

in case of emergency (call 911)

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in case of emergency (call 911)

by [shaneverse](#)

Summary

When Maya Hollander has an emergency, she does exactly what her dad always told her to do: call the fire department.

The problem? The emergency is her Russian homework.

Or: one phone call, one very confused dad, and an unexpectedly helpful firefighter.

Notes

hope you enjoy reading it as much as i enjoyed writing it <3

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The reusable grocery bags hit the kitchen island with a heavy thud, and Maya immediately dragged her own smaller bag beside them, already pulling out apples and lining them up in a painfully straight row.

Shane dropped his keys into the bowl by the door and rubbed a hand over his face, exhausted from the drive home spent trapped in traffic while Maya asked increasingly catastrophic questions about clouds and whether they could collapse onto the earth.

When he looked up again, she still had her backpack strapped stubbornly to her shoulders, her messy blonde ponytail halfway falling apart as she narrowed her eyes at one of the apples and nudged it slightly to the left.

Apparently that was better.

“Dad,” Maya said suddenly, abandoning the apples as she dug through her backpack and pulled out a crumpled worksheet. “The Russian.” She flattened the paper against the counter with both hands. “I still don’t understand the letters. They look like backwards furniture.”

Shane looked down at the Cyrillic worksheet and felt his brain immediately power off.

Unfortunately, this was entirely his fault.

He had been the one insisting on the language classes in the first place, determined that Maya would grow up connected to that side of her family even if most of that connection currently came through uncomfortable holiday phone calls and Christmas cards that somehow felt judgmental through the envelope.

But Shane had overlooked one very important detail.

He did not know Russian.

“Maya, honey,” he said, already loosening the cuffs of his shirt, “give me five minutes to shower and mentally prepare for this.” He tapped the paper lightly. “But I’m warning you now, this may actually qualify as an *emergency*.”

Maya looked up instantly. “An emergency?”

“A complete disaster,” Shane corrected gravely as he started backing toward the hallway. “Potentially catastrophic.”

Maya looked slowly back down at the worksheet.

Emergency.

She knew that word was serious.

Luca’s dad had come to school for career day in his police uniform and explained that emergencies were situations you couldn’t fix by yourself.

Like when Mrs. Gable's cat got stuck on the roof.

Or when Maya accidentally ate a cashew cookie at Auntie Julie's house and everything had turned blurry and fuzzy and an ambulance showed up.

She looked back down at the worksheet, the strange blocky letters still making absolutely no sense no matter how hard she stared at them.

Maya had tried reading them. *Really tried.*

And her dad, who usually knew how to fix everything, had admitted he couldn't fix this either.

If Dad can't help, and it's an emergency, then I have to find someone who can.

She wandered out of the kitchen, the sound of the shower starting upstairs filling the quiet house.

Shane's phone was sitting on the edge of his unmade bed exactly where he'd left it, and Maya picked it up carefully before sitting cross-legged at the top of the stairs with the worksheet spread beside her on the carpet.

Then she opened the dial pad and pressed three numbers.

9.1.1

She lifted the phone to her ear.

It rang twice before a woman answered, her voice calm and steady beneath the distant sound of ringing phones and muffled conversations in the background.

"911 emergency dispatch, this is Rose speaking. What's your emergency?"

Maya sat up a little straighter. "Hello. My name is Maya Hollander and I have an emergency. My dad can't help me, so I need someone to come quickly."

There was a sudden scraping sound on the other end of the line, like a chair rolling back.

"Okay, Maya," Rose said immediately, her voice sharpening into something more focused. "Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Is your dad hurt?"

"No, nobody is bleeding," Maya assured her. "He's in the shower right now, but he said it was a disaster."

"Alright, sweetheart. Can you tell me your address for me?"

“It’s 412 Maple Street, apartment three,” Maya recited proudly. “The blue house with the bird mailbox because Dad says regular mailboxes are ugly.”

Rose typed something quickly. “Perfect. And what exactly is the emergency?”

Maya tightened her grip on the phone. “I need an expert,” she explained seriously. “Dad said he can’t fix it.”

“And your dad is still in the shower?”

“Yes.”

Rose let out a soft sound that almost resembled a laugh. “Okay, Maya. Help is on the way. You stay right there for me, alright?”



Shane turned off the shower and stepped out into a bathroom still thick with steam, dragging a towel through his damp hair while he tried to prepare himself for the rest of the night.

Dinner. Homework. Bedtime.

He had just tied the belt of his navy bathrobe around his waist when a deep mechanical rumble vibrated through the front windows of the house.

Shane stopped.

That definitely wasn’t normal.

A second later, heavy boots pounded up the front porch steps, followed by the doorbell ringing loud enough to echo through the entire house.

The sound sent something cold twisting through Shane’s stomach.

“Maya?” he called, already moving barefoot into the hallway. “Maya, where are you? Who’s at the door?”

He found her sitting calmly at the bottom of the stairs with the worksheet spread across her lap while flashing red and white lights flickered through the frosted glass panels beside the front door, throwing strange shadows across the walls.

Shane’s pulse spiked instantly.

A gas leak? A fire? Had he left the stove on?

He practically flew down the remaining stairs and yanked the front door open hard enough to rattle the frame.

And froze.

Because instead of smoke or panic, there was a firefighter standing in his doorway.

A very large firefighter.

He filled the entire doorway in dark yellow turnout gear, one gloved hand resting against the doorframe while his helmet sat tucked beneath his arm.

Blond hair curled slightly damp against his forehead, and his bright blue eyes swept once over Shane's wet hair, bare chest, and hastily tied bathrobe before lifting back to his face.

For one absurd second, Shane forgot how to speak

"Everything alright, sir?" the firefighter asked, his voice low and calm, the accent underneath it familiar enough to make Shane's brain stall even harder.

Shane blinked back into existence. "I- yes. Everything's fine." He glanced automatically past him toward the truck lights flashing across the street. "Is there a gas leak or something?"

Before the firefighter could answer, Maya appeared beside Shane's robe.

"Hello," she said politely, holding up her worksheet. "I'm Maya. Thank you for coming so fast."

Shane looked down at her slowly. "Maya," he said carefully, "what did you do?"

"You said it was an emergency," she explained. "And you said you couldn't fix it."

The realization hit him all at once.

Oh no.

Shane's jaw tightened immediately. Mortifying or not, he refused to completely fall apart in front of a stranger.

"I'm incredibly sorry," he said, smoothing his expression back into something controlled despite the heat crawling up his neck. "I was being sarcastic. She's seven, she took me literally, and now apparently the fire department is here because I made a joke about Russian homework." His eyes flicked briefly to the name stitched across the jacket. "Sorry, Mr. Rozanov."

Rozanov didn't look irritated.

His mouth twitched into a smirk as he crouched in front of Maya, heavy gear creaking softly. "Russian homework, huh? You did right thing calling for help."

Maya looked deeply vindicated.

Then Rozanov glanced at the worksheet in her hands before standing again, tall enough that Shane suddenly felt very aware he was barefoot and wearing a bathrobe.

“Lucky for you,” he said, looking directly at Shane now, blue eyes bright with amusement, “this is one emergency I can actually fix.”

Shane narrowed his eyes slightly. “Excuse me?”

“Rozanov.” He tapped the name stitched across his jacket. “Ilya Rozanov. Born in Saint Petersburg.” The corner of his mouth lifted. “I think I can handle a first-grade worksheet.”

Maya gasped softly beside them.

Shane looked between the two of them and immediately realized he was losing control of the situation.

“You’re telling me,” he said slowly, “that you’re planning to stand in my hallway and tutor my daughter while there’s still a fire truck parked outside my house?”

“It would be rude to leave emergency unfinished, Mr. Hollander.”

The accent made the words sound unfairly smooth.

Shane stared at him for another second before stepping back and pulling the door open wider.

“Fine,” he said. “But shoes off.”

Ilya looked down at his heavy boots, then back at him. “Seriously?”

“You arrived in a fire truck. God knows what’s on those.”

A quiet laugh escaped Ilya as he bent to untie them.

When Shane came back downstairs a few minutes later, changed into grey sweatpants and a black t-shirt, the house had gone strangely quiet.

He rounded the corner into the living room and stopped.

Ilya had abandoned most of the heavy gear beside the couch, leaving him in a fitted navy department shirt that stretched tightly across broad shoulders as he sat folded awkwardly into one of Maya’s tiny chairs at the play table like it was the most natural thing in the world.

“No, look,” Ilya was saying softly, pointing at the worksheet with one finger. “This one is *Д*. See? Like little house.”

Maya stared at the paper with fierce concentration.

“It makes a hard D sound,” he continued. “Like dog.”

“D- dog,” Maya repeated carefully.

“Exactly.” Ilya smiled immediately, warm and easy. “*Molodets*. Good job.”

Shane crossed his arms and leaned quietly against the archway, watching them for a moment without interrupting.

Ilya's hands looked almost absurd holding Maya's tiny pink pencil, careful and steady as he pointed at the worksheet while Maya listened to him with complete focus, her chin resting in her hands.

Then Ilya glanced up.

His eyes landed on Shane instantly and stayed there.

Slowly, deliberately, his gaze dragged down Shane's black t-shirt before lifting again, something amused flickering across his face.

"I hope you make coffee with same level of intensity you use to stare at people, Mr. Hollander."

Shane pushed himself off the wall before the heat crawling up his neck could fully betray him. "I make excellent coffee, actually."

Shane moved into the kitchen, still able to see them from where the counter opened into the living room.

He filled the kettle while Ilya continued talking Maya through the worksheet in that low, steady voice that somehow carried easily through the house without ever sounding loud.

"Shouldn't you be getting back to work?" Shane asked as he reached for the coffee grounds.

"It's slow tonight," Ilya replied easily. "And dispatch knows where I am." A pause. "Besides, Maya is very good student. Better than rookies at station."

Maya giggled immediately.

"They complain too much," Ilya added.

Shane smiled despite himself as he poured the coffee and carried the mug over. Ilya took it with a quiet thanks, their fingers brushing briefly in the exchange.

Still, Shane pulled his hand back a little too quickly afterward.

"Are you really a hero?" Maya asked suddenly, staring up at Ilya with wide, serious eyes.

Ilya took a slow sip of coffee before glancing toward Shane over the rim of the mug, something amused flickering briefly across his face.

"Not always," he said. "Sometimes I just spray water at things."

Maya considered this carefully.

"The real hero," Ilya continued, "is your dad for surviving you every day."

“Hey,” Shane said from the couch, offended on principle.

“She called 911 because you couldn’t help with homework, Mr. Hollander,” Ilya pointed out calmly. “I respect initiative.”

Maya looked deeply pleased with herself.

Twenty minutes passed without Shane noticing, Maya repeating Russian words while Ilya corrected her in that low, steady voice Shane was already getting used to.

Finally, Ilya tapped the worksheet lightly with the pink pencil.

“Done,” he announced. “Perfect.” He looked at Maya seriously. “*A-plus*.”

Maya beamed instantly, glowing with pride before launching herself at Ilya without warning, wrapping both arms around his neck.

“Thank you, Fireman Ilya,” she declared. “You saved my life.”

Ilya looked caught off guard for maybe half a second, his hands hovering awkwardly before settling carefully against her back.

“You are welcome, *malysh*.”

When he glanced up afterward, his eyes met Shane’s across the room.

Shane looked away first.

Then Ilya stood, the tiny chair creaking dramatically beneath him.

“Alright,” he said, stretching one arm back over his shoulder. “I should probably leave before dispatch decides I died in here.”

Shane followed him toward the front door while Maya wandered through the living room clutching her worksheet proudly against her chest.

Ilya pulled his gear back on piece by piece, the reflective stripes catching flashes of red light from outside as the heavy jacket disappeared over his broad shoulders again.

“Thank you,” Shane said quietly when Ilya reached for the door. “Seriously. I know this was completely insane, but...” He glanced back toward the living room where Maya was still talking to herself in careful Russian syllables. “You made her really happy.”

Ilya paused with one hand resting against the doorframe.

Then he looked back at Shane, his gaze lingering long enough that it definitely wasn’t accidental.

“It was nice,” he said simply.

Before Shane could answer, Ilya reached into his pocket and pulled out a black marker.

He grabbed one of the small receipts sitting beside Shane's keys and scribbled something down against the wall with quick, messy handwriting.

Then he folded the paper once and pressed it into Shane's hand.

Their fingers brushed again.

Shane looked down automatically.

A phone number.

Underneath it, written in sharp Cyrillic letters he still couldn't understand, was one word in English.

Ilya.

"In case of emergency," Ilya murmured.

He leaned in slightly, close enough for Shane to smell smoke and clean soap beneath the low rasp of his voice.

"Or if you want a drink," he added. "The alphabet only gets worse from here, Hollander."

Shane looked up at him, pulse suddenly uneven.

"I don't need a tutor," he said smoothly.

Ilya's eyes flicked briefly to his mouth. "No?"

"I'm a very fast learner."

That slow smile returned immediately, sharper this time. "Good."

Then he stepped back onto the porch, pulling his helmet on as if he hadn't just completely short-circuited Shane's brain.

"Do svidaniya, Maya!" he called into the house. "Do your vocabulary."

"Bye, Fireman Ilya!"

Shane stayed in the doorway while Ilya jogged down the front steps and climbed back into the truck, red lights flashing briefly across the quiet street before the engine roared to life and disappeared into the evening.

For a long moment, Shane just stood there holding the scrap of paper in his hand.

Then he closed the door and walked back into the living room where Maya was happily coloring in the margins of her completed worksheet.

"Hey, Maya," Shane said lightly.

“Yeah?”

He slipped the receipt into his pocket. “Think we can find any more emergencies next week?”

Maya looked up thoughtfully. “Probably. Russian is very hard.”

Shane laughed before he could stop himself.

“Yeah,” he said. “I’m starting to realize that.”

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