Pike and Boiziau, Amateur Detectives

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Pike and Boiziau, Amateur Detectives

by gurlsrool

Summary

Usually, Hayden can accept that Shane's private life is none of his business. When he's at home waiting on four kids hand and foot, it's not like he's filling his days making deranged cork boards connecting Shane to every gay man in North America.

But on the road, he has nothing to occupy his time besides the occasional Skype call and cable TV. It gets harder to ignore the fact that Shane's swapping sweet nothings with a man he still won't let himself talk about.

Or: After the cottage, Shane comes out to his teammates but swears that he doesn't have a boyfriend. Unfortunately for him, Hayden and J.J. don't believe his lie for a second.

Notes

This one is like 70% show canon, 30% book canon. I'm leaning into being Ron Swanson at the family barbecue holding out the "I can do what I want" permit

It takes place in the fall of 2017, during the season following the cottage. There's like maybe 2 small references to lore established in The Long Game but it's overall not very spoilery

See the end of the work for more notes

Hayden likes to think he knows his best friend pretty well.

He knows after thirty seconds of scanning a menu if there will be something Shane can eat. He knows by the furrow of Shane's brow if he's beating himself up over a game or working through the next one.

He knows his breathing for God's sake, can tell when it's shallow enough that a panic attack is around the corner, deep enough that he's asleep and won't be bothered by Hayden's phone light when he pulls it back out.

So yeah, he knows that Shane has a secret boyfriend.

Admittedly, he did think it was a secret girlfriend for years—but that was before.

Before the September day when Shane finally emerges from his cottage to sit at Hayden's dinner table, eyes twitchy, downcast.

Jackie and J.J. carry on the conversation, but Hayden notices the way that Shane's shoulders scrunch. It's the same look he got when they first started rooming together and he wanted to ask Hayden to give him a heads up before showering in case he had to pee first.

"You okay?" Hayden asks gently.

"Yeah. I just. Um." Shane rubs a thumb over his own knuckles. He looks scared. Like, so scared that Hayden worries that he has something awful to share. That he has cancer or his parents have cancer or, oh God, what if he put in a trade request? Unsurprisingly, he says, "I have something to tell you guys."

The table quiets. Waits. And then, after some more stammering, Shane says those two words that clearly take every shred of strength he has: *I'm gay*.

Hayden immediately cycles through a bunch of emotions at once, like a speed run of the five stages of grief. Not that he's grieving Shane's perceived heterosexuality or anything, but wow. Shit.

It manages to blindside him even though it explains a lot. The secrecy, the shiftiness, the lack of interest in Jackie's friends who are all hot as fuck.

It never made sense to him, the way that he knows Shane wholly, but can't seem to suss out his type. Because his type is men.

Everything falls into place—except for the fact that Hayden didn't know. How did he not know? How did he miss this?

"Oh Shane," Jackie says, because he and J.J. both haven't said anything. One glance at Shane shows he's either going to throw up or throw himself in front of a moving car. God bless Hayden's perfect wife. "Thank you for sharing that with us."

She crosses the table to hug him and from there, Hayden and J.J. manage to pull their heads out of their asses long enough to say what they need to. That it doesn't change a thing. That they love him and support him no matter what.

And then finally, after all these years of pretending not to give a shit about Boston Lily, Hayden gets to ask, "So, who's the lucky guy?"

Because of course. This is why Shane's love life is a closely guarded secret, why he flinches at the mention of Lily's name, why he never brags about his conquests—beyond, ya know, being Shane.

So it's really confusing when Shane's eyes widen. "There's no…I'm not…It's not about a guy. I just wanted you guys to know."

Hayden cocks his head, because it's obvious that Shane's lying. But Jackie gives him a sharp look like he's being homophobic or something.

"Of course," she says. "It's hard to hide that part of yourself."

And sure, yeah. It obviously is. He can't even begin to imagine.

But a few minutes later, when J.J. starts talking excitedly about setting Shane up with a guy he knows from the restaurant circuit, Shane doesn't look excited by the prospect of getting laid.

No, he looks touched, but also vaguely ill?

Hayden focuses on being a good ally and forces himself to let it go completely, something he manages to do—until the season starts.

The thing is that Hayden knows the pattern. It's Shane Hollander, so even his sex life comes with a routine.

Shane texts Lily every now and then, and when they're in Boston, he disappears for a few hours to fuck her—him?—but ultimately comes back before curfew.

Very quickly, it becomes clear that this season is different.

Shane's on his phone all the time now. Like, almost constantly. He only half-listens to conversations on the bus, too busy smiling—*smiling!*—down at his screen. Sometimes he even laughs out loud, which is beyond weird to witness.

Hayden's not too surprised when he sees that the texts are coming from Lily. He kind of figured Lily was a guy if they've been hooking up for this long.

He is, however, surprised by the messages themselves. He's seen Shane's texts with Lily before. Not because he was snooping, but because for someone having a secret love affair, Shane's not very good at concealing his phone.

The messages have always been straight (pun unintended) to the point. A room number. An address. A devil emoji. Once, Hayden saw one after a brutal shutout loss that said: *Don't worry, I'll fuck you harder than you fucked up tonight*. Which, Jesus.

So Hayden's pretty fucking gobsmacked when one crisp October day in Buffalo, he glimpses a text on Shane's screen that reads: *I know. I miss you so much sweetheart*

Hayden can still hear Shane's shower running, so he has time to just stare at it, shocked. Granted, he always thought this thing with "Lily" was more serious than Shane let on, but seeing the proof is sort of maddening.

It's different now, because Hayden knows. He knows that Shane likes dick and he's fine with it.

Some of the other guys on the team have been weird now that Shane's shared with the class, but Hayden doesn't give a shit.

They still share rooms in cities where there's not enough for everyone to have their own. They still share a bus seat. They still share a shower in the locker room and Hayden doesn't flinch because unlike Comeau, he's not enough of a narcissist to think that Shane jacks off to fantasies of him.

So why does he still not know about this mystery man? Why hasn't Shane told him?

Another text lights up the screen: *Yuna just called me but I can call you after?* ♥

Hayden drops the phone. What the fuck? This guy's on a first name basis with Shane's mom? Hayden isn't even on a first name basis with Shane's mom! He still calls her Mrs. Hollander.

The shower stops so Hayden puts the phone back where he found it and sits down on his own bed, stares blankly at *Shark Tank* on the TV.

Shane comes out of the bathroom, towel slung around his waist. He checks his phone, smiles at it, types something. Probably that he misses this dude too. Maybe even loves him. Fuck.

"You know you can tell me anything, right?" Hayden blurts out.

Shane doesn't look up from his phone, but his face freezes slightly. "What, do you want me to come out again?" he jokes, which is good. It's nice he can joke about it now. For the first two weeks after coming out, he was like a skittish barn cat. More than usual, anyway.

Hayden doesn't know how to respond to that though, so he just laughs. He texts Jackie, who reminds him that Shane's private life is private.

Usually, he can accept that. When he's at home waiting on four kids hand and foot, it's not like he's filling his days making deranged cork boards connecting Shane to every gay man in North America.

But on the road, he has nothing to occupy his time besides the occasional Skype call and cable TV. It gets harder to ignore the fact that Shane's swapping sweet nothings with a man

he still won't let himself talk about.

It seems like a sad, lonely existence. Hayden can't help but wonder if Shane's adjusting to being out or if there's something more, something concerning that he feels compelled to hide.

It's not exactly hoisting any green flags that he's still keeping this guy so close to his chest.

"I'm gonna, um, go call my agent," Shane says. He haphazardly throws on some clothes and leaves the room. God, he won't even call this secret boyfriend in front of Hayden.

This is officially Hayden's breaking point. He waits thirty seconds, then charges two doors down to J.J.'s room, pounds on the door.

J.J. answers wearing a half-buttoned shirt that makes him look like a total douchebag, so he's clearly about to go pick up.

"What?" J.J. says. "Where's the fire?"

Hayden steps into his room. "We need to talk about Shane's secret boyfriend."

J.J. grins. "Fucking finally."

Over the course of the next two weeks, they string together theories.

The man is old. Like, in a nursing home eating meals through a straw old.

He's married. Married with two kids. Married with four kids (Hayden pushes back on this one, because that's a totally normal amount of kids to have, J.J.).

He's a Boston fan. Like, a hardcore one that can only come if Shane's wearing their colors and calling him 'wicked hot'. He's a Boston player. He's the mayor of Boston.

None of them sound feasible. It doesn't help that Jackie keeps telling him to leave it alone.

But he can't leave it alone—especially because when it comes time for their first road trip to Boston of the season, shit gets weird.

Hayden claims the bed closest to the window, sprawls out. Shane, meanwhile, doesn't move past the threshold. He looks like a vampire waiting to be invited in.

He doesn't head to the closet to dutifully hang up his game day suit, then unpack and refold all his clothes, starting with his socks and ending with his pants. Instead, he stares at Hayden, his bag still slung over his shoulder.

And then, he utters a sentence that would knock Hayden to his feet if he wasn't already lying down. "You can cover for me, right?"

"Sorry?"

“Like with curfew?” Shane shifts his weight from one foot to the other. Hayden stares at him. Shane averts his gaze.

“Yes?” Hayden says finally. “I mean, of course.”

“Cool. Thanks. Then I’m gonna…”

Then Shane…leaves? He turns out of the room they just entered, bag still in tow, and closes the door softly behind him.

Hours pass. Hayden Skypes his kids for a bedtime story. He watches a shitton of *Storage Wars*. He jacks off twice.

After the second time, he passes out. When he wakes up the next morning, the room is still empty, Shane’s bed still untouched.

Hayden doesn’t see him until practice—where Shane shows up late. Okay, fine, he’s right on time, but that’s a Shane Hollander late. He’s usually ten minutes early.

“Hey,” Shane says. He’s smiling. His shoulders are so low they’re practically on the floor. It’s unsettling.

“Have a good time last night?” Hayden shoots J.J. a side-eye. Obviously he texted him the second that Shane fled into the hallway like a man on the run.

Shane shrugs. Just shrugs! Then he averts his eyes, like if he looks away long enough, they won’t press him.

“Get up to some Boston funnn?” J.J. tries.

“Boston fun is an oxymoron,” Shane says drily.

One of the rookies that worships at Shane’s feet laughs, but Hayden can’t even muster a chuckle.

All he can think about is his brother. About the girlfriend he had in college who he never talked about, never brought home, because he knew that the second Hayden met her, he’d be forced to face the truth: that he had to end it.

Shane gets his gear on and charges out of the locker room ahead of them, walking with the same pace that he does when he’s avoiding follow-up questions from reporters.

“We need to find out who this fucker is,” J.J. whispers.

“Yeah,” Hayden says. “I think we do.”

The opportunity presents itself in New York.

They're at some gay bar where Scott Hunter's boyfriend works, and Shane's had two light beers, which is a lot for him during the season.

He's clearly feeling it, stretched out in the booth beside Hayden and J.J., across from Hunter and Vaughn.

Both their teams were invited, but only the five of them showed up, no surprise there. The bar is pretty chill, but J.J.'s charmingly turned down two men's advances since they walked in. Comeau would shit himself in this place.

"Shane Hollander!" A frankly stupidly gorgeous man who Hayden recognizes from his make out with Hunter on TV plops down in the booth. Well, he mostly plops down in Scott's lap. "I'm Kip. It's an honor to meet the man who attempted to beat up my boyfriend."

Shane blanches. They don't talk about the Scott Hunter fight. Hayden's tried, the whole team has, but Shane's always been tight-lipped about it. J.J. has a theory that Hunter has a gambling addiction and Shane lent him a million dollars, but it doesn't really hold water.

"Excuse Kip," Scott says. "He takes his WAG duties very seriously."

"We're using SAPs now, remember?" Carter says. "Spouses and partners. It's more inclusive."

"Okay, well Kip takes his SAP duties seriously."

"It's fine. I'm, um, sorry about that," Shane says, ever the Canadian golden boy.

"You don't have to be." Scott waves a hand. "It's part of the game."

"Yeah, and it was fucking hilarious." Carter grins.

"Part of the game?" Kip says. "That's so funny, I didn't realize it was *part of the game* to start a fight after you've already won."

"Kip," Scott warns, but the rest of the table falls quiet. Because, yeah, it's really not, especially for Shane who doesn't fight even in the worst circumstances. This Kip guy has a right to be pissed and confused.

"That's why I'm sorry. It was stupid anyways, in hindsight."

"Only in hindsight?" Carter asks, but he's still grinning. This guy's, like, unnervingly gleeful.

"No, I mean…" Shane has that look like he's about to share something personal. Hayden practically leans forward in anticipation. "I thought you were being homophobic to me."

"Sorry?" Scott's brain seems to physically reboot. Hell, Hayden's does too.

"I thought you were implying that you knew I'm gay," Shane says. Carter looks excited, but Scott just looks shocked. Jaw dropped, eyes wide, the works. "And that you knew…It doesn't matter. Obviously that's not the case. So...yeah."

Kip breaks the silence. “Okay, that’s the only acceptable reason to beat up my boyfriend. I approve.”

Shane cracks a grin, and Carter grins even wider somehow. “This is so cool! Are all the top players in the league gay? Maybe Rozanov will come out next.”

Kip snorts a laugh, mutters *yeah right*, but Scott clears his throat hard, his eyes still focused on Shane. “So are you saying…”

“I have to go make a call,” Shane says abruptly, practically fleeing the booth.

As soon as he’s gone, Hayden levels them all a hard stare. “This stays here. Our team knows and his parents, but no one else.”

“No one else in the league?” Scott asks slowly.

“No,” J.J. says. “And you better keep it that way.”

“Of course,” Kip says. “I have to ask though, is he seeing anyone? My friend Kyle would kill to be a WAG—SAP, whatever. Shane’s a little young for his taste, but I could see them together. Can’t you, Scott?”

Scott just hums, staring at Hayden like he’s eagerly anticipating Shane’s relationship status. His gaze makes Hayden suspect that he either knows something or is looking for a third.

“Can you excuse me?” Hayden says, half because he has no idea how to answer, half because he needs to make sure Shane’s okay.

That was a lot for him, Hayden’s sure. He’d asked Shane if he was planning on coming out to Hunter tonight, and he’d said no. Clearly it was a spur of the moment thing, and Shane doesn’t do spur of the moment.

He heads in the direction that he saw Shane go, ends up pushing the bathroom door open softly. He doesn’t step inside, too caught off guard by the sound of Shane’s laughter—his real one, not the one he fakes for the media.

“He’s not *that* old,” Shane says. He hasn’t seemed to notice the cracked door. Hayden’s about to say something when Shane adds, “can you just…I’m trying to apologize.”

Apologize? Hayden’s curious now. He shouldn’t eavesdrop. He knows he shouldn’t. But, well, he’s had a few beers himself and it somehow doesn’t feel like the worst idea in the world.

He keeps the door open a sliver, so he can’t really see Shane, but he can hear him just fine.

“I’m pretty sure he pieced it together—his face was like—yeah, okay. I guess that’s true.” There’s silence again, then more laughter. “Oh my God, Ilya, stop.”

Ilya. Ilya?

No. There's no way. He misheard. Or Shane's secretly dating another Ilya? It's probably a common name in Russia.

"I'm not gonna do that," Hayden tunes back in to hear Shane hiss. "I have to get back."

Silence. Then, softly, "no. No one's in here. Just me. Someone could walk in anytime though, it's not a single stall." Hayden swallows down his guilt. He's about to clear his throat once and for all, when Shane says, "fine. Just—hold on."

A rustling noise. And then, Hayden hears it. A stupidly familiar Russian accent cooing, "Oh sweetheart. You're so good at doing what you're told."

Holy shit.

Holy

shit.

Hayden quietly staggers away and yelps into his own fist.

The hard part isn't processing that Shane's in a secret relationship with his sworn rival and the biggest asshole in the league, potentially the world.

Well, that's a lie, of course that's a nearly impossible feat.

But even harder than that is convincing J.J.

"There's no fucking way," J.J. says for the fourth time, pacing around his hotel room. Hayden feels bad for whoever has the room beneath his.

"I swear to God," Hayden says, reclining in the desk chair. "I know what I heard. Like, Shane was giggling and shit. He called him *Ilya*, then he switched to speaker or something and Rozanov goes, 'Sweetheart, you're so good at doing what you're told'." He says that last bit in a Russian accent—or tries to. It ends up sounding more like if The Terminator had a stroke.

"But there's no fucking way."

"It makes sense though, doesn't it? He lives in Boston. His name's close to Lily's. And it explains why Shane hasn't told us anything about his secret boyfriend."

"His secret boyfriend Ilya Rozanov," J.J. whispers. "This is bad, Hayd."

"I know."

"It's really bad. Like, Rozanov's obviously fucking with him."

"Fucking with him?"

J.J. looks at him like he was born yesterday. “He’s playing the long game, stringing Shane along, then he’ll break his heart to throw him off his game in a major way.”

“He wouldn’t…”

It’s an insane suggestion. That’s Hayden’s first instinct. It’s convoluted, deranged, straight out of the made for TV movies his mom watches.

But they’re not dealing with a kind, rational person here. This is Rozanov.

With a jolt, Hayden remembers that old rumor about Rozanov fucking Vincent Lemaire’s sister their rookie season to mess with his head and ensure he wouldn’t be competition in the scoring race.

Hayden remembers every coy smile, every smirk, the way he twists the media around his finger, how he always knows the exact right words to goad players into fights and the penalty box.

“Fuck,” Hayden says. “What do we do? Do we stage an intervention?”

“No.” J.J.’s head snaps up. “He doesn’t know you know, right?”

“What?”

“Shane. He doesn’t know you know.”

“No?” Hayden remembers Shane leaving the bathroom ten minutes later, clearly more relaxed, which, ew. He rejoined the conversation as if nothing had happened. “No, I don’t think so. So what?”

“So.” J.J. grins. “We expose the fucker.”

It’s an insane plan.

Let the record reflect, if there ever is one, that Hayden’s aware of that.

The first phase is to drive out to Ottawa on a night Boston is playing there, which is batshit in itself.

Hayden should be home with his kids right now. Instead, he’s at an Ottawa nightclub trying his best to look inconspicuous in a baseball hat and sunglasses. It’s so dark he can barely see.

“This is so stupid,” he mutters, pushing his sunglasses down.

“It has to be this way,” J.J. reminds him. “Connors said Rozanov never comes out when Montreal plays Boston. He barely got him out tonight.”

J.J. didn’t tell Connors why they needed Rozanov at the club. He just worked his magic and now, they’re here. And Rozanov’s here. And so is Bridget.

Bridget, J.J.'s very, very chesty friend—not that Hayden's looking or anything.

"So what's the plan again?" Bridget snaps her gum.

"You seduce that guy." J.J. points at Rozanov, who's sitting a bit of a ways away from his teammates, nursing a beer and texting. He looks bored, but that doesn't mean much. Rozanov always looks bored, like the mere existence of people who aren't his own reflection inconveniences him. "And you ask no questions, because you love me."

She smiles. "Ilya Rozanov? That shouldn't be hard. Gimme five. Hell, give me two."

She takes off in Rozanov's direction. Hayden and J.J. set up shop in a dark corner, where J.J. props up his phone and gets ready to record.

"This is so stupid," Hayden says again. "It's not too late to just go home."

"We're already here! Come on. This will prove he's not serious about Shane. It's *Rozanov*. I don't know how he's faking it in bed, but you know he's not gay."

Hayden can't argue with that. Rozanov's slept with enough women to fill a stadium. Maybe two by now. There's no way he's anything but straight.

That's why he's spending his night off doing this. It's worth it, he reminds himself. For Shane, this Scooby Doo ass scheme is worth it.

He turns his attention to where Bridget's now flirting with Rozanov. J.J. hits record and they fall quiet. She looms over him, her tits practically in his face.

Hayden can barely see Rozanov because of the angle—until he stands, smiling, and places a hand on Bridget's back. Well fuck.

It's what they came for, but it doesn't feel like victory. His stomach sinks and when he imagines actually sitting down and showing Shane this video, it churns too.

Rozanov keeps smiling down at Bridget and guides her to the dance floor...right into the waiting arms of Cliff Marleau. Without a second glance, he turns on his heels and walks away, leaving the club completely.

"What the fuck?" J.J. says. "We need to follow him."

"Follow him?"

"Yeah! Maybe he's meeting up with another girl. Connors said he has an Ottawa chick in his rotation. Come on."

It's not like they can ask Bridget for intel, since she's happily grinding on Marleau now. Some secret agent she turned out to be.

So Hayden makes a split second decision to see this absurd plan through. He and J.J. hurry toward the exit in time to follow Rozanov's rental car out of the parking lot.

They drive. And drive. And drive. One hour stretches into two. Hayden would consider quitting this mission completely if it hadn't quickly become clear where they were headed—Montreal.

Rozanov parks on the side of the road ten minutes from Shane's house, near a grocery store. Maybe he's stopping to pick up food, even flowers. Maybe right around the corner, Shane's waiting for him. Maybe this is happening whether it makes sense to them or not.

In the passenger seat, J.J.'s quiet. "Maybe we were wrong," Hayden says, parking a few cars down and ducking his head. He's ready to pack it in and go home at this point. "I mean, a girl just brushed his arm and he came running to Shane."

"There's no way—" J.J. starts, but before he can finish his thought, there's a harsh tapping noise on the window.

J.J. screams. Hesitantly, Hayden rolls down the window.

"Why the fuck are you following me?" Rozanov barks. Which shit, yeah, that tracks. Of course he noticed a car tailing him across provinces. His jaw drops for a split second, then closes, hardens. "Pike? Boiziau? What are you…"

"Heyyyy," J.J. says. "We thought you might be headed to a cool club!" He pumps his fist up and down like he's dancing.

Hayden groans and Rozanov rubs a palm over his own face. "You know?"

"Yeah," Hayden says quietly. "We know."

Rozanov sighs, like he's put out. "Meet me at Shane's," he says flatly, then walks back to his car.

"*Shane's*?" J.J. echoes. It really is unnerving, hearing his first name leave Rozanov's mouth.

They follow him the last ten minutes to Shane's house. Of course he didn't go all the way there before confronting them. He probably thought they were paparazzi or crazed fans.

God, Shane's gonna kill them. Or Rozanov's gonna kill them. Either way, Hayden's ending tonight in a coffin. He'll miss Jackie and the kids dearly.

"What do we even say?" J.J. asks.

"The truth? Then beg for forgiveness, I guess?"

They get to Shane's house and hesitantly follow Rozanov to the door. "I texted him, but I'm not sure he saw," Rozanov says, punching in the door code.

The door code. To Shane's home. Where he lives.

He does it easily, like it's second nature to him, and pushes the door open, toes his shoes off right away.

He places them neatly on the rack, gesturing for J.J. and Hayden to do the same, as if they don't know the rules. J.J. scoffs, but they both comply. They're already about to face Shane's wrath, they know better than to add 'tracking dirt in' to their list of offenses.

"*Finally*," Shane calls from the living room. "The Thai place is closing soon. I was about to order and just let you eat it co—"

The smile drops off Shane's face when they enter the room, Rozanov at the helm, J.J. and Hayden trailing behind like two guilty children.

"The circus is in town," Rozanov says, sitting on the couch beside Shane. "These clowns were shivering out in the cold so I let them inside."

"Oh fuck you Rozanov," Hayden says instinctively.

"What…what's going on?" Shane looks between Rozanov, Hayden, and J.J.

"They followed me home from the club," Rozanov says. *Home*.

"What?" Shane practically shrieks. "Why? I—from Ottawa?"

"Yes. From Ottawa." Rozanov cocks an eyebrow at them. "Your friends have very sad love lives so they are too invested in ours."

"That's not—" Hayden starts.

"We just—" J.J. says.

Rozanov sighs. "I'm going to order dinner. Extra chicken satay tonight, yes?"

Shane nods and Rozanov *kisses him on the temple* before standing to his feet. He tosses Hayden and J.J. a glare that almost looks like a warning before leaving the room.

"What is this, guys?" Shane says when he's gone. He's folded in on himself, like if he scrunches up far enough, he'll disappear.

"I heard you on the phone with Rozanov," Hayden says. "And we came up with this…plan."

"Plan?"

"We wanted to show you that he's just pretending to like you to get in your head, fuck up your game. So we had a woman hit on him at the club tonight," J.J. says.

"But he wasn't interested!" Hayden adds, as if that makes it better somehow.

Shock flashes on Shane's face—then, it settles into a look that Hayden's never seen directed at him, only at opponents. Rage. "Right, okay. Because, what? I'm too boring for my boyfriend to actually be into me, it has to be some villainous ploy? Or am I too ugly, is that it?"

“No,” Hayden says quickly. “No, it has nothing to do with you, I promise. It’s just…is Rozanov even gay?”

“I am bisexual,” Rozanov says, sweeping back into the room. “Do I have to explain that word to you? Is it too big for your tiny little brains?”

“Oh shut up—obviously I know—“ Hayden starts. Except, no. He didn’t really consider that at all. Shit.

“Food will be here in fifteen,” Rozanov says softly to Shane.

“Did you get the—“

“Yes, I got your stupid lettuce wraps.” Rozanov rolls his eyes. God, he knows Shane’s Thai order, down to those tofu lettuce cups he’s so obsessed with. This is real.

“How long has this been going on?” Hayden asks.

“We only became official this summer,” Shane says. “But, um, unofficially…since…”

“It’s okay, Shane,” Hayden says, meeting the fear in Shane’s eyes. “I know he’s Lily. I know it’s been awhile.”

And Hayden means it—but he still audibly gasps when Shane drops his gaze and says, “Um. Since our rookie season.”

“No. Summer before.”

Shane shoves Rozanov’s side lightly, then settles into it, his body unfurling little by little.

“What the fuck?” J.J. says, narrowing his eyebrows. “Why didn’t you tell us?”

Rozanov laughs. “Hmm, yes, I wonder. Why not tell them, Shane? They’re so accepting. They just followed me to a club to, what? What was your plan again?”

“We thought if Bridget hit on you—“

“Wait, you told that woman at the club tonight to hit on me?” Rozanov asks. Hayden nods and Rozanov laughs even harder. He doubles over laughing, the little shit. “Women throw themselves at me all the time. What a waste of money.”

J.J. scoffs. “We didn’t pay her. She’s a friend. It was a favor.”

Rozanov stares at him like he’s insane, which is honestly fair.

“We shouldn’t have done that,” Hayden says. “I’m sorry, Shane.”

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you guys.” Shane’s eyes are overshadowed by his lashes, like they always get when he’s about to cry.

“No,” Rozanov says brusquely. “No, Shane, look at me.”

He reaches out and tilts Shane's chin up, his fingers gentler than Hayden's ever seen them. "I should have…" Shane mumbles.

"Of course you did not tell them. Look how they reacted," Rozanov says, shooting them another glare.

"Look, I'm sorry we overstepped, but we were worried," J.J. says. "We've all heard the rumors about you and Lemaire's sister."

"Ugh, this again? Is so insulting. I slept with Lemaire's sister because she was hot. Not to throw off his game. I don't need sex to win. Unlike you, I'm very good at hockey."

"Okay, fine," J.J. says. "Say you're not trying to fuck with Shane—"

"I'm not. I just like fucking him."

"Ilya."

"This. This is what I don't get," J.J. says. "Like, what do you see in this guy?"

"I'm hot," Rozanov says. "I'm rich. And maybe you already forgot since you are very slow, but I'm good at hockey."

"But—"

"He's good to me." Shane darts his chin out with all the defiance he carries on the ice. "I know you might not see it, but he's sweet. We take care of each other."

"Sweet? You're going to ruin my reputation, Hollander," Rozanov says, but he's smiling. It's a smile that Hayden's never seen from him before. Not cocky, just…fond?

"Okay. So what's the plan?" Hayden asks.

"Plan?"

"You have to keep this huge secret and you live in different countries. That sucks." He offers Shane a sympathetic smile—or attempts to, at least.

"That's temporary," Rozanov says. "Next season, I will become the first ever interesting Canadian."

"What?" J.J. manages when Hayden fails to.

Hayden goes through the options in his head, but none of them make sense. Montreal's out of the question. They wouldn't be able to afford Rozanov and him and Shane on one team sounds like a shitshow.

Vancouver and Edmonton are even further away. Toronto maybe? The distance is about the same though and it's not like they're hurting for a star center.

Ottawa is, but Rozanov would never sign with them. They're awful. Like the Mighty Ducks, but at the beginning of the movie before they get good.

But Hayden has apparently entered some sort of alternate universe, because Rozanov says, "Once my contract is up, I am going to sign with Ottawa."

Hayden can't help it. A bark of laughter escapes him. J.J.'s so stunned that he sinks into the couch. Hayden joins him.

"There's no way you're signing with Ottawa," Hayden says. "Ottawa sucks."

"They won't next season," Rozanov says. "They will have Ilya Rozanov."

"Even you can't save Ottawa, man," J.J. says. "They're abysmal. Why would you sign with them?"

"My boyfriend lives nearby. Are you naturally this dumb or were you dropped a lot as children?"

Shane offers another warning word, but Hayden barely hears it. He's too busy reeling.

There's a good chance that Ilya Rozanov will never win a Cup again. He should be delighted by this fact. And okay, maybe a tiny, bitter part of him is.

But he mostly feels a sudden flood of warmth. This guy loves his best friend. Evidently, he loves him a lot.

"So this is serious," Hayden says.

"No, very casual. I think I will find out where busty Bridget from the club lives, move for her next contract."

"Busty?" Shane whispers, and Ilya whispers something back in *Russian* that makes Shane laugh. Because Shane knows some Russian now, apparently.

He supposes that answers that. Oh God. He's going to be the best man at a wedding to Ilya Rozanov. And he doesn't totally, completely hate the idea.

"Alright," Hayden says. "Fine. I approve. I'm sorry you felt like you couldn't tell us. That's on us. But I'm happy you're happy."

"Oh you approve?" Rozanov says. "We have daddy's blessing? Thank God, now I will be able to sleep tonight."

"Can you just be serious for, like, two seconds?"

"He can't," Shane says. "But thank you. That means a lot, Hayd."

Hayden nods and elbows J.J.'s side. Hard.

“Fine,” J.J. grumbles. “It’s fine. But if you ever change your mind, I know plenty of nice guys…”

“I’m good,” Shane says shortly. The doorbell rings and Shane stands, goes to get their food, leaving them alone with Rozanov.

Hayden expects another wisecrack, but instead Rozanov looks right at them and says, “You need to really be okay with this.”

“Dude—” J.J. starts.

“No,” Rozanov cuts him off. “I do not care if you hate me. I hate you both, so no problem. But for some reason, Shane does not hate you. He is going to have a panic attack the second you leave. He is very scared. He needs you to be okay with this.”

Hayden’s shocked that Rozanov noticed Shane’s anxiety, always lurking right beneath the surface. Maybe he shouldn’t be. After all, it’s been nearly a decade.

“We’re both gonna need time to process,” Hayden offers, “but we’ll keep it to ourselves. We love Shane. We’re always here for him.”

"Yeah," J.J. says after a moment. "Anything for Shane."

“Good. If I find out you are giving him trouble, any trouble at all, I will kill you,” Rozanov says so earnestly that it chills Hayden. A second later, his eyes soften, his lips lifting into a smile. Without turning his head, Hayden knows that Shane’s re-entered the room. “Everything there?”

“Yeah. You got Pad Thai?”

“Yes. You need carbs. Or are you a rabbit?"

Shane scoffs, then scans the couch anxiously, like he just realized he left them alone with Rozanov. “All good?”

“Of course. We were bonding,” Rozanov says. “What were you saying, Pike? Oh right, he was telling me that they are going to leave now, because he understands we haven't had sex in weeks. Smart man.”

“Ilya.”

Rozanov pouts. "What? Your friends don't want you to wait another second to get fucked by your gorgeous boyfriend. Is very nice of them."

"You guys can stay if you need to talk about this more," Shane says. "We have plenty of food..."

"Shane, no. The food is fuel so we can fuck all night!"

"Okay, yeah, we should go.” Hayden stands abruptly. Partially because wow he doesn't want to hear another word, but partially because now that he has the brain capacity for it, he feels bad that they’ve interrupted such a domestic scene. All things considered, Rozanov’s been nice. If someone disturbed Hayden’s post road trip tradition of pizza and sex with Jackie, he’d stick a fork in their eye. “We can ask all our questions later. We still have a lot to talk about, obviously. Like…Scott Hunter?”

“Long story,” Shane says.

“Right. But you guys should eat. We shouldn’t intrude.”

“Intrude? Never,” Rozanov says. “You just go to Ottawa night clubs on random Tuesdays for fun, yes?”

“Sorry again. Wanna do breakfast tomorrow, Shane?”

“Let’s do lunch,” he says. Right. Because his boyfriend will still be here in the morning. In his bed. His boyfriend Ilya Rozanov. Totally.

Shane walks them to the door, his fingers tapping against his thigh. "Okay, um. I'll see you tomorrow. Maybe we can do your place, Hayden? So we don't have to worry about being overheard? I can pick up sandwiches from that deli you like."

"Yeah, totally." Hayden lingers in the doorway, staring at his best friend who looks about two seconds away from crumbling. So he does the only thing he can think to. He lunges forward and wraps his arms tight around him.

Shane lets out a soft squeak of surprise. "Oh," he whispers, hesitating before ultimately hugging him back.

"I’m happy you finally worked things out with Boston Lily," Hayden says. "Seriously.”

“Oh," Shane says again, like he's stunned. Like he didn't expect to make it out of this and still be loved. Fuck. "Thanks. I am too.”

Finally, Shane closes the door, leaving Hayden and J.J. on his doorstep, breathing in the night air.

“Shit. Can you believe any of that just happened?” J.J. says.

“Not really." Hayden glances at the closed door behind them, thinks of his best friend on the other side, tucked under Rozanov’s arm like he wouldn't want to be anywhere else. “But we'll get there."

End Notes

“Wait is this—“ Yes. This fic is loosely inspired by the Friends episode The One Where Everybody Finds Out. I felt legally obligated to write a “they don’t know that we know” moment

It’s also inspired by the official alternate ending of Heated Rivalry, My Dinner With Hayden. If you found yourself thinking “there’s no way that Hayden would think Ilya is straight and just messing with Shane”, I understand but I do have some bad news for you lmao

Thanks for reading! Comments are appreciated as much as Shane’s friends would appreciate him dating literally anyone else

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!