

Spotlight

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Spotlight

by [30somethingAutisticTeacher](#)

Summary

Ilya would rather stay home than attend another awards show, but Shane convinces him that this award means something bigger than both of them.

Notes

I really like this one ❤️ hope you enjoy!

This fic is fluffy but TW for brief mention of miscarriage.

"Do we really have to go?" Ilya groaned. "Get all dressed up and play nice instead of staying home and having hot sex with husband? Pass."

"Ilya, the Arthur Ashe Courage Award is a huge honor," Shane said firmly. "We're being recognized together as an out queer couple in professional sports."

"We have many awards," Ilya said with a dismissive wave.

"This is different," Shane said, his voice softening. "This isn't about hockey. This is about us and what we represent to people who are struggling to come out, or who don't see themselves reflected in sports."

"This is nice thought, Hollander, but it just seems fake to me," Ilya said, his frustration evident. "Barrett should get the award for the work he does, but instead Crowell threatens him." He ran a hand through his hair. "I am sorry. My brain is not being nice today."

Shane's expression softened immediately. He moved closer, taking Ilya's hand. "Hey, I know. And you're right, Troy absolutely should be recognized for everything he does. But that's also not why he does it."

He squeezed Ilya's hand, his voice growing firmer, more resolute. "And sweetheart, we have gone through so much. Waded through bullshit, dealt with hiding and homophobia and being outed against our will." His eyes held Ilya's steadily. "We deserve the recognition."

"I did not know this was so important to you, moy lyubov," Ilya said quietly, his thumb stroking Shane's hand. "You are such private person."

Shane took a shaky breath. "I am private. And I hate the attention, you know I do. But..." He paused, gathering his thoughts. "We were forced out of the closet, Ilya. We didn't get to control our own story. This award is us taking that narrative back. It's saying what we went through mattered, and we're still here, still together, still standing."

He looked down at their joined hands. "I don't want to accept it for me. I want to accept it for every kid who thinks they have to choose between the sport they love and being themselves."

Ilya pulled him closer, wrapping an arm around his waist. "Okay, Hollander. We go. We get dressed up. We accept award." He pressed a kiss to Shane's temple. "And then we come home and have hot sex with husband. Yes?"

Shane laughed, some of the tension leaving his shoulders. "Yes. Deal."

The red carpet was chaos. Flashes blinded them from every direction, microphones shoved into their faces. Shane tightened his grip on Ilya's hand.

"Ilya, over here!"

"Shane, smile!"

"How does it feel to be accepting this award with your husband?"

Ilya stepped slightly in front of Shane, his media smile firmly in place. "Feels like honor," he said smoothly. "Shane and I, we are grateful for recognition."

Another reporter pushed forward. "What does this award mean to you as openly gay athletes?"

"I am bisexual," Ilya corrected firmly. "Queer athletes is better word."

Shane squeezed Ilya's hand and stepped up beside him. "It means a lot," he said, his voice steady despite the overwhelming attention. "Not just for us, but for everyone who's struggled to be themselves in sports."

"One more photo! Can you kiss for the camera?"

Ilya's smile sharpened. "We are not circus act," he said pleasantly but his tone made it clear the conversation was over.

"They are vultures," Ilya muttered, shaking his head as they moved away from the press line.

"Oh, that wasn't so bad," Shane said, his shoulders relaxing now that they were past the worst of it.

"Look, Troy and Harris!" Shane's face lit up as he spotted familiar faces. "And Wyatt and Lisa!"

Ilya's tension eased at the sight of their friends. "Now is better," he said, raising a hand in greeting.

Troy approached first, pulling them both into quick hugs. "You two clean up nice. Thought you'd bail on us."

"Ilya tried," Shane said with a grin.

"Was good plan," Ilya protested. "Stay home, have hot sex—"

"We get it," Harris interrupted, laughing.

"Lisa, you look stunning in that dress," Shane said warmly.

Lisa grinned, doing a little twirl. "It's definitely an improvement from scrubs. I forgot what it's like to wear something without stethoscope pockets."

"How long has it been since you've had a night off?" Wyatt asked, slipping his arm around her waist.

"Too long," Lisa admitted. "But my man is up for Best Play ESPY for that goalie goal in the playoffs. I wasn't missing this."

"Was insane goal," Ilya agreed. "You deserve to win, Wyatt."

Wyatt shrugged modestly, but he was grinning, clearly proud of himself.

"Which award are you presenting?" Shane asked Troy.

"Best Coach," Troy said. "Really hoping Wiebe takes it."

"Speak of devil," Ilya said with a grin as Coach Wiebe and his wife approached.

"Boys, Lisa, you remember my wife Amy," Coach Wiebe said warmly.

"Of course," Shane said, stepping forward to shake her hand. "Good to see you again, Amy."

"Beautiful dress," Lisa said with a smile.

"Thank you! You look stunning," Amy replied. She turned to both Shane and Ilya.

"Congratulations on your award tonight. It's well deserved."

"Thank you," Shane said.

"Is nice to have support," Ilya added.

"We're all very proud of you both," Coach Wiebe said, clapping Shane on the shoulder.

"What you've been through, you've handled it with real class."

"Most days," Shane said with a laugh, glancing at Ilya.

"Hey, I am model of restraint," Ilya protested.

Troy snorted. "Yeah, okay, Roz."

Soon enough, they were being ushered inside to find their seats.

They'd been to many awards shows over the years, and Ilya knew exactly how boring they could be...long speeches, endless commercial breaks, categories he didn't care about. But Harris and Lisa were both so excited, talking animatedly about who might win what, that he didn't want to dampen their enthusiasm.

Shane squeezed his hand as they settled into their seats. "You doing okay?" he asked quietly.

"Is fine," Ilya said, then added more honestly, "Will be better when is over and we can go home."

Shane smiled. "I know. Thank you for being here."

"Of course I am here," Ilya said, bringing Shane's hand up to kiss his knuckles. "You are right. Is important."

When Wyatt's name was called for Best Play, the group erupted in cheers. Lisa kissed him fiercely before he made his way to the stage.

"Wow, uh, thank you," Wyatt said, clearly trying to compose himself. "This is incredible. First, I have to thank my team...you guys are everything. My captain—" he grinned at Ilya, "—love you, Roz."

Ilya raised his hand in acknowledgment, smiling proudly.

"My sister Kristy and her wife, and my niblings who make me the coolest uncle ever. My coach for believing in me and my abilities."

He paused, his eyes finding Lisa in the audience. "And most importantly, my beautiful wife Lisa, who puts up with my ridiculous schedule and still manages to save lives every day." His voice grew softer, more emotional. "And the baby that she's growing for us right now."

The camera cut to their group. Shane and Ilya's heads whipped toward Lisa simultaneously, mouths open in shock. Harris grabbed Troy's arm. Troy looked like he'd been hit with a puck.

Lisa was beaming, tears streaming down her face, one hand on her stomach.

"Did he just—" Shane started.

"Baby?" Ilya said, stunned. "Lisa is—"

The moment Wyatt walked off stage, their entire section descended on Lisa.

"You're pregnant?!" Troy exclaimed, pulling her into a careful hug.

"How long have you known?" Harris demanded, grinning from ear to ear.

"A while, actually," Lisa admitted, her hand instinctively going to her belly. "We're just past the first trimester. We told our families last week."

The joy on everyone's faces softened with understanding. They all knew about the miscarriages, the heartbreak Wyatt and Lisa had endured.

"Oh, Lisa," Shane said, his voice thick with emotion as he hugged her. "I'm so happy for you both."

Ilya wrapped her in a gentle embrace next. "This time is sticky baby," he said firmly, using the term he'd learned meant a healthy pregnancy. "I feel it."

"From your lips to God's ears," Lisa said, wiping at her eyes.

When Wyatt finally made it back to them, he was immediately mobbed.

"You couldn't have given us a heads up?" Troy said, but his voice was warm.

"I panicked!" Wyatt said, laughing. "I got up there, saw Lisa, and just...it came out! We were going to tell you guys this weekend, I swear."

"You are disaster," Ilya said, but pulled him into a bone-crushing hug. "But congratulations, my friend. Very happy for you."

When their names were called for the Arthur Ashe Courage Award, Shane felt Ilya's hand tighten in his. They stood together, walked to the stage together, and Shane found himself grateful for Ilya's steady presence beside him.

The trophy was heavy in Shane's hands as he stepped up to the microphone. He took a breath, looking out at the audience, then down at Ilya.

"This award—" Shane's voice caught slightly. "This is for everyone who thought they were broken, or that there was something wrong with them. Who has faced pain and been ostracized and looked down on for who they love." He paused, his eyes finding their friends in the audience. "I am so lucky to get to do what I love with the man I love. And if our story helps even one person feel less alone, then everything we went through was worth it."

The applause was thunderous as Shane stepped back, and Ilya moved to the microphone.

"Major league sports culture is toxic," Ilya said bluntly, and Shane could hear the sharp intake of breath from the audience. "Is homophobic, is racist, is sexist. We accept award, yes, but real courage is people like Troy Barrett who fight every day to make change. Is young players who come out even though they are scared. Is parents who support queer children when leagues do not."

He paused, his jaw set. "Shane and I, we are lucky. We have each other, we have support, we have money and platform. But many do not. So we accept this award for them, and we promise to keep fighting until no one has to be courageous just to be themselves."

The applause started slowly, then built into something powerful. Some people in the audience looked uncomfortable but their friends were on their feet, cheering.

As they walked off stage, Shane let out a shaky breath. "You just called out the entire sports industry on live television."

"Is true," Ilya said unapologetically. "You give beautiful speech about hope. I give truth."

Backstage, they were immediately surrounded by producers and photographers, but Shane kept his hand firmly in Ilya's.

When they finally made it back to their seats, their friends pulled them into fierce hugs.

"You two," Troy said, his voice rough. "That was—"

"Perfect," Harris finished. "Absolutely perfect."

Wyatt clapped Ilya on the shoulder. "Rozanov, you just made every sports executive in America choke on their champagne."

"Good," Ilya said with satisfaction. "They should choke."

Shane laughed, the tension finally leaving his body. "Can we go home now?"

"Now you are speaking my language, Hollander," Ilya said, pressing a kiss to his temple.

"Wait, you can't leave yet," Troy protested. "I still have to present Best Coach."

"Fine," Ilya sighed dramatically. "But you better make it good, Barrett."

"No pressure," Troy muttered as they settled back into their seats.

A few awards later, Troy was on stage. He looked polished and confident in his suit, but Shane could see the slight tension in his shoulders as he approached the microphone.

"Good evening," Troy began smoothly. "I'm here to present the award for Best Coach. Coaching isn't just about strategy or wins. It's about shaping athletes into better people, creating environments where everyone can thrive, and having the courage to stand up for what's right, even when it's difficult."

He glanced down at the card in his hand. "The nominees for Best Coach are..."

As Troy read through the list, Ilya leaned over to Shane. "Wiebe better win."

"Shh," Shane said, but he was thinking the same thing.

"And the winner is..." Troy opened the envelope, and his face broke into a genuine smile. "Coach Brandon Wiebe."

Their section erupted. Amy was crying as Coach Wiebe stood, looking genuinely shocked. He kissed his wife, shook hands with the people around him, and made his way to the stage where Troy pulled him into a hug before handing him the trophy.

"Wow," Coach Wiebe said, clearly emotional. "I honestly didn't expect this. Thank you. When I became head coach of the Centaurs at forty-one, people had lots of opinions. Most not overwhelmingly positive," Coach Wiebe said with a slight smile. "But my team had heart. Had drive. That team is made up of some of the finest men I have ever had the privilege of knowing."

He looked directly at their section. "Our captain, Ilya Rozanov, who leads with passion and integrity. Assistant Captain Shane Hollander, who shows up every single day and makes everyone around him better. Troy Barrett, who has unmatched drive and determination." His voice grew thick with emotion. "Wyatt Hayes, who just announced he's going to be a father...congratulations again, by the way."

The audience laughed warmly.

"These men, and every player on my roster, make my job easy. They believe in each other, they support each other, and they've created a culture where everyone belongs. This award isn't mine...it belongs to them."

He held up the trophy. "To my team: thank you for letting me be part of your journey. And to every coach out there, remember that our job isn't just to win games. It's to build environments where every athlete can be their authentic self and reach their full potential."

Applause broke out across the venue, and above it all, Ilya's voice rang out loud and clear: "Let's go, Centaurs!"

Finally, the ceremony ended. As they made their way out of the venue, Ilya kept his arm around Shane's waist, steering them through the crowds.

"Home now?" Ilya asked hopefully.

"Home now," Shane confirmed with a smile.

"Thank God," Ilya muttered. "Was starting to think we would never escape."

Shane laughed, leaning into him as they headed for the exit. "It wasn't that bad."

"Was terrible," Ilya said, but he was smiling. "But you were right. Was important."

"I love you," Shane said softly.

Ilya stopped right there in the lobby, wrapped Shane up in his arms, and kissed him deeply, not caring who was watching or what cameras might still be around. When they finally broke apart, both a little breathless, Ilya pressed his forehead to Shane's.

"Love you too, moy lyubov."

And they walked hand in hand out into the warm evening air.

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