

Scotty Doesn't Know (Lily and Me Do It)

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Scotty Doesn't Know (Lily and Me Do It)

by [ItsMayBiTheWay](#)

Summary

Hayden Pike's best friend Shane Hollander is as predictable and reliable as it gets. But when Shane uncharacteristically fights with Scott Hunter, of all people, Hayden *needs* to know why. As he sits in Shane's living room, waiting for an explanation, things start getting progressively more confusing. Why is Shane coming out to him? And how does Lily play into this?

OR

Hayden finds out about Lily after Shane and Scott fight on ice. When Hayden throws down gloves to take on a dinosaur, his closest ally is the most unlikely person.

Notes

HELLO FRIENDS!!!! This installation of Hayden Pike Hockey-matic Universe takes place after the fight scene in the third episode of the TV show. Although I normally write book canon, this specific change in the TV show was such a good opportunity to get Hayden involved, I couldn't resist it. *shouts* THANK YOU JACOB TIERNY

Also the first chapter is smut free but the whole fic is rated E because I have some HEATED smut scenes coming up in chapter 2 and 3.

Also thank you all so much for all the comments and kudos on my other Heated Rivalry pics, I promise I'll respond to them once I'm out of this job application hell I'm in. Enjoy my unemployment while it lasts! UPDATED I AM UNFORTUNATELY ONCE AGAIN EMPLOYED BUT I WILL CONTINUE WRITING YAOI AS IF MY LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

The title is from the Lustra song my gf kept singing when I told her about this fic!!!

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

Chapter 1: The Canadian Sherlock Holmes

Chapter Notes

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

The most fundamental thing about being best friends with Shane Hollander is, well, that it is predictable. Among many other things, their friendship—and Shane as a friend—is predictable. Not in a bad way, but in a reliable, dependable kind of way.

Hayden loves reliability. He, himself, is reliable and it's one of his biggest strengths. He's never been the best hockey player in the league, or in his team—partially because no one stands a chance against Hollander—but he is a damn good and reliable player, enough to be a fucking first liner with Shane. He's never been the most handsome in a room, or the most suave, but he's always been a loyal, reliable partner. He will remember all the important dates, treat his girl like an absolute queen, and do it consistently. He's someone you want to marry. And so is his wife Jackie; she is reliable too, in the best way. It makes them a solid couple and solid parents. And Shane? If Hayden and Jackie are living in Reliable City, Shane is the King. Predictable, trustworthy. Hayden's life is simple and unsurprising and he loves it.

What is completely unexpected—and fucking *blindsides* Hayden—is the fight Shane uncharacteristically picks out. With fucking Scott Hunter of all people. If Hayden were to make a guess on who he thought Shane would fight—and again, normally it is so out of the realm of possibilities, even the thought of it is bewildering—the most obvious choice would be Rozanov. Not that Shane had ever fought Rozanov.

Lost in thought in the aftermath of everything, waiting for Shane to get out of his bathroom he locked himself in forty-five minutes ago, with a flimsy second-shower excuse, Hayden really thinks about it. Shane and Rozanov are arch-rivals, they're always chirping on ice, always caught in a battle of insults and push-backs. But the words they throw around are *tame* compared to what Hayden knows Rozanov is capable of. Rozanov never pushes Shane to his limits, never says anything disrespectful or bordering on rude. He has never, not once, made Shane throw down gloves. But Scott fucking Hunter did. And Hayden is *dying* to know what he said.

Right on cue, the door to Shane's bedroom opens, Hayden's best friend standing in the hallway like a child who knows he's messed up. His red rimmed, puffy eyes are laser-focused on the carpet as if they hold all the answers he's looking for, wet, spikey hair making him look younger than he already is. The image reminds Hayden of Jade a few nights ago, when she pulled Ruby's hair even though she knows better. The way she looked when she came to her parents's bedroom to face the consequences is a mirror image of how Shane's looking right now. Instinctively Hayden stands up, and walks towards Shane, enveloping him in a tight embrace.

Shane immediately crumbles under the touch, his knees wobbling. Hayden pulls them both towards the couch, and silently rubs Shane's back until his breathing evens out and the rocking subsides. He tries to find reassuring words—something that does not come to him

naturally—but Hayden gives it his best anyway. “Don’t worry, buddy. No one will think any less of you because you threw a punch at Hunter. You’re still Canada’s golden boy.”

Unfortunately, his words seem to make everything worse, because a wail, an honest to god wail, leaves Shane’s mouth. “I fucked up,” he finally manages.

“No the fuck you didn’t!” Hayden truly loves Shane, but the way he sometimes can’t see what’s right in front of him frustrates Hayden more often than not. “Just because you threw hands with Hunter one time won’t change people’s perception of you.”

“It’s not the fucking punch!” Shane starts yelling all of a sudden. “It’s what he fucking knows.” When his words leave him, his shoulders slump on his sides. It’s as if uttering those words has completely drained the fight out of him.

“So what he knows that you can fight, buddy? What’s so bad about it? Every hockey player fights, it’s in the nature of the sport.” Hayden, lost in his confusion still manages to catch the exasperated look on Shane’s face.

Shane’s eyes trace the patterns on his throw pillows, guilt etched into the brown of his pupils. His shoulders move with a deep breath in and out, before he starts speaking. “Hayden, I need to tell you something. Something that might make you hate me. But I suspect you’ll find out about it one way or another, and I’d like to take control of how people find out if I can help it.”

All Hayden can do is to look at the genuinely worried and dejected look on his best friend’s face. He feels helpless in a way that’s foreign to him, especially when it comes to Shane. Hayden has always been able to decipher his best friend’s moods, struggles, boundaries, and he’s always been able to offer comfort and help. He has always been reliable. But right now, the whole situation feels so hopeless, so out of his control. “Nothing, and I mean *nothing* would make me hate you, dude. Not unless you, I don’t know, run over my kids or something. But even then, I’d hear you out. I wouldn’t put it past Jade to bring it upon herself.”

A small huff of laughter leaves Shane’s mouth and he finally looks up, still not maintaining eye contact, not that Hayden expects. This time Shane has the determined captain expression on his face, the one that he plasters on before big games to show his brevity. “I’m gay,” he lets out. His voice is even, unwavering.

“Oh, buddy,” Hayden exhales. His arms wrap around Shane one more time, pulling him in for a hug. “Thank you so much for trusting me with this. And I would never, *ever* hate you for that.”

“I know.” The sureness of Shane’s voice reassures Hayden. He didn’t fuck it up. He’s a good friend. Shane knows he’s not alone, not in this, not ever, if Hayden can help it.

And in the grand scheme of things, the whole gay thing makes sense. Shane never dates, doesn’t do one night stands. The only time he’s ever shown interest in a girl was with the chick from Boston. Lily. “But wait... But I’m a bit confused. I thought you were seeing this Lily girl for a while now. You always look so happy talking to her. I even caught you

blushing once or twice while, you know, texting her late at night. Sexting, if you will.” Understanding finally dawns on Hayden. “Oh. *Oh*. Holy shit!”

Shane grimaces, his face contorting in something definitely uncomfortable. “Yeah,” he runs a hand through his hair, hand fisting for a second as if he wants to tug.

Then all the pieces slot in place for Hayden. Shane is gay. Lily, his Boston girl, is a man who Shane is seeing in secret. He feels like a genius upon discovery. And once he starts thinking about everything involving Lily, things just come together on their own. Shane sees Lily when they play in Boston, but he also sees her during their home games with Bears too. “Fuck.” He mutters. “Lily is a hockey player. Lily is a fucking Bears player.”

Shane’s eyes get glossy, yet no tears roll down his cheeks. He just nods in surrender.

Hayden is a fucking genius. He is the fucking Canadian Sherlock Holmes. “Lily is Carmichael!”

“What? No.” Shane responds, recoiling from the guess. “But you’re close.” A few emotions flicker in his eyes, fondness and softness, and something like dread.

“Oh fuck!” Hayden tries again. Of course Shane is not fucking Carmichael. He has standards. “It’s Marlow.”

“Jesus fuck, Hayd. No.” Although Shane looks a little bit disgusted, Hayden thinks there are worse men than Cliff Marlow to get into bed with.

The third time around Hayden is sure he’s got it right. Handsome. A decent player. And a French speaker. “You bagged St. Simon? You sly dog.”

Shane takes another breath, puts his head in between his legs and repeats something Hayden can’t catch under his breath a few times. Then he lets it out all in one go.

“Lilyisilyarozanovandwevebeebhookingupsincerookiseason”

“Excuse me?” Hayden finds himself perched on the backrest of the couch, unable to recall how he got there. When Hayden entered Shane’s apartment tonight, he thought he was confused. Confused was an hour ago, confused was ten fucking minutes ago. Now Hayden feels completely lost. A rock floating in the fucking space. Feeling kind of weirded out was when he figured out Lily was a Bears player. Weirded out was guessing Carmichael. This is catastrophic, unfathomable. He wants to throw up, and for a second Hayden thinks he might actually throw up. “Shane, I need you to repeat what you said. Again. Very slowly. And enunciate.”

“Lily, my Boston girl, is Ilya Rozanov. We’ve been hooking up since rookie season. Even before that. Fuck,” his cheeks blush, and Hayden dreads the possibility of finding out why. “I’ve tried to stop, to break it off, but... I might be-“ his voice trails off with the rest of his confession, his resolve dissolving like Hayden’s sanity.

Realistically, Hayden wants to scream. He wants to break something. He wants to hug and punch Shane for having such bad taste in men. A cocktail of rage and guilt and betrayal swim

inside his mind, clouding his vision. But his best friend, Shane, who is the best fucking person Hayden knows looks frightened, afraid that his best friend hates him. And Hayden can't let that happen. He'll freak out tonight when he's back in Jackie's arms and life makes sense again. "I'm not gonna lie and say it didn't hurt that you kept this from me for fucking *years*, or claim that I understand. I would have preferred if you fucked Marlow. Like, by a landslide. And I would have preferred if I could do something, anything to earn the trust to know this much sooner, be a better friend. But fuck. Shane. I'm not gonna hate you for having awful, and I mean awful, taste in men."

A relieved laughter escapes Shane's lips. "He's not that bad. And being an asshole aside, he *is* objectively hot." Then the temporary fondness that has found its way evaporates, worry replacing it once more. "We don't even know what the fuck this is, you know, between us. We hook up, and pretend it doesn't matter, but. God it feels like something when we're together."

"Okay, dude. Wait. Give me like ten minutes to adjust, and maybe let me get us a bottle of wine or five. Then we can dissect what it actually is." Hayden is *not* about to miss out on the opportunity to gossip about his best friend's love life for the first time in his life, just because he likes to put his dick in Rozanov, or have Rozanov's dick—well, Hayden is not going to go there for sure, he'd rather not know the mechanics of their encounters, unless Shane *really* wants to share. "Do you wanna call Jackie and have like, I don't know, a girls night?"

"No, Hayd. Well, I appreciate your support, a lot." Shane breathes. "You have no idea. And we can do that one day. Preferably when I'm drunk. But today is not the day. I gotta fix this first. Hunter fucking knows. He told me so."

"Fuck." Everything now clicks in Hayden's mind, this time for real. He was kind of lost on why they were talking about Shane's sexuality and who he was seeing when the sole reason he was at Shane's place was the fight. Then the whole Rozanov thing completely derailed his train of thoughts, and he was kind of intrigued to the point of forgetting the fight altogether. But now they're back to business. Scott Hunter is a possibly-homophobic fucking asshole disguised as hockey's good boy, and that's why Shane faught him. "That fucking son of a bitch. I will kill him."

"No, you will not. Maybe we can just talk to him." Shane objects, but his voice is not convincing enough for Hayden's liking. Hayden needs backup and he knows it's not going to come from Shane.

"And what's Rozanov's suggestion?" He asks, because surely Rozanov is not above killing Hunter. "How does he suggest we handle this? Hopefully violently?"

"I- fuck. I haven't told him." Shane starts squirming. "Should I have told him? I don't know. Fuck."

"Fuck yeah, dude." Hayden can't believe he's defending fucking Rozanov right now, or considering teaming up with him to kick some American ass. What is his fucking life? But he's not petty enough to keep the animosity going when people's lives can be ruined. "It'd affect him as much as I'd affect you if this got out, maybe even more so than you." Fuck. Fuck. *Fuck*. Now Hayden's worried about Rozanov. Ew.

And then it's Shane's turn to get confused, if the expression on his face is anything to go by. "What do you mean by that?"

"Dude, Russia." Hayden waves his hands at how obvious it is. "He won't be able to go home to Russia. Like ever. They might fucking arrest him, or worse, since he's like a fucking public figure. And with the Sochi Olympics coming up, God knows what'll happen if Hunter leaks this during the Olympics."

Shane turns as white as a ghost, and okay, Hayden might not be helping, in any capacity. Judging by Shane's trembling hands, Hayden might be doing the exact opposite even. But Shane needs to realize all the risks, like, now. "Fuck, I need to call him."

"And ask if he'll help with Hunter's murder! I'm gonna need an extra pair of strong hands to bury the body."

Chapter End Notes

Snippet from Chapter 2

Watching the clip of Hollander fighting with Scott Hunter subsequently causes Ilya to fight too, mostly with his inner demons and a raging boner. He's comfortably sprawled out on his sectional, one hand on his bare abdomen, one propping his phone up as the video of Hollander and Hunter fighting plays on screen with subtitles on—the lip readers are doing the lord's work over on Twitter and although Ilya's not religious, he sends a hallelujah. His finger slides the cursor slightly to the left and tries to read the words "*You're forty-five years old,*" on Hollander's lips one more time.

His hand immediately dips inside the elastic band of his sweatpants and his fingers wrap around his dick as the video replays. "*You're a fucking pu-*" the video stops abruptly, Ilya's phone ringing in his hand. Reflexively his fingers reach to silence it, reject the call, but the name appearing stops him dead in his tracks. **Jane**

Chapter 2: Let's Fucking Go Roz

Chapter Summary

Watching the clip of Hollander fighting with Scott Hunter subsequently causes Ilya to fight too, mostly with his inner demons and a raging boner. He's comfortably sprawled out on his sectional, one hand on his bare abdomen, one propping his phone up as the video of Hollander and Hunter fighting plays on screen with subtitles on—the lip readers are doing the lord's work over on Twitter and although Ilya's not religious, he still sends a hallelujah. His finger slides the cursor slightly to the left and tries to read the words *"you're forty-five years old,"* on Hollander's lips one more time.

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Chapter Notes

Hello peeps, I'm posting this chapter a little earlier than intended because apparently gay gods hate me and the day I was hoping to post this is when ao3 will be down. So here you go. Also the chapter count will change but don't pay any attention to it lmao.

Hope you guys like it!!!

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

Watching the clip of Hollander fighting with Scott Hunter subsequently causes Ilya to fight too, mostly with his inner demons and a raging boner. He's comfortably sprawled out on his sectional, one hand on his bare abdomen, one propping his phone up as the video of Hollander and Hunter fighting plays on screen with subtitles on—the lip readers are doing the lord's work over on Twitter and although Ilya's not religious, he still sends a hallelujah. His finger slides the cursor slightly to the left and tries to read the words *"you're forty-five years old,"* on Hollander's lips one more time.

The video feels almost fake. Shane Hollander, Canada's golden boy, fighting with America's righteous captain, Scott Hunter, and calling him fucking *old*. As more and more clips from the fight surface, fanatic fans manage to decipher and transcribe the entirety of their dialogue. Ilya keeps refreshing twitter, lurking to see more and more. There is no record showing what started the fight, and Ilya is fucking dying to know what got under Hollander's skin, but what he can dig up is good enough for now. He'll pester Hollander about it next time they see each other.

A new clip pops up with a refresh, and in this one Hollander calls Hunter a fucking *dinasour*. Ilya's hard dick twitches in its confines. He *is* rubbing off on Hollander and that knowledge does things to his insides. He does *not* want to know what those things are, or admit their existence beyond a rock-hard dick. But still, the thought of him affecting Hollander has Ilya pressing a hand down his crotch and an involuntary moan leaves his lips. There are certain things Ilya has learned to surrender to, and he decides with a momentary certainty, jacking off to a clip of Hollander fighting is on that list too. Jacking off to Hollander hasn't been a novelty since he was eighteen anyway.

His hand immediately dips inside the elastic band of his sweatpants and his fingers wrap around his dick as the video replays. "*You're a fucking pu-*" the video stops abruptly, Ilya's phone ringing in his hand. Reflexively his fingers reach to silence it, reject the call, but the name appearing stops him dead in his tracks. **Jane**

A million possibilities present themselves but none seems substantial enough for Hollander to call Ilya. They don't do this. They've never done this. They text each other hotel room numbers and addresses of rental properties, trade chirps and occasional hockey gossip, but never this. They never call. One of his hands releases his cock that is rapidly softening under the thrum of rising anxiety while the other presses the little green button. "Hollander?"

"He fucking knows." Hollander's voice cracks at the end, his voice choking before the silence settles between them.

Ilya's instincts go haywire. Like the call of a siren, Hollander's ragged breathing calls to Ilya. He wants to reach out and lift his chin with a thumb, kiss him and tell him to relax, that everything will be okay. That Ilya will make sure everything will be okay. "Hollander, you are having panic attack. Calm down. Who knows?" He doesn't need to ask what they know. There can be only one thing.

"Fucking Hunter." Hollander spits, a level of acidity Ilya has never heard before lacing his voice. He hears a shuffling and the next time Hollander speaks, his voice is less clear, more distant. Ilya's on speakerphone. "He told me he knows."

"Wait. Is that why you fought him?" Fuck. Ilya is going to fucking *kill* that dinasour. Scratch that he's going to fucking make him go extinct, take down a few other Admiral players as well. How dare this motherfucker threaten *his* Hollander. Ilya must said at least some parts of it out loud because he hears a voice that's not Hollander whoop and yell "let's fucking go," in the back. Oh, Hollander's not alone.

Hollander's voice, impossibly, even smaller, responds to the questions Ilya hasn't even had time to voice. "And Hayden knows. He kind of figured it out himself. But yeah- I'm- I'm sorry for all of this."

"Hollander, is okay. It is not your fault." The implications of people knowing are clear. If the word gets out, Ilya will never be able to go back home. He'll be forever stuck in America, if he doesn't get fired. And he can kiss the Olympics goodbye. And if he gets fired... He'll cross that bridge of extraditions and possible threats to his life when he gets there.

Ilya thinks about home for a second, the word losing its meaning the more he thinks about it. He thinks about his father, and the deteriorating mind of his; he thinks about Alexei and endless requests for money, for more. His mother's grave would be the only place Ilya would miss, the flowers he placed on her tombstone whenever he was in Moscow the only act he voluntarily did back home. Then he thinks about Hollander. Scared, and possibly spiraling. A fleeting thought about what his mother would think of Hollander passes his mind, immediately chased away by a ragged breath Ilya hears on the other side of the phone. Because Ilya's fingers can't wrap around the nape of Hollander's neck to caress the skin, they reach for a cigarette. Fuck.

"But- I told Hayden. Well. He thought I was fucking Marlow." Ilya can *hear* Hollander roll his eyes. Knowing Hollander is coherent enough to get offended loosens something in his chest.

"Pike doesn't know you have standards? And he is your best friend?" He asks, eliciting a laugh from Hollander that makes Ilya feel lighter than it should. The knot in his chest loosens even further. "He should know you are ambitious. You always want to be the best. You are the second best hockey player in the league. Of course you will fuck number one."

"Fuck off." The lightness in Hollander's voice lets Ilya breathe a little better too. "But I don't know what to do about Hunter." It shouldn't be surprising to Ilya, to witness how easy people can surrender to darkness. Not after his mother. But hearing the shadows take over Hollander still feels like a stab to his chest.

"Leave him to me." Ilya lets out, the anger in his voice even scaring him. "When I'm done he will beg to be taken to- Fuck. You know. The place you put old people before they die."

"Hospice?" Hollander supplies, his voice sounding more amused than Ilya thinks Hollander wanted it to be. "Besides, hospice is not just for old people. Anyone close to dying can be in hospice."

"Don't care," he retorts. "Will put Hunter in hospice. Result stays same." He forces a laugh, but it falls flat.

Hollander reciprocates the laughter, but his is just as deflated. "You're not putting him in anything. He might hurt us both." And god, Ilya can *taste* Hollander's pain and fear.

Ilya heeds Hollander's words no mind, already putting on a jacket and walking around his apartment to gather his wallet and cigarettes. He pulls out a duffel bag and haphazardly stuffs a few articles of clothing in it alongside his phone charger. "Do not worry. He will not have enough teeth to speak. Or tongue. He will babble like baby." Ilya wonders for a second if he can figure out when the Admirals are flying out of Montreal. But if he leaves now, he's almost certain he'll catch Hunter.

While his mind is occupied with creating an excuse to miss practice tomorrow, Ilya hears something he would never, in a million of years, think to hear. "Let's fucking go Roz. Let's fuck up an old man!" Pike yells from the other side of the line.

“Hayden, hey. No.” The voices get quieter, Hollander moving away from the phone to argue with Pike, but Ilya can still make up what they’re saying. “No. I don’t want you or Rozanov to get in any trouble.” But Ilya is already out the door, putting the address to Hollander’s love-shack/investment property on his fastest car’s GPS.

Hollander picks his phone back up as Ilya is pulling out of his parking garage. “Can we be serious for a moment?” He asks. “What are we going to do?”

“I’m serious. I’m on my way, Hollander. I’ll go to Scott Hunter’s hotel. Threaten him. Rough him up. If he does not listen, maybe break a bone or two.”

“Roz-“

Ilya cuts him off immediately. “Hollander. No one makes you mad, so mad you fight, and walks away in one piece, okay? Not if I’m here. I am going to visit Hunter tonight.”

“Wait? You’re coming here?” Hollander asks, as if Ilya has ever denied him anything he’s wanted, ever. If Ilya knows Hollander needs him to do anything, he’ll do it, damn with the consequences. Ilya might not confess why he’s doing any of this to himself, or to Hollander, but he fucking would have expected Hollander to feel certain that he wouldn’t be going through this alone.

“Yes,” he responds, trying to hide the hurt in his voice at how incredulous Hollander sounded. “I told you during our first time, before rookie season. I might be asshole, but I will never leave you like this. Not when you need me. And this is about both of us, Hollander.”

“I’ll send you the address.” Hollander concedes. “Come to my house first.” Ilya tries to not hear the hope and happiness blossoming in Hollander’s voice.

With the expectation of seeing Hollander’s actual home, Ilya pushes speed limits a little more than he normally would. But when he’s in front of Hollander’s house, minutes before midnight, the only regret he carries is not driving even faster. Because the look on Hollander’s face as he opens the door for Ilya is unbearably painful.

Hollander’s eyes are red-rimmed and puffy, his lips start quivering the second he sees Ilya in front of him and when Ilya’s arms wrap around his broad shoulders, he just *crumbles*.

Chapter End Notes

Here's a sneak peak into ch 3:

With great strength, Ilya peels his eyes away from Hollander to check his phone. He still needs to find the hotel Admirals are staying at, and Hunter’s room number. While thinking of a way to find everything out without any suspicions, he absentmindedly unlocks his phone. There are a few texts waiting for him; his coach’s acknowledgment

that he'll be missing practice tomorrow, Sveta checking in, and a number of texts from a number he doesn't recognize.

[+1-586-284-5982] Hunter is staying in 1752 at Four Seasons

[+1-586-284-5982] They'll fly out around noon

[+1-586-284-5982] If we head there around 9am it should be good

[+1-586-284-5982] This is Pike btw

[+1-586-284-5982] Don't ask how I got your number 🤖

[+1-586-284-5982] I still don't like you btw but

[+1-586-284-5982] 🍷🦊

Chapter 3: Say My Name

Chapter Notes

Alright kiddos this is where we earn our fucking explicit rating, let's make it a fun one shall we? And by fun I mean completely tainted by Ilya's internal issues.

You might have also realized there is a new chapter added, because this got too out of hand, I added an extra smut scene and a bath scene so next chapter will be Hayden and Ilya's confrontation with Hunter (Hayden POV) and that'll be the end of it!! As always I'll post the next chapter approx four days after this. Love y'all

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

Ilya closes the door after them, then he allows himself to take in his surroundings. Being in Hollander's actual house, in the space he considers home, that's been something he craved for a while now. Maybe longer than he's willing to admit. But not in a million years he would think it would happen under these conditions. Not in a million years he would *want it to happen under these conditions. Both of them are a mess; afraid of being outed, thrust into a forced camaraderie, unsure how to proceed.*

The feeling Ilya's been spending all of his time and energy on repressing resurfaces in that instance. The burning need to be close to Hollander, to make sure he's okay, to protect against everything. His hands hold onto Hollander's hair tightly, his arms still wrapped around his torso. He pulls them both towards the couch, and lets Hollander rest his head on his chest.

They stay like that in the shared comfort of the silence for a while before Hollander's head slowly inches towards Ilya's crotch, his hand moving down from his chest to fiddle with the strings of his sweatpants. "Hollander. We don't have to. I did not come here for sex."

"I know," Hollander responds, his voice a little muffled in between Ilya's legs. "I just need to feel something real. Not fear of what might happen. Not the anxiety of getting outed, losing our futures. I need something real. I need you."

Words escape his lips before he can process what he's saying. "I will give you whatever you need." Ilya feels a whole-body shudder run through Hollander. His hand gently presses on Hollander's back, guiding him to the floor, in between his legs. "Open."

Hollander immediately opens his mouth, presenting his tongue for Ilya. He is so perfect like this, eager to please, eager to be good, just for him. Ilya pulls his pants down just enough to release his soft cock from his sweatpants, then guides it into Hollander's mouth. Hollander's lips close around him, his head starting to slowly bob, but Ilya stops him.

“No. You will not move until I tell you. Just stay on your knees and hold my cock in your mouth. Tap on my knee once if you agree. Three times if you want me to stop.” When Hollander looks at him, Ilya can see how blown-out his pupils are, the brown of them drowned by the black of his irises.

Strong fingers tap once on Ilya’s knees as Hollander sits back on his haunches. Belatedly Ilya reaches for one of the many throw pillows on the couch and grabs the flattest and largest one. He nudges Hollander’s knees and places them under him. Not being able to stop himself, Ilya then gently touches the corner of Hollander’s mouth, caressing the taut skin there. “So perfect for me,” he murmurs, unsure in which language he’s speaking. When Hollander contentedly hums around his cock, Ilya thinks maybe Hollander would understand either way. Some things transcend languages no matter how much he’s trying to conceal them.

With great strength, Ilya peels his eyes away from Hollander to check his phone. He still needs to find the hotel Admirals are staying at, and Hunter’s room number somehow. While plotting a way to gather information without rousing any suspicions, he absentmindedly unlocks his phone. There are a few texts waiting for him; his coach’s acknowledgment that he’ll be missing practice tomorrow, Sveta checking in, and a string of texts from a number he doesn’t recognize.

[+1-586-284-5982] Hunter is staying in 1752 at Four Seasons

[+1-586-284-5982] They’ll fly out around noon

[+1-586-284-5982] If we head there around 9am it should be good

[+1-586-284-5982] This is Pike btw

[+1-586-284-5982] Don’t ask how I got your number 🤖

[+1-586-284-5982] I still don’t like you btw but

[+1-586-284-5982] 🍑🦖

Ilya reflexively snorts at the last text, drawing Hollander’s attention. His relaxed eyebrows furrow in confusion and Ilya feels an immediate urge to reach out and smooth out the wrinkles on his forehead. He runs his fingers through Hollander’s silky hair before his hand rests on the nape of his back. “It’s nothing. Just a funny picture. I will show you later.”

Hollander’s expression doesn’t change until Ilya tucks his phone away, and his hands massage the corners of Hollander’s jaw. He rests his head on Ilya’s inner thigh and sighs again as if he could stay like this forever. There is some drool dripping from the corner of his mouth and Ilya just gathers it with the pad of his thumb before putting the digit in his own mouth. He hears Hollander make a broken noise, the reverberations shaking Ilya’s entire body.

He wants to haul Hollander up and bend him over the back of the couch, slide home right away and fuck him hard and fast until they both come, Hollander spilling on his couch, and Ilya in him. But he knows this is not a quick fuck. This is not for his pleasure. This is for Hollander.

So Ilya caresses his jaw one more time and orders him to fetch the lube and a condom. When Hollander comes back as quickly as possible Ilya rewards him with an open mouthed kiss on his neck. “Take your clothes off.” His voice comes out commanding yet soft. Hollander’s

beautiful obedience gets rewarded with another kiss peppered on his chest. "So good for me," Ilya purrs, making Hollander shiver.

Once Hollander is on his lap, sitting comfortably as if it's his throne, Ilya opens him up at a painstakingly slow pace, making him beg. "Please, Rozanov. I'm ready, please. Please."

"You don't decide when you're ready to be fucked, Hollander," Ilya whispers to his ear. "I decide when I will fuck you."

Lost in too much and not enough, Hollander just rests his head on Ilya's shoulder, letting four strong fingers carve a space in him. He feels like putty under Ilya's hands, soft and pliable. "Yes," he mutters. "M' yours to do what you want."

The implications of such simple words take Ilya's breath away. He cannot think of what it would mean for Hollander to be his, to completely belong to him. Being wholly Ilya's to do what he wants. To be reduced to monosyllables and moans, to be stretched open and fucked, to be cherished and lo... He can't have that. Hollander can't be his no more than he can be Hollander's. But he can have this: Stolen moments hidden in shadows. Stolen confessions under the influence of lust. He can protect Hollander against Hunter, step out to the sun with a disguise and then go back to the dark where he belongs.

Without breaking the rhythm of his fingers, Ilya puts the condom on, slicks himself up and slowly buries himself in Hollander's heat. He stills his hips despite Hollander grinding down on him. His hands splay over the planes of Hollander's back and Ilya rearranges them on the couch; Hollander on his back, Ilya hovering over him. He fucks Hollander slow and hard, making it agonizingly good but torturously not enough for Hollander. His arms bracket Hollander's entire body, I would shield you like this from everything if I could, he painfully thinks, the thought stealing his breath.

There isn't much room for Hollander to move, trapped under Ilya's body. But the squirming makes Ilya realize that Hollander is trying to touch himself. Ilya moves one of his arms to pull both of Hollander's hands above his head, pinning them there. "Hands off. You will come on my cock and on my cock alone."

"Please," Hollander begs, tears gathering in the corners of his eyes. "Please let me come. Please, Rozanov."

Ilya's thrusts pick up pace, desperate to give Hollander what he wants, what he needs. And maybe, just maybe he needs to give everything he has to Hollander too. He wants to hear Hollander plead and beg for his cock, tell him that he's needed just like he did in Vegas. He wants to hear a broken 'Rozanov' spill from Hollander's lips before he spills in between them. "Talk to me. Say my name. Tell me how much you want it. Then you can come."

"Fuck. Oh fuck. Fuck me, harder. Please. Ilya, please.." The force of Hollander's orgasm shakes his entire body, his ass constricting around Ilya's cock. His face goes completely relaxed but his hips keep moving, urging Ilya to keep going.

Hearing his name in Hollander's voice, with the pressure around his cock pushes Ilya off the edge, his cock pulsing inside Hollander as he comes. For a second it feels like he's never

going to stop coming, forever buried here. And until the aftershocks of his orgasm subside, Ilya lets himself accept that he wouldn't mind staying like this forever.

But the post orgasmic glow morphs into something icy cold and distant when he feels Hollander stiffen under him. His body is still trapped under Ilya's, yet the soft, pliant state of him has evaporated. "I- I'm sorry. I- You- You didn't mean it like that, did you?"

The crossroad in front of them comes into focus for Ilya. He will be the one determining how this plays out. If he leaves it up to Hollander, like he normally does, he knows what will follow. More distance. Maybe even no more Hollander. "Shane," he says, trying to keep his voice even and strict, mimicking the way he sounds when they're having sex. When Hollander looks up, with so much uncertainty in his eyes, something in Ilya breaks for the thousandth time that day. "Who tells you what to do? Right now?" They both know outside of the sex, Hollander holds the reins, but once Ilya has to assume his role outside of sex.

"You," Shane lets out, some of the tension leaving his body.

"Good." Ilya lets go of Shane's hands, and grazes his cheek with the back of his hand. "Whatever you're thinking about. Don't."

Shane preens under the praise, relaxing even more. But there is still hesitation clinging on to his expression. "I didn't do anything wrong?" he asks, breaking Ilya's heart.

"No, you did not do anything wrong. I told you to say my name, and you did. And as a reward I let you come." He does not need to clarify he asked Shane to say his last name. He does not need to corroborate Shane's fears. He can take the blame and let Shane loosen up. It's second nature to Ilya now, to shoulder the blame, become the villain in everyone else's story.

He leans in for a kiss that turns sweeter than he would normally allow it to be, but he lets it slide. If he's going to hell, he might as well earn his spot there. "Do you want to come again?" Ilya then asks, keeping things in a familiar territory. He punctuates it with a roll of his hips, his soft dick still somewhat inside Shane, making him whimper with the overstimulation.

Shane nods frantically, thrusting towards Ilya to get a little more even though he's not hard either. "Yes." But the growl coming from his stomach cuts off whatever else he was about to say.

"You have not eaten?" Ilya asks disapprovingly, unsurprised. He already knows the answer judging by the continuous sounds emitting from Shane's stomach at the mere mention of food. He slowly pulls out, making both of them wince, then gets up despite Shane's protests and pout. "You will tell me where bathroom is. I will clean us up. I will cook. We will eat. And if you are a good boy, and eat, and not freak out, then maybe, maybe I will fuck you again. This time in your bed. Hard and fast the way you like it. Okay?"

Once Shane points him towards the bathroom, Ilya moves around the house deftly as if he's navigated the halls of this house a million times. He cleans himself up, grabs a wash cloth, dampening it with warm water, then finds another softer towel to dry Shane up. Ilya grabs a

fresh pair of sweats for Shane and a soft t-shirt from his closet then heads back to the living room.

When he heads back to the living room, Shane is already half asleep on the couch. Ilya gently cleans him up, relishing in the soft content noises coming from him, then helps him put on clean clothes. Shane's nose crinkles, his stunning freckles scrunching up. "M cold." A foreign, maybe denied, urge fills Ilya, and not letting himself question it deeply, he acts on it. He grabs the duffel bag he threw somewhere around the entrance for the sake of gathering Shane in his arms, and pulls out the sweatshirt he stuffed in there.

He sits down on the edge of the sofa, right next to Shane's hips and taps his arm. "Up." Shane obeys immediately, lifting his arms up and lets Ilya put the worn out sweatshirt on him.

Shane's hands curl inwards, twisting from his wrists before he tucks them near his chest and goes back to his nap. "Smells like you," he mutters, a soft smile on his face.

For a second Ilya stands there, taking in how relaxed Shane looks. A domestic sight for the sore eye. A complete juxtaposition with how he looked when Ilya first arrived. A testament to how good they are for each other. A proof that Ilya can be a balm too, and not just a sharp blade leaving behind open wounds. He thinks he might stay here, let time freeze around them, but a loud roar coming from Shane's stomach brings him out of his stupor. With a giddy giggle he can't suppress, Ilya heads towards the kitchen.

The fridge, much to Ilya's chagrin, is basically useless. The only thing he deems worthy stand out as pickles, and even those are low-sodium. He quietly roams around the kitchen, opening cupboards until he finds the pantry shelves. He grabs two cans of tuna and heads back to the fridge to scavenge the rest of the ingredients. Ten minutes and a quick google search for Shane's fancy oven's broiler setting later he has two tuna melts on plates with low sodium, low fat, oven baked chips to accompany. When Ilya is searching for napkins, glass straws catch his eye. An abundance of curved glass straws are neatly stacked in a tall cup. He picks up one, wraps it in a piece of paper towel and places it on the coffee table, next to their plate of tuna melts, and goes to wake Shane up.

A part of him wants to shake him, say something like "you're late for practice," and watch him scramble to his feet. But the sight of Shane curled up on the couch stops him. He looks more relaxed than Ilya has ever seen him. Young in a way neither of them have felt since forever. Gentle hands find his black hair instead, resting on his nape. "Dinner is ready, Sleeping Beauty," he teases, closest to their normal banter he can get.

They mostly eat in silence, but Ilya can feel Shane's eyes on him, their bodies drawn to each other like magnets. It feels almost painfully domestic. Realistically, Ilya knows this is their first time spending time together like this, no cameras, no hockey; not lingering after sex because neither of them can admit they want to stay, or running away even before the afterglow fades because what will follow feels too dangerous to risk it. And it shouldn't feel this easy, this familiar, yet it does. He loves it. He hates it. The whole scene is a preview of a movie he won't ever be allowed to watch.

"I'm pretty sure I'm owed another round of fucking after dinner," Shane muses once his plate is cleared, his fingers dancing around the elastic of Ilya's sweatpants. "I've been good,

haven't I?" His lips are wrapped around the straw, eyelashes fluttering.

The familiar territory loosens Ilya's shoulders a bit. He's not surprised Shane is pulling them there either, where he knows every nook and cranny. Shane looking like an irresistible ethereal being is not exactly foreign to Ilya either, especially in the dim glow of his living room, the shadows his eyelashes are casting dancing on his freckled cheeks. The added domesticity makes everything heightened almost. Yes, Ilya wants to ruin Shane, make him gasp and moan, take him apart. But he also wants to put him back together.

Ilya looks at the dirty dishes in front of them, then glances at the clock. "Go to your bed and wait for me. I will do the dishes and join you." Ilya watches Shane obediently go upstairs, but as he stands in the small landing, he turns to look at him and their eyes meet. The shy smile that appears on Shane's face feels immeasurably more intimate than anything they've ever done.

When Ilya enters Shane's bedroom, Shane Hollander's actual bedroom, anticipation is thrumming under his skin like a second heart beat. While every indicator tonight points to the opposite conclusion, his traitorous mind tells him that this might be the one and only time he gets to see it, so he should take it all in. But as soon as he crosses the threshold, the first and only thing that catches his eye is Shane. Naked and kneeling on the bed, his hard cock already leaking with anticipation. "I didn't know how you wanted me."

His explanation makes Ilya want to kneel too, just to worship him. Using every ounce of his strength, Ilya forces his voice to come out stern and commanding. "On your knees. Head on pillows."

He watches Shane scramble to obey as fast as he can, his ass presented to Ilya. And suddenly Ilya's world zeros in on the crook of Shane's neck as he looks back expectantly. "So beautiful," he runs a finger down Shane's spine. "So perfect for me. You are perfect for me, yes? You would do anything to please me."

It is a physical, observable change in Shane, the way he so seamlessly falls into it. Letting Ilya control the situation. "Yes, yes, yes," he babbles. "I would do anything. Anything. Yes. Anything for you."

Before responding, Ilya spreads Shane's cheeks and blows a huff of air. He watches the tight ring of muscles contract with the expectation, still loose and relaxed, then licks a broad stripe over it. They have never done this before, adding yet another first to tonight's list. And Ilya has never done this to someone before either. But hidden in the dim glow of Shane's bedroom, he can confess that he wouldn't want it to be with anyone else. In here he can confess into the dark that he wishes all of his first could be experienced with Shane. He'll tie up all his deepest desires and discard them later, like a used condom, but right now, he can allow himself.

Not to get lost in his own mind, Ilya lets the methodical movement of his tongue spearing into Shane's hole take center focus of his thoughts. When Shane is reduced to babbling nonsense and a stream of expletives strewn around please, he pulls back enough to speak. "Tell me what you want. You ask. I will give it."

"You." Shane manages to get out. He's pushing his entire body back, towards Ilya to urge him on, but Ilya stops the movement with a strong hand resting in the small of his back.

"You have me," Ilya reassures, peppering kisses to the curve of his ass before biting down hard enough to leave a mark. "What do you want, Hollander?"

"Fuck me." There is a certain determination to Shane's voice, finally being allowed to ask for what he wants, almost making him sound drunk. Maybe drunk on power, drunk on want and lust, drunk on Ilya.

Ilya goes back to his ministrations, knowing soon he'll be inside of him again. He laps around the skin, noises coming from both of them a sinful symphony. Shane starts begging again, asking for Ilya to fill him and Ilya has never been able to deny this man of anything. Moving away from Shane, Ilya heads towards the nightstand, a questioning look on his face.

Left alone on the bed, Shane slightly sobers up, incoherently signaling towards the top drawer. He watches with rapt attention as Ilya opens the top drawer, pulling out a condom and a half used bottle of lube. A black satin pouch catches Ilya's eyes, the impulsive part of his mind dying to ask if that is Shane's dildo, but for the sake of the task at hand, he goes back to bed.

Ilya goes back to standing behind Shane and rips the package of the condom, accompanied by the familiar crinkling of the package. Suddenly a strong hand reaches out and grabs his wrist. "Don't. Don't use it."

"Shane," he objects. They can't. He knows it, Shane knows it. Beyond every concern, they shouldn't. They've already trampled past so many of the walls and borders they've put up during this...whatever they are. Letting go of this physical barrier would entirely shatter Ilya's resolve. Then what would he have, keeping him from completely crumbling?

Shane honest to god whines underneath him, distress oozing out. "You said I could have what I wanted if I asked. You said you'd give me what I wanted if I was being good. Was I not good?"

The unshed tears make his big brown eyes glossy and Ilya feels his resolve melting away. He's a pathetic, weak man. He knows he can't ever give Shane what he deserves. He should say that it's too dangerous with him sleeping around every night. That he's too much of a manwhore who won't ever be satisfied. He should break Shane's heart, end everything, break Scott's face, and go home. Be alone. Forever. But his father is right. He's a weak man, so he takes the easy way out. "You are being so good, Shane. You are perfect. But we need some tests for this, yes? I cannot give you this safely."

Somewhere in his cock-drunk mind Shane must understand the situation because he accepts his fate. Then in a small voice, he tries again. "Next time?"

"We will talk about it. Plan it. Okay, Hollander?" Fuck. Ilya hates himself for not saying no. He also hates himself for wanting it maybe even more than Shane does. If he sticks to his guns, keeps avoiding Shane the way he's been doing until tonight, he can get out of this fucking mess he's gotten himself into. He hopes Shane won't let him.

He puts the condom on, slicks himself up hastily, then slowly sheathes into Shane. Once Shane melts back into the bed, Ilya starts pounding into him ruthlessly, reveling in the sounds Shane makes. It's hard and fast. They are both being louder than they probably should, and it's the holiest sound Ilya has ever heard.

Once Shane comes, completely untouched, Ilya lets go as well. He maneuvers their bodies to the side, avoiding the wet stop, and holds on to Shane. His cock softens, sliding out, and Ilya takes it as his cue. "Tell me where your sheets are. I will make the bed. You draw a bath." His words are spoken into the crook of Shane's neck, making him squirm. Ilya belatedly realizes Shane is ticklish and for some reason it makes him tear up. He should not be endeared by it.

Thankfully Shane sheepishly shows him where he keeps his extra bedding, profusely thanks him while reassuring he doesn't have to do it, and that he'll do it after they shower but eventually disappears into the bathroom.

By the time Ilya joins him, the large bathtub is filled, bubbles covering the surface and most of Shane's chest. It all feels so soft and domestic. Ilya wants to revel in it, let it seep into his bones like the warmth radiating from the water. Ilya wants to ruin it. Destroy everything he knows he can't have. Gathering both of his hands, he collects all the bubbles he can and places them on Shane's head.

Shane's laughter is brighter and lighter than Ilya's ever heard. It's kind of addicting. "You're such an asshole. Get in before the water gets cold."

Not arguing for once in his life, Ilya lowers his body into the hot water slowly right across from Shane and watches him move closer to him. He expects Shane to give him a kiss, maybe rest against his chest, but Shane gathers bubbles of his own and puts them on Ilya's head, spiking his hair like a mohawk.

"Wow," he looks at his work with a childlike wonder. "Your hair is so much longer than I thought."

An answer on the tip of his tongue, Ilya chokes on his words when the spiky part of his hair flops over his face, the suds sliding down on his cheeks and into his mouth. Shane doubles over in laughter, holding his hands out against any acts of retaliation. The light air in the bathroom, laughter echoing off the walls, mixed with the lavender scent wafting from the bubbles soothes something inside Ilya.

Once the water starts turning cold, they wash off any suds and towel themselves off. Shane throws a pair of boxer briefs towards Ilya and he happily accepts it. The entire day catches up to him as they make their way towards the bed. His limbs and head heavy, Ilya cannot find it in himself to freak out over the fact that he'll be sleeping in Shane Hollander's bed, next to Shane Hollander. He rolls onto his side, pulling Shane's back towards his chest, using his body as a shield between Shane and the rest of the world, and lets sleep take him.

Waking up in unfamiliar places is not foreign to Ilya. Between away games and one-night stands he can't be bothered to bring to his own place, he's had his fare share of "where the fuck am I?"s over the years. Usually the activities that have led him there come to him in the

first few seconds of his consciousness, and he manages to get the hell out of there and into either practice, the team bus, or his own place with practiced precision.

However, waking up next to Shane Hollander is a completely different and life altering experience. One that Ilya is not sure he will survive. Not completely. At first, his mind registers the familiar scent of Shane. In his sleep-dazed state, it places a smile on his lips. Traitorously, they search for the source, and place a kiss on top of Shane's head on their own accord. That's when Ilya realizes they haven't moved an inch since they've fallen asleep. Shane is still safely tucked in his arms, snuggled even further into the warmth of him. There is nothing unfamiliar. There is nothing foreign. The consciousness and reality does not come back to him. And that feels worse than everything. Ilya would gladly take the millisecond panic of "where am I?" over this relentless desire to wrap his arms even tighter around Shane.

Wanting to get the fuck out of this bed before Shane wakes up, he slowly disentangles their limbs; both their legs and arms. He'll get out of bed, put some clothes on, make some coffee, smoke a cigarette, and wait for Pike at a nearby coffee shop or something. Perfect plan. And that way they can build everything they had broken brick by brick. Ilya can keep his distance, get through the rest of the season and focus on being a complete disgrace and disappointment to his family while he's in Russia during the summer. He'll tamp down whatever hopes and feelings that are bubbling inside of him with endless strings of meaningless one-night stands and drown them with alcohol.

But nothing in Ilya's life goes according to his plan. Shane stirs in his arms, making small noises. He further burrows into the heat of his body, and when he realizes Ilya's still there, his breath hitches, followed by a happy sigh. Ilya considers jumping out of the window, or drinking bleach. Shane presses his back against his chest, and Ilya, the weak man he is, plasters kisses to his neck, his cheek, and eventually to his lips.

"Haven't brushed my teeth," Shane protests, trying to put distance between them.

And if Ilya were a smart man, he'd let him. He'd let Shane move away, and head downstairs while he was brushing his teeth. But just like everything to do with Shane, instinct kicks in. The primal part of his brain that is conditioned to compete against him, go against him even when it is to his own advantage drives Ilya and he tightens his hold on Shane. "No, Hollander. I want to kiss you."

And maybe Ilya's stupidity and weakness is sexually transmitted, because Shane lets Ilya kiss him again, his lips pliantly opening under Ilya's insistent ministrations. Shane presses back once again, this time the swell of his ass finding Ilya's crotch. Ilya forgets every single thought he had since he woke up, and lets his body take over. His hand that's wrapped around Shane's waist finds the elastic of Shane's underwear, inching down. Just as he's about to drip underneath it, Ilya's phone starts buzzing at the nightstand. Shane turns towards him, his brows furrowed, and for a fleeting second, before he reaches over to see who's calling, Ilya thinks he looks even prettier when concerned.

Ch 4 sneak peek

The second the door opens, Hayden's fist connects with Hunter's face. He takes advantage of the recoil and pushes himself in, Rozanov in tow.

"What the fuck, Pike?" Hunter aggressively strides toward him, crowding Hayden against the wall. But suddenly Rozanov is standing between them, towering over Hunter.

"Sit down, Hunter. We need to talk." The timber of Rozanov's voice leaves no room for any objections. Hayden has watched this man take down many *many* men down on the ice. He's witnessed several people getting their noses broken, faces caved in, teeth punched out of their mouths by him. But this is the first time he actually feels afraid of Rozanov and what he might do.

Chapter 4: Scotty Doesn't Know (No. Really. He Doesn't)

Chapter Summary

The thing is, Hayden can't wrap his head around the whole Rozanov thing. Not with Shane. The same Shane he knows. In general, he can see the appeal, Rozanov is objectively good looking, maybe as much as Marlow is. Rozanov does have the bad guy thing going on for him. And because Jackie has made him watch way too many cheesy rom-com movies where the initial asshole love interest who gets chicks for being a bad boy gets dumped third way, he knows where guys like Rozanov stand. But in the last third of the movie comes the reliable, lovable, one true love, and they drive off to sunset. What fucks Hayden up is the fact that Shane looked like Rozanov was the end game for him. He looked like it agonized him, not having the option to ride off to sunset with Rozanov.

Chapter Notes

AND WE ARE DONE WITH THE OG STORY MY PEEPS!!! While I'm tagging this story as complete, the epilogue of Shane hanging out with Jackie and Hayden is coming sometime next week-ish. It will be Shane POV and will be their queening out session to gossip about Shane's relationship with Ilya. Watch out for what happened during their morning before Hayden pulled up, and a Hollov timeline reveal to Pikes.

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

“I’ll be out in a minute,” is all Rozanov mutters before hanging up on Hayden the second time that day.

A part of Hayden strongly maintains that the only reason he called Rozanov’s phone instead of ringing the doorbell is his concern for Shane’s sleep. If Shane is asleep, after such a taxing day, Hayden won’t be the one disrupting his sleep. Hayden’s been hiding behind that flimsy argument since he first called Rozanov around 7.30am to wake him up. But another part of him, a part he’s choosing to ignore for the sake of his best friend, knows the real reason. He cannot handle going inside and witnessing Shane with Rozanov. In theory, he is okay with it. He’s completely comfortable with Shane’s sexuality in reality too. It’s the Rozanov part that’s fucking with him.

Hayden won’t ever confess how much it actually is fucking with him, not to Shane at least—what he said to Jackie in the safety of their bedroom, one the kids are soundly asleep is between him, his wife, and God. And for the sake of the urgent situation at hand, he’ll gladly team up with anyone, let alone a scary Russian to protect Shane. But he’s taking this harder

than he's let on. Ilya fucking Rozanov. In his defense, Hayden hasn't realized just *how much* this was gnawing at him until he went home to Jackie and she asked how he was doing. Then, he just crumbled. Traitorously, now, the part of his brain where his friendship with Shane is ingrained keeps asking the same question: *Do I even know this person who sees something in Ilya Rozanov.*

The thing is, Hayden can't wrap his head around the whole Rozanov thing. Not with Shane. The same Shane he knows. In general, he can see the appeal, Rozanov is objectively good looking, maybe as much as Marlow is. Rozanov does have the bad guy thing going on for him. And because Jackie has made him watch way too many cheesy rom-com movies where the initial asshole love interest who gets chicks for being a bad boy gets dumped third way, he knows where guys like Rozanov stand. But in the last third of the movie comes the reliable, loveable, one true love, and they drive off to sunset. What fucks Hayden up is the fact that Shane looked like Rozanov was the end game for him. He looked like it agonized him, not having the option to ride off to sunset with Rozanov.

And in some of those movies, the bad boy reforms into someone who is more reliable and lovable. Maybe if that were the case for Rozanov, after a serious character-altering head injury or something, Hayden would still understand. But Shane, his sweet, rule-following, goody-two-shoes Shane gets a heart-breaking look on his face when he talks about Rozanov. He looks as if Rozanov already is the transformed version, the one that mends his ways at the end of the movie for his one true love. And Hayden. Just. Doesn't. Get. It.

Frankly, he's not sure if he wants to get it either. Because Rozanov, the asshole who is the bane of Hayden's existence, is also a predictable constant in Hayden's life. He's not ready to replace the brash, flashy asshole with a domesticated version. And if Shane is somehow involved with the brash, flashy asshole version, Hayden needs to strategize first before he shit talks about Rozanov enough to drive Shane away from him. Then he can introduce Shane to Jackie's yoga instructor. Or any man who's not Rozanov.

All and all, Hayden is not dealing with the whole Shane is involved with Rozanov—relationship status info pending—as well as a best friend should. Reluctantly—and a little willingly, because fuck it'll be exhilarating fighting alongsize Rozanov instead of with him for once—Hayden will go kick some homophobe ass. Then he can air his grievances.

The door to Shane's house slightly opens, but for a while no one walks out. Hayden can see Rozanov's back through the ajar door, a black wool coat on his back, blond curls peeking out from the collar, but Rozanov makes no move to head toward the car. His fingers tap on the steering wheel impatiently.

Then two arms wrap themselves around Rozanov's neck, pushing the door open in the process. The revealed image of Shane giving Ilya Rozanov a goodbye kiss as if he's sending his husband off to work is weirdly nauseating. The kiss does not turn filthy, the way Hayden dreaded—and low key hoped—it would. A filthy kiss would signal toward a no strings attached relationship. A non-committal, long distance, fuck-buddy. A filthy morning kiss. A summary of and a precursor to some meaningless sex. This is fucking syrupy sweet. One of Rozanov's hands is on Shane's waist, steadying him while the other is on his face, cupping it gently. This is the type of kiss Hayden shares with Jackie.

Rozanov finally puts some distance between them with a disgustingly fond expression on his face, and Hayden throws up a little in his mouth. He watches with rapt attention as Shane reaches over for something, toward the credenza Hayden knows sits right by the entrance, and hands over a travel mug to Rozanov. Rozanov inspects the mug, and Hayden can tell the exact moment he sees the Montreal logo. He throws his back in an unguarded laugh, swatting Shane's arm, then accepts a lingering kiss. Hayden considers driving off of a cliff.

With his mug in his hand, a weird, soft expression on his face, Rozanov starts walking toward Hayden's car when Hayden hears Shane call after him. "Ilya." Ew. Ew. Ew. Who the fuck is Ilya? This is Rozanov. Not Ilya. Rozanov.

But fucking *Ilya* turns toward Shane with a childlike jubilee on his face. Why this fucker is acting like hearing his name is a miracle is beyond Hayden. He is not touching that with a ten foot pole. The shit-show plays in front of Hayden like a real-life documentary. But instead of an antelope being mauled by a jaguar, it's Shane Hollander placing a scarf around Ilya Rozanov's neck, then using said scarf to pull him down for a kiss. The image is just as grueling. Hayden helplessly watches as Shane's hands flatten over Rozanov's chest after he plucks an invisible lint.

While the whole Rozanov thing is admittedly shocking, Hayden still likes to think he knows his best friend. And Rozanov thing aside, he does. Shane *hates* physical touch. His face contorts in discomfort when people casually touch him in the locker room. It took Hayden several months of living with Shane to temp down his own touchy tendencies during their rookie year. But here, now, in front of Hayden, and God, Shane Hollander is reveling under Ilya Rozanov's touch.

Shane's face scrunches up as Rozanov boops, honest to god boops his nose, then melts as Rozanov peppers a bunch of kisses on his cheeks. Every kiss lands slowly and deliberately and only when Rozanov places one kiss to the side of Shane's jaw, Hayden understands what's going on. Rozanov is kissing every single one of Shane's freckles. Hayden starts honking. You do not learn about the singular freckle on the side of your fuck-buddie's jaw. And no one can make Hayden endure this.

Rozanov finally settles into the passenger seat while Shane walks toward the driver's side. Hayden happily rolls down his window, in that moment he can see why dogs wag their tails when they get attention. After witnessing whatever the fuck that domestic clusterfuck was, he is buzzing with happiness, being back in a familiar territory. "Hey, buddy!"

"Hi, Hayd!" Shane greets him. "Look, I don't want this to blow out of proportion. Hunter is, well up until yesterday, has been a decent guy, you know. If you guys talk to him, explain what's at stake, I'm sure he won't cause any more issues."

Hayden hears Rozanov grumble next to him, but pays no attention. "We'll try to keep it civil. But he was decent enough to listen to us, he wouldn't have thrown this at you on ice, Shane."

As an objection starts forming on Shane's face, Rozanov decides to chime in. "Promise, Shane. We will talk first." Jesus fuck. Hayden's entire 'let's fuck up Hunter' plan was based on Rozanov's violent inclinations. How whipped is this guy?

“Thank you.” Shane softly lets out, looking at Rozanov with heart eyes, and a fucking blush appearing on his cheeks as if Hayden is not there. An urge to honk again fills Hayden’s entire being.

“So,” Hayden starts once they’re alone and on their way to the hotel. “I don’t know exactly what’s going on between you and Shane. And I don’t need to either. But Shane is my best friend in the whole wide world. He is the godfather of my child. I may not look very scary. But if you ever hurt him, and I mean fucking *ever* Rozanov, I will hunt you down and kill you.”

Rozanov gives Hayden an unimpressed look which boils his blood, and then proceeds to ask “Are you done?” in a monotone voice.

“Yes, I’m done,” Hayden huffs. “Now we can get back to business and lowkey ignore Shane’s warnings and beat the shit out of Hunter.”

“Two things first.” The way Rozanov looks at him with such intensity gets Hayden off-kilter. “You are Hollander’s best friend, yes? Your support is very important to him. I can tell. If you do not give him support. Unconditional support. If you give him shit about me or us...” After a few seconds of silence, Rozanov starts speaking Russian.

“The fuck did you say?” Hayden asks. He’s had a fucking day yesterday, then had to come home, wrangle his kinds, wake up in the morning, drop the twins off at daycare, and was subjected to some domestic bullshit against his will. He does *not* have the patience for this.

“I threatened you in Russian. Is too violent to translate.” The smirk on his face tells Hayden that Rozanov is fucking with him, but he can never be sure.

“What the actual fuck, man?” he asks incredulously. “Are you a fucking psychopath?”

Rolling down the window, Rozanov lights a cigarette. Hayden tries to reach over and flick it off his hand but with one hand on the steering wheel it’s a near-impossible task. “You care about Shane. You give me shovel talk. I care about Shane. I give you shovel talk.”

For a second Hayden wonders how pissed Shane would be if Hayden ran over Rozanov after they successfully beat up Scott Hunter. Another, smaller, begrudging part feels oddly satisfied that Rozanov is willing to take on anyone for Shane. “Jesus fucking Christ. Okay, what’s the second thing?”

“Hollander didn’t have any real food. I need breakfast.”

And yeah, Hayden could relate to that. “There’s a Timmie’s on our way. We’ll grab something.”

Hayden watches in horror as Rozanov orders two sausage breakfast sandwiches, a croissant royale, hashbrowns, two glazed donuts, and an iced coffee. At the last moment he turns to Hayden and asks if he wants anything. Hayden slowly shakes his head no, completely horrified by the sheer amount of food Rozanov has just ordered.

After receiving his order and promptly scarfing down one of his sandwiches Rozanov must realize the look on Hayden's face. He just shrugs. "Hollander is more tiring than playing a game." Then fucking winks at Hayden. Disgusting.

"I fucking hate you." Hayden winces, an unfortunate image flashing in his mind and making him blush.

"I know," Rozanov responds once his second sandwich is gone too. "As long as you don't make Hollander hate me. Is okay." His voice comes out smaller, quieter. If Hayden didn't know better he'd think Rozanov was afraid, but this is Rozanov, and it all seems so out of the realm of possibilities for him.

In all honesty, it was Hayden's full intention to take Shane out one night, with Jackie in tow, and discuss the situation going on between him and Rozanov, find every weak point and hole in between them and use those as a vantage point to rip this thing to shreds. But now looking at Rozanov, all of his 6' 3 shrunk into the passenger's seat under the weight of dislike, Hayden feels an emotion flood through him. It's a similar one he's felt, when he first thought about what being outed would do to Rozanov. But this time it's not just a hypothetical. Hayden knows that he's seeing what losing Shane would do to Rozanov. The feeling in his chest is empathy, and Hayden begrudges its existence. He also kind of hates himself for feeling it. "Fuck," he mutters, more to himself than his companion. "If you don't hurt my best friend, I won't do such a thing." That's all he can promise.

Hayden watches Rozanov take another drag of his cigarette and carefully blow it outside of the car. He can't tell if he hates asshole Rozanov more or this version of him that's trying to be considerate, that's more human. "Don't look at me weird, Pike. You have no baby seats in the back. Your kids do not go in this car. I will keep smoking."

"How am I looking at you? And how do you know my kids don't ride in this car?"

"Your kids are small, no?" Rozanov asks, then looks at the back seat. "There are no small seats for them. Is dangerous to put kinds in cars without small seats. Are you a bad father?"

"No." Hayden automatically responds, because he is not. Because he knows he is not. He's just a little taken aback that Rozanov agrees with him on this.

Rozanov just shrugs. "See. No kids in this car." Then a silence settles in between them. The ice in the coffee clinks, his munches on his hashbrown fill it, but neither of them speak. Eventually Rozanov is the one who breaks the silence. "I won't hurt Shane."

Fuck. Hayden's gonna have to learn how to be civil to Rozanov. He's here to stay, isn't he. Just when Hayden thinks he might be going soft, the asshole marches on.

"Nothing will hurt more than being friends with Montreal's fifteenth worst player anyway." And the familiar urge to deck him comes back. Hayden feels a little safer in his seat. The grass is green. Rozanov is an asshole. Shane is low-key in love with him. Rozanov is low-key in love with him back. And maybe, just maybe, Hayden might care about the asshole.

They get out of the car after Rozanov stuffs his entire croissant sandwich in his mouth, still chewing as they walk toward the entrance of the hotel. It all hits Hayden once they're on Hunter's floor, rapidly approaching his room. "Fuck. Okay. We need a game plan. Fuck. We're actually doing it. We are gonna beat up Scott fucking Hunter."

Hayden gets caught off guard when Rozanov grabs the sleeve of his puffer coat, pulling them toward the side of the corridor and out to the fire escape. "Shut up!" he hisses. "Oh my god, Pike. Shut the fuck up. Do you want the thing that makes your voice loud too?"

"A megaphone?" Hayden dryly supplies.

"Yes. Do you want fucking megaphone? Tell everyone? Keep fucking quiet." Hayden watches as Rozanov checks their surroundings, then lowers his voice. "Are you ready now? Without yelling?"

"No." Because as much as Hayden actually *wants* to make sure Hunter is gonna stay quiet, he is nervous too. "Can we actually talk about what the plan is?"

Rozanov runs a hand through his face, then resigns. "You want plan? I will talk to Hunter. If he doesn't listen, I knock his teeth out, so he can't talk. Good plan. Ready?"

"No." Hayden insists. Because Hunter might be a homophobic asshole, but they know he at least tolerates Shane. He *hates* Rozanov. "Hunter fucking despises you dude. What can you say that'll make him keep his mouth shut."

"I have my ways." Rozanov presses, clearly reluctant to tell Hayden, but Hayden can't take any risks with unreliable Russian assholes.

"Tell me. Convince me that you'll convince Hunter."

The expression on Rozanov's face dances, going between anger, consideration of punching Hayden, a look he's far too familiar with from the ice, before finally settling on resignation. "I will tell him to leave Shane out of this. I will tell him that if he wants to be homophobic, he can out me. But leave Shane alone. I will tell him if he does not listen he will not have any teeth or tongue. Can we go now?"

"Wait, what?" Hayden haven't felt this confused since his fucking concussion and this discombobulated since he last had a newborn and was funning on four hours of sleep each night. This feels like both of those situations were put in a blender alongside his brain. "But if he outs you, you can't go back home."

"Yes? Are we sharing facts now, Pike? I drove here with a bad hockey player."

"Fuck you." Hayden retorts. "You know what I fucking mean, Rozanov."

"Yes I do." For a second consideration of a different kind passes Rozanov's face, clearly weighing how much he wants to share. "I have no family. Not important family. It does not matter to me. Hockey is everything to Shane. Hockey matters to Shane. I am stopping Hunter

so Shane can keep playing hockey. I will survive without home. I will not risk other possibilities.”

Ever since Hayden found out about the whole situation he’s wanted to fuck up Hunter. But now he wants to beat him up even further for making Hayden feel fucking heartbroken for Ilya Rozanov. “Great plan,” he says and pulls them back to the corridor so he won’t do something stupid like pulling Rozanov in a hug and giving him his blessing to marry Shane.

When they’re in front of the door, Rozanov plasters himself against the wall, avoiding being seen from the peephole and Hayden honest to god hates him for being smart on top of every other good quality he apparently has. It’s going to be annoyingly hard hating him. Pushing down his annoyance, he knocks on the door.

The second the door opens, Hayden’s eyes lock on Hunter’s face and fist connects with his eye. How dare this motherfucker threaten his best friend and make Hayden feel empathetic toward Ilya Rozanov. Taking advantage of the recoil, Hayden pushes his way into the room, Rozanov in tow.

“What the fuck, Pike?” Hunter aggressively strides toward him, crowding Hayden against the wall. But suddenly Rozanov is standing between them, towering over Hunter.

“Sit down, Hunter. We need to talk.” The timber of Rozanov’s voice leaves no room for any objections. Hayden has watched this man take down many *many* men on the ice. He’s witnessed several people getting their noses broken, faces caved in, teeth punched out of their mouths by him. But this is the first time he actually feels afraid of Rozanov and what he is capable of.

Hunter must be sharing the sentiment, because he sits down on the foot of the bed, his head tilted back. The expression on his face looks exhausted, as if he was already on the sixth circle of hell, and he had to come back just to deal with him and Rozanov. It makes Hayden feel even more furious. If Hunter was going through something, why did he take it out on Shane who has been nothing but friendly toward him, Shane who idolized this man. Anger brews in him, getting stronger each second, and it must be radiating off of him because Rozanov just squeezes his shoulder, letting Hayden know that he’s got this.

“This is what’s going to happen,” Rozanov starts explaining. The calm but icy tone of his voice sends a shiver down Hayden’s spine. “I will tell you what you did. You will apologize and tell us you will keep your mouth shut. Or I will make sure you have no teeth before your old age knocks them out of your mouth. Does that sound good, Hunter?”

The nagging knowledge that the depths of Rozanov’s anger is driven by his feelings for Shane settles something in Hayden. Although he hates the fact that those hands belong to Rozanov; his best friend is in good hands. For a second he wonders how deep Rozanov’s love might run, if this is how far his anger can reach.

Hayden feels Hunter’s eyes on him, before they dart back to Rozanov. “This is about what I said to Shane?” Hunter asks. He’s looking clearly lost for some reason. But Hayden can’t figure out exactly what’s the missing piece in Hunter’s mind. Then realization dawns on

Hunter, about what Hayden can't be sure. But he whispers "Tampa? Was it Hollander in your room? Is that what you whispered to him?"

"You did not know." Rozanov lets out, his voice fucking *broken*. All the fight is drained out of him, his shoulders sagging "And I told you."

"Yeah." Hunter sighs, but there is a misplaced smile blooming on his face.

Rozanov must realize the unseemly expression as well because he grabs the front of Hunter's shirt, tearing him away from the bed, and slams him against the wall. His forearm settles on Hunter's throat. "Do not fucking dare, Hunter," he spits. "Wipe your smile. Do not speak of this. Ever."

Hunter gains some of his composure back and pushes Rozanov off of himself, putting some distance between them. "I wouldn't. I wouldn't out you or Shane."

Just when Hayden thinks the situation is defused, Rozanov growls again. "Do not dare say his name. You do not get to say his name. Not after what you did to him."

The final piece clicks for Hunter, everything readable on his face. "I did not- Fuck. I didn't want to scare Hollander." Hayden observes his demeanor as he sits back down on the bed. Hunter finally turns his attention back to him. "And you're okay with this?" He gestures towards Rozanov, but Hayden can tell that's not exactly what he's asking for.

An offended scoff leaves him. "Of course I am. What the fuck do you make me for? I'm not a homophobic piece of shit. Shane is my best friend. I don't give a fuck who he's with. I'll support him no matter who he chooses." Hayden's eyes dart to Rozanov. A man he once hated, a man he's come to accept, a man he's getting to know beyond the facade.

"But you've been with so many women." Hunter scrunches his brows at Rozanov.

"Is hard in your old age to keep up. But people are sometimes bisexual." Rozanov deadpans. Hayden's escaped snort makes him grin, and god it feels weird and exhilarating to be on the same side as Rozanov. "And we are not...allowed to fuck others..." he turns to Hayden, snapping his fingers.

"Exclusive?" Hayden offers.

"Yes. We were not exclusive." Rozanov runs his tongue over his teeth, maybe tasting how the word tastes in his mouth.

"Are you exclusive now?" Hunter asks, because apparently it is imperative for him to know. Voicing questions even Hayden hasn't gotten to ask. He really needs to talk to Shane.

The usual expression of mirth is back on Rozanov's face when he asks "why Hunter, do you want to fuck me?" Then he looks at Hunter's cocked head and his nostrils flare. "Do you want to fuck Hollander?"

"No, man. God. Fuck. No, I don't want to fuck either of you." His hands are defensively splayed in front of him. Hunter's eyes fixate on the impersonal hotel art, a sort of

undecipherable longing on his face. “I already have a boyfriend. Or *had* a boyfriend. I don’t know anymore. We’re... It’s a rough patch.”

Hayden feels more than he sees Rozanov plop down next to him on the couch. “Disgusting.”

Hayden looks at Rozanov, Hunter probably having a similar expression on his face. “What?”

“This is a bad day. A disgusting day. First I become friendly with Pike,”—he makes a gagging noise—“then I learn I have to respect Hunter.”

Across from them, on the bed, Hunter lays down, legs still dangling, and starts laughing. A relieved sound Hayden has never heard him make. “Fuck Rozanov. Gay-bi solidarity huh.” Then his voice turns somber. “I was already upset over my fucked up situation, playing shitty hockey. Then the fucking nices guy in hockey chirped at me. Fuck. Like, how low could I go? I thought comparing him to his biggest enemy would get under his skin. I meant to call him an asshole, not scare him with fucking outing him.”

“You should say this to Shane,” Rozanov responds, his voice serious. “And don’t get it wrong. I only respect your sexuality, Hunter. You still are a shitty player. Old as dinosaur. Maybe fix things with your boyfriend, then you will play better hockey. Not as good as me. But not shitty hockey.” Rozanov grins.

“And he’s back.” Hayden announces.

“It’s one thing, you guys being gay. But I don’t know what Hollander sees in you.” Hunter mocks.

Having someone on his side, Hayden can’t help the words that tumble out of him. “I know. When Shane told me he was seeing someone on the Bears, I thought it was Marlow.” He feels both men’s gaze burning a hole through him, possibly for different reasons, but he has a case to make. “What? He’s a good player, he’s funny, and he is a total hunk. His beard is very luscious.”

“Do you want to date Marlow, Pike?” Hunter asks, his voice now playful.

“I don’t know if Marly swings both ways,” Rozanov adds, his asshole persona back with a full force. “And what would your wife and sixteen children do?”

“Who the fuck taught you that phrase?” Hayden can’t help but ask. “And fuck you. I don’t have sixteen kids. And I love my wife.”

“I don’t hear any denial of your bisexual tendencies.” Hunter jokes. “Maybe the NHL is gayer than I thought.”

“Queer,” Rozanov corrects him. “Do you hate bisexuals, Hunter? Is not very inclusive of you.”

By the time they get back to Hayden’s car, Hayden feels like the whole world as he knew it has been rewritten around him. Three NHL legends are gay—queer, a voice in Hayden’s head with a strong Russian accent corrects—Ilya Rozanov is still an asshole, but a more tolerable

one than Hayden has thought, and Scott Hunter is possibly going through a breakup with his boyfriend.

As soon as he pulls up to the driveway, Rozanov pushes the door open, sprinting toward the door. Hayden catches up to him in a matter of minutes, soon enough to watch him punch the code for the front door. It took Hayden two years to get the code, and this fucker has it already. Then a question Hayden knows will not be able to forget climbs into his brain. *How long has this been going on?*

Once they're inside, they find Shane sitting on the edge of his sofa, fingers clutching the corner of the cushion, knuckles white. Rozanov unceremoniously plops down next to him and pulls Shane halfway into his lap. Hayden watches as Shane's entire body goes rigid, then he looks up at Hayden who offers him a big smile that hopefully is conveying some sort of comfort. Shane must feel it, because he then fully climbs into Rozanov's lap, arms wrapping around his neck. The whole picture looks so domestic and soft. The familiarity of their actions are warm in a way that can only come from years of touches woven into the fabric of them. Hayden low-key wants to throw up.

Biting down on his questions, he sits down across from them, the day finally catching up to him. With great effort, he actively tries to not gag at Rozanov playing with Shane's hair, and Shane further melting into his chest.

When Shane speaks, his voice is muffled against Rozanov's sweater. "Are either of you assholes gonna say anything or do you expect me to read your minds? Or is the plan letting me die of anxiety so I won't ever have to find out how bad it all went." He kind of sounds like a grumpy cat that was on the verge of a panic attack.

Hayden opens his mouth only to get cut off by Rozanov. "Shane, Pike committed elderly abuse." And the asshole unashamedly points at Hayden with his free hand, that asshole tell-tale.

Shane sputters. "What? Hayd. You promised me."

Feeling like a child getting admonished, Hayden wants to get revenge. "Rozanov came out as bisexual to Hunter." His finger is up in the air too.

Shane looks at Rozanov with a glint in his eyes but Hayden tries to not read into it. "Will either of fuckers explain?" Despite his insistence, his shoulders seem to relax, understanding nothing bad is going to follow.

"I know is very hard next to me, but keep your panties on, Hollander," Rozanov barks a laugh, making Shane turn red and earning himself an elbow to the ribs. It makes Hayden feel a little smug.

"I still don't know what happened." Shane lets out, whining and batting his eyelashes at Rozanov. Maybe Hayden can acquire a gun.

"Is okay, sweetheart," Rozanov reassures, and by the look on his face Shane is just as taken aback by the pet name as Hayden is. "Hunter didn't mean...it wasn't..."

“Insinuate?” Shane asks, finishing Rozanov’s sentence. “Like, imply, make me think so.”

“Yes, he didn’t mean to insinuate he knew about us. It was just simple chirping. He apologized. He will apologize to you too. I told him to apologize. If he does not, tell me, and I will find his boyfriend and tell him to dump Hunter again.”

Shane visibly relaxes, easing a knot in Hayden’s chest too. “Oh, okay.” Then his eyes widen. “Wait, what boyfriend?”

“We don’t know. You should ask him about his boyfriend situation,” Hayden adds, super curious about the whole situation. Jackie will *love* the gossip. Hayden has always felt so lucky to have a built-in friend in his wife, and he loves talking to his friends about her. The loneliness Shane must have felt, Hunter must be feeling presses down on his chest. “He said he *had* a boyfriend. Maybe he could use a friend.”

“Maybe his boyfriend wanted someone younger,” Rozanov jokes, earning himself a slap on the arm. He grabs the hand Shane slapped him with and intertwines their fingers, then speaks into the crook of Shane’s neck. “Did you eat anything?”

Shane nods no, and Rozanov gently places him onto the couch, placing a kiss on the top of his head. Hayden watches as Rozanov navigates the kitchen, making a snack plate for Shane. “He’s really good to you, huh?”

Shane shyly ducks his head, avoiding eye contact. “He really is.”

In a matter of minutes, Rozanov reappears with a plate full of grilled chicken bites, a hard-boiled egg, some cottage cheese and cut up fruit. Maybe Hayden can really accept this relationship. “And Pike is leaving his wife for Marly,” Rozanov grins, flashing all his teeth. No, Hayden is for sure getting that gun.

“I love that you’re gay, dude, good for you, but I hate who you’re being gay with.” Hayden yells at his best friend, then turns toward Rozanov. “I love my wife, asshole.”

“You are not saying no to crushing on Marly, Pike. You’re just saying you have a wife. ” Rozanov presses, pulling Shane and his plate on his lap again.

“Shane, I’m gonna start being homophobic to him.”

When Hayden gets up to leave, after chirping with Rozanov some more over a few games of Fifa, they both get up to walk him home. Shane stands at the door, Rozanov right behind him, his arms securely wrapped around Shane. “See you tomorrow at practice, Hayd. Seriously. Thank you.”

“Don’t even mention it, dude.” The gratitude in Shane’s eyes makes Hayden feel choked up. There isn’t a world where he wouldn’t do anything for his best friend. Even befriending the world’s biggest asshole.

“You’re a good friend, Pike,” Rozanov simply says.

“And you are a good, whatever you are to Shane, Rozanov.” He simply responds, already walking to his car.

Chapter End Notes

As always, here's a snippet from the upcoming epilogue "My Queening Out With Hayden"

“What? Hayden’s right, Malow is hot.” Shane deadpans with a dismissive shrug.

“Thank you!” Hayden exclaims, his fist in the air with vindication. “But for your sake I won’t tell Ilya that you said that.”

“You said Ilya!” And Jackie bursts into giggles once again, delighted at her husband’s admission.

End Notes

Thank you guys so much for reading!! You guys' comments and kudos keep my Tinkerbell spirit alive <3 

And you all know the drill by now I hope

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