

love was a myth (now it's my morning coffee)

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love was a myth (now it's my morning coffee)

by [justhockey](#)

Summary

“What were you doing?”

“Oh.” A sweet flush colours Shane’s freckled cheeks, and his fingers twitch where they’re still resting on Ilya’s back. “I was just tracing your moles.”

Ilya is going to die. His heart is actually going to give out on him because of this sweet, perfect man who he loves more than he knows what to do with. Who he loves more than anything in this entire world.

Notes

Title from *Audrey Hepburn* by Maisie Peters.

CW: brief mentions of depression and disordered eating, but they’ve been to therapy about it & are in a very good place right now.

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

There's something tickling Ilya's back. It's the first thing he becomes aware of as he inches towards wakefulness.

He's lying on his stomach, face smushed against his pillow with a hand tucked underneath it, and the sun rays are fanning across his face where they're seeping in through the crack in the blinds. It's early still, he can feel it in his lethargic muscles and not-quite-rested eyes. But there's a warm, familiar body next to him, and fingertips trailing faintly across his back, so Ilya doesn't want to fall back asleep and miss a single second of this moment.

"What're you doin'?" Ilya mumbles.

He feels Shane flinch, and hears the soft, surprised chuckle that slips out from between his lips. It makes Ilya smile, even with his eyes still closed.

"You scared me," Shane whispers into the early-morning quiet. "I thought you were still asleep."

"So you felt me up?" Ilya asks. "Pervert."

He feels Shane moving closer to him, but he doesn't expect the sharp sting of teeth sinking into his bicep. Ilya yelps, his eyes shooting open in time to see Shane pulling back, his tongue flicking out to lick over his grinning lips.

"That's what you get."

"You are vampire."

Shane snorts. "That's rich, coming from you."

Ilya hums, smiling smugly as he tilts his head up in search of a kiss from his husband.

Shane isn't wrong; he's permanently covered in hickeys and bite marks, on his chest and hips, and the soft insides of his thighs. Ilya loves marking him up - loves making sure everyone in the world knows that he's taken by someone who treats him right. And he especially loves the blush that floods Shane's skin when the guys tease them about it in the locker room.

Shane dips down from where he's propped up on his elbow, granting Ilya his demand for a kiss. It's chaste, and slow, and tastes a little bit like morning breath but mostly just like the familiar warmth of Shane. Of home.

"Morning baby," Shane murmurs against his lips.

"Good morning," Ilya replies. "You didn't answer my question."

"What question?"

"What were you doing?"

“Oh.” A sweet flush colours Shane’s freckled cheeks, and his fingers twitch where they’re still resting on Ilya’s back. “I was just tracing your moles.”

Ilya is going to die. His heart is actually going to give out on him because of this sweet, perfect man who he loves more than he knows what to do with. Who he loves more than anything in this entire world.

They’ve been married for almost three years now, and everyday Shane still manages to do something that amazes Ilya. He’ll giggle at a dirty joke that he once would have balked at, or he’ll make a shot on the ice that would be unthinkable for anyone else, or he’ll lie in bed while Ilya sleeps, and trace the moles on his back, like they haven’t been waking up beside each other for the past seven years.

Every night Ilya falls asleep thinking he couldn’t possibly love his husband more, and then each morning he wakes up loving Shane more than he did the day before.

It shouldn’t be possible, but it is.

He thought it would have stopped after their first few months together, but it just kept happening. And then he thought that after the wedding, surely, Ilya couldn’t love him more than that. But it’s like his heart grows bigger every day, just to keep holding more love for Shane.

“You know you have a little cluster right here,” Shane murmurs, trailing down the inside of Ilya’s left shoulder blade, “that kind of looks like the Taurus constellation.”

Ilya swallows thickly, feeling strangely emotional. “Oh yeah?”

“Mhm. Taurus is-“

“Your star sign. I know.”

Ilya doesn’t believe in all of that. Neither does Shane, for that matter. But Rose went through a phase a year or so ago, and she decided to make it everyone else’s problem. Ilya heard more about star signs, and compatibility, and mercury in retrograde - whatever the fuck that is - than he’d ever wanted to.

Whenever those silly tiktok’s come up, like *what shark are you based on your star sign?* Ilya always checks his own - Gemini - and then Shane’s, too. It’s a habit now.

“Looks like we were written in the stars. Literally,” Shane jokes, a teasing smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

Ilya feels like he’s going to explode.

In a burst of movement he rolls onto his back, snatching Shane’s wrist and dragging him on top of Ilya’s chest. Shane lets out a loud, uninhibited bark of laughter, shuffling so he’s comfortably splayed out on top of Ilya. He props himself up, fingers playing with the crucifix Ilya wears around his neck, and looks down on him.

He's the most beautiful thing Ilya has ever seen. Sometimes he wants to squeeze him, or bite him, or pull on his hair, just because he doesn't know where to put all of his feelings. *Cuteness aggression* Galina had called it, when Ilya was worried he was a little bit of a psychopath.

"I guess I was always meant to be yours," Ilya says, and watches with delight as Shane's pupils dilate until there's only a tiny sliver of brown left surrounding them.

He groans, collapsing his full weight onto Ilya as he burrows his face into his neck and nips him there, right where his neck meets his shoulder. Ilya laughs, carding his fingers through Shane's hair as he continues to mouth at his skin.

"You can't just *say* stuff like that," Shane grumbles.

"Oh, no? Why is that, sweetheart?"

"Makes me wanna marry you all over again."

Ilya's heart soars. "What a tragedy that would be," he teases, and Shane nips him again.

They lie there for a little while, Shane's face in Ilya's neck, and Ilya's hand in Shane's hair.

There's nowhere for them to be today - no practice, or game, or interview, or brand shoot that Yuna organised for them. Just a full day ahead with no responsibilities or expectations to weigh them down. It's a rare thing, and Ilya is giddy with excitement over the prospect of having Shane all to himself for the next twenty-four hours.

They already spend all their time together, of course. They live together, and carpool together, and their stalls are side by side in the locker room; they sit beside each other on the bench and the bus and the plane, and room together on the road, and wherever one goes, the other one follows.

They'd live inside each other's skin if they could; nothing will ever be close enough, no amount of time together will ever be long enough.

"Anya will be waking up soon," Shane says, moving like he's about to pull away.

Ilya whines, wrapping his arms and legs around Shane to hold him in place. Shane laughs, gently slapping Ilya's flank to try and make him let go. Ilya just holds on tighter, though, rocking them from side to side.

"Ilya."

"If you let Anya sleep in our room this wouldn't be a problem."

"We've had this conversation a million times."

"But listen--"

"Nope."

“Shane.”

“*Ilya*.”

“Sweetheart. Please.”

Ilya is giving his best puppy dog eyes, all wide and desperate, with his bottom lip sticking out in a pout. Unfortunately, it doesn't work on Shane in the same way that Shane's puppy dog look works on Ilya. So he snorts, presses the palm of his hand to Ilya's face and pushes it to the side.

“You know that's not gonna work, baby.”

“Worth a shot,” Ilya huffs.

“Good try,” Shane says. And then, while kissing Ilya to distract him, Shane tickles him until he shrieks and lets him go.

As Shane clambers out of bed, Ilya sticks out his tongue and blows a raspberry at him. “You suck.”

“Not with that attitude.”

God, his husband is a menace.

A devastatingly handsome menace, whose freckled shoulders and back dimples are on display as he saunters into their en-suite. Ilya throws his head back on the pillow and groans, then immediately gets out of bed and follows along behind Shane.

He'd probably bark like a fucking dog if he asked him to.

They brush their teeth side by side, elbows knocking into each other tauntingly, and garbled chatter spoken through mouthfuls of toothpaste.

It's the kind of ridiculously domestic, homely thing that - once upon a time - Ilya could have never imagined for himself. Now, it's one of his favourite parts of the day: getting ready together, still in their perfect little bubble, before the rest of the world intrudes on it.

After they've pulled on clothes - old sweats, and faded, team issued t-shirts, and hoodies that could belong to either of them - they make their way downstairs, hand in hand.

Shane is rambling on about his latest fixation, which, for some reason, is curling. Ilya listens intently, because he cares about everything his husband is interested in. That's why he's formed opinions on the most random of things, including - but not limited to - architecture, marine life in freshwater lakes, and now, apparently, *curling*.

Anya greets them with excited tippy taps and kisses.

“Good morning my sweet girl,” Ilya murmurs to her. “I'm sorry daddy won't let you sleep in our room.”

“Still not gonna work,” Shane sings, as he heads through the kitchen to open the back door for her.

As she does her business outside Shane starts to prepare her breakfast, while Ilya starts on theirs.

He loves cooking breakfast for them every morning.

He sets the coffee machine going first, and then begins to rummage around in the refrigerator for something to cook. Settling on omelettes, Ilya takes out the carton of eggs, a red pepper, a bunch of green onions, and he gets to work.

A couple of years ago, after seeing how much Galina helped Ilya, Shane decided to give therapy a go for himself. Just to see. As it turned out, there were a lot of things he hadn't realised about himself, until he'd been forced to confront them by a professional.

Things like how much Montreal had fucked him up, or how the racist and homophobic micro (and macro) aggressions affect him, and especially how fucked up his relationship with food used to be.

It's much better, now, after spending months dissecting the how's and the why's of it all.

His diet is still healthy, of course, because he's a professional athlete and his body is his job. But it's so much less rigid now - no longer a punishment, but fuel. If he wants pizza, he eats pizza. If he feels like getting room service to deliver ice cream at 11pm while they're on the road, then that's what they do.

And, no matter what, if Ilya cooks it then Shane eats it. That's the rule. If things feel out of control, and Shane's eating habits become stricter, Ilya just has to put a meal in front of him and Shane knows he's taking things too far.

“Baby,” Shane says softly, as Ilya is chopping up the pepper.

When Ilya glances towards him, Shane is holding out a glass of water in one hand and Ilya's anti-depressant in the other.

Ilya rests the knife on the cutting board and turns to face his husband. Like he's been all but trained to do, Ilya opens his mouth and sticks out his tongue so Shane can put the pill on it, then he swallows it dry before following it down with a mouthful of water.

Once it's gone, Shane leans in and kisses him. A habit. A routine, really. Sometimes Ilya used to forget to take his medication, but kisses from his husband are always the most rewarding incentive.

“Thank you,” Ilya says.

Shane hums. He presses his thumb into Ilya's chin, tilting his face down so he can kiss him on the nose. “You're welcome.”

There's a practiced ease in the way they move together, dancing around the kitchen without bumping into each other, only careful brushes of their arms, or intentional hands on hips to gently shift the other out of the way. It's a familiar rhythm that they've had years to settle into - boring, almost, except for the way that the comfort of it settles in Ilya's stomach like a cat curled up in the sun, purring.

Ilya finds so much joy in the mundanity.

He likes cooking with his husband, and folding laundry, and going grocery shopping with him; he enjoys tending to the vegetable patch in their garden, and icing post-game aches together, and the car ride to the cottage. All of the tiny, insignificant moments that make their marriage safe, and dependent, and strong.

He loves those things as much as - if not more than - the big, loud, exciting things.

Once the coffee and omelettes are ready, they sit across from each other at the table and dig in.

The conversation is easy, flitting from one topic to the next with no need for a segue.

Chatter about the farmers market - and those really good heirloom tomatoes they got last week - turns into talks of the penalty kill, then, somehow, the Pike kids and the next time they're coming for a sleepover.

Everything with Shane is easy. Even the hard stuff - the bad days, where Ilya struggles to get out of bed or Shane can feel the humming of the electricity in his gums - is made easier by having each other around. Shane knows when to wrap himself around Ilya and hold him through the darkness, and Ilya knows when to keep the lights and volume low, and physical contact to a minimum.

They get each other. They love each other. They *like* each other. More than anything else in the world. Even more than hockey, which - once upon a time - finding something that mattered more than hockey had seemed impossible for both of them.

Ilya's phone buzzes on the table, and when he picks it up and reads the message on his screen, he can't help but grin smugly.

"What are you smiling about?" Shane ask, immediately suspicious.

"Oh, nothing. It's just Rose."

"Rose? *My* Rose?"

Ilya raises his eyebrows. "*Your* Rose, is she?"

Shane rolls his eyes and huffs dramatically. It makes Ilya want to laugh at him. Rose is one of their dearest friends, but it never stops Ilya from teasing Shane about their brief relationship, or Shane getting jealous that Ilya and Rose are close now, too. She thoroughly enjoys it when they 'fight' over her.

“Shut up,” Shane says. “Why is she texting you?”

“She agrees that Anya should sleep in our room.” Ilya grins.

“Or for fuck’s sake,” Shane grumbles, throwing his arms up in the air. “You can’t do that! You can’t get my-“

“-our.”

“My friend to side with you. I’m not having dog hairs on my bed.”

“She will sleep on floor!” Ilya insists.

Shane fixes him a deadpan expression. A *don’t bullshit me* kind of look, that Ilya has been painfully familiar with since the two of them first met. He’s on the receiving end of it multiple times a day, but it’s the most fun when Shane directs it at their teammates instead.

“You’re a liar.”

Ilya gasps. “I am *not*.”

“Liar,” Shane sings, pointing his finger at Ilya.

“Sweetheart, I would *never* lie to-“

“You’re doing it again!”

Shane is indignant for about half a second, but then Ilya’s lip twitches, and so does Shane’s, and in an instant they’re both laughing.

They laugh together often, of course. All the time, really. They’re the kind of people who are funnier together, and know that everyone else thinks so too. It shouldn’t still give Ilya a rush - laughing with Shane - after all this time, but it does. It makes his blood feel all tingly, and his heart feel like a bird trapped inside a cage.

He loves to watch the sides of Shane’s eyes crinkle when he laughs. There are more lines there now, than there were a few years ago. Proof of the beautiful life they are living together. Proof of all the joy they get to feel, and all the years they have been allowed to spend together.

“You’re an asshole,” Shane says, grinning.

“And yet you still love me,” Ilya responds.

“Debatable.”

“It was not *debatable* last night, when I-“

Ilya doesn’t get to finish his sentence because he’s interrupted by Shane’s phone ringing obnoxiously loudly. He’s the kind of person whose ringtone is the same as the standard alarm

tone, and it makes Ilya feel nauseous every time he hears it. It reminds him of too-early mornings, crawling out of bed in the dead of winter to catch a flight or run drills until his bones ache.

Shane fishes it out of the pocket of his hoodie, then his eyebrows scrunch inwards as he reads the caller ID. He doesn't ignore the call, though; he answers and immediately puts it on speaker.

"Luca, is everything okay?"

"Hey, no, everything is fine. Sorry, did I wake you?" He asks, voice tinny through the speaker.

"No, you're good. We just finished eating breakfast. What's up?" Shane asks, the concern on his face already melting away at the relaxed tone of Luca's voice.

Luca was Ilya's rookie, back when he was just a starstruck kid who couldn't believe he'd made it to the big leagues. He was equally as starstruck by Shane, too, when he first joined the Centaurs.

But now the hero worship has mostly worn off. Ilya and Shane have a drawing of them that Luca did, framed and hung up on their wall. Once Luca saw it, he figured that meant he'd *'made it'*, and so he's just a regular old pain in their asses now, much like most of the other guys on the team.

Not that they'd change it for the world, of course.

"Well, I, uh. I was wondering if I could bring someone to the barbecue tomorrow?"

Ilya and Shane's eyes instantly lock across the table, wide and insistent. Luca has never brought anyone around the team before, and this kind of feels like a big deal. They're both making weird faces, nodding and gesturing towards the phone, both trying to encourage the other to ask the probing questions.

Finally, Ilya gives in.

"Who do you want to bring?" He asks.

"Oh, hey Roz. I was, uh - I was hoping I could bring Kai. My boyfriend."

Shane and Ilya's mouths drop simultaneously.

They both knew Luca was queer. Not, like, *knew* knew. He'd never explicitly told them, or anything. But he'd implied things through the years, danced with guys a little too closely to be considered platonic, been more than a little invested in Ilya and Shane's relationship when they first got outed. Small things, but big enough that they'd pick up on them.

It feels like a big moment, Luca asking this. Huge, honestly. And Ilya kind of wants to cry, or tell him he's proud, or something else equally mushy and sentimental. But also...Luca isn't

trying to make a whole thing out of it, so Ilya just wants this to be normal for him. Not a big deal. Something easily understood and accepted.

He opens his mouth to respond, but Shane beats him to it.

“You’re old enough to have a boyfriend?” He teases, lighthearted, and easy, and exactly right.

Luca scoffs. “*Alright grandpa, calm down.*”

“Oh, fuck you,” Shane splutters, laughing quietly.

Down the phone, Luca whistles. “*Damn, Hollzy. You kiss the captain with that mouth?*”

Shane’s jaw drops, and Ilya snorts out a laugh that he doesn’t even bother trying to hide. Then he leans forward, close to where Shane’s phone is resting on the table between them, and says, “He does a lot more than that.”

There’s a beat of silence. And then-

”*Oh, gross!*”

“Ilya!”

He laughs again as Luca continues to whine down the phone about, “*Unprofessional conduct, Captain,*” and, “*You guys are like my dads!*”

All the while, Shane sits there with his arms folded over his chest, nodding his head in agreement. He tries to look disappointed in Ilya, but it fails catastrophically. The corner of his mouth is twitching, and he keeps scrunching his nose like he does when he’s trying not to laugh.

It’s very cute. Ilya wants to kiss him about it.

“You can bring your boyfriend, Haas,” Ilya tells him.

“But he can expect a...*conversation* with us,” Shane informs him.

”*Oh my god, you’re so embarrassing,*” Luca groans, like he really is still a teenager and they are his dads. And then, “*Thank you. Love you. Goodbye.*”

They don’t get to say *love you* back, because he’s already hung up the phone. It was definitely implied, though.

For a short moment, Ilya and Shane just stare at each other.

It’s just a silly moment - something they will tell the team about, or maybe even this boyfriend of Luca’s, and Luca will roll his eyes at them and grumble about it, but will be quietly happy, too.

But, for some reason, it feels oddly precious to Ilya. Their teammate - their *friend* - who they mentored through his first years in the league, came to them with something big because he knew he could trust them, and because they've built a team that he can trust, too. They answered the call while sitting at their table, eating breakfast in their home, after waking up beside each other in their bed.

Sometimes, Ilya still can't believe this is his life.

Before the emotion can choke him, Ilya pushes back his chair and stands up. "Our baby is all grown up," he sighs, all dramatic, like their child is off to college.

Shane follows suit, picking up their coffee mugs while Ilya collects the plates. They're walking into the kitchen when Shane says, "Imagine when we *actually* have kids."

They've talked about it before. A lot, honestly. In Shane-typical amounts of detail, with lots of planning and options and things to consider. They want kids - they can't wait to have kids, in fact - but it won't be for another few years, yet. Not until one, or perhaps both, of them are ready to hang up their skates.

It still makes Ilya giddy to think about, though. The thought of having children with Shane is...well. There just aren't words for it.

"You will cry so much when they leave us for college."

"Me?" Shane instantly protests. "You cry at car commercials! You cried when my dad made you soup when you were sick!"

He's not wrong. Ilya is sort of a crybaby, now. Galina says it's because he spent so many years pushing him down, because he knew they wouldn't be met with the grace or compassion that they deserved. But now, in a home that is safe with a husband who loves him dearly, Ilya feels secure enough to truly *feel* every one of his emotions.

And anyway, Shane can't talk because...

"You cried last night, when I put my tongue--"

"Nope!" Shane interrupts him. "Be quiet. Wash the dishes."

"Woof," Ilya jokes.

Shane rolls his eyes, but he leans in for a kiss anyway, then murmurs, "Good dog," against his lips.

Ilya laughs, then gently shoves Shane away from him. "Go. Put on that documentary you've been waiting to watch. I'll be there in a minute."

Ilya takes two minutes to load the dishwasher - in the exact way that Shane likes best - but doesn't bother to set it running. Shane always tells him it's a waste of water and that he's killing the environment when he only uses it for a couple of dishes, so he'll wait until evening to set it going.

By the time he makes his way into the living room, Shane is already tucked into the corner of the couch, lying lengthways, with the documentary loaded and ready to play. He grins when he sees Ilya.

“I waited for you,” he says, impossibly sweet.

And Ilya says, “Thank you, my love,” even though he doesn’t care all that much about the candle making documentary that Shane has been wanting to watch for weeks now.

Shane pats his chest, a gesture that Ilya is all too familiar with; he wants Ilya to lie on him like he’s Shane’s own, personal weighted blanket. And, well, it’s not like Ilya is going to say *no*, is he?

So he gently lowers himself top of Shane, chest to chest, settling into the familiar comfort of his arms. Ilya can feel the steady, rhythmic beat of Shane’s heart beneath his cheek, and the way he rests his chin on top of Ilya’s head. He melts into his husband’s arms, snuggling even closer when Shane presses kisses into his hair.

“My baby,” Shane whispers softly.

Ilya hums, kissing Shane’s chest as he says, “Love you.”

“Love you, too. So much.”

Shane presses play on the documentary, and - much to Ilya’s surprise - he finds himself pretty interested in it. That is until he feels Shane’s hand slowly slide beneath his hoodie and t-shirt, his fingers trailing faintly over his back. It feels like he’s following a certain pattern, and Ilya wants to weep when he realises: Shane is tracing Ilya’s moles again, this time from memory.

He is the luckiest person in the whole world.

To love and be loved by Shane Hollander-Rozanov is a beautiful, precious gift, that he once never believed he could have.

It’s one that Ilya intends to spend every day of the rest of his life proving that he deserves. He won’t ever take it for granted. What it took for them to get here, and how hard they had to fight, will always, *always* be worth it, because at the end of it all, they get this. Forever. For always.

Later, they’ll take Anya for a walk and then make lunch together. Maybe Ilya will FaceTime Sveta, and then perhaps he and Shane will complete a bit of paperwork for the upcoming camp in the summer. The world will sneak back up on them eventually, invading the bubble they’ve created for themselves just for today. They’ll have practices, and games, and things to do and people to see.

But for now they hold each other close, and it is a perfect day.

End Notes

love you :)

also no AI was used in this fic, no AI will *ever* be used in any of my fics.

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