semantics

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by anincompletelist (soldouthaz)

Summary

Pike calls Lily after Shane's concussion, full of restless panic and a complicated sense of responsibility at being the only one who knows about their relationship.

Ilya Rozanov picks up instead.

Notes

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE WORK LISTED IN THE INSPIRED BY IF YOU HAVEN'T! <3

throwing my hat into the ring for this fun prompt that was going around for a bit, I loveeeee the idea of Hayden and Ilya interacting when Shane is the catalyst it's so good.

another part of this series will be up soon as well. I hope you're all having a lovely week so far! x

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by You Have Reached Lily by ItsMayBiTheWay

The split second after Hayden hangs up, the moment immediately replays in his head. It's like when they do a slow motion replay of a particularly bad move on the ice, tossed up on the giant jumbo-tron above his head for all to see.

Except this time there's no crowd. There's no ice. There's no one but Hayden here in one of the back hallways of the event center, Shane's phone clutched in his fist like a lifeline and a little like a time bomb that's about to implode.

He holds his breath. Counts to ten. Counts back down.

Lily—or *Ilya fucking Rozanov*—doesn't call again.

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The thing is, he's not the logical one.

It's fine. He's not all that bothered about it either, except for times like these where the two people he'd ordinarily call for said logic, Jackie and Shane, are off the table. And Shane is literally *on* a table right now, tucked away somewhere in a hospital and probably unconscious and possibly has been in a romantic relationship of some kind with someone he's claimed to hate for the last decade or so.

Except, when he thinks about it, Hayden can't actually remember the last time Shane had *insisted* he hated him. Not in a long time.

Fuck.

He doesn't go home. He can't. He's a shit liar, and Jackie can always tell. But where the fuck *does* he go, then?

Before he can talk himself out of it, he taps in Shane's passcode that Hayden's watched him type a thousand times and navigates to Lily's text thread like he had earlier, only this time with an uncomfortable lump of guilt in the back of his throat. He avoids reading anything he shouldn't, tapping the contact icon and then call.

The line rings. No answer.

With a muttered curse, Hayden exits the call and pulls up the texts again. He types a quick and awkward *It's Pike. Shane's OK but parents say they're keeping him overnight for concussion protocol.*

He backspaces, adds another sentence, reads it back and deletes it. Presses send a little more harshly than he needs to, then shoves the thumb up to his mouth to chew on.

The text sends. Gray pops up beneath the bubble: *read*. Hayden's thumb starts to bleed.

I'm returning his phone to his parents tonight. They'll probably give it to him when he wakes up. You can wait until then if you want, but if you want to see him there's a good chance I can get you up to his room if you meet me outside the hotel in an hour.

He can't stop thinking about the way Rozanov had sounded earlier. Desperate and tentative, so relieved to have seen Shane calling that it'd been audible. Accent thicker with emotion Hayden hadn't known the man was even capable of.

The sudden shift to stoic silence the moment he'd realized it wasn't Shane on the other side of the line.

Hayden feels sick. He looks down at the screen again.

Read.

He walks out of the event center on shaky legs and heads for the hotel.

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Some part of him had hoped Ilya Rozanov might be the asshole everybody thinks he is. That he wouldn't show, or that some sports gossip site would report that he was already on a plane headed far away from here. It would've been easier that way, Hayden thinks, to justify still hating him.

But *this* version of Ilya Rozanov is standing underneath a side entrance awning already waiting for him when Hayden pulls up in a rental with tinted windows, and when he stubs out his cigarette on the drizzle-wet concrete and approaches the passenger side, Hayden isn't sure he's ever seen someone look so sullen before.

In his beanie and coat, Rozanov drops into the front seat with a measured exhale. By the time Hayden puts it back in drive, his knee is bouncing, the toe of his boot squeaking on the floor mat below. It doesn't stop until they pull into the parking garage and kill the engine.

"His parents will be here," Hayden murmurs casually as they walk toward the visitor entrance. "His mom hasn't wanted to leave the room since he got here, but I think I can convince them to come downstairs with me and get some dinner. Should give you guys at least, like, a half hour or more."

Rozanov, eyes wide and alert, frown fixed in place, glances over his raised shoulder and shoves his hands into his pockets. He gives no response to show that he's even heard anything, so Hayden keeps walking.

He's been here before, courtesy of his own injuries, so he's familiar with the layout. Also helps having a recognizable face—especially when Rozanov is walking behind him with his

head down and hood up, suspicious enough for the both of them.

Funny as the sight would be at any other time, Hayden can't help the sour aftertaste; he gets to waltz in whenever he wants to ask for updates and see Shane and talk to his parents. Rozanov, despite how long they've had this thing going on, is still relegated to the shadows.

Hayden thinks of Shane's body being hit, meeting the ice, not getting up again. He blinks and sees Rozanov standing beside the refs, face ashen and voice hardly carrying over to where Hayden's fist had been flying at Marleau's jaw. *Is he okay? Fucking tell me!*

The only person who'd given *him* updates is Hayden.

"Wait here," he tells Rozanov, nudging him toward a quiet alcove in one of the corridors while he approaches the front desk.

The hospital is busy, seemingly always at capacity this time of year. Hayden spots a couple of security members around the vending machine behind the desk, no doubt keeping an eye out for fans that've managed to get ahold of Shane's location. There'd been a small barricade outside already.

He checks in with the nurse, already anticipating his arrival from Shane's parents. Within seconds he's given a bracelet, and he smiles and thanks the receptionist—the charming one Jackie's allowed him to use to get out of answering uncomfortable questions—and meets back up with Rozanov who, a little jarringly, has followed Hayden's instructions to a tee. He stands there like he's waiting for orders, breathing fast and looking lost. Underneath the harsh hospital flourescents, the bags under his eyes when he lifts his head match the color of his boots.

"Okay. Put this on your wrist."

Rozanov glances down at the bracelet with a furrowed brow, but he takes it regardless. "What is this?"

"Visitor bracelet," Hayden explains, heading for the guest elevator. "I'm sure you could talk your way out of it anyway, but this'll keep anyone from stopping you if you need to step out and come back."

A little belatedly, Rozanov follows, strapping the bracelet around his wrist.

"What about you?"

"His parents have been texting me hourly updates, man. Think it keeps them from going stir crazy in there. Believe me, I'd love to be there to personally annoy him when he wakes up, but," Hayden starts to laugh, but it doesn't quite make it out. He shrugs instead. "Sorta feels like the right thing to do, I guess."

He's talking too much. It's not usually something he cares about. Shane's silence typically feels like an invitation to say more, but Rozanov's is like a wet blanket. Or a bandaid peeling up at the corner, one that Hayden wants to dig his nail under and rip off.

He's not very good at keeping things quiet, but he guesses Rozanov doesn't have much of a choice. He presses the button for the elevator and taps his foot while he waits.

"Why are you doing this," comes Rozanov's voice from over his shoulder.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean what I said," he deadpans, carefully quiet, traitorously rough. "You hate me. Would be easy for you to not care."

"Yeah, maybe, but this is Shane," Hayden tosses back a little more harshly than he means to. He sighs, runs a hand down his face. "Look, man. I don't really know what's going on with you guys, and to be honest, I don't really give a fuck as long as he's safe and happy. And every time he comes back from seeing *Lily* he sure as hell seems that way. So."

The elevator light goes off with a soft ding, the doors sliding open. Rozanov turns into a ghost again as a group of people exit and veer off down the hallway, then reappears seconds before the doors close to slip inside.

He leans against the right wall. Hayden leans against the left, chewing at his lip.

"He's not—" Hayden starts, spitting it out before he can stop himself. "Shane doesn't open up easily. This thing between you guys—it's probably the longest lasting relationship he's had with anyone since I've known him. He doesn't even tell *me* how he's feeling most of the time, and we're closer than any of the other guys on the team. Have been for years. And I just."

There was a different point he was going to make with this, but he surprises himself with his voice cracking, his eyes suddenly wet. He stares hard at the ground beneath Rozanov's feet and grips the railing behind him with his palms.

"I just don't know why he didn't tell me," he finishes.

"Is not your fault," Rozanov says, eyeing him from under his beanie. "We agreed to be secret. Safer for everyone."

"Is it?" Hayden returns with a dry chuckle. Rozanov's face twitches. "He was asking for you when he came off the ice. You know that?"

Of course he doesn't. The column of Rozanov's throat moves when he swallows, jaw skewed to one side. The lights flick off on the panel beside him one by one as they ascend floors.

"No."

"Yeah. Not his parents. Not me. Not a doctor. He gets his bell rung so fuckin' hard he sees the light and *you're* what's in his head. That's not worth nothing."

His volume has raised since he started talking, the way he does when he gets passionate about something but doesn't have all the right words to communicate it the way he wants to. Shane's face has this tell when he does it, a little there-and-gone flinch at the shift in tone that

Hayden's learned to pick up on over the years that means he probably needs to cool off a little.

He wonders if Rozanov knows that look. Right now, in fact, Rozanov's got a look of his own —eyes wet and knuckles white on the railing, his own lips red from the imprint of his teeth. He swallows again, and this time it's audible.

"I can't—" he starts, sniffs, shakes his head. "It is complicated. Not—the *feeling*, but. How we would—be together."

"I get it. I mean, *obviously*," Hayden blows out a breath, head falling back against the wall. "I don't know, man. It's been a long night. I'm exhausted from worrying about him and I'm not really looking forward to having to lie to my wife about this later. I guess all I'm trying to say is—"

He breaks off, steps forward, shoves a conciliatory hand into the big empty space between them.

"Whatever you guys figure out. I'll back your play."

Even if he still looks miserable, Rozanov's lips twitch when he looks down at Hayden's outstretched palm. He nods once, extending his own to meet it in a firm shake.

"You are good friend."

Hayden takes the praise. "I don't need to give you *the talk*, do I?"

Ilya blinks. "I think we are pretty clear on birds and bees."

"Fuck, man," Hayden breathes, yanking his hand back. "Yeah, okay, great. Thanks for the confirmation on *that*, by the way."

"Is not right phrasing?" Rozanov asks.

"No, it is. Just. I meant the *best friend talk*," Hayden clarifies. "The '*if you ever hurt him I'll find you and kill you*' talk."

He's expecting a laugh, maybe. Or a hockey related insult about his ability to carry out said finding and killing. The floor numbers dwindle, mechanism pulling slow as they approach Shane's room.

"He is clumsy. Lots of things hurt him," Rozanov says, with a lift of his shoulder that feels more weighted than casual. Then, with more conviction than any statement about cups or goals or hockey, "I do not ever want to be one of those things."

Hayden's eyes burn again. He blinks rapidly, dips his chin in a nod.

"Well. Good."

The elevator dings again when they reach the top, the doors preparing to open. Hayden steps into the middle, and Rozanov stands shoulder to shoulder with him this time.

“He loves you,” Rozanov tells him.

Hayden laughs. At the turn of events, at the various shocks of today, at the fact that *Ilya Rozanov* is offering him comfort right now. He guesses he’ll have to work at getting used to it.

“Yeah. I know.” Hayden nudges their arms together. “Welcome to the club.”

Rozanov stiffens a little beside him as the doors slide open, and Hayden steps out first into the hall. When it’s clear he waves Rozanov out, pointing him toward a lounge area adjacent to Shane’s room.

“Sit there, keep your head down, you should be fine. Security’ll be tight but you have a pass that’ll get you pretty much anywhere up here,” he explains. “I’m gonna go grab his parents, see if I can say hi if he’s awake. You’ll hear us leave for the cafeteria. After that you’ve got him to yourself. I’ll do my best, but I can’t promise more than like thirty minutes with the way his mom gets.”

Shaking his head, Rozanov’s jaw steels again. Hayden’s beginning to think that it’s not so much a look of anger as self control.

“Thirty minutes is more than enough,” Rozanov says gruffly. “Thank you.”

“No problem, man.”

Hayden claps him a little awkwardly on the shoulder and turns to head for Shane’s room.

“Pike.”

He turns back. “Yeah?”

“I mean it,” Rozanov insists, blinking wetly at him from across the seating area. “Thank you.”

With the contrast between the man he knows from the ice versus the one standing in front of him now, it takes effort not to look away from the intensity of Rozanov’s gaze. For his own throat not to close up too.

He nods. “Just. Take care of him, yeah?”

Rozanov nods back, quiet and sure.

“I will.”

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The room's empty again by the time Hayden walks back up from the cafeteria with Yuna and David, just Shane lying in the bed, high on pain meds and a smile bigger than Hayden's ever seen on him before.

Hayden knows he'll see the texts. The call log. If Rozanov hadn't told him already, he'll put it together as soon as the meds wear off that Hayden knows now. That his own panic and eagerness had taken away Shane's chance to tell him himself, always too much in one way or another, and this time too far.

He stays for a bit to make sure Shane doesn't say anything compromising about him and Rozanov in front of his parents, then heads out when it gets dark. He's leaning in to grab Shane's hand when he's pulled down into a hug instead, wires and heart monitors and all.

"Thanks, Hayd," he whispers.

Fuck. Hayden's eyes sting. He sniffs into Shane's shoulder, holding him as tightly as he's allowed. *I'm sorry. I'm not going anywhere.*

"Glad you're okay, man," he rasps, trying for a smile as he pulls back. "Call me up when you're feeling better, alright?"

Shane nods, quiet and sure. *I forgive you.*

"I will."

He thinks about it the whole drive back, alone in the car: that same smile splitting Shane's face seconds before he went down on the ice, eyes on Ilya Rozanov like he was untouchable to the rest of the world when all Hayden's ever seen is Shane getting overwhelmed, underestimated, and discouraged by it.

There were times Hayden had wished he could've been enough to get into Shane's head, into that place he keeps so buried full of all the things that bother him that he never talks about. But maybe that place was never meant for Hayden anyway, not in quite the same way it seems to be for Rozanov.

The last of his misplaced envy fizzles out into nothing. He sits in the parking lot behind the wheel until his phone rings from the passenger side, Jackie's name on the screen, and thinks it's probably not totally unlike how Rozanov felt seeing Shane's on his earlier when he reaches for it like a reflex, his first full breath in hours stretching his lungs.

"I love you," he exhales when he picks up, listening to Jackie's surprised, happy laugh.

He'll say it enough for all of them until all of them can say it out loud.

End Notes

you can find me on tumblr @ anincompletelist ! x

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