

Another Dinner with the Pikes (and Why Did I Agree to This?)

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Another Dinner with the Pikes (and Why Did I Agree to This?)

by [Icyhot_Kem](#)

Summary

Hayden doesn't know how his life had come to this point, standing in front of his oven watching four fillets of salmon cook as he waits for Ilya fucking Rozanov to enter his house.

"I can't fucking do this," he mutters to the empty kitchen, staring at the tray of asparagus and baby potatoes on the countertop, hoping they have an answer to all of his current issues.

They do not.

Or Hayden promised he'd try his best and somehow that meant getting roped into having another dinner with Ilya Rozanov of all people.

Notes

This is technically a part two, to my first work in this series but can definitely be read as a standalone as well.

Timeline is a bit ambiguous mix of book and tv but is mainly set sometime soon after "My Dinner with Hayden"

Also, not too great at the English language and English grammar continues to elude me, so apologies for what is likely many grammar mistakes.

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

Hayden doesn't know how his life had come to this point, standing in front of his oven watching four fillets of salmon cook as he waits for Ilya fucking Rozanov to enter his house.

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They decidedly do not.

He was about three seconds away from calling the whole thing off. One easy phone call and—poof—no dinner. While the last dinner may have ended okayish, it started out as a shitshow, and he had absolutely zero interest in signing up for a sequel. It'd be easy, call Shane and make up some excuse. Say Ruby and Jade had the flu, very contagious and just tragically timed. Or the house caught fire, smoke damage everywhere, hardly a place fit for guests. Maybe aliens had come down and had decided to take his family hostage.

Really, there are so many options, anything would beat spending the next three or so hours in the company of Ilya Rozanov.

God, why the fuck did he promise Shane this?

Deep down, he knows why. Because the look on Shane's face and the break in his voice when he asked Hayden not to be disgusted by him, not to be disappointed, had been enough to split Hayden open. It cracked his heart straight down the middle and let everything ugly and raw spill out. He could have died right there, from the pain etched across his best friend's face, and it would have felt deserved, too for causing that look, for planting the doubt that made Shane believe, even for a second, that Hayden might ever see him in a different way.

So instead of calling Shane and claiming they'd need to reschedule because an alien spaceship had beamed down and locked them all up, Hayden opened the oven door instead. He pulled out the salmon fillets, set them on the counter, and waited for the doorbell to ring.

Minutes later when the shrill sound eventually made its way through the house, Hayden still wasn't ready for it.

Fuck.

He'd never hated the fact that Arthur needed at least two stories read to him before he could finally sleep more than now, because if he had to go face Rozanov in his own home and play *nice* he'd at least like his wife by his side already.

Reluctantly, Hayden made his way over to the door, dragging his feet along the way. He took a deep breath as he pulled it open, knowing that this would be the last moment of peace he would be feeling for the night until Rozanov was out of his vicinity.

"Hey," Shane says, and the nerves lighting up his body are impossible to miss. They hum just beneath his skin, visible in the tightness of his shoulders, the way his smile doesn't quite settle. The sight of it tugs Hayden out of his mood, grounding him, reminding him exactly why he's doing this in the first place.

This is for Shane.

“Hey buddy, come on in,” he says, opening the door wider, allowing Shane and Rozanov to make their way into the house. The creak of the wood as he eases it shut makes him wince, hoping the noise wasn’t loud enough to carry its way over to where all the kids were hopefully sound asleep.

Unfortunately, Rozanov is watching him a little too closely and catches the wince anyway.

“Sore from earlier hit yesterday Pike? So sorry, I know it hurts getting hit by best player in the league,” the cocky tone dripping from those words only infuriate Hayden further, and he’s about to tell Rozanov where he can really shove it, before Shane intervenes.

Hayden watches as Shane jabs an elbow into Rozanov's side and grits out the word “behave.”

“I am,” Ilya says defensively, holding up his hand in surrender. Hayden can sense the insincerity from miles away. “Was only making sure Pike wasn’t too injured, can’t have 15th best Montreal player become 16th best.”

Fuck being *nice*, “Well, you know what asshole-” luckily, before Hayden could go on and say more things, he’d probably end up regretting later, Jackie appears at his side. Her hand slips around his arm, fingers curling gently into his bicep, the squeeze equal parts comfort and warning. A reminder to not start anything, even if it was Rozanov coming for the attack first. He knows better than to ignore it though. Hayden bites his tongue and falls silent, though not without a low, unmistakable grumble of annoyance rumbling in his chest.

“Hi, guys,” she says, stepping forward to pull Shane into a hug, warm and familiar. When she turns to Ilya, she pauses for just a moment before leaning in and wrapping him in a quick embrace as well. “Sorry,” she adds with a small, apologetic smile, “Arthur always takes a while to finally settle down.”

Hayden hopes that’s the end of this awkward greeting and is ready to direct everyone over to the dinner table, until Rozanov pulls a bag out behind his back.

“Ah yes,” he says with a smile on his face that Hayden was not used to seeing. “The little Pikes, I brought gifts.”

“Oh Ilya, that’s so sweet you didn’t have to.”

“No no. Have to make sure they end up liking me more than *uncle Shane*,” the last words are drawn out and directed with a teasing tone towards the man in question. Hayden looks over, expecting some eye-roll or at least a bit of mild annoyance, but what meets his gaze is something softer: Shane rolling his eyes, yes, but with a slow, fond grin spreading across his face.

God Hayden wasn’t gonna make it through the night without puking at least once

“I told him he didn’t have to, but he insisted it was needed for a good impression,” Shane said with a small, knowing smile, as Rozanov shifted the weight of the giant bag and handed

it over to Jackie. The bag thudded softly into her arms, and she let out a brief laugh, half amusement, half disbelief at just how much had been crammed inside.

Hayden had expected Jackie to pull out four mini jerseys with the name Rozanov on the back of each one and was *reluctantly* surprised when, instead, she pulled out two mini hockey sticks.

“Oh my god, these are so cute! The girls are gonna freak.”

If Hayden didn’t know any better, he might say a faint blush was dusting Rozanov’s cheeks with color, but that would mean he was feeling something other than his usual arrogance and relentless desire to provoke. And if Hayden were living in a world where that was even possible... well, then he’d have no idea what reality was anymore.

The next thing Jackie pulled out was a Duplo set for Arthur, and Hayden once again found himself begrudgingly hating the fact that it was a good gift, something Arthur would inevitably obsess over for hours. Then came Amber’s gift.

Honestly, it was Hayden’s fault for not expecting this, “Really Rozanov.”

Because there held in Jackie’s hands was a little brown teddy bear wearing none other than a fucking Rozanov jersey.

He can see Jackie pressing her lips together, trying to tamp down a smile. He’s glad she’s having a good time because Hayden himself can feel his left eye starting to twitch.

“What’s wrong pike? Children like stuffed animals, no?” He says a shit-eating grin plastered on his face. “Besides, this is last pike baby, have to make sure she knows whose number since others were brainwashed.”

Shane should be really happy right now that Hayden doesn’t just deck Rozanov right across the face. Instead, he just grumbles under his breath and makes his way to the kitchen to start plating their food. As he starts moving the vegetables over, making sure to give Rozanov the most burned pieces he can find, he hears footsteps making their way through the kitchen opening. At first, he’s expecting Jackie to materialize by his side, so he’s a bit surprised when, instead he sees Shane leaning on the counter next to him.

He looks so painfully awkward standing there, clearly wanting to say something but keeping his mouth shut and watching Hayden move around the kitchen to grab a bottle of wine instead. Hayden’s spent enough time around Shane these past many years to know that asking is only gonna cause him to clam up even more, so he instead rummages through the drawer for a bottle opener, giving Shane the time and space to wait him out.

Just as Hayden got the bottle open and four wine glasses pulled from the cabinet and ready to be carried out over to the dinner table, Shane finally decides to open his mouth.

“Thanks,” he said, still looking down at the floor, resolutely not making any actual eye contact with Hayden.

“For what?”

Shane lets out a soft huff of air before sliding back to stand beside him, fingers deftly rearranging the wine glasses so he can hold them securely in both hands. “For doing this,” he says, his voice quiet. “I know you’re not his biggest fan—”

“An understatement,” Hayden mutters under his breath, the words barely audible, but the sharp glance Shane shoots in his direction makes it painfully clear that he caught every syllable anyway. The corner of Shane’s mouth quirks in a mix of amusement and exasperation.

“*But* I’m happy you’re trying.” The shy little smile Shane has on his face as he lets out the words is enough to let any snide remark left on Hayden’s tongue die down.

“Yeah, well, anything for my best buddy,” he responds back, softly bumping his shoulder into Shane’s. “I meant what I’d said before, I’m gonna do my best to support you here. Even if supporting you means having to spend my Friday night with Rozanov, off all people, I guess.”

Shane doesn’t say much in response, but the look on his face tells Hayden that it’s appreciated, that things are settled between them. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the tight knot of tension Hayden hadn’t realized he’d been carrying in his chest begins to loosen, unraveling strand by strand until a surprising sense of calm seeps in, leaving him lighter than he’s felt in hours.

He can’t let Shane think he’s completely cooled on Rozanov, though. So, as he trails Shane out of the kitchen and toward the dining room—four plates miraculously balanced in his hands—he leans close and whisper-shouts at him.

“But I swear to god if he ever actually brings my kids’ jerseys with his name on the back, he’s not leaving this house without a black eye.”

The snort he gets from Shane in response is very much not appreciated; he’s being one hundred percent serious.

Another thing that’s not appreciated is the way his wife and Rozanov are sitting next to each other at the table, fucking cooing over whatever Jackie’s showing him on her phone.

“She is very cute, Pike’s genetics did not do any work,” Rozanov says in response to what Hayden assumes are pictures of Amber, who’d recently started walking and whose goal in life was to give her father an early heart attack.

“Fuck you,” Hayden says back, though with slightly less fire than usual. He moves to set everybody’s plate down on the table, and when his eyes land on Rozanov’s plate, he can’t help the faint, private smile tugging at his lips; the baby potatoes are just a little too dark, edges crisped and slightly burnt.

If he can't actually punch the guy, this'll have to do.

Shockingly, the dinner seems to be going okay, most of the time spent talking about upcoming games, and Jackie talking about how Jade and Ruby are excited to start their first hockey lessons, although Jackie a bit less so.

"I'm excited for the girls, especially with seeing how much they want this," Jackie says while leaning to pick up her glass of wine. "But after having spent this many year's watching you guys play and witnessing the sheer amount of times you guys lose a tooth or come back covered in bruises, I'm not exactly eager to send the girls out on that ice."

Hayden's about to tell her for the umpteenth time that the girls will be *fine* and that no one is gonna come home with a broken tooth when, surprisingly, Rozanov moves to talk.

"Ehh, it is the baby hockey league," Rozanov says, waving his hands as if the motions can somehow make his point clearer. "All they do is stumble on skates and try to hold their sticks right. It's the—" He pauses mid-gesture, searching for the word, before turning to Shane, as if expecting him to fill in the blank.

To Hayden's quiet surprise, Shane doesn't even glance at Rozanov. He simply says, "Novice league," filling in the word perfectly, effortlessly. Rozanov doesn't skip a beat, continuing on as if nothing happened, and Hayden finds himself blinking, momentarily dumbfounded. He can't help but pause and actually think about the silent understanding that exists between them, the easy familiarity that makes Hayden stumble.

For years, Hayden had wanted Shane to find someone. Shane always insisted he didn't need it—hockey was enough, he'd say, the only thing that really mattered in his life—and that dating was pointless because no one could ever understand it the way he did. Deep down, Hayden knew it probably felt a little lonely. All he had ever wanted was for Shane to have someone by his side, someone who could make him genuinely happy. He didn't want to believe that someone could be Rozanov. Rozanov was an asshole, loud, infuriating, and reckless, not the kind of person Hayden thought would protect Shane's heart. And yet Hayden was starting to realize, although reluctantly, that maybe he had been a tad bit wrong.

Logically, he guesses it makes sense. Who else could understand Shane's obsession with hockey and the relentless drive to be the best but his decided "rival". The one guy always said to be his equal, the one who fought tooth and nail just to challenge him. And now Hayden is starting to see the other side, too: the guy who somehow calms Shane down, who fits with him in ways that don't need words, finishing sentences, reading glances, filling in gaps effortlessly.

For the first time, Hayden kind of understands. Not fully, he still can't claim to know what Shane actually sees in Rozanov, but he can see the connection, the quiet pull between them, the way Shane relaxes in Rozanov's presence. For the first time, Hayden can admit, without entirely realizing it, that it kind of works.

Great, just when he thinks this night can't get worse, he finds himself thinking they're kind of *cute*.

God, he thinks to himself, this is disgusting

Before he can think about this any further and actually spiral into a place where he won't come back from, he quickly tunes himself back into the conversation being had around him.

"Don't worry, Jackie," Shane says, the right side of his mouth quirking up a bit. "The only thing getting their teeth any time soon will be the tooth fairy."

Jackie laughs at that, reaching for the bottle of wine placed in the middle of the table to top of her glass. "God don't remind me, one of the kids in their class just lost his first tooth, and the girls are already asking me how much I think the fairy is going to bring them."

"The fuck is a tooth fairy?" Rozanov says, and for a second Hayden can't help the snort of laughter that comes out over the confusion on his face.

"What tooth fairy never left you a dollar Rozanov?"

Shane must sense the total confusion written all over Rozanov's face, because he chimes in with an explanation. "It's just something parents tell their kids. You lose a tooth, put it under your pillow, and at night the tooth fairy comes to take it... and leaves a dollar in return."

The look of confusion on Rozanov's face is entertaining enough that Hayden can't help but huff out another laugh. "Guess this is why you turned out so insufferable. Missing those dollars clearly did some real damage."

Rozanov scowls, shaking his head. "Fuck off, Pike. At least I didn't grow up thinking some magical fairy was sneaking into my room to steal my teeth." He pauses, gesturing vaguely. "First Canadian wolf birds, and now tooth-stealing fairy, this country is ridiculous."

Now it was Hayden's turn to glance over, brow furrowed in confusion, because what the hell was a Canadian wolf bird? Based on Shane's slight eye roll and the shake of his head, it was clear he wasn't going to get an answer to that one. With a resigned sigh, Hayden decided to ignore his confusion for the moment and pick up a piece of asparagus with his fork instead.

Slowly Dinner ended like that, strangely normal with the occasional jabs between himself and Rozanov, but none escalating to the level of the last dinner, and thankfully none requiring any intervention from Jackie or Shane, even if the urge to hit Rozanov just a little did come up sometimes.

They eventually began clearing the table when a sharp cry came through the baby monitor Jackie had set on the kitchen island, Amber awake and clearly not happy.

Jackie pushed back her chair and moved down the hallway toward the kids' rooms, her soft footsteps fading behind her. Suddenly, Hayden was left alone with Shane and Rozanov. Without Jackie there, Hayden felt as if he was left without a buffer; the room felt a little quieter, and Hayden found himself shifting slightly, not entirely sure of what to say.

"So," he started, trying to break the awkward quiet that had settled over them, cringing inwardly at his own inability to come up with anything to say next.

Shane, sensing his discomfort, seemed to take pity on him, bringing up the game Montreal had against the Admirals next week.

“It will be really sad if you do not win against Scott Hunter,” Rozanov said, eventually slinging an arm across the back of Shane’s chair. “He is hundred years old, even Montreal’s fifteenth best player should be able to score a goal against him.”

Every single time Hayden thinks he can kind of understand this relationship, Rozanov proves to him once again that he is in fact an asshole.

“God, you’re such an asshole,” Hayden snaps, leaning back in his chair and crossing his arms over his chest. “Let’s see if the Centaurs even manage to *score* a goal in their next game.”

Rozanov smirks, that infuriatingly cocky grin tugging at his lips. “Of course they will,” he says, voice dripping with arrogance. “Best player in the league is on their team now.” Hayden can practically feel the smugness radiating off him, the kind of grin he’d very much like to wipe off Rozanov’s face with his fist.

“Let’s wait to see you say that again at the end of the season when the centaurs come out ranked dead last in the standings.”

Infuriatingly, Rozanov merely waves off his words. “Whatever, our game will still be more interesting than boring Montreal playing against boring New York Admirals.”

Rozanov moves the hand resting across Shane’s chair up higher to play with the hair resting on the nape of his neck, winding the shorter strands around his finger, a mischievous look spreading over his face as he speaks next. “Maybe Shane can start another fight with Scott Hunter, make the game a bit more interesting,” he says, pulling on the hair just a bit.

Shane blushes, whether from the gesture or Rozanov’s words, Hayden doesn’t know, nor does he want to know, but the reminder of that fateful game has Hayden curious.

“God yeah, almost forgot about that, shock of the year golden boy Shane Hollander actually dropping gloves on the ice.”

The reminder only causes Shane’s blush to darken further, and Hayden can’t help but laugh. “Man, that shit was wild, you know I still don’t know what he said that actually got you that worked up.”

“Is very funny story,” Rozanov says, a smug little smirk playing at the corner of his mouth.

Shane elbows Rozanov hard enough for him to wince in response to that, and Hayden can’t even find himself enjoying the slight display of Shane’s annoyance with Rozanov, all to curious to know what actually happened that day on the ice.

“Cmon you’ve gotta tell me now.”

Shane shrugs, reaching for his glass to give his hands something to do, all while avoiding Hayden’s eyes. “It was nothing, he just said some shit and I let it get to me.”

“Yeah, but you’re Shane Hollander, you don’t let anything get to you on the ice.”

Knowing that he clearly wasn’t going to get out of this, Shane let out a groan, and Hayden couldn’t contain his mild sense of victory in response.

“He said, ‘you’re starting to sound like him’ and when I pushed back and said what did you just say, he doubled down and goes ‘you fucking heard me hollander’ and I don’t know, I just kind of lost it.”

Hayden’s even more confused now than he was before the explanation, and it must show on his face, because the next thing Rozanov says is, flatly, “Not only bad at hockey but stupid too.”

Before Hayden can even yell back something about him being an annoying fucking asshole, Rozanov continues gesturing between him and Shane. “Hunter was talking about him sounding like me. Probably because he heard me fucking Shane in hotel room next door during all star.”

Hayden’s sound of disgust is only drowned out by Shane’s louder growl of disapproval.

“Not helping Ilya.”

“What? I am only telling the truth,” Rozanov said, throwing his hands up in mock surrender, a sly smirk tugging at his lips.

Pushing past the instinctive urge to scrub his brain clean of both those words and the thoughts they stirred, Hayden reluctantly voiced his lingering confusion. “How the hell did Scott Hunter even know you were staying right next door to him?”

Shane let out a pained sigh before shooting Rozanov a very pointed look. “Because Ilya here thought it’d be smart to give me his hotel room number while I was sitting on the bench next to Hunter.”

Rozanov, clearly not regretting his decision from all those years ago does nothing but shrug in response.

“You know,” Hayden begins to say, pointedly looking at the both of them. “It’s kinda a miracle you two weren’t found out before, you’re kinda shit at this whole subtlety thing.”

“Took you ten years, did it not, Pike?” Rozanov said, a condescending little eyebrow lift punctuating the jab.

Before Hayden could think of a retort, or something he’d likely regret saying moments later, Jackie returned to the room, cradling a sleepy, teary-eyed Amber in her arms.

“Sorry, took me a minute, she just wouldn’t go back to sleep,” Jackie murmured, sliding back into her chair beside Hayden, gently rocking Amber in her arms.

“She’s been sleeping through the nights for months,” she added quietly, trying not to disturb Amber further, “but she’s started her second round of teething, so she’s been waking up a

lot.”

Hayden moves a hand to lightly rub the tear tracks off her red little cheeks, wincing instead when Amber moves her head slightly and bites down on his finger.

“God, I forgot how much those baby teeth hurt.”

Rozanov laughs at his misery, and then, to Hayden’s complete surprise, asks to hold Amber. Jackie hesitates for a quick second, like she always does when handing off one of their kids to someone else, before she gets up to move to the other side of the table, softly depositing Amber into Rozanov’s open arms.

“Hello Malyshka,” he says softly to her as Amber begins to settle in his arms. Amber’s little hand immediately grabs for Rozanov’s shirt, moving it to her mouth and chewing on it insistently. Hayden’s preparing to move to grab her back when he notices the drool she’s beginning to get all over rozanovs shirt, instead, Rozanov only quietly laughs.

Never would Hayden have used the word *soft* to describe Rozanov, but seeing him now with Hayden’s daughter carefully cradled in his arms, as his hand moves over to Amber’s other closed little fist, allowing her to hold on to him, Hayden can’t help but think that’s the only accurate description.

If that wasn’t enough, the sheer look of adoration on Shane’s face as he watches Rozanov with Amber in his arms makes it even worse. Any lingering reluctance Hayden had about accepting their relationship is crushed, dissolved by the way Shane’s features soften and light up, the quiet awe and affection washing over him like a tide. In that moment, Hayden is left uncomfortably aware of how right this, feels, no matter however maddeningly and infuriating.

This is permanent, he thinks, and deep down he knows it. No matter how many years pass, at some point, he’ll be back here again, sitting at a dinner with the four of them, only this time it won’t be Amber in Rozanov’s arms but Shane and Rozanov’s own child, warm and squirming against him. He and Rozanov will probably still be getting under each other’s skin, still pushing buttons, but maybe... just maybe, they’ll be *friends* by then, even if the thought alone still pains him.

But it’s what’ll make Shane happy, and at the end of the day, his best buddy deserves nothing less than that. And for some godforsaken reason, Rozanov is the one who’s giving it to him.

A little while later, after Shane and Rozanov had left and Amber had fallen back asleep, Hayden lays in his bed as he waits for Jackie to join him. Slowly she makes her way out of the bathroom, turning the lights in the room off as she slides her way into her spot next to Hayden. She leans over, a hand resting on his chest, and kisses his cheek.

“I’m proud of you,” she says, moving to rest her head above his heart. “You did good today, and you made Shane happy too.”

He’s quiet for a second, letting the darkness of the room wash over them. “They’re forever aren’t they,” he whispers into the stillness that surrounds them.

“Yeah,” Jackie whispers back quietly, Hayden can tell there’s a smile on her face without seeing it, hearing it in the soft tones of her voice. “I think they are.”

End Notes

The little tooth fairy section is from my own personal experience learning about that tradition and folk tale for the first time and being decidedly very confused.

Thank you all for reading, leave a kudo or comment below if you want!

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