

pancakes

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pancakes

by [goldenish](#)

Summary

Ilya sees a lot of things about Shane that he never has to tell him. He can tell when Shane can't deal with the casual touches. He never pushes him about his insane urges to get up at 5 AM to go for a run. Even in the off-season. And he especially avoids any and all direct talk about food. Or at least how weird Shane is about food.

But it's been getting worse.

Sometimes, when the spiralling in his brain is impossible to break out of, Shane will stand in the kitchen, staring at his fridge, counting and calculating proportions and calories, and will feel like nothing he could possibly eat would be good for him. Like every single piece of food in his house, will come with a negative repercussion that will ruin his entire life.

Because hockey is everything. And if Shane doesn't have this body, then he can't play hockey. And then what is he good for?

Notes

TRIGGER WARNING: Please please, be careful, and don't read if eating disorder talk will trigger you! This covers a lot disordered thinking, and could definitely be harmful if you are not in a good place.

Take care of yourselves!

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

The pancakes are a no-go.

Too many carbs. Add on top of that butter, since Ilya will be watching, and the regular syrup, not even sugar-free. Shane will already be over by 400 calories.

Eggs could be a safe bet, but Shane feels like scrambled they would feel rubbery and eggy in his mouth. Boiled, he could only eat the whites because he hates a runny yolk, and he always overdoes it on boiling, so they turn gray and nasty. And again, Ilya would watch him with careful eyes, as he picked the pieces apart. Push the bagels in front of him, without saying a word.

The orange will spike his blood sugar since he hasn't had anything to eat. The salad won't be enough without adding some carbs to the mix. How many carbs? Too many, too little. Shane doesn't know the in between. Chicken sounds disgusting, and he despises the texture of the kidney bean curry that's in the back of the fridge. Because it's not even his to eat, it's Ilya's.

Shane sits down at the table. Ilya is still standing at the stove, flipping his pancakes. He doesn't say anything to Shane.

He never does. Even when he does this weird thing. Denying the perfectly good food Ilya is making, and then goes silent, staring probably with dead eyes around the kitchen, consumed by the balancing act in his mind.

Managing the eating thing with the sensory stuff is a nightmare.

When Shane was younger, it wasn't so bad. He thinks because his metabolism was higher, or he felt invincible, like so many teenagers do. There wasn't anything to notice. Anything to freak out about.

Shane isn't even the one who decided to go on the macrobiotic diet. His nutritionist recommended it when Shane said he noticed feeling shitty after eating out one time, but thought maybe he just didn't drink enough water to balance out the high sodium.

She laid out all the details, and it had sounded good. It meant eating less meat, which was already a difficult aspect of his diet. There were too many external factors that he could never know if it would taste the same. Too much fat, day-old chicken, well-done beef, slightly pink turkey, mid-bite everything tasting too... *meaty*. Shane had thrown out a lot of meat in his time.

So vegetarianism. Mostly. Seemed good. And he was used to counting macros already. Protein counts were huge for him. For building muscle, because Shane had never been a muscle-y kid. His body had always been good for moving quickly, swiftly on skates, ducking and swerving came easily. But he got to the league, and the hits were a lot harder than he was used to. The guys were bigger, packed with pure hard muscle weight, and Shane couldn't stack up.

No one had really pointed this out to him, of course. Because logically, Shane knows he isn't actually that lacking in muscle. If he looked across a range of hockey players in the league, who play center, he'd probably be somewhere in the middle of the pack. Which shouldn't matter because he was supposedly the second-best player in history anyway.

That didn't feel true most days.

The way people talked about it felt like Shane shouldn't have to try this hard. To feel like he was holding on to his skill and this body with every piece of energy he had left.

At twenty-six years old. Shane does not look like he did at eighteen. He feels pretty much the same, in his body, in his level of physical health and function. Stronger even, sometimes. Happier because this body gets to be happy in a way that eighteen year-Shane never was. But the image in the mirror and the number on the scale tell a different story.

He doesn't really care about the number. At least not the way most people do.

What creates that panicky feeling, where he can't catch a whole deep breath for a few moments, is the signifier of change.

Because Shane hasn't changed how he eats or trains, or does anything related to his body in years. So the scale going up means something is happening out of his control. And he doesn't know what to do about it.

"Shane." Ilya snaps in front of his face. He shakes his head. Lets his eyes refocus on the man in front of him.

Ilya is staring blankly. Plate in hand, hovering in front of him.

It's the god damn pancakes. With a whole thick square pad of butter in the middle, already melting into the center, so Shane couldn't slide it off even if he wanted to. At the very least, Ilya has not drizzled syrup directly on top, but left the bottle in reach for Shane to do so himself.

He's noticed things. Shane is sure. It's been a year of more. Of longer visits, and staying the night. I love you-s, and forehead kisses waking him up in the morning. And last summer, the weeks they had spent at the cottage were blissful, and domestic, and so incredibly *real*.

Ilya sees a lot of things about Shane that he never has to tell him. He can tell when Shane can't deal with the casual touches. He never pushes him about his insane urges to get up at 5 AM to go for a run. Even in the off-season. And he especially avoids any and all direct talk about food. Or at least how weird Shane is about food.

Shane has mentioned some things. Like how sometimes eggs taste too much like eggs. Or the texture of peas makes his skin crawl. And Ilya takes it all in stride. Immediately adjusting to leaving peas out of his regular dish that calls for them, avoiding making enough chicken that they have to eat leftovers (because reheated chicken increases the chances of Shane getting grossed out by about 90%).

But it's been getting worse.

This happens sometimes, when the spiralling in his brain is impossible to break out of. Sometimes Shane will stand in the kitchen, staring at his fridge, counting and calculating proportions and calories, and will feel like nothing he could possibly eat would be good for him. Like every single piece of food in his house, will come with a negative repercussion that will ruin his entire life.

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"I can't," Shane says. Staring down at the table. Ilya doesn't say anything. And the plate stays hovering in front of him for a moment before he sets it down. The food is in his eyeline now, and Shane has to squeeze his eyes shut, as the sight brings with it a churning in his stomach, and the awful wave of nausea that sits like a ticking time bomb in his throat.

He hears footsteps, and for a terrifying split second, Shane thinks Ilya has left. Then.

"Moya lubov," A soft hand tracing down his cheek. Shane shudders.

He turns his head and finds Ilya kneeling down next to him. No disgust, or annoyance in his expression. Shane doesn't know if he's ever seen that on Ilya's face, so he's not sure how he was able to imagine it so clearly to be the case now.

"This is not okay, Shane." He shakes his head. But Ilya places another hand on his face and steadies him. Making him keep looking at Ilya.

"I'm- I'm fine," Shane says, not even believing himself. Ilya stares at him for a minute. And then his face collapses into something Shane *hates*. It's pure misery. Teary eyes, that are easier for him these days, but still so rare.

"I'm not fine. I'm not fine, because you are not. And you either can not see it, or you do not want to." Shane gapes at him.

"Ilya-" He shakes his head. Let's go of Shane's face, to grab at his hands with both of his. Wrapping Shane's clenched fists in his own, holding them in front of him, his elbows balanced on Shane's knees, like he's praying for something, or begging.

"You are not fine. This is not okay, Shane. I do not want this for you. I do not want to see you in this much *pain*."

The guilt sits heavy in the pit of his stomach.

No one has ever noticed this way. Noticed how it is *pain*. How it eats at him inside, even if outside, his body looks like it is thriving. Because mostly, it is. Shane is healthy. In his body. He's a healthy weight, and his bloodwork is squeaky clean, and his performance has never been better.

But his brain. His brain is very much... not okay.

He guesses he has two choices here. Because he knows Ilya.

There is a world in which Shane gets angry and defensive. Gaslights Ilya into thinking he's imagined it all, or attempts to because he isn't stupid. He would know exactly what Shane was trying to do. But he would let it go. Let it fall away, because this is still so new. Shane knows that they are both pretty terrified of fighting because they've never done that before, with so much to lose.

So Ilya would let it go. Let Shane continue to self-harm in these twisted small ways, until it got bigger and bigger and bigger and then -

Shane doesn't even know what it would look like if all this came to a breaking point. What it would mean for him. What it would do to Ilya to watch it all happen, the slow decline into a fiery burn.

And he doesn't want to know.

He lets the tears fall, and Ilya immediately reaches up to wipe them away. Shane nods slowly.

"I'm not okay." He admits. Ilya's mouth turns down, lips wobbling heartbreakingly. And then he's scrambling up to straddle Shane on the chair, and he's holding on to him, like he might never let go. Shane wraps his arms around him like his life depends on it.

"I will help you. We will get help. Okay? You will be okay. It will be okay, Shane." Ilya murmurs over and over, attempting to soothe him, as Shane shakes in his arms still, tears pouring out of his eyes unbidden. Not sure how or when he will be able to let go of him.

Ilya's hand is running through his hair, and Shane is wondering why his brain is so useless that it doesn't know how to eat like a normal person.

"I'm scared." He whispers after a few moments, of them just rocking minimally in their positions, holding onto each other tightly. Ilya leans back, hands still wrapped tightly, around Shane's neck.

"You are brave. You can do anything, Shane," He brushes a lock of hair out of his face, gently, "Ya tebya lyublyu." Shane lets himself look into his eyes.

It might not be today, but one day, Shane thinks he might believe him.

End Notes

My food stuff is a little different from Shane's, but I definitely identify with him a lot. I hope that if you are struggling with something like this, you can talk to someone and get help! It absolutely gets better, no matter how far it feels like things have gone. ❤️❤️❤️

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