

Ilya Gets His Bell Rung

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Ilya Gets His Bell Rung

by [PenPatronusAooO](#)

Summary

When Ilya gets injured while swimming in the lake, Shane scrambles to save him from drowning.

("We all get our bell rung, eventually." -Shane Hollander)

It was a less than perfect day at the lake. A gray day—little sun. But Shane Hollander was overflowing with light. He felt it on his cheeks, all over his skin, in his bones. He couldn't stop smiling with it. The cottage itself seemed to glow with a living aura. The night before he was looking into his longtime lover's eyes when he said—twice in Russian, and then once in English—"I love you."

Shane said it back. And his world shifted like tectonic plates. No day would ever truly be gray again.

Ilya Rozanov stood on top of the large, slanted rock on which Shane sat. "Don't dive into the water, you idiot. It's shallow here—up to your waist."

Ilya ruffled Shane's slate-black hair. "I do little jump," Rozanov said. "Barely dive. Closer to—what do you say—eh, belly flop."

Shane rolled his eyes as he carefully rearranged his hair. "You're going to belly flop into cold water with bruised ribs?"

Ilya winced and wrinkled his nose at the thought.

"You dive in there and you're going to sprain your wrists on the bottom before your feet hit the water," Hollander warned.

"Fine!" Ilya made a show of putting his hands behind his back by stretching his long arms up and around. He clasped his own fingers together and stared down at Hollander. "No arms. Half belly flap, half dive. Yes? Approved?"

The fondness for Ilya that glowed in Shane's heart warmed. "Fine!" he said, pronouncing the word with a Russian accent, speaking it the same way Ilya had a moment ago. "But there's a downed tree down there so aim to the—"

Ilya rotated to the right and dove nose-first over Shane's knees.

"—left." Shane gulped. Ilya disappeared into the water—all six feet of him—and Shane sighed. He looked around, taking a moment to ingest the view. The hockey captain took in the trees, the horizon on the water, the sky. All beautiful, he concluded. But not as beautiful as Ilya Rozanov's body in those swimming trunks. That was his favorite view of all.

Shane looked down at the spot in the water where Ilya had disappeared, and curled his hands into fists when he realized that a whole half minute had passed. How long could his lover hold his breath? Shane didn't know. "Rozanov?" he called to the silent lake. "Ilya!"

The clouds shifted then. Shane concluded that an entire minute had passed. Sunlight through the trees illuminated the colors of the water—blue, black, teal, green...

And red.

“FUCK,” Shane gasped at the sight of the blood. He eased himself into the water and started swimming as fast as he could. His leg bumped something solid. Shane took a deep breath and dropped underwater, eyes open. Arms paddling, fingers reaching, mostly blind, Shane felt around for the solid object. Fingers found the underwater tree, first, but then he found something hard that felt like skin, and he pulled.

Shane summoned all of his strength and swam for the surface. He emerged gasping, holding the limp, unmoving body in a bridal carry. Rozanov’s head lolled against Shane’s bicep—eyes shut, mouth open. “Ilya!” Hollander shouted at him. “ILYA!” When not even an eyelid flinched, he swore again and stomped toward the shore.

Shane had never heard his own heart beating. But it was thundering in his ears when he gently laid Ilya’s waterlogged body down on the grass. Rozanov’s skin was corpse-colored except for the massive gash at his hairline that was leaking blood. “Dammit!” Shane shouted, voice cracking, when water leaked from Rozanov’s blue-tinted lips. He rolled him onto his side and watched several cups of water stream from his mouth. Then Shane knelt, pressed his ear to Ilya’s lips, and both listened and felt for his breathing.

Nothing. No inhale. No exhale.

Tears erupted from Shane’s dark eyes. He pressed two fingers against the pulse point on Ilya’s throat.

He found it. Ilya had a pulse. But Shane was certain his heart was beating too slow—the sensation shallow under the white skin.

Shane’s eyes were so soaked with tears that everything went funhouse mirror blurry. He rolled Ilya onto his back, squeezed his nostrils shut, and blew air into his lungs.

Again. Again and again and again. Over and over he breathed breath into his lover. In the distance, a loon called—mocking, almost.

“Please,” Shane said against Ilya’s lips. “Wake up, you asshole! Please!” Shane pulled back and looked down at Ilya’s slack face. “Ilya,” he begged. “ILYA!” Then, with all his strength, Shane pushed down on Ilya’s stomach.

Water, vomit, and who knew what else erupted from Ilya’s stomach and chest. A cough followed it—then another. After three more, Ilya’s eyes burst open and he went into a coughing fit that Shane had no doubt killed his already bruised ribs. Shane lifted Ilya’s body, then. Lifted him up into his arms so that he was almost sitting. Shane held him while he coughed—didn’t care about the blood slowly soaking his swimming trunks or the vomit under his knees. Ilya’s wide eyes found Shane’s and refused to look away. Shane whispered into Ilya’s ear, “I’m here, I’ve got you, just breathe, you’re ok—you’re ok—you’re ok.”

The blood flow didn’t stop, but the coughing eventually did. “Shane,” Ilya wheezed. “S-Sorry...”

“Shhh,” Hollander soothed. “You hit your head. You’re bleeding bad. I have to get you to the hospital—can you stand?”

Rozanov lurched forward and wrapped his arms around Shane's chest, chin against his collarbone—an almost painful hug. Hollander hugged him back, careful of Ilya's injured ribs and head. "I need you to get up," Shane ordered. "I'll help. We'll move on three, all right? One, two, three!" With Shane's assistance, Rozanov stood and the pair started climbing the hill up to the cottage.

They were so close. Shane's car was waiting in the driveway only twenty yards away. But Ilya's knees gave out and the pair half-crashed to the ground.

"Dizzy," Ilya told Shane. "I—I can't. My head..."

Shane arranged Ilya's body so that he lay on his side. "I'll be right back," Shane assured him. "I'm just going to run into the cottage and get my phone, ok? It's just on the table. I'll be right back."

Ilya grabbed Hollander's wrist. His skin felt cold. "Shane," he whispered, voice hoarse, "kiss me."

Shane did. He pressed his warm lips against Ilya's cold lips and tried to push all of the sunlight in his bones into his body. "Stay awake," Shane said, next. And he ran as fast as he could to the cottage. He ran as fast as he could back—emergency services already on his phone—but found Ilya unconscious, a halo of blood in the grass around his head.

Ilya woke up, but frowned and refused to open his eyes. "Shane," he whispered, throat sore and deep voice gruff. "Shane?"

Quiet movement nearby. The scrape of a chair across a floor. And suddenly kisses landed on Ilya's face like dozens of butterflies. A shaky sigh near his ear made him turn his head. And then Shane was kissing him on the lips.

"Ow," Ilya hissed when he tried to rotate his head further. He finally opened his eyes and found Shane standing above the hospital bed still in his swimming trunks and wearing some nurse's scrubs for a shirt. The half circles beneath his eyes were nearly as dark as his hair. "Is big scar?" Ilya whispered.

Shane snorted, smiling (no teeth). "The stitches make you look like Frankenstein. Women will love it." His voice sounded just as hoarse.

"Frankenstein's monster," Ilya corrected.

Shane rubbed his hands up and down Ilya's bare arms. "You scared me," he whispered. "There was so much blood. I thought... I thought..." Shane inhaled a shaking breath and exhaled a steady one. "You have a concussion and a small fracture in your skull. You broke your own head, you asshole."

Ilya stared into Shane's eyes as he digested the news. Shane leaned forward and kissed him again. And again and again. "My love," Ilya interrupted, "hospital is public place. We must

be careful. Take me home—back to cottage—and kiss me there.”

Shane’s Adam’s apple bounced as he swallowed. “Do you, uh—are you familiar with the phrase ‘the cat’s out of the bag’?”

Ilya frowned. “Who is putting cat in bag? How cruel!”

Shane grinned a sunshine smile. “Never mind,” he chuckled. “We’re on the news, Ilya. And it’s not because of hockey. It’s because... I was with you, um, when they brought you to the hospital. I was... hysterical. You passed out and the blood just wouldn’t stop and I was yelling and c-crying and I may have shouted ‘I love you’ and s-somebody—somebody had a camera. Several somebodies had cameras.” Shane twisted his fingers with his fingers. “I’m so sorry, Ilya. I—I wasn’t thinking. I freaked out and outed us both and I’m so, so sorry.”

“Shhh,” Ilya exhaled. “Look at me. Shane, look at me.” Shane obeyed. “24 hours ago, that would have mattered. But we told each other ‘I love you.’ We watched sun rise. We made love. And then you saved my life.”

Water hovered in Shane’s eyes—a millimeter away from falling.

“I am so proud to be your boyfriend, Shane Hollander, my love. I maybe would’ve shouted it from rooftop by now anyway.”

Water streamed down both of Shane’s cheeks. “Boyfriend?” he whispered.

“Yes,” Ilya whispered, deciding for them both. “My pretty, freckled boyfriend who rescued me from stupid—stupid me. Stupid water with fucking wolf-birds.” Ilya paused. His eyes widened. And then he gasped, “That is what we should tell Press.”

“What?” Shane asked.

“I did not hit my head on tree. I was attacked by—by LOON!”

“You were attacked by a loon?”

“Yes! Yes—call police. Arrest wolf-birds. All.”

Shane shook his head while he chuckled. “No one’s going to believe that a loon cracked your skull.”

“Then love.” Ilya took both of Shane’s hands in one of his. “Attack of love. So fierce. I was goner.”

Shane smiled. They kissed. “Now that’s believable.”

THE END

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