

So Lily's Just a Buddy?

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So Lily's Just a Buddy?

by [multifandomhomo](#)

Summary

5 times Hayden learns things about “Boston Lily” from texts + 1 time he learns who [s]he is

Or, Hayden needs to get better at not looking at Shane’s phone, but to his defense, it’s always open.

Notes

im saying they’re fucking at ilya’s apartment in 2014 and 2015 and he doesn’t get the house until later so that’s why shane remarks on seeing it for the first time in fall 2016. Because otherwise i don’t know where they’re fucking in those years in boston.

Dialogue from part 3 is taken directly from the show.

Canon divergent also in that I’ve added in texts that technically aren’t a part of canon, and made Hayden see a few of the ones that we know Shane sees immediately. This is also not book compliant at all, I haven’t read it

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

It's not like Hayden is trying to find out Shane's private information. It's just that sometimes Shane leaves his phone face-up within Hayden's sphere of vision, and his message previews show up on the screen. It's not Hayden's fault when he glances over and sees the first sentence of a message. He always looks away as soon as he realizes.

Everyone is saved in Shane's phone as their first name and their last name, apart from his parents. It's usually one of them texting. Well, his mom, mostly. Sometimes his dad with a YouTube link or a Facebook meme.

Sometimes it's the full team chat, the one that only exists for the team to text Shane about things he should know because he's their captain. Hayden feels bad about keeping the *other* team chat—the one where all the fun happens—from Shane, but he knows he'd be in deep shit with the rest of the boys if he was the one to spill the beans.

But, anyways, the texts are never typically anything that Hayden has any reason to feel bad about seeing, because they're usually not even particularly personal information that he's accidentally seeing.

There is one exception to this, Hayden eventually finds out. There's "Lily," no last name.

It's March 2013 and they're playing an away game in Boston, the first time he sees Lily pop up. The message is just a kissing face emoji. Apart from being a little flirty, there's nothing Hayden can glean from it. But he'd thought even if Shane had met a girl, she'd be added first name last name like everyone else. But maybe they'd met on a dating site that only shared first names, or something.

The idea of Shane dating someone shouldn't surprise him as much as it does. Especially from a dating site. He knows Shane's had a girlfriend before, but ever since Hayden has known the kid he's seemed pretty solidly single. He's never talked about dating—never talked about girls at all, really. He just seems too obsessed with hockey to even spend the time.

He certainly hasn't talked about a Lily. Hayden would remember. But if his friend doesn't want to talk about her, yet, he'll pretend he didn't see the text.

After that, Hayden doesn't see a text from Lily for months, but when it starts up again, it's with a vengeance. It's the start of the 2014–2015 season, and Shane has been on his phone a *lot* more than usual. He checks it at dinner, he checks it before and after every game, he checks it mid-rep at the gym sometimes, and even when they're actively on a run. And some of that isn't particularly different from the way he's always used his phone, but the frequency at which he has something to pause whatever he's doing and reply to is definitely increasing.

And pretty much every time Hayden accidentally sees his phone, and there's anything to see, it's a text from Lily.

Hayden sometimes manages to pull his eyes away just from seeing her name, but when he doesn't, it's fairly innocuous. For the most part.

See you next week is one of the first ones that intrigues him. They go to both Boston and Philly in the next week. But then on the day of their Boston game, he sees another: *Same place as last time*.

He doesn't see the resolution to that conversation, and he's not rooming with Shane that night, so he doesn't know if he goes out or not. But it's enough for him to start thinking of her as Boston Lily specifically.

As much as he wonders, he doesn't let it occupy his thoughts, because it already feels like prying just to see these two texts. Still, he doesn't get any better at not looking at Shane's phone when he leaves it out. On the table when he goes to the bathroom during dinner, once, he sees another emoji, this time a winking face. Once, he sees a text referencing the game they'd just played, while Shane is showering and has left his phone with his clothes. Hayden turns it upside down for him, but it has him adding another mental note. Boston Lily is a hockey fan.

And based on the tone of the text, probably a fan of Boston, which makes it even more surprising that Shane's hooking up with her. And that really does seem like what it is. Just hooking up. Shane never mentions her to him, and Hayden doesn't bring up what he knows.

Shane has never been much of a partygoer. Hayden has tried to invite him to the clubs that the team goes out to, and the few times he's actually said yes, he never seems comfortable. And he *never* picks up girls. His head's just too into hockey to focus on anything else. Which makes Boston Lily even more surprising. Hayden is so curious, but he doesn't say anything. Not even when Shane smiles blatantly at his phone in the middle of dinner with him and Jackie.

The other thing he's noticed is that Shane is never available when they play Boston at home, either. If the girl just lived in Boston, that wouldn't make sense. She must be a hardcore fan, to travel for their games... or else this thing between her and Shane might be more serious than he thought. He wonders why they keep it so private, in that case—but if she really is a Raiders diehard, maybe they think there'll be a controversy about it. Or maybe it's not serious *enough* to come out about. But still, Hayden would think his best friend on the team could come to him about it. He doubts Shane is talking to anyone else about her.

It's October 2016 and they're in Boston again. This time, Hayden and Shane are sharing a room—sometimes there just aren't enough rooms at the hotel, and Shane and him always volunteer because they know they'll have a fine time sharing. They've done this before, but never in Boston.

Shane's phone is open on his bed, and Hayden passes by and just happens to see an address sent from none other than Lily. He isn't *trying* to see it, but he sees nonetheless. Hayden doesn't let himself look long enough to memorize the address or anything, but it's obvious that's what it is.

Another text comes through that he pointedly does not look at, before Shane emerges from the bathroom, where Hayden could see he was fixing up his hair, something he only bothers to do before press conferences or, apparently, when Boston Lily is involved.

"I'm, uh, heading out for a bit," Shane says, and he sounds like he's covering up that he's going to commit a crime, or something. Way too much anxiety for just announcing he's going to hook up, or fuck his secret girlfriend, or whatever the situation is.

Hayden keeps his tone positive and encouraging, hoping to settle Shane down some. "Cool."

"Uh, to meet a friend," he continues, still nervous.

"Nice!"

"I'll be back later."

"I won't wait up," Hayden says, and he can't help a knowing smile, because, really, even if he didn't know about Boston Lily, he'd be able to tell what Shane was going off for anyway. There's no other topic he gets this shy about.

"It's not like that. It's just a... a friend," Shane says, immediately trying to cover for himself, which is ridiculous because he has nothing to be covering for. Maybe he thinks Hayden will judge him for it being casual, or something, but he doesn't think Shane grew up conservative so he doesn't know why he'd jump to that. But, anyway, Hayden has no such problem. He's happy for his friend, really.

So Hayden decides to let go of the act of not knowing. "So Lily's just a buddy?"

Immediately, Shane seems like a deer in headlights, his body freezing. "What?"

"Chill out, man. I know you text some girl named Lily." Hayden tries to make it clear he's not bothered, and goes back to folding his clothes.

"I don't," Shane says, and Hayden seriously does not get why he's denying it still when it's really not a big deal. Shane's just strange like that. He's private to everyone, even to Hayden. Maybe even to his own parents. He can't imagine Shane discussing anything related to sex with his parents, not when he's so shy he can't even joke about it with his best friend.

"Okay, go get laid, weirdo," Hayden says. Shane stares at him, mouth open, seemingly speechless. Hayden shrugs, unbothered. "Or don't. I don't care. Actually, I hope you do. You always play better after." He hopes a joke will chill Shane out a bit, but he *does* actually always play better when they're against Boston ever since the texting with Boston Lily became constant.

It seems to have done the trick, because Shane tells him to go fuck himself. Hayden grins.

“Oh, I plan to. Probably more than once. Love a hotel room.” He closes his empty suitcase, already thinking about what he might do while Shane is gone. As much as his family is the light of his life, and he likes spending time with his best friend, he enjoys some alone time as much as anyone else with three small children does. He’s sometimes tempted to ask for a different room—they’re both entitled to them, now, as senior players—but being road roomies has always worked well for them, and they can’t argue with science.

“Gross,” is all Shane says, turning towards the door.

Hayden waves at him. “Bye!”

Shane leaves, and doesn’t return for several hours, but he does indeed get back before it’s even dark outside. Hayden’s surprised he didn’t end up staying the night, and it makes him wonder why. Their game with Boston tomorrow is in the afternoon so it wouldn’t have even messed with practice or anything.

He’s also wearing a different shirt, unless Hayden is going crazy. And maybe pants, too? But maybe he has some he’s left at Lily’s, or that she’d previously stolen from him. Chicks love that shit, getting to wear around your shirt for a while, so Hayden wouldn’t put it past her, even a casual hookup.

Hayden opens his mouth to rag on Shane for the shirt, some light-hearted teasing, but he closes it when he sees Shane’s expression. He doesn’t look like a man who just got to see the girl who makes him smile at his phone all day long. His expression is relatively blank, actually—but Hayden’s slowly been learning to read the small ways his face changes, and this is one of the stronger emotions he’s ever seen on Shane’s face.

He looks *devastated*. Heartbroken, even.

“Everything alright, man?” Hayden looks over at Shane as he collapses on his bed. He kind of wishes now that they did have separate bedrooms, because Shane looks like he deserves some time alone. He doesn’t even look over, though he nods.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” he says, but his voice is flat, flatter than Hayden’s ever heard it.

He wants to ask if something happened with Lily, but he gets the sense that would be unwelcome. So he just nods. “Okay.” If Shane wants to talk to him about whatever’s going on, Hayden hopes he knows he can. But he won’t push it. “Want to order room service?”

There are no texts for several months. Not ones that Hayden sees, anyway; but Shane also doesn’t look at his phone as much, as if he has no reason to. A few times, Hayden tries to pry it out of him, because something’s clearly up, and it obviously has to do with Boston Lily and whatever had happened when they’d last seen each other. But Shane always deflects, or answers the question so directly that he doesn’t get to what Hayden is actually trying to ask,

and Hayden can never tell how intentional that is. But he doesn't push too hard, even though Shane's been playing like shit ever since.

He wants to be there for his best friend, because he doesn't think Shane has a lot of people like that in his corner, and he can't go to his parents for everything. Sure, the guy's well-liked, but he doesn't seem to have people he can just *chat* with. They've known each other long enough that Hayden wishes Shane could see him as that person, but he doesn't, that much is clear. They talk, but rarely about important subjects. It's almost always hockey, hockey, hockey, unless Hayden brings up something about his home life and family or pop culture.

Hayden worries for Shane. He knows not everyone wants to be married with three kids and another on the way as early in their lives as Hayden, but he still worries. Shane just seems lonely, for someone excelling at the top of their career. Hayden doesn't know what else he can try, though.

And then Shane gets together with Rose Landry, and Hayden hears about it from the tabloids just like everyone else.

"Congrats, dude!" Hayden says he comes into the locker room the next day. He hadn't been at the party that they'd all met the X-Squad cast at—family duty called—which he only regrets a little bit. That had been a few days ago, and he'd heard from the team that Shane and Rose were getting along, but he'd sort of thought that he might get told something about it if they were actually together. Then, yesterday, the paparazzi had spotted them coming out of a restaurant together. Everyone was talking about it.

Shane looks at him, confused for a second. "Congrats on..."

"On bagging Rose Landry, man!" Hayden says with a laugh. Understanding comes over Shane's face, then. "The pics are everywhere. You two look damn good together."

"Right, yeah," Shane says, smiling. It does seem to reach his eyes, at least, though there's something restrained to it. "Sorry I didn't say anything, I wasn't really sure whether we were going to be a thing."

"So you are, then?" Hayden asks, grinning. "A thing? Boyfriend-girlfriend?" It sounds so middle school, but also so *Shane*.

"Yeah, I think so," Shane says, blinking.

Hayden claps him on the back, and Shane smiles. Hayden's glad to see it. "You pulled *Rose Landry*, man. Let that sink in."

Hayden goes back to getting ready for the game, but he hopes Shane does take it in a little bit, lets himself feel some of that confidence. It's a goddamn achievement, and he should feel good about it.

The weeks go by with Shane dating Rose, and Hayden can't help but notice things. Like the way he still doesn't talk to Hayden about Rose—unless he pries, which he tries not to do, too

much, but really! He wants to know how his friend's relationship is going! Or how his face doesn't light up when he gets texts from Rose like Hayden used to see when he got texts from Lily. And the next time they play Boston, Shane plays probably the worst game Hayden's ever seen from him.

Hayden doesn't get it; how could Shane be unsatisfied when dating literally one of the most famous, most beautiful women in the world? But on the other hand, he knows love is rarely simple, and he's really starting to wonder if it was more than just casual with Lily. It's hard when Shane has never talked about her, but he thinks it might have involved more feelings than Shane was willing to admit were there.

Shane does tell him when Rose breaks up with him, and he doesn't seem distraught. Not half as distraught as when he and Lily had their falling out. He seems almost relieved, and Hayden is furiously curious why. But none of his attempts to pry into it come up with anything useful, so he eventually gives it up. He's happy his friend is happier again. And he hopes, for Shane's sake, that he finds another Lily.

5

It's after the All-Star Game that the texts start up again. He's pretty sure it's Lily—that wide smile of Shane's is back on his face as he looks at his phone. A few days later, he spots a text that confirms they're texting again.

Hayden is glad things are good with Lily again, though he's absolutely dying to know how they got back together. It's not like they've been to Boston or Boston has played them at home since the All-Star Game. Maybe she travelled out to see it? Hayden decides that, this time, he's actually going to ask Shane about it. Shane can deflect and defend all he wants. Hayden *will* get something out of him.

“So you and Boston Lily got back together?” Hayden asks, the next time they're alone in a hotel room together. They'd just played in Buffalo, an easy win. While Shane had been in the bathroom, Hayden saw the beginning of a text that read; *I can't wait to have your cock in my mouth*—and had quickly looked away. He really needs to get better at not looking at all.

“What?” Shane immediately says, though he freezes in that way he only does when he's asked about girls or girlfriends or Lily in particular. “Why do you—”

“You've been smiling at your phone again,” Hayden interrupts. As if on autopilot, Shane picks up his phone and sees the latest message. Hayden will spare Shane the knowledge that Hayden had seen that text in particular. He knows the poor kid will wilt from the embarrassment of it. “I know how this girl gets you, man, it's okay.”

Shane's blushing hard, and he puts his phone facedown on the bed. “Yeah,” he admits, and Hayden has the urge to pump his fist. He's finally gotten a personal detail out of his best friend. It only took years. “We did. Get back together. Or...” He trails off, and that just won't do.

“Or?” Hayden prompts. Shane pulls his lip into his mouth and doesn’t look at him. “C’mon, dude, you can talk to me!”

Shane sighs softly, and doesn’t quite look over at him as he talks, but Hayden is used to this from Shane. It doesn’t bother him. Everyone has some quirks, Shane just has a few more.

“I don’t know if we’re really... ‘together,’” he says, putting up air quotes.

This isn’t necessarily what Hayden expected, but it doesn’t surprise him much, either. “It’s complicated, then?”

“Well,” Shane sighs, looking around as he seems to think about what to say. “We only see each other a few times a year.”

Hayden hums understandingly. “So you haven’t put a label on it, yet. I get it. Long distance is hard.” Or so he has heard. He’s only ever been with two women for any significant length of time: his high school sweetheart, and then, after her, Jackie..

“Yeah,” Shane says, seeming a bit relieved. “Yeah, no labels. We can’t really...” He pauses for another long moment, and Hayden lets him. “It’s the distance. It’ll never be a real relationship.”

“That’s rough, man.” Hayden glances over at Shane, and he seems sad, but in more of a wistful way this time. He wants something he can’t have. Hayden gets it. Plenty of people aren’t willing to move, even for a relationship. It wouldn’t work for Hayden, but he doesn’t blame Shane for clinging to what he can’t have.

“It is what it is,” Shane shrugs, and he gets another notification. Probably more sexting, which Hayden shouldn’t find as sweet as he does. He’s just glad Shane has someone.

A few weeks later, they’re sharing a room again, this time in Ottawa. It’s nice to have the company, even if it means a little less privacy. It’s afternoon when Shane springs up with his phone and starts towards the door. This in itself is unusual; Shane only gets phone calls from his parents or his agent, which are pretty typically pre-scheduled.

“Everything okay?” Hayden asks, raising an eyebrow as Shane books it towards the door, barely taking a moment to squeeze shoes onto his feet. If someone is calling outside of that schedule, and it’s so urgent that Shane is rushing towards the door, it’s probably something important. He hopes it’s nothing bad.

“Yeah, I’m just gonna—” Shane says, blushing in that way he only ever does for one person.

“Have fun!” Hayden tells him. He realizes after Shane leaves that maybe he should have offered to leave for a bit, but he’s not sure where he would have gone. He’s not sure where Shane is going, actually.

He doesn’t really have time to worry before Shane returns, only like ten minutes later. Shorter than Hayden had expected, actually. He lifts his head and puts down his phone as Shane

comes back into the room, wondering what he's going to be met with. He hopes it's not that same despairing look from when they'd broken up.

Shane's smile is small, but it's definitely there. He looks happy. Genuinely happy. Hayden can only wonder what Lily had said. And he knows it must be Lily.

+1

so if we win tonight I get to do whatever I want to you, then?

and we will win

They're playing Boston at home and, as usual, Shane is getting texts from Lily. It's only been a few days since the phone call, and if Shane had been texting a lot before, now it's like he's constantly on his phone. Hayden can't even get on his case about it, because Shane is as happy as Hayden's ever seen him. He's still not talking a lot about Boston Lily or giving up any new information, but it's clear she makes him happy, and Hayden would never want to interfere with that.

Except, he has a bit of a desire to interfere with that if she wants to trash talk about the game. He gets that she's a Boston fan, but if she's basically dating a Metro, she should support them.

But maybe it's some sort of weird foreplay for them. He doesn't need to get it.

"Lily's texting!" Hayden says, mostly to tease Shane. Shane quickly rushes to his phone and picks it up, and there's a smile on his face. Yeah, he's definitely into that, it's so weird.

"Who is Lily? And what is she saying?" J.J. butts in, appearing beside Hayden. He loves to rib on Shane whenever he gets the chance. Shane had taken a while to learn that it's a language of love within their team, and he's never been great at quipping back, but he takes it better now.

"Just about the game," Shane says, and Hayden thinks it's interesting that he leaves out how she'd been telling them they'd lose. And seemingly betting sexual favors on it. "Wishing me luck."

Hayden considers spilling the secret, that Boston Lily is a Raiders fan, but he doesn't. He gets why Shane wants to keep that a secret. The guys would be relentless about it.

But soon enough they're given their five-minute warning. Then they head out onto the ice, and all hell breaks loose.

Shane is rushed off to the hospital, and Hayden barely keeps his cool as he plays the rest of the game, and plays it hard, even with his hand hurting from his fight with Marleau afterwards. He won't let them lose after Shane went down so badly. They barely scrape it out, and it feels wrong to celebrate, not with their captain injured.

Hayden doesn't get any updates, not from the coaches or from Shane's parents, who he knows have his number these days. He considers calling them, but they're probably stressed as hell, so instead he gets the name of the hospital and decides to go there so that Shane has someone waiting for him when he wakes up. If he hasn't woken up yet. *Shit*, he hopes Shane wakes up soon. He has to be fine. They can't do this without their captain, and Hayden doesn't want anything bad to happen to his best friend.

He puts Shane's clean clothes into his bag, and his keys, and then grabs his phone. On it is a thread of missed text messages, all from *Lily*. When he clicks on them, the thread expands and shows him all of the messages.

FUCK

you better be okay

call me

I know you don't have your phone with you but

what the fuck am I meant to do?

call me as soon as you can

please be okay

please, Shane.

The first one had come in just after the game ended, probably around when Hayden got into the locker room, and the last just a few minutes later.

Hayden should just close the phone, put it in his bag, and give it to Shane at the hospital. He really should. He has no reason he should get involved with the whole Lily business, especially when Shane has always kept her so private.

But he knows what he'd want someone to do for Jackie if she wasn't already going to be told by the hospital. He can see the desperation in those messages, and, well, he's accidentally seen Shane's passcode before. It's the same one as his front gate. 1919.

He doesn't know whether to text or call. But he figures calling is easier; that way he can just explain who he is and figure out a way to get Lily to the hospital, if she's in town for the game.

Hayden presses the call button.

It goes through four rings, and then picks up. The person at the other end of the line doesn't speak, and that's a little weird, but Hayden starts talking anyway.

"Hi, is this Lily?" There's no response. It was a stupid question anyway, he knows who this is. Well, doesn't know, apart from the first name. God, what if there's something else weird behind why Shane is hiding his relationship? Is she married? Is she a hooker? Not that it'd be

bad if she was, just that it might make more sense than just the fact that they're long-distance and she's a Raiders fan. Still, he keeps talking. "This is Hayden Pike, Shane's teammate? I know you don't know me, but I know Shane cares about you, so I thought I'd call..." There's still no response, but there's some background noise. Is she still in the stadium? "I'm about to head to the hospital, I thought if you're still here, I could drive you, or something." He figures that since she's from Boston, she's probably here without a car. "If you want."

The line hangs up. Fucking weird.

The text chat to Lily is still open, and the typing bubbles pop up only a moment later.

I can't do that. appreciate the offer.

Then, a few moments later: *have you heard anything?*

Hayden texts back: *Nothing yet. But I don't mind taking you. I promise I won't judge whatever the situation is.*

The typing bubbles pop up, then disappear, then return. He's about to head out when they come back.

it is okay. please let me know when you hear anything? or when he is awake?

The tone of the texts only makes Hayden's curiosity stronger, but he doesn't pry any further.

and don't read our texts.

Hayden almost laughs. After what he's seen in the past, he really doesn't want to.

I'll let you know. I'm going to put your number in my phone so I don't have to keep using Shane's.

Hayden does just that, and texts a quick *It's Hayden* from his phone to Lily's, getting a thumbs up in response. He puts Shane's phone in his pocket and makes his way to the hospital.

It's probably a good thing Lily isn't with him, because he isn't allowed to see Shane at all that night anyway. He meets Yuna and David when they arrive in the waiting room, and then the nurse tells them his condition. Only his parents are allowed to see him. Hayden goes home with a plan to meet his parents at the hospital the next morning so he can visit before they take him back to their home in Ottawa.

He's fine, he texts Lily before leaving the hospital. *Fractured collarbone and a concussion. Dazed but he'll be alright. They didn't let me see him tonight, but he's in the Regional hospital, floor 2, room 219. They might let you see him tomorrow.*

Lily doesn't reply for a while, not until he's already home, but when she does, it's just a simple *thank you*.

No worries, he texts back, and then, because it's been a long night and he can't help himself: I know you make him happy.

I do? Comes the reply. It makes Hayden frown a little. It's strange, that she'd question that, when the two of them clearly have something solid going on. Even though Shane said they'd never defined things, Hayden already thinks of them as a couple. If it weren't for the distance, they would be.

Yeah, Shane never smiles at anything like he does your texts. And he's always in a better mood after seeing you. Boston's his favorite place to play for a reason.

Maybe it's too much information, maybe it's too much meddling, but Hayden wants his friend happy, damnit.

do not tell him this, but he makes me happy as well.

Hayden smiles a little. Their relationship is so... weird, but Hayden can't help but be a little fond of Boston Lily, for all the smiles he's seen on Shane's face over the years.

Of course. Then, he offers again. *If you need someone to get you to the hospital tomorrow, I'm happy to drive you. I'm going to visit again in the morning before practice.*

There's no response for a while, then.

what time?

I'm meeting his parents there at ten. They should be gone until then. They needed some time to make sure everything was okay in his house and to get breakfast. And Hayden has to deal with the long morning routine that's involved when you have three small children. He's also not sure when Shane will even be awake to see anyone.

There's no response at all, no typing bubbles, and eventually Hayden puts down his phone for the night.

It's actually a little after 9:30 by the time he finishes up everything he needs to with the kids, kisses Jackie on the cheek, and heads to the hospital. As he walks in the front door, he gets a text and glances at it.

just visited with him. thank you again.

He starts typing back a response as he waits for the elevator. It comes, but there's someone on it, so he hangs back to let them exit, and—

“Rozanov?” he blurts out, unable to contain his surprise.

The last thing he expected to see this morning is Ilya Rozanov walking out of the elevator.

Rozanov's eyes flick up to him from his phone, and Hayden thinks he sees a flash of panic in them, quickly overlaid by a carefully neutral expression. Soon it's almost a sneer.

“Pike,” he says, disdain in his voice.

“What the hell are you doing here?” Hayden remembers to lower his voice a bit. The elevator door closes behind Rozanov as the two stare at each other, luckily not in the way of anyone else.

“Here as team captain,” Rozanov says. His voice sounds a little strained, and Hayden frowns. There’s something he can’t quite place, but something’s weird about Rozanov. Weirder than usual. “Courtesy after bad injury.”

It sort of is, but it’s not required, and with a rivalry like Shane has with Rozanov, he didn’t exactly expect it.

“Right,” he says. Then he remembers his text with Lily. He must have just missed her. *Of course*, he’s already typed, and he hits send on it.

Rozanov’s phone dings only a second later.

It takes Hayden a second to start to put it together, and even then, he’s not sure if his brain is just fucking with him. Rozanov glances at his phone, but Hayden is staring at him. He knows he looks a little insane.

Ilya Rozanov. Ilya... Lily. Boston Lily. Ilya. Ilya Rozanov. Captain of the Boston Raiders. Holy shit.

“Holy shit,” he says out loud.

Rozanov, for his part, does a pretty good job of acting oblivious.

“Okay,” he says, as if Hayden is losing his mind. Then he turns as if to leave, but Hayden just takes a step towards him.

It’s not just the text. The text could have been from someone else. But everything, altogether, it just... Hayden could be way off base here. Maybe it’s just the stress and being tired and a coincidence. But the way *Lily* had acted, not even able to talk back into the phone yesterday when Hayden had called. And refusing to be picked up by him, saying she *can’t do that*. Why else would she not be able to do that, unless... unless she was fucking Ilya Rozanov, who of course wouldn’t be able to do that!?

“Rozanov,” Hayden says again, and even he can see how Rozanov is carefully keeping any emotion from his face. “We need to talk.”

“About what?” Rozanov says, sounding almost bored, and then rolls his eyes. Fucking asshole. But hadn’t Shane just said yesterday that it’s an act? How would Shane know that, if not for... fucking hell. “I have plane to catch. See you next time we beat you.”

Rozanov turns and starts to leave, and Hayden knows he can’t just let him go. He doesn’t know why, but he knows he has to do something about this. He just doesn’t know what. Rozanov isn’t going to listen to him, and there’s a chance he *could* be wrong, but...

Well, there's one way to prove it.

Hayden gets out his phone, already on the screen with Lily's texts. She'd seemed so sweet when he'd talked to her. Maybe this is all just a coincidence. Maybe she'd already left by the time she'd texted.

He presses the call button.

After the first ring, Rozanov stops in place as his phone starts going off. He turns around slowly, looking at Hayden, and Hayden sees a hint of panic in his eyes again. He almost sort of feels bad for putting it there.

They're at a stalemate, for a moment, as another ring goes by. Hayden knows if Rozanov lets it go through, Hayden will get his voicemail. That's why he'd picked up the night before. But if he answers, it's just as damning.

Hayden keeps the eye contact as they both endure yet another ring.

Rozanov says something in Russian that is certainly an expletive, and denies the call. Hayden only has a moment to hear *Hi, this is Ilya*— before Rozanov is stalking forward, glancing around them to make sure they're still alone.

"You will never tell anyone about this," Rozanov says in a low, intimidating voice. Hayden throws his hands up. This isn't how he wanted this to go, though it's all been so much of a surprise that he hadn't had any time to build specific expectations.

Hayden shakes his head. "I wouldn't, man, seriously."

Rozanov looks skeptical, and angry, and scared. "It would not be good for you, if you tell." It's distinctly a threat, this time. "I promise."

"I get it, really, and I won't tell anyone," Hayden responds, lowering his voice too. "You can trust me. Shane's my best friend, I wouldn't do anything to hurt him."

Rozanov studies his face for several moments, and then steps back, and just in time, as someone rounds the corner into the elevator area.

Before Hayden can say another word, Rozanov is already leaving, and Hayden doesn't want to cause a scene by calling out to him.

Hayden tries not to appear weird in front of the stranger, getting into the elevator with them to go to the second floor.

And in the elevator, his mind starts to go back over... over *everything*.

If Lily is Ilya Rozanov, then every text he's seen from Lily has been from Rozanov, too. And, fucking *gross*, he thinks, before Jackie's voice in his brain tells him maybe it's not great to be grossed out about the thought of gay sex if he wouldn't be otherwise. But, fuck, the things he's seen, and coming from Rozanov... For years.

Years!

He gets off the elevator and just stands for a few moments, glad that nobody else is in the elevator bay to witness him.

All the sexting, all the texts about the game, that's all been from Rozanov? The weird foreplay of texting about losing and betting sex on it. Knowing that's been from someone who was on the ice with them makes it so much more... he doesn't even know what. He doesn't want to think about it. He doesn't want to start thinking about how Shane fucks Rozanov. Or Rozanov fucks Shane? No. Not thinking about it.

But every time Shane's smiled at his phone, too... that's been Rozanov. All the joy he's thought was caused by some girl in Boston was instead the captain of the Raiders. All those times Hayden has seen Shane checking his phone, ecstatic at a new text from Lily, has been Shane excited to talk to Rozanov. Rozanov, who they hate. He thought. Or at least, Hayden still hates Rozanov. Right?

But the time they'd been broken up, Shane had been distraught. The saddest Hayden has ever seen him. Nothing in him could want to do anything to hurt Shane like that again. Even if that means trying to learn not to hate their sworn enemy. He can still hate him when they play against each other, but, for Shane's sake...

He takes a few moments to shake himself, gather himself back together, before going in to see his friend.

Shane greets him with a bright smile, that seems to dim somewhat when he sees it's Hayden. Just Hayden. But he still smiles, and gives a little wave with his good hand.

"Heyyyy," he says, elongating the word, and yeah, kid's doped up on pain meds. Well, pain meds and apparently Ilya fucking Rozanov. Hayden smiles back, laughing softly.

"Wow, they've really got you on the good stuff, huh?"

Shane nods. "Yeahhhh," he says, and reaches up to rub at his nose. "Nothing hurts, it's great."

Hayden is glad for it. "So you're feeling alright, then?"

"Yeah, great," Shane says, still sounding like he's floating. "I know it'll suck, but it's fine now. Just want to get home."

"Your parents will be here soon, they'll drive you back to Ottawa so you can stay with them," Hayden relays, in case he hasn't been told the plan yet. Shane just nods. "I'll stay here 'til then, if I'm allowed."

"Awesome," Shane says. He sounds so... open. So unlike he usually does.

Hayden pulls a chair up. "I have your phone," he says. "But I don't think I'm allowed to give it to you. Just wanted to warn you that I texted Lily from it. And told her you're here." He swallows. He hates to lie, but the immediate worry on Shane's face has him quickly covering

it up. This isn't the time. "I didn't meet her, just told her where you are. She said she came to visit?"

The worry slowly disappears, and Hayden's never seen Shane's face so unguarded. Normally he'd be getting very little from his expressions, but right now everything comes through.

"Yeahhhh," he says again. "Il— Lily was here."

"I'm glad she got to see you," Hayden says, and he has to think about that for a moment. *Is* he glad Rozanov came in? He still can't think about it. There's too much to unpack. He's not upset about the whole 'Lily being a guy' thing, but the fact that it's *Rozanov* is still hard to settle with. "She seemed worried."

Shane's face breaks out into a wide smile again, and he closes his eyes. "She was worried," he repeats on a hum.

If Hayden didn't know what he knows now, he'd be ribbing on Shane for being so whipped for this girl. But he doesn't know how to make a joke about it, knowing who it really is. Knowing what Shane's kept from him for years. Years!

"Yeahhhh," Shane continues, oblivious. "Good to see her. I was gonna— she was gonna come to my house, last night. Was gonna ask her something. Mostly pissed at Marleau for screwing that up."

Hayden's not surprised, except now he is surprised because he's having to rethink everything he's ever thought about his best friend and his relationship with Lily. Knowing she's not just some Raiders fan, but the *Captain* of the fucking *team*. That's a bit of context that he was sorely missing.

"What were you going to ask?" Hayden wonders. Maybe it's bad of him, to take advantage of Shane's state to get more out of him, but he can't help himself.

Shane hums again. "To come to my cottage this summer, when we get our time off." He sighs softly. "He... She said maybe. Maybe's good. I thought it'd be no, but maybe... can work with maybe."

Even *Hayden* hasn't been to his cottage, so he's shocked by the news. If Shane is inviting Rozanov up there, things are serious. Much more serious than he thought.

Hayden forces a smile. "That's great, dude," he says. "I hope she says yes." Does he?

Yes. For Shane's sake, yes he does. He'd seen how upset Shane was when the two of them were broken up. Even if the other half of the equation is Rozanov, Hayden wants to see his friend happy.

"Me toooo," Shane says, that happy smile still on his face.

They fall quiet, and then end up on other topics of conversation. Hayden is just glad for something he doesn't have to watch his step for. Then Shane's parents arrive, and Hayden

leaves the room with a wave, letting them deal with everything. He does remember to give Shane's phone back, making sure it's clear of visible notifications.

Then, because he's got too damn big of a heart, he pulls up his text conversation with *Lily* on his own phone. He shoots off a quick text, hoping he hasn't been blocked.

Shane's parents have his phone. They'll see any notifications that pop up. Just FYI.

There's no response, but he has to assume Rozanov gets the message, because he doesn't hear of anything bad happening in the time before he sees Shane next. They have a few days off, so he drives up to Ottawa to visit Shane at his parents' place. He's had dinner with Shane's parents several times before, but always in Montreal. They're fun, but kind of intense. Shane always seems buttoned up around them.

It's halfway through dinner that it comes out.

"And guess who came to visit Shane in the hospital?" Yuna asks, like it's the juiciest gossip in the world. Even though they're in their home, she still drops her voice. "None other than Rozanov. Ilya Rozanov!"

Hayden feigns surprise. "Wow, really? What did he want?" He looks over at Shane, wondering what his friend will say.

Shane seems especially nervous, but he just shrugs, finishing off a bite. He answers as if he's had to say this before. Multiple times. "He just came to say Marleau felt bad. That it wasn't on purpose. I get it."

Shane avoids eye contact and keeps eating, but he seems tense for a few minutes as his mother goes on about it being so weird that he'd come to see him, even apparently delaying his flight home for it. Hayden glances off to the side at Shane, trying to determine how he feels about this. But his face has once again gone back to its typical state of stiffness and unreadability.

Until Yuna brings up Scott Hunter.

"I mean, what did you think of that?" she says, after a few glasses of wine have gone down. They're sitting together after dinner, and Hayden can see the way Shane freezes for a moment before picking up his can of ginger ale and taking a long, slow sip of it. "Certainly very brave of him."

"Yeah," Hayden says, and it's not the first time he's thought about it. It's not the first time he's thought about how Shane must be feeling about it. Everyone's reactions to it, too. Everyone has been very carefully supportive where Shane can see it, but there were some *words* in the non-Shane Metros group chat that Hayden had taken it upon himself to shut down. He realized he doesn't care if people see him as a bit of a stick in the mud, if they're gonna go and be homophobic where he can see it. Especially with his best friend being, well... he had to say something. "Very brave. I hope his team is being supportive."

“Me too,” Yuna says with a sigh. She glances at David. “Have the team been saying anything about it?” She asks, looking between Hayden and Shane.

“Yeah, a bit,” Shane says. “I told you. Only good things.”

Only good things where Shane can read them.

“Well, I’m hoping Hunter is off social media,” David says. “It’s a cesspool on there.”

“Some people just aren’t quite getting it,” Hayden says, trying to make sure he remains neutral, not revealing too much, while letting Shane know he’s not going to be one of the dickheads. “About why it’s necessary to do something so... public.” He doesn’t know if *he* truly gets it, but he’s trying to understand. After all, he’d kissed his wife on the ice after they’d won the cup. Why shouldn’t Hunter get to do the same thing?

Yuna nods, and shrugs her shoulders. “I suppose, but it definitely couldn’t have been easy for Hunter to do that. And I’m glad people are talking about it, at least. It’s time for some change in the hockey world. I mean, he can’t be the *only* gay player. Right?”

Hayden makes sure he doesn’t look directly at Shane. “Yeah, of course. Maybe it’ll help more people talk about it.”

Later in the night, Yuna and David leave them to chat alone, going to their bedroom. Hayden’s staying the night because of the drive back home. As much as he wouldn’t trade his wife or kids for the world, it’s nice to have a night without them, just hanging with his friend. His in-laws are in town, helping Jackie out with the household. So he doesn’t even have to feel bad about leaving her solo with the kids.

But now that he and Shane are alone, he knows he has to come clean about what he found out. Hayden’s not a very good liar—he’s surprised he’s managed it as long as he has.

“I have to tell you something,” Hayden says. Shane looks at him, eyes widening just a little bit, before nodding. He gets a hint of a smile on his face, the way he always does when he thinks of a good chirp.

“Well, I know it can’t be that you’re having a fifth kid, since Jackie hasn’t popped out the fourth yet. Hayds, you know that you can’t get pregnant, right?” he says. Hayden smiles back, glad for some levity.

“Yeah, no, nothing like that. Thank god.” He loves his kids, and four is plenty enough for him. He’s just glad they only ended up with one set of twins. “No, it’s about when you were in the hospital.” Shane tenses again. His eyes dart away. “I’m sorry, man, I really didn’t try to find out, it just happened—”

“Find out what?” Shane asks, his voice suddenly tight.

“I saw Rozanov leaving. And I figured it out.” Shane sucks his lip up between his teeth, and Hayden’s quick to continue. “I know he’s Lily. I didn’t want to tell you while you were high on pain meds.”

“I’m sorry,” Shane says immediately, not even trying to deny it. He’s curling in on himself, not making eye contact, and Hayden can hear his breath coming a bit faster than usual. Hayden frowns. “I’m really sorry, Hayd, please don’t tell anyone, I—”

“Hey,” Hayden says, frowning harder. “Hey, man, it’s okay. I’m not mad at you. And I won’t tell anyone. I just couldn’t keep it from you that I know.”

“You’re not mad?” Shane says, slow, like he’s trying to piece it together. “That I’ve lied to you?”

Hayden slowly shrugs. “I mean, I sort of get it. I don’t *get it*, obviously, but... I’m not mad. Or, like... I get why you’d hide being gay.” He lowers his voice to say it. He doesn’t think Shane’s parents know, and he doesn’t want to be the one to tell them. He’s kept the secret so well for weeks now. “I’m good with it,” he’s quick to add. He’d thought more people thought the same, until seeing the reaction to Hunter’s coming out. He can’t imagine that’s been easy for Shane, either. “I’m not judging. And I won’t tell anyone, I promise. That’s yours to tell.”

Shane regards him for a long moment. “I’m still sorry for keeping it from you,” he says quietly. “I didn’t like lying to you, I really didn’t. It was just...” He sighs.

“Rozanov?” he guesses. “He made you keep it a secret?”

“What? No,” Shane shakes his head. “No, it was always going to be a secret, I just, uh...” He trails off for a moment. “I didn’t think it would be this big of a secret, I guess? For a while it was... it wasn’t anything worth telling about.” Hayden understands after a second. Shane always insisted it was nothing, because he didn’t think it would end up being so much more than nothing. His heart aches a little for his friend. “I can’t believe you aren’t pissed that it’s... about who it is.”

“I mean, sorta,” Hayden says with a shrug. “I can’t say I understand, but... I’ve seen the way Lily’s texts always made you smile, and how sad you were when you were broken up. I’d be a bad friend not to support you, wouldn’t I?”

Shane looks to the side, and Hayden sees tears in his eyes, but they don’t fall. Shane nods, and smiles a little, just a tightening of his lips with the tiniest upcurve. Hayden smiles back. They’re too far away, but he wants to give Shane a good slap on the back, maybe a hug. But, well, Shane’s still sort of injured, had just gotten his arm out of the sling. So he won’t.

“You are,” Shane says. “A good friend.”

Hayden feels a tightness in his own chest that usually only comes out around Jackie and the kids. “Anything for you, man. I mean it.”

It feels almost too intimate for the moment, and he looks away after saying it, but he sees Shane smile before he turns his head, and that in itself is enough to make everything feel right, again.

“He said he’ll come,” Shane says, and it takes a moment for Hayden to figure out the context. “To the cottage. After what Hunter did, Ilya called me and said he’s coming.”

“That’s fucking big, dude. Are you excited?”

Shane’s smile is soft, his gaze somewhere in the middle distance as he nods. “I am. We’ve never had... time together, really?”

It hits him all of a sudden that Shane will never be able to have a regular relationship with Rozanov, that he needs to bring him to his cottage just for it to be private enough for them to have time together, and it makes Hayden’s heart break a little. He will never *get* it, but he can feel for his friend for having had to hide his relationship for so damn long.

Hayden nods, trying to smile instead of feeling sad. “Do your parents know?” he asks. “I don’t want to be the one to accidentally spill the beans, you know?”

“No,” Shane says. “Nobody knows. Knew.”

Wow. It really dawns on Hayden that he’s the first person to find out about this, and completely by accident. He’s glad it wasn’t someone else, and kind of mad at himself for accidentally snooping.

“Your secret’s safe with me.” He’s gonna have to ask about telling Jackie, because he doesn’t like to keep things from his wife, but that will come later. Eventually, he’s gonna have to meet Rozanov for real, and learn to like him, for Shane’s sake. It’ll be hard, but he can do it for his best friend. “Love you, man.”

Shane seems to relax a little more. “You too, Hayds.” His smile is genuine, and warm, and things feel okay again.

End Notes

Thank you so so much for reading ! Please consider leaving a comment if you enjoyed, it really makes my day and encourages me to keep writing <3 <3 <3 Stay warm out there

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