The Photo

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The Photo

by dntat

Summary

Sprawled out on a beach chair, damp and sun-kissed, Shane Hollander is oblivious to how fuckable he is.

So really, posting that photo was just… sharing the truth. A public service.

Notes

Thank you to everyone in the HL discord who helped with some of the details of this little story!

See the end of the work for more notes

Ilya *knew* Shane truly did not realize how stunning he was.

It frustrated Ilya sometimes, that his husband didn't know. That Shane sometimes felt like he didn't *deserve* Ilya, that he had this ridiculous notion that he, Shane Hollander, wasn't in the same category as Ilya when it came to looks. Because Ilya had known this from the very first time their eyes met in the parking lot of that grungy rink in Regina that Shane was the type of gorgeous you only came across once or twice in a lifetime.

From that moment on, Ilya had dedicated himself to learning the secret language of Shane's beauty. And he considered himself successful in that education. He now knew exactly how sweat would trail down the lines of Shane's neck when they fell into bed together. He could name every shade of pink that bloomed across Shane's chest when he whispered filthy promises in Russian against his throat. He knew how to fit Shane's collarbones between his teeth as he slowly took him apart.

So when the photo went viral, Ilya wasn't surprised.

The shot itself had been completely unplanned. Ilya had emerged from the hotel pool to see Shane sprawled on a beach chair, with what felt like an endless stretch of perfect, exposed skin on display. One arm was flung over his eyes, making his bicep flex. Water droplets trailed down his smooth chest, onto the hard planes of his abdomen. Ilya watched, fascinated, as they meandered down to his swim trunks, where the damp fabric stuck to the corded muscles of his thighs, and his legs had fallen open in an unthinking invitation.

The composition was too perfect. Ilya grabbed his phone.

Then, before his brain caught up, he had taken a photo and posted it on Instagram.

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The internet promptly lost its fucking mind.

Comments poured in by the thousands:

@hollandersgurl: "It's official… I'm just a hole for Shane Hollander."

@rainonmeshane: "shane hollander could punch me in the face and i would still say 'thanks daddy'"

@4everslut4hollander: Shane could be an alien who wants to lay his brood eggs in me so they could eat me when they hatch and I'd let him."

Shane had been less than impressed after seeing the photo, and had some choice words to say about it. Ilya had only half listened, having gotten distracted by the way Shane's blush was complimenting his freckles. He wanted to count each one with his tongue.

He had given in to the impulse, throwing his phone to the side to pin Shane against their bed and kiss the complaints from his lips.

After the kissing (and the biting, and the licking, and the grinding, and the sucking and the breathless "Ilya–" gasped against his neck), he'd sprawled across their rumpled sheets, phone back in hand, reveling in the chaos that was taking place online while Shane lay beside him, fucked-out and sulking.

"Stop grinning like that," Shane muttered as he scrolled. "This is so embarrassing."

"I want to suck his soul out of his dick." Ilya read out instead of replying. "This one has twenty-two thousand likes."

"Gross," Shane groaned, dragging a pillow over his face. Ilya scrolled further, enjoying the way Shane's blush crept down his chest. He wondered how much further down he could make it go.

"Ten thousand likes on this comment from a very hot woman asking you to "destroy her, mind, body, and soul." Ilya scoffed. "Too bad she would be very disappointed. You are very bad at sex with women."

Shane threw the pillow at his face.

Ilya's laughter was loud and unrepentant as he blocked Shane's attack and began searching for another comment to read out to his husband. Annoyed, Shane lunged across the bed in an attempt to grab his phone. "Oh!" Ilya taunted, holding the device just out of reach, "This account made a, what do you call it, thirst edit? Your combine photos set to–"

"I know what a thirst edit is," Shane snapped, the flush on his chest deepening. "Christ, it's just a stupid photo. They're acting like I did a fucking centerfold spread."

Ilya closed the distance between them, his teeth finding the shell of Shane's ear. He bit down, delighting in the way Shane immediately pressed against him.

"Mmm," Ilya hummed, nuzzling into the spot between Shane's neck and collarbone. "But you are very beautiful." His hand slid higher up Shane's thigh. "Let them look." Another bite, this time on Shane's neck. "Let them want." A kiss, deep and filthy. "They will spend their lives wondering what you taste like–" He ground his hips down, drawing a choked sound from Shane's throat. "–while only I get to know."

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And at first, it was fun.

The hype around the photo lasted longer than either one of them expected. They'd both been surprised, a few days later, to see it on ESPN, sandwiched between a highlight reel of top NHL goals and an analyst droning on about fantasy sports.

"And in other news, Ottawa Centaurs center Shane Hollander has caused quite the stir with his latest Instagram post–"

("I didn't post it!" Shane had exclaimed, nose crunched in indignant fury, and Ilya had felt like his heart would burst with the love it held for this man.)

“Is it just me, or is it getting hot in here?” the co-anchor had quipped, fanning herself dramatically after the segment had ended.

Ilya had laughed, after. “Must be a slow day in the news.”

But the effects of the photo continued to ripple outwards, launching Shane into the public eye like never before. Sure, *Cosmopolitan* had named him the NHL’s Sexiest Hockey Player four times now, (“It’s stupid,” Shane had grumbled, even as Ilya stuck the latest headline to their fridge.) but this was different. Overnight, he'd transcended hockey fame and crashed headfirst into mainstream consciousness. Podcast hosts debated whether his jawline was real or manufactured (“No one can be that perfect,” the host had complained. Ilya disagreed). Talk shows invited him to appear as a guest. The internet cranked out edits, fan art, and thirst tweets at lightning speed.

Shane, for the most part, ignored it as much as he could.

Ilya *loved* it.

He had always enjoyed the way strangers’ eyes lingered on Shane. The way fans squealed and elbowed each other when they saw him. The way people would whisper, “God, he’s unreal," when Shane passed them by. For Ilya, it was all just another reminder that the world was finally catching up to what he had known for years. Shane Hollander wasn’t just talented. Wasn’t just beautiful. Shane Hollander was fucking *perfection*.

And he belonged to Ilya.

Ilya made sure no one forgot it. He rested a hand on Shane’s back during interviews. He pressed kisses to his temple in full view of paparazzi lenses. He covered his mic during press scrums to lean over and whisper to Shane in Russian, low enough that no one else could hear. “Moy prekrasnyy.” *My beautiful.* “Ty tol'ko moy.” *You are only mine.*

It was exhilarating. After so much time spent hiding away in hotel rooms, after so much time spent biting back words and aborting touches, Ilya couldn't stop himself from letting the world see their relationship. Letting them know that no matter how many photos they saved, no matter how many fantasies they spun, Shane was his.

That each night, this beautiful, incredible man came home with *him*.

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But then the fun began to wear off.

It started at a meet-and-greet. Shane had chatted with every fan, laughed at every joke, signed every jersey, puck, and scrap of paper shoved in his direction. He asked the kids about their hockey teams, listened to their stuttered stories, and gave one hundred percent of his focus and energy to the task at hand.

But Ilya had spent years learning the subtle signs of Shane’s exhaustion and could see the way his smile was tightened at the edges and his shoulders were inched toward his ears.

Which made the timing of *her* stepping up all the worse.

Ilya had clocked her immediately. Her handshake had lingered, her fingers holding tight even as Shane tried to pull away. Her gaze dragged over him after they finally broke apart. “I’ve been waiting a long time for this,” she purred, and pressed herself against his side for a photo. Ilya’s eyes narrowed as he watched her arm snake around Shane’s back.

Shane, ever the professional, kept smiling. But Ilya frowned even more as he watched her touch drift lower, down his back, across the line of his spine, all the way to the dip of his waist. Then she slipped her hand under his shirt.

Shane froze in place.

Ilya lunged forward.

One second, Shane was standing still, his smile fixed and brittle. The next, Ilya was between them, wrenching Shane back against his chest.

“That is enough,” he snarled.

Security guards were already materializing out of the shadows to usher the woman away. She tossed her hair, shooting a smile over her shoulder.

“Oh, so we’re allowed to look but not touch?” she called, voice dripping with false innocence.

White noise roared in his ears as the event organizers hurried them backstage, murmuring apologies and announcing to the crowd that they would be taking a short break. Shane followed Ilya wordlessly, the last threads of his composure rapidly unraveling.

The second they were alone, Shane sagged into Ilya’s arms, exhaling shakily. He looked up at Ilya, his eyes wide with relief.

“Thank you,” he said quietly. “I didn’t want to make a scene.”

Ilya’s heart ached. Of course Shane’s first instinct was to worry about the optics, about not causing trouble, rather than be concerned about himself.

“I know, moya lyubov,” Ilya murmured, stepping closer. He cradled Shane’s face in his hands, thumbs brushing over the sharp curve of his freckled cheekbones. “But you do not have to let anyone touch you. Not ever.”

Shane leaned into Ilya. “I know,” he said into Ilyas chest. “But you know how it is. If I react, it’ll be a whole thing.”

Ilya’s jaw clenched. He hated that Shane was right. Hated that the world felt like Shane owned them something, like they were entitled to a piece of him.

“Fuck them,” Ilya growled, pressing a knuckle under Shane's chin so he could look into his eyes. “Next time someone touches you, I will break their fingers.”

Shane huffed a small laugh. “That’ll go over well with PR.”

“PR can suck my–”

Shane cut him off with a kiss. Ilya kissed him back, pouring every ounce of *mine, mine, mine* into it.

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It was a few days later when the DM slid in.

Shane generally ignored his Instagram. His account was mostly just a collection of team-mandated posts and shoutouts to the Irina Foundation. But the name that popped up in his notifications caught his eye immediately.

Jake Kenton.

Kenton was one of the biggest names in Hollywood. He was the type of actor who put the ‘A’ in A-list. He was unfairly handsome, obnoxiously talented, and extremely rich. Shane and Ilya had just watched one of his movies last night, sprawled across their couch with a bowl of popcorn between them.

("This movie is bad," Ilya had declared, mouth full.

"You just don’t like it because there aren’t any explosions," Shane had said.

"I do not like it because nothing is happening."

"It’s called subtlety," Shane had replied, rolling his eyes.

"It is called boring," Ilya had muttered, slouching deeper into the couch. “It is maybe not so surprising that you like it.”)

Despite their bickering, they had agreed on one thing: Jake Kenton was, objectively, a stupidly attractive man.

And now he was in Shane’s DMs.

Shane shot upright. “Holy fuck. You’ll never believe who just messaged me!” he yelled.

"Is it your cousin asking for tickets again?" Ilya called back from the kitchen.

"Try again."

"That barista from Starbucks who is always putting little hearts on your cup?"

“No! Someone famous!”

“It does not count if it is Rose.”

“It’s Jake Kenton, actually,” Shane burst out, unable to keep it to himself any longer.

There was a beat of silence. Then, the sound of Ilya's socked feet padding across the hardwood as he came to loom over the back of the couch.

"What does he want to say to you?" Ilya asked, and Shane swiped the notification open.

Shane's eyebrows rose. "Wow. Okay. Um. Not what I expected."

Ilya's patience snapped. "What? What did he send you?" His accent had thickened with his irritation, which just irritated him more. "Show me."

Shane turned the phone slowly. The flush crawling up his neck told Ilya everything he needed to know before he even read the words.

The message was graphic. An invitation to LA, followed by a detailed description of what Jacob wanted to do to Shane in some Malibu beach house, complete with a photo showing the clear outline of what did appear to be a spectacular erection, barely contained in a pair of tight boxer briefs.

Ilya's fingers tightened around Shane's phone as his face grew dark.

"Reply," he said, thrusting the phone back into Shane's hands. "Say no."

"Obviously I'm going to say no," Shane said, tapping out a quick *'No thanks'* before he could overthink it.

Ilya's expression didn't soften. It wasn't enough. "Tell him you are taken."

Shane rolled his head back to look at Ilya properly. Their eyes caught, and Shane's somewhat amused smile faded as he took in Ilya's possessive gaze.

"You are mine," Ilya growled.

Shane swallowed. "Ilya, of course–"

"Only ever mine," Ilya cut him off, catching Shane's chin and pulling him into a rough kiss. Ilya's free hand fisting in Shane's shirt to keep him close. When he finally pulled back, Shane's chest was heaving, his breath uneven.

"Tell him," Ilya said again.

Exhaled shakily, Shane grabbed his phone.

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The final straw was at the bar.

They'd won the game by the slimmest of margins. Shane had scored a last-second goal that had the entire hometown crowd on their feet and screaming. Almost the entire team had crammed themselves into a private corner of Monks to celebrate, and energy levels were high.

Now Shane was laughing at something Troy said, head thrown back. It was one of those rare, unguarded moments that Ilya was always pleased to see, made all the better by how *good* Shane was looking tonight. His smile was wide, his cheeks were flushed, and he was wearing what Ilya considered one of his best shirts -- the silk one that was practically see-through. He was radiant. Magnetic. And, as always, completely fucking oblivious to the way practically every set of eyes in the bar was glued on his every move.

And then *he* appeared.

(Afterwards, after the haze of fury had cleared enough for rational thought, Ilya had almost been impressed by the sheer *audacity* of the guy. Making a move on one of the most famous hockey players in the world, in front of his teammates, *and* his husband? That took a special kind of stupid.)

It all happened so fast. One second, Shane was grinning, relaxed and glowing under the bar lights. The next, some drunk idiot was lurching into his space, digging his fingers into Shane's chest, as if he had any right to touch.

"Fuck, you're even hotter up close," the guy slurred, before tilting forward, lips aiming for Shane's mouth.

Shane had immediately shoved the guy. "Get the fuck away from me," he snapped, his expression turning cold and furious.

Rage flashed through Ilya and he was lunging before he could think. His teammates caught him before he could make contact, Wyatt and Troy grabbing his arms, while Dykstra bodily blocked his path. Across from them, the drunk idiot stumbled, blinking like he couldn't quite believe what had just happened, as a few other members of the team dragged him away.

Shane's gaze found Ilya's. Their teammates parted, and Shane grabbed Ilya's wrist, dragging him outside.

The street was quiet, but Ilya's pulse was still roaring in his ears. Shane kept a steady grip on his wrist as he called for a car. His voice was clipped and calm in a way that meant he was pissed. Not at Ilya, he knew, but at the violation, at the fact that people thought they could take what wasn't theirs.

The ride back to the hotel was silent as they say beside each other, locked in their anger. The elevator ride even more so. Shane held Ilya's wrist the entire time, his thumb pressing into the rapid-fire pulse. Once they reached their room, Shane turned to face him.

"I am yours," he said, voice low.

"Yes," said Ilya, transfixed by the intensity in Shane's eyes.

Shane stepped closer. His hands came up to frame Ilya's face. "I am yours," he repeated. "No one else's. I belong to you. I want you. I will only ever want you." He paused. Then, a challenge: "Show me how much I belong to you."

Ilya felt his anger evaporate. He could do that.

He hauled Shane towards him, crushing their mouths together in a filthy kiss, all teeth and tongue. Shane melted into it, his fingers tangling in Ilya’s hair.

“Mine,” Ilya growled in Russian against his lips, hands already tugging at Shane’s shirt.

“Yes, yours,” Shane replied in Russian, and then they didn't speak for a long time.

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The next day, Shane opened his infrequently used Instagram, and posted his first personal photo of the year. Hayden had snapped it one afternoon during a visit to the cottage. Ilya and Shane stood side by side on the deck, Ilya’s arm wrapped around him. Shane's gaze was turned up to Ilya with open affection. Shane had thought it was cute.

He hadn’t noticed the faint bruise on his neck, or the possessive grip of Ilya’s hand on his waist. Or the way Ilya’s eyes were focused on him, dark and hungry with desire.

The internet, predictably, lost its fucking mind.

End Notes

My headcannon is that Shane is a bit whiney after, because he went out of his comfort zone to post the photo, thinking that it would make people see he is happily married and encourage them to move on to other things. Ilya could have told him the photo he picked would light off another firestorm, but chose not to.

As always, hope you enjoyed! Kudos and feedback are greatly appreciated. 💕

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