

Off day

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Off day

by [mareastralis](#)

Summary

Ilya knows he has to get up, soon, but he doesn't feel up to the task today. Shane notices.

Notes

I don't know if this is anything interesting, I just needed Ilya to get the comfort I couldn't

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

There were only a handful of things that Shane loved more than his morning runs. It looked like a chore to most people, but it was a treat to him. Other than slow mornings in Ilya's arms, exchanging kisses and caresses, it was his favorite way to start the day. It allowed him some peace and quiet, even when life was hectic, even when he was on the road, even if the whole world was loud, running was always quiet. At home, it was part of a routine, his itinerary traced carefully to avoid big roads and focus on flowery paths. He was often accompanied by Anya, or sometimes by his grumpy husband, who demanded kisses as a reward when they were done. On the road, it helped him clear his head before a game, mentally running different possible plays to get himself ready, or it let him explore the neighborhood of his hotel, getting a feel of cities he was traveling to so often but knew nothing about.

That morning, he was alone. Ilya had barely stirred when he had left their bed, and Anya had chosen to stay with him to enjoy the warmth left in Shane's wake. The air was pretty cold indeed, but neither rain nor snow had ever stopped Shane from going out first thing in the morning. He knew he didn't have much time, and so he had started on a faster rhythm than his usual. They had a lot on their plate today, despite it being a rare no-hockey day. They had a meeting with Farah, who wanted to discuss possible joint sponsorships for next season, then they would go and have lunch with Shane's parents to debrief the meeting (and so Yuna could give her opinion on everything). After that, Shane had a photoshoot for an energy drink brand, and Ilya had planned to tag along because he was the only one in their household who liked said drink (he had offered for Shane to just spit in his mouth after every take, to which Shane had simply spluttered and blushed, which Ilya took as one more reason to come). After that, they would have dinner with Rose, who was in town for a few days to attend a convention. Then, they would finally get home and relax a little, probably go to bed early to be ready for practice the next morning.

Checking his watch, Shane picked up his pace a little. If he showered quickly enough and Ilya was almost ready when he came back, they could maybe have five minutes to enjoy each other before they had to leave. He crossed the threshold of their house sweaty and out of breath, but he felt like it would be worth it. He took off his shoes and was surprised when Anya didn't come to greet him. Even more surprising, there was no noise coming from the kitchen, where Ilya usually stood making breakfast when Shane came back. He peered inside just in case, but it was empty, same for the living room and the patio. A little worried, he climbed up the stairs and walked back inside their bedroom. That's when he understood.

Ilya was a little relieved to hear Shane leave almost as soon as he had walked into the room. He didn't feel like being rushed by his husband today. He didn't feel like much. He had been coming in and out of sleep for a few hours now, never really falling into peaceful slumber, but never finding the strength to get up either. He had calculated it. If he skipped both

breakfast and shower he could still get ten more minutes to lay here and be ready in time. He tried to take a deep breath in and felt tears prickle at the corner of his eyes. Time was going too fast. The air was too cold. He felt heavy. He didn't want to get up.

He brought Anya closer and hid his face in her fur. She was warm and soft and as lazy as he wanted to let himself be. She whined playfully and settled against him. That helped a little. She always did. He closed his eyes again, tired of staring into nothing. He was so tired. But they had a long day ahead, and he had to get up soon. He would do it. Any minute now. He just wanted to stay warm for a little longer.

He didn't want more sponsors. He didn't want to be in meetings all day. If he was entirely honest, he didn't even want to go out for lunch with Yuna and David. He felt terribly guilty about that, and that weight was just added to his shoulders. If he didn't tell anyone, it would be fine. He would mask it, they wouldn't be able to guess, they wouldn't get mad. Shane would hate him if he knew, and Ilya wouldn't be able to bear it. He had to hide it as best as he could. He loved Shane's parents, but he could barely breathe correctly today. It would take a lot of energy, but he would find a way. He felt so heavy he was wondering if he would even be able to lift himself from the mattress. He didn't feel like trying before he absolutely had to.

He heard Shane walking in again, the scent of his body wash following him as he crossed the room to enter their shared walk-in closet. Ilya heard him look for his clothes, probably a smart, no-nonsense, clean outfit. Shane liked to wear this kind of armor to deal with brands and sponsorships. Anya wiggled away from Ilya's grasp and joined him there as he dressed. Shane giggled softly as she ran into his leg and surely almost made him fall. The sound made Ilya's heart swell. He wanted to live in this moment forever. He wanted to ask Shane to close the door to their bedroom and hide there for the day, together, piled up on the bed, doing nothing. He just wanted his bed and his family. But they probably wouldn't want to be around him for long in his state.

As if they had heard his thoughts, Shane left again, Anya close on his heels. Ilya curled up on himself, chasing warmth. Five more minutes. Just five more minutes, and then he'd be able to face the day.

He heard Anya's paws first, the click-clack of her claws on the wooden floor, which was usually his favorite sound. She jumped on the bed, putting her two front paws on his thigh, and he took it as a sign to move. Shane was surely on his way to kick him out of bed and he didn't have the energy for any kind of bickering right now. He rolled on his back and sat up slowly, each of his members weighing a ton. He scratched Anya's ears to give himself an excuse not to move for a second. He breathed in, and out, slowly, consciously, but his chest still felt too heavy for air.

Shane walked in then, and the first thing Ilya noticed was that he was carrying a tray. He closed the door with his feet and came to put the tray down on his bedside table, an intense focus on his face. There were so many things on the tray, it was a miracle that it had all made it up the stairs. Before Ilya could ask, Shane was sitting next to him, back under the covers, and that's when Ilya noticed his joggers and old Boston hoodie.

“What... what is going on?” he asked, puzzled.

Shane sent him a blinding smile as he adjusted his pillow against the headboard. “We’re having breakfast in bed today.”

“We have a meeting with Farah, Shane,” Ilya breathed out, surprised that Shane could forget.

“No, we don’t, we have time.”

“Oh? She cancelled?” Ilya asked, trying to ignore the intense wave of relief that washed over him. Even getting just two hours of free time would help. He would be able to face the world after that.

Shane adjusted Ilya’s pillow behind him while Anya turned around on herself to find a good sleeping position. Ilya was very sorry if Farah had had an issue, but this felt like a dream come true. Shane wiggled closer, and Ilya looked at the love of his life, and how the morning light fell on his face, and he wanted to cry. Shane leaned in, and Ilya instinctually met him halfway, kissing him like Shane was oxygen. Right now, Ilya really felt like he was.

“Is Farah okay?” he asked when Shane pulled back.

Shane nudged their noses together and kissed Ilya’s chin before turning back to grab his tray. There were mugs, a thermos of tea or coffee and pieces of fruit and juice and bread and jam and about a million other things Shane wasn’t eating for breakfast, especially when he had a photoshoot later on. He had even brought the chocolate cookies Ilya loved so much.

“She’s fine, don’t worry. I’m the one who rescheduled.”

Ilya frowned, opened his mouth to ask follow up questions, and Shane took the opportunity to put a piece of apple in his mouth. He laughed at Ilya’s surprise and leaned in to kiss his cheek as Ilya chewed.

“I don’t understand.”

“I cancelled the meeting. And lunch, and the shoot, and Rose.”

“What?” Ilya’s eyebrows shot up and his heart accelerated. “Why? What is wrong?”

Either Shane had fallen on his head or a war had been declared, but something was definitely wrong.

“Nothing,” Shane shrugged, looking somehow both angelic and mischievous. “I’m just sick, I can’t go out.”

“You’re sick? What is it золотце darling? Are you hurting?”

Ilya put a hand on his forehead. He seemed fine. He looked fine. He had even gone for his run. Ilya was entirely lost. Shane put a hand in front of his mouth and faked a cough.

“See? Very sick. The doctors are saying I have to stay in, stay warm, and kiss my husband a lot,” he said with a devilish smile and a kiss on Ilya’s jaw.

Ilya’s eyes were wide as saucers. He was scared to understand. “Shane...”

“Why, did you want to go out today?”

Ilya stayed silent for a second, stunned. “We have a lot to do.”

“No we don’t. I cancelled.”

They just exchanged a charged look in silence. Ilya saw it all. The worry, the understanding, the unbearable love. Tears were rolling down his cheeks before he could feel them come up. Shane gently put the food aside so he could gather his husband in his arms. Ilya melted against him, crying like a scared kid. With every tear some of the incomprehensible tension he had woken up with fell away from his body, but his guilt grew bigger. Shane held him close, petted his hair, kissed his temple, relentless, warm, perfect.

“It’s okay, my love, it’s okay.”

Ilya shook his head as best as he could where it was hidden against Shane’s neck. “I’m sorry.”

“You have nothing to apologize for. It’s okay. All of it can wait.”

“No, no, we have to... I can do it.” His voice broke.

“You don’t have to. You can let go. We’re okay.” Shane’s voice, on the other end, was steady. A lighthouse in the storm. Ilya grabbed a fistful of the worn fabric of his old hoodie. He wanted to crawl inside Shane’s ribcage. He would be safe there.

“I’m so sorry.”

“I’m not. We’re okay, you’re okay.”

Ilya kept crying, and Shane kept holding him. He was so warm and reassuring and alive that some of it ended up seeping through Ilya’s skin, and he settled a little. He was sprawled against Shane’s chest, who had a hand in his hair, holding him close, another on his back, caressing his spine, lips trailing against his skin, and Anya was curled up at their feet. Ilya could breathe a little easier.

“I love you,” he whispered against Shane’s hoodie.

“I love you more,” Shane whispered back, and Ilya’s heart came alive.

“Sorry I ruined your day.”

“I’m cuddling my husband and about to have some cookies, nothing has been ruined.”

Ilya moved so he could look him in the eyes. Shane was smiling, soft and easy and in love, his hands still holding on to his husband. Ilya couldn't comprehend his look. He probably looked like a blotchy snotty mess, he felt physically as heavy as the burden he was being in Shane's life, and, still, Shane looked at him with... adoration. He was the sun, and Ilya needed him for the world to keep turning.

"Maybe we can still see your parents, or..."

"Ilya, it's okay. I rescheduled," he insisted and, when Ilya opened his mouth to argue, added: "I'm tired."

"What?"

"This season. New city, new team, all the eyes on us. I'm tired. I want a day off. We haven't had a real one in ages. There is always something to do, someone to see. I realized it when I saw you there... we deserve some peace and quiet."

Ilya sniffed, but couldn't object. Instead, he leaned in and stole a kiss, then another. "Thank you."

"Of course," Shane answered and kissed him again.

Ilya's eyes welled up again. He loved this man too much for words. He was the luckiest person in the world, to be loved by Shane Hollander. He'd tell him that, and more, he would, but later, when his brain didn't feel like mush and when he could breathe without feeling like he was about to cry.

He settled against his husband's shoulder. Shane moved just enough to bring the tray back within reach and sat against the headboard. He grabbed a cookie and brought it to Ilya's mouth. He should have protested, said something about being capable to do it on his own, but he didn't want to. He didn't want to do it on his own. He wanted to take that small gesture, and all the others, and all the pieces of love Shane would offer, selfishly. He wanted it all.

He accepted the food, a hand falling on Shane's thigh to caress him in thanks. Shane kissed his head and reached for some fruit. Ilya closed his eyes and took it in. The warmth, the comfort, his soulmate, his little Anya, the family he didn't think he could ever have, the love he thought he could never deserve. He took a full breath and let himself feel it coursing through his lungs. Shane gave him some fruit, petted his hair, and launched himself in a story about Evan and Luca at practice that Ilya had missed. Ilya let his hands wander, touching, caressing, reaching under Shane's hoodie just to feel his skin under his fingertips. The world felt a little lighter, a little more bearable.

End Notes

золотце – golden one, darling

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