a bit of a haze while waiting to hear about Shane's condition. After the game was over, the coach told them that he had a concussion and would be out for a while but ultimately be okay.

Later that night, Hayden laid in bed and replayed the match again and again. He just couldn't understand Rozanov's behaviour, and against his will, his brain was supplying him with facts

that weren't helping him work towards an answer. When he looked at the facts objectively, it seemed like maybe Shane and Rozanov knew each other more than they were letting on. Shane's mystery man lived in Boston, and he seemed sure that they couldn't ever be together. And what Shane had said to him before the game today. If someone had said this to Hayden, he wouldn't have believed it. Hell, he wasn't even sure if he believed what he was thinking himself. If it wasn't for what he had seen today he would say no way, but every time he told himself it wasn't true, his brain would supply him with a picture of Rozanov on the ice. Hayden wasn't sure he could believe it, or more importantly, that he wanted to.

The next day, Hayden heard the news that Rozanov had visited Shane in the hospital. This wasn't necessarily out of the ordinary but did little to convince Hayden that he was wrong about what he thought, something he'd spent all morning trying to do. He knew he needed to talk to Shane about it but had no idea what he'd say. The chances were that Shane would look at Hayden like he'd grown a second head and then laugh at him. The chances were they'd laugh about how silly he'd been. The chances were that Hayden had put all the facts together wrong. That's what he hoped anyway because if Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov really were hooking up then Hayden didn't really want to think about what could happen.

May 2017 – Hayden

Hayden was watching Scott Hunter on his TV, not only winning the fucking cup but also kissing his boyfriend. On the ice. In front of everyone. Hayden had to give the guy credit; he doesn't do anything by half. He texted Shane to make sure he was watching but got no reply. Hayden supposed it might be a lot to take in. This was a big step for the NHL and Hayden hoped that it might help things. He hated the idea of Shane and Scott and anyone else not being able to be with the people they loved. Unless that person was Ilya Rozanov, in which case he might suggest a lobotomy.

One Month Later - Hayden

Hayden knew he needed to call Shane, it had been a while since they had spoken and apparently Shane was staying at his cottage by himself, on some meditation week. Hayden thought that might be code for "I have a broken heart" and/or "I'm going insane" so he thought he better check in.

Hayden stared at his phone. Shane had just hung up on him. Hayden wasn't sure what to make of that phone call, Shane was behaving very strangely and hadn't sounded like his usual self at all. It hadn't done anything to convince him that Shane wasn't going insane by himself at his cottage.

Hayden sighed. He wasn't sure what to do, whether to leave his friend alone and trust that Shane would come to him if he needed to, or to go and make sure he was okay. He hadn't asked about Rozanov, partially because he didn't think it was a conversation to have over the

phone, and partially because he wasn't sure he wanted the answer. If he had put the facts together correctly, Hayden couldn't imagine what their relationship could be like? Shane had made it pretty clear that he knew they couldn't be together so it's not like they were a couple, but when Hayden thought about Shane confessing his love in the hotel all those months ago, and Rozanov's face when Shane was injured, he was sure that whatever feelings were there ran deep. Jeez, when had they even had enough time talking to each other to start something? It's not like they chatted on or off the ice and you don't simply end up at the house of your rival because you took a wrong turn. Hayden decided that it wasn't going to be good for himself or for Shane for Hayden to be having these questions bouncing around his head. He needed to talk to him, and make sure he wasn't losing his mind.

Hayden - July 2017

Hayden pulled up to Shane's cabin in his car. Parked in the drive he realised that maybe just showing up wasn't the best thing to do, but he didn't trust Shane not to lie to him over the phone, or that Hayden would be able to say what he needed to. He got out of the car and approached the house. Then he stopped dead in his tracks. Through the window next to the door, he could see Shane sat on his kitchen island, making out with someone that looked an awful lot like Ilya Rozanov.

Hayden had thought about the two of them as a possibility, he hadn't quite prepared for the fact it might be true – if anything he was sort of hoping Shane would laugh at him and say he was being insane. He had also assumed that if there had been something between them it couldn't be serious, despite what Shane had told him because in Hayden's brain, there was simply no other possibility.

But if Rozanov was here, at Shane's home and special place that meant that Shane had to think something serious was between them.

Before Hayden could decide to turn around and drive back, Shane must have caught him out the corner of his eye, because he broke off his kiss and stared.

Hayden, despite feeling confused and more than a little betrayed, has the grace to look sheepish, and gave a small wave to Shane through the window.

Shane – July 2017

Shane stared at Hayden out of the window. Ilya was stood next to him looking slightly pissed off, "Who shows up to someone's house in the middle of nowhere without texting first?" he asked.

"I guess we better let him in and explain" replied Shane, still staring at Hayden. He looked shocked and increasingly annoyed, but he hadn't driven off and he wasn't yelling at Shane or anything.

He opened the door and Hayden walked past without saying anything. Shane stood next to Ilya in the open kitchen while Hayden leaned against the fridge.

They all just stood staring for a minute and then Hayden said, “What the fuck, man?”

Shane winced and then decided he should just dive right in “Um, so Ilya and me, we’re together. Obviously.”

There was a long pause while Hayden seemingly waited for Shane to say more, and when it was obvious he wasn’t about to continue he said “What that’s it? You’re fucking a guy that we hate, our fucking rival and that’s all you’ve got to say?”

Ilya chose to speak for the first time at that point, interjecting with “I don’t think Shane has to tell you anything”

Shane shot him a Be Nice! look and then turned back to Hayden, “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you, but no one knows for obvious reasons, and it’s taken us a long time to, you know, figure stuff out”

“But he sucks” Hayden pointed out slowly, as if Shane just needed someone to mention it.

“You suck much worse and Shane puts up with you” Ilya added, like he was being helpful.

Shane decided he better take control of the situation before they ended up actually fighting. “Why don’t we sit down? And talk about it? It’s, um, kind of a long story how we got here, but he doesn’t suck okay?”

Hayden – July 2017

Hayden sat down on the couch, mainly because he felt a bit like he would fall over if he kept standing. He knew he had sort of figured them out, but he still wasn’t prepared for all of this, for Rozanov to be *here*, in Shane’s home, his safe place and all that entailed. He knew he was kind of being a dick but he couldn’t help it, and he sort of figured he had earned the right.

Shane and Rozanov had gone into the kitchen to get some beers, and he could here muffled bits of conversation floating through that sounded like “please don’t be a dick” and “He’s interrupting our time”.

They returned and sat on the other sofa, closer than Hayden was sure he was comfortable with, and by the look Shane had thrown, it was purposefully.

Hayden decided to start by being the bigger person. “Sorry for before, it’s just this is a shock okay? Even if I suspected something, I’m not sure I ever could have predicted this, and I thought we hated him!”

“What do you mean, you suspected something?” Shane asked him.

“Well, it’s just after what you told me about, you know, loving someone and I knew you’d been hooking up with someone from Boston for ages and then with how he looked when you were injured I just thought maybe and then the other day on the phone you sounded, I dunno, off so I wanted to check you were okay but I never predicted, you know, all this...” There was a moment of pause and then Hayden decided if he was going to say all of that he might as well carry on. “I mean what even is all this? Are you two together? How do you go from hating someone to this? When did you even talk enough to start seeing each other or whatever?” Another thought dawned on him, “How long has this been going on?”

Shane looked at Rozanov, seemingly asking if he could answer Hayden’s questions and then blushed a bit. “Well, uh, it’s complicated but we’re together now. Properly. But only more recently. Before that we were more just, you know, casual. Or trying to be, anyway.” He threw another embarrassed glance at Rozanov, who was being uncharacteristically quiet, probably at Shane’s request.

Hayden took a minute to digest that information. He guessed it sort of made sense, but he still had two questions unanswered.

“Okay but for how long and how do you go from hatred to friendly enough to be doing all that” with a hand wave that he hoped got the implication of what he meant by all that across.

Apparently, that was as long as Rozanov could be quiet for because he said “Was never hate, only lust” with a wink.

Shane muttered “Jesus” and then elaborated with “It’s been since our rookie year”

Hayden felt the words sink in and realised what they meant. He never would have imagined that Shane could have been keeping that secret that long. He needed a stronger drink, a sentiment which he repeated out loud.

Shane stood and glanced out the window, at the sky that was beginning to go dark and said “Why don’t you stay here tonight? And then we can talk some more, and you can maybe get to know each other slightly”

At that, Rozanov looked annoyed but said “Yes fine he can ruin our night, but he will not be having the good vodka”

Hayden supposed he better start getting used to the insults.

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