

## Hayden's Not Ready for This

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# Hayden's Not Ready for This

by [midnighttypewriter](#)

## Summary

An alternate take on Hayden discovering the identity of Boston Lily and meeting Ilya as Shane's boyfriend for the first time.

It takes a week from the moment Shane comes out to the Montreal Metros – with quiet determination and his jaw tense – for Hayden to put two and two together. At least, he thinks he's got the correct answer. And the correct equation to solve.

“So... Lily,” he says and Shane flinches like at a jumpscare.

Which isn't great given he's currently cradling Amber in his arms like the good uncle he is. They've had dinner at Hayden's, one that Jackie insisted on to show Shane nothing has changed. Hayden has assumed that much was obvious, but given the wary glances Shane has been giving him all evening, maybe Hayden's wife has been onto something. She's always been the brains of the relationship.

“Is that why I've never seen a picture?” Over the years, Hayden has developed theories about Boston Lily. He dismissed most of them. Of course she wasn't married, Shane would never go there, he just wasn't the type. And his relationship with Rose Landry suggested he didn't have a problem with public spotlight on his relationship, so she probably wasn't a celebrity either. In the end, Hayden has secretly settled on the idea that Boston Lily was a high class dominatrix who helped Shane handle the pressure of being Shane Hollander, the captain of Montreal Metros, the NHL superstar, the involuntary inspiration to many. And Hayden decided not to ask. Now, however, the answer was obvious. “Lily's a man.”

Shane is staring at him with the doe-eyed gaze of a hunted animal.

The baby stirs in his arms when his grip on her tightens just a little.

“Hey, man, we won't be doing that,” Hayden says, reaching for Amber to gently pry her out of his best friend's grip. “You don't need to use my baby as a shield. I'm not going to be an ass about this. There's no need to take hostages.”

“Sorry.”

“No worries,” Hayden bounces the baby, hoping she won't wake up just yet. They're both keeping their voices low. “She is, though, right? Your Lily. A guy.”

Shane's ears are burning when he nods shortly.

“Are you still seeing her? Him,” Hayden corrects himself quickly.

Shane seems to have lost the ability to talk, but a brief hint of a smile flashes across his features. Under his freckles, his cheeks darken with a blush.

“Man, it's been ages. Years, right?” Hayden can't remember when he's first noticed Shane glued to his phone and sneaking out of his hotel room, but it has been a long time ago. Now that he thinks about it, Shane's secret rendezvous in Boston have always been a part of Shane Hollander lore. “Is it serious?”

Impossibly, Shane's cheeks turn darker still. He gives a sharp little nod.

“We’ll be playing Boston in what, two weeks? You must be looking forward to it.”

Shane opens his mouth, but then he closes it again. His face does something indecipherable. He shrugs.

“I think you should introduce us,” Hayden barrels through. “I’m your best friend. I should make sure this guy is worthy of you.”

Shane actually laughs at that. “I don’t think— Actually, I think he won’t be in Boston.”

“Liar. He’s always in Boston.” Hayden gives Shane a suspicious look. “Are you worried I won’t approve, is that it? Is he old?”

He loves seeing Shane genuinely amused.

“He’s definitely not old. Same age.”

“He’s not out, then,” Hayden guesses. “I can be discreet!”

It’s true. He’s never told anyone about his suspicion that Shane’s seeing a dominatrix.

“I’d have to ask him. I’m not sure he’d be—“ Shane shakes his head. “But he really doesn’t live in Boston anymore.”

“Oh.” Hayden feels his heart break a little. When he considers it now, Shane never got to see his Boston Lily all that often. It seemed much more frequent the way he’s been glued to his phone all these years, but in reality it was only a few times a year. To think the man has moved somewhere further away? Ah, Hayden ached for his friend. “Does he live in any of the cities we’ll be playing? Long distance is harsh, man.”

Shane takes a breath. “He— He lives a bit closer now. I get to— It’s not that bad anymore,” he smiles a little. “Maybe we could— If he’d want to, which I’m really not sure— Maybe we could have a dinner. Sometime. If schedules allow. His isn’t much better than ours.”

Hayden’s curious about this man now. “What does he do?”

Shane only shakes his head. “I’ll have to talk to him first. No promises.”

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Two weeks later, Hayden and Jackie received an invitation to have dinner at—

Shane’s cottage near Ottawa.

“It’s more convenient for everyone, trust me,” Shane assured him. “And it’d be easier for you to leave than if we visited you. If you don’t like him.”

Which has Hayden a little concerned, but Shane refuses to tell him anything more.

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It's a crispy afternoon. Hayden's been to Shane's cottage before, a few times in the summer, sometimes with the kids who love it there. He's never considered what it'd be like to come here during the season, but the lake looks beautiful and the cottage itself calm, secluded and private.

He wonders now if Shane built it as a sanctuary with a secret relationship in mind.

Shane greets them at the door, accepting a hug from Jackie and ushering them inside. It's early enough that the cottage is flooded with natural light. It's quiet and empty.

"Where's your mystery man?" Hayden asks sheepishly while Shane takes the polite bottle of champagne off his hands. "If he now turns out to be imaginary, I'll be very disappointed."

"I think you'll wish he was imaginary," Shane chuckles, setting the bottle aside and avoiding Hayden's gaze. He's never been one for eye-contact, but it gets more pronounced when he's nervous. "Outside. He said he needed a cigarette first." He sighs. "I keep telling him to quit."

"Will we be eating outside?" Jackie asks.

Shane shakes his head. "I think it's too cold for that. I'll set the table inside. I have to warn you, you'll be taking food home. Il— He makes fun of me, because I made too much food again, but I wanted to make sure it'd be right." He looks visibly nervous. His fingers tremble and he grasps the hem of his shirt.

"I'm sure it'll be wonderful," Jackie says gently.

"Right, man, you know I'll eat just about anything," Hayden nods. "And there's no such thing as too much food." He inhales and glances towards where the cottage opens towards the lake. "Maybe— Do you want to introduce us now, or do we wait?"

Shane hesitates. Then he nods.

They walk out.

There is a man sitting in a chair, facing the lake. He has blond curls, he's wearing a black fleece and there's smoke curling around a cigarette held in his hand.

When he hears steps behind him, he rises and turns around.

And Hayden is glad he's no longer holding anything. Because it'd be on the ground right now. This way, the only thing to drop is his jaw.

Because that's Ilya fucking Rozanov standing outside Shane's cottage, looking like he belongs there.

"Rozanov."

"Pike." Rozanov puts out the cigarette and discards it into an empty can by the chair. He's smirking, a challenging expression Hayden knows a little too well from the rink.

"Ilya fucking Rozanov."

Rozanov fucking Hollander, Hayden's brain supplies a very unwelcome thought.

And now he wishes he had that champagne in hand.

He'd down the entire bottle.

He turns to Shane. "Why is he— Are you pranking me? Please tell me this is—" He stops himself when Jackie squeezes his elbow.

Shane looks pained.

"I'm Jackie," Jackie says, reaching her free hand towards Ilya with a welcoming smile. Still, Hayden thinks she's roughly one wrong word away from kicking Hayden in the ankle.

"Hayden's wife."

Rozanov accepts her handshake. "Ilya. Shane's boyfriend," he says it easily and with a lazy grin that makes Hayden want to strangle him.

No way.

No way that this man is Shane's boyfriend.

His Boston Lily.

Except that it makes almost too much sense. Ilya Rozanov has been a Boston Raider the entire time Shane was seeing his mysterious man.

"Since Shane cooked, do we set up the table?" Jackie offers, her gaze still on Ilya.

And Rozanov is apparently better at social cues than Shane, because he nods. "Let's do that," he says. But he's not subtle so he adds: "I hope Pike stops freaking out soon, because I'm hungry."

Jackie, the traitor, laughs as she and Rozanov head towards the cottage.

Hayden wonders if that's grounds for divorce.

"Holy shit," he says when he and Shane are left alone. "Holy shit, that's Ilya Rozanov."

Shane nods. "I figured you didn't need introductions."

“Holy shit,” Hayden repeats. “I’d never have guessed he’s—“ What? Gay? Queer? Bisexual, maybe, with all the women he’s always surrounded himself with.

With a hesitant smirk, Shane says: “Yeah, that’s how being in the closet works.”

He’s still clutching onto his shirt, or he’s doing it again. Hayden reaches out and clasps his shoulder. He doesn’t know how to reassure Shane that this is okay, because it’s—

It’s not, not really.

It’s absurd.

It’s—

“How long?”

“Always, I guess,” Shane shrugs, staring at his shoes. “Although we didn’t make it official until the summer. You can’t tell anyone, okay?”

“As if anyone would even believe it.” Hayden shakes his head. “Of course I won’t. This is— No one knows?”

“My parents. We weren’t planning on telling them, but they found out. They’ve been very supportive, actually. I think they like Ilya better than me.”

Ilya.

Shane is calling Rozanov by his first name like that’s a normal thing they do.

Which it probably is.

Because they are dating.

“But don’t you hate him?”

“No. No, I’m— I love him very much.”

Hayden feels like he needs to sit down so he does. In the same chair Ilya Rozanov, formerly of Boston Raiders, occupied just moments ago.

“I’m sorry I surprised you like this. I didn’t know how to tell you.”

Hayden doesn’t think there’d have been a good way to tell him. “I’d never have guessed.”

“That’s actually kind of a relief,” Shane says, amusement and sadness mixed all in one.

“He doesn’t want to come out?”

“He can’t. Not yet. It’s illegal, in Russia, to promote queer issues. With his celebrity status, it’d be dangerous for him until he can get citizenship abroad.”

Hayden looks towards the cottage. Through the glass windows, he can see his wife setting table alongside Ilya Rozanov.

Shane's boyfriend.

He can't tell what they are talking about, but Jackie seems to having a pleasant time. And Hayden should be worried, because that's the famous womanizer Ilya Rozanov, except he trusts Jackie and also—

"He moved to Ottawa for you, didn't he? That's why he transferred. To be closer to you."

It has been the biggest mystery of the past few months. Hayden couldn't believe that Ilya Rozanov, of all people, would choose an always losing team in boring Ottawa over his loyalty to Boston, the Cup contender who's drafted him, because of a man.

Because of a man.

Because of Shane.

Because of—

Love?

It is a lot to take in.

"He did. We actually have a plan to put the public rivalry to rest. So we can be see together without it being a news-worthy event," Shane sighs. "I'll tell you all about it over dinner. It'd be— Actually, it'd be kind of nice to have your help."

His tone doesn't change much with the last sentence and yet it sounds like a plea.

Hayden nods.

He gets up. "I can't believe you're making me eat dinner with Rozanov, of all people. You're on babysitting duty forever for this."

"Aren't I always?"

Hayden closes his eyes for a brief second.

Because suddenly he realizes.

There is a chance one day his children, his poor innocent children, will be calling Ilya Rozanov their uncle.

"I'll punch him if he breaks your heart."

"You don't have to."

"I'll drown him in the lake."

“That’s really not necessary.”

They move towards the brightly lit cottage.

By the time they reach it, Hayden is still suggesting ways of getting rid of Rozanov, but Shane is no longer clutching onto his clothes like he’s stopping himself from fleeing.

So Hayden pretends it’s not the stuff of nightmares when Ilya fucking Rozanov kisses Shane’s cheek like it’s the most normal thing in the world.

Because apparently it is now.

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