what the folks saw

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what the folks saw

by strawberryblondespresso

Summary

Canonically, Yuna Hollander would've seen her son's debacuched neck at dinner.

Notes

Episode 6 on repeat until further notice
amen

See the end of the work for more notes

There.
Right at the edge his collar, right there–that? Was a love bite. Yuna was sure of it.

Shane was talking, and then David said something. All while the mellowest Russian hockey center Yuna had encountered in her more-than-forty-five years was Hoovering down pasta like he hadn't been fed a homemade meal in a century, only drawing breath occasionally to gaze lovingly at her son.

And there, on Shane's neck for all of creation and North America and his parents to see, right inside his linen shirt collar, was an eye-catching, very oversized, and proudly purpling hickey.

Just the size of his archrival's pair of lips.

Yuna glanced at the young man beside her son again. He was bouncing around a little in the solid oak chair, shoulders wobbling happily every time he dove in for another bite.

The sun was still bright enough outside that Yuna could see it light up the Russian boy's eyes. They were green maybe, it looked like. Bright.

No darkness there.

No threat.

No simmering, stomping insistence or glaring, angry determination.

No suggestive, menacing winks like the ones he normally tossed to the cameras after a game.

And his gaze, when not focused with laser intensity on the spaghetti David had quickly fixed, was back on Shane's face every chance he could get, it seemed like.

Shane was grown, of course, and he'd had relationships over the years. Girlfriends. There'd been Jennifer-something. Or Jessica, maybe, a few years ago. That Mikayla when Shane was in 8th grade. Sonya Lohani when they'd been together in Ms. Almond's kindergarten. Cute as a button. And of course, Rose, but that one was recent and wait–apparently while Shane and the man beside him had been...Yuna took a sip of water and drew a breath.

The truth was no one had ever looked at Shane the way this man was looking at him now. Definitely no one had ever marked him up this way before, shamelessly and defiantly and right there on his neck for anyone to just *see*. No one but this archrival of her son's.

Burly and aggressive and shit-talking and flirtatious and philandering.

All the things Shane wasn't.

But look at him. He's calm.
And Shane's calm.

And Shane's being patient with them right now, requiring no real support from herself or from David. Or from anyone except the man beside him.

Some love and apologies, out in the front yard before dinner, that was all Shane had graciously required of her, forgiving her right away for all the ways for which she hadn't been a safe place for him to land all these years. Shane had been generous. And Yuna was going to have to see her therapist this week and unpack the guilt she could feel lingering behind her thoughts about her baby boy even now, but Shane?
Was uptight, maybe. Sure. Stressed.

But not melting. Not spiraling.

He wasn't sinking.

He was okay.

And the man beside him was freaking buoyant. There was no other word for it. He seemed elated. Comfortable, somehow. He looked like a completely different person than the Russian menace Yuna had grown accustomed to loathing. He looked happy, incredibly.

And Shane wasn't sinking.

The contrast between the Russian man's public persona and this boy at her kitchen table was truly shocking. Almost as shocking as being forced to see her son's hickey.

Maybe she still had some of that pancake makeup left in her bathroom vanity from Shane's last Speedo shoot. Maybe it was a rite of passage to teach your child to cover up hickeys given by a very-devoted hockey player.

"And what about your family back home, Ilya," David was asking, "in Russia. Do they know about you two?"

Yuna watched the Russian man swallow and then frown and shake his head once. "No," he said. "There is no family home in Russia. And I am with Shane. I am here now."

David nodded, then glanced at his wife before motioning towards his son. "This is a great deal of responsibility for you two fellas. A whole hell of a lot of extra pressure on you both, too, I imagine."

Shane shrugged one shoulder, looking between his parents' faces and then at the man beside him.

"It is, yeah. But we're used to it after so many years," he said.

Yuna glimpsed Shane's hand slide from his water glass to the knee of the man beside him. She saw Ilya smile at him. Beam, really. It was a private smile though. A sweet smile. Obviously loaded with meaning, and it was meant for Shane and only viewed by Yuna and David thanks to proximity.
It was a gift to witness, honestly. A window.

And it was easy to see the way the other man's hand found Shane's and twined their fingers together. Gazed at one another.

"I am not responsible one anyway," said Ilya, and Shane huffed the quietest chuckle.

Yuna swiped a napkin across her lips and decided never to mention the hickey. Fuck the concealer. David was right. No matter what those two boys said–no matter how they were lost in one another's gazes right now–they were under too much constant scrutiny as it was. As soon as the world got wind of this, and they would at some point, it was pretty clear to see despite Shane's protests about not wanting to Scott Hunter himself just yet, someone was going to have to run interference.

She pushed back from the table and patted David's hand. "Bring the pasta pot to the sink."

"I'll help clear," Shane said, "since you guys made dinner and everything."

Yuna scooped up a few plates while all the men followed her with dinner plates and silverware and water glasses. She opened the freezer and pulled out a carton of Baskin Robbins, holding it up in front of the Russian man, with whom she came face-to-face when she closed the freezer door.

"Mugs," she said, pointing to the cabinet near his right shoulder. She met the man's eyes and nodded. He opened the cabinet and pointed, looking to Yuna before she nodded again and said, "let's grab four, would you?"

"And spoons," she said, placing the chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream lid beside the four mugs he'd chosen. The man beside her chose four spoons and then met her eyes again.

Yuna looked him up and down quickly, from eyes to toes and back. She nodded resolutely and then reached to touch his bicep, shaking it gently. "I like you better sweet like this. Let's refill the tank and keep you this way."

Ilya smiled and Yuna watched his face light up. "Is Shane that makes me like this."

"I can see that," she said. "I can see plenty. Trust me." She scooped ice cream into his mug and handed dessert to the Russian man in her kitchen. Ilya glanced at Shane's back, gulping a little when they both realized David and Shane were wrist-deep in kitchen sink water, busy scrubbing dinner away by hand.

"Thank you," Ilya said.

"You just keep it up. Okay?"

"Okay."

"And I've got your back from here, on out," Yuna said.
Someone needed to get this boy an Adidas deal like yesterday, she realized, like a lightning strike. Missed opportunity. Someone should address that immediately.
And someone would, Monday.

She patted Ilya's arm again and headed to the table to sit down again, the Russian man one step behind her the whole way.

"Now," she said, pulling her phone out of her pocket, "give me your number."

End Notes

maybe more coming?
idk
what cottagecore vignettes do we want to see, and from whose POV?

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