stranger danger

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stranger danger

by abitchforlasagna

Summary

Shane
I think you should go with the black shirt.
It's better if someone wants to tear it off you.

Ten minutes later, his phone chimed.

Unknown Number
Oh shit
That is not what I expected from my Friday night.
But I'm not saying no.
I like people who take initiative.

Shane froze. That was definitely not Hayden's number.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

“Explain to me again *exactly* how your phone got broken,” Shane said. Hayden let out a long, dramatic sigh.

“The second-smallest monster had heard that phones can be fixed if you put them in rice after dropping them in water.”

Shane raised an eyebrow, turning the brand-new phone over in his hand. The surface was glossy and smooth, not a fingerprint or scratch in sight.

“Okay…?”

Hayden threw his hands up. “Yeah, well, with classic toddler logic, she didn’t wait for a phone to actually break. She put *mine* in the toilet on purpose, then put it in rice.”

“I’m sensing a ‘but,’” Shane said dryly.

“But,” Hayden confirmed, “she didn’t check whether we even *had* rice at home. Which we didn’t. So she put it in flour instead, thinking it would work the same.”

Shane choked back a laugh as he handed the phone back. “Let me guess. It didn’t.”

“It did not,” Hayden said darkly. “So now I’m standing here, five hundred dollars poorer, trying to get back into my YouTube accounts, re-add old contacts, and remember passwords.”

Shane laughed outright now. “You should’ve used a condom.”

“I know. But hey — speaking of condoms. Jackie and I are going on a date tonight. Without the monsters.”

“It might be harmful to refer to them like that,” Shane pointed out. Hayden shrugged.

“One of them just cost me five hundred dollars and a full day of phone recovery. They’re monsters. Anyway — yeah, Jackie and I are trying to have an actual date night. No kids, no nothing. Which shirt do you think I should wear?”

Shane shrugged. “I don’t know. What does she usually like?”

Hayden pulled the phone out again. “I think it’s between these two.” He searched for the photo gallery icon, swore when it wasn’t where he expected it to be. Eventually he found it, and then had to hunt again for the photo, now completely out of order.

“Okay, here. Either a white shirt that fits tight but is kind of basic. Or a black shirt Jackie thinks is hot, but I also think makes me look like a pimp.”

Shane laughed loudly and leaned in to look at the pictures.

“I don’t know, man. Maybe—”

The screen suddenly filled with Jackie’s face.

“Fuck!” Hayden swore. “Fuck, fuck. I promised I’d be home by, like, *now*. Fuck, I gotta go. Text me about the shirts, okay? I need to decide tonight.”

“I don’t have your new number,” Shane pointed out, a bit alarmed.

“Shit — right. Okay, get your phone out.” Shane did, and Hayden rattled off the digits quickly, then swiped to accept Jackie's call. Shane didn’t bother adding a name or photo, just saved the number and waved Hayden off, which he took as his cue to bolt. If this were a comic book, there’d have been a little cloud of dust left behind him.

It wasn’t until Shane was home, scrolling aimlessly through Netflix on his TV, that he remembered Hayden’s question. He picked up his phone and thought about what Hayden had said, speaking of condoms.

Shane
I think you should go with the black shirt.
It’s better if someone wants to tear it off you.

Ten minutes later, his phone chimed.

Unknown Number
Oh shit
That is not what I expected from my Friday night.
But I’m not saying no.
I like people who take initiative.

Shane froze. That was definitely not Hayden’s number. His thumbs were almost sweating as he hurried to type a reply.

Shane
Oh my god, I’m so sorry.
My friend must’ve given me the wrong number.
Sorry.
Please ignore that.

Unknown Number
No, no.
I am… how do you say.
Captivated
Who said the black shirt is good for ripping off?

Shane’s cheeks burned. He shot a quick glance out the window, half-expecting someone to be crouched out there filming him for a prank video.

Shane
My friend asked for clothing advice for a date he’s going on. That’s all.

The reply came immediately.

Unknown Number
I see.
So I will not get my shirt torn off, then?

Shane nearly dropped his phone. Jesus Christ. What kind of pervert had he accidentally texted? And of course he couldn't even call Hayden to laugh about it, because he didn't have Hayden's damn number.

Shane
I don't know how your Friday night will end, but no, I will not be assisting in any rapid undressing that could damage clothing.

Less than twenty seconds later:

Unknown Number
Shame.
I got my hopes up for one second.

Shane stared at the phone, squinting at the message bubbles like he might be able to divine the person's intentions just by glaring hard enough at the letters. He decided he'd encouraged this conversation enough and didn't reply. Instead, he set the phone aside, turned on the TV, and sank into the couch with his ginger ale.

He hadn't even made it through the movie's prologue before his phone chimed again. He told himself not to look.

He looked.

Unknown Number
Did I scare you away?

Shane bit his lip. He really shouldn't respond.

Shane
I'm confident enough in my masculinity not to feel threatened by testosterone, assuming you're a man. I'm just not interested in sustaining this kind of banal conversation.

Unknown Number
Wow.
Big words.
Wait.

A minute passed before the phone chimed again.

Unknown Number
Okay, I googled.
You are man, yes?

Shane frowned.

Shane
Yeah?
Why?

Unknown Number
Just wondering.
It's not problem for me.

Shane
What isn't a problem?

Unknown Number
Well.
I was told I should wear the black shirt if I want it torn off.
I will be very disappointed if that doesn't happen.

Shane
I texted the wrong person. That's all there is to it.

Unknown Number
It could be much more than that.

Shane frowned, trying to understand what the other person was implying. Did he mean that…?

Shane
What do you mean?

Unknown Number
Jesus.
For someone with such strong opening line, you are very bad at flirting.
I mean I want to meet you.
In real life.
And see you.
And get my black shirt torn off.
Okay?

Shane was now fully convinced that someone was sitting outside his window, filming him. This had to be an elaborate prank, maybe something Hayden had set up. Maybe he'd given Shane the wrong number on purpose and hired someone to mess with him. Shane jumped up from the couch and hurried into the bedroom, where at least the windows had curtains.

Shane
I don't know who you are.
And you don't know who I am.

He hesitated for a long moment before adding:

Shane
And I don't date guys.

It was a lie. A half-lie. In one sense, it was true: Shane didn't date guys because he didn't date *anyone*. He didn't go on dates at all.

Who Shane might prefer to date, if he ever did go on one… that was irrelevant.

Unknown Number
Ah.
You are not open to it either?

Shane flopped onto the bed and buried his face in the pillow. This was insane. Completely insane.

Shane
I'm not open to dating people I've never even seen.

He was acutely aware that he was dodging the question, and he hoped—desperately—that this would be the end of the absurdity.

Unfortunately, it wasn't.

Unknown Number
Okay. No problem.
I fix.

Shane stared at the phone.

I fix?
What did that even mean?

Ten seconds later, he got his answer. The phone chimed, and an image appeared, downloading before Shane had even fully registered what was happening.

He stared.

Light brown, curly hair that looked like he'd either been through a storm, or just had very intense sex. Brown eyes, strong brows, a sharp jaw. He was lying back on what looked like a massive couch, one arm casually tucked behind his head. Even through the photo, Shane could see the way muscles strained beneath the white T-shirt stretched across his chest.

Fuck.

He was *ridiculously* attractive. Shane's mouth practically watered.

He realized he'd been staring for several minutes when a new message popped up.

Unknown Number
Speechless?

Shane jolted, cheeks burning, and typed quickly.

Shane
I still don't know who you are.
I don't want to get murdered.

Unknown Number
Oh my god, you are difficult.
Now you send picture back.

Shane
No.
I have learned about stranger danger.

Unknown Number
Not stranger!
Look!
Ilya Rozanov.
Plays hockey.
23 years old.
From Russia.
But live mostly in America.
Likes long walks on beach, puppies, and talking about my feelings.

Shane stared at the phone.

Unknown Number
I joke about last one.
I like hockey.
And talking about hockey.
But beach is pretty nice too

Carefully, Shane typed:

Shane
I like hockey too.
But that doesn't change the fact that I'm not meeting an internet stranger.

Unknown Number
Come on.
Picture of you now.
Or wait.
Don't tell me you are, like, 16 years old.
Or very old.
But judging by how you text, you are probably very old.

Shane
I am not an old!

I'm also 23.
Asshole.

Unknown Number
Ahhh, there is spark again.
Come on.
One picture.

Shane hesitated. This was insane. Completely insane.

And yet, he opened his gallery.

He wasn't nearly confident enough to do what the stranger — *Ilya* — had done and take a picture of himself right now. Instead, he scrolled for a bit, until he landed on one Rose had taken of him over the summer. He was wearing a light-colored shirt, sunglasses tucked into his hair, smiling just slightly off to the side.

It looked… fine. Good, even.

He sent it before he could overthink it, then immediately rolled over and screamed into his pillow.

When he turned back to his phone, there was already a new message waiting.

Unknown Number
Wow.
Now you really have to tear my shirt off.
Or even better
my pants.

Shane dragged a hand down his face, cheeks flaming. He'd somehow fallen into an alternate universe where everything was upside down.

Shane
Do you have no shame at all?!

Unknown Number
Awww.
Are you blushing?

Shane
You're sexting with me even though we don't know each other!
Yes, I'm a little embarrassed!

Unknown Number
So cute.
Which brings me back to point
We should get to know each other.

Shane
You don't even know my name.

Unknown Number
And you know mine. Very unfair.
Imagine if we could do something to fix this injustice.

Shane rubbed at his temples, then typed, before he could stop himself:

Shane
Shane.
Shane Hollander.

Unknown Number
Ah.
Good name.
So, Hollander.
Date? Or no?

Shane
You mean… tonight?

Unknown Number
Oh.
Someone is eager.
So you do have little game.

Shane
Stop.
That's not what I meant.

Unknown Number
So… not tonight?

Shane hesitated.

Shane
You said you live in America.
I live in Canada.

Unknown Number
And I am in Ottawa now for game.
What amazing coincidence.

Shane's heart started racing. This whole conversation had been ridiculous, but at least he'd been able to tell himself it was kind of a joke. There was no way they could actually meet in real life.

But now ... now Ilya was saying he was in the same city.

It suddenly felt too close. Too real.

Shane
I don't know.
I don't think it's a good idea.

Unknown Number
Aww, don't chicken out now.
Please, I am bored.
We don't even have to do anything.
But I want to meet someone.
There is nothing to do in this cold city.
I am just sitting in my hotel staring at wall.
Please?

And then, like he knew exactly what it would do to Shane, another picture arrived. This one a close-up. Big eyes looking straight into the camera, lips slightly pursed, almost pleading.

Shane sucked in a breath. Closed his eyes as he typed:

Shane
Address?

He could practically hear Ilya's satisfaction in the reply.

Unknown Number
Ah, see.
Wait little bit.
I send location.

A few seconds later, a Google Maps pin came through. Shane opened it, checked the address.

Fifteen minutes away by taxi.

He hesitated.

Shane
I can't be there for another 45 minutes.

Unknown Number
Is okay.
I wait.

Fuck.
That wasn't sexy. Not even a little. Shane needed to shut this whole thing down before it spiraled any further.

Shane
Okay.
I'm coming.

Unknown Number
I will change into black shirt.

Shane sat bolt upright and hurled his phone across the room. He wasn't reckless enough to throw it at the floor — he aimed for the big armchair instead, where it landed face-down with a dull thud. Then he flopped back onto the bed and screamed.

His calm, safe, boring Friday night had just taken a hard ninety — no, a full one-eighty turn.

No, that wasn't even accurate. One-eighty implied a straight line, just in the opposite direction. This wasn't straight or predictable at all. It was more like some warped graph, the scale suddenly jumping and dipping, bending and twisting in ways that made absolutely no sense.

After wasting a good ten of his precious forty-five minutes panicking, Shane finally got up and retrieved his phone. Ilya had only sent one more thing: a winking emoji.

Shane ignored it and called Carter Vaughn instead. Carter picked up on the third ring.

"I need Hayden's new number. The *right* one."

Once he had it, Shane typed furiously.

Shane
You asshole
You gave me the wrong number
Now I have a date tonight
And I might get murdered
I'll text tomorrow if I survive

Then he tossed the phone again — at this rate, Hayden wouldn't be the only one needing a replacement — and bolted for the shower.

As Shane speed-showered and mentally cycled through possible outfit choices, his phone buzzed helplessly on the bed.

Hayden
What
What do you mean
How is it a date
How is this my fault
Also you never got back to me about which shirt I should wear
Shane?

End Notes

thank you for reading!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!