

Why Ginger Ale?

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Why Ginger Ale?

by [obsessiveoverenjoyer](#)

Summary

shane was always so specific about what he put in his body, but ginger ale never wavered.
why?

or

a cute, domestic conversation taking place sometime after the events of TLG :)

Notes

I wrote this in silence because that is what shane would have wanted

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

The season finally ended, and Shane and Ilya were enjoying their well-earned break. Their new morning routine consisted of making breakfast together, taking anya on her walks, and spending every moment making up for lost time.

Shane had slowly but surely eased out of his performance diet with the help of Ilya and his therapist, which had been a slow going but successful journey. He rediscovered his love of cooking with Ilya, and making meals together brought so much joy and domesticity into their home in the off-season.

They were finally able to be present, and just exist within each other's company.

It was on one of these wonderful days, while Ilya and Shane were watching a show lazily in the afternoon, when Ilya asked a question that had been on his mind.

"Why ginger ale?" he asked suddenly.

"What? What do you mean?"

"You have always been so careful about what you eat and drink, but ginger ale was always important to you. Where did that come from?"

Shane pondered the question. Honestly, ginger ale had been part of his life for so long, his solace after a stressful day. Ilya and he always had each others' drinks in their fridges and it was never discussed, so he assumed Ilya had given it much thought.

The knowledge used to be their unspoken form of 'I care about you'.

"I'm not sure" He answers honestly, "Growing up, I didn't have soda in my house. I'm sure that's not surprising."

"Of course not. Soda would be much too exciting for your dad" Ilya snickers.

"Fuck off" Shane laughs. "You are just as boring as he is."

"Do not say such a thing!"

Ilya has no defense, truly. He spent all of last weekend helping David with his puzzles while Shane and Yuna made fun of them.

Shane rolls his eyes fondly.

"I remember always ordering water growing up. It was the obvious choice of drink and good for you, so I never gave it much thought. I only ever had ginger ale as a kid, and only when I was sick."

"Makes sense," Ilya nods. "I always had *kvass* but I know ginger is good too."

“Yeah. And I always hated the carbonation in other sodas, the way the fizz ruined the flavor. But with ginger ale it never bothered me.”

“But you drink it all the time now, not just when you are sick.”

Shane nods, confused at Ilya’s persistence.

“Why are you curious about me liking ginger ale? It’s not exciting, I promise”

“Everything is exciting with you, *moya lyubov*. You are my husband, and I want to know everything about you.”

Shane blushes softly.

“You are always inside your head, always thinking. I can feel it, sometimes. I want to understand. To see what you see. Ginger ale is important to you, so it is important to me.”

Shane smiles fondly at that.

“Ginger ale became ‘my drink’ as I was growing up skating,” he continues. “I remember going to restaurants with my team after games, at birthday parties, and everyone celebrating by getting sodas. I wanted them to know I was celebrating too, and they thought water was boring.”

“But did you want to get it?”

“At first, it felt weird,” Shane confided. “I had associated it with being sick, so I felt strange having it in such a different environment. But after a few times, I felt comforted by the drink.”

“Makes sense,” Ilya nodded. “It was a safe drink for you, reminded you of being safe.”

“Exactly. But I don’t think I realized it then, at least not at first. I just knew it was a soda, and was more interesting than water, so I was being ‘cool’ like my teammates.”

Shane leans his head on Ilya’s shoulder.

“But it means more to me now. It reminds me of consistency. It became ‘my drink’ and I liked the familiarity. When I was anxious, it soothed my stomach. The bubbles would distract me from when my brain would get too loud, and the cold would keep me grounded.”

“Galina said something similar to me once, when I asked her how to help you.”

Shane remembered that day. The night before, he had had an anxiety attack and Ilya had done his best to help. He asked Shane what he could do to make it easier for him the next time.

Since he started seeing Dr. Galina, they had been working on bettering their communication. Shane had confided that he didn’t know how to ask for comfort, because he did not know what could help.

Galina had shared that sometimes people would eat sour candy to distract themselves. They didn't end up using the coping strategy because of Shane's diet, but it had been a helpful starting point.

"After those days, once I started in the MLH, I found myself making sure I always had some with me. I didn't know the words for it, but I knew when I was stressed and overwhelmed that it always helped. But then it changed again. People then thought the ginger ale was strange. Strange that I would choose a boring soda over something alcoholic."

Ilya nodded. They both knew drinking was a huge part of the hockey culture. There were other players who didn't drink, but they were always subjected to teasing.

Shane continued, "But at this point I realized the comfort I got from the soda and I was not going to change now because of some chirping from the others. I didn't like alcohol, the way it made me feel. I still don't."

Shane knew this stemmed from his need for control. His being a public figure only exacerbated this desire. Always having to watch what he said, to shape himself into this role model figure they had decided he would be.

He was working on letting his body relax, but it was difficult and scary to give up some control in order to be more comfortable, however paradoxical it had seemed to him at first.

Ilya understood though, of course he did. He started playing with Shane's hair, and Shane let out a small sigh.

"I guess the ginger ale was a way for me to stay connected to my family, even when I was traveling and staying in different places every night. I felt like they were always with me then, making sure I was ok no matter how far away they were."

Shane let out a small chuckle at that.

"Wow. I honestly never really gave it that much thought. I didn't realize how deep it went. It really is just a soda, but I don't know. It's always been more than that."

"Of course it is. You feel so deeply about things, always. It makes sense, to want to feel like your family is watching over you even when they cannot physically be there with you."

Shane knew he understood this well, grabbing his hand gently.

Ilya continued, "But I like to know that even when you did not know the words for your anxiety, you found a way to help yourself, to allow yourself comfort. I'm glad you had that, before you could let us in."

After starting with his therapist, and with reassurance from Ilya, Shane had sat down with his parents and explained some things he now had the words for. Shane opened up to them about his anxiety, his sensory issues, the things he had faced and learned.

It took a lot of courage, letting his parents know that he was struggling, but it was a big step in learning how to share important things with the people he loves. Since then, he had grown

even closer to his family and to Ilya, letting himself be taken care of when he needed it.

“Thank you for telling me, my love. I always love when you tell me new things about yourself.”

Shane blushes, but accepts the praise anyway.

“You can always ask. I know I’m bad about sharing, but I’m working on it. On being more open about things. I love when you ask me things, and I love when you share too. *ya tebya lyublyu.*”

“*ya tebya lyublyu.*”

Shane laughed and pulled Ilya upstairs. The time they had together was always sweet, cherished. They had earned it, Shane thinks, after everything that came before. They deserved domesticity, curiosity, joy and laughter. And they would never waste a moment of it, of soaking up each other’s presence.

The season had been long, and the demand was great and exhausting as always, but these moments they took for themselves at the end of it, worn and smiling from the wins, made everything else worth it.

End Notes

thank you for reading <3

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