

the pregnancy poster boy

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Summary

“Nothing serious,” Yuna says before Shane can reply. “I was just telling Shane about this great opportunity to work with a maternity athletic brand.”

“I don’t really feel comfortable right now, Mom,” Shane tells her, grimacing as he looks down at the stretched fabric of the hoodie he’s wearing. “I’m not myself. I don’t think this is the Shane Hollander brands are expecting.”

“You are beautiful, perfect, moy lyubimyy,” Ilya is quick to disagree.

“Ilya is right,” Yuna says, “and Shane, they know you’re pregnant. That’s exactly why they want you! You’re breaking barriers for omegas in the NHL. A pregnant, star NHL player? Just think of how much hope young omegas would feel looking at you!”

Ilya winces. He hadn’t meant for his comment to encourage Yuna this way.

-Yuna books a brand shoot for Shane during his pregnancy, he says yes even though he really doesn't want to-

Notes

let me just get the disclaimer out of the way that i love yuna hollander and pls dont read this and think anyone is slandering her lol

i just wanted to write some anxious preg shane and comforting protective alpha ilya :-)

ALSO i dont write omegaverse much so if there's lore that's wrong or smth just...just breeze by...we're here for fun and sillies and love !

i hope you enjoy and thanks for reading!

“...and it could be *so* important for people to see!” Yuna Hollander is mid-sentence when Ilya quietly steps into the front door.

He comes upon a familiar scene in his kitchen. His husband, Shane, seated across from his mother in law, Yuna, at their kitchen table. They’re both nursing cups of coffee -Shane’s one and only he’s allowed per day, considering he’s currently seven months pregnant with their first pup- and their expressions are quite serious.

“Ilya,” Shane greets him, expression softening into a smile as the taller man moves closer, pressing his hands into Shane’s hair. The omega relaxes visibly, melting against Ilya’s side as his calming pheromones settle the mild distress in the air.

“This seems like a serious talk,” Ilya says with an arched, concerned eyebrow.

“Nothing serious,” Yuna says before Shane can reply. “I was just telling Shane about this great opportunity to work with a maternity athletic brand.”

Ilya hesitates, glancing down at Shane’s reluctant face. Yuna has been trying to talk him into doing some sponsorships over the past few months, insisting that just because he’s off the ice for the season, doesn’t mean he can’t still be working.

Shane is hesitant to broadcast the state of his body right now to strangers. He’s been feeling insecure and out of touch with himself without hockey, and in his new body as their pup takes up space inside of him.

“I don’t really feel comfortable right now, Mom,” Shane tells her, grimacing as he looks down at the stretched fabric of the hoodie he’s wearing. “I’m not myself. I don’t think *this* is the Shane Hollander brands are expecting.”

“You are beautiful, perfect, moy lyubimyy,” Ilya is quick to disagree.

“Ilya is right,” Yuna says, “and Shane, they know you’re pregnant. That’s exactly why they want you! You’re breaking barriers for omegas in the NHL. A *pregnant*, star NHL player? Just think of how much hope young omegas would feel looking at you!”

Ilya winces. He hadn’t meant for his comment to encourage Yuna this way.

“I-I guess,” Shane admits reluctantly.

“You could have used someone like that, growing up,” she reminds him gently.

Ilya’s jaw tightens.

“I know,” Shane says, cupping a hand under his belly. “I mean, what’s the ad going to be?”

“It will be so easy, they just want you to model some of the athletic wear, show how comfy it is for pregnant omegas. A one-day shoot. Very manageable for you.”

“Shane has been pretty exhausted,” Ilya interjects, keeping his voice neutral. The last thing he wants is to put himself in the middle of a matter between mother and son, but his alpha insists on protecting Shane and their pup.

“I’m fine,” Shane replies, almost like it’s a reflex- an instinct to not make a spectacle of himself, or demand more from anyone than he thinks he deserves.

“I know you are,” Ilya says gently.

“Well, I’ve got to get back to them by today,” Yuna tells him. “Will you at least consider it?”

It’s clear Shane is debating internally, beating himself up over the thought of saying no to a job when it’s clear how important it seems to be to his mother, and apparently to every omega in the world who needs *Shane* to be their representation.

“Sweetheart,” Ilya tells him, “you do not have to say yes.”

“Of course not,” Yuna agrees. Her words are sincere enough, but there’s years of expectations underneath them, however unspoken, that weigh on Shane.

“I’ll do it, it’s fine,” he says, “it’s just one day. And, I’ll be wearing clothes, right? I don’t want anyone to see my belly.”

“Fully clothed,” she assures him. “So, you’re in?”

“Yeah.” Shane’s expression is tight, coiled in a veil of faux positivity that Ilya recognizes immediately as bullshit. “Let’s do it.”

Ilya looks worriedly at Shane, whose tense face makes it clear he does not want to discuss it further.

This is not going to go well.

The day of the shoot comes on a Friday morning. Shane has trouble getting out of bed, exhausted and aching from a long night of having his bladder kicked. Their pup is a little olympian, probably a future footballer the way she loves to kick his organs out of place.

He rubs his side, lying in bed for a few languid moments, just watching the sun rise behind the hills outside. It’s a beautiful morning, but it’s tinted with displeasure and a bad taste on his tongue.

He shuffles to the bathroom to release himself from the pulsing ache of his bladder. Lately, he can’t go more than a half hour without the unbearable urge to pee. He mostly blames the thudding of limbs against his insides.

Shane exits the bathroom, huffing out a tired exhale and scratching the itchy underside of his belly as he waddles his way toward the staircase. He needs to use that lotion his mom got him to help the itchiness, but he doesn’t feel like it. Right now, he’s starving.

Ilya is already awake when Shane enters the living room. The taller man is slouched on the couch, iPad in his hands, tongue out between his teeth like he's focusing intensely. He glances up when Shane enters, a smile taking over his face.

"What level are you on?" Shane inquires casually as he waddles over to kiss the top of Ilya's head. He sees the bright colorful Cake Sort screen on the iPad and stifles a laugh.

"Seventy-two," Ilya replies, glancing up idly. "Did you get some sleep?"

Shane smiles with an arched eyebrow. "What do you think, babe?"

Ilya frowns, setting the iPad down and climbing off the couch. He moves swiftly, wrapping his arms around Shane's waist, pressing his face into his neck and scenting him. Shane exhales, body relaxing a bit at the touch of his alpha.

"Your smell is stressed," Ilya murmurs disapprovingly, "is about the shoot today? We do not have to go, Shane."

"You're coming too?" he asks, surprised.

"Of course. I'm going to make sure you do not work too hard."

"I'm just standing in front of a camera, Ilya."

"Mm." Ilya presses his lips against the healed over mating mark that mars the soft skin of Shane's clavicle. "Are you hungry?"

"Always, yeah."

"Come on, I make pancakes."

Ilya leads Shane into the kitchen by the hand, having the decency today not to tease him about how pronounced his waddle is looking. Shane sits down at the island, wincing at the pressure on his hips from the narrow stool. He adjusts his thighs until it's semi-comfortable, huffing a heavy breath.

"Blueberries?" Ilya asks.

Shane nods eagerly.

It's quiet while Ilya cooks, Shane nursing a mug of tea and watching his husband putter around the kitchen purposefully. The pup gives a swift kick to his side, and he rubs his palm gently over the spot, glancing down at his protruding middle.

Shane is dreading this photoshoot, to be completely honest. He doesn't feel himself at all lately. All his normal parts are weirdly bloated and swollen. His back and ankles are killing him, his chest is tight and sore, he's exhausted, and he can barely get up from a chair without assistance. His skin is marred by pale white stretch marks, and his fingers are starting to swell a bit. He knows his face is softer around the edges than usual, and despite Ilya sweetly calling it his "*glow*" he's constantly glossy with a sheen of sweat, no matter the temperature.

Ilya sets a plate of pancakes and sausage on a plate in front of him, kissing the shell of his ear with a warmly whispered, “feed my pup please.”

Shane’s face feels warm, and he nods, quickly taking a bite. With a sigh of pleasure, his eyes flutter closed. “Fuck yeah.”

“Is good?”

“So fucking good.”

Ilya presses close, half-heartedly eating his own breakfast while he gently nuzzles against Shane, his alpha pheromones dripping over Shane’s body. Ilya’s scent is a crisp, calming one—expensive leather and amber, soft notes of bergamot. Shane would recognize this scent in a crowd of a million people.

Home.

The rest of the morning is leisurely. They have a few hours until the shoot, so Shane takes his time in the shower, scrubbing every inch of his body that he can reach. Ilya helps out where he can’t. Shane leans back against his firm, warm chest, eyes closing as he lets his alpha bear the weight, just for a few moments.

“You do not have to do this,” Ilya whispers in his ear under the spray of water.

“I know,” he says. And he really does. His mom has never *forced* him to do brand deals he didn’t want to do. It’s always just been...well, why would he say no? It’s good for his career. It made their family pretty much set for life financially. And it’s just one day out of his schedule. There’s no *logical* reason to say no.

And she has a point anyway, about it being powerful for other omegas. Growing up, Shane didn’t see many people like himself in major league sports. Hockey especially is a mostly alpha dominated game. And the omegas who do play, like Shane, they take blockers and wear scent patches and pretty much do everything in their power to *never* be omegas.

It’s partially why deciding to take a break from playing this season to start their family had been a nuanced decision for Shane. But he loves his husband, he loves their unborn pup, and he knows he doesn’t have to choose. He’s Shane Hollander. He’s always done the impossible, and he isn’t stopping now.

“Okay.” Ilya sighs gently. “You promise you will stop if it is too much, da? If you are not feeling well or if you are tired or if the pup seems mad.”

“I don’t think the pup is capable of that yet, Ilya.”

“Mmm, she kicks extra hard when you eat brussel sprouts, Shane.”

“Ilya. That’s gas.”

“Don’t call our pup gas!”

Shane just rolls his eyes. There is no reasoning with this man.

He's toweling off in the bathroom when his phone buzzes. He waddles over, glancing sideways at Ilya, who is trying to wrangle his curly hair into something manageable. Shane smiles briefly, and puts the phone to his ear.

"Hello?"

"Shane, are you almost here? The shoot is in an hour."

"I haven't left yet, but-"

"What?! You're still at home?!"

"Mom, we're fifteen minutes from the studio."

"Okay and what do I always say?"

"Mom-"

"Shane."

He huffs an exhale. *"If you're not early you're late."* I know Mom. I don't need you to manage my time. I will be there."

"Alright, alright. I'm sorry, it's just this is a lot of money and I'm really excited about getting to showcase my beautiful son and my grandbaby before she's even born."

Shane winces. He sort of hates the sound of that last bit. "Yeah, I know. I'll be there."

"Okay honey, see you soon. Drive safely. I love you."

"Love you too."

Shane looks down at the phone. His lock screen is a photo of Ilya and Anya at the dog park. Ilya has her leash tangled around his wrist, and he's squatted down beside her, kissing her soft fluffy head. Her mouth is open in a smile, tongue plopping out lazily.

He smiles faintly, startling a bit when he feels a firm hand on his arm. He looks up to see Ilya's face, creased with worry.

"I'm fine," he says immediately.

"You are tense," Ilya replies without missing a beat.

"I always get like this before photoshoots." Shane shakes his head, glancing down at his protruding belly over the towel around his waist. "I have to get dressed."

Ilya trails behind him as he makes his way over to their large walk-in closet, perusing. His options are pretty narrow these days, though he's not complaining about the expectations being lower. He enjoys wearing athleisure and being comfortable.

Today though, he's very aware of how his black t-shirt stretches over his round belly. The pinch of his joggers at his thickened hips is more pronounced than unusual. His thighs rub together underneath the fabric, and it makes his skin crawl a little bit.

Ilya drives to the studio, because apparently Shane smells too *"anxiety ridden"* to be behind the wheel with their precious cargo in tow. They make it to the studio with twenty minutes to spare, and Yuna is waiting for them just inside.

"Thank god you're here!" she exclaims. "They're waiting for you in makeup, come on."

She takes his arm and pulls him away from Ilya, whose shoulders tense.

"It's alright," Shane assures him, "go find craft services."

It's clear Ilya isn't happy about it, but he doesn't push. Shane lets his mom lead him down the hall, blabbering in his ear about all the amazing outfits they have for him today.

"How many is it?" he asks, trying not to sound too disheartened. He's really aching today, and his body feels sore and tired. He's no stranger to pushing through the pain, he just doesn't feel like being on display. His face feels extra swollen too, after all the carbs he had for breakfast. That wasn't his smartest move.

"Just a few," she assures him as he's lowered into a makeup chair in front of a harshly lit mirror with a few betas surrounding him. "Shane, honey, you're looking a little puffy. Did you get any sleep? Drink water? Eat?"

He scowls. "Yes. I had pancakes for breakfast."

"Before a shoot?"

"Mom."

"Sorry, sorry." Yuna cups his hair gently, glancing over at the makeup team. "He is already perfect, but if you could help him out with the dark circles."

Shane huffs a sigh.

Yuna steps back as the makeup team does their thing. Shane is also no stranger to this, but it's been a while. Everything is more sensitive right now, and he is not enjoying the poking and prodding.

One of them jabs his eye with the corner of her powder brush and he grits his teeth, nodding his acceptance at her quickly hurled apology. The pup starts kicking against his bladder halfway through and he has to ask them to stop so he can take a bathroom break.

Everyone seems a bit annoyed to be interrupted, but his mom tells him to take his time and let them know at any point if he has to go again. He thanks her and waddles down the winding hallway to get to the bathrooms.

He's winded by the time he returns to the makeup chair, from all the walking and trying to hurry. His face is flushed pink.

"He's all pink again," one of the artists says to her colleague, "more powder."

His scowl returns. Tenfold.

It takes longer than usual, to get his makeup and hair done into something the artists feel is presentable. His hair's getting thicker and longer from the prenatals, and it's a little more difficult to tame these days- he hasn't paid much attention to it.

Finally, they're finished and he's shipped off to wardrobe. His mom follows behind, checking emails on her phone and making sure they're on track. He wonders if Ilya found craft services. He's starting to feel hungry himself. He'd learned the hard way early on in this pregnancy that if he doesn't eat when he's hungry he'll either throw up, pass out, or a fun mixture of both.

"Mom," he says, as another beta stylist shows up and starts to take his measurements.

"Yeah?" she asks distractedly, still looking at her phone.

"Do you mind grabbing me something to eat?"

"Oh, sure honey. I have some nuts here." She digs into her purse and passes him a little pack of individually sealed almonds. It's his go-to salty snack on a long shoot. At least, before the pup it was.

He was sort of hoping for something more like, a jelly-filled donut, or a bag of Doritos, or even a big cup of hot chocolate. Something to satiate this craving grinding against the back of his teeth.

But, Shane is not a complainer, so he thanks her for the almonds and chews on them gruffly while a strange woman wraps a tape measure around his belly.

"You're how many weeks?" she asks conversationally.

"Twenty-eight," he tells her through a mouthful of nuts.

"Hmm, okay." She nods. "We're going to size up on the bottoms, but I think we're good on everything else."

"Size up?" he asks.

"You're a tad bit bigger than our standard seven month omega size," she explains, "but we can get you into a bigger pair of pants, a little more comfy for you and the pup."

Shane's throat feels dry, but not from the almonds. "Oh. Okay. Thanks."

"Of course hon. I'll be right back." She whisks away to get his outfit.

He's feeling weird and vulnerable, standing here in nothing but a pair of boxers and his t-shirt. His mom doesn't seem to notice- this is all so commonplace for them by now. But for some reason today just feels...*different*. He is different, and more vulnerable and it's all just a little weird. He hadn't planned on being this exposed during the pregnancy. It's something he wanted to keep mostly to just them. His alpha and himself.

The stylist returns with his first outfit. It's a pretty standard long-sleeve athletic shirt, with a pair of dry-fit leggings that suffocate his thighs and ass. The "support band" for his belly is so tight it's immediately uncomfortable. He slides his fingers into the waistband, exhaling a heavy breath.

"Are you sure this is the right size?" he asks hesitantly.

She nods. "Yes! They're meant to be compression pants, to keep everything held in while you exercise and provide some support for the belly."

Shane does not feel *supported*, he feels like a size ten sausage in a size two package.

"It's not really flattering, is it?" he asks grimly.

Yuna glances up from her phone, pursing her lips. "It *does* look a little tight."

"That's how it's supposed to look," the stylist assures them. "Trust me, you're a vision, Shane."

He kind of has no choice but to take her word for it.

As they begin their walk back to set, he finds himself adjusting the waistband of the pants several times. The pup kicks harshly against his side, and he winces.

I know you're uncomfortable, he thinks worriedly, *Daddy is too*.

It's just one day. One shoot. He can do this. He's done much more difficult things in his life. He'd once played and won a game with two broken ribs. This is nothing.

Shane is walked on to a set, blinded immediately by bright lights from all angles. There's a backdrop behind him, some charcoal gray *Nike* knockoff theme. He hesitates, hands cupped under his belly.

Introductions are made, and he spots Ilya standing over to one side, arms crossed, eyes locked on the omega like he has heat seeking missiles in his pupils. Shane offers him the best smile he can muster, but it's clearly not convincing, because Ilya's worried expression only deepens.

Shane is a professional. He's done plenty of these shoots before, and he never really enjoys them. He knows how to shut up, put on a pretty face, and get through it.

The first half goes fine. The director is pretty reasonable, not asking much of him outside of a few poses that show off his belly in the clothes. It's a little awkward, but it's his body, and he's trying very hard not to be aware of it.

They get him changed in and out of a few more dry-fit athletic wear outfits and change up his hair, re-powdering his face once or twice because he's getting sweaty from all the moving around.

Ilya catches hold of his arm as he's walking back to set in outfit number three. Shane glances up at him, braving a small smile.

"Hey, are you bored? I can get a ride from my mom if you want to get out of here."

Ilya's lips twist into a displeased line. "I am fine. Are you hungry? Thirsty? They have not let you take a break for two hours."

"I'm okay, babe. I can go longer than two hours without eating, you know." Shane rolls his eyes fondly.

Ilya doesn't seem to be in a joking mood. Protective pheromones are curling off of his skin. "You look miserable Shane, do you want to be done?"

Truly, he *is* miserable. His feet hurt from all this standing around with no breaks, his back is on fire, he's sweaty and exhausted from all the outfit changes, and the lights are irritating his eyes. But, he's halfway done. He doesn't want to let everyone down when he's already made it this far.

"We're fine," Shane assures him, reaching out to grasp Ilya's wrist. He places the alpha's large hand on his belly, gently applying pressure against the pup's little feet.

Ilya's eyes soften immediately. His shoulders relax a bit, and the protective air about him seems to settle just a bit.

"She's in a mood today, da?" he asks softly, bringing his other hand up to cup the swell of Shane's tummy where she's pounding her feet.

Shane laughs. "Mhm, just making sure I don't forget she's there."

Ilya chuckles dryly, lifting his eyes to Shane's face. He studies him for a moment, brows furrowed, like he's trying to figure out something. Then, realization seems to hit him, and he looks disheartened all over again.

"What?" Shane asks, brushing his fingertips over his skin. "Something on my face?"

"They put makeup on your freckles," Ilya says sourly, reaching up to gently rub at Shane's cheek with his thumb. "Cannot see them anymore."

"They always do, I think," Shane replies, arching an eyebrow. "They cover all the imperfections and stuff."

Ilya's frown deepens. "*Imperfections?*"

"It's not a big deal." Shane waves his concern off, popping up on his toes for a quick kiss to his alpha's nose. "I have to get back."

Ilya watches him go, eyes tight with emotions Shane can't decipher.

It's going fine. He's fine. He's tired, and his feet are killing him, and if he has to put on one more outfit he might just lose his mind, but he's okay.

"Okay, and Shane, let's get one with you cupping your belly." The director -a somewhat grating beta man named Chuck- mimes what he wants Shane to do.

Shane exhales, reaching his arms down under his belly.

"And smile down at your stomach, you know, like you're happy about the pup."

Shane winces. He *is* happy about the pup.

He attempts a smile, hoping it looks natural. At this point, four hours in, phony smiles are getting hard to access.

"Shane, honey, that's your awkward smile," his mom calls unhelpfully from his left. His *awkward smile* is what she calls it when he's feeling uncomfortable in front of the camera and can't feign being a normal human anymore.

"Sorry everyone." He shakes his head, trying to loosen his muscles a little. "I- can I just, can we take a few? I need some water, I think."

"We *are* on a schedule," Chuck says unsurely.

"He is thirsty." Ilya appears as if out of nowhere beside Yuna, passing her a water bottle. She thanks him quietly and shuffles over to give it to Shane.

Shane guzzles it, realizing he's absolutely parched. He hadn't noticed, too busy being overwhelmed by other discomforts.

"Thank you." He passes the water back to his mom, exhaling and cradling his belly again. He forces a smile on his face.

"A little more natural, if you can," Chuck says. He sounds like he's getting tired of this too.

"I'm sorry." Shane wipes at his face with the back of his hand. "I'm trying."

"He needs a break," Ilya says to Yuna.

"We're almost done," one of the managers replies.

Shane blinks back hot tears, feeling like an idiot. Can't he just smile and pose? It's not that fucking hard.

"I have it, I have it," he insists, waving off everyone's tension. He relaxes his shoulders, thinks about Ilya's curly hair and his big cheesy grin, and musters up a warm smile.

“Beautiful!” Chuck coos.

The camera flashes, blindingly. Shane holds his pup and thinks about his husband and smiles.

“That’s my boy,” he hears his mom say.

“Alright, that’s nearly it!” Chuck says. “Shane if you want to head back for the last costume change.”

Shane frowns, confused as he glances over at his mom. “I thought we were done? This is the fourth one.”

“Didn’t you get my email?” the manager asks Yuna, who looks just as confused as Shane.

“I’m afraid I didn’t,” she replies. “There’s another outfit change? I think Shane is about done. We only expected three and he did an extra one for you.”

“Well, we were thinking it might be great to get a few shots of Shane in our signature undergarments. We have a whole campaign that features prominent, pregnant omegas, and he would just be a great ambassador for the campaign. Pride in being an omega, the belly, everything that comes with it, and of course our comfortable underwear.” The manager explains, and it takes Shane a moment to process.

They want him to take photos in just undergarments, his belly and chest exposed. They want to exploit this bump under his shirt, be the first ones to get the exclusive on the NHL’s pregnant Stanley Cup winner.

His blood goes cold. “No, I don’t want to do underwear shots. We didn’t agree to that.”

“You heard him,” Yuna says firmly.

“If you’re worried, we can make sure everything is smoothed over and cleaned up,” Chuck says, “the stretch marks or your nipples, anything like that. We can do heavy editing.”

Shane stares at him in disbelief. His heart is racing in his chest, sweat thickening at the back of his neck. He’s sure the entire room smells like *omega in distress*.

“That is *enough*,” Ilya’s voice booms, powerful and inarguable *alpha*. The entire room goes silent, deferring to the alarming cadence of his voice.

“It is enough,” he continues, moving toward Shane with venom dripping from each word. Shane reaches his arms toward him, all of his instincts desperate to be near his *alpha alpha alpha*.

Ilya ropes his arm around Shane’s shoulders protectively, cutting his harsh eyes around the room as if daring anyone to challenge him. Everyone seems to visibly shrink away from the rage and ferocity in his eyes and body language.

“You have kept him here for many hours, cover up his pretty freckles with your stupid makeup, not let him eat or drink, complain when he pees. I try my hardest not to ruin the

shoot for him, but now it is *enough*. You do *not* tell *my* omega to take his clothes off.” Ilya’s voice becomes something more like a growl at the tail end of his sentence. “We are *done*. Come on, Shane.”

With that, Ilya swiftly walks them off the set, Shane tucked underneath his muscular arm. Shane presses close, and once they’re alone in the dressing room, he finds himself all over his husband. He scents him, nose buried into the matching mating mark on his neck. Leather and citrus warms his nostrils, and he clings to the familiar smell, allowing the alpha’s pheromones to calm his frayed nerves.

“Shh, is okay,” Ilya murmurs, and it’s only then that Shane realizes he’s crying.

“S-sorry,” he sniffs.

“No, moy lyubimyy, you are not sorry. You did nothing wrong.”

“I really didn’t want to get undressed in front of them.”

“I know, I know. I should *kill* them for asking.”

“Don’t.”

“I’m still thinking about it. I am sure no one will miss them.”

“Maybe not but you’d go to jail.”

“Eh, they will be dead, how can they push charges?”

“*Press* charges, Ilya.”

“Mm. Does not matter. We are leaving now. Do you have your things? No, never mind, your mother will get it. Come on.”

Shane walks under his arm through the halls of the studio, out to the parking lot, until he’s lowered into the passenger seat with tender hands. He’s still drying his own eyes with the back of his sleeves, when he realizes he never changed out of their clothing.

“Shit, Ilya,” he says, “I stole this outfit.”

“It is the least they can do,” his alpha mutters, knuckles white on the steering wheel.

“*Ilya.*”

“Shane, they are lucky I do not turn around without you and finish what I started. They will survive without a shirt and pants.” His voice is deadly serious, so Shane decides not to push it.

“Thanks for getting me out of there,” Shane says softly, glancing out over the pavement beneath them.

“I should have said something sooner,” he replies, shaking his head with his jaw clenched tightly. “I did not want to ruin your- you and your mother seemed like you wanted to do this. I did not want to ruin it. I should have said something sooner.”

“I’m okay.”

Ilya nods stiffly, but doesn’t offer much in the way of a reply.

The rest of the drive is silent. Shane doesn’t know what to say, and he’s too busy trying to keep his eyes dry to focus on forming any real sentences.

Home is a welcome sight. Ilya comes around to help Shane out of the car, one hand braced protectively on his lower back. He can tell his omega is exhausted from the long day, physically and mentally.

Flicking on lights and petting Anya as they walk in, Ilya steers Shane toward the kitchen. The omega plops down in a chair, legs sprawled out in front of him, hands cupping his belly in an instinctive, almost second-nature gesture. Ilya rubs a hand down the back of his well-groomed hair for a moment, fingers gliding through the locks. They’d put some kind of product in it during the shoot, which gums up a bit between his digits.

“Let’s eat,” Ilya says, “then we will wash away that stupid makeup so I can see my husband’s pretty face again.”

Shane smiles bashfully at him, and the soft grumble of his stomach is all the confirmation Ilya needs to start on their dinner.

He moves quickly, since Shane hasn’t eaten in hours and he’s clearly very hungry. Something simple, a rice bowl with some grilled chicken and loads of veggies. Easy, familiar, safe for Shane on a difficult day when he may not be in a good place for more complicated flavors and textures.

Once their bowls are scraped clean -Shane having seconds- Ilya leads him upstairs toward their shower. It’s a quick, perfunctory shower. Ilya scrubs his body and helps him wash the makeup off his face. Shane leans against his chest tiredly, body going languid, giving over all of his control in the way he sometimes needs after a long day.

They end up curled around each other in bed, Anya at the foot, her snout resting protectively on Shane’s ankle. Ilya rubs his belly, kissing the shell of his ear, shushing his small snuffles and letting him relax. It’s been mostly quiet, and he knows Shane needs this right now- serenity, silence, not too much stimulation or sound.

After a few beats, Ilya breaks the silence. “We have to talk.”

Shane exhales heavily. “I know.”

“You have to stop doing this, how is it called? Person pleasing?”

“People pleasing, yeah.”

“You are allowed to say no, Shane.”

“I...I know.”

“Mm, I think you do not.” Ilya shakes his head, tugging Shane a bit closer against his chest. “Your mom loves you, and wants good things for you, and maybe sometimes puts too much pressure on you. For a long time, now. And you are just used to it, so you keep letting it happen.”

“Ilya-”

“I don’t say this because I want to be mean, Shane. You were very stressed out today and you didn’t want to do any of it, but you said yes anyway. You did not want to let anyone down.”

Shane shuffles around, spinning with some difficulty until his tummy is pressed against Ilya’s and they’re facing each other. The pup kicks roughly against his stomach, and Ilya feels it on his own, unable to help his small smile in response.

“You are going to have so much to worry about,” Ilya says gently, “you are growing our pup, and soon she’ll be here and she will need us both. If not for yourself, do it for her, da? You have to say no sometimes, moy lyubimyy.”

“It’s hard to say no,” Shane mutters. “My mom made my career what it is, and-”

“No, Shane. *You* did that. You did all that work. You are the best player in the league. *You* won those cups, *you* broke bones and pushed your body to its limit, *you* stood in front of those cameras for hours. She helped you I know, but *you* made your career. You do not owe her a yes to everything. And she would not want that, Shane. She loves you.”

Shane’s lashes flutter on his cheeks, brushing the stark lines of those pretty little freckles. Ilya can’t help but gently stroke his thumb over the smattering of constellations on his skin. The reverence comes naturally with the sight of his husband’s beautiful marks.

“You’re not wrong,” Shane amends quietly. “I just feel guilty when I let people down.”

“I know, because you are selfless and a wonderful human.” Ilya kisses his forehead, lingering for a moment and breathing in his omega’s homey smell. Vanilla and peach, softened around the edges lately with hints of sweet milk. “Is okay to say no. It does not make you less wonderful, it makes you a person. You can just be a person, you do not always have to be *Shane Hollander*.”

Shane sniffs delicately. “Sometimes being Shane Hollander is a lot.”

“I know, sweetheart. I know.”

Ilya wipes at Shane’s eyes softly, catching the subtle buildup of tears that his brave omega refuses to let fall. It’s quiet then, for a moment, and he just lets it linger.

“I will say no,” Shane says, nodding thoughtfully, “I’ll...next time she asks something like that. I’m going to say no. I will tell her how much today bothered me.”

“I think she probably figured that out already,” Ilya says, “I am expecting her to show up at our door to say sorry. She is a good Mama.”

“She is,” Shane agrees. “She’s like me though. She gets tunnel vision.”

“It makes you both very successful people. But also, especially now, it is okay to leave the tunnel sometimes.”

Shane laughs- a soft, tender sound. “I like that. *Leave the tunnel.*”

Ilya leans in, pressing his lips against Shane’s, pleased when the other man easily submits to the touch. They kiss briefly, but firmly, something solid and secure in the embrace.

Then, Shane pulls back and says, “it felt kind of good to steal those clothes. They deserved it.”

“Mm, they deserved worse,” Ilya says, “but I will take care of that later.”

“Ilya,” Shane warns.

“Shane,” he replies nonchalantly.

“Do not do anything stupid.”

“Is not stupid. You are my omega, my *pregnant* omega. This is my pup.” Ilya’s hand splays protectively over the swell of Shane’s belly, where their little one is currently pounding her tiny feet against his palm. “He made you cry. He will pay for that.”

“Oh my god.” Shane rolls his eyes. “Just, whatever you do, leave me out of it.”

“You have nothing to worry about except growing our pup.” Ilya kisses his forehead, pulling him in a little tighter.

“I love you,” Shane says, though the words are slightly muffled by his cheek being smushed so tightly into Ilya’s chest.

“Mm, I love you more, sweetheart.”

“Thank you, for today. For protecting us.”

“Always,” Ilya replies firmly, tightening his grip.

Shane’s eyes flutter closed as the exhaustion seems to sweep over him. It’s no more than a few minutes before he’s snoring loudly, body completely limp in Ilya’s arms. The pregnancy has given him an almost eerie ability to fall asleep anywhere, like a cozy, sleepy kitten. It is adorable.

Ilya holds him steady, protective arms still wrapped around his omega. And, if he plans to pay a visit to that studio tomorrow while Shane’s at yoga class, Shane can be none the wiser.

No one covers up his omega's freckles.

End Notes

PLEASE CHOOSE KINDNESS IF YOU COMMENT, IM NOT A PROFESSIONAL, THIS IS JUST FOR FUN, AND IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T LIKE, THE BACK BUTTON IS YOUR BEST FRIEND !! <3

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