achilles, come down

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by voidvapor

Summary

Hayden's about to fist a hand in Marleau's jersey and make a truly heroic attempt at rocking the much larger man's shit (because no matter how clean the check might've been, that's Hayden's boy) when there's the thunk of a second body hitting the ice.

The fight Hayden meant to start stops cold, because Rozanov goes down like a bag of bricks out of absolutely nowhere.

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or: in a world where soulmates share injuries, when Marleau rams into Shane, Ilya goes down too. He and Hayden try to handle the situation as best as they can.

Notes

based off the show, i have not read the books.

this was the result of a writing sprint so don't look too closely at any mistakes. title is from the Gang of Youths song of the same name. enjoy! <3

See the end of the work for more notes

2017

Hayden has just dropped his gloves when he hears it.

The medics have made it to Shane who's lying motionless somewhere to Hayden's left, knocked clean out and unresponsive. Hayden's about to fist a hand in Marleau's jersey and make a truly heroic attempt at rocking the much larger man's shit (because no matter how clean the check might've been, that's Hayden's *boy*) when there's the *thunk* of a second body hitting the ice.

The fight Hayden meant to start stops cold, because Rozanov goes down like a bag of bricks *out of absolutely nowhere*. Hayden recognizes the flash of panic when Marleau twists back around to get a better look at Rozanov's still form; that was him looking at Shane two and a half minutes ago.

People give Hayden shit for being stupid, but he's not, not really. And he can tell Marleau isn't stupid either; they're both putting pieces of two separate but matching puzzles together at the speed of light.

The guys on the team call Hayden a glutton for punishment because he's got so many kids. Jackie's his soulmate, so that means he's shared every excruciating second of labor pains with her, laid up in a cot the nurses had pressed up against her bed, their hands tangled and fighting to see who would break the other's fingers first. Hayden just thinks it makes him a better father, in the end; he knows exactly how badly it hurts to bring kids into the world, cherishes them and all their chaos.

Of course, it's a pain in the ass when he gets injured on the ice, means Jackie's limping too, means she sports bruises that match his. Hayden hates that part, but they manage, though.

That also means Hayden knows *exactly* what's happening, and years of missed signs are flashing through his mind like something halfway between a vision and a waking nightmare. The words *Boston Lily* clank around his skull like a loose bolt, and he thinks it's a sure bet that *Montreal Something-or-Other* is doing the same in Marleau's skull.

Rozanov's head is cocked at the same weird, limp angle as Shane's, like they're two morbid snow angels, limbs splayed all wrong. The guys on the medic team briefly give each other puzzled looks before snapping into action, two of them splitting off to attend to the rival captain. Shane and Rozanov are both loaded onto backboards and hauled off the ice, their twinned pained groans the only sound audible in the arena. Shane's parents are following them, David's arm around a shaking Yuna's shoulders.

Fuck.

Hayden can feel the freakout building inside him, the sheer shock of it finally receding. But it gets a whole hell of a lot worse when his brain goes back online and he realizes that if he's figured it out, everyone else will too, if with a few minutes of delay. This is gonna be all over the internet; there aren't many reasons Ilya Rozanov could've gone down like that, in

lockstep with Shane. He watches the same awareness spark in Marleau's eyes where they're both standing way too fucking close, still in each other's spaces, arms hanging uselessly at their sides now.

Hayden's cool with Shane being into guys. He's been trying to find a way for a while now to tell him, to work it into a conversation gently, see if he can get Shane to open up to him. Hayden's *cool*; he'd never judge Shane for being gay. But that nice, careful plan is all blown to smithereens now. Whether Shane is ready or not, unless the league finds a believable lie, everyone's about to put together that his soulmate's a guy. That his soulmate is *Ilya fucking Rozanov*. The sportscasters are gonna have a field day. Even if the league *does* try to cover it up somehow, the rumors will linger, online and in the locker rooms.

But there isn't squat Hayden can do about it, nothing he can do to shield Shane from scrutiny. Right now, they've got a game to finish, even with both teams down their captains.

They all kind of play like shit from there, still rattled, but Hayden and Marleau are definitely the worst of the bunch. The other man keeps catching Hayden's eyes, question marks written all over him.

Hayden nods at the guy, a curt little jerk of his chin, and he knows Marleau will be waiting for him when the game's over.

Boston wins, barely. Theriault's in a rage, instructing all of them to keep their mouths shut and not give the press anything more than a '*no comment*' if they ask about Shane and Rozanov. Hayden's got a feeling something nasty's coming, and he tries to slip out of the locker room unnoticed, but J.J. catches him by the wrist before he can.

"*Caliss*, man," J.J. grits out, "*Ça s'peut pas*."

It's pretty damn clear J.J. has it figured out, too.

Hayden's not exactly fluent in french, but he can read the disbelief in J.J's tone anyway. And really, it echoes in Hayden's chest, because Shane being gay is one thing, but Rozanov being his soulmate? That's a shitshow of entirely unknown proportions.

But Shane's going to need friends more than ever, because Hayden can already tell some of the guys are taking this *really badly*. He doesn't like the harsh set of Comeau's jaw, and he doesn't doubt that there's at least a few other guys who feel the same. They can't afford to linger on the *what the fuck* of it all, not now. He's hoping J.J. cares more about the Rozanov part than he does about the gay part.

"Look, I get it," Hayden says, "But you've gotta get really cool about this really fucking fast. Shane's gonna need us on his side." Hayden tilts his head in the direction of the other guys sharply, trying to put a whole lot of meaning in not a lot of words.

J.J. looks offended for a second, like Hayden's calling him a bad friend. Which, points to J.J., means he probably *isn't* one. Still, this whole situation has Hayden on edge, no idea who's trustworthy. He's never exactly had to consider this sort of thing before. Shane's had to weigh

out this sort of thing for god knows how long, though, and Hayden feels a sharp pang of sadness in his chest under all the worry.

“I don’t care if he’s gay, *tabarnack*,” J.J. insists, voice rising an octave, “but *Rozanov*?”

And again, Hayden doesn’t disagree. Ilya Rozanov is a dick, one of the worst Hayden’s ever met. He spends every game flirting with playing *too* dirty, goes for the lowest blows when he chirps. The idea of him being Shane’s soulmate sounds like the made up stories from that weird fan website Jackie showed him once. It doesn’t make any sense to Hayden at all.

Except… *Boston Lily*. Fuck.

“Look, dude, I get it. Just promise me you’re gonna stick with us on this. United front, or whatever.”

J.J. scoffs, and the sound unwinds the tension that had started coiling in Hayden’s spine.

“*Pour qui tu m’prends*? He is my friend too. Of course I will.”

With that reassurance, Hayden makes his excuses to J.J., promises to give Shane his regards. He rushes out of the locker room and makes the trek to the fire escape door with his head down, chin pressed against his chest. Marleau’s waiting for him out back in the lot, a cigarette held loosely between two fingers like he’s forgotten he lit it.

“They’re so fucked,” Marleau says, his voice rough like gravel.

Hayden sighs. “Yeah, it’s gonna be bad. Theriault’s on the war path.”

“Did you know?”

“Not until now, no.”

“Me neither. Just knew Roz had a girl in Montreal, one that had him blushing when they texted.” Marleau laughs to himself, finally takes a drag off the cigarette that’s been burning idly between his fingers.

Hayden doesn’t want to think about what Shane could’ve possibly said to make *Ilya Rozanov* blush. Really *really* doesn’t want to think about that. So he just swallows thickly, tries to find his words, but can’t.

“So what do we do?” Marleau asks, looking back at him, eyes assessing Hayden critically. He’s not exactly the meathead Hayden has always thought of him as, and Hayden would really like it if the world stopped pulling the rug from under him. It’s fucking *weird* for him to be standing out here with Marleau like they’re buddies all of a sudden. But it makes sense, if Hayden takes the time to think about it; Marleau treats Rozanov like some fucked up little brother, always standing over his shoulder. They’ve got a common goal here: protecting the younger men they’ve taken under their wing.

“You gonna visit Rozanov?” Hayden asks, sort of pointlessly. The answer’s obvious, but he’s not sure what else to say.

Marleau just nods, doesn't look away from Hayden, a nervous tic in his jaw.

"Text me when you're about to head out tomorrow, we can go together," Hayden offers.

"Why?"

"They're gonna put them in the same room, most likely. S'what they always do with me and my wife when she's in labor."

It takes a second, and Hayden gets to watch the realization hit Marleau, the way his mouth goes slack with surprise. "Holy fucking shit, *labor*?"

He says it like he'd never even considered the implications of soulmates having kids together, and the familiar wide-eyed look he sports is almost soothing to Hayden. Makes it feel a little less like they're about to have to take on the entire fucking NHL for their boys.

For the first time since Shane took the hit, Hayden laughs.

They get a few weird looks when they show up for visiting hours the next morning. Not everyone recognizes them, but enough people do that it's unsettling. Yuna and David aren't there when they're lead back to the private double room, so there's no buffer, and Hayden's nerves are starting to fray.

As soon as they step through the door, Rozanov's head snaps up. His eyes are cloudy, and his curls stick limply to his forehead, but the rest of him is as sharp as ever.

"Marly, why you bring Pike here?" He asks disdainfully, words slurred.

Marleau just laughs, crowds up against the side of Rozanov's bed. "He's here for Hollander, Roz."

Hayden wanders off in the direction of Shane's bed quietly, where his friend's gone to the world, hooked up to an IV drip that's probably pumping him full of painkillers. He looks so young like this, all those tense lines on his forehead from overthinking smoothed out. It makes Hayden's stomach twist uncomfortably.

"How bad is it?" Hayden asks Rozanov without looking at him, because *god, this is fucking weird*.

"Broken collarbone, they say. Concussion, too. Has to stay off ice." He sounds pissed *for* Shane, and that does more than anything else could've to sell Hayden on the idea of… whatever the fuck they've apparently been doing this whole time in Montreal and Boston.

"And you?" Marleau asks.

"Not broken, only bruised. And 'sympathy migraine'. Will be fine." Rozanov does the air quotes and all, and it's the least threatening Hayden's ever seen the Russian look. He just looks tired, and his hand's doing that twitchy thing Hayden recognizes from when he himself is trying not to reach for Jackie, so the guys won't have another thing to call him whipped for.

Yep, this whole thing is still so incredibly bizarre. But it makes a disturbing amount of sense; of course Shane "highest hockey IQ" Hollander would have a fellow player for a soulmate. Of course it would be the other best player in the league (Hayden hates that he really does believe that, is *never* going to say it out loud).

"How bad is it?" Rozanov parrots back at Hayden, and some of his natural aura of violence comes back, and that actually does help a bit. His shoulders droop when Hayden and Marleau both cringe in sync. Twitter has been on fire, the video of Rozanov falling over right after Shane getting countless amounts of likes and retweets.

"*You're* fine, except for the whole—" Marleau gestures vaguely at Rozanov, "Russia thing."

It's a crappy way to tell a guy he basically can't ever go home again without getting arrested, but it's all they've got.

"Russia thing. *Da*." And Rozanov doesn't really look surprised. Hayden might not like the guy, but he sure as hell feels bad for him.

Hayden clears his throat uncomfortably. He's got the distinct feeling Rozanov is *not* going to like what he's about to say. "It's not gonna be easy for Shane. Some of the guys are kicking up a fuss, and Theriault's not happy either."

Yeah, Rozanov's pissed. His whole posture goes rigid, and he looks about a second away from tracking Theriault down himself to do something that'll get him arrested. "Because fucking me make Hollander play bad hockey, now?"

Hayden winces at the phrasing. "Pretty much."

"Fucking stupid Metros. Hollander never play bad hockey before, we would not be fucking if he did."

And Hayden hasn't missed how Rozanov keeps calling it just fucking, but that's none of his business and also way above his pay grade anyway. *Fucking* doesn't mean keeling over on the ice together because one of you got blindsided. Hayden bites his tongue, reaches for Shane's hand instead, strokes the back of it with his thumb.

Eventually, another question bubbles past Hayden's lips on its own. "Was he ever gonna tell me?"

Rozanov softens a little then, looks over at Shane's sleeping form with something that is definitely not *just fucking* written all over his face. "I think so. Hollander never shuts up about you, Pike."

Rozanov says it like it's a problem, but for Hayden it's a blessing. The last twelve or so hours have been too chaotic for him to really stop and think, but maybe a little sadness had still managed to creep in. Now more than ever, Hayden gets why Shane didn't say anything; he thinks of the bitching in the locker room, Comeau making assumptions about every single game they've ever lost against Boston. But it's still a little sad for Hayden, that Shane thought *he* might've thought that.

He'll make sure to correct that impression when Shane wakes up. If there's one thing Hayden knows you can trust Shane Hollander on, it's good hockey.

Tears are starting to prick at the corners of Hayden's eyes, so he covers it up with some snark. "I can't even give you a real shovel talk because if I hit you I'll hurt him. Asshole."

"Fuck you, Pike," Rozanov snaps back, and it's strangely brittle, like Hayden's hit a nerve he didn't know was there. The air grows thick with an unpleasant sort of tension, and Marleau fidgets at Rozanov's side.

That's about when Shane wakes up, blinking sleep out of his eyes. He can barely keep them open, as high on the good stuff as he is.

"Hayd?" He asks, stretching out Hayden's nickname like it's elastic in his mouth.

"Hey, bud."

Shane's smile is one of those things Hayden has never figured out how to tell him he likes without it sounding weird. It's a pretty smile, curls slow and wide across his face, and Hayden always feels a bit like he's scored a goal when it makes an appearance.

"Where's Ilya?"

And that's the final nail in the coffin. *Ilya*. Like he's said it a thousand times before, and Hayden's really fucking curious how long they've been doing this under everyone's noses.

"Am right here, Shane. They gave me bed next to you." Rozanov calls out, not even trying to go back to last names. It's pretty moot now anyway, with all of them in the know.

Panic flits briefly across Shane's face, like he's only just now connecting the dots about all of them being in the same room and what he's just said. He yanks his hand out of Hayden's grip and tries to scramble up the bed, tries to pull himself up but he's only got one arm free, the other tied up in a sling, so he ends up almost falling over. Hayden rushes to steady him, repeating a string of *hey, bud, it's okay*.

"Nobody was supposed to—"

"It's fine, Shane. *We're* fine, okay?"

There isn't much else that's fine, but Shane doesn't need to know that right now. When Hayden looks up, he sees Marleau helping Rozanov hobble over to their side of the room, watches him deposit Rozanov carefully so he can sit next to Shane on the bed. It feels kind of like looking in a strange, Bostonian mirror.

They both look away politely when Rozanov reaches over to hold Shane's hand, look at each other instead. An understanding passes between them, and Hayden knows he's walking out of here with a new friend today.

He doesn't know what *solnyshko* means, but he hears the pleased little sound Shane makes when Rozanov whispers it to him, so it must be a good thing. Marleau tries to apologize to

Shane, but he just waves it off with that big smile of his.

There's gonna be hell to pay soon, Hayden knows, but this little moment right here is pretty damn nice.

End Notes

notes on J.J.'s french:

- "caliss" and "tabarnack" are swears
- "ca s'peut pas" = there's no way
- "pour qui tu m'prends" = who do you take me for

thank you for reading xoxo

edit: i'm having trouble keeping up with the comments on this but i am reading all of them, kicking my feet and giggling!! thank you for being so nice <3 love y'all

edit 2: i am reading all your comments and i love you all im so overwhelmed with FEELINGS. thank you guys sm <3 <3 <3

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