

go get a room

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go get a room

by [jackberry](#)

Summary

Hayden never imagined his peace would be shattered like this. He bumped his head, unexpectedly gaining the ability to read mind, while simultaneously caught between two lovebirds, Shane and Ilya.

(English is not my first language, and there may be issues with the timeline.)

Hayden Pike knows he isn't the most dazzling player on the ice, but he is reliable and steady. He is the kind of guy who would show up on time, do his job, and go home to his wife, Jackie, and their twins, Emma and Ruby, and if he is lucky, maybe even catch the last few games on TV before collapsing onto the couch and falling asleep.

Therefore, he is absolutely certain of a few things in life: Jackie's Sunday pancakes were the best in Montreal; the kids would make him spend all the money he could possibly have on hockey gear; Shane is the best captain he could have; Shane is a straight man; and Hayden himself is one of the best role players in the NHL.

Then, in a meaningless game in November, he was bumped by Cliff Marleau of the Boston Raiders, and everything changed.

It isn't even a flagrant foul. Hayden is skating backward, caught up in the rhythm of the game, and didn't even see Marleau coming at him. His head slammed into the ice with a sharp thud that echoed through the Bell Centre. In that instant, he felt dizzy, colors blurred, and the clamor of the crowd turned into a cacophony of noise.

When he opened his eyes, Shane was leaning over him, his lips moving. But Hayden couldn't hear Shane's voice; he heard something else.

[Please, please, it has to be alright, damn it, it looks terrible. Is he ok? Say something, Pike, say it—]

Hayden blinked. Shane's lips didn't move with the words.

"Can you hear me?" Shane's voice finally broke through. "Pike? How many fingers?"

"Two," Hayden said hoarsely. "I'm alright. Just... give me a second."

But he isn't really alright. As the medical team helped him to his feet and escorted him through the players' tunnel, Hayden felt a buzzing in his head, like a radio switching between two channels. Words and phrases swirled in his mind, but he couldn't fully comprehend them.

[He looks really badly injured. I can't afford to get hurt again.]

[f I'm late for another game, my wife will kill me.]

[That new Thai restaurant on St. Lawrence Street...]

Maybe I can talk to the coach and try to get more playing time—

Various sounds mingled together, like a chaotic symphony, utterly disordered. As the team doctor helped Hayden into the examination room, he pressed his palm to his temple.

"Headache?" Dr. Rousseau asked, shining a flashlight into Hayden's eyes.

“Yes,” Hayden said, but it isn't just a headache. The sounds were becoming clearer; he could now distinguish the different sounds.

[Hope it's nothing serious. I have a wedding to attend next weekend.]That's Dr. Rousseau. It must be him; he's alone in the room.

“I...” Hayden swallowed. “Am I going crazy, Doctor?”

Dr. Rousseau gave a reassuring smile. “It's probably just a mild concussion. You'll be fine. Rest for a few days, don't look at screens, and come back for your follow-up appointment next week. Don't participate in any training until I give you permission to recover.”

That night, lying in bed next to Jackie, Hayden truly realized the seriousness of his new problem.

[I wonder if I locked the car.]

He turned his head. Jackie is looking down at her phone, a calm expression on her face.

[Emma needs a new pair of figure skates. Maybe we can go to the sporting goods store this weekend. Goodness, they grow up so fast.]

“Hey,” Hayden said softly. “Jay?”

She looked up. “Hmm?”

“What are you thinking about right now?”

She raised an eyebrow. “Pike, this is a dangerous question. What's wrong?”

“Just curious.”

[—Is this about that celebrity on Twitter? I knew I should have made my account private.]

Hayden suppressed a laugh. “Never mind. I love you.”

“I love you too, weirdo.”

By morning, Hayden had to accept the fact: he could hear other people's thoughts. Not always, and not with everyone, but when he focused intently on someone, their inner monologue would reach his ears clearly.

This should have terrified him. However, after the initial panic, Hayden found...it is useful?

He discovered that Jackie's favorite coffee isn't her usual vanilla latte but a honey lavender cold brew she'd tried once at a specialty coffee shop, which she'd thought was too expensive.

[Eight dollars for a cup of coffee? Insane! But wow, it is so good!]

So he learned to make it himself. That Sunday morning, when he served Jackie his homemade coffee, her expression made all the tutorials he'd watched on YouTube

worthwhile.

He discovered Ruby wanted a Lego set, the Death Star, for his birthday. Ruby had always been too shy to ask, thinking it was "for big kids."

[Dad would think it is too much. Maybe I should get hockey cards instead.]

That afternoon, he ordered the Death Star set

Meanwhile, Emma is upset because a girl at school is mocking her drawings.

[That idiot Melissa said my dragon looked like a deformed lizard. Maybe I should just forget about bringing my sketchbook.]

That evening, he spent a whole hour talking to Emma about famous artists whose work had been criticized, how cool her dragons were, and asking if she wanted to hang some of her drawings in his locker at his hockey rink.

"Really?" Emma's eyes lit up. "In your real NHL locker?"

"My teammates would love it," Hayden assured her, and he meant it.

Jackie noticed the change in him. "You've been acting like the best dad ever lately," she said, snuggling against him one evening. "I'm not complaining, but what's wrong with you lately?"

[I'm not complaining; that is fine, but has he read any parenting books?]

"Just want to spend more time with her," Hayden said, unintentionally, but it is true.

The only problem is everyone else.

At the grocery store, he could hear a hundred people saying they needed milk and eggs. Oh my god, did I forget to turn off the stove?

On the street, there were probably a thousand voices: late, late, late, damn subway, I should have called Uber.

It is exhausting. Hayden learned to block out these thoughts, to build up a mental defense. He couldn't control when these thoughts appeared, but he could control whether he listened to them. In a way. Sometimes, these thoughts were just too noisy to ignore.

Like Shane's.

Shane Holland's thoughts were both exactly what Hayden expected and completely different from what he had imagined.

[I need to practice my backhand; I keep hitting it too high.]

[Mom wants me to get another sponsorship project. Great. More photoshoots. More questions about my personal life.]

[Maybe I should tell them. Maybe things won't be as bad as I think. Or maybe, my career is over. Damn it!]

That last sentence stopped Hayden in his practice. How could he tell them?

He tried hard not to ask. He really tried. Shane is his best friend, and best friends don't invade each other's privacy, even if he unexpectedly gained superpowers. But Shane's thoughts weighed heavily on Hayden's mind.

[...Eight years. Eight whole years like this! How much longer can I hold on?]

Eight years? Eight years?

Hayden's curiosity is driving him crazy, but he is too embarrassed to ask directly. Hey buddy, I can read your mind now; you're obviously hiding something important. Want to talk about it?

Shane wouldn't say, "Great, that's wonderful."

He tried to stop thinking about it. Focus on the game. Focus on his family. Focus on not accidentally revealing his newfound abilities.

A week later, Dr. Rousseau announced he is ready to play.

"Everything looks good," the doctor said, switching off his flashlight. "You're lucky; no aftereffects."

"...I mean, is there any possibility of some strange side effects? Like seeing hallucinations? Hearing hallucinations?"

Dr. Rousseau chuckled. "This isn't a comic book, Pike. You might have headaches for a few weeks now and then, that's all! You'll be fine."

Hayden wanted to argue, wanted to ask about telepathy and superpowers, and whether the doctor had any patients who gained superpowers through accidents, but he just nodded.

"Great, thank you, Doctor."

He should have asked. He should have told others. But they'd think he is crazy. Maybe he really is...

He isn't crazy. The evidence is conclusive. He had proven it countless times: guessing what Jackie was thinking, what the kids wanted before they even asked, and what his teammates were worried about.

If he needed more evidence, he would have it on the day they played the Boston Raiders again.

Hayden had certainly heard of Ilya Rozanov. Everyone in hockey knew him. That arrogant Russian center, a vicious shooter, is incredibly conceited. He is Shane's supposed nemesis, though Hayden always felt the media exaggerated it. They were both professionals. Playing for different teams didn't mean you actually hated each other.

However, Shane did become exceptionally nervous when playing against Boston.

The game is intense, the pace fast. When Hayden entered the ice for the third time, he found himself near the faceoff, side-by-side with Rozanov. Up close, the Russian is tall and angular and radiates an irrepressible energy.

The puck landed, the game began, and just as Hayden's instincts kicked in, he stupidly glanced at Rozanov.

[Holland's playing really well tonight. Really good. Damn it, don't stare at him. Focus on the game. But that ass in his pants...]

Hayden nearly tripped over himself.

Wait.

—What?

He glanced back at Rozanov, who was skating intently toward the goal. Then, his gaze lingered for only a second before shifting to Shane, a thought striking Hayden like a train:

[God, I miss him. Two weeks since I left Ottawa. Two weeks feels like forever.]

No.

No, no, no.

Hayden must have misheard. Misunderstood. Oh well.

[After the game. Text him after the game. No, too risky. Wait until tomorrow.]

The game continued. Hayden skated mechanically, just mechanically repeating the same motions. His mind is a complete mess. Ilya Rozanov is... gay? Bisexual? Or something else?

And he actually liked Shane?

Shane, a straight man. Hayden had spent years trying to set him up with different women. Shane always had a reason for not being serious about relationships.

Wait... my God, Shane. ...?

No. This is absurd. Hayden definitely knew. They were best friends. Shane would definitely tell him.

Unless...

Eight years. What eight years...

All the clues pieced together clearly, shockingly, and terrifyingly.

Hayden felt like he was going to throw up.

The remaining time of the game felt like an eternity. Montreal won 3-2. Shane scored the winning goal, and during the handshake, Hayden watched Shane and Rozanov shake hands, their handshake seeming to last a moment longer than expected.

[Tomorrow. My home. Thinking of you, thinking of you] (Rozanov thought).

[Is he asking me to come later or not? I miss him] (Shane thought, abruptly stopping as he released Rozanov's hand and walked down the line).

Hayden felt like he was about to faint.

Hayden didn't confront Shane. How could he?

Hey, I can read minds now. I know you've been sleeping with our biggest rival.

That kind of conversation wouldn't benefit anyone.

So he went home, kissed his wife, put the children to sleep, and lay in bed until 3 a.m., trying to process everything he'd learned.

Shane...isn't heterosexual. That's obvious. And clearly, he's had a steady relationship for at least a few years... and it's with Ilya Rozanov.

Hayden's thoughts raced through the past, re-examining everything. All those days Shane is "too busy" to go out. The agonizing tension before every game against Boston. Of all the girls Hayden introduced him to, he never seemed to get along with any of them.

How stupid. That's so stupid. should have seen through it sooner.

But how could he? People don't go around announcing their homosexuality, especially on a hockey team. Besides, both involved are captains of their respective teams, and both have huge fan bases.

However, Shane is his best friend. They talk about everything.

But obviously, this is an exception.

The next morning, Jackie found him slumped at the coffee table, staring blankly ahead.

"Didn't sleep well last night?" she asked, pouring herself a cup of honey lavender cold brew coffee.

"Yeah. Just...thinking about things."

[He's been acting strange lately. Ever since that concussion. Maybe I should...]

"I'm fine," Hayden said quickly. "Just some things with the team."

"Is Shane okay?"

That's a good question. "Yeah. What's wrong?"

"You've been watching him a lot lately. That worried look in your eyes."

He always thinks he's subtle, but he's not at all...

Hayden forced a smile. "I can't hide it from you."

"That's right," Jackie said with a laugh, kissing him on the head. "So what's wrong with Shane? A relationship problem? Or something else?"

Hayden choked on his coffee.

Jackie chuckled and patted him on the back. "Don't be nervous. Just kidding. Shane's too serious; he is probably ironing his t-shirts now."

But seriously, that explains why he never goes on dates.

"Yeah," Hayden said weakly. "Super serious."

For the next two weeks, Hayden successfully avoided thinking about Shane's secret. Everything is fine. Shane is an adult. He could date whoever he wanted. It is none of Hayden's business.

Then, after practice, he went into the locker room and found Shane and Ilya Rozanov standing in the equipment area, pressed tightly together, Rozanov's hand on Shane's chin.

Hayden froze.

They didn't see him. The lockers were angled, blocking their view of the doorway. Hayden knew, perfectly well, he should leave. Turn around. Come back in five minutes, pretending he saw nothing.

But his legs wouldn't move. Worse still, his damned telepathy told him this is the perfect moment to activate.

[I missed you so much; I can't believe we've not been together for the last three days!](This is Rozanov.)

[I.....ah.....God, you taste like...](This is Shane.)

[He knew we were just... oh my God, no, I might still have Shane's taste in my mouth—] (At this moment, Rozanov suddenly panicked, his gaze rapidly turning to the doorway.)

Hayden let out a scream he never expected to make. A suppressed, terrified scream. The two abruptly separated.

"Pike—" Shane screamed, his face instantly turning pale.

Hayden turned and ran.

He heard Shane calling him from behind, but Hayden had already rushed out the door, down the corridor, and into the parking lot. He frantically fumbled for his car keys, his hands trembling.

[Damn it, damn it, damn it, he saw it, he knows...]

[I should have been more careful; I am so stupid.]

What if he told someone?

[Hayden, wait, please.]

These thoughts haunted him like ghosts. Hayden sat in the car, gripping the steering wheel tightly, trying... Breathing.

His phone vibrated. It is Shane.

Shane: Let me explain.

Shane: Hayden, I'm sorry.

Hayden stared at the message on his phone. His thumb hovered over the keypad. What is he supposed to say? You lied to me for eight years; that is okay? You slept with our archenemy; that is okay? I can read your mind; I know more than I want to know. that is okay?

He drove home. Instead.

The next morning, Shane appeared at Hayden's door.

Jackie opened the door. Hayden had overheard their conversation in the kitchen, hearing the worry in Jackie's voice [something is wrong between them, I knew it] and Shane's cautious neutrality [please don't hate me, please].

"He's in the kitchen," Jackie said. "I'll give you two some space."

Shane appeared in the doorway, looking like he hadn't slept. He probably really hadn't.

They stared at each other.

"I won't tell anyone," Hayden finally said.

Shane shrugged with relief. "Thank you. Oh my God, Hayden, I'm so sorry. I never intended to let you... We're usually very careful."

"How long?"

"Eight years. Since we were...you know."

“Oh my God, Shane.”

“I know.”

“Couldn’t you just tell me? Your best friend?”

“I can’t tell anyone.” Shane’s voice choked. “Do you know what would happen if this got out? We’d lose everything. Our careers, our reputations. Ilya might be banned from returning to Russia. I’d disappoint my parents. The team would—”

“I won’t tell anyone,” Hayden said softly. “You know that.”

[I know. I know you won’t. But I’m so scared. So scared.]

Shane whispered. “I’ve wanted to tell you countless times. You’re my best friend, and I hate lying to you. But the longer it goes on, the harder it is... to say it.”

Hayden closed his eyes. He could hear the true thoughts deep within Shane's heart and feel the heavy burden of years of fear and secrets weighing on him.

"Are you... happy?" Hayden asked, "with him?"

Shane's expression softened. "Yes, yes, I'm very happy. He... isn't like he seems. All that competition, all that trash talk—it's all for the camera. When it's just the two of us..." His voice trailed off.

"He's my everything. I love him so much that sometimes I'm afraid..."

Hayden felt something burst in his chest. "Then I'm truly happy for you, Captain."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. You deserve happiness, even if you have terrible taste in Russians."

Shane smiled, tears streaming down his face, with a sigh of relief. "He'll definitely like it when you say that."

"He knows that I know?"

"Yeah, partly he's going crazy. He thinks you're going to tell or something."

"Tell him I'm not that petty," Hayden said. “But perhaps you could warn him that I’ll be guarding him more closely next game.”

Shane smiled. “Deal.”

—

Hayden thought, this universe is truly humorous. Knowing about Shane and Ilya is one thing; being forced to listen to their wild speculations during a game is quite another.

Montreal and Boston played three days after Hayden discovered their secret, and he is prepared for all sorts of strange things to happen. But he never expected them to keep commenting on him in their minds.

[God, he looks so handsome when he's focused!](Ilya watching Shane prepare for a jump ball)

[Don't laugh, don't laugh; there are cameras everywhere!](Shane think after Ilya slammed into his teammate.)

[I want to kiss him right now. Not appropriate. Very inappropriate. Focus on the game!](Ilya think again.)

[After the game. It'll be fine in a few hours!](Shane think)

Hayden nearly crashed into the backboard.

"Pike, are you alright?" J.J. asked from the bench.

"It's nothing. Just... a little distracted."

[Actually, my mind is full of images of the captain's sex life," Hayden thought dejectedly to himself.]

Things got worse.

The next practice, Shane's phone vibrated in his locker. Hayden didn't need to look to know it is from Ilya.

[Already thinking about you," God, he is so cheesy, but I liked that about him. I should text back. No, I'll wait until after practice... I don't want Pike to think we're being too obvious.]

"You guys aren't that obvious," Hayden muttered.

Shane looked up. "What?"

"Nothing, just talking to myself."

Two weeks later, things took a turn for the better in the game against Tampa Bay. Montreal is leading 4-1, and Shane is playing the best game of his career, with two goals and an assist, like he is under a spell.

Hayden is preparing for a face-off in the defensive zone when he finds himself standing behind Shane, who is inside the face-off circle. A flood of thoughts rushed through his mind:

[I told Ilya I was going to play my best tonight. Two goals already. One more to go. Good heavens, if I got three, what did he promise me? No, don't think about that now. Focus. But, damn it. He'll use his... not to mention...]

"Shane!" Hayden blurted out. "Focus."

Several teammates turned to stare at him. Shane blushed.

[Oh no. Did I just announce it? Does Pike know what I'm thinking?]

“Sorry,” Hayden quickly said. “Just, you know, stay focused.”

J.J. gave him a strange look.

[Hayden is a little strange today] J.J. thought.

Four minutes later, Shane scored his third goal. A cheer erupted from the bench. Hayden groaned inwardly, because Shane's mind is now filled with vivid and detailed imaginings of how Ilya would “treat” him the next time they met.

“I need therapy,” Hayden muttered to himself. “A lot of psychotherapy is needed.”

—

“So, let’s suppose,” Hayden began, “that someone has experienced unusual symptoms after a head injury, some seemingly impossible symptoms. What would you say?”

Dr. Rousseau frowned. “What kind of symptoms?”

“For example...hearing sounds that don’t exist at all. But very specifically, things you couldn’t possibly know.”

“Auditory hallucinations can occur after a head injury, but that’s rare. Can you give an example?”

Hayden thought quickly. “For example, knowing what someone is going to say before they even speak, or knowing what they’re thinking.”

“That sounds more like enhanced intuition or anxiety. It’s not uncommon for the brain to try to predict certain patterns after trauma.”

“But what if it were true? What if—suppose—someone could actually hear what others are thinking?”

Dr. Rousseau smiled kindly.

Hayden wanted to shout. But he held back and asked, “How long do concussion symptoms usually last?”

“Most people fully recover within three months. Some symptoms can last up to six months. Why?”

“Just curious. Assuming there are people like that.”

[He is clearly worried about himself. Just to be on the safe side, a follow-up appointment should be scheduled.]

“If you’re worried, I can arrange another evaluation,” Dr. Rousseau offered.

“No, thank you, Doctor.”

—

Hayden had briefly considered faking an injury when he first went to an away game with Shane, with Ilya also present.

The Montreal team is playing in Boston. A three-game road trip. Ilya’s home court.

“He’s not actually staying with us,” Shane said on the plane, sensing Hayden’s anxiety without telepathy. “He’ll be staying at the hotel with the team.”

“Hmm.”

[Okay, he might sneak over after curfew. But Pike didn’t need to know.]

“Wait, do your parents know about this?”

Shane nodded. “I told them last summer. They came to the cabin to see us. It is... a bit chaotic. But they were very supportive, but....to every one you know..”

“That’s good. That’s really good, Shane.”

[I wish I could tell everyone. I wish we could live like normal people. But the hockey world is still...]

The sadness in Shane’s voice made Hayden’s heart clench. “Maybe one day you’ll be able to say it,” he said softly. “The world is changing.”

“Maybe. Scott Hunter coming out definitely helped. But Ilya and I... we’re different. We’re rivals. The media will definitely be covering it.”

“Scott Hunter?” Hayden perked up. “The captain of the USA? He came out?”

“You didn’t know? That was big news last year.”

“I definitely missed it.” Hayden felt like an outsider.

The game against Boston is really a nightmare. Not physically, or because of the referee’s harsh calls, but mentally. Hayden spent a full sixty minutes trying to filter out Shane and Ilya’s incessant chatter.

He looked exhausted. [Has he slept enough? I should text him.] (Ilya, during a break in the game)

[God, I love him so much. Even when he's annoying on the ice.] (Shane, after Ilya snatches the puck from his hands)

[Two hours. Two more hours until I can hug him.] (Ilya reappears.)

[I wonder if he'll wear my favorite shirt.] (Shane)

"I hate my life," Hayden whispered to J.J. on the bench.

"Is today tough?"

"You can't imagine."

—

The outburst occurred on their last night in Boston.

Hayden couldn't sleep. Too much coffee, too much noise from the street below. He wandered to the hotel gym around midnight, thinking a quick workout might help.

He had just finished a set on the bench press. Hearing this, his heart sank:

[The door at the end of the hallway, room 847, should be safe...]

Hayden's heart sank. It is Shane's voice. Shane's inner voice.

No. He won't. Not in the team hotel. Too risky.

[I know it's risky, but I need to see him, even if it's just for an hour.]

"Damn, Shane," Hayden muttered.

He should go back to his room. Pretend he didn't hear anything. But the part of his brain that worried about his friend started working. What if they were spotted? What if his teammates saw them? What if there were reporters lurking around?

Hayden found himself on the eighth floor in the elevator, then walked down the hallway to room 847. He pressed his ear to the door.

Silence. Okay, apparent silence. But inside, he is in turmoil.

[I miss you.]

[Two weeks is too long.]

[I love you.]

[I love you too.]

Hayden knocked on the door.

The room fell silent.

Then:[Oh, damn. Oh, damn, oh, damn, oh, damn—](Shane)

[Which piece of furniture should I hide behind? Where should I hide? This is bad—](Ilya)

"It's Pike," Hayden whispered through the door. "You two are reckless idiots."

The door opened a crack. Shane's face appeared, his hair disheveled and lips red, and he looked utterly remorseful.

"Hayden—"

"I'm not here to arrest you two. I'm here to tell you that J.J.'s room is on this floor. And Connors. And half the coaching staff. So next time, could you pick somewhere else, not the team hotel?"

Ilya appeared behind Shane, looking surprised. "You really don't mind?"

"Mind? I'm quite alarmed. But I don't want you to be found out. That's a different matter than minding."

[He's a good friend](Ilya).

[I'm so lucky] (Shane).

"Don't think about it anymore," Hayden muttered. "I'm going back to sleep. You two ...there is a really good hotel downtown, i will give you two location ."

"Okay, Mom," Shane said with a smile.

[Thank you](Shane).

[Thank you] (Ilya).

Hayden waved goodbye, turned, and walked toward the elevator, trying not to think about what they were going to do in the hotel.

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