

pure, unadulterated loathing

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by [fonduebroski314 \(anon_carrots\)](#)

Summary

“Rozanov introduces himself to the rest of his family, and Hayden can tell that they’re all immediately charmed by his blue eyes and foreign accent. He feels like he’s going crazy. Is he the only one who can see past this guy’s slimy schtick?

There’s only one explanation. Shane has found some sort of magical Russian trickster god for a boyfriend and has fallen under his evil spell.

Hayden has to get Shane to safety immediately.”

It’s graduation, and Hayden Pike is on top of the world. He gets to spend his day with his favorite people—his wife and two daughters, and his best friend Shane.

His best friend Shane, who forgot to tell Hayden about his boyfriend.

Notes

► content warnings

Set in the future of this mafia!verse. You should probably read [meet me in the dark](#) for this to make sense. But you do you.

Yuna and David have met Ilya already here. One day I will finally finish the fic where Yuna meets Ilya for the first time... one day...

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

Hayden practically vibrates in his seat from excitement. He's so excited he thinks he might puke, and ruin his blue graduation robe and ceremonial hood. But he doesn't, because he's a grown man, and because his twin daughters would never let him hear the end of it.

It's the world's greatest cruelty that he's forced to sit quietly on the biggest day of his life—after his wedding, of course. The dean's speech seems to drag on into an eternity, and he tunes the guy's voice out so that he can lean forward and tap his friend on the shoulder.

“What?” Shane hisses in a whisper.

He barely turns his head, so that he can look like he's still watching the speech. Knowing what a hardass he is, he's probably actually listening, too. Although Hayden shouldn't judge. Shane's long hours of tutoring and meticulous class notes got him through his last couple of terms.

“Bring anyone special for the ceremony?” He asks.

He's brought Jackie and their girls, naturally. But Shane is private, notoriously so, and Hayden can't imagine he'll get any other chance to meet the people in his inner circle. It feels like fate that they get to graduate together now—Shane should've been one term ahead, but his car accident set him back just long enough for Hayden to catch up.

Shane scowls at him.

“Why do you want to know?”

“Can't a guy be curious about his best friend?” Hayden does his best to look innocent. “I only know your parents. Literally none of your other friends.”

“What, is this a third date, or something?”

“You're meeting the friend group on the *third* date?!”

“Shut up,” Shane says, rolling his eyes. But his lips quirk up and Hayden takes it as his victory. “As a matter of fact, I did bring my parents. A couple of friends, too.”

“Nice,” Hayden says.

Before he can say more, Shane blushes and looks away.

“...and my boyfriend.”

The bombshell news takes a second to register. Hayden's eyes bug out of his skull.

“You never mentioned having a *boyfriend*!”

If they weren't literally in the middle of their graduation ceremony, Hayden would be yelling. He settles for the sharpest whisper he can manage.

"Please don't be weird about it." Shane looks embarrassed.

"I'm not!" Hayden protests.

He pauses for a moment, trying to remember what Jackie had said about good words to say to support Shane, back when Shane had first come out to him.

"I respect you and I still love you as my friend."

"Jackie told you to say that."

Hayden shrugs.

"Guilty. But I mean it."

Then he shakes himself; eye on the prize, Pike!

"No, don't change the subject. What do you mean you brought your secret boyfriend you've been hiding from me!"

Their classmates are starting to side-eye them. Hayden knows they're probably dying of curiosity too. *Shane Hollander* dating someone? The man who left a trail of broken hearts across campus because his nose was so perpetually buried in a textbook that he never looked up to see who was talking to him? Mr. I-don't-have-time-for-feelings-I'm-studying? *That* Shane Hollander?

"I wasn't hiding him," Shane says, "it happened recently. During my... time off. And when I got back it just never seemed important, y'know? He's pretty busy."

"He hasn't been to a single one of your games!" Hayden says. "And never picks you to class. This guy sounds like an asshole."

For some reason, this makes Shane smile.

"He is, a little bit. But I like him that way."

Before Hayden can digest *that* statement, the dean calls their college up to walk the stage. Hayden and Shane shuffle into their respective spots in line, Shane in the front half and Hayden in the back. He checks his hair in the reflection of his phone like Jackie told him to, making sure it's not messy under his cap.

Shane takes the stage up ahead. Hayden cups his hands around his mouth and cheers, as he is honor-bound to do. What surprises him is the answering cheer from the stands—enthusiastic and loud, one bass tone rising above the rest. He's met David Hollander; this doesn't sound like him.

"*Hollander!*" It yells.

A smattering of chuckles echoes around the room. Hayden begrudgingly gives the guy a point in his book for being willing to make a fool of himself for Shane.

Shane freezes with a deer-in-headlights expression, before he schools himself into a picture-perfect smile. A camera flashes while he holds his diploma up, shaking hands with the dean. As he walks off the stage, Hayden thinks he throws a deathly glare at the stands. No time to worry about that, though, because Hayden's own turn to walk is coming up.

"Shane!" Hayden waves across the crowd. "Over here!"

He's holding Jade in his arms, while Ruby holds Jackie's hand, trailing behind. Shane is barely visible through the throng of people. Hayden fights his way through the crowd to reach his friend.

Yuna and David Hollander are immediately recognizable to him. Yuna's beaming at her son, snapping photos almost constantly on her phone. David nods at Hayden.

"Congratulations," he says, shaking Hayden's hand.

"Thank you," Hayden manages, juggling Jade with one arm. "Couldn't have done it without Shane."

Shane, who is smiling as widely as Hayden has ever seen him smile. His eyes are bright, cheeks flushed, leaning into the side of—

Hayden whistles. The guy is tall, clad in a close-cut designer suit. Blond curls fall artfully on his face, shocking blue eyes the same color of Shane's silk tie. His arm is slung around Shane, tucked around his waist.

He's struck by how open Shane looks. Unguarded. Carefree.

"Hey, bud," Hayden says, setting Jade down. "Not gonna introduce us?"

"Hayden," Shane says, finally noticing him. "And Jade!"

He squats down to greet Hayden's daughter. It always melts his heart to see them interact—Shane, who is awkward and quiet on the best of days, seems to be perfectly-suited to matching energies with his twin terrors.

"You are Hayden Pike?" A deep voice says.

Hayden looks back up, to see the blond guy sizing him up. He has a Russian accent; somehow, this is the most unexpected thing about him.

“You are shorter than I thought.”

Hang on. “What?”

“Shane makes you sound so much... bigger.”

Who the fuck does this guy think he is? Hayden scowls immediately. Before he can respond, however, Shane is standing again, this time carrying Jade.

“Ilya, be nice,” Shane says. “Hayden, this is my boyfriend, Ilya Rozanov. Ilya, this is Hayden, my best friend.”

Hayden crosses his arms. He’s not impressed at all. Rozanov smirks at him, as if reading his mind.

“I thought Rose was your best friend.”

“I can have multiple best friends,” Shane sniffs. “Right, Jade?”

“Yeah!” She cheers. “Me ‘n Ruby are your best friends too.”

Rozanov shakes his head.

“Shane Hollander, having multiple friends. Never thought I would live to see the day.”

“And what is *that* supposed to mean?” Hayden bristles on his friend’s behalf. *This* is the shit Shane puts up with on a regular basis? He almost can’t believe it. “Do you hear him, Shane?”

But Shane only sighs.

“Stop teasing, Ilya.”

He brings Jade around so Ilya can see her, and Hayden almost snatches his daughter back with bared teeth.

“Meet Jade. One of my goddaughters.”

Rozanov softens, smiling gently at her. “Hello, Jade.”

Hayden boggles. This is a totally different guy from before.

“Why do you talk weird?” Jade asks.

“Why is his face so weird,” Hayden mutters.

Jackie, who’s finally caught up, swats the back of Hayden’s head in reprimand before scolding their daughter much more gently.

“Jade! Don’t be rude.”

Rozanov laughs.

“Is okay. I do not mind. I am from a land far, far away, where we speak another language.”

“Like Mass-a-chu-setts?” Ruby says, sounding the word out slowly.

She’s been obsessed with saying it ever since she learned how to, even in conversations where it doesn’t make sense.

“You think I am from Boston, little Pike?” Rozanov says, kneeling to speak to Ruby. “No, further than that. Russia.”

He introduces himself to Jackie and Ruby in turn, and Hayden can tell that they’re both immediately charmed by his blue eyes and foreign accent. Yuna continues right on taking photos of all of them together, David smiling. He feels like he’s going crazy. Is he the only one who can see past this guy’s slimy schtick?

There’s only one explanation: Shane has found some sort of magical Russian trickster god for a boyfriend and has fallen under his evil spell.

Hayden has to get Shane to safety immediately.

He’s pulled out of his thoughts when Jackie rubs at the slight swell in her stomach. His hand comes up automatically to steady her.

“I’m going to find a place to sit for a bit,” she says. “Why don’t you come with me, girls, and let Daddy spend some time with his friends?”

The girls groan, predictably. Yuna swoops in.

“We’ll go with you. David looks like he could use a break from the sun. How does that sound?”

His daughters change their tune in a heartbeat. The only person they love more than Auntie Yuna and Uncle David (great-uncle?) is probably Shane. But Shane stays while their families walk away, smiling softly at Rozanov. It makes Hayden nauseous all over again, and not in a fun way.

“You’re good with kids,” Shane says. “I didn’t know that.”

“Mm,” Rozanov says. “Maybe I should get you pregnant, then. Want to see you plump and round for me.”

Disgusting. Hayden opens his mouth, drawing in an outraged breath. How dare he talk about Shane that way. But instead of being similarly upset as he expects, Shane... jokes back.

“I’d like to see you try,” he says, raising a challenging eyebrow. “You couldn’t handle all of that, Rozanov.”

Hayden has a hysterical thought. *Why are they so certain Shane is the one getting pregnant?*

He makes a strangled noise as realization sets in.

At the sound, Shane springs back guiltily from where he's been leaning into Rozanov's space. Blushes red to his ears.

Rozanov only curls his lips at Hayden.

"What are you still doing here, then?" He says, in that infuriating accent.

"This is *my* graduation too, motherfucker," Hayden swears. "C'mon, Shane, we gotta go talk to the other guys."

"Oh, sure, if we can find them—"

He grabs Shane's arm, towing him away. Rozanov follows easily with his long legs, still wearing that shit-eating grin.

They wander around the crowd for a while, greeting random classmates that pop up like the little fold-out drawings in Jade and Ruby's books. Hayden keeps himself close to Shane's side, glaring at Rozanov distrustfully. It only seems to amuse the man.

Each time Shane introduces Rozanov as his boyfriend, Hayden has to suffer through the same song and dance—eyes widen, lips part in delighted smiles, excited to peek into Shane's private life. Hayden tries to keep them moving before Rozanov can charm everyone with his wily Russian ways. It's a losing battle, he thinks. Shane most of all.

Finally, he spots JJ and Comeau together and waves them over.

"Geez! You know how long I've been looking for you two?"

"Ah, Hayden, Shane," JJ says, clapping Shane on the back. "I am glad we are finally free from this place!"

"Right," Comeau says. "I never want to see any of you fuckers again!" He laughs loudly.

"It's a miracle you made it in here in the first place," Hayden snipes back.

Comeau laughs again. "Shut up." His gaze settles on Rozanov. "And who the hell are you?"

Today is Hayden's graduation. He's been determined to enjoy himself, and that involves hanging out with all of his friends, all of them in high spirits. Making memories to look back fondly on in ten or twenty years.

But for the first time that day, Shane stiffens up. Mouth presses into a thin line, eyes wary. Gearing up for war.

It strikes Hayden that this version of Shane is more familiar to him.

Rozanov sets a steadying hand on Shane's shoulder, and some of the tension melts out of him. He takes a deep breath.

"This," he says, slowly, carefully, "is my boyfriend."

Hayden's lost track of how many times he's heard Shane say these words today, but this time feels different. He snaps his eyes to JJ and Comeau.

JJ pauses for a moment, before recovering.

"Hollander has been locked down at last, eh?"

He offers his hand. Rozanov shakes it firmly, eyes never straying from Shane.

Comeau stays firmly rooted in place.

"I see," he says, and an ugly expression spreads across his face. "Now that we're almost done here, you finally work up the nerve to air all your dirty laundry out."

Hayden is taken aback.

"What the *fuck*?" He can't help but say. JJ looks similarly shocked.

But Shane keeps his cool, despite the way his shoulders hunch minutely.

"If you have something to say, Comeau, you should come out and say it directly."

"I think I have," Comeau says.

Hayden's eyes ping-pong back and forth, watching the exchange. If there was ever a time for Rozanov to step in with his fancy suit and icy blue eyes, now would be it. He looks expectantly at the man, but Rozanov is silent at Shane's back, watchful. Calculating.

"Well, that's that, then," Shane says, with what appears to be a casual shrug. Hayden can see the tension along his spine, though. "It's graduation, Comeau. Let's go out on a good note. Don't be an asshole."

"I'm sure you know all about that," Comeau sneers, "what with your *boyfriend*." He spits it like a slur.

Blood boiling, Hayden balls his hands into fists. Comeau might be a friend, but Shane is his *best* friend. He'll start a fight in a heartbeat.

Shane studies Comeau for a moment, tilting his head like he sees something that Hayden can't. And then he barks out a laugh, suddenly and loudly. It's so out of character for Shane, even without how tense the confrontation is, that Hayden's jaw drops. Comeau seems equally thrown, watching Shane with confusion as the tension bleeds out of him with his laughs.

Only Rozanov looks completely at ease. His gaze levels into something warmer, and he smiles almost approvingly at Shane.

"God, this is all so pointless. I don't know what I was so afraid of," Shane says, still chuckling. "It's really not that big of a deal, Comeau. There are worse things in life, and all. I guess I should've realized that sooner." He straightens his tie. "Enjoy the rest of graduation. I'm gonna go find Rose."

Shane turns from Comeau as if he's nothing but an afterthought.

"Rose?" JJ perks up. "Who is that? So many friends today, Hollander."

"You wanna meet Rose Landry, JJ?"

"*The* Rose Landry? How? Where?"

"Wherever the crowd seems thickest," Shane says, and points at a thick knot of people swarming around an unseen focal point. "C'mon, let's go rescue her."

Hayden sees Shane's eyes meet Rozanov's. There's a split second conversation, and then Shane steps away gracefully. It paints quite the picture—Comeau, face ugly with disgust, Shane calm and controlled.

Shane walks away without a second glance. Hayden would love nothing more than to join, but he can't quiet the anger in his veins at Comeau. What a way to end their final term. He watches Shane go instead, before whirling around to confront Comeau.

Rozanov beats him to it.

"Gilbert Comeau," he says, practically purring around his accent. "I cannot say it is good to meet you."

He steps forward, into Comeau's space. Comeau tilts his chin mulishly in challenge. Refuses to yield ground. Hayden thinks maybe he should've. Rozanov is all sharp angles and golden curls, smooth skin and prowling gait. It strikes him that Rozanov looks *dangerous*.

"I didn't think Hollander would be ballsy enough to pull a move like this," Comeau returns. "What, now you'll clean up his sad little mess that he's not man enough to finish?"

"I am sure you finish in enough men for all of us," Rozanov says, and Hayden chokes on his tongue. Comeau's face turns a funny color. "No, I know I do not have to fight Shane's battles for him. He would not appreciate, anyway." He cocks his hip, and casually flips his suit jacket with the motion. "However, if he ever needs *trash* taken out... I am more than happy to oblige."

Hayden's standing at just the right angle to catch a glimpse of what Comeau sees. Which is that, under Rozanov's suit, he's carrying a gun. A sleek black handgun, tucked snugly into a buttery-smooth leather holster, somehow undetected by the security at the venue entrance. There is a *gun* at the ceremony and it's being carried by Shane's *boyfriend*.

A spike of shock and adrenaline rushes through him. *What the fuck?*

Comeau's face has now gone entirely pale, drained of blood. He opens his mouth, closes it. Makes a croaking noise.

Rozanov rebuttons his jacket. "So I think you should go enjoy your graduation, Mr. Comeau." His smile is more a baring of teeth. "And never, ever, come near Shane again." He pats Comeau roughly on the cheek. "Bye-bye, now."

Comeau turns and walks away woodenly. Hayden watches him go, slack-jawed. Regains his bearings and whirls back to Rozanov.

“What. The. *Fuck*.”

The Russian man raises an eyebrow. “Problem, Pike?”

“What—you—that’s illegal!” He exclaims, gesturing at where Rozanov’s gun has disappeared. “How did you get that in here?! Holy shit, I brought my *family*! Does Shane know?!”

Rozanov has the audacity to chuckle at Hayden’s outburst. “Calm down. Your family is safe, Pike. And of course Shane knows. No secrets between us. Except for the sexy ones.”

“I can’t believe my best friend is dating some kind of-of-” he casts about for the right words. “Shitty wannabe Russian gangster guy!”

Now Rozanov throws his head back and laughs fully.

“Oh, Pike, you are adorable.”

He waves a hand as if shooing away a fly, and Hayden abruptly notices several men in suits littering the venue space. They have their eyes trained on Rozanov, and appear to back down at his gesture, blending away into the crowd.

Hayden’s had enough of this clusterfuck.

“Okay, dude. I don’t know who you are, or what kinda shady shit you’re caught up in. But whatever you do, you gotta leave Shane out of it. If he got hurt, I would kill you.”

Rozanov sobers at that, looking at Hayden. It might be the most serious he’s ever seen the man, for the short amount of time he’s known him.

“Of course. If he got hurt again, I would let you kill me.”

Hayden blinks as he parses Rozanov’s meaning. “...Shane didn’t have a car accident last term, did he?”

He’s seen the scar. Hard not to, when their lockers are right next to each other. It’s a jagged thing, supposedly the result of shattered glass lacerating the muscle between Shane’s neck and shoulder. But from how Shane still sometimes winces when he reaches above his head, Hayden suspects that the damage runs deeper than what a minor crash could manage. He might not be as smart as Shane, but he’s still graduating with a master’s in science.

Rozanov lets out a long breath.

“That is not for me to tell,” he says, solemnly. “But Shane is right. There are worse things in life than one small man like Comeau.” Rozanov runs a hand through his curls. “However, I would sooner cut off my own arm than allow anything to happen to him ever again. That I swear to you, Pike.”

Hayden looks at him for a long moment, trying to gauge how sincere Rozanov seems.

“You better mean it. Shane likes you, for some reason. Like, really likes you. So don’t fuck it up.”

“You are good friend to Shane,” Rozanov says. “I’m glad.”

His voice is completely sincere. Hayden feels blindsided by the compliment. Maybe he’s been too harsh on the guy.

“Uh, thanks, I guess?”

“Yes, I will put you down as his fifteenth best friend.”

Pause.

“Excuse me?!” Does Shane know that many people? A voice in his head that sounds like Jackie’s tells him this would be a mean thing to say out loud. “You have a *list*?”

“Well, I am his number one, obviously. His mother and father, maybe equal, although with family it is hard to say. Then Rose Landry. After that I would say Emily the barista—”

Hayden takes back any goodwill he was feeling. He hates Rozanov.

Shane chooses this moment to make his return, JJ in tow along with a long-haired woman. She looks oddly familiar but Hayden can’t quite place it. His friend takes one look at the expression on his face, before turning and smacking Rozanov’s arm. Hard.

“Stop terrorizing my friends!” He snaps. “You promised to behave, Ilya.”

Rozanov hangs his head like a kicked dog. If Hayden didn’t know better, he’d say Rozanov was *pouting*. As if he were a snot-nosed kid instead of the Russian Godfather with a gun and suited guys menacing innocent civilians.

“Please, Shane. I was good, I promise.”

“Right. So how come I saw Comeau walking by like he saw a ghost? He wouldn’t look at me.”

“Hmm. I should have gouged out his eyes.”

“You won’t be gouging any eyes out today. Stop looking at me like that, you know it doesn’t work on me.” Shane crosses his arms as Rozanov coos endearments at him.

Hayden meets eyes with JJ and the woman. “This is the weirdest day of my life.”

The woman nods, sympathetically.

“Yeah. First time meeting Ilya?”

“Yup,” he says. And then, “*Rose Landry?!* ”

She sighs. “Yeah.”

“Rose Landry from the movies?!”

“Uh-huh.”

“Shane Hollander is friends with Rose Landry?!”

“Have been, for like, ten years.”

Hayden needs a drink. He needs to get blackout, actually. It’s his graduation day, after all. He deserves it.

End Notes

Hayden: shane you have to leave your boyfriend, i would never treat you like this

Shane: ??? You're married? To a woman??

Hayden: what does that have to do with anything

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Don't think I forgot about Hayden for this AU! (I forgot about Hayden for this AU)

Realistically do I think any of Shane's Montreal teammates would be in a grad school program? Or even Shane himself? Absolutely not. However, fanfic logic is beautiful.

Also, a non-explicit fic for this series? With (the tiniest hint of) plot? What am I becoming??

It was supposed to be fluff and humor all the way through but then I wanted Ilya to be mean, for non-sex reasons. And it felt unfair for Hayden to get threatened with a gun when his worst crime is being a little silly. Thank you for your service as a random low-level villain, Comeau.

This was also supposed to be a character study from Shane POV, before I decided Hayden would be funnier.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!