

Hayden Pike might be stupid, actually

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Hayden Pike might be stupid, actually

by [halfbaked_ziti](#)

Summary

Hayden knew he wasn't stupid.

Well, not completely. Well, he felt like he was pretty smart about some things, and, okay, a little oblivious about others. Still, he liked to think he was pretty far from stupid—especially when compared to his fellow hockey players.

Like, he'd known that Shane had that off-and-on thing with that girl in Boston, Lily, for years. He didn't know much more than that, and he especially didn't know why Shane was so cagey about it, but his best friend was admittedly pretty weird about everything.

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Slight AU where Shane comes out to Hayden and J.J. around the time he breaks up with Rose, but Lily's identity remains a secret. For now.

Notes

It's been at LEAST a decade since I've even written a fanfic, much less posted one. But hey, this fucking show.

I wrote this in one sitting because these two (my close personal friends Shane and Ilya) are the only thing I can think about. Written pre-episode 5, so based on book canon. Not beta read, so please publicly shame me in the comments if you catch any errors.

Also, I'm on a one-human quest to reclaim the em dash for us real people if it's the last thing I do. Fuck AI.

EDIT: Wow, thank you all for the kudos and kind words. I don't usually show my writing to anyone so all the positive feedback from strangers has been extremely validating. See y'all at the cottage heyyyyyyyyyyyyyy

Hayden knew he wasn't stupid.

Well, not completely. Well, he felt like he was pretty smart about some things, and, okay, a little oblivious about others. Still, he liked to think he was pretty far from stupid—especially when compared to his fellow hockey players.

Like, he'd known that Shane had that off-and-on thing with that girl in Boston, Lily, for years. He didn't know much more than that, and he especially didn't know why Shane was so cagey about it, but his best friend was admittedly pretty weird about everything.

Hayden had tried asking Shane about Lily, once. He hadn't thought he was doing anything inappropriate, but Shane had completely panicked, turning bright red and stammering something incoherent about not knowing a Lily, but also that they were just friends, and that it was none of Hayden's business, before spinning on his heels and darting out of the hotel room so quickly you'd think he was trying to set a record.

Okay, fine. His so-called best friend was such an intensely private person that he wasn't even willing to share basic details about the girls he was seeing. Or, Hayden supposed, girl—he wasn't sure he could remember Shane *ever* being involved with or even expressing interest in anyone besides this mysterious Lily.

And yeah, it hurt. But Shane was his best friend, and a weirdly closed-off guy in general, so Hayden didn't press. Not even when Shane got back later that day, obviously distressed, wearing a completely different outfit than he'd left the hotel in. He figured that if Shane wanted to talk about it, he would, and that all Hayden could do was be there for him when that time came.

The thing with Rose Landry threw him completely for a loop. Their relationship was just so...public, so completely unlike Shane, and it had seemed to come out of nowhere. Something had to have shifted, for Shane to have gone from covertly meeting up with one girl every couple months for *years* to a very public whirlwind relationship with a verified A-Lister, but if there was something more going on with Shane, he still wasn't talking to Hayden about it. He still didn't seem fully himself, either. He was even more subdued than usual, and even his play was starting to suffer. Hayden actually liked Rose quite a bit—the few times he had met her, she had been funny, warm, and down-to-earth, exactly the sort of girl that he would have picked out for Shane—but it seemed clear that something was missing, that Shane still wasn't fully happy, and that whatever was going on, he still wasn't going to talk to Hayden about it.

When Hayden tried to ask Jackie how she felt about everything, she just snorted and reminded him that Shane's love life was none of his business. Hayden supposed she was right, but he couldn't help it if he worried about his best friend. Shane still wasn't talking to him about his relationships, but Hayden got the sense that whatever he had had with Lily had been serious, more serious than Hayden had realized, and must have ended pretty badly, for Shane to rebound as hard as he had.

“You still hear from Lily, ever?” Hayden risked asking once, a week before they were due to play in Boston. Shane turned bright red and choked a piece of grilled chicken.

“What? No! I mean—who? I mean...no,” he stammered once he was done coughing. “Why would you ask me that?”

Hayden shrugged. “Just curious, man, sorry for bringing it up.” He *was* sorry—he hadn’t meant to make Shane uncomfortable, but the man had gone from bright red to white as a sheet in an instant. “I know you’re with Rose now, and I know you’re pretty private about this stuff, but I always had the sense that your thing with Lily was pretty serious, so I guess I was kind of surprised when it seemed like you just, y’know. Broke up out of the blue. And I never really checked up on you, because I didn’t want to pry, but I feel like a shitty friend for that, since it seemed like that relationship really meant a lot to you, and even if you’re happy with Rose it’s gotta be hard to go from...whatever...to full no-contact. So, I guess I’m just...checking in. And you don’t have to tell me anything,” he added hastily, because Shane was looking at him like he might bolt, “just wanted to make sure you know I’m here for you, bud.”

Shane took a deep breath, looking agonized as he twisted a napkin around in his shaking hands. “Il—Lily wasn’t anything,” he said, sounding as though he was trying to convince himself. “Could never be anything. We both knew that, and it was stupid to pretend otherwise. I’m with Rose now, and I’m happy.” He said the last part like a mantra, as if saying it out loud enough times would make it true.

“Whatever you say, man,” is all Hayden said to his very obviously unhappy best friend, because he was a coward.

He was not particularly surprised when Shane and Rose abruptly broke up not long after. She was great, but to him at least it was obvious that she had only ever been a rebound.

At least the breakup had seemed amicable enough, and Shane was somewhat back to his usual self, but Hayden could tell there was still something missing. He still seemed...subdued.

And a few days later, Shane had called and invited him and J.J. out for a drink in a very un-Shane way, and Hayden had to admit he was worried. It wasn’t like Shane was a complete shut-in, but he rarely went out during the season, and *never* initiated plans like this. The text had been worrying, too, with its vague wording and slightly ominous tone.

Shane was already sitting down at a booth when Hayden arrived, clutching a can of ginger ale. He looked like he was going to be sick.

“You alright there, bud?” Hayden asked, slapping him on the shoulder as he sat down. Shane started.

“Fine,” he said tersely. “I needed to—it’s not a big deal, I guess, or like it is, but—you know what, let’s just wait for J.J..”

Hayden gave his friend a bemused smile and went up to the bar to order a beer. Poor guy was just so tightly wound, all the time.

J.J. was sitting down by the time Hayden returned to the table with a pitcher and three glasses. Shane didn't usually drink during the season, but he was behaving so oddly that Hayden felt a beer or two might be in order, if only just to lighten the mood.

"So, what's so important that you had to call a besties meeting?" J.J. joked, pouring himself a beer. Shane, already staring a hole in the table, flushed an even deeper shade of red. Hayden noticed his hands were trembling slightly on his ginger ale.

"I need to tell you guys something," he said in a rush, "and I h-hope it's not a big deal, that you don't see me any differently, because you two are my best friends and I-I couldn't handle if—" he trailed off, taking a huge, gulping breath.

"Shane, buddy, you can tell us anything," Hayden said, hoping he sounded gentle and accepting, praying that Shane wasn't about to cop to a gambling problem or doping or vehicular manslaughter or a secret family or—

"I'm gay," Shane blurted. "I'm—fuck. Yeah. That's it. I'm gay."

Hayden couldn't help it, he let out a short bark of relieved laughter. Relieved, mainly, because Shane's big secret wasn't anything bad, but also that Shane was finally opening up to him. Hayden had a feeling that this actually made a lot of things make sense.

"Are you laughing?" Shane asked, sounding crestfallen. Hayden clapped a hand over his mouth in horror.

"Shit, not like that, Shane, I'm sorry," he said frantically. "I'm not laughing at you, I would never do that, I'm really proud of you for telling us. I'm just relieved, you were acting so weird, I thought you were gonna tell us you had like a secret family or a drug problem or something...gay is great!"

Shane relaxed infinitesimally. Hayden poured a third glass of beer and pushed it his way, and it was a testament to how nervous Shane had been about this that he took it.

"Oui, Hollander, we support you," said J.J. earnestly. "Thank you for telling us. I do not think you have told many people?"

"No," Shane admitted. He was still staring resolutely at the table, but his face had returned to its normal color and his hands had loosened slightly on his drink. "No, I haven't. Just Rose and Il—one other person."

"Rose knows?" J.J. asked incredulously.

"Rose kinda helped me figure it out," Shane muttered sheepishly. "She's great."

"Y'know, this actually makes a lot of sense," Hayden said slowly. "I mean, you're a private guy generally, and of course you don't have to share anything you don't want to, but I admit I had wondered, why you never seemed to date anyone, or be interested in any women."

Even as he was saying it, Hayden realized that what he had said wasn't entirely accurate. It was true that Shane had never expressed much interest in women, or dated much of anyone... with one glaring exception.

"Wait, so what about that girl Lily?" he asked, at the exact same time that J.J. said, "You've told one other person?"

Shane finally made eye contact, his eyes snapping up to meet Hayden's with the same guilty deer-in-headlights look he got every time someone mentioned Lily.

"What?" he squeaked, and the realization hit Hayden like a ton of bricks.

Lily was a *dude*.

It all made sense. Shane's on again, off again Boston fling had been a man the whole time—no wonder he had felt the need for all the secrecy. How long had Shane known he was gay? How had he and this Lily even met? How must Shane feel, keeping such a huge secret for so long?

Hayden launched himself out of the booth and gave his best friend a hug. Shane was stiff in his arms at first, startled, but eventually relaxed into it. Neither of them were huge huggers, but Hayden needed him to know how loved he was, and how bad Hayden felt that he had been carrying this alone.

"We love you, Shane," he said once they had separated, settling back into his own seat. "I can't imagine how hard it's been for you, keeping this secret. And if you ever want to talk, about guys or whatever happened with Lily or-or whatever his real name is, we're here for you. We want to hear it."

"Or whatever his real name is," Shane echoed faintly, like he couldn't believe what Hayden was saying.

"I mean, Lily's a guy, right? Your old Boston hookup? Fake name to keep people off the scent, I assume?"

Shane was shaking his head, looking every bit as terrified as he had when Hayden first sat down. Hayden wasn't sure what he'd said to make him look so scared, again. The secret was out, wasn't it?

"I can't talk about that," he whispered. Hayden raised his hands in surrender.

"Okay, not going there," he said. "Is he also closeted, or something?"

"Stop," Shane ground out, eyes screwed shut like he was in pain. "It's not...it's complicated." Hayden and J.J. said nothing, just watched him sympathetically. Then something in Shane seemed to deflate, and he slumped against the table.

"Yes," he admitted, more to his drink than his friends. "I'm so tired of lying. Fuck. Yes, Lily is a-a man, also closeted, because of his job, that I used to see in Boston." Hayden didn't miss the way his voice cracked on the use of past tense. "We fucked up. *I* fucked up. We both

knew it could never be more than what it was, and I should have ended things years ago, but we kept hooking up, and then it got, I dunno, complicated, and I freaked out, and I bolted, and now we aren't anything." Shane's chin was trembling and Hayden realized with a pang that his best friend was about to start crying, here, in this bar.

Crying about his years-long gay situation that Hayden had been *completely* oblivious to. God, he was such a shitty friend.

"Oh, Shane," J.J. said gently, and they both watched a single tear make its way down Shane's cheek.

"I think I love him," Shane said, sounding impossibly young and impossibly vulnerable. Hayden had never seen this side of his best friend, before, and he supposed now he knew why. "But I don't think he feels the same way, and it would never, ever work, even if he did, and I would take even what we used to have, even if it isn't enough, but I can't even have that because I screwed everything up."

Hayden wished he could think of anything to say, instead of sitting there like a mute idiot.

"Chin up, brother," J.J. said gently. "Plenty of boy fish in the sea, yes? How good can this guy be, if he lets someone like you get away? Too much of a coward to be with you for real, hmm? Good riddance. We will find you another, who will give you the wholesome nerd love you deserve."

Shane choked out a laugh that sounded more like a sob. "I don't want anyone else," he admitted. "I want Il—I want *him*."

"Well, perhaps your Lily will realize one day what he is missing, and that he is a massive idiot who is in love with you because you are Shane Hollander and you are the best hockey player alive," J.J. said dismissively. That, at least, got a snort of laughter from Shane. "Until then, we cannot waste time thinking about this man who is so clearly a coward with terrible taste. We have a season to focus on! We play Boston next week, how are you going to pound Ilya Rozanov's ass into the ice if you are so preoccupied with your lost love?"

"Jesus, J.J., we gotta work on your phrasing," Hayden said, but all three of them were laughing and the tension had finally eased, even if Shane still looked a little lost inside his head.

Shane was lighter, after coming out to Hayden and J.J.. He still wasn't ready for the rest of the team to know, but it was clear to Hayden that just having *someone* know his secret had meant a lot. He smiled more, laughed more easily, and a cloud of tension that Hayden hadn't even noticed him carrying seemed to have lifted. Whatever funk the breakup with Lily had gotten him into even seemed to have abated somewhat, because he was even playing like himself again.

And, okay, Hayden had noticed Shane smiling at his phone an awful lot more. Clearly, he had met someone, and it was going well. Not that he had said anything to Hayden, but Hayden

figured Shane would talk about it when he was ready. It wasn't like he had to keep anything secret from Hayden, anymore.

"Come out for drinks with us later?" Hayden asked Shane after they wrapped up a game in Boston. Boston had won, but Montreal had managed not to embarrass themselves, and Hayden was feeling antsy. Besides, this was their first time back in Boston since Shane's thing with Lily had ended, and Hayden had a sneaking suspicion his friend would need a distraction.

"Maybe," Shane hedged, checking his phone for the dozenth time in the last five minutes. "I kind of...I thought I might have plans, but I guess not."

J.J. and Hayden exchanged a concerned look. Shane had disappeared for a bit before the game, and had been in a suspiciously good mood ever since, but now he was looking at his phone like it had personally betrayed him.

"That settles it," Hayden said firmly. "I'm tired of watching you make sad puppy eyes at your phone. Come grab a drink with us, and if whoever you're waiting on a text from hits you up, we'll let you ditch us, but what you're not gonna do is sit around in a hotel room waiting for your summons like some loser. You're *Shane fucking Hollander!* The boys should be flocking to you!"

"Keep your fucking voice down!" Shane hissed, but they had been moving slowly enough that they were the last three left in the locker room. "Fine. You're right, waiting around for a text is pathetic. Let me get changed."

J.J. whooped loudly and clapped Shane on the shoulder. Hayden turned towards his locker to grab his street clothes. He wasn't trying to snoop, but he couldn't stop himself from catching a glimpse of Shane's phone screen.

He had it open to a message thread, and Hayden couldn't read the contents of the thread but he could clearly see the four most recent messages, all from Shane, with no response. He could also see the contact name.

Shane was texting Lily, and Lily was ignoring him.

Hayden felt awful. Poor Shane, to be so hopelessly in love with some aloof Masshole who wouldn't even text him back. He really did deserve better.

Shane did not respond well when Hayden tried to tell him as much, later. Hayden had to admit that he probably had overstepped, but he couldn't help it.

"There's probably something else going on," Shane insisted. "I know you don't trust him, and I don't blame you, but you don't have the full story. He wouldn't just ghost me for no reason. Besides, he seemed totally normal at the, uh, earlier."

"You saw him earlier?" Hayden asked sharply. Shane flushed and muttered something that was probably a half-assed denial, then changed the subject.

Hayden had no idea who this Lily asshole was, given that Shane *still* wouldn't give them his real name, but he was rapidly coming to the conclusion that he did not like or trust this man at all. Shane deserved someone who was all in on him, who was willing and able to *commit*, because Shane was good and special and deserved the world, not someone closeted and inconsistently communicative at best and in another country to boot.

When Hayden tried to broach the topic with J.J., J.J. merely reminded him that Shane was *also* closeted, so it wasn't entirely Lily's fault, and also that Hayden was making a lot of assumptions about someone they knew *literally nothing* about, which he was forced to concede was fair. But he couldn't shake the feeling that there was still something Shane wasn't telling them about Lily, and none of the reasons he could think of for the continued secrecy made him feel any better. But Shane seemed happy, or at least happier than usual, so Hayden tried his best to mind his own business and let his friend figure out his love life on his own.

A few weeks later, they were back in Montreal, suiting up for a home game against Boston. Shane was buried in his phone, as he had been more and more lately.

"Feel like coming over after, watch a movie or something?" Hayden asked, chucking a sock at Shane to get his attention. Shane looked up from his phone, surprised, and chucked the sock right back.

"Don't think I can, sorry," he said with a small smile. "Got other plans."

"A date?" J.J. crowed, materializing on Shane's other side.

"Fuck you guys," he responded, but his blush gave him away.

"Get it, Hollander," was all J.J. said.

"With who? How'd you meet? First date or has this been going on a bit?" Hayden asked. He knew the questions would probably make Shane uncomfortable, but he was actually talking to them about a date, for once, and they were at home so it couldn't be Lily, and Hayden was allowed to be happy for a friend, thank you very much.

"Wouldn't you like to know," Shane replied, already buried in his phone again.

"Yes, Shane, we really would like to know," Hayden insisted. Shane just laughed and shook his head, locking his phone and sliding it into his cubby.

"Stop grilling me and get dressed, Pike, I'm still your captain," he said as he made his way out of the locker room for warmups.

"As long as it's not Lily," Hayden muttered to J.J., who raised his eyebrows in agreement.

Shane was in a good mood during warm ups, even exchanging a few words with Rozanov at center ice. Their conversation looked relatively civil, but Hayden still took it upon himself to check in.

“He’s not a bad guy,” Shane had said, unconvincingly. Hayden’s direct interactions with Rozanov had admittedly been limited, but he could say with certainty that he wasn’t a fan. Rozanov was rude, antagonistic, flashy, and had a reputation as a reckless womanizer that Hayden simply couldn’t get behind. He supposed he was lucky that he had met Jackie so young and that settling down had been easy for him, but he had trouble finding it in himself to respect men like Rozanov that treated women as accessories, or worse, disposable.

At the same time, Rozanov might be an asshole on the ice, but Hayden had never heard him say anything racist or homophobic, which he supposed counted for something. He seemed to know where the line was, at least, and even Hayden had to begrudgingly respect the man’s skill.

Shane loved playing against Boston, and Hayden assumed part of that was Lily, but even at home he had an extra level of enthusiasm when facing their rivals. Hayden wasn’t complaining—Shane was an exhilarating person to play with on his worst day, and borderline superhuman against Boston. They didn’t always win, the teams were too evenly matched for that, but it was always a good game.

This game had been going great until Cliff Marlow slammed Shane against the boards and Shane didn’t get up.

Hayden saw the hit in slow motion, saw Shane lying crumpled on the ice, and medics come running from the tunnel as the game came to an abrupt halt. He didn’t stop to think, just plowed across the ice to where his friend was lying motionless.

“Shane?” he said, kneeling in front of his friend and trying to sound calm.

“Hollander?” came a voice from behind him. Rozanov’s voice was barely recognizable, threaded through with something that sounded like the abject panic Hayden himself felt.

“Ilya?” Shane croaked. *Ilya?* The fuck? Since when were Shane and Rozanov on speaking terms?

“Is he all right?” Rozanov was *right there*, Jesus, why couldn’t he give them some space?

The paramedics arrived, finally, pushing everyone back, loading him onto a spinal board. Hayden could hardly breathe. Rozanov, to his left, didn’t look much better—he was flushed and his breathing was ragged and uneven. Shane muttered something else that Hayden couldn’t decipher, and Rozanov made a sound like a wounded animal.

“Is he all right?” He asked again. No one answered. The paramedics were already taking Shane away to the waiting ambulance, and all Hayden could do was watch.

“Rozanov, what the fuck was that?” Hayden hissed as soon as Shane and the paramedics had disappeared into the tunnel. Rozanov didn’t answer him. He looked like he was in shock, eyes staring unfocused in the direction that Shane had been taken. “Rozanov!”

“The fuck do you want, Pike?” Rozanov finally responded, without any of his normal bite. Hayden was stunned to realize that he sounded like he might cry.

“Since when are you and Shane on first-name terms?” Hayden demanded. He wasn’t sure why it mattered so much, just then, only that he was completely helpless and he needed to yell at someone.

“I do not have fucking time for your boring fucking questions right now, Pike,” Rozanov snapped. “I need to know is Shane okay?”

For a second they just stared at each other, neither man moving, until suddenly Rozanov let out a shuddering breath and seemed to sag against the boards. “Please,” he whispered, voice trembling, and Hayden was a good person, goddamnit, so he supposed the questions could wait. Rozanov was an asshole, but he was being decent right now, checking on a fellow captain, and it might be a bit overboard as far as sportsmanlike conduct went, but Hayden could hardly fault him for that.

“I’m going to the hospital as soon as the game is over. Want me to let you know how he’s doing?” he offered. Rozanov shook his head firmly.

“No. I am coming with you.”

“Like hell you are!”

“You do not want to pick this fight with me, Pike. I am coming to hospital.”

“He probably doesn’t even want you there,” Hayden protested.

Rozanov managed to stop looking like he was about to either pass out or throw up long enough to throw a ghost of a smirk in Hayden’s direction.

“You don’t know as much as you think you do, Pike,” he said. “Maybe Hollander wants to see me most of all. Is begging for me, even.”

“Fuck you, Rozanov, are you serious? My teammate just got carried off the ice on a fucking spinal board and you’re being a dick about it?”

Rozanov actually looked contrite at that. “Sorry,” he said quietly. “You are right. I am being an asshole because—is easier than being terrified. Please let me come with you, if Hollander says he doesn’t want me there, I leave immediately, but please.”

Hayden was shocked enough that Rozanov was actually *apologizing* to him for something that he found himself giving in.

“Fine,” he groaned. “Meet me in the parking lot after the game. You can come with me, but you’re going to shut up and play nice, because you’re still an asshole and I still don’t understand why you even give a shit.”

“You wound me, Pike, I am very nice guy. Good sport,” Rozanov retorted, albeit with none of his usual flair.

The rest of the game was a blur. Hayden played terribly, as did the rest of the Voyageurs, as, inexplicably, did Rozanov. Hayden was sure he showered and did postgame press, at some

point—at least he must have, because the next time he was aware of his surroundings he was walking up to his car to find a burly Russian already waiting. Hayden must have grabbed Shane's things at some point, too, because he was holding a bag with Shane's street clothes and phone in one hand.

"You can drive?" Rozanov asked. Hayden gave a terse nod and climbed into his car, opening the passenger side door for Rozanov. "Are you sure? Maybe never learned, stupid car like this."

"What part of shut up and play nice don't you understand, Rozanov?" Hayden snapped. "I didn't have to say yes to this. I still don't understand why you even care."

"Must be difficult, so many things you don't understand," said Rozanov, staring worriedly out the window as Hayden pulled out of the parking lot and turned in the direction of Montreal General.

"Fuck off, Rozanov," Hayden said without heat. They drove in silence for a few minutes, Hayden focusing on the road, Rozanov repeatedly refreshing his phone, until Rozanov swore quietly.

"Does Sh—Does Hollander have his phone? Has someone called his parents?" He asked suddenly.

"His parents were at the game, they're already at the hospital," Hayden replied. "I have his phone and his change of clothes with me. Actually, shit, that reminds me—Shane was supposed to have a date tonight. I should text, uh, them. Let 'em know he's not gonna make it."

Rozanov snorted. "You are fucking moron, Pike. It will be fine. Is all over news here. Do not bother meddling in boring Hollander's boring dating life. He would not appreciate that, I think."

"Yeah, because you know him so well," Hayden muttered, but Rozanov was right. Hayden spared a glance sideways. The other man was doing a decent impression of someone not about to jump out of their skin with worry, but Hayden could see that Rozanov's left leg was shaking and his jaw was tense as he clenched and unclenched his fists. However Rozanov felt about Shane generally, he did seem genuinely worried about him. More than Hayden would have expected from anyone on an opposing team, and definitely more than Hayden would have expected from Shane's sworn rival.

He was still going to text Shane's date, though.

They made it to the hospital in record time, Rozanov leaping out of the passenger seat as soon as Hayden put the car in park. Hayden grabbed Shane's stuff out of the backseat and hurried to catch up with him.

"Lemme send a quick text," he said, pulling Shane's phone out of the bag and saying a silent apology to his friend for the light violation of privacy. Shane would understand.

He opened Shane's phone—he didn't know the passcode on purpose, but Shane was always on that thing in Hayden's line of sight—and navigated to his recent messages. He wished he knew this dude's name, but figured it wouldn't be that difficult to figure it out from context clues.

Like...shit. Like Lily's thread being right at the top with a new notification alert. With dread pooling in his stomach, Hayden opened the conversation. Shane *really* needed to let this guy go, and instead he was, what? Having him come to Montreal? Maybe it was more serious than Hayden realized. He wondered why Shane wouldn't tell him. Maybe Hayden should have been nicer about Lily, more supportive? It wasn't his fault the guy was an asshole, but if Shane liked him enough to have him visit, well.

Shane: Suiting up RN. See you after?

Lily: Yes, after you lose I will come over and make you beg for it

Lily: Fuck. Are you ok

Lily: You probably have concussion and are not reading this but I need to know you are OK

Lily: Shane.....

Lily: If you are dead I will kill you. Hockey will be no fun without you

Lily: Was not funny joke I know. Please be ok

Hayden felt a bit sick. Lily sounded like an asshole, but he seemed to genuinely care about Shane's feelings. He typed out a quick text, making a mental note to apologize to Shane later.

Shane: Hey, Lily, it's Shane's friend Hayden. It sounds like you were probably watching the game, and saw Shane go down. I'm at the hospital now. I'm sorry he's not going to make your date tonight, but I'll let you know how he's doing as soon as I know something. Here's my number if you have any questions.

Rozanov's phone pinged with a notification. He looked down sharply, then back up at Hayden. "You're a fucking idiot, Pike," he said, then turned on his heel and strode into the hospital without another word. Hayden had no choice but to follow him, bemused.

The nurse at the reception desk didn't look too enthusiastic about giving out Shane's room number, but Hayden turned on his most charming smile and eventually they were hurrying down a brightly lit hallway to a private room. Shane's door was ajar, but apart from him it was empty. His arm was in a sling, but he was awake.

"Shane," Rozanov gasped, crossing the hospital room in two big strides. Shane looked stunned to see him there.

"Ilya? Who—" he started, and then Rozanov was throwing his arms around him, careful not to jostle his injured arm, and then—oh holy everlasting *fuck*—kissing him on the forehead, the cheeks, the *lips*.

And, okay, Hayden was willing to concede that he might actually be a fucking idiot, because apparently his best friend had been hooking up with *Ilya fucking Rozanov* right under Hayden's nose for who knows how long.

Ilya. Lily. Jesus fucking Christ, how had it taken him that long to figure it out?

Well, he knew how—because the idea was so absurd that Hayden had never even considered the possibility. As far as he knew, they barely interacted beyond their on-ice rivalry, and besides, Rozanov had always given off a very strong heterosexual vibe.

There was nothing heterosexual about the way he was murmuring and stroking Shane's hair right now, though.

Hayden figured he should do something besides stand in the doorway like a fucking idiot. He awkwardly cleared his throat and shuffled into the room, closing the door gently behind him. Shane's eyes met his as he seemingly registered for the first time that he and Rozanov weren't alone.

"Hayden," he squeaked. "I—Rozanov was just—"

"We'll talk about it later," Hayden said, sparing his friend the indignity of scrambling for a completely unconvincing lie. "How are you feeling?"

Shane tried to shrug, then winced. Hayden might have been surprised that Shane didn't seem to be in more pain, but it was evident from the goofy grin on his face and the looseness in his limbs that he was on some heavy drugs. Rozanov looked alarmed from the spot he had claimed at the side of Shane's bed.

"Fineeeeeee," he said, drawing it out. "Concussed. Fractured collarbone. But I'll be okay. Sooooo okay. The okayest, because now Ilya's here."

"You had better, moya lyubov," Rozanov muttered sharply. "What would we do without second-best hockey player?"

"Ilya, please," Shane said, sounding, to Hayden's dismay, long-suffering and very much in love. "How are you even—oh, god, does everyone *know*?"

"No, no, nothing like that," Rozanov said soothingly. "Maybe yes if hockey players were less stupid. But we are lucky that we are the only two with brains. Pike here even texted Lily, very nice message, sorry you cannot make your date tonight." He huffed out a laugh. "I am standing right there, telling Pike he is a fucking idiot, and still he does not catch on. Maybe now, but I cannot be sure." He winked at Hayden. "Maybe I kiss all my rival captains on the mouth."

Hayden and Shane blanched in tandem. Rozanov chuckled. Hayden noticed that he was gripping Shane's good hand with one of his, and gently stroking his hair with the other. Shane looked more relaxed than Hayden had ever seen him, which could surely be at least partially attributed to the drugs, but he was gazing up at Rozanov like he held the answers to all the secrets in the universe.

Hayden cleared his throat awkwardly, and Rozanov and Shane broke their reverie long enough to look at him, clearly having forgotten that he was even there.

“I guess I’ll just...head out,” he said lamely. “Uh, Rozanov, nice to—I mean—you guys just —” he trailed off, unsure what to even say to your best friend’s...whatever. Sworn nemesis-slash-secret boyfriend? Hayden’s head hurt. He wanted to talk to Jackie.

“Thank you for bringing me, Pike,” Rozanov said, sounding more serious than Hayden had ever heard him. “You are stupid and bad at hockey, but you are good friend to Shane.”

Shane grinned goofily up at Rozanov. “He’s not stupid,” he protested.

“So you’ll stand up for me when he calls me stupid, but not when he says I’m bad at hockey? Thanks, bro,” Hayden scoffed.

“Hey, Pike, weren’t you just leaving?”

“Yeah, Pike, weren’t you just leaving?” Shane echoed with an uncharacteristic giggle.

“Okay, hint taken,” Hayden said. “Don’t think I don’t have questions for you both, but Shane, I’m glad you’re okay. And for what it’s worth, I’m glad you have...him. He clearly makes you happy.”

Shane grinned even bigger and rubbed his cheek against Rozanov’s arm. Rozanov gave Hayden a small nod of acknowledgement. Hayden let himself out of the room and gently closed the door behind him to give the two men a moment of privacy.

Holy fuck. He needed to call Jackie. She was going to *die*.

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