

a stitch in time

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a stitch in time

by [flowerylanguage](#)

Summary

Old Shane chuckles sadly, running a hand through his hair. A glint of something on his finger catches Shane's eye. A ring? He's *married*???

Something twists in his stomach. If he's married, that must mean— No, he won't let himself think it. Rozanov is just a— a fuckbuddy. It doesn't matter. It's just— nothing. It's just nothing.

OR

In a twist of fate (or cup magic), Shane Hollander gets visited by his older self, causing a crisis of feelings.

Notes

inspired by [this post](#) on tumblr. huge thanks to saira @wistfulcynic on tumblr/profdanglais on ao3 for the beta!

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

After a day of playing hockey and being sprayed with champagne and being pushed into a pool with all his clothes on, Shane wants nothing more than to take a nice shower and collapse into bed. It's nearing 4am, and the party was still raging when he'd left. He's still high on winning and celebration, but all his body wants is rest.

He closes the front door and leans against it, the euphoria of the night leaving him. A teammate's pregnant wife had driven him home, her husband in the passenger seat, drunk. Shane had been pleasantly buzzed himself, but it just feels sad, now, at home alone.

There had been girls at the party, girls who'd wanted him. Shane had told himself he was just setting a good example for the rookies by not letting himself indulge. But here, he can admit to himself the truth.

He almost wishes he had taken someone home, just so he wouldn't be alone. His parents aren't staying with him, having them in his apartment during the playoffs would have just thrown him off. Even if they had been staying with him, they would be asleep by now. And he would be just as alone.

Shane toes his shoes off before heading to his room. He needs to shower, but he flops down on the bed first. Everyone he cares about was just at that party, so why the fuck does he feel so empty?

He's opening his phone and thumbing through his contacts before can stop himself, pretending he doesn't know who he's looking for. Shane stares at the message box and thinks about typing something.

He doesn't, instead throwing his phone onto the bed and pressing the heels of his hands into his eye sockets.

"What are you doing, dude?" he asks himself.

He wanders into his living room, not feeling ready to sleep yet despite his exhaustion. He stares at the front door, willing someone to walk through it. Instead, a figure blinks into existence in the entryway. Shane freezes, but as his eyes adjust to the darkness, he sees—himself.

"What the fuck?" he says aloud. The other Shane looks at him, and Shane mentally categorizes all the ways they're different. This Shane has longer hair, just slightly, but enough to notice. And he's wearing— what the fuck?— an Ottawa Centaurs shirt. "You're a Cen?" he demands, flipping on a light.

In the light, he can see that the other Shane is older, by at least a couple of years. Is this some kind of cup magic time travel? He's heard about cup magic before, and it's always reversible, guys waking up as girls, or married, or their older selves appearing to them. This was clearly the last one.

“Uh, yeah,” older Shane says, jamming his hands into his pockets. “Got traded about a year back.”

“What the fuck?” he says again, because it’s all he can even think. If Montreal would give *him* up, Jesus, the whole team is built around him. He just won them a cup! “Did we get terrible at hockey in our old age?”

Old Shane chuckles sadly, running a hand through his hair. A glint of something on his finger catches Shane’s eye. A ring? He’s *married*???

Something twists in his stomach. If he’s married, that must mean— No, he won’t let himself think it. Rozanov is just a— a fuckbuddy. It doesn’t matter. It’s just— nothing. It’s just nothing.

His chest feels hollow, like it’s missing something. And suddenly he feels a flash of rage at this other Shane. *You had a good thing going!* he wants to shout. *Why’d you have to go and fuck it up?* But, he realizes, he doesn’t know if he’s the one who broke it off. All at once he becomes aware of the fact that *Rozanov* might have been the one to break it off, and he feels sick.

Obviously, a quick fuck every couple months wasn’t enough for Rozanov, and Shane tries not to think about the fact that he probably has a girl in every city. But Shane likes to imagine that he is Rozanov’s only *guy*. That Rozanov could get his fill of fucking women anytime he wanted, but he had to wait for Shane. That Shane got to be the only one to fill that little niche of Rozanov’s sexual desire.

Older Shane catches him staring, catches the wounded expression on his face, but doesn’t say anything, just tucks his left hand back into his pocket.

Shane tries to school his expression into something neutral. “Why now?” he asks.

The other Shane shrugs. “I asked myself the same question when it happened to me.”

“And?” Shane demands.

He rocks back on his heels. “That’s something you’ve got to figure out for yourself.”

“So, what, you come here on the best night of my fucking life to remind me that it doesn’t last? That it all gets worse?” Shane pushes past himself to storm into the kitchen, yanking the fridge open just for something to do. He’s so tired, feeling empty and unmoored.

But old Shane, *married* Shane, Shane reminds himself, follows him, closing the fridge doors and filling a glass with water at the sink. “Here,” he says, handing it to him.

Shane takes it roughly, taking a sip before letting out an angry sigh. The other Shane watches him with an expression that looks suspiciously like pity. “I can’t tell you anything about the future.”

“Nothing?” Shane asks before he can stop himself.

“Well, nothing you haven’t already figured out,” he corrects. “It’s what happened for me. I can’t— well, don’t want to— change anything.”

“So, we’re married,” Shane says, and the other Shane nods, “And we’re a Centaur.”

“That’s the long and short of it.”

“Why?” he asks desperately.

Old Shane sighs again. “You have to understand that nothing you do is going to change these events. But I will tell you that it’s not your fault.”

For a brief, wild moment, Shane thinks he’s talking about Rozanov, before he realizes that he probably means the trade to Ottawa.

“And the marriage?”

Old Shane smiles softly at the ring on his finger. “It’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me,” he admits.

Shane scoffs, anger filling him up like a balloon. “How can you say that? How can you— when you know that— that—” He breaks off, not able to bring himself to say it.

He’d always known that someday he’d settle down. Of course he would. It’s what people expected of him, and somewhere inside him ached to be that perfect golden boy. But he can’t lie to himself and say that it’s what he’s always wanted.

The other Shane looks at him. “It doesn’t turn out the way you expect,” he says gently. “But that’s okay. You learn to live with it.”

What bullshit. Shane’s eyes flicker back to the hand he’s hiding in his pocket. He wants to demand answers now, but he needs to go to sleep. “I’m gonna—” He jerks a thumb back.

“Don’t drown yourself in the shower!” the other Shane calls out as he trudges toward his bedroom.

Shane scoffs, but it’s not like the idea hadn’t occurred to him. He strips, placing his clothes neatly in the hamper, and steps into the shower without waiting for it to warm up. The icy water shocks him, his eyes watering with unshed tears.

He has no reason to be torn up about this. He and Rozanov aren’t anything. And apparently, in the future, they really will be nothing. Not even rivals, anymore.

When does it end? Who breaks it off? It hurts to admit, but Shane can’t imagine wanting anyone like he wants Rozanov.

He turns his face into the warming spray so he can pretend not to feel the tears slipping down his face.

End Notes

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