

Breakaway

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Breakaway

by [GreyMichaela](#)

Summary

Johnny's in love with his defenseman, Liam.

Problem is, Liam is straight.

Notes

I was always That Girl. Refused to be into sports. Wasn't interested in any of the games played, couldn't tell you with a gun to my head the rules of football, etc. And then the Knights nearly won the Stanley Cup and HERE I AM.

This is chronologically the first in the series about the Toronto Wolverines. Most of them will be novellas, although one is a full-length novel that will go to my publisher. But this is a freebie, a quick story of how Johnny and Liam, who are an established couple in the rest of the series, got together.

I did my best to keep it from being too technical, so even if you don't know the first thing about hockey, you can still enjoy it.

Thanks for reading!

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

Johnny realized he was in love with Liam Thibault the day Liam kissed him.

They were down by two in the final period, Johnny on the bench next to Broussard waiting for his shift on the ice, when the crowd started laughing and cheering, shouting Johnny's name. Johnny looked up, confused, to see the Kiss Cam pointed squarely at him and Broussard.

Before he could even say anything, Broussard snorted rudely and scooted a foot away. The crowd booed. Johnny laughed to show them he wasn't offended, and that's when Liam pounced. He came in from the side, wrapping both big arms around Johnny's shoulders and pressing his mouth messily to Johnny's cheek. His lips were cold and damp, breath warm, and he was gone again before Johnny could react, straightening to wave at the crowd, which went wild.

Johnny played the rest of the game distracted, thinking about how Liam's arms had felt around him. They lost by one, but Johnny barely noticed, too aware of Liam in the stall beside him, stripping out of his gear. Liam was the biggest player on the team, at six four and 240 pounds, almost all muscle. Next to him, Johnny felt almost small, something he wasn't used to experiencing. Liam caught his eye and grinned at him, shoving sweat-dampened blond hair out of his face.

"We'll get 'em next time," he said. He didn't seem to notice or mind that Johnny hadn't had anything to say.

Johnny went to shower, still in a daze. Why hadn't he ever appreciated Liam's green eyes before, the straight slash of his nose and the mouth that smiled so easily? Liam was his best friend. Johnny *couldn't* look at him that way. But he remembered how Liam had held him when Johnny's mother had died, a thousand miles away, and Johnny couldn't go to the funeral. And the way Liam had half-carried him up the stairs to their place after they'd gone out drinking to numb the pain, his body warm and solid against Johnny's.

He was a terrible roommate, always leaving his clothes out, never cooking for them, and usually playing PS4 when he was supposed to be training.

And yet... Johnny remembered the touch of Liam's hand between his shoulder blades when Johnny leaned into his frame, seeking warmth and connection. Liam was unhesitatingly there for him in a way very few people had been in Johnny's life. He made Johnny laugh constantly, with his reckless enthusiasm and determination to think well of everyone.

They'd played together for over a year, roomed together for eight months, and it had taken Liam kissing him in front of a thousand people to light this spark inside.

But what was he even thinking? Liam was straight. When they'd first met, Liam had had a different girl each weekend. He treated them with utmost respect, and they left happy and laughing almost every time, but none had ever been over more than once. The revolving door of women had slowed recently, as practices got harder and they geared up for the season, but

the point was, Johnny thought, drying himself off, Liam had never so once as *looked* at another man. Not the way Johnny looked, when it was safe and appropriate.

You're crushing on a straight man, he told himself, and sighed.

Liam was waiting when Johnny got out of the shower, looking comfortable and relaxed in street clothes, long legs stretched out in front of him. He hopped to his feet when Johnny appeared, smile crinkling his eyes.

"Wanna grab a drink with the guys or just go home?"

Johnny hesitated. "I'm pretty tired," he finally said. "But you can go out if you want. I think I'll just go to bed."

Liam watched him. "You sure?"

"Yeah." Johnny mustered a smile. "See you at home. Don't do anything stupid."

He went back to their apartment and settled in for a quiet evening alone with his PS4. He was halfway through a second game, beating the Red Wings quite thoroughly, when heavy footsteps sounded outside and the key scraped in the lock. Liam stepped inside, clearly making an effort to be quiet.

"What are you doing here so early?" Johnny asked.

Liam blinked. "Thought you were in bed."

"I'm heading that way," Johnny said. "Just needed to unwind a bit first. You okay?"

Liam nodded, but didn't meet his eyes. He scratched the back of his neck, sidling toward the kitchen.

"Tibs," Johnny said.

Liam grabbed a Gatorade from the fridge and drained it in several long gulps. "Going to bed," he announced loudly.

"*Tibby*," Johnny said, and Liam jerked to a stop, shifting his feet. Johnny set the controller down and crossed the room, until they were facing each other, two feet separating them.

"You're being weird," Johnny said.

Liam crossed his arms over his chest, looking anywhere but Johnny. Johnny allowed himself a moment to appreciate the definition of muscle in his forearms before pulling himself together. *Focus* .

"Talk to me, Tibs," Johnny said. "Did someone say something?" A flash of hot fury rolled through him. "Is Brewski on you about your skating again? I swear to God I'm going to—"

"No!" Liam interrupted. He coughed a laugh, rubbing his neck again. "God, Johnny, you're like half my size, you really gonna fight my battles for me?"

Johnny bared his teeth. “It’s not about size, it’s about being willing to get dirty. Now talk to me. Why are you acting weird?”

Liam lifted one heavy shoulder. “‘M not,” he mumbled.

Johnny narrowed his eyes. “Right.”

Liam sighed and scrubbed a hand through his hair. “C’mon Johns, give me a break, will ya?”

“Sure,” Johnny agreed easily. “Soon as you tell me what’s going on.”

“It’s not *me*,” Liam said on an explosive sigh. “It’s *you*.”

“Me?”

Liam’s cheeks pinkened. Johnny loved how prone to blushing he was, how his fair skin went dusky with color in moments of embarrassment or stress.

Focus, goddammit, he told himself.

“You’ve been weird ever since I kissed you,” Liam mumbled, still not meeting his eyes. He looked up, face open with raw honesty. “I’m sorry, Johns, I didn’t think, I just did it—the camera was there and you looked embarrassed, and fucking *Brewski*, and—”

“You think I’m mad at you?” Johnny asked, startled.

Liam shrugged again. “You’re always saying I don’t think before I do shit. I didn’t mean to make it worse.”

“You didn’t,” Johnny protested. “Tibs—” He blew out a breath. “Look, I just—”

“I know you’re not straight, which means it’s me you have a problem with,” Liam blurted. Johnny’s mouth fell open but Liam blundered on before he could speak. “I just want you to know that’s okay, I’ll stay out of your way, I never meant to make you uncomfortable. I can move out if you want, I just don’t want to lose your friendship. I—”

“*Stop—*” Johnny protested, half-laughing at the sheer absurdity, and then the first thing Liam had said sank in. “Wait, you... know I’m not straight?”

Liam rolled his eyes, and it was such a *Liam* thing to do that Johnny couldn’t help the surge of affection. He wanted to pull Liam down into a kiss, lay him out and discover his body, see what kind of noises he could wring from him, but Liam was speaking and Johnny forced himself to pay attention.

“You never bring girls home,” he said, speaking as if Johnny were a little slow and needed time to catch up. “You don’t even *look* at girls when we’re out. You’re friendly and a gentleman but you never bring anyone back here, and at first I thought maybe you were just being polite, but then I saw you, uh—”

“Saw me?” Panic flashed through Johnny’s chest, receding almost as fast. This was Liam. Liam would never hurt him.

“Kissing the defenseman for the Blades, I guess it was about six months ago?” Liam scratched his neck, the usual habitual nervous tic. “Brewski was right behind me, by the way—I got him out of there so he didn’t see you. I was afraid he might... say something.”

Fucking hell.

“He’s in the closet,” Johnny said, knowing it sounded lame.

“Who, Brewski?”

“No!” Johnny hesitated. “Actually, he might be too. But I meant the defenseman. He’s not ready to come out. And we’re not... together. It just sort of happened.” He eyed Liam warily. “You’re okay with this?”

“Well, yeah,” Liam said. “I just wish you could have told me, but I get it. You didn’t trust me, I guess?”

“It’s not—” Johnny broke off, swearing under his breath. “Tibby, you’re my best friend. I trust you with my life, okay? I just didn’t want to make *you* uncomfortable.”

“Why would I be uncomfortable?” Liam demanded.

Johnny stared at him. “We play in an excruciatingly heteronormative sport, where any deviance from the *literal* ‘straight’ and narrow is considered unmanly and could cast doubt on our ability to play, you’re practically the poster boy for that, and you want to know why I thought you might be uncomfortable with me being gay?”

“Well, when you put it like that...” Liam chewed his lip.

“And you don’t... care?” Johnny asked.

“Nah, man.” Liam tossed the Gatorade bottle in the trash. “None of my business who you kiss. Or... do other stuff with. I just want to make sure we’re cool.”

No, Johnny wanted to say. We’re not cool, because I want to kiss you. I want to know what you taste like, how you feel. If you laugh during sex because I’ll bet you do, the way you find joy in everything you do.

“Johnny?” Liam said, brows drawing together.

Johnny shook himself. “Yeah, of course,” he said. He dredged up a smile and slapped Liam gently on the arm. “We’re cool, man.”

Liam’s face lightened and he smiled back. “Okay. Okay, cool. In that case, I’m gonna go to bed. See you tomorrow!”

Johnny waited until he was alone before very gently thumping his forehead against the refrigerator and groaning quietly. *You idiot. You could have told him how you feel. Your chance was right there.* But it wouldn't have done any good. Liam was straight, and Johnny confessing his feelings would only make things worse.

He went to bed, crawling between the cool sheets with a sigh. The only thing to do was get over Liam as quickly as possible.

His chance was offered to him the next day, in the form of a tall, silent young man named Logan Martel.

Coach Eglanton introduced him to the team before practice. "Boys, this is Logan, your new goalie. He doesn't speak, so if you want to communicate with him, you'll need to learn sign language."

"Why?" Liam wanted to know. "Is he deaf, too?"

"No, Tibs," Johnny said quietly. "It's so *he* can speak to *us*."

Liam shifted, the back of his neck flushing a dull red. Johnny wanted to pat his knee comfortingly—Liam never *meant* anything by the things he said; he just rarely thought first. Instead he focused on Logan, who was lanky and dark, with a hooked nose and watchful eyes. Johnny hopped up and crossed the room, holding out a hand.

"Johnny McLane," he said. "You're a goalie, huh?"

Logan accepted his hand, nodding briefly. He pointed at him, raising his eyebrows.

"I'm a first line left winger and alternate captain," Johnny said. "Rudy's our center, and the captain—he's got his daughter today so he'll be back tomorrow. This is Broussard, our right wing. Liam Thibault, D-man and the one with his foot in his mouth—" He pointed and Liam waved, still looking chagrined. "Don't take it personally, he just doesn't have a filter."

He took Logan around the room, introducing him to everyone one by one, and then settled him at an empty stall.

"New to the city?" Johnny asked as Logan set his bag down and began pulling gear out.

Logan nodded.

"Want someone to show you around?" Johnny did his best not to hold his breath for the answer. Logan was sharp angles and edges, dark and intense, nothing like Liam's sweet peaches-and-cream complexion and open expressions. He was the perfect antidote for getting over someone who couldn't love Johnny back.

Logan shot him a measuring look, and Johnny lifted one eyebrow. After a minute, Logan's suspicions seemed to settle and he nodded once, a small, secret smile curving his lips. Johnny smiled back at him, and when he looked up, Liam was watching.

Liam tore his eyes away, clearing his throat, and stood. "Let's get this show on the road!"

Practice was the usual intense affair—Coach didn't believe in slacking off between games, and he alternated between shouting at them to dial up their moves and complaining about the subpar quality of the players.

Johnny skated by Logan, in the net. "Don't take it personally," he said quietly. "Rudy usually coaches us, but every once in awhile Eggy actually has to step up. He hates it."

Logan looked thoughtful. Johnny dropped him a wink and skated away.

They went out to eat after practice. Communicating was complicated at first, a combination of gestures and yes/no questions. A sign for a drugstore across the street caught Johnny's eye and he held up a hand.

"Be right back."

He was back in five minutes, triumphantly depositing a small pad of paper and a pen on the table beside Logan, who smiled properly for the first time, picked up the pen, and began to write.

He was twenty-four years old, Johnny learned, from Ottawa. He'd been playing hockey since he was a kid. He'd been mute most of his life, and a shuttered expression crossed his face when Johnny asked about that. Johnny quickly changed the subject.

"Are you out?" he asked.

Logan considered him. Finally he lifted a shoulder. *To those who matter*, he wrote.

"Fair enough. About the same for me. So you know, most of the guys on the team should be cool with it. We've got a new owner pushing for equality and inclusivity. He talks about 'diversity' a lot, kinda gets on everyone's nerves, but I think if any of us actually came out, he'd back us."

Logan wrote quickly. *No boyfriend, though?*

"Alas, no," Johnny sighed. "Don't really have time for a relationship, you know? Probably have to be a teammate, and that's always a potential timebomb."

Logan nodded. When Johnny set his glass back on the table, Logan reached out, touching his knuckles with the tip of one finger. His gaze held heat and something like a challenge.

Johnny gulped. "You wanna get out of here?"

Logan was living in a hostel until his lodgings were ready, so Johnny took him back to his apartment. Part of him whispered what a very bad idea this was, but Johnny steadfastly ignored it. Liam brought girls home all the time. Well, Johnny amended as he unlocked the front door, not *all* the time. Not very often in recent months, in fact. But the fact remained he

had . And they had an agreement. It was fine, he told himself, pushing the door open. Liam would be glad for him.

Liam was on the couch playing PS4. “Yo!” he hollered without looking. “Get your ass over here and help me beat the Pens, would you?”

Johnny cleared his throat. “Company, Tibs.”

Liam twisted, shock rounding his eyes. “Hey, uh—Logan. Hi. Um. Hi!” He glanced between Logan and Johnny, looking confused, and then comprehension dawned. “Oh. *Oh*. I’ll just... um, be in my room, I guess.”

“No need,” Johnny said, taking pity on him. “We’ll go in mine. It’s cool, man, kick the Pens’ asses for me.” He gave him a smile but Liam didn’t return it, sinking back into the couch cushions but not picking up the controller. The tips of his ears were dark red, Johnny noticed as they passed him on the way to Johnny’s room.

Inside, Johnny kicked his shoes off and the door shut and shoved a pile of dirty laundry out of sight. He dove for the bed and straightened the sheets, then turned to look at Logan, still standing by the door.

Logan pointed toward the living room and held up the pad of paper. *He okay?*

“Sure,” Johnny said, avoiding his gaze. “Why wouldn’t he be? He’s fine. He’s just... not used to me bringing anyone home. Hey, come here.” He held out a hand, and Logan took it, still seeming hesitant, but he stepped forward willingly enough, until their bodies were flush and Johnny could reach up and bring Logan’s head down until their lips met.

Logan’s mouth was warm, his kisses tentative, and he brought his hands up to Johnny’s waist, settling them there and rubbing small circles against Johnny’s hipbones with his thumbs.

Johnny shivered, pressing closer, and didn’t think about Liam sitting alone on the couch. Instead he took a step back, pulling Logan with him toward the bed. They settled themselves on it, careful not to bump or jostle each other, until they were lying on their sides facing. Johnny scooted a little closer and captured Logan’s mouth again.

They spent several long, leisurely moments kissing, their mouths and hands between them on the bed the only points of contact. It was sweet and gentle and Johnny was enjoying it, he told himself, until he realized with dismay that he wasn’t hard. He broke away briefly, trying to catch his breath, and Logan’s brow knitted.

You okay?

Johnny nodded, resettling himself. He just had to try to get into the moment. He leaned forward—and the front door slammed.

Johnny jerked upright. “Tibby?” There was no answer. Johnny threw an apologetic look at Logan and scrambled off the bed.

The living room was empty. Liam's phone was on the couch. Johnny ran for the door, but Liam was already out of sight. *Which way did he go?* He was looking for his shoes when he remembered Logan.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

Logan was sitting up on the bed when Johnny came in.

"I'm sorry," Johnny said. He rubbed his face. "I'm—God, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have—I didn't mean—"

Logan stood and put a hand on Johnny's arm. *Breathe*, he mouthed, demonstrating. He picked up the pad. *I should go.*

"No," Johnny protested. "Fuck, I'm sorry, I'm such an asshole—"

Logan put a finger over Johnny's lips, silencing him. His eyes were kind. Johnny didn't deserve kindness. He hugged his own ribs as Logan wrote something else and held it out.

Tibby's a lucky guy.

Johnny shook his head, tears stinging his eyes. "He's straight," he managed around the lump in his throat.

Logan's eyebrows went up. *You sure?*

Johnny nodded miserably.

Logan watched him for a minute and then nodded to himself. He reached out and pulled Johnny into a hug, arms warm and strong, as if things were going to be okay. When he let go, he tapped Johnny's chin and smiled. Then he stepped around him and left.

Liam didn't come back for hours, until Johnny was ready to call Rudy and initiate a manhunt. But finally he showed up, fumbling with the lock with exaggerated care before stepping into the darkened apartment.

Johnny didn't move from the corner, where he was coiled in the beanbag. When Liam flicked on the light, he caught sight of him and staggered backward with a yelp, clutching at the kitchen counter to steady himself.

"Where were you?" Johnny asked.

"*Out*," Liam snapped, and that was so unlike his usual sweet demeanor that Johnny hesitated. "That okay with you?"

Johnny stood. "You left your phone. I didn't know where you were. I was *worried*, Tibs."

“I’m fine,” Liam insisted. His blond hair stood on ends, spiky like he’d been running his hands through it, the way he did when he was exhausted or extra stressed.

“Why did you leave so suddenly then?” Johnny pressed. He didn’t know why he was pushing, only that he needed to *know*—

“I didn’t want to hear sex noises, okay?” Liam said. He turned and yanked the fridge door open, grabbing a Gatorade.

“Have you been drinking?”

“Just a few beers, *Mom*,” Liam said. He drained the Gatorade and slung the bottle in the trash. “Your new boyfriend gone? Love ‘em and leave ‘em type, is he?”

“What is your *problem*?” Johnny said, pushed to breaking.

“*It should be me!*” Liam shouted.

Silence echoed cavernously between them as Liam covered his mouth and Johnny stared at him.

“Say that again,” Johnny whispered. Hope began to unfurl in his chest, slow and cautious and barely there.

“I said it should be me,” Liam repeated. “I just want....” He shook his head as if defeated. “It doesn’t matter. You don’t want me. It’s fine. It’s okay.” He glanced up, eyes pleading. “I can’t lose your friendship, Johnny, please tell me I didn’t fuck everything up—”

Johnny crossed the living room in two huge strides and slammed their mouths together with so much force Liam staggered backward into the fridge.

It didn’t take more than a second for him to get with the program, though, hands coming up to catch Johnny’s waist and yank him nearer, mouth opening and tongue delving inside.

Johnny was breathless with joy, tears blinding him, so he closed his eyes and wrapped his arms around Liam’s neck, going up on tiptoe to better devour his mouth.

“It’s—*fuck*—” He broke off as Liam tore away and nipped his earlobe with sharp teeth. “Fuck, Tibby, it’s always been you. *Always*.”

Liam groaned and kissed him again, tasting like beer and peanuts and everything Johnny hadn’t let himself want. “What about—”

“He left,” Johnny managed. “I think he saw—”

“Saw what?” Liam kissed Johnny’s throat, lips lingering.

“How I feel about you,” Johnny whispered. “But I thought—I thought you were straight, Tibs. I’ve never—”

Liam, still kissing his way up and down Johnny's throat, shrugged. "I mostly like girls," he said, and Johnny *really* liked the way his voice sounded muffled against Johnny's skin. "But I've been with guys, and you—" He lifted his head, eyes worried. They were so green, Johnny thought—green like the grass after a summer thunderstorm. He never got tired of looking at them, at Liam's beautiful face.

"I thought you just didn't want me," Liam confessed.

"I want you more than anything," Johnny said, throat suddenly tight. "I want you more than the Kelly Cup."

"Whoa now, let's not go too far," Liam said, and Johnny threw back his head and *laughed*, feeling weightless with joy and possibilities.

The next morning at practice, Johnny found Logan strapping on his pads at his stall.

"Hey," he said awkwardly.

Logan looked up at him and smiled, his eyes calm and kind.

"So listen, about yesterday," Johnny said, and trailed off.

Logan raised his eyebrows.

"I wasn't using you, I swear," Johnny blurted.

Logan's smile widened and he pulled out the pad of paper. *I know*, he wrote.

Johnny shifted his weight. "I was trying to get over him and I didn't mean to put you in the middle, it was selfish and stupid and I'm sorry."

Logan wrote for a minute. *All good w/him now?*

Johnny couldn't help the smile, or the blush that fired his cheeks. Logan laughed and slapped him on the back.

Happy 4 u.

"Thanks, man," Johnny said. "So look, if you want to come out for drinks with us—" But Logan wasn't listening, his eyes fixed on a point over Johnny's shoulder.

Johnny turned just as Rudy walked in the door. He glanced back. Logan's attention was fixed on Rudy's slim form, eyes rapt. It was Johnny's turn to grin and slap him on the shoulder.

"Come on, I'll introduce you."

End Notes

This was inspired by Steve Yzerman, who kissed a teammate when the kiss cam was pointed at him. [You can see the video here.](#) (*It's adorable.*)

I honestly don't expect any comments on this because I know my fanbase isn't exactly sports-oriented, but if you do want to leave a note with your thoughts, I'd love to hear them.

You can also [find me on Tumblr](#) for all your flailing needs!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!