

the favourite son

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the favourite son

by [Tizniz](#)

Summary

“And that’s why you’re our favourite son.”

Shane manages to hide his flinch, just barely, and mostly because Ilya is being pulled into a hug by Yuna. Shane bites the inside of his cheek as he watches the way his husband and mom embrace so easily.

Notes

Hiii

I started and wrote most of this back in February. Whoops.

I wanted to explore the effect of Shane hearing Yuna call Ilya their favourite son, and then it became this. Because we all know (and love) Shane's mind and what it would do after hearing that over and over again. Our boy tries his best to be good, after all.

Oh, and because it is a word used quite frequently in this story: yes, favourite is spelled with a U because I, like our beloved Shane, am Canadian. And that is how we spell it.

(also because I guess might as well remention this: fuck AI. I wrote this myself.)

TW: mention of Shane's eating habits (canon - but also he's doing better!), a panic attack, and dissociation.

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

“And that’s why you’re our favourite son.”

Shane manages to hide his flinch, just barely, and mostly because Ilya is being pulled into a hug by Yuna. Shane bites the inside of his cheek as he watches the way his husband and mom embrace so easily.

He’s happy for them. Truly. Ilya has been without a mother for so long, and Shane’s mom has taken Ilya in as her own so easily. Same with his dad. David has bonded easily with Ilya over puzzles and the New Yorker and recipes they both like to test with each other.

They all get along *so good*. Shane knows his parents wanted another kid beyond him, but that it wasn’t in the cards for them, so Ilya has sort of filled that void a bit.

It’s just...

It’s *just*.

Shane’s smile is there, although a bit wobbly, when Ilya looks back at him, a bright smile on his own face. Ilya winks, playing into the whole charade, like him being claimed as the favourite son and being loved so easily hasn’t weighed heavily on Shane.

Not that he would change anything.

Because he *wouldn’t*.

He is the first in line to state that his husband absolutely loves to be loved and admired.

But...but couldn’t Shane’s parents have maybe not loved him *quite* as easily as they did? Could they maybe *not* claim that Ilya is their favourite every single time they get together? Could they remember that Shane is also their son, by blood and sweat and tears? Could they love Shane as easily as they love Ilya?

The guilt churns uncomfortably in Shane’s stomach as that thought returns and he sips at his ginger ale, hoping to soothe the sensation.

No. No, no, no. Shane knows his parents love him. They’ve always loved and supported him in everything and anything.

It’s just...

It’s *just*.

Shane mostly pushes his food around at dinner. No one bats an eye at this; they’re well used to Shane’s odd eating habits. Ilya still sends him a worried glance or two, at which Shane

shoves a forkful of food into his mouth and chews it repeatedly until it's dissolved into nothing but still sticks as he swallows it down.

Ilya, on the other hand, practically inhales the heavier food that Yuna had prepared. There's ooey, gooey, cheesy sauce seeping out from between the layers of lasagna noodles. Ilya happily sprinkles even more cheese on top, his other hand waving around as he praises David on the delicious scents. He takes a giant forkful, cheeks puffing out like a chipmunk, sauce staining his cheeks. Yuna and David gaze at him with such love and joy, watching as he enthusiastically eats the food they'd made.

Shane's own plate holds his steamed vegetables and pan fried salmon. His mom had made it without asking Shane, and he hadn't wanted to be a bother, telling her that actually, he wouldn't mind a slice of the lasagna tonight. But no, he wasn't going to waste the food. And his mom had given him a tight but pleased smile when he'd taken the plate with a soft thank you.

He ignores how much her smile had grown when Ilya loaded his plate with a giant serving. Shane tries to close his ears as his mom chimes in with another *you're my favourite son* as Ilya eats the food without comment or complaint.

Shane hadn't even noticed, at first, the way his parents had joked about Ilya being their favourite. Of course he didn't notice though. Shane Hollander never notices comments like that. The joke flies right over him until someone snatches it back, sits down with him, and explains it. By then, it's too late. The moment has passed. Everyone thinks Shane is weird or slow.

He thinks that about himself too.

But because he hadn't noticed, it hadn't bothered him.

And it wasn't like someone pointed it out. No one went *hey Shane, your parents love your husband more than you, ha ha!*

No, Shane had noticed it all on his own this time.

He thinks each moment has been imprinted on his skin with invisible ink. The words slice into his skin and have him bleeding, but no one can see.

And he can't *say* anything.

God, no.

Because Shane can't be greedy or needy or selfish. He can't take any love away from Ilya, who lost his mother and had a father who hated him and a brother that only took from him.

No, Shane can handle the teasing joke.

It's just...

It's just.

Shane starts to wonder if maybe it isn't a joke.

He starts to wonder if maybe his mom and dad actually *do* prefer Ilya to him.

And Shane can't even blame them.

Why wouldn't they? Ilya is exactly the man that they have always wanted for a son.

He's great at hockey, wonderful at talking with people, isn't particular about his food, and certainly doesn't shy away from touch in any form.

Ilya is *perfect*.

Of course they prefer Ilya over Shane. God, Shane prefers Ilya over himself. Obviously his parents do.

But did they have to say it all the time? And in front of Shane?

Couldn't they, like everyone else, wait until Shane was out of ear shot and then say it?

Or maybe this was on purpose.

Maybe they wanted Shane to know that Ilya is their favourite. Maybe they hope that Shane will try and be better like Ilya.

Except, Shane has tried. He has tried *so fucking hard* his entire life to be enough. To be better. To be the son his parents want him to be and to be the hockey player everyone expects him to be.

It's never been enough.

Shane has never been enough.

And he's still not enough.

No one knows it bothers him.

Shane smiles and laughs every time it's said. Every time someone jokes that Ilya is the favourite. He ignores the uncomfortable tightness in his chest when his mom brushes the curls from Ilya's forehead and asks if he's getting enough sleep and eating okay. She only asks Shane about his brand deals and if he's been practicing that back shot. Shane ignores the sting as his dad invites Ilya to explore a recipe in the kitchen with him or asks about the latest movie that was on whatever streaming service they're into that week. His dad fumbles over questions about a biography from some Polish hockey player that Shane knows his dad is only attempting to read because Shane had read it.

His parents are happy.

His boyfriend is happy.

So Shane has to be happy.

It's just...

It's just.

Shane excuses himself from the dinner table, where everyone except him is eating the same meal, laughing and talking, and he goes to hide in the bathroom. His fingers curl around the counter until his knuckles turn white. He bites down hard enough on his cheek or tongue that he tastes an all too familiar metallic tang. He closes his eyes so tightly that stars and shapes burst behind his eyelids. Each breath is a struggle like he's been slammed against the boards by a heavy enforcer.

Something ugly and vicious tries to claw its way up his throat, determined to burst out, either in the form of a scream or a sob, but Shane shoves it back down. Down until it's muffled and silent. Until he can plaster that smile back on his face and return to the table, slipping into the chair set out for him, in front of his plate of food made just for him instead of the other food that Shane actually thinks looks pretty good.

Everyone laughs and talks and doesn't even bat an eye, like they hadn't noticed Shane was gone.

He swallows a sip of water to help wash the bitter sensation in his throat. Smiles at Ilya when those hazel eyes flicker over to him, an automatic movement that is engrained in Ilya. His focus quickly returns to Shane's parents, paying attention to the conversation that Shane can't quite grasp the tone of.

But it's okay. Their favourite son is listening.

This happens often, hiding in the bathroom.

No one ever says anything.

When Shane is on the road and Ilya isn't, he almost feels relieved.

Ilya still goes over, still sees Shane's parents, still spends time with them, and Shane is well aware that they're fawning over Ilya. They're plying him with love, happiness, and food.

Shane feels relieved because he doesn't have to pretend. Because he can simply exist as the outsider, listening to the stories about the happy family. His mom and boyfriend both tell him about what happened, laughing over stories. Shane hums and haws at all the right moments, ones he's learned through trial and error, so they don't know how it hurts. How he aches over the fact that his parents love Ilya more than they love him. How it cuts into his skin each and every time that Ilya is called their favourite son.

Shane can't say anything though. He'll never say anything.

Ilya *deserves* to be the favourite son. He should be their favourite!

Shane has never done anything to be their favourite. He hasn't been good enough, proven by his mom's constant critics and reminders of how he could present himself better. Proven by the uncertain glances and half started sentences from his dad.

Shane knows he's not what his parents wanted. But Ilya is. He gave them that. He gave them Ilya.

Is that enough?

"Shane?" Ilya asks, knocking lightly on the bedroom door. "We have dinner with your parents."

"Oh, uhm," Shane doesn't look up from the book he's not actually reading. "You go on without me. I'm not feeling great."

He doesn't need to see Ilya's face to know that he's frowning. Shane can feel it all the same. Ilya's footsteps are quiet as he enters the room, moving over to the bed that Shane is sitting on.

"You are unwell? You seemed okay earlier."

Because Shane had been. Because it had just been him and Ilya. Enjoying a rare few days off where they have no obligations. It's easier, now, with both of them on the same team. Both of them playing together on the same schedule.

Except, it also means they see Shane's parents more often. And that means Shane hears Ilya called the favourite son more often. Too often.

He almost can't pretend it doesn't hurt anymore.

Earlier though, he hadn't been hurting at all. He'd woken up in his husband's arms. They'd had slow, loving, morning sex. They had made breakfast together, and Shane didn't have to eat whatever was placed in front of him because Ilya simply cooked what he wanted (he long ago refused to make Shane's 'diet food', saying that if Shane wanted to follow it, *he* had to cook it.) and it was delicious. They'd gone for a walk with Anya just to get some fresh air before ending up tangled together on the couch because Ilya had been rubbing his foot along Shane's calf and that had apparently been enough to set them off.

But the looming dinner with his parents had been in the back of Shane's mind. He knew it was coming. He knew he'd have to sit through another evening of hearing his mom and dad praise Ilya, call him their favourite, and treat Shane like...like he wasn't really a human.

Yuna had already confirmed, with Ilya and not Shane, what meal would work for Shane. Something different from everyone else. Ilya had been a bit confused, because he thought Shane was doing better, was recovering, and Shane had shrugged, said he'd told his mom to stop. (He hadn't. There was no point.) Ilya had said Shane would eat what they ate but Yuna had brushed him off and said she'd prepare the alternative, so as to not ruin Shane's diet for the season.

Knowing that his meal would be different, knowing that he'd have to watch his mom and dad smile happily as Ilya ate whatever was made while Shane picked at his lackluster meal, it made it more difficult to want to go.

Shane loves his parents. He *does*. But he just can't handle them right now.

"Came on about an hour ago." Shane says softly, thumb moving along the paper of his book. The words are blurred, even though he's wearing his glasses. "I'm just going to stay in. But seriously, go. I'll be fine."

Ilya slides into the spot beside Shane on the bed, sneaking a hand around his waist and tugging him closer, lips pressing against Shane's temple, "I would be a bad husband if I left you while sick."

"Well, you'd be a bad son if you didn't go." Shane fires back, biting his lip too late. The words are already out.

"What?" Ilya asks, body tensing up, mostly from confusion. "What does that..."

"Nothing." Shane closes the book and tosses it onto the bed, squirming out of Ilya's hold and rolling off of the opposite side. "Forget it."

"I don't think I want to."

“Well I do.” Shane snaps, back to Ilya, “So just go. Be the perfect fucking son and leave me alone!”

Shane doesn't wait before he marches across the room and into the bathroom connected, slamming the door shut behind him. He falls back against the solid wood, sliding down to the floor, gasping for air.

God. He really fucked up now. Ilya is going to be...hurt. Angry. Upset. Confused. All of the above. Because Shane couldn't keep his fucking mouth shut and just manage.

So *what* if his parents prefer Ilya over him. No one prefers Shane. He's never been the first choice. Why does it suddenly bother him?

Maybe because Ilya was the first time Shane felt like he *was* the first choice. A foolish thing for him to think, he supposes, dropping his forehead down to rest on his knees, arms wrapped around his legs.

This is doing nothing to help with the gasping breaths trying and failing to get into his lungs, but Shane wants to become small. So small and tiny that he can disappear.

“Shane?” Ilya's voice is soft, careful, along with the knock on the door that vibrates into Shane's curved spine. “Shane, please open door.”

“Y-you have a d-dinner to go to.” Shane chokes out, tightening the grip he has on his forearms, blunt nails digging into his skin. “Just *go*!”

There's silence, then the softest sound of a sigh, and then footsteps moving away from the door.

Ilya is listening. Ilya is *leaving*.

Something inside of Shane shatters. The sobs are silent, but he presses his mouth to his knee anyways, uncaring of the saliva that forms and pools against his skin, wanting to muffle any potential sound that might come from him. Tears fall steadily, cutting down his cheeks, dripping onto his thigh and trickling down under the shorts he'd thrown on earlier. He doesn't try and stop them. Doesn't try and reassure himself. Simply falls apart into a thousand pieces.

The one person he thought would always choose him first just walked away.

The sound of another body leaning against the door is quiet, the sliding of cotton as the body moves towards the floor is near silent. But Shane has nothing left in him to cry out, so he's been sitting there, cheek pressed to his knee, silence pressing in against him. He can hear every creak and shift of the house.

“I am here, Shane.” Ilya’s voice sounds through the door. “I am not leaving.”

You did, though. Shane’s mind screams even as his lips don’t move. *You left me.*

“I called Yuna and David,” Ilya continues, like they’re having a normal conversation. “Told them we cannot make it. Do not worry, I did not tell them about...” He trails off, clearly trying to find a word to describe what is going on. “This.”

Shane closes his eyes, lids swollen and lashes clumped together wetly.

“I do not know what this is either.” Ilya admits, “But I am staying. And we will talk. When you are ready. When you open door.”

Shane can tell Ilya is rattled by this because his accent is thicker and he’s dropped some words that make his English sound more fluent. Guilt churns in Shane’s stomach. He doesn’t want to *worry* Ilya. And he certainly didn’t want him to skip out on dinner. Now Shane’s parents will be sad, because they’re missing out on a meal with their favourite son.

Apparently Shane isn’t done, because a choked, pained sound escapes him. He presses his fingers tighter into his arms, trying to make himself smaller. He thinks he’ll have bruises when this is all done. He doesn’t care enough to loosen his hold.

“Shane? *Moya lyubov?*” The door creaks lightly as Ilya shifts on his side, “What is it? Please. Open door. Let me see you. Let me hold you.” When a minute passes and Shane doesn’t say anything, there’s another sigh. “Okay. I wait. I wait as long as you need.”

Time sort of slips a bit for Shane.

He doesn’t move from his spot, curled up on the bathroom floor. His breathing creeps towards normal as he does. Ilya occasionally says something, a gentle reminder he’s still there. But otherwise, Shane loses track of everything.

It’s been a while since he’s disassociated like this.

But he eventually comes back to himself, body aching from being tense for as long as it has. Forcing his fingers to unclench from around his arms is difficult and he winces, twisting his left arm to look at the fading red marks. There’s definitely going to be bruises. Shane stretches his legs out from his body, laying them flat on the cool tile floor. Another wince as they protest the movement.

“Shane?” Ilya calls through the door, maybe hearing Shane’s movements.

“M’okay.” He mumbles, body heavy and tired.

“Can you open door? Please?”

The thought of standing and opening the door, walking out, is way too much for Shane right now. Instead, he shuffles over on the floor until he's leaning against the wall. "You can come in."

The door opens almost immediately, Ilya kneeling on the floor, eyes sweeping across the room until they land on Shane. His body jerks, like he wants to rush forward and gather Shane in his arms, but he stops himself, fingers clutching tightly to the doorhandle.

"M'sorry." Shane whispers, dropping his gaze to his lap.

"No. No. Just...you are okay?" Ilya's voice is ragged, "You are not..." Shane can feel his husband's eyes roaming his body, checking for any injury. Shane wonders if Ilya thinks he was going to do something to himself. The dull ache in his arms tells Shane he sort of did do something, unintentional or not.

"I overreacted." Shane slides his left hand out along the floor, palm up. It's a silent invitation, one Ilya understands immediately, walking on his knees into the bathroom, picking up Shane's hand and kissing the back of it before holding it to his chest. "I was stupid."

"No." Ilya rushes out, "No, no, not stupid. But...Shane..."

He closes his eyes, tilting his head back against the wall. "I'll explain. Just...need a minute."

"Okay. Okay." The warmth of Ilya's body appears along the length of Shane's body, making him realize just how cold he is. He barely gives his husband a moment to actually settle before he's more or less curling up into Ilya's lap, tucking his face into Ilya's collarbone. A small, surprised noise comes from Ilya before his arms wind around Shane, tugging him even closer. "Okay. I got you. I am here."

Shane doesn't realize he's fallen asleep until he wakes up.

It's not surprising, not with how hard and fast the panic attack had gone through his body before Ilya had appeared. Although it has been some time since Shane has had one that bad.

"Are you awake?" Ilya asks, fingers moving up and down Shane's arm slowly. He nods, rubbing his face lightly against his husband. "You only slept for maybe half hour. Do not worry."

He nods again, glad to know he hasn't trapped Ilya here for too long.

"Think we can move? Go to bed instead of floor?"

"Yeah." Shane forces the word out, his throat and mouth dry. His face feels tacky and stiff from the tears that had dried there earlier too. "But first..."

“Yes. Face. I didn’t want to disturb you, or I’d have grabbed a cloth.” Ilya comments, waiting until Shane slides out of his lap before he stands, offering a hand and helping Shane into an upright position as well. Ilya’s touch is firm yet gentle on Shane’s hip, steadying him while offering comfort. Shane automatically sways into Ilya, his husband’s arm gliding around to take more of Shane’s weight.

“Thank you.” Shane murmurs, dragging the words against Ilya’s jaw.

“Bah.” Ilya scoffs, flicking on the tap to start warming the water. “Do not thank me. I love you. I care for you.”

Shane is surprised by the fresh tears that sting his eyes; this time from the overwhelming love coming from Ilya. “I love you too.”

Ilya smiles softly at him, like Shane hadn’t snapped at him and disappeared into the bathroom earlier. Like Shane hadn’t broken down so bad he slipped away from the world for a bit. Like he loves Shane unconditionally. “I know. Close eyes, *malysh*.”

Shane wrinkles his nose at the pet name but does as told, sighing in relief when the warm, damp face cloth wipes away the remains of his tears.

“There you go.” Ilya comments as Shane’s eyes reopen. The tap is turned on again, cold this time, and Ilya grabs the glass they keep there, filling it halfway. Shane takes the offered drink, taking small sips of water until it’s gone. He shakes his head when Ilya lifts an eyebrow in a silent question, wondering if Shane wants more. Satisfied, Ilya replaces the glass to its home and then Shane is being led out of the bathroom.

He all but collapses onto the bed, remaining face down as Ilya climbs onto the bed and settles in.

Shane knows this is when they’ll need to talk. When he’ll have to explain what the fuck happened. Ilya will wait and let Shane lead this, only pushing when needed. Shane also knows if he looks up, Ilya will be sitting at the head of the bed, back resting against the headboard, happy to let Shane climb onto him or curl up beside him if wanted.

He’s honestly too good. Shane doesn’t deserve him.

Shane rolls onto his back, lifting one arm to rest on the bed above his head, fingers hooking under Ilya’s thigh. He wants the connection but he doesn’t think climbing on top of his husband will be helpful right now. Not with what he wants to confess. Needs to confess.

“My parents prefer you over me.”

As predicted, Ilya splutters in protest. “What? No! Shane, they love you.”

“I know. I know they love me. I’m not disputing that.” And Shane isn’t. There isn’t a doubt inside of him about the love his parents hold for Shane. It’s the rest of it. “But the reality is this: they prefer you. You’re their favourite son.”

“Shane...”

“They literally say it all the time, Ilya.”

Ilya hesitates then, because he can’t say no. It’s true. They do. “Is just joke.”

Shane shakes his head, “A handful of times, back in the beginning, sure. A joke. But now...” He frowns up at the ceiling, “I don’t think *they* even realize it. I know you didn’t.”

“No. I’m sorry.”

“Not your fault.” Shane replies, maybe reassures? He’s not entirely sure right now. “And I...I get it? I’d prefer you to me. I *do* prefer you to me. You’re...fuck, you’re perfect.”

“Shane.” Ilya’s voice is sharp. “Do not say that.”

“It’s true!” Shane’s voice is sharp in return, fingers pressing upwards into the muscle of Ilya’s thigh. “God, Ilya. How do you not see it?”

“Because it is—“

“You are the best player in the league, you are an amazing captain who is both loved and respected, you are great with people in social settings, you’re active on social media...” Shane pauses only long enough to take a breath, “You do puzzles and crosswords with my dad, you keep up in hockey talk with my mom, you eat the food they cook without second guessing anything, you’re funny and understand jokes...” Shane’s bottom lip wobbles, “You’re fucking perfect and everything they ever wanted and that’s why you’re the favourite and I can’t even fault you for it because you *deserve* that love. You should be the favourite! You’re amazing and wonderful and I would hate you for it if I didn’t love you so much but it fucking *hurts* okay? It just *hurts*.”

He’s probably leaving bruises in Ilya’s skin with how hard he’s pressing now, ones to match the ones Shane gave himself accidentally. “I have tried so hard, for all my life, to be...to be *right*. To fit in. To be what everyone wants. My parents included. And I still...I still couldn’t do it...” His breath hitches. “But you walked in, smiled, and that was all it took. And it’s...” Shane closes his eyes tightly. “It’s stupid but it’s unfair. Because *I* am their son and I’m not good enough and I hate it because you are their son too, even if not by blood, and I don’t want you...Ilya, this isn’t your fault. I promise. It’s not. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

Shane’s choked, broken sobs are the only sound in the room for a moment. And then there’s the rustle of sheets before a warm, heavy body is settling over Shane’s own chilled one. For a second, he finds it to be too much. He’s about to push or shove Ilya off of him, but his husband drops his entire weight onto Shane and something releases inside of Shane. He gasps out a breath, arms coming around Ilya, fingers digging into Ilya’s back, clinging to him.

Ilya tucks his face into Shane's neck and shoulder, fingers pressing into Shane's hips. The rise and fall of his chest against Shane's is soothing, and it isn't more than a minute before Shane's breaths are matching so that as his chest rises, Ilya's chest decompresses, pressing the breaths into each others lungs.

It's exactly what Shane had needed. Ilya had known without Shane having to say it or consider it.

"I am sorry, Shane." Ilya mumbles when Shane's gone boneless under him, eyes closed and breathing steady. He feels the calmest he's felt all day. "I should have noticed sooner."

"No, Ilya..."

"Shush. You had your turn. Now I talk."

Easiest command to follow that Ilya has ever given. Shane's mouth shuts and he nods, the grip he has on Ilya lighter now, allowing him to run his fingers up and down his husband's spine, his hand having crept under the shirt Ilya is wearing.

"I should have noticed that you were hurting, even though you are very good at hiding. I am supposed to notice. That is what you do when you love someone." Ilya presses a kiss to the skin where his lips are resting. "And I do, Shane. I love you so much. Sometimes, I ache with it."

"Me too." Shane whispers; years had passed since they'd both pretended this was nothing, but the love they held for each other was so strong. And grew with each day.

"I will not lie – I do like the love and attention your parents give me." Ilya sighs, "It is... different. Nice. Healing, maybe?" That's something Galina has probably said to Ilya during their sessions. Shane's glad Ilya is healing. "But that should not be done in any way that hurts you."

A protest is on the tip of Shane's tongue, but he swallows it down. Because the truth is out there. Ilya knows how much it hurt Shane. That's why they're here.

"I do not think your parents are doing it to harm you either, but you know that." Shane nods enough for Ilya to feel it. "None of this changes how *you* feel though. Because while it may not be intentional to hurt you, it still hurt you."

Shane snuffles a bit, "Yeah."

"I am so sorry, Shane." Ilya repeats again. "And you know, I am glad you are nothing like me. I love you for who you are. You call me perfect when I look at you and think I could never be as perfect as you." Another kiss to Shane's skin. "I know you dislike many parts of yourself, the ones you pointed out before. Socializing, the jokes, the food...but you being different from me does not make you less."

"It feels like it. Sometimes." Shane whispers the admission.

“I am so sorry, Shane. And I know you will say it is not my fault but I am allowed to say sorry.”

“Okay.”

“Is there anything else?”

Shane thinks about it for a minute. *Really* thinks. They’re being fully honest so might as well.

But he’s pretty certain that everything he’d been holding in has been torn out of him. He’s mostly just ready to sleep for a week.

“Not that I can think of right now.” Shane answers, opening his eyes to find Ilya’s hazel ones peering down at him.

All his life, Shane has found making eye contact uncomfortable and weird. He’ll force himself to do it even as his skin crawls, eye darting away occasionally to give himself a break. But with Ilya, most of the time it’s as easy as breathing.

God, he loves him.

“I love you.” Shane says quietly, needing it to be spoken.

Ilya smiles and kisses him softly. “I love you too.”

“Sorry, wasn’t distracting you, I just...”

“Needed to say it?” Ilya asks and Shane nods. “I understand. And if you think of anything else about all this...please tell me?”

“I...will try.”

“Thank you.” Ilya kisses him again and Shane feels relieved; Ilya isn’t demanding that he push himself and say anything else. He’s okay with Shane simply trying. Because of course he is.

Ilya rolls off of Shane but gathers him in his arms and tugs Shane closer. “Okay. We need dinner. And I know you did not get to shopping yet. Can we order in?”

Shane squirms a bit against Ilya, “As long as it’s not like...McDonald’s.”

“Even if I did get McDonald’s, I would order something else for you.” Ilya kisses the top of his head.

“It’s just so greasy...”

“And we know you don’t like being dirty outside of sex.”

“Oh my god.” Shane groans, weakly pushing against Ilya. “Shut up.”

Laughing, Ilya holds on tighter, “No. I love you being dirty in sex. It’s fun.”

“Order your food, you freak,”

“Okay.” Ilya, still holding Shane, rolls and stretches across the bed to grab his phone. It makes Shane giggle, feeling lighter after the events of the night. There’s exhaustion in his bones, lingering from the panic he’d had, and he’s sure his mind will dissect everything over the next few days, but for right now? Shane feels okay.

Thanks to Ilya.

“Now...” His husband says as they settle back on the mattress, somehow slanted diagonally across it, the sheets a mess, “What type of Shane approved junk food can I order...”

Smiling, Shane buries his face into Ilya’s neck and listens as options he actually would eat are listed.

End Notes

love you.

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