

Nesting Instinct

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Nesting Instinct

by [quantumoddiy](#).

Summary

Ilya thought he was done being surprised by all the changes Shane would go through during pregnancy.

Until the day he opened his closet and found all his clothes had gone missing.

Notes

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

Ilya Rozanov was fairly certain that, at some point in his thirty years of life, he'd bought some clothes.

He must have done, right? He would have gotten frostbite at some point if he hadn't. Or a call from at least one of his teams' PR departments along the way.

But looking at his closet now, Ilya would quite easily believe he'd never owned a single piece of clothing. Every single hanger in there was empty, the little side compartments were bare, even the laundry hamper was sagging in the corner with nothing to offer him, even the sweat drenched shorts and tank top he'd left on the floor after his run had disappeared.

Leaving Ilya really wishing he'd noticed this before getting in the shower, before it was just him and a towel against the world.

"Shanya?" he called softly, turning his head, hoping his mate would still be exactly where he'd been for the whole morning up until that point, curled in their bed and sleeping soundly.

But no, the bed was carefully made and Shane was nowhere to be seen, probably padding around the house somewhere finding things to tidy away or dust or rearrange which Ilya had been reassured by the other dads on the Centaurs, yes, it's perfectly normal and no, he is not going to appreciate you chasing him back into bed and insisting on doing it yourself. Apparently Ilya was supposed to just let his mate comb through every inch of their home and just be grateful he was sleeping past six am and had abandoned his idea for non contact, pregnancy friendly hockey.

Now that he considered it, Shane had probably decided he needed to wash every single item of clothing they owned before the pup arrived. A little heads up would have been nice but Ilya wasn't about to complain, he would just be a good alpha and hover until Shane caved and let him fold things. Maybe even find something more fun to do without their clothes on, if his mate was in the mood.

Anya was sleeping on the landing, jumping up the moment she saw her papa, reminding him with a little yip that she'd been a very good girl on their run and she usually got a treat whenever they got back, didn't she?

"Like you did not beg one from your daddy while I was showering..." Ilya snorted in amusement, bending to ruffle her ears, "Come on, I'll give you one more if you help me find him."

It must have been the easiest treat Anya had ever earned in her life. The second Ilya came down the stairs and looked across their living room, he saw exactly where his clothes were and exactly where his Shane was, all at once. And suddenly everything made a lot more sense.

All of their furniture had been pushed back to the very edges of the room and stripped of every throw pillow and blanket and even the cushions, opening up a space right in front of the fireplace. A space that had been filled with those cushions, carefully arranged then piled

high with what had to be every piece of clothing that had hung in Ilya's closet just an hour ago, even the gear from last practice, the stuff he'd promised Shane he'd put in the laundry already but his mate must have known was still festering in the trunk of his car. Every pair of shorts, every shirt, every one of the sweaters Shane had bought him for his first Canadian winter, every jersey from his Russian junior team to Ottawa had clearly been put in exactly the right place.

Of course Shane Hollander had made sure his very first nest was absolutely perfect.

"Shanya?" Ilya called softly, after swallowing a few times to make sure he could actually get the words out without crying.

Shane had been crouched over a corner, arranging the last few workout shirts, he hadn't even heard Ilya come down the stairs. But he jumped guiltily at the sound of his own name, head whipping around.

"Ilya! Hi! How was your run? Did it end up raining? What was your time?"

Ilya ignored the barrage of questions, he knew that was his mate's attempt to distract him from the blatant theft that had taken place. He just sauntered up to the edge of the nest, a soft smile on his face.

"If you are not careful, my love, our pup will end up a Bears fan."

Shane's anxious expression relaxed, his eyes crinkling in the corners in that way that made Ilya want to squeeze him.

"I'll turn all those ones round. Make sure only the Centaurs stuff is showing."

Ilya chuckled, reaching down and running a gentle hand across Shane's hair, smoothing it down and out of its sleepy bird's nest, "Good or your mother will never forgive me...what is all this, Shanya? I would have helped you put all this together."

Shane fidgeted a little, his brow furrowing like he was searching for the answer himself, doubt clouding his eyes, "It just...it felt like I needed to do it? I didn't exactly plan it, I just kinda woke up and decided it was time. I know it's probably not very good, I didn't really know what I was doing but..."

Of course Ilya had read about all this. He'd been devouring every book he could get his hands on, taking every recommendation their OBGYN and his teammate's partners had for him, making him very glad he'd insisted on being added to the WAGs group chat when Shane had signed for them. Even if he'd had to read most of those books with his phone balanced on his knee, ready to google Russian translations for words like *endometrium* and *lactiferous* and *effacement*, he still felt like he knew more about omegas than he did about hockey these days. And every book told him that an omega would start to make their nest as they entered the third trimester, he shouldn't be surprised.

But even then, it had been hard to read about those behaviours, everything that was supposed to happen, and picture his Shane.

His mate had never behaved like a normal omega, not least because he'd been forced to keep his status a secret for so long just to be taken seriously in the NHL. He'd been on suppressants since he was a teenager, having to trust in team doctors and NDAs and mutually assured destruction with Ilya like this fundamental part of himself was something to be ashamed of. He'd never allowed himself to make a nest, telling himself he was okay with the scraps of what he actually needed. Scraps like the shirts Ilya would pretend to accidentally leave behind after their nights together, his heart breaking for him.

Ilya would bet those shirts were somewhere in that pile, in the huge nest his Shane had finally gotten to make for himself and their pup.

He knelt down, reached across and stroked his mate's cheek with gentle fingers, making sure that every emotion welling up in his chest spilled into his voice and his eyes, holding nothing back from this man who deserved everything he had to give.

"It is perfect, Shane. I am so proud of you."

It would never stop staggering Ilya, how just a few words from him could clear Shane's eyes, soften that anxious little furrow between his eyebrows, ease the parts of his mind that worked too fast and too frantic. It was a power no one should have let him have, he hadn't earned it, but all he could do was be grateful.

"You think they'll like it?" Shane's voice was soft, his hand moving to the swell of his belly, "It'll keep them safe?"

Ilya's heart gave a painful squeeze. He had done everything in his power to shield Shane from the things people had been saying online about his pregnancy, about his decision to take the season off and not lie about the reason. But his mate wasn't a fool, he'd grown up in this game and been burned by it more than most. He didn't need to be told what the fans, or people who called themselves fans anyway, were saying about him. He knew, it was there in the anxious way his eyes flitted around the room, the way his lower lip was raw and bitten.

Ilya so desperately wanted to tell Shane there was nothing to fear, that their nest didn't need to be safe. But he wouldn't lie to him, he'd done more than enough of that in their lives.

But he wasn't lying when he leaned across and put their foreheads together, murmuring in a low, steady voice, "Nothing will hurt them here, Shanya. Me and you, we will keep them safe."

The last of the anxiety melted out of Shane's body, a soft whimper escaping him as he slumped into the crook of Ilya's shoulder, "Thank you..."

Ilya purred for him as loud as he could, until his whole body was trembling with it, wrapping Shane in his scent of smoke and cold air and clear, sharp ice.

"Anytime, Shanya..." he made to move forward, to roll his mate into the softness of his nest and do something that would make them both glad that Shane had taken all his clothes.

But he found himself stopped, a hand splayed on his chest and holding firm.

“I didn’t say you could come in...” Shane’s voice wasn’t a purr anymore but a growl, his teeth lightly grazing Ilya’s neck in a warning.

A slow, delighted grin spread over Ilya’s face. Those books he’d read had also told him that omegas would experience mood swings, that they could become territorial and possessive. Now that sounded like Shane to him.

Ilya drew back immediately, sinking down from his knees to his belly, resting on his forearms in a display of submission. He didn’t care when the towel fell away and puddled under him. It might help his case.

“Of course, beloved, I’m sorry,” he purred indulgently, still grinning, “Please may I come in?”

Any real upset quickly disappeared from Shane’s face, his eyes glittering as he regarded his alpha.

“I don’t know...I worked really hard on it, last thing I need is you knocking it all down with one of your hurricane sneezes...”

“They are dad sneezes, I am practicing,” Ilya sniffed with mock indignation, “What if I brought you something? Something to prove what a capable alpha I am?”

Shane pretended to consider this for a long moment before nodding eagerly, “Okay. What would you bring me?”

Ilya cocked his head, “What about...your mom’s dumplings? The pork and cabbage ones you like best?”

Shane grinned, resting his chin on the edge of the nest, “Depends. Are you the one who folded them? If you are, I’m good.”

Ilya made a wounded noise, “They still taste good, they just look like they were in a car accident! Alright, fine...I will bring you the moon then. When it is full and bright, the way it is at the cottage in the summer.”

That made Shane melt, his eyes going soft and gooey, “That sounds nice...what else?”

Ilya purred, he loved when Shane joined in with his games and let himself be a little silly.

“How about the water from that beach we went to in Spain, when you said it was the bluest thing you’ve ever seen? Brand new hockey tape, from that company you used to use and it went out of business? The very tall tree out the back of your parent’s cottage, your favourite one? How about...the Stanley Cup at the end of the season?”

Shane had been giggling all through the list but at that last one he paused, tilting his head and considering, “You know what, I bet you will.”

Ilya had been joking, just saying whatever he thought would keep pulling those happy trills from his mate. The team had done well last year, better than anyone had expected them to,

and maybe next year when Shane was actually on the ice they could start dreaming big. But from where he was sitting right now, Ottawa winning the Stanley Cup was about as likely as him being able to pull the moon from the sky or fold dumplings as perfectly as Yuna.

But Shane lounged in his nest, looking at Ilya with wide, trusting eyes, like there really wasn't anything his alpha couldn't do. And seeing his mate in front of him, wearing a ring Ilya had thought he'd never be able to have from him, in a nest that he'd thought Shane would never feel free enough to make, with his belly rounded out so beautifully with a pup he'd never dreamed they'd get to have.

Why not keep asking for the impossible? They already had it.

"If it means I'm good enough for your nest, Shanya, consider it done," Ilya smiled warmly, batting his eyes hopefully.

There was a new heat in the way Shane looked at him then, still playful but hungrier now, a smoky edge building under his milk softened scent. Ilya suppressed a triumphant grin for a few more moments and slowly pulled himself into a crouch, ready to pounce.

"You need to bring me one more thing," Shane said decisively, already moving back to make room for him, the way he trembled betraying his excitement.

"Anything. Anything you ask."

"Your mouth," Shane breathed, everything about him now begging for his alpha.

Ilya let his fangs loose, his tongue lolling, his promise coming out a twisted growl, "Done."

He barrelled into Shane's arms, knowing his mate would catch him, rolling the two of them into the softness of his nest. Softer still was Shane's mouth, parting for Ilya's tongue with a whimper of sheer relief, his hands grasping to get around his mate's broad shoulders and anchor him there. As if Ilya would ever be anywhere else, like his whole world wasn't right here in his arms, panting and gasping and flushed. He loved how sensitive Shane was, like every nerve ending he had was raw and ready for Ilya to set them alight with the barest kisses and touches. Not that he planned to stop there.

"Up, *moy miluyi*, I know your back won't take this for long..." Ilya reversed their positions, gently guiding Shane over him.

His omega gave an adorably grouchy huff, "Shut up."

"Why? It is true?" Ilya gave a soft groan as Shane hovered over his face, his scent strong enough to get drunk on.

"I know but you don't have to sound so pleased about it..."

Ilya thought he had plenty of reasons to sound pleased right now but he decided to just do as he'd been asked and shut himself up. He pressed his mouth against Shane's hole, thrilling at the way his most sensitive muscles twitched for him and the rush of sweet slick that flooded his tongue. Shane gave a broken moan, hips rolling, though he was clearly trying to hold

himself back, aware of his mate underneath him. Ilya would have given a fond smile if his mouth wasn't occupied. He took hold of Shane's hips, closing the distance himself as he dragged him down until he was sitting on the flat of his tongue, making them as close as they could physically be.

The squeal Shane made at that sudden, intense rush was heavenly and Ilya eagerly chased down, desperate for more. He ate him out like it was the only thing he'd been put on this earth to do, like they gave out Stanley Cups for it, like it was going to be a demonstration sport at the next Olympics.

Soon Shane's voice had taken on that frantic, grasping tone Ilya wanted to hear, like he was scrabbling for handholds he couldn't quite reach, "Can't...alpha, I can't stop..."

Ilya gave Shane's hips a deliberate squeeze, *then don't*.

Shane fell forward, his forehead resting against Ilya's bent knee, his hands splayed on Ilya's stomach as his orgasm pulsed through him.

"Fuck, fuck, *fuck*..." he moaned as he came across his alpha's chest, as he flooded Ilya's mouth with that sweet taste again.

"Maybe later. If you have any energy left," Ilya purred smugly once his mouth was free.

He kept his hands sure and steady, knowing Shane didn't have anything left to hold himself up. He carefully guided his boneless, whimpering mate onto his side where he melted into a contented puddle, burying his face into the pile of Ilya's clothes.

Ilya kept on rumbling for him, tabs stroking lazily up and down his spine, "That was good, Shanya?"

Shane gave a low groan that was probably supposed to be words, nodding and curling up against Ilya like he was his one solid point in a world that was still spinning. Ilya chuckled warmly, more than happy to just sit with his mate's head in his lap and catch their breath.

After a while, Shane rolled until he was looking up at Ilya, eyes soft and hazy and unguarded.

"You don't have to give me any of those things, you know..."

Ilya cocked his head, pushing a strand of silky black off his flushed brow, "I don't?"

Shane caught his fingers, kissing them lightly, "No. You're enough. More than enough. Just...just wanted you to know that."

Ilya closed his eyes, bowing until their foreheads rested against each other. For a long moment all he could do was let those words burn through him and hope he could contain everything they made him feel.

"Well," he finally rasped, kissing his brow, "You'll always have that, Shanya...I might need some of my clothes back, though."

Shane opened one eye, “Oh, no, that’s not happening. You’ll have to buy more. And then give them to me when you’ve worn them a few times.”

Ilya laughed, shifting until he was lying behind Shane, arms wrapped around him to cradle their baby inside him, “Whatever you need, *moy miluyi...*”

And he meant it. He had no idea what other surprises would be waiting for them, what other things he would trip over as he got to know this new version of Shane.

But he couldn’t wait to find out.

End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this! I would really appreciate comments, I'm also on Tumblr if you ever want to chat Hollanov, @mollymauk-teafleak! <33

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