Why am I like this?

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Why am I like this?

by gothicgirlGXD

Summary

Shane Hollander was a weird kid
Shane Hollander being weird was the price to pay due to his talent.
Or at least that's what he always thought

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Or also called: The Late term Autistic Diagnosis of Shane Hollander

Notes

Because the world changes when you get your diagnosis as an adult, by accident

The title is inspired by the song "Why am I like this?" By Orla Gartland

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane Hollander was weird

-He isn't like other kids miss Hollander-

Shane Hollander was a weird kid

-He is talented and perfect the way he is, he doesn't harm no one miss Sunset, so i would suggest for you to instead of calling me about my son, you call the other kids parents to tell them than people different than them deserve respect and not some senseless teasing-

Shane Hollander being weird was the price to pay due to his talent.

Shane was talented and no one could say otherwise, by his age he was the siren in the water equivalent to ice skating; he flew and ran in the ice with no problem, the teachers were impressed but not Yuna nor David Hollander, who took their little star to classes and began practicing with him since he could walk. Yes, the youngest Hollander was a future gold mine on ice, many people tried to talk him into artistic ice-skating, but he loved hockey so there was no other option; he loved the strategy, the roughness, the rules and the points, liked the idea of winning even if he was teached to keep those thoughts to himself.

Other kids? Friends? They were by far less interesting than hockey

He wasn't shy perse, but he kept to himself, unlike the other kids in his class, he enjoyed going to school and having a schedule to follow as a 8 year old; school wasn't that interesting but he learnt different things there, and if he finished his exam soon he could go to the computer salon and watch hockey games till his next class; and what's best, after it he knew his Mom would pick him up and drive him to the community hockey classes.

He felt more himself in there, the cold made him focus, his body was his, he had just one task and it was to win, maybe he didn't make friends to the other kids in the team but that was alright, he wanted to play hockey and he did it, nothing to complain there; his parents would pick him up after class, he would talk about his practice and how he plans to become better and faster and his parents would hear, a perfect planned day.

But today was different, it seemed that some of Shane classmates called him some names and the teacher chose to call Yuna, his mom, to talk about it.

So in short, they were punishing him with less hockey time just because some other kids were talking trash, that didn't seem fair; but fairness didn't seem like a concept to other people inside his household; if his dad heard he would agree with Shane, order him up the wooden bench outside the classroom and walk out with him.

-I finished talking here, and I expect the kids who bully my kid to be dealt with, or i will-

When his mom gets out of the classroom she had glassy eyes, like when she saw a sad movie or the Montreal lost at the last minute, she was clearly upset and Shane couldn't shake the feeling that it was his fault.

So, he held her hand and moved close.

-Sorry mommy-

She looked at him confused, cleaning her eyes on the white cardigan she used to wear at this time of the year.

-For what darling? -

-For making you cry? -

Yuna couldn't help but smile as they walked out of the school, holding her son´s tiny hand.

-I'm okay darling, no tears dropped, see? No crying yet-

Shane nodded as his mom walked him towards their car, looking at the sky

-Mom, did they call you because I'm weird? -

Yuna looked at him, intrigued

-What makes you think that? -

-That's what Will and his friends called me, right? That's why Miss Sunset called you-

His mom shakes her head, smiling, her long shiny hair moving side by side

-Weird is just a word people call others different than them, being talented isn't common Shane, being aware and enjoying what you do; if that means you are weird for them that's their problem; i think talented would be a better word-

Shane smiled at the change of voice his mom had, she wasn't sad or angry anymore, she held Shane hand with strength and pride.

Yes, maybe both things can be right at the same time, and being weird according to other kids his age, was the price to pay for being talented.

Shane looked at the grey sky and breathed, weird wasn't bad after all then, he would keep being him. As long as it made him happy, as his dad said, things would be alright.

Shane was 12 when he heard other kids call him weird in his face, one of them bolder than the others.

-You are weird Hollander, but you play fucking well! Can you teach me how to do that? -

After the coach reprimanded Tom over the cursing, Shane actually teached the boy to do the pass he practiced so many times alone; after all, hockey was a team's game and he want them all to enjoy this as much as he does; so ignoring the word Shane teached him and played with him for a long time after that.

Tom was American, transferred just last year to the league while her mom's worked at the new job they got in Ottawa; somehow Shane and Tom ended up being something similar to friends; they played and talked and went to each other's birthday parties.

Tom was also funny and smart and way better at school than Shane, especially in math and english, talking about some books while smiling wide, blonde wild hair falling in his shoulders and blue eyes fixated on Shane.

It was embarrassing to look back towards them, like looking straight at the sun, Shane just couldn't do it, but Tom didn't mind, he would talk and talk and Shane would listen, like a good friend would

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Years later, many years later, Shane and Tom lost contact, Shane also proved his mom theory and became an NFL star making it to the draft (second place, but he got over it by now, he swears) , winning rookie of the year, taking Montreal to victory two years in a row.

Weird really was the price to pay due to his talent, a burden he expected his other playmates to understand, but it seemed that they didn't, or they grew out of it and so would Shane.

Who cares if he still has a schedule? Yes he may be a millionaire but as an athlete he needed to take care of his body, that meant almost no alcohol (not like he liked it that much, he would take a cold ginger ale over beer any day of the week), a good work out each day and the macrobiotic diet that helped him maintain it all, clean body, clean mind.

What made him mad and made no sense at all was Ilya fucking Rozanov, in general really.

He was talented like Shane, first one in the draft (but he isn't bitter over it anymore, he swears) but he didn't seem to have the weird to balance out his talent; no, Ilya Rozanov was anything but weird.

He was an asshole and cocky and a dick, he got under players skin and annoyed them to no end; but he was also a womanizer who drank and partied till late and still was a good damn player after it.

He trained hard, clearly, Shane being part of the training himself could testify to that, but Ilya had friends in his team, he was secure on himself, he wasn't off place at all times; and Shane

couldn't understand how he did it, or why he couldn't get his cake and eat it too like Ilya

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-I suspect you may be autistic-

Shane Hollander was weird

-I know this may sound like a bomb, but after the annual psychological check i saw the signs and thought it would be beneficial for you to know what i saw-

Shane Hollander was a weird adult

-I want you to know that this is confidential, if you want to continue with a proper diagnosis or just handle this in your own its your choice, but the knowledge would help you to understand your needs better, and in case you need some accessibility aids you can count with the help of the team and the NHL

Shane Hollander being weird was the price to pay due to his talent.

This was supposed to be a normal psychological check out, figured out if he had some depression over missing birthdays and family important things, anxiety over the pressure of being a professional athlete, work around it and deal with it.

Anxiety was a common diagnosis, one that Shane dealt with on his own. It was normal after all; most had it and could function normal with it, then so could Shane.

But the psychologist was a new girl; it seemed she was new to the NHL but had clearly credentials to back it up (if the 5 diplomas with her name in the wall was any indicative), eager to make a change, to shake things up.

Shane didn't like things shaking up, he had enough with Ilya and how their relationship became public, how he almost lost him and how he was betrayed by his own past team.

No, if Shane Hollander needed something right now, it was stability, a solid ground to rest and walk like nothing changed.

-Ahm- Sir Hollander, are you listening? -

He wasn't sure if he could do anything _but_ listening; he stared at the wall avoiding the woman gaze, he couldn't do it, he wanted to talk, to stand up and walk away, to disappear, but he couldn't move.

It wasn't the first time this happened, the embarrassing talk with his parents after his dad found him kissing Ilya was pretty similar, in both instances he wanted the earth to swallow him whole; in both instances he breathed and pushed through

-Yes, yes i am ... apologies, it's just... A lot of information-

-I imagine, let me be clear with this Mr. Hollander; as I said this doesn't mean your diagnosis will be public or known by any other person outside this room if you dont want to; but i saw some patterns, and the anxiety you've shown along the years is an usual comorbidity with autism, especially when one isn't aware of it, pushing oneself to mask and ignore their discomfort until it's too late-

Shane looked at the floor, pushing himself was all he ever knew, not only due to be the best; but also, to be representation for other Asian Canadians out there, then he also became queer representation along with Ilya when their relationship became public, now this? He doesn't know if he can handle this.

Being weird was other people's problem, it was a way to see the world other people had and Shane just kept being himself, it wasn't his problem after all.

But if the girl was right and he was... what she said he was, maybe the problem was always himself?

He looked up, not directly at the eyes but the best next thing, her mouth

-Why do you think im...-

-Autistic?-

-On the spectrum, yes-

Shane wasn't new to this, Yuna and David made sure he knew the advantages he had, and that he didn't lose touch with the new fame and money and power he won over the years; he helped different campaigns to special needs kids, he was educated by some special aid teachers how the world could be cruel to the different, but community and acceptance meant the world to this kids, and Shane understood it better than anyone.

-Well, it's a group of things that make me thing so, like your deep focused passion on hockey if I'm correct, which has lasted since childhood for what you told me, providing you comfort and emotional regulation-

-It's just a passion, like all the other hockey players-

-You also told me in the previous session how you are very rigid, both in thinking and actions- she starts reading from the computer in front of her, moving her glasses in position and pulling her blonde hair out of the way -How you have a schedule and a diet you follow to the end; How public may affect you, but you have “a system” so that it doesn't bother you as much, and can control yourself way more in front of camaras even though they make your deeply uncomfortable-

Damn, did he really talk so much about himself in that session?

-All these things separate? It may be some anxiety, OCD even, but all together? It makes a pattern-

Shane nodded, he is good with patterns, it helped him figure out how to play best, how to get the maximum out of himself, and helped when he didn't know how to act when someone was crying or being emotional.

-As i said, i imagine this is big news, but-

She then took out a pamphlet, giving it to Shane

It read “Late-diagnosed Autism"

-It's a pamphlet about the diagnosis, it explains a bit about how autism works in adult brains and how it's not a box where everyone behaves the exact same way, autism is an expectrum and one may be more independent in some things and need more help in others-

As Shane touched the blue pamphlet, he couldn't help but look with irony at the picture in the paper, a white boy and girl smiling to each other.

It was a mix of sad and funny, but he wouldn't say it out loud, not yet.

-It also explains masking, how to get a diagnosis and centers where you can get help with specialist in the issue-

Shane folded the paper, saving it in his pocket

-You don't have to choose yet, maybe resting and taking the info in could help you think clearly about it-

-I'll think about it-

Shane Hollander was weird; he knew that all his life

And he never questioned much; he figured it was something that he was, some kids were weirder than others, nothing bad about it.

He thought that understanding and accepting his sexuality, his love for Ilya would make him understand himself totally.

It seemed that he still didn't knew himself at all

Once the psychiatrist said the session was over, Shane politely thanked her and walked away, the coach asked, and Shane just told him it was all okey. He held the pamphlet hard inside his pocket.

Should he?

Could he?

He walked away straight towards his car, he sent a fast text and started to drive, he couldn't bare the idea of talking at all right now.

[Ilya]

Shane:

I'm on my way home

I need you

End Notes

Hii!! I hope you enjoyed it
First of all I wanna make clear that this is a two chapter story, I write this mostly to let out some of my frustrations as a high masking autistic person.

I also wanna say that I don't know shit about hockey and while I talk about psychology and autism diagnosis I talk from my own experience so please don't take my word like a bible.

Also I'll maybe eventually fix some stuff due to grammatical errors I may not notice right away, if any of you noticed something please just say so.

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