

Are you proud of yourself?

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by [mareastralis](#)

Summary

It's Pride Night for the Ottawa Centaurs and Shane realizes how far he came

Notes

This isn't much but I'm travelling right now so I want to use the little moments I have to get some shorter ideas out of my head, hope you enjoy this all the same <3

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

The game had gone well, but most game went well for the Ottawa Centaurs these days. The atmosphere at the rink was electric, and Shane had let it flow through him during all three periods. He felt like he had adjusted to the Centaurs completely by now, he was part of this team, maybe more than he had ever been part of his previous one. He wasn't carrying the team on his back, and instead was just a cog in a well-oiled and well-loved machine that seemed destined for greatness. He had been terrified to work with new linemates, certain that no connection could be as great as the one he had with Hayden. He had soon come to learn that Hayden himself wasn't the important part, but the friendship they had shared was. Now, Shane knew that most of his teammates were his friends, and the team only worked better because of it.

Not only had they won, but it had been a clean one too. Things had seemed to work as perfectly as they possibly could. It was always fun to win, but it was rewarding to beat a good team, even more so with such a score. 3-0. Wyatt had been phenomenal, and Shane couldn't wait to celebrate him properly. For now though, Shane had to go through the whole post-game media circus, because he had scored every goal tonight, and he knew journalists would be after him. He only had to exchange a look and a nod with their coach to know where he had to go. He took a second to breathe and put on his media smile before stepping in front of the camera.

"Mister Hollander, congratulations, another great win for you tonight!" the reporter started, a kind but practiced smile on her face.

"Yes, the team was great, we did everything we had to and it paid off," he smiled as he gave her the rehearsed answer.

"Ottawa's definitely grateful to have you on their roster."

He hated those kind of post-game interview, taking him away from his team and forced to put his feelings into words when he was barely out of his game mindset, and right now he hated even more that she wasn't even really asking him questions, just prompting him to say things when he didn't know what she wanted to hear.

"We're just grateful to work together so well, honestly, and none of that would have been possible without Hayes' brilliant play tonight."

"Yeah, your goalie has certainly played one for the books, but I was also refereeing to you specifically because it's a special night."

"Uh, sorry... special night?"

"Isn't this your first pride night as an out player?" she nudged him kindly, eyes expectant.

"Oh, right."

Shane shook off some of his stupor and looked up. The mindset he had to put himself in for every game was the result of a long process to focus and erase everything that wasn't the ice,

the puck, the goal. He had always hated getting distracted by everything that wasn't the game he was playing, and there had been a lot of distraction since his accidental coming-out and subsequent trade. Now he simply blocked it all off.

He took a second to take it all in. The rink was full, as it always was now, but it was more colorful than ever. Everywhere his eyes landed, he could see rainbows, and flags he could now identify, in shades of blue, or pink, purple and blue. People were smiling and cheering, waving their flags around. Shane physically felt his heart grow three sizes.

"It's..." he started, eyes falling back on the reporter, "this is a great opportunity for our sport. It's good to remind everyone that hockey is as inclusive as ever and... anyone can play."

The words felt bland and meaningless on his tongue. This was what he was trained to say, but none of the emotions stuck in his throat were satisfied with them. He turned away to look around again.

"It must feel good to see the love out there tonight," the reporter prompted again.

His eyes fell, as they often did, on his husband. Ilya had found a bisexual flag somewhere, and it was now draped around his shoulders as he took victory laps around the rink, riling up the crowd here and there. People in the stands were reacting as expected, screaming and laughing at his antics. The flag was floating behind him like a cape as he gained some speed to cross the ice, hair falling all over the place, a huge smile adorning his face. Shane fell in love with him all over again. It hadn't been that big of a game, and while a win always felt good, this was more than that. This was Ilya finally being carefree and loud about his love, the way he had always wanted, and deserved, to be.

Troy joined Ilya, who wrapped an arm around his shoulder to drag him along. They were quickly followed by Evan and Wyatt, and soon enough most of the team was back on the ice, playing with their supporters. It hit Shane then. How safe he felt with them. How warm and peaceful his life had become. Tears welled up in his eyes, and he adjusted his breathing so they wouldn't fall. There was a term he had read during one of his late night research, but had never really understood until that very moment. Queer joy.

"This must feel like a dream come true!"

He looked back at the reporter while he processed her words. He thought about it for a second, and frowned.

"No, not really."

"Oh..." She was taken aback. "Is there anything more you would want from your fans?"

"No, it's not... it's not them," he shook his head, feeling like he was overflowing. "I just never... dreamed of this. I didn't... I didn't think we could." His thoughts were too jumbled for words, but there was a camera and a mic and she was still frowning at him, so he tried again. "Being... gay." He still shuddered when he said it aloud, which was ridiculous. "For a long time it was just something to be afraid of, something that could ruin my career. And... loving Ilya... it was painful, most of the time. I couldn't tell anyone. For a while I couldn't

even tell him, because it could ruin us, ruin our chances in this sport and I just... loved hockey too much to give it up.” His throat was closing now, but he didn’t know how to stop talking. He wanted someone to get it, for once. “It was agony, to not be with him, and terrifying to be with him. We were so torn about every stolen moment, every time we had to lie to someone we cared about, and we were so scared... So... the plan was never that hopeful.” He looked around again, realizing how far they had come. “It’s not a dream come true because I never allowed myself to dream about getting all this.”

His chest felt tight, and there were definitely rogue tears on his cheeks now, but he couldn’t help it. He hoped it was worth it, and that someone somewhere would understand how complicated it had been, and how it was a little less complicated now. He was ready for the interview to end, he wanted to join his team and bring the love of his life in his arms, right here on the ice. The now slightly wide eyed reporter opened her mouth to answer, but stopped herself as she looked behind Shane. As if summoned, Ilya walked up behind him and wrapped a protective arm around Shane’s waist. It took everything in him not to close his eyes and let himself fall back against Ilya’s chest. As it was, he simply let himself enjoy the warmth and chased away the tears on his face.

“Hello, Sarah, come on, I thought we were friends you and I, why are you making my husband cry?” Ilya asked playfully, but Shane could feel his strong grip on his waist, could see the tension in his jaw.

Hoping that the camera had been cut off, but also not caring entirely, Shane turned a little towards him and kissed his cheek.

“It’s okay, lyubov moyamy love, it’s fine, happy tears.”

Shane reveled in Ilya’s expression, from worried to surprised to turned on, as it often ended up when Shane spoke Russian.

“Because we killed this game, yes?” he said softly, his thumb brushing Shane’s freckles.

“Exactly, yes, let’s celebrate now,” Shane said with another kiss, this time at the corner of Ilya’s lips, turning even more into him, cameras be damned.

“I have a gift for you, look.”

Ilya gestured away from him and wiggled until he could grab a flag he had hidden under his uniform. Shane couldn’t help his dopey smile at the sight of the blue flag. Not rainbow, strictly gay, as they had once joked. He put it around Shane’s shoulders.

“Looks perfect with your eyes,” Ilya nodded, a mix of mirth and pure joy dancing on his face.

Shane laughed. “Yeah because it reminds me of yours.”

Ilya couldn’t help but steal a kiss, and Shane felt even prouder at the fact that he was able to make his husband lose composure like this.

“Let’s celebrate now,” Ilya said, letting his hand fall to grab Shane’s and tug him back on the ice, interview long forgotten behind them.

They had a lot to celebrate indeed. This game, and all the others, everything they had overcome, both in secret and in the public eye, all they represented for the sport, but also their community, their love, their joy, their pride. Shane wasn’t a proud man in any way, but there, hand in hand with his soulmate, surrounded by their team, he thought he could get used to the pleasant feeling in his chest.

End Notes

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