

The reassuring quiet of boring days

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The reassuring quiet of boring days

by [mareastralis](#)

Summary

Ilya calls Shane "boring". It's a joke, it has been for years. One night, alone in bed while his husband is out partying, Shane wonders if it could be more than that.

Notes

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

- Translation into 中文-普通话 國語 available: [岁月静好](#) by [Shiny_Park](#)

Shane hadn't thought anything of it at first. It made sense, now that they were married, that they wouldn't spend all of their time together. The days when they had to desperately hold on to every second they could spend in the same room were long gone, and that was a positive thing. And so, when Boob had asked the Centaurs group chat if anyone wanted to go out dancing, Ilya had said yes, and Shane had said no. He had watched his husband get dressed, barely stopping himself from undressing him again, because Ilya's tight pants and sheer shirt made his mouth water. Knowing how much Ilya loved to go out, he had chosen to behave, and had simply kissed him at the door long enough to give him a reason to come home.

He had then used his time wisely, cleaning around the house, taking a walk with Anya, cooking, eating and going through his whole night routine before settling into bed with a book. He had to admit that he appreciated the stillness and calm that came with the absence of Ilya. But just for tonight, and because he knew he would be back soon. In the meantime, he was at ease, and enjoyed the cozy evening. He had even been in a good enough mood to let Anya sit at his feet to keep him company. He decided to go to sleep somewhat early, even though they had a day off the next day, because the intensity of the season had been killing him lately. Also, he thought he might take advantage of Ilya's absence to not get distracted before bed. He put down his book and grabbed his phone to check on his messages once before turning the lights off.

He had no new messages but a notification saying that Ilya had posted on his Instagram story. He opened it immediately, unable to help himself. There were a bunch of videos and pictures, both on his public and private story. It looked like most of the team had agreed to come, as well as people Shane recognized as friends of his teammates. They were in a busy club, with loud music drowning anything they could have been screaming, stroboscopic lights making the video painful to watch. Shane couldn't imagine being stuck there and brought the comforter closer to his chin, telling himself that he had made the right decision. The next video, however, almost made him change his mind about that.

Ilya was taking it, arm raised above his head as he danced to some electro song, eyes lidded by the liquor, tongue out, his second hand trailing on his chest. Shane's first reaction was to bite back a moan. His husband was so fucking hot. His second reaction was to check that it was indeed a private story. They had dealt with enough scandals for a lifetime, especially since every moment they shared in public was still being treated as a scandal in itself. Fortunately, Ilya wasn't drunk enough to post this on his public story. His private one was mostly just his friends, teammates, and some random hockey players he had added for shits and giggles ("It'll mess with their heads, Hollander, they'll think I'll like them, won't know how to act, that's how we win the cup this year." Shane didn't think that slutty videos would mess with anyone besides him, but Ilya wasn't the kind of person you reasoned with). Shane replayed the video a couple times, and didn't even feel guilty about it. He would have to ask Ilya to send it to him, now that they were allowed to keep these kinds of things. The next one was a shaky video of their goalie, seemingly sitting on a table. He was giggling before he even started speaking, eyes gleaming, cheeks red.

"Hey, Shane, wait, no, mister Hollander," he started, screaming to be heard.

“Hollander-Rozanov,” Ilya’s voice came from behind the camera, his accent thick, like it always got when Ilya was drunk. Shane had to repress a shiver.

“Mister Hollanov-Whatever,” he giggled again, and Shane heard Ilya do the same while the camera shook. “An anon- ananan...” he frowned. “A source that is anonymous wants you to know that you’re booooooring for not showing up tonight. Boring! Boring! Boring!”

The camera moved again as Ilya tried to pan it towards the rest of the team who started chanting the word “boring” on repeat. He couldn’t tell who, as the shot was too blurry for him to see anyone. The video cut, the story ended, and the room was plunged into silence again. Shane locked his phone and put it down on the nightstand before laying down.

It was nothing. A simple joke. One Ilya had made a thousand times. He rubbed his eyes and sighed, trying to put his mind at ease and sleep. But... why did Ilya feel the need to point it out again and again? Sure, Shane wasn’t the most exciting person in the world. To other people, maybe, he was a star hockey player, he was rich and famous, but Ilya had all of that too, and had never been impressed by any of it anyway. To him, hockey was a job, money was practical, fame was fun. Shane turned on his back. For a long time, he had been exciting because he was new and forbidden. If there was one limit that Ilya shouldn’t have crossed, it was everything he had done with Shane. The secrecy, the danger, it had been fun, it had been hot.

But now? They were out, they were married, they were even teammates, so they couldn’t even compete on ice. Shane didn’t have much more to offer than himself. And his self was, deep down, boring. Ilya was anything but. Ilya was the type to insult players twice his size for fun and go out to party in the middle of the week just because. And so Shane became aware, at eleven at night on a random Thursday, because of a stupid fifteen second video, that Ilya might very well get tired of him someday.

Anya woke him up when she bolted out of the room at the sound of Ilya’s keys entering the lock. Shane listened as he greeted her fondly. He had struggled to fall asleep, heart racing and mind in overdrive, and so he had allowed himself to keep her near. Now he was awake and the bed was covered in fur. Exhausted, he closed his eyes and listened to Ilya stumbling through the motions of getting a snack, then loudly telling Anya to be silent not to wake Shane. He pretended to sleep when Ilya walked into the room, letting him disappear into the en-suite bathroom. He only allowed himself to move when he heard the shower start.

He checked the time and sighed. His husband was forcing himself to take a shower at five in the morning, because he knew that Shane didn’t want him to get in between the sheets all sweaty. He was right too; on any other day, Shane would have been very glad about it. But now he wondered how long Ilya would accept all these rules and quirks, because surely the only thing he wanted to do was crash in bed and sleep. A familiar guilt made itself at home between Shane’s ribs. He was used to the feeling, but it still hurt. He settled and waited for Ilya to come out of the shower.

Walking out with just a towel around his waist and a cloud of condensation around him, Ilya looked like a God. Ugh. Shane was really tired. Ilya changed into some shorts and joined him

in bed.

“You alright?” Shane mumbled.

“Yes. Is good. Sleep, sleep,” Ilya reassured him with a lazy wave of hand.

Shane watched as he got comfortable and sighed in relief. It looked like he was immediately asleep. Shane brought a hand up to chase a strand of hair from his forehead, taking his time to caress his skin softly. Ilya hummed in appreciation, and Shane felt emboldened enough to drop a kiss on his temple and wrap an arm around him. Ilya let him, and even nuzzled against his chest once he could. He seemed relaxed, at peace. Not bored, not tired of this life. Shane had him, entirely, body and soul. For now. He should leave it at that, and be happy with whatever time he would manage to get. But could anything less than forever be enough?

He didn't manage to fall back asleep. He stayed in bed as long as possible, looking at Ilya's sleeping form, listening to his soft snores, playing with his hair. It did keep him from completely spiraling, but after about an hour, he decided that he didn't want to risk waking his husband up. Not before he had time to make a plan.

He got out of bed as discreetly as possible, making sure to replace the comforter around Ilya's shoulders before he left. He grabbed a hoodie that was definitely not his and left the room as silently as possible. He walked down to the kitchen and started the kettle. He rubbed his eyes until they were nearly painful, chasing away any remnants of sleep. He just needed to think. He needed to calm down, and get the situation under control. He could do it.

Ilya loved him, he was aware of it, he would have to be blind and stupid not to. Ilya had built most of his adult life around him, he had sacrificed a lot for them to be together. Their relationship was strong and loving and sexy, and nowhere near any kind of immediate danger. He breathed in and out, the way he usually did before he started a yoga session, and put his hands on the counter, arms outstretched, to ground himself and stretch his shoulders. His body was tense. Yoga would help, for a minute, but he was more in the mood to find a practical solution. His body would wait.

The secrecy surrounding their relationship had been painful most of the time, especially in the end, especially when Shane had failed to make Ilya feel loved and cared for. But it would be a lie to say that it hadn't been exciting at times. All the sneaking around, the hidden touches, all the times they had to stay silent and discreet and exchange looks that only made sense to them. It was sending a thrill down his spine to think about it, even today. Things were much more comfortable now. But maybe the thrill wasn't all gone, maybe Shane could find ways to bring it back. He could find ways to be exciting again. He could smother the part of himself that made him fearful and ultimately stuck in a comfort zone too small for Ilya to want to fit in forever.

He settled on the couch with a warm cup of tea and his laptop, pulling a blanket over himself. The best way to get out of his own head was to look for external reassurance, tips and ideas.

Unfortunately, his search for “exciting activities for couples” gave him very sexual results very quickly, and that wasn’t what he was looking for. They were good on that front, and Ilya already knew every trick to bring Shane out of his comfort zone in the bedroom. In a way, their whole relationship was based on Ilya’s capacity to make Shane do whatever he wanted in bed, and to make him comfortable through it all. Also, Shane wasn’t the sharing type, and it seemed that what most people found ‘exciting’ was to be with someone who wasn’t their partner. Shane would do everything in his power so that it wouldn’t come to this.

He tried to get more specific with his research. Their couple wasn’t the issue, Ilya wasn’t the issue, Shane was. Traveling destinations, classes, indoor and outdoor activities, he didn’t limit himself in any way. He lost some time on daredevils’ blogs, learned words he had never even heard once to describe forms of partying he wasn’t sure he completely understood, and started a list. He tried to make it as wide as possible. He could always trim it down later. This was about making an effort after all, he had to take every possibility into consideration, even if it scared him, maybe even more so. He had gotten lost between all his open tabs, looking for the one about a hiking trail in Thailand, when he heard Ilya’s feet slowly coming down the stairs. He couldn’t help but smile when he saw his husband’s barely open eyes and sleepy frown.

“Hey, are you okay? Do you need anything? Aspirin?”

Instead of answering, Ilya made a beeline for the couch. Shane put his laptop away automatically, and Ilya crawled into the newly vacated place until he was resting between his husband’s legs, head on his chest. Shane’s hands immediately went up, one on his back and one in his hair. He held him close, smiling despite himself, already feeling calmer.

“Why are you up? Nightmare?”

“Mh,” Ilya said, and Shane was almost sure that it was a ‘no’. “Woke up and you weren’t here.”

“That’s not a reason to get up. You barely slept...” He looked at the clock on his screen. “Three hours.” He had been at this for three hours... no wonder why he felt so exhausted.

Ilya nuzzled against his chest, and Shane’s heart went haywire. He didn’t need anything more than this to have a good day for the rest of his life. He just needed to make sure Ilya’s needs were also met. And that meant getting out of his bubble.

“But you weren’t there,” Ilya repeated like that explained it all.

“Okay. I’m here now. Do you want to sleep here? Do you want coffee? Aspirin?”

“Already had some,” he mumbled, rubbing at his eyes. Shane couldn’t resist kissing the top of his head. He was still warm with sleep. “What’re you doin’?” Ilya asked, barely opening an eye to look at the screen on the coffee table.

Shane started scratching his head in what he hoped was a comforting way. “I’m looking for things we could do this summer.”

Ilya groaned and stretched before settling back in the same position, grabbing Shane's hand to put it back in his hair. Shane huffed out a laugh and resumed his caresses.

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why look things up? We can't go to the cottage?"

"Well... I was just thinking... we don't have to."

"Mh."

"Now that... now that everyone knows, we don't have to hide out there. We can be together anywhere."

"True," Ilya smiled, the 'r' rolling under his tired tongue. It was a good cover, because it wasn't even a lie. "Where are we going then?" he asked as he blinked himself awake. That was good, he was into the idea. Shane was on the right path.

"I don't know yet. You get to pick."

"Tell me all the places."

"There's this hotel I found which is lost in the jungle in Thailand," he brought his laptop closer with the hand that wasn't busy with petting Ilya so he could show him pictures. "It's in the middle of nowhere. You take a train to go there and it goes through the mountains, and in some places it goes over bridges which are basically hanging over the edge."

"Pretty," Ilya simply said as Shane scrolled through the pictures. The mere idea of looking over the cliffs' edges through the open doors of the train (which was, for some reason, something you could do) made him queasy.

"There's also this place in Croatia. I'm not sure I understood everything but from what I gathered you can do paintball in old hotels and buildings that became ruins after the war."

"What war?"

"Huh... the last one I guess."

Ilya chuckled against his chest. "Okay."

"Then if we want something more urban, it looks like Berlin has a crazy nightlife. Lots of clubs, things like that. Queer places too," he added with a shiver going down his spine.

Ilya shifted so he was on his knees, eye to eye with Shane, and grabbed his face with both hands. "What have you done with my husband?" he asked with a frown that would have been more intimidating if he didn't look half asleep still.

Shane snorted. "What do you mean?"

“My Shane wouldn’t go to gay parties in the jungle.”

“Those were two different things,” he tried to dodge.

Ilya clicked his tongue, almost annoyed. “You hate clubs. You’d hate the jungle. Scared of every little ant. And paintball? Don’t even know what it is.”

“It’s like a game with fake gu-” he was interrupted by Ilya squeezing his cheeks.

“You don’t want any of that,” he frowned.

“I want what you want,” he explained once Ilya had released him.

“All I want is.. sun, and you in little tiny... for swimming,” he said as he traced the outline of something scandalous on Shane’s thighs.

“Swimming trunks.”

“Yes. Tiny tiny. And no one around so I can make you scream all I want,” he added with a proud smirk.

Shane shook his head, already feeling a blush coming up. That sounded like heaven. “That’s what we’ve done every summer.”

“I want to do it again.”

“We can do that and other stuff.”

Ilya huffed and returned to his previous position on Shane’s chest. “You don’t want me to make love to you in the sun anymore?” he asked, almost innocently.

“I... no- I mean, yes, but...”

“But what?”

“We can also do other things now.”

Ilya sighed. “I think I’m too tired now to plan for more things. Right now I think after the season all I can do is sleep and have my way with you.”

Shane could picture it perfectly, the exhaustion that came after the season was over, after the pressure was off for just a few weeks. Most players spent their first days off sleeping and eating and feeling a little desperate at how uncharacteristically empty their schedule was. Ilya and Shane usually spent it sleeping and eating and desperately clawing each other’s clothes off. It was all he wanted, which was why he needed to find something else, something better, something Ilya wouldn’t get fed up with in two years.

“We don’t have to leave right away, we can take a break. But it would be good to... go out. Do something new. It’s what people do, you know?”

Ilya looked up, a questioning look on his face. “It’s a thing, right?”

“Vacations? Yeah?”

“No,” he clarified as he sat up again, “You, doing this, now. It’s a *thing*.”

“I’m not following,” Shane tried, hoping he was reading this wrong.

“Getting up before the sun looking up clubs in Berlin. You’re doing a Shane thing. You’re bothered.”

“No, I- I,” he stuttered, “I went to bed early, so I woke up early and thought I could plan something and...”

He trailed off when Ilya put a hand on his cheek. His husband seemed to look for something on his face and, when he found it, leaned in to kiss him. He kept it chaste, mindful of Shane’s obsession with brushing his teeth before putting his tongue in Ilya’s mouth, but it wasn’t any less passionate for it.

“Tell me,” Ilya ordered when he broke the kiss, his thumb still caressing Shane’s face.

“There’s nothing to tell. I wanted to plan a nice holiday for you.”

“For me?”

“Yes!”

“You want to send me in another country so you can sleep here all day?” Ilya said, teasing.

“What? No! I want us to go... somewhere! Somewhere fun and new and exciting! Now that we... can. Stop looking at me like that!” Shane tried to turn his head to avoid the intensity on Ilya’s face, but he kept him from moving with a hand on his cheek.

“Am too tired to read your mind. Just tell me.”

“There’s nothing. It’s fine.”

Ilya bumped their foreheads together. “Lie.”

Shane sighed. “I just want you to have the option to do something fun this summer.”

“The cottage is fun.”

“The cottage will get boring,” he mumbled, eyes down.

He looked up when Ilya didn’t answer. He could see the cogs turning in his husband’s head.

“You’re bored at the cottage?” he asked, disbelief clear in his voice.

“No, I love that place.”

“You think I’m bored at the cottage?”

“I...” he couldn’t find the right words.

“Why do you think that? I never said anything wrong about the cottage. The cottage is my friend.”

Shane almost laughed at his turn of phrase. He loved when Ilya’s excitement, or state of inebriation, or, in this case, tiredness, made his English sloppier and all over the place. He loved that he felt comfortable enough around Shane to still speak, uncaring of his words, unafraid that he might sound dumb, knowing Shane would always get it in the end.

“I don’t think that you’re bored now, but... you might be... someday,” he gave up on that half-truth.

“Okay, maybe, in like, ten years, I will want to do other stuff,” he rolled his eyes. “Is fine. We’ll see in ten years.”

“I’d rather take care of it now.”

“But I love going there,” Ilya whined. “I don’t understand.”

“I just...” he looked for courage in his husband’s eyes, “I don’t want you to get bored.”

“Am not. I’m a star hockey player, on my way to win the cup with my hot husband, nothing in my life is boring, I just partied all night!”

“Yeah, without me,” Shane whispered, the words barely escaping his lips.

“What?” he asked. Shane shook his head, but the words finally reached Ilya’s brain. “You wanted to come last night? You said no, I thought-”

“No, I didn’t, that’s... I really didn’t.”

Ilya grabbed his chin and forced him to look up. “Tell me.”

Shane’s shoulders fell as he gave up. “That’s... that’s the issue, right? I’m just... I’m just me. Hockey player, but not for long, and that’s the only exciting thing I have to offer. I’m not... I’m boring, right?”

A myriad of emotions flashed over Ilya’s face. He was entirely awake now. “Shane...”

“No, it’s fine, I don’t need you to... I can fix it!” he said, gesturing towards his laptop, now in standby mode.

“There is nothing to fix,” Ilya answered, puzzled.

“Yes, you just don’t see it now but.. in like... five? Ten years? What excitement will I be able to offer you? You’ll be... You’ll be...”

“Bored of you?” Ilya finished for him, and hearing it said out loud broke Shane’s heart. “That’s ridiculous.”

“No, it’s not. You don’t even realize it, but you say it all the time and one day it’s going to be the only thing I am, once the novelty wears off and-”

“Shane, hey, stop, please. You’re breaking my heart.” Ilya put his hands on Shane’s face again. “I didn’t think... I’ve always said it, you knew it’s not real.”

“Yeah, it’s just... you’ll change your mind.”

“No I won’t.”

“Last night, did you or did you not make a video to tell the entire world that your boring husband stayed home?” he asked with a frown.

Ilya thought about it for a second. “I don’t think the entire world watches my Instagram.

“Ilya,” Shane started, but he didn’t let him finish, cutting him off with a kiss.

“Just a stupid joke,” he said against his lips.

“For now,” Shane countered, and Ilya let him go with a sigh.

“Shane...” he stopped himself to brush his hands over his face. “Okay, so... the cottage is my favorite place to be on all of the Earth. Even if there was a jungle paintball gay club in Antarctica, I would want to go to the cottage.”

“Fine. We’ll go, it’s settled.” Shane tried to slip away from under Ilya, but his husbands didn’t let him, forcing him to lay down and trapping him even more.

“Am not done. We made the video because I got very drunk, and told everyone it sucked that you didn’t come, but I couldn’t tell them I was sad not to see my husband for a few hours, because I am their captain and I need their respect, so I said you were boring. They said we could make a video to tell you to come and then I would have to stop talking about you. I think Hazy forgot to say you should come. We were very drunk very fast. There was pink shots. Very sugary.”

“Okay, fine, forget I said anything.” Shane tried to move away again, but Ilya grabbed his wrists and pinned them above his head.

“No, there’s one more thing.”

“What?”

“Boring doesn’t mean boring.”

“As in... Is it a translation thing?” Shane asked, utterly confused.

“No. It’s just for you and me. When I didn’t know you, I just heard you were a polite Canadian boy. No scandals, good family, nice, boring. Then I knew you, and I knew I was wrong, but I wasn’t allowed to love you, so I called it boring but it didn’t mean boring anymore.”

“What... what did it mean?”

“It means you were the only unchanging thing in my life. Shane Hollander always comes when I give him my room number. Shane Hollander always puts up with me. Shane Hollander always kisses me like I need it. Always nice, always perfect for me. Everything else changed. Teammates, coaches, girls, boys. Everything else was chaos. Hockey, parties, money. You were always just Shane. Always boring, always the same, reassuring.”

Shane’s heart was beating painfully hard against his ribcage. Ilya’s capacity to render him speechless with the most beautiful declarations always made him lose his mind. Even worse, he wasn’t done yet.

“Boring now means I am not scared to lose you. Boring means I can enjoy being in a club with strangers because I know I can come home to you and you will kiss my head and let me fall asleep against you. Boring means you won’t let me destroy my body with bad food and bad habits. Boring means you care. Boring means I’m safe with you forever.”

Toothpaste be damned, Shane surged up to capture Ilya’s lips in a bruising kiss. He felt tears prickling his eyes, brought on mostly from the relief he felt at Ilya’s words. Ilya finally released his wrists, and Shane didn’t lose a second before he grabbed him to bring him impossibly close. Ilya let him, holding onto him with the same force. Shane kissed him with all he had, letting go of all his fears, giving him all his love.

“I’m sorry,” came Shane’s shaky voice.

“Nothing to be sorry for любовь моя,” Ilya shook his head and went right back to kissing him.

They separated after a few intense seconds, out of breath, exchanging a charged look.

“Sorry I made a scene,” Shane insisted.

“Sorry I made you doubt,” Ilya answered with a kiss on his cheek. “I need to sleep more.”

“Yes, of course, I’ll wake you for lunch?”

“No, you’re coming with me,” Ilya shook his head, getting up and holding a hand out for Shane.

“I’m-”

“When did you get up this morning?” Ilya cut him off, and Shane sighed.

“Fine,” he relented, taking Ilya’s hand.

He guided him to their bedroom, not letting go of Shane's hand until they were both settled against the pillows. He didn't let Shane stay away, gathering him in his arms and pushing Shane's head onto his chest.

"That way I'm sure you're not signing us up to go juggling snakes or something," he teased, and Shane laughed.

"I don't think that's a thing."

"You'd find a way."

They exchanged a fond smile.

"There are many not boring things we can do at the cottage," Ilya said, a hand coming up to trace lines on Shane's thigh.

"Oh yeah? What do you have in mind?"

"Is for you to find. Prove you're not boring."

Shane saw the dare for what it was. "Okay. We can bring out the jet-skis again."

"Yes, perfect."

Shane hesitated for a second. "I could have my way with you out on the dock."

"We already did that," Ilya pointed out. "Of course we'll do it again, but find something new."

"I could..." he felt his cheeks heat up and stopped himself.

"Yes, this, tell me this," Ilya pushed, a hungry look on his face.

"I could tie you up. Not let you touch me until I'm done."

"Yes, love that. We're doing it," Ilya declared like he was closing a business deal.

Shane laughed and shifted to come up and kiss him. Ilya didn't let him go, the kiss turned languid.

"Maybe... maybe we could still go away, for a little while," Shane offered shyly as the image occurred to him. "Just us. Somewhere sunny. Somewhere people don't care about hockey. Don't care about us."

"Just us," Ilya said, his eyes closing on their own. "Yes, I like that."

Shane stole one more kiss, and settled against his husband, in his rightful place, forever.

End Notes

Let's yap about hollanov on [twitter](#) <3

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