

Dinner and Diatribes

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Dinner and Diatribes

by [GrasveBon](#)

Summary

Hayden and Jackie come over for dinner. Hayden and Ilya are at each other's throats and Shane is at his wit's end. What happens when Ilya tells everyone what he's really feeling?

Notes

This is a retelling of the "My Dinner with Hayden" short story by Rachel Reid, which is available to read for free on her website! Much of the dialogue is pulled directly from there, so I highly recommend checking that out if you haven't already!
<https://www.rachelreidwrites.com/news/2019/10/1>

I had the idea for this fic because Hayden's behavior in this short story made me *so* mad, and I felt like it was so unfair for Ilya to be expected to play nice with someone who didn't seem to care whether he did or not.

When Ilya returned, Shane and Jackie were standing near the hallway that led to the stairs. "I'm going to show Jackie the house," Shane said. Ilya could very clearly read the unspoken message in Shane's words, Stay here and bond with Hayden.

Shane exhaled heavily when he reached the top of the stairs, stepping to the side. Jackie met him on the landing and he immediately jumped into action, gesturing at the door on his left. "Okay! So, this is the first guest--"

Jackie cut him off with a gentle hand on his outstretched arm and a knowing look. "Are you okay?" She asked gently, withdrawing her hand as Shane deflated. "I know tonight is important for you, and I'm sorry Hayden is acting like this."

Shane shook his head and scrubbed a hand over his face, "It's not just Hayden, though. Ilya is intentionally riling him up, he's acting like a child." Jackie hummed thoughtfully, tilting her head side to side. "A little bit, but Hayden isn't giving him a chance. And for what it's worth, Rozanov seems sweet. When it comes to you, at least."

Shane felt his lips involuntarily curving in an affectionate smile, "You think so? I don't think I've ever heard anyone describe Ilya as *sweet* before, but." He paused, dipping his head shyly. "He really can be."

Jackie laughed good-naturedly, then glanced consideringly down the stairs. "I know it was... a shock for Hayden. For me too, but he had built Roza--" she cut herself off with a smile "*Ilya* up in his head as the enemy. He would kill me if I said this in front of him, but he's worried that you're going to get your heart broken, and instead of handling his emotions and giving Ilya a chance, like an *adult*," she and Shane shared a laugh,

"He's trying to, I don't know, protect you? All he's really doing is making an ass of himself though, and he will be getting an earful from me on the way home." She smiled wryly, then sobered and patted Shane's arm comfortingly. "But really, it'll be okay. They both love you too much to make you miserable by staying at each other's throats like this. And maybe leaving them alone for a few minutes will make them play nice for once."

Shane felt a little teary despite himself, and pulled Jackie easily into a firm hug. “Thank you.” He murmured, “For being here for me, and for saying all that.” He pulled back, “It means a lot.” Jackie gave him a watery smile, wiping delicately at her eyes as she stepped back from their hug.

“Okay!” She clapped her hands together once, as though shaking off the moment, “Let’s go back downstairs and make sure your boyfriend hasn’t killed my husband.” She chuckled, “I would say to make sure that they haven’t killed each other, but we both know who would win that fight.” She winked cheekily at Shane, who laughed and shook his head.

They turned to descend the stairs, and Shane hoped that Ilya and Hayden had found some common ground and hadn’t just sat in silence the last several minutes. As they started down the stairs, Shane heard voices from the living room and deliberately slowed his pace. Jackie silently matched him, and they shared a wary look.

Hayden’s voice reached him first, sounding tense and accusatory, “-kidding here? You obviously aren’t, y’know, *gay*.” A knot formed in Shane’s stomach, before Ilya’s voice replied, mockingly exasperated, “You have not heard of bisexuals?”

Shane couldn’t help but snort under his breath at that. Hayden replied “Bisexual, huh?” and Shane had to roll his eyes at the suspicion in his voice. He glanced at Jackie, whose lips were pressed into a thin line, looking as irritated as he was beginning to feel.

“Some people like apples. Some people like oranges. Some people like apples and oran—”

“Oh fuck you. I know what it means.” Shane winced at the vitriol in Hayden’s voice. They reached the bottom of the stairs, and Shane silently held a hand out to stop Jackie from interrupting. He wanted to give them a chance to work this out themselves before intervening.

“Then you know I can sleep with a million women and still fall in love with your best buddy Shane.” Shane smiled despite himself, the way he always did hearing those words in Ilya’s smooth accent. Hayden’s response, however, quickly drove the smile from his face.

“Do you have *any* idea of what it will do to him if this secret gets out?” He said it as though the idea was clearly something Ilya had never considered or cared about, and Shane wanted to scream. Ilya had just as much to lose if their secret got out, possibly more if you considered his Russian citizenship.

Ilya snorted, “Yes. I have thought about it a bit.” Shane’s mind was reeling, of *course* Ilya had fucking thought about it. He hadn’t yet recovered from that when he heard Hayden retort, sounding righteously indignant, “I won’t let you hurt him.”

He shared a withering look with Jackie, who seemed to be getting more nervous as the conversation went on. Shane shook his head and held up one finger. *Give it one minute. Maybe they'll work it out.* And if not, he and Jackie would break it up.

Ilya's voice pulled his attention back, as he replied to Hayden matter-of-factly, “Okay.”

“I’m serious.” Hayden retorted sharply, then Shane heard the unmistakable sound of someone's hands hitting another person, feet stumbling in response. He was around the corner and standing in the entryway without another thought, eyes blazing.

“Are you guys fucking kidding me?” Shane snapped, and was gratified to see both of their heads whipping towards him instantly. “Like, are you guys serious right now?”

Ilya looked regretful, at the very least, until he opened his mouth to reply, “He started it.” and Shane’s blood *boiled*.

He pointed at Ilya, “Do you know how long I have been wanting to do this? To introduce you to my friends as my boyfriend? Hayden and Jackie are my *best friends* and you are being an asshole.”

“Fucking right,” Hayden said smugly, as though his behavior hadn’t been even worse than Ilya's.

Shane whipped towards him, “And you! You’re acting like I met Ilya yesterday or something. Just because you only found out about us recently doesn’t mean our relationship is new. It’s pretty fucking solid, even if you don’t want to believe it. Even if you don’t want to consider the fact that we have been keeping this thing a secret for almost ten fucking years now!”

Hayden looked shellshocked, mouth opening and closing as he sputtered “Shane, I-”

But Shane was on a roll now, overwhelmed by an entire fucking night of listening to two of his favorite people in the world snipe at each other for no good reason.

“Do you know how scared I’ve been this whole time? Do you know how fucking terrifying it is to feel attracted to your archrival when you are eighteen and your rival also happens to be a man?”

Ilya was staring, his hands outstretched towards Shane like he wanted to offer comfort, but Shane needed to just get this out.

“I have been so fucking scared and alone for so goddamned long and tonight was supposed to end some of that and you guys are acting like children. Fuck both of you.”

The silence in the room was *loud* as everyone processed what had just happened. Hayden sagged where he stood, like a puppet with his strings cut, then Ilya cleared his throat and took a deep breath.

He glanced at Hayden, then Jackie, who stood behind Shane glaring daggers at her husband. His expression turned resolute, and he said calmly, “Shane. I *am* sorry that tonight has not gone the way you wanted. I know that I could have been nicer, could have tried to be charming. Maybe that was even the right thing to do.”

Shane snorted, arms crossed over his chest. Ilya clearly wasn’t finished yet, so he waited patiently.

“I know that these are your best friends. I know that you want me to like them and them to like me. Jackie, you seem lovely, from what I have seen, and I hope you do not hold tonight against me for too long. But Shane, I know that Hayden made the choice to hate me long ago, and I am not going to... what is English phrase, bend my back? To get to know someone who never had interest in giving me a chance to begin with.”

Hayden was beginning to look particularly red-faced and shameful, and Shane was beginning to realize that maybe he hadn't considered Ilya's feelings the way he should have.

Ilya paused, his hand rising to his crucifix and fidgeting with it mindlessly. Shane knew he did that when he was nervous.

“I love you, Shane, and I am glad that your friends know now, that you have people to talk with, to help you be less alone. I do not want to come in the way of this, and if Hayden,” Ilya cut his eyes sharply towards the man in question, who was beginning to look quite overwhelmed, “Would like to discuss what is his actual problem with me, like *grown-ups*, I would be glad to.”

Ilya paused and Shane let out a shaky breath before he continued, “But if he is only here to find more reason to hate me, more reason to doubt our relationship, I am not interested in being nice. We do not owe anyone an explanation of our relationship, and I should not have to go on trial to prove that I am worth your time.”

He exhaled heavily, then turned to Hayden, his eyes stern. “Just because you love him too does not mean you get to decide who is good for him. You do not know me.”

Shane realized all at once that Ilya looked exhausted, and grappled with the weight of knowing that all night, Ilya had felt like he was being asked to prove to Shane's friends that he was worthy of Shane's love.

The silence stretched on too long as Shane processed that he had put his boyfriend into a truly uncomfortable situation and expected him not to lash out, even if he felt it was in self-defense.

Hayden abruptly broke Shane's stunned contemplation, "I'm sorry," he said quietly, his eyes darting between Shane and Ilya, "to both of you."

"Jackie warned me before we came here that I needed to keep an open mind, and she was right." He sighed heavily, and locked eyes with Shane,

"I came in here determined to find something that would make it so I could tell you to dump him, because I had it in my head that there was no way you and him could possibly have a real relationship, and that he was going to hurt you and then I'd have to fight him to the death or something. I should have trusted that your standards are at least a little better than that." He smiled apologetically.

Ilya chimed in, "I would win that fight. Lucky for you, if I had hurt Shane I would let you kill me."

The joke seemed to break some of the tension, and Hayden huffed in reluctant amusement while Jackie made a quiet "aww" sound. Shane swallowed heavily, but smiled at Ilya and Hayden.

Hayden finally continued, "I'm realizing that there's a lot about your life that I don't know, Shane, and that's hard for me because I thought we knew basically everything about each other. Still, I took that out on Rozanov and your relationship with him, and that wasn't fair to you. I'll do better."

Hayden glanced at Ilya and pursed his lips, "I still think he's an asshole, though."

Shane huffed a laugh and replied "I mean he is, but like. The lovable kind."

Ilya sputtered in exaggerated offense while Shane and Hayden laughed. Jackie moved past Shane, finally stepping into the room and glancing between the three men. "Alright, has everyone gotten their feelings out? Are we done with fighting and sorries?"

Shane, Ilya, and Hayden all nodded, still laughing. Ilya wiped surreptitiously at his eyes.

Shane looked around the room, smiling, "I bought cookies for dessert, let me go grab them, I want to tell you guys about the Irina Foundation."

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