thank you, montreal

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by strwbrryfox

Summary

Ilya took his face in his hands and smacked a kiss onto his cheek, making Shane laugh, which was probably the desired effect.

Harris left with his photos a few moments later, promising Ilya that they'd be seeing them all on the official Centaurs account soon.

"You should make caption, 'Thank you, Montreal,'" Ilya called after him. "Tag the fuckers too!"

or, shane scores his first goal as a centaur, ilya is a very proud husband.

Notes

these two won't leave my head, and i'm embracing it. as a hockey lover, this was very self-indulgent, so i hope it resonates

thank you to lauren and kim for betaing ♥

enjoy, and happy holidays!

See the end of the work for more notes

It had been the perfect moment. Shane couldn't have drawn it up better if he tried.

The goal had come from Ilya on the powerplay, a hard slapshot from the point. The goal horn had gone off, and Shane's first thought was how different it sounded from the one in Montreal. The thought was drowned out by the loud hometown crowd and his teammates surrounding him, smacking his helmet in celebration.

From the corner of his eye, he could see Ilya fishing the puck out of the opposing team's net and collecting it as though it were some milestone goal, like Shane hadn't scored over thirty goals every season since he'd started in the league.

And then, his husband was barrelling towards him, his arms wide open. He looked so proud.

"Nice goal," he said as he pulled him in for a hug, his voice low so only Shane could hear.

"Nice pass," Shane replied, bumping Ilya with his shoulder.

The way Ilya was looking at him was making it difficult to be professional, but Shane didn't care. The noise around them quieted, and it suddenly felt like they were the only ones in the room. Ilya had that effect on him.

Ilya snorted, and they skated towards the bench where the rest of their teammates were on their feet and ready to congratulate him.

Shane had forgotten about it by the end of the game; he was just happy to contribute and to prove himself—to his new team, to the fans, to himself in a sense.

While he was ecstatic to be playing in Ottawa, in his hometown, with his husband, he couldn't deny the tiny bit of anxiety that had been building up inside of him in anticipation of the season.

He'd played in the same city, with virtually the same core group of guys, for the better part of a decade, and while he knew that leaving was the right choice, he had been worried that the drastic change would affect his game, at least for the first little while.

So getting a goal in the first period of his first game as a Centaur was a relief.

Ilya approached him with the puck, freshly showered, shirtless, his hair pushed back and damp. A fucking vision as usual.

Shane had to take a double-take before realizing what Ilya had in his hand. He snorted when he saw the puck was taped around the sides and labelled **HOLLANDER—1ST CENTAUR GOAL**.

"Seriously?" Shane asked as he took it in his hands.

Obviously, it was a joke; it had to be. Ilya was smiling at him with an all-too familiar crooked smile that still made Shane feel shy even after all these years.

“Very serious,” Ilya replied. “I’m proud of you, Hollander.”

“Thanks, *Captain.”*

“I am,” Ilya said, as though he could tell Shane didn’t believe him. “Is a big deal.”

“If you say so.”

“Go stand in front of stall,” Ilya said, pulling out his phone. “Hold it up, I want a picture.

“Ilya,” Shane said incredulously.

Ilya gave him a look that said, *what the hell did you expect, Hollander.*

Shane did it because he loved seeing Ilya so happy—he didn’t think he’d seen him this elated since their wedding day. He stood in front of his stall and held up the labelled puck, feeling every bit like the rookie he *wasn’t.*

Ilya snapped a few shots of him, biting his bottom lip as though to hide his smile. He flipped through the pictures, and Shane could see the adoration in his eyes as he grinned down at his phone.

“Got it?” Shane asked.

“Yes,” Ilya replied, bringing his eyes up to meet Shane’s again. The look Ilya gave him made Shane’s heart flip in his chest. “Got it.”

“Oh, great! Let me get one too,” Harris called, before Shane could move.

“Yes! Make sure to post on Instagram,” Ilya told him, winking cheekily at Shane behind Harris’ back.

“That’s really not—” Shane tried.

“Smile, Hollander,” Ilya said.

Shane sighed and did what he was told.

“Want me to take one with both of you in it?” Harris asked, and Ilya’s entire face lit up.

“Yes, good idea,” Ilya handed Harris his phone and stood next to Shane, throwing an arm around him.

“Hold it up,” he instructed, the hand slung over his shoulder reaching to grab his wrist.

Shane rolled his eyes, but his heart was so full.

Ilya took his face in his hands and smacked a kiss onto his cheek, making Shane laugh, which was probably the desired effect.

Harris left with his photos a few moments later, promising Ilya that they'd be seeing them all on the official Centaurs account soon.

"You should make caption, 'Thank you, Montreal,'" Ilya called after him. "Tag the fuckers too!"

"You know I can't do that, Ilya," Harris said, sounding amused.

"Is okay. I'll just do it myself later," he heard Ilya reply.

Shane sat on the bench in front of his stall and stared at the puck in his hands. It felt surreal. As surreal as it had been putting on the jersey of the team he'd grown up watching. But he was having a hard time not thinking about it as just being another goal. Maybe because he'd always had that mindset. Scoring was something he was expected to do. It was his *job.*

Everything else—the sentiment behind the goals he scored—was never of much significance to him. Or at least, he never put much thought into it anymore.

He felt Ilya sit down in the stall next to him. They were silent for a moment.

"Is your first goal playing for your hometown, Hollander," Ilya said, as though he could tell Shane still wasn't convinced of the weight of this. Some days, he felt like Ilya could read his mind. "Is big deal. We will frame it next to mine."

Next to his? Was Ilya's in their trophy room? There were so many in there that it started to all blur together.

"You kept yours?"

"Yes. Of course," Ilya said.

"Really?"

Ilya nodded, shrugging his shoulders. "It means something to me. It's home for me now, too. It's…where my family is. Now, I mean. My new family." His voice cracked as he said the last part.

Oh.

Ilya had scored his first goal as a Centaur when he and Shane had only been together for real for a year. They hadn't been married. They hadn't even lived together. But Ilya had already thought of Ottawa as his home, because Shane was from there, because Shane's family was there.

Shane's family had embraced Ilya with open arms—his parents thought of him as a son. Ottawa was likely the first place he'd ever lived where he felt completely safe, completely at home. And now, he and Ilya lived there together, played there together.

Of course, he'd want to keep the puck. O*f course,* it meant something to him.

And of course, Shane's puck also meant something to Ilya. It was a symbol of the start of their new life together.

Shane felt a lump in his throat just thinking about it.

"I didn't even…think about it like that," Shane said. He suddenly felt stupid and shallow for *not*.

Ilya shook his head. "Maybe because you score so many, you forget. It's okay to be proud of yourself sometimes."

"Yeah," Shane said, feeling himself zone out a bit.

"Is okay," Ilya reassured him, putting a hand on his knee. "I'm here to remind you. Always."

Shane glanced at Ilya's hand, at his thumb softly caressing his knee, catching a glimpse of the rubber ring on his finger. Shane was wearing a matching one on his own ring finger. It had been Shane's idea to get separate, more durable ones made so they could wear them while they played, and Ilya had suggested rubber, "because puck!"

"You're a good captain," Shane said.

"Mhm. I'm a better husband, I think."

"That wasn't up for debate."

Ilya hummed. "Let's go home," he said, his hand slowly sliding up Shane's leg, stopping to rest on his inner thigh. "So I can *show* you how good of husband I am."

Shane's breath hitched at the implication.

Ilya chuckled and rose to his feet.

Shane quickly looked around the room to see if any of their teammates had seen the interaction. They were all chatting loudly amongst themselves and seemingly couldn't give less of a shit. He was truly a part of the most unbothered team in the entire league.

Shane's phone buzzed on the shelf above him. He reached for it and grinned at his screen.

@ilyarozanov has tagged you in a story.

He glanced up at Ilya, who'd just locked his phone and was now in conversation with Troy Barrett on the other side of the room.

Shane clicked on the notification and smiled wider. It was the picture they'd just taken, the one with Ilya kissing him on the cheek. They both looked so unapologetically happy. *Free.*

"Proud husband ❤️*"* the caption read.

Shane looked up from his phone, blinking away the tears in his eyes.

Shane *felt* fucking happy.

He felt something in him shift—like the spark that he'd, maybe unknowingly, lost for hockey last year had been reignited.

All the shit they'd been through, all the unknowingness, all the lonely nights, the sneaking around, the loving in private. Everything had led them here. It was all behind them. It all made sense now.

He inhaled and gazed around the room, a sense of pride washing over him as he took in his new team, his new locker room, and—

Ilya's eyes were already locked on him; he was smiling softly, as though waiting for Shane to notice. Shane grinned back, exhaling shakily.

He was *home.*

End Notes

thank you so much for reading!

i have also written a hollanov christmas fic if you're interested!

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-phee ♥

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