

That Look in Your Eyes, Oh, the Joy it Brings

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That Look in Your Eyes, Oh, the Joy it Brings

by Anonymous

Summary

“Mr. Vance, is it?” Ilya extended his hand to greet the man who had stood when they walked in, “Sorry we’re late, my husband is terrible at keeping track of time.” He added a shrug and Shane rolled his eyes.

“Pleasure to meet you both.” Mr. Vance pulled his hand from Ilya, and reached for Shane’s hand, “Truly an honor.” When he turned to walk back to his seat, Ilya and Shane made eye contact, trying their best not to laugh, made even more difficult when they saw the screensaver on Mr. Vance’s computer was Shane’s former team, Montreal.

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(Or, Shane and Ilya attend parent teacher conference and his teacher just happens to be a fan)

Notes

Title is from "Love is a Compass" by Griff

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

“Where were you?” Shane asked, his hands in his pockets nervously. He’d been waiting in the school lobby for the last 10 minutes. As frustrated as he is, it doesn’t stop him from automatically leaning in to greet his husband with a kiss.

“Sorry, nails were wet.” Ilya held up his left hand to show off the terrible polish job that he’d received from their daughter.

“You couldn’t have waited to have your appointment until after the parent teacher conference?” Shane smiled, shaking his head softly.

“Her salon is very exclusive, and appointments are hard to get. She made it clear: if I reschedule, still have to pay.” Ilya curled his fingers between Shane’s and started to walk down the hall, “Now we must go, all your questions have made us late.”

“Right, I made us late.” Shane laughed as Ilya knocked softly on their son’s classroom door and pushed it open.

They’d met his teacher before, and exchanged pleasantries, but this was the first time they’d had the opportunity to sit down with him since their son had started in his class two months ago. As long as the world had known about them, Shane still felt himself brace for impact when they were meeting a new person.

He looked around the colorful classroom, and smiled at the environment his son was learning in. Maks hadn’t mentioned much about Mr. Vance, instead focusing more on showing off the pictures he’d been able to draw. They were happy that he’s found a hobby that he seemed to genuinely love.

It was exhausting to see all the articles talk about how people expected Maks to follow in their footsteps. They were constantly being asked when he’d join his first hockey team and what position they thought he’d play. He’d grown up going to camp, but last summer, when each team had painted their own banner, they saw the way his eyes lit up as he showed off his finished project. The next day he asked if he could sit out, and Shane had checked his forehead, hoping that he wasn’t coming down with something. Maks had said over and over he felt fine, he just didn’t feel like skating, so they set him up in one of the offices with his tablet where someone could still keep an eye on him.

Ilya disappeared during the second morning session, saying he needed to run an errand, and while Shane had questions, he barely had a chance to say goodbye before Ilya was walking out of the facility. When he went to get Maks for lunch, he found Ilya setting up a small easel for him complete with an assortment of watercolors. Their friends always made comments about the fact that Shane looked at Ilya like he hung the moon, and when he saw the look on his son’s face as he held his tiny cup of water, he understood.

“Mr. Vance, is it?” Ilya extended his hand to greet the man who had stood when they walked in, “Sorry we’re late, my husband is terrible at keeping track of time.” He added a shrug and Shane rolled his eyes.

“Pleasure to meet you both.” Mr. Vance pulled his hand from Ilya, and reached for Shane’s hand, “Truly an honor.” When he turned to walk back to his seat, Ilya and Shane made eye contact, trying their best not to laugh, which was made even more difficult when they saw the screensaver on Mr. Vance’s computer was Shane’s former team, Montreal.

“You have no idea how surprised I was to see Max’s name on my class roster. I grew up watching you play, Mr. Hollander, don’t know if I ever missed a game.”

“Oh, well, um thank you.” Shane shifted in his seat, a bit uncomfortable from the praise, and wanting to get back on topic, “So, how is Maks doing?”

“Max’s scores have been great. I would say especially in science and math, he’s doing a spectacular job.” Mr. Vance slid a paper across his desk and placed it in front of Shane. Ilya, reached for it, pulling it closer so that he could see and smiled at his husband.

“I’m always telling you our son is a genius.”

“Is there anything that we need to pay attention to? Any areas where he may need more support?” Shane asked.

“Well, I will say that sometimes when I have them working in small groups, he can lose focus easily, bit of a daydreamer. I’ve also been pretty surprised that at recess he doesn’t seem all that interested in playing sports. Just want to make sure he’s staying active, but I’m sure you have that under control. I’ve read so much about the rigorous training schedule you used to keep.” Mr. Vance smiled at Shane who was listening, but already considering how he can talk to Maks about the feedback they were receiving.

“You feel like his focus is making him miss things in class?” Ilya asked.

“I don’t know if I would say he’s missing things, but we do like to make sure we’re keeping the kids on track.” He answered Ilya before addressing Shane again, “You get it Mr. Hollander, you were always so disciplined on the ice. While other players may have depended on brute force, you knew there was mental finesse to it. It’s not all that different with the kids. Even in the 3rd grade we want to make sure they’re adopting good habits.”

“Huh.” Ilya responded, shifting in his seat and Shane felt his eyes narrow. “I’m glad to hear that his daydreaming hasn’t impacted his work. Maks has incredible imagination.”

“About that.” Mr. Vance pulled another sheet out of his folder and slid it forward. The picture in front of them appeared to be two men with swords fighting each other. Ilya lifted it to show Shane, and they both smiled. A year ago, when Maks would excitedly hand them one of his drawings, they’d have to carefully ask what they were looking at. He’d improved so much in such a short amount of time, “I only wanted to bring this one to your attention because of the aggressive nature of it. I can’t imagine where he would be getting that from.” Mr. Vance let his eyes flicker to Ilya and Shane sat up straight, prepared to answer but Ilya’s hand moved to his.

“Thank you for bringing it to our attention. It is not concern. His sister’s favorite bedtime story is about a princess who is saved by a knight,” He turned to Shane, “But lately she

changes story so that she fights with knight.” He smiled before he looked back at Mr. Vance, “Maks loves the pictures, so I’m not surprised to see that he’s drawing knights here. Can I keep this?”

“Um, of course.” Mr. Vance nods and hands them the folder, labeled, “Max Hollander”. Shane and Ilya both see the folder at the same time and while Ilya reaches for it, Shane puts his hand out to stop him, collecting the sheets of paper out of it.

“Is that all for this evening?”

“Well, yes, but I thought –“

“Thank you so much. We’ll make sure to talk to Maks about trying to focus in class.” Shane moved to his feet and Ilya and Mr. Vance both look at him, a bit surprised by the sudden movement, “We have an appointment with Ms. Crane about joining art club, so I think we should be going.” Ilya stood and shook Mr. Vance’s hand as they exchanged tense smiles. Shane scooted his chair out of the way, avoiding saying goodbye and moving toward the door.

“Um, Mr. Hollander, if you wouldn’t mind. I’d love it if we could take a photo. Only if you didn’t mind.” Mr. Vance stood a bit awkwardly behind his desk and Shane felt Ilya tense next to him.

“No problem.” Shane said and Ilya looked at him, surprised. In response, Shane smiled at him softly and rubbed his back, “Why don’t you go ahead, I’ll meet you up there.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yeah. I’m very sure.” Shane nodded and Ilya looked back at Mr. Vance before walking out of the classroom.

“Thank you so much Mr. Hollander.” He started as he walked around his desk, gripping his phone, “I really appreciate it. I know I said so earlier, but it truly is an honor and I –“

“Hollander-Rozanov.” Shane said and Mr. Vance pulled up, confused, “My name is Shane Hollander-Rozanov. My son’s name is Maksim Hollander-Rozanov.”

“Yes, I know that I-“

“If you know that, then why does my son’s folder have the incorrect name on it?” Shane lifted the folder, “Last summer, when he started painting, my husband taught him how to sign all of his pictures. He practiced his signature for days to get it right, and he’s never once spelled his name with an X.”

“I just figured since –“

“As an educator, you should know that you don’t need to figure anything. His name is his name. I should know, my husband and I picked it out, and until he decides to go by something else, we expect that you’ll use it.”

“Of course.”

“While we’re clarifying things. I have to ask, do you have a problem with my husband, Mr. Vance?”

“What? Of course not. You know how it is, growing up watching you both play, we all hated Ilya Rozanov. But that was just petty sports stuff.”

“What you’re calling “petty” seems to be a bias that has invalidated your professional judgment regarding our son. My husband’s character is not your concern. Maksim’s fair treatment while you provide him his education is your only obligation. Your job description does not include any role in evaluating his athletic abilities and if you continue to do so, the next conversation we have will not be about the beautiful picture that he’s drawn. Is this understood?”

“Of course. Mr. Hollander-Rozanov, if you’ve gotten the wrong idea, I –“

“Have a good evening. Mr. Vance.”

Shane turned and walked out of the room, doing his best to calm his breathing before he walked into the art classroom. He opened his mouth to apologize for his delay in arrival, but came up short when he saw Ilya wearing a smock and standing in front of a canvas with a brush in his hand.

“Yes, exactly like that Mr. Hollander-Rozanov!” Ms. Crane brought her hands together excitedly as she looked at the canvas and Ilya saw Shane standing in the doorway.

“Shane, come look. You remember the problem, the flat building? I told Maks about the light source. Here I’ve done shading. Come, see. Your husband is also an artist.” He turned to Ms. Crane, “I’m so sorry for my husband’s tardiness. He can’t seem to get anywhere on time.” Ilya joked and she smiled as she greeted Shane who had entered the classroom, blinking to hopefully hide some of the shine in his eyes that had come from watching Ilya learn how to paint so that he could show his son how to do something new.

“It’s good, right?” Ilya asked, pointing to the shading he’d added to the basic building on the canvas.

“Yeah.” Shane nodded, “It’s perfect.”

End Notes

Yes, they ended up pulling him out of that class...

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