

He's My Best Friend

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He's My Best Friend

by [LuneFaitLaFolie](#)

Summary

“Hayden I’m gay.”

It’s said so suddenly and so fiercely it takes Hayden a second to register what he’s heard.

“Oh.”

“Yeah.” Shane replies

Or

How Hayden finds out.

Notes

I have not read the books, only watched the show, so please keep that in mind!
Russian has been google translated, and some OC players invented

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

Something was building.

Hayden didn't know *what*, or *why*. But this weird tension was building between him and Shane, and he knew they were creeping closer and closer every day to the inevitable crest of whatever shit show was coming.

It was almost strange, being able to tell something was going on without anything really happening. No one else on the team seemed to notice. But Hayden, it was just a feeling he couldn't shake.

It started around the game against Boston, when Shane hit the ice with such an audible thud Hayden's dad reflexes kicked in before the hockey ones did, and his fists went flying.

Though, if he thinks about it, he knows it started *before* that.

There was a while, *god*, a few years ago now, when it felt the same.

This same weird tension. It had seemed to crest every time Hayden mentioned 'Boston Lily'. Any attempts to get his painfully private captain to give him an inch of familiarity. Constantly feeling like Shane knew him inside and out. Knew about his wife, and his kids, his friends, what made him happy and what made him sad.

But Hayden had only known a few boring facts about Shane.

He loved hockey. He loved his parents. He loved ginger ale and healthy food.

And that was it.

Obviously, there was more to him, but that was the horrifically sad summary of it. And god knows he worried about the kid. So, as gently as he could, he'd offered open ended statements and softly prying questions into what his Boston Lily was like. How serious it was.

It didn't go well. *Clearly*. He *still* had not the faintest clue about *anything* about Boston Lily. Apart from she was in Boston and her name was Lily. Two facts which his wife *kindly* pointed out might not even be true.

But then Shane had gone on a stretch of 13 away games staying either in a hotel room on his own, or with someone else. Shane didn't even need to say anything, that was enough. Shane could have screamed in his face to stay at of his personal life and it might have felt less obvious.

Because *every* game since Shane was rookie, if there was a hotel room to be shared, they shared it.

And knowing about some girl wasn't worth losing his best friend.

He hadn't brought it up since.

But the tension was back.

Not just between the two of them. Also back in Shane.

The tightness in his shoulders and his smile. The avoidance of eye contact.

It ebbed and flowed.

Shane's weird retreat to his cabin in the woods seemed to have fixed everything. For a while.

He'd been the most relaxed and happy Hayden had ever seen him. But as practice picked up, and games and brand deals. Well, it crept in tenfold.

And then there were the *stares*.

The way every time they were alone, Shane was constantly looking at him like he wanted to say something. Like he was psyching himself up for something. There was a moment, half asleep on the couch with his wife, some rom-com playing quietly on the tv, that a thought crossed his mind.

The main characters were best friends, with one secretly in love with the other.

As quickly as the thought occurred to him, he had dismissed it.

Apart from the *obvious* fact of him being a man, so Shane *clearly* wouldn't be interested, he just knew it wasn't like that.

For a terrifying moment in the gym one day, while some of the guys were talking about players they feel had retired too soon, Shane had gotten a weird glint in his eye. A look Hayden couldn't quite place.

His heart had sunk to his stomach like a rock. Shane wasn't going to retire, *was he?*

But then someone else had asked someone else something, and in the back of his mind Hayden had heard someone else ask "You okay Cap?" and with an ease not forced Shane had shared how the whole conversation had made him think about how his injury from Boston could have looked a lot different.

The subject had been changed pretty quickly after that.

So not retiring, then.

It kept building like that.

Weird apprehensions and any guess Hayden had would inevitably be proven wrong.

But still Shane wouldn't *say* anything.

And Hayden wasn't going to ask.

And then there was the phone call.

They'd been playing in Seattle. Lost in overtime.

Morning flight out.

Hayden was almost asleep when he heard Shane step out into the hall. Could just make out the murmurs of a conversation. Ah, *the* phone call. A new common occurrence, Hayden had noticed. *Another* thing he wasn't commenting on.

He wasn't even sure if it was Boston Lily. Could be Rose Landry. *Though*, as Shane had reiterated more times than Hayden could remember. *Yes*, Shane and Rose had broken up, *yes*, they were genuinely still friends, and *yes*, he *did* love her. But not like *that*.

But the phone calls, almost every night. Hayden was sure, were not to Rose.

If Hayden focused hard enough, he'd be able to make out what Shane was saying, but sleep was pulling at him and that was far more desirable than whatever Shane was saying to whatever woman was on the other end of that call.

Until his subconscious registered Shane was speaking *gibberish*.

"Moy russkiy yazyk uluchshayetsya. No eto slozhno. Vy mne pomogayete."
My Russian is getting better. But it's hard. You're helping

Hayden opened his eyes, half expecting Shane to be asleep next to him, and his dream had just been that odd. But *no*, Shane's bed was still perfectly made, and Hayden could see the shadow of Shane under the door.

"I- I think I want to tell Hayden."

And then Hayden couldn't ignore it even if he tried.

"Of course your opinion matters. It's not just about me now."

Oh Jesus Christ, had his little Shane gone and gotten someone pregnant. *Was that it?*

"He'll *ask*. He'll know there's a reason I'm telling him. I don't want to keep lying to him, *he's my best friend*."

And that softened something in Hayden he hadn't even realised was sharp. Made him tear up a little, *horribly*. It also made him miss whatever Shane had said.

"Yeah I know, I have to be up in four hours for the airport. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

And then, confirming Hayden was in fact *not* going insane, *nor* having a stroke. Shane spoke more gibberish.

"Ya lyublyu tebya yeshche bol'she."
I love you more.

It had taken Hayden so long to fall asleep after that – no matter how much he pretended to be dead to the world for Shane’s sake. The alarm had gone off and he’d barely slept an hour.

It hadn’t been until three weeks later, when Sasha Nikolaev, number one defence of the Minnesota Mustangs, muttered something in Russian to Shane to rile his guys up, cocky smirk on his face, that it clicked.

“YA perespal s tvoyey mater'yu proshloy noch'yu.”
I fucked your mother last night.

Hayden caught what no one else did, not even Nikolaev. *Recognition*. Shane had *understood*.

Which Shane confirmed for Hayden five minutes later when he checked Nikolaev into the boards so hard it took him a good thirty seconds to get back up again.

Since when did Shane Hollander know Russian?

But nothing else ever came up from it, and for a reason Hayden couldn’t say, he didn’t tell Shane that he knew about the Russian thing. Somehow that ended up being filed into the same do-not-touch box as Boston Lily and the phone calls.

And no baby ever showed up either. *Thankfully*.

The day that Hayden figured it out, he thought he was going to start crying.

The whole team was at Hayden’s, watching the playoffs. Two games after they had lost, so the sting wasn’t *so* bad.

Boston vs Minnesota.

“*God*, Rozanov seems to have it out for Niko, something you two might actually have in *common* hey Cap?” One of the guys said, making him laugh.

“Nikolaev probably make bad comment about trade.” Misha, their soon to be newest rookie, commented.

“What do you mean?” Hayden asked.

“*You not hear?* Is all through Russian community. Ilya Rozanov not signing with Boston again.”

“There’s *no way* something like that would be happening without it being public knowledge.” Someone comments.

“You not know Russian players, like gossip and know *everything*.” Misha replied.

You could hear a pin drop everyone went so silent. One of the guys even muting the tv.

“*So...* Boston were stupid enough not to resign their captain, that has taken them to the playoffs *every* season he has played, *and* won them a cup?” JJ asked, shocked.

“No Boston do try, Rozanov become uh, how you say, uh *besplatno*...” Misha trails off.

“Free agent.” Shane chimes in. And it’s only from the shock of what Misha is saying, that no one but Hayden notices he’s translated.

“*Da*. He sign with Ottawa.” Misha adds.

Someone spits out their drink. If Hayden had been sipping his beer, he’s pretty sure it’d be out his *nose* right now. Everyone is collectively losing their shit. All yelling over each other, all trying to ask Misha far too many complicated questions far too fast.

“*Hey* – stop overwhelming the kid. English is a dumb enough language when spoken slowly. And properly.” Shane snaps. Captain voice full throttle. Everyone shuts it real fast.

“C’mon, surely *you* and your psycho hockey obsession can acknowledge how *insane* that kind of move is.” Hayden says, even grinning back to Shane’s mother Yuna. Hayden had invited both Yuna and David for Shane, so he at least had, *someone*.

“*It’s tactical*.” Yuna cuts in. Voice sharper than her expression.

It’s abundantly clear where Shane gets his captain voice from.

She rolls her eyes when no one seems to get what on earth she means.

“When Boston drafted Ilya, they hadn’t even come *close* to the playoffs in over thirty years. He got them in the competition in his *rookie* year. He didn’t just save a dying team, he’s made them *winners*. I could say the same for Shane and you lot, but I *am* biased.”

And that makes Hayden’s eyes flick back to Shane. He’s not looking at his mother. He’s looking at the tv, still watching the game.

There’s that look on his face again.

“The only thing is, Ilya Rozanov is the kind of cocky player who wants to say he’s done it *twice*. And he might very well be good enough to do it.” She finishes, gesturing to the tv.

Someone unmutes it, Boston have won. They’re into the next round.

But Hayden can’t tear his eyes from Shane.

The look in his eyes is *haunting* to Hayden. Because if Hayden was to name the expression on Shane’s face, it’s *longing*.

Shane’s going to fucking leave the team. *By choice*.

He doesn’t think he knows how to bring it up is the problem.

But then Jackie’s parents are over and so is his sister and there’s an adult for each kid and Shane is alone at his cottage and it’s only an hour and half drive and by the time Hayden registers what a fucking *insane* thing he is doing he’s already halfway there.

“Hey siri, call Shane.”

“Hey man what’s up?” Shane’s voice echoes through the car.

“I’m about fourty five minutes from your place man.” Hayden replies.

“*Uh*, I’m not home man I’m-”

“At your cottage. *I know*.” Hayden snaps. “We’re going to finally talk about whatever the fuck it is we need to talk about.”

“*Hayden*... we, it’s fine man we don’t *uh*, we don’t-”

“I’ll see you soon.” And with that, Hayden ends the call.

The fight leaves Hayden as soon as he pulls up.

Shane’s on the front porch, pale and almost shaking and his eyes are glassy. He half looks like he’s vomited, half like he’s had a panic attack. *Maybe both*.

The guilt rolls through Hayden’s stomach in a wave. And the nausea *sticks*.

Within a few seconds Hayden’s sure he looks almost as bad.

“Hey man.” Hayden says when he gets to the door, wraps Shane in a hug that he returns so half-heartedly it’d be funny if it wasn’t devastating.

It’s almost muscle memory that makes Hayden remember to kick his shoes off on the way in.

Shane ends up leaning against the open doorframe of the massive sliding doors. Hayden leaning against the fridge. He registers Shane has somehow made it that not only is there a counter between him, but Hayden is almost, trapped.

Like if Shane wanted to bolt out the door it’d take Hayden that extra-long to chase after him.

The thought does nothing to ease the storm churning up inside Hayden.

Insanely, he hopes for retirement first.

“Your collarbone giving you grief?” Hayden asks. His voice cutting through the silence so loudly they both flinch.

“*What?* No, my collarbone is fine man. Healed perfectly. *You know that*.”

“No lingering concussion symptoms that have flared up or..?” Hayden trails off.

“No. Just the usual post season aches man. *What...*” Shane says. Trailing off with a confused expression.

So, he is moving. Hayden doesn’t know why it’s devastating him so much.

It's part of the sport. *But still.*

"So where are you going?" Hayden asks, looking down. He's not sure he can handle seeing Shane's face as he tells him where he's going.

God, please not fucking *Boston*. *Anywhere* but Boston. Let someone else try and fill Rozanov's shoes.

"*What.*"

It's so blunt it's not even a question. It makes Hayden look up.

That confused expression still cemented on his face.

"Jesus man, *what team?* Where have you been traded, or *fucking*, if you went the free agent path or whatever the fuck. *Where?*" Hayden almost yells. Composure snapping like a rubber band.

Somehow though, Shane just looks more confused.

"*Hayden*, literally what the fuck are you talking about?"

Hayden can't help the frustrated groan.

"*Gee man*, take a fucking guess! This big elephant in the room we've been ignoring for *months*. You're leaving Montreal. *That's* what I'm talking about." Hayden snaps. Ignoring how his voice breaks a little.

Shane is looking at him like he's insane. Almost a ghost of a smile on his face.

"Hayden that is the *dumbest* fucking thing I have *ever* heard. I'm not going anywhere man, unless you know something I don't. What the *hell* made you even think that?" Shane trails off with a soft laugh, shaking his head.

Hayden is mirroring him, he realises. A small, relieved smile on his face, shaking his head at his own stupidity.

What made you even think that.

Hayden realises rather abruptly, that means there's still *something* that Shane isn't telling him. He still hasn't figured out whatever is going on.

The image of Shane shaking and pale at the front door is seared in his mind.

"Shane..." Hayden starts, eyes flicking back up to look at him. "If you aren't getting traded, then what *are* we talking about?"

Shane's expression changes so quickly it's like whiplash. His eyes dropping to the floor, his whole head down, so Hayden can't really see his face. He's shaking his head.

“You’re going to hate me.” Shane mutters with a self-deprecating laugh.

And that, Hayden doesn’t know what to do with that. He comes up with ten thousand scenarios and not one would ever make him *hate* Shane.

Shane’s his best friend.

The silence is suffocating. But he can’t seem to make himself break it.

Shane’s looking down the hall, staring at what Hayden knows is his bedroom. Lost in thought. Like he’s having a whole internal conversation with himself.

“*Hayden I’m gay.*”

It’s said so suddenly and so fiercely it takes Hayden a second to register what he’s heard.

“*Oh.*”

“*Yeah.*” Shane replies, but it’s almost more of a gasp, and if Hayden focuses enough, he can see the shaking creeping in.

So, Hayden slowly makes his way around the counter, slow enough that Shane doesn’t bolt. Gives his shoulder and squeeze, and wraps him in a hug.

“Thank you for telling me.” Hayden mumbles into Shane’s shoulder. And that gets Shane moving. Hugging him back.

And then Shane’s words actually register. Not that he’s gay- *no*. The ones before.

You’re going to hate me.

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you for-” Shane starts.

“*No*. No you don’t have to apologise. I’m sorry I stormed in here and made you.” Hayden says, cutting him off. The guilt lurching up his throat.

You’re going to hate me.

The sound of a car door makes them both jump apart.

Hayden turns to see David and Yuna climbing out their car.

“*Oh*, uh *yeah* sorry my parents um...” Shane trails off.

“*Fuck man*, sorry. I’m interrupting. I’ll go.” Hayden stammers out. Hoping his expression doesn’t show anything.

You’re going to hate me.

Do David and Yuna even *know*?

“Oh *Hayden*, I was wondering whose car that was.” Yuna says. And while her face has the same warm smile it normally does, her voice has that distinct sharp edge to it. He’s just not used to it being directed at *him*.

You’re going to hate me.

“Hi Yuna, David.” Hayden waves to them both. “I’ll get out of your hair. Just dropping some stuff off for Shane.” He hopes they can’t hear the wobble he can feel in his voice.

“You can stay for lunch Hayds.” Shane says, but his words are echoing in Hayden’s mind and he’s spiralling and he’d rather do that in the privacy of his wife’s arms.

You’re going to hate me.

“No, please. Spend some quality time with your parents. I gotta get back to the kids.”

After the three quickest hugs of his life and he’s out, barely remembering to put his shoes on as he goes. He shouldn’t even be driving, so lost in his own thoughts. A broken record on repeat.

You’re going to hate me.

He’d said it with such conviction, like it was *fact*.

You’re going to hate me.

He runs through his usual chirps, his snarks to piss off other teams and the full blown fight starting insults he uses regularly. Tries to twist them in every which way that Shane could have interpreted them. He comes up short.

You’re going to hate me.

He thinks back to that phone call in Seattle.

He’s my best friend.

What changed? How did it become...

You’re going to hate me.

He drives home lost in his head, half auto pilot half numb. It’s a miracle he makes it back in one piece.

He doesn’t tell Jackie. It’s not his place. Not his secret to tell.

But she can tell *something* is up with him once he’s back. Can tell it didn’t go how Hayden thought it would. She probably knows what happened anyways. She’s psychic like that.

He *half* tells her what happened, how David and Yuna showed up and how it cut off any kind of conversation they were having.

“He’d probably messaged them for back up, considering how upset you were.” She comments off handedly while watching reality tv and cooking dinner two nights later.

And it makes so much sense he feels like an idiot for not connecting the dots sooner.

“You should probably go back at some point and actually finish whatever conversation you were having.” She says over breakfast the next morning, helping the twins cut up bacon. Not even looking at him.

She’s right. Of course she is.

But he’s *terrified*.

He’s terrified that he’s already irreparably fucked his friendship beyond repair. This is his best friend. They’ve been close for over a decade.

What if he’s ruined it.

HP: Hey man. Should probably actually finish our conversation. You still at your cottage?

Hayden texts.

SH: Hayden Pike willingly talking about feelings? Did Jackie steal your phone?

The reply comes.

It’s normal enough that it gives Hayden a shred of hope he hasn’t fucked up *too* badly.

HP: Consider it a once off. But yeah, figured I’d ask before I come over.

Hayden watches the typing bubble pop up and disappear for five minutes. Before vanishing for ten. Before appearing again.

SH: Yeah okay. If you’re free today do you want to come round?

HP: I can get there by lunch?

Hayden replies.

SH: Done. Bring some clothes in case you crash for the night.

Shane replies.

SH: You’ll probably want enough to drink that it won’t be legal for you to drive home lol.

Comes straight after it.

HP: Lol I’ll be coming home to the kids. Plus, I don’t think I want to drink whatever weird old sad alcohol you have floating around.

SH: Hey! I have good, expensive vodka in the freezer I’ll have you know.

And *what*. Since when did Shane's parents casually down vodka.

HP: I hope I'm not going to need something that strong for this.

Hayden responds. Hopes his tone comes across more 'haha' and less asshole-y.

Once again, he watches Shane type and backspace for five minutes, which doesn't bode well.

SH: I'll see you around 12.

Is the reply he eventually gets.

Well that's that.

The drive there isn't much better than the last drive. His mind still running rampant and emotions high. But he at least pays more attention to the road this time.

There's an unfamiliar car parked next to Shanes.

Hayden doesn't know what to make of it.

Shane opens the front door as Hayden climbs out the car. He looks a thousand times better than the other day, though the anxiety is still written all over his face.

"Hey man." Hayden greets, pulling Shane into a hug.

Hopefully he can't feel Hayden's sweaty palms on his back.

"Hey *uh*, come in." Shane replies awkwardly.

God, it's *painful*. Like how Shane was when he was a rookie and felt like he had to uphold this whole '*Shane Hollander*' brand in front of Hayden.

They end up in the kitchen.

Shane leaning against the railing to the small lounge area. Hayden with his back to the bedrooms and main living area.

So doing better than last time at least.

"So *uh*, what did you want to talk about?" Shane asks softly.

"I mean I guess, first I guess I just wanted to *reassure* you I suppose. Secret's safe with me." Hayden starts. Because truth be told he has no clue how to talk about what he actually wants to talk about.

The slight show of relief on Shane's face doesn't really help either.

"Appreciate it." Shane mumbles.

“And I guess. *I’m- I’m sorry* for the other day. I had *no* right to storm in here and show up and make you tell me something you didn’t want to tell me.” Hayden continues.

“*I wanted to tell you.*” Shane cuts in, before Hayden can start rambling.

“Oh.”

“It’s *um*. Complicated, I *guess*. Telling someone makes it real. That’s hard. Secrets suck, and I didn’t want you to have to keep it from other people, so it was easy to not tell you. But I’ve been thinking about telling you for, well, *years*.” Shane continues.

“But you didn’t.” Hayden says softly. Not an accusation. But a fact.

“*But I didn’t.*”

“Because you thought I’d *hate* you.” And Hayden hates how the emotions in his voice say everything he manages to hide on his face.

Shane looks shocked.

“*Hayds*, Hayden man, *c’mon*. I never thought you’d hate me for being gay. I thought you’d hate me for- well. *Um...*” Shane says. The apprehension and anxiety creeping in.

Hayden’s guilt and panic seep out of him, replaced with relief and confusion.

Shane didn’t think he’d hate him for being gay. But then-

“What did you think I *was* going to hate you for then?” Hayden asks.

Shane looks a little like a deer caught in headlights at the question. His mouth opening and closing while he tries to find the words.

“*Take wild guess.*” A deep voice comes from behind Hayden.

“*Jesus Fucking Christ!*” Hayden yells, jumping around. His heart racing a thousand miles an hour.

“What. The *fuck*.” Hayden says. He thinks he means it as a question but he’s not 100% sure.

Because at the top of the small set of stairs, arms crossed, leaning against the window frame looking like a fucking model. Is *Ilya Rozanov*.

“Why the *fuck* is *Rozanov* in your house?” Hayden all but yells, looking to Shane. Gesturing wildly.

“Why the *fuck* are *you* in *his* house?” Hayden yells at Rozanov, before Shane can even make a sound.

“You know, Shane say you are smart, but I swear you do *everything* in your power to prove him wrong.” Rozanov says, voice cocky and smirk on his face. He struts down the stairs like

he owns the place, goes straight to the fridge and opens it like he has any right to.

Hayden watches in disbelief as Rozanov takes out a ginger ale and hands it to Shane.

“Ginger ale?” Rozanov asks, and it takes a second to register its directed to him.

“Uh, *what*.”

“I take as no.” Rozanov says, grabbing one for himself and moving to lean against the railing next to Shane.

It’s only then that Hayden registers what Rozanov is wearing.

It’s a Montreal jumper.

With Shanes number on it.

“*Oh god*.” Hayden mutters.

“Understand my assumption now?” Shane asks. There’s almost a bitterness to it. An anger Hayden doesn’t see in Shane often. And always on the ice. Usually towards Boston. Never towards Hayden. *Never*.

It feels, *telling*.

“How serious is this?” Hayden asks. He’s not sure why that’s the first question that tumbles out his mouth.

He watches as Rozanov turns to look at Shane, and it’s like watching a shape shifter. Rozanov’s expression changes so significantly, softens so much, that he genuinely looks like an entirely different person.

“Ottawa is only two hours from Montreal.” Is the reply Shane eventually gives.

And it tells Hayden *everything*.

Because one of the two best players in the NHL, left one of the *best* teams in the NHL, to join *the worst* team in the NHL, just to be closer to the *other* best player in the NHL.

Which is *insane*.

And sweet, which, gun to his head Hayden will *never* admit.

“How long has this been going on?” Is the next question that Hayden asks.

“Officially or unofficially?” Is what Shane hits him with right back.

“I hate that there’s two options here.” Hayden mutters. There’s a quirk in Shane’s lips, minor, miss-able, but *there*. Rozanov still looks like dog waiting to be given permission to rip someone’s balls off.

It registers that maybe the look is less because Hayden is, *well*, there. But because *maybe*, he's guarding Shane.

"Officially." Hayden eventually chooses.

"A week after the Admirals won the cup." Shane replies softly.

Hayden thinks back to then. Tries to see if he can pick apart his memories for something he missed. But when he thinks about then, about that season, all that he can see is Shane hitting the ice and not fucking *moving*.

Remembers the struggle to play on, the *worry*, the *anger*. The silence of the crowd, the ref yelling at Rozanov to back off...

And after, when Rozanov had found Hayden and apologised on behalf of Marlow and Boston. How he'd normally offer such apologies to the captain but, *well*. How Rozanov had explained that some Boston PR person had wanted to send something to the hospital for Shane and 'do you know which?' and- *oh*.

"*Yeah okay*, that makes sense." Hayden says, half lost in his thoughts.

"*Does it?*" Rozanov asks, and when Hayden refocuses on their faces, he can't place their expressions.

"I think if I hadn't been so fucking pissed off and so fucking worried about Shane when we he went to hospital, I might have registered how *terrified* you looked." Hayden explains.

He watches as Shane turns to look at Rozanov, somewhere between an apologetic smile and in an in love one.

"And... *unofficially?*" Hayden dares ask after a moment. Though he's not sure he actually *wants* the answer.

Especially when Rozanov starts smirking like an asshole again and Shane gets that look on his face.

"Since our rookie season." Shane says softly.

Hayden thinks he's having a *stroke*.

Barely registers what Rozanov is saying, because that means that for as long as he's known Shane, Shane has been-

"*No*, you always say that, *is wrong*. Was Summer *before*." Rozanov adds, *which*, fucking *christ*.

They've been banging since before Hayden even knew Shane. Even knew Rozanov.

Hayden tries to pick his jaw up off the floor, but he's struggling.

“And at which point did you two stop hating each other?” Hayden asks. Because he knows there were times, when the bitterness in Shane’s voice towards Boston and their captain was very genuine. Though now he can’t help but wonder what Rozanov did piss him off at the time.

“Probably around the time we started loving each other.” Shane says, and somehow that’s the sentence that he’s said the most confidently. With no doubt, no nervous wobble to his voice, no apprehension.

Fucking hell. *Love*.

Hayden rubs at his eyes.

“And it *had* to be *Rozanov*?” Hayden asks, pinching the bridge of his nose.

“*Yeah*. Yeah it kinda did.” Shane replies.

“God and I had a hard time convincing the kids to like *Benny* when he was traded to us.” Hayden mutters to himself.

Remembering the absolute *chaos* that had devolved in his house when the guy that had checked him hard that *one* time, that *one* game, that meant he’d had to miss the two following games, had *dared* to be traded to Montreal. His kids were still not super friendly with guy, and it’s been *five* years.

“*What?*” Shane asks.

When Hayden does look back at them, there’s a definite confusion on Rozanov’s face. But the glint of *hope* in Shanes eyes, that convinces Hayden to be okay with this. Not that he’s going to *admit* it any time soon.

“You better have a plan Hollander. You’ve shackled up with the *enemy*. *Jackie* I can convince, but the *kids*, yeah that’s a good joke. And he’s *your* boyfriend, so if you want the kids to not be planning how to kill him in his sleep, *you* better start figuring out how you’re going to make them like him. You made your bed, time to lie in it.” Hayden says, with a dramatic shrug.

Rozanov’s face has lit up at the challenge, like kid in a candy store.

Shane’s eyes are going glassy. If Hayden isn’t careful, his will be too.

“Ilya’s good with kids.” Shane says, resigned.

“*Of course he is.*” Hayden groans.

“Are you bad at *anything*?” Hayden snaps at Rozanov.

“*Uh*, well there’s- *mm* no I am good at that. I guess, *ah*- no, good at that too. Ah, *no*. No, I am not bad at anything.” Rozanov replies with a shit eating grin.

“Don’t know why I bother.” Hayden mutters.

“Oh fuck, gimme a minute. *Don’t kill each other.*” Shane mutters, and Hayden gets a glimpse of Yuna’s face lighting up his phone screen, calling him.

For a moment, Hayden and Rozanov just stare at each other.

Like they’re on the ice, but so different at the same time.

“I feel like I should be threatening you or something, but I’m about ten years too late for that.” Hayden eventually says.

There’s a ghost of a smile on Rozanov’s lips.

“*Probably.* Would do you no good anyways.”

“And why’s that?” Hayden asks. Rising to the bait.

“Because between the two of us, there’s only one that should be worried about hurting Shane right now.”

It’s a fair point.

“*True.* But I won’t.”

“*Good.* And you won’t tell anybody.”

“Of course not, don’t be stupid.” Hayden snaps. The thought genuinely impossible to him.

“Not about him, *or you.* Or the two of you.” Hayden adds belatedly. It occurring to him that Shane isn’t the only one who has just confessed everything.

Rozanov relaxes. Minutely. But still.

The silence stretches. Though somehow it’s not awkward, or uncomfortable.

“*So...* I take it Ottawa was step one of whatever plan Shane has come up with?” Hayden eventually asks.

“What makes you think *I* not come up with plan?” Rozanov asks, faux offended. At least Hayden *thinks* he’s not actually offended. Now that his sole focus isn’t on beating the guy on the ice, Hayden can see Rozanov *almost* has a personality.

Hayden just levels Rozanov with a stare.

“Only Shane would come up with such an insane plan, *and* be able to convince someone to follow it, *and* have it somehow work out.” Hayden eventually adds. Because that has his captain written all over it.

“He *is* good at that, isn’t he.” Rozanov comments, smiling to himself.

Actually, *genuinely*, smiling.

And no longer does Hayden feel like he's looking at Rozanov, one of the best players in the league.

No. He's looking at Ilya. A man who is willing to sacrifice anything for the person he loves.

"And does that plan account for the fact Shane can *never* be out and play for the Metros at the same time?" Hayden asks softly.

"*Yes.* It does." Rozanov replies.

"*Good.* He deserves to not have to keep his life a secret by force. But I know enough about the Metros to know how badly that would go. So what *is* the plan?"

Rozanov looks a little taken back. And it takes Hayden a second to realise that this is Rozanov's version of panic.

Oh.

"Oh. Well, there's two and a half years before Shane's contract is up." Hayden comments, voice tight. Guess he was right after all.

"*Yes.*"

"So, two and a half years for you to get Ottawa good enough that they can increase their cap and afford him." Hayden replies.

And the look on Rozanov's is the same as Shane's when they are training at the gym. The same at practice. The same in a game. It's his captain look.

"*Yes.*"

"I'll take less if I have to." Shane adds, walking back over to Rozanov, bumping shoulders with Hayden on his way past.

"*That's stupid.*" Hayden can't help but let slip.

"*That's what I say.*" Rozanov replies.

"So I guess at some point I can yell at you about trading then." Hayden comments.

Shane just smiles.

"*Leaving us.*" Hayden carries on, *dramatic*.

"*Technically* not really leaving you though, *am I?* Just Montreal." Shane cuts him off.

"You've got to be *actually* insane if you think I'd play for *Ottawa*. *Even* if you move there." Hayden replies.

“This is what I mean when I say you have tunnel vision Pike.” Shane starts with a teasing voice, referencing his most frequent call out. “It’s not just *my* contract that is up in two and a half years.”

Oh. *Right*.

They’d signed the same 5 year deal. The same day even.

“And you think the Metros will trade me?” Hayden asks, suddenly conscious of how he plays.

Shane scoffs.

“No *dumbass*, you’re going to retire.”

“Why the *fuck* would I retire?” Hayden snaps. Angrier than he means to.

Shane doesn’t look effected. And neither does Rozanov. *God* have they spoken about this before?

“How many more of your kids’ firsts are you willing to miss Hayds?”

Oh. Fucking. *Yeah*, okay.

“JJ’s contract is up next year, and I know Washington have been poking around. Benny is one hard check away from forced retirement, you’ll be gone. And I won’t have anything worth staying in Montreal for.” Shane explains, like it’s fact.

“And you think it’s just going to *happen* like that.” Hayden asks, though it doesn’t really come out as a question. He’s not even thought about retiring. And JJ can’t leave, and fucking Benny is just really starting to fit in with the team and-

“*It will*.” Shane replies, all cocky captain energy.

“And why’s that?”

“Because Shane Hollander is very good at planning.” Rozanov interrupts.

“Would you like ginger ale now?” Rozanov asks, and Hayden knows an olive branch when he sees one.

“I think I’ll take that vodka now, *actually*.”

“*Huh*. Maybe you right. Maybe I will like Hayden.” Rozanov says to Shane, pressing his lips to Shanes quickly before moving to the fridge.

Horrifically, seeing them kiss *doesn’t* horrify him. Which it should. It’s *Rozanov*.

But he’s kind of thrown off from Rozanov using his first name.

“Of course you will Rozanov, Shane is always right.” Hayden says.

“Ilya.” Rozanov corrects, placing two glasses on the counter.

“*Ilya*.” Hayden replies. Though it feels wrong and he kind of hates it.

And Hayden watches Shane watch Ilya.

And its even more love sick then how he’s ever looked at Jackie.

And if he thinks about it too hard but also not at all, it makes sense.

They make sense.

And Shane is *still* his best friend...

Even if he has terrible taste in men.

End Notes

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