

scar tissue

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77575121) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77575121>.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander & Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov , Yuna Hollander , David Hollander
Additional Tags:	Implied/Referenced Child Abuse , Angst with a Happy Ending , Hurt/Comfort , Confessions , Sad Ilya Rozanov , POV Ilya Rozanov , POV Shane Hollander , POV Yuna Hollander , Depressed Ilya Rozanov , Sad with a Happy Ending , Anxious Shane Hollander , One Shot , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , Emotional Stunted Ilya Rozanov , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Mental Health Issues , Scars , Good Parent Yuna Hollander , Good Parent David Hollander , Nightmares
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-12 Words: 4,313 Chapters: 1/1

scar tissue

by [okstiles](#)

Summary

Shane nearly stops himself right there, runs through all of the ways he could navigate away from the question, but when he opens his mouth it comes right out anyway.

"Was he hard on you too?"

Or

Ilya had been waiting for the other shoe to drop. He just hadn't expected it to be about this, hadn't expected, or maybe simply refused to accept, that his father would somehow still hurt him beyond the grave, that the punches and split lips and broken ribs would still, impossibly, ache within him after all this time.

or

Shane tries to talk to Ilya about his past. It doesn't go as planned.

Notes

First thing I have published in a long, long time, mostly for myself but I hope anyone who reads enjoys it! Not beta-read and lowkey (highkey) inspired by Good Will Hunting. Mind the tags!

Update: Thank you everyone so much for the comments and kudos!! More work to come :)

This wasn't how Shane wanted the conversation to go.

He had done his best to phrase the question lightly, to prod only in the slightest, vague way. He should have known, before even asking, that it was a bad idea, that he was coming on too strong too fast. The question comes out anyway. He had broached it over dinner, his own food untouched as Ilya scarfed down his own.

"The other night, you had said that your dad was hard on your mom."

This alone was a gamble, one he spent most of the night turning over in his head. Ilya had another nightmare, thrashing and crying quietly in his sleep-- slurred, panicked Russian escaping him. The first time, their second night at the cottage, Shane had been worried sick, had shaken awake Ilya and held him as he came to in panicked, disorientated breaths. Ilya, however, had only looked at him in a funny, disbelieving way in the morning, claiming no recollection at all, and when Shane pushed a little more, had succeeded in distracting Shane in one of the many, tantalizing skilled ways he knew how. This past night, it had been even worse, Ilya nearly knocking over the bedside lamp in his unconscious struggle, and though it was entirely in Russian Shane could make out a few words— father, mostly. Ilya had only half woken this time, had simply rolled over and pulled Shane into him in the middle of Shane's whispered questions and fallen quickly back asleep. Shane hadn't been able to do the same, instead dedicated the rest of the night to running his hands through Ilya's hair and thinking back to every meeting, every moment, every inkling that something had been seriously wrong.

That night in Sochi, especially, flooded his mind. Ilya had been tense, nearly stricken, had hardly looked at Shane at all. Only in retrospect, without the blindness of the hurt and shame at being rebuked, did he fully grasp what he had seen. The fresh bruise cradling Ilya's jaw, the split lip. Shane had watched the pitiful game, couldn't recall a single moment in its entire run time that Ilya got injured in that way. But it was the beginning then, and after their terse exchange Shane had done his best to stop thinking about Ilya completely, had thrown himself into securing the gold and taking home the victory he had worked so very hard and long for. By the time they reconciled months and months later, Shane had been, understandably, more distracted by Ilya fucking him for the very first time to even think to bring it up.

Other moments, smaller moments, hardly there moments. Tense, low arguments in Russian over the phone, Shane pretending not to hear. Unusual bruises, unexplained cuts and welts-- *'Cost of being best hockey player. you would not know'* Ilya had teased when questioned. Scars on Ilya's back, small, circle-ish dots of white, wrinkled tissue spread without reason across his shoulder blades. Old, nearly unnoticeable if not for Shane's exclusive proximity. When asked, Ilya had offered some easy answer, Shane can't even remember now, only that at the time it seemed sufficient enough of an explanation.

And for the longest time— for most of their time, really— their personal lives were rarely the topic of conversation. Shane had done research, of course, had known every single statistic and watched nearly every game of Ilya's, but he knew nothing of Ilya's life in Russia, of his family, and it seemed quite impossible to ask. Only in Tampa does Ilya finally reveal the smallest but heaviest of confessions about his parents, about his fathers sickness and his

mothers death. Then Ilya's father had died, and they hardly spoke about that either, and Shane was waking up with a concussion not even four hours after Ilya finally landed back in Montreal for their game.

Now, through events Shane still cannot fully understand, they were together, and in love, and Ilya had confessed the truth about his mother and Shane had done his best to be gentle, to listen and offer quiet, intimate support. But it eats at him, and he knew it was only a matter of time before his curiosity would come out unplanned and botched, at the wrong time in an even more wrong place. So he tries to get ahead of himself, brings it up over dinner, and tries his best to hide the nervous tick of his knee bouncing below the table.

Ilya is quiet at the initial question, looks at Shane warily before slowly, hesitantly answering. "Yes."

Shane nearly stops himself right there, runs through all of the ways he could navigate away from the question, but when he opens his mouth it comes right out anyway.

"Was he hard on you too?"

Ilya stills, setting his fork down, eyes no longer meeting Shane's own but instead focusing on the plate below him.

"What?" He eventually says. The coldness of his voice sends panic blooming in Shane's chest, opening his mouth to conciliate before his brain even catches up.

"I just- Last night, you had another nightmare, and you were saying things in your sleep and it made me think back and I just wanted to offer the space, to talk about it, if you-"

"What-" Ilya cuts in, clearly confused by the quick rambling of English words, sparing a quick glance up towards Shane. "What are you talking about?"

Shane swallows, tries to gather himself before starting again. "Last night, you had a nightmare. You were talking in your sleep."

Ilya is quiet, crossing his arms over his chest and leaning back, eyes darting around the room. Looking for an escape. *Fuck.*

"You were saying things about your dad. I know you- I know your dad is really- I know you didn't have the best relationship with him. And I was thinking back and realized that maybe, you know- maybe it was worse than I thought. And I want you to know that you can talk to me, you know?" Shane prays that, despite his fumbling, his point is getting across, that he's not pushing too far.

"What the fuck are you talking about, Hollander?" Ilya suddenly says, harsh and accusing. Shane falters at his own last name. Ilya is looking at him, incensed, chest heaving. Memories of Las Vegas run through Shane's mind without warning. '*What the fuck do you want, Hollander?*'

"Ilya," Shane says softly, tilting his head. He reaches his hand out for Ilya, fingers brushing his arms. "Hey."

Ilya suddenly stands as if burned, knees hitting the table as he does and rattling their glasses. He grabs his plate, walks into the kitchen without a word. The clatter of the dish landing hard in the sink follows. Shane closes his eyes, wishes more than ever he could reverse time, could start over the conversation, or maybe never even begin it to start with. After a pause, Shane stands too, taking his plate and going after Ilya.

Ilya stands over the sink, hands gripping the edge of the basin so hard his knuckles have turned white. Shane doesn't get close, instead sets his plate on the counter nearby and leans awkwardly against it.

"Look, I'm not trying to attack you or anything. I just thought we could-"

"We could what?" Ilya suddenly turns, venomous and loud, hands flying in the air in a defensive position. Shane can't help but flinch. "What, hm? What the fuck do you want from me?"

"Ilya-" Shane starts, unable to stop his own ire from building, hates more than anything when Ilya talks to him like this.

"You want to know what? That my father hit me, put cigarette out on me? Is that what you want to fucking hear?" Ilya juts his chin forward, shaking his head in a questioning, nearly cruel way. "You don't want to fucking hear that shit."

Shane is quiet, the words sinking in after the initial shockwave of Ilya's anger washes over him. *Jesus Christ*. Ilya brings his hands to his face, pushing his palms into his eyes and muttering something in Russian under his breath.

"I didn't know." Shane says, voice soft. Ilya rapidly shakes his head.

"Of course you don't fucking know. You have no idea what you are even-"

"Jesus, Ilya." Shane cuts in, nearly desperate. "I'm just trying to help."

The wrong thing to say, Shane knows it as soon as it comes out, and can see the moment it makes impact on Ilya, who lets out a low laugh so bitter Shane can't help but flinch again.

"Right. Perfect Canadian boy with perfect fucking family taking pity on the poor fucking Russian." He spits, a hysterical, watery edge in his voice that Shane is far too overwhelmed to completely recognize. "Not everyone can have as perfect life as you, Hollander."

Shane can't help the way the last line hits him, the way his own last name curls in his stomach and his own anger rises to the surface before he can think. "God fucking forbid I- What do you want me to do, *Rozanov*? Not care that you got the shit beaten out of you, just let you cry in your sleep?"

Ilya flinches now, lowering his head and shaking his head nonsensically, hands clenching and unclenching at his sides. "It's not your problem." He says eventually, quieter but no less cold.

"Fuck you. You know that's not true." Shane scoffs.

The silence that follows is sharp, dreadful. Ilya is deathly quiet, unmoving, eyes closed. Shane's chest heaves, skin buzzing, face hot. When Ilya suddenly turns on his heel and walks out of the patio doors, Shane doesn't follow, doesn't even watch. He is somehow in his car moments later, unable to recall the steps he made to get there, where he is even driving.

By the time his parents' house is visible in the distance, he can hardly see through the tears.

"Shane?"

Yuna blinks rapidly, clearing the sleep from her eyes and fully taking in the sight of her son, standing on the front porch with tear stained cheeks. In another moment she is stepping forward, bringing her hands up to cup his face.

"Hey, what happened? What's wrong?" She presses. Shane only shakes his head.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up I'm just, Ilya and I-" Shane stops, clenching his jaw and looking away.

"What's going on?" David's voice comes from behind them. Yuna turns, shooting him a look indicating she, too, didn't know.

"Shane, come on. Let's go inside." Yuna says softly, moving her hands to rest on his arm as she steps backwards into the house. Shane follows wordlessly, lets her guide him to the couch and only nods when David offers a glass of water.

It's not until they are all sitting together in the living room, Shane's glass of water half-drunk, that he finally speaks.

"Ilya and I got into a fight."

"What? What did he do? I swear to god, I'll-" Yuna starts.

"Yuna." David warns. Yuna stops herself, sustaining a quiet sigh. "A fight about what?" David asks then.

Shane is quiet for a moment. Yuna can see his mind racing, quite accustomed to the small, telling signs. Jaw working, leg bouncing, fingers constantly in small but frantic motions. His nails have been bitten down, no doubt on the ride over.

"He- I had asked him about his dad. If he... if his dad was hard on him, before. He's been having these nightmares and I just thought-" Shane sighs, shaking his head and swallowing hard before continuing. "He freaked out, we started yelling at each other- I don't even know. I don't know what happened."

“What do you mean, hard on him?” Yuna asks, ignoring the look she knows David is shooting her way. Shane is quiet for a long moment.

“Like hit him, and-” Shane shakes his head again, looking away. “His dad used to put *cigarettes* out on him, for Christ’s sake.”

Yuna and David are quiet, stunned. Yuna feels a sudden rush of emotion, guilt for assuming the worst, pity for Ilya, for Shane, for the whole situation. Anger at Ilya’s father, at the coaches and trainers and scouts along the way that could have stepped in and stopped it. Did anyone try? Could she have, if she paid more attention back then?

“Jesus.” David mumbles finally. “Where is he now?”

“Still at the cottage, I guess. He stormed off.”

Yuna can’t help but feel, of all things, disappointment with Shane, and can’t stop herself from saying “You left him there alone?”

Shane looks over at her, faltering at this question. “I- we were both really upset. I didn’t know what to do, he wouldn’t talk to me. I don’t even remember driving here.”

Yuna nods, sighing, understanding his reaction all the while feeling for Ilya. Alone, in a foreign land, in a home that was not his own. No parents to run to, no one at all, if Yuna had to guess.

“It sounds like it’s a really hard topic for him, Shane.” David says sympathetically. “I understand how upsetting it is, I do, but I mean- he has probably never talked about it, honestly.”

“I know, I know-” Shane gets out, voice watery once more. “I fucked up, I didn’t- I didn’t want it to go like this.” Just as Yuna is about to speak he suddenly cusses, head landing in his hands. “Fuck, fuck I didn’t- fuck.”

Yuna puts a hand to his back quickly, rubbing in soothing circles. “Shane, hey-hey. It’s okay. There is no manual for that kind of conversation.” She looks to David, who nods despite Shane’s face being buried in his own lap, before speaking again. “I think it might be best to go back and talk to him. You are of course welcome here, you know that, but I don’t think you’ll be okay with yourself if you stay.”

Shane is silent for a long moment, sniffing aggressively before sitting back up. “What if it’s too late? What if he left?”

“I don’t think that’s something he’d do.” David answers before Yuna can, surprising her and Shane both. “I don’t know the kid well but anyone can see how much he loves you.”

Shane nods at this after a moment, sniffing again and wiping his eyes. “Fuck, okay. Okay.”

It’s only after they watch his break lights disappear around the bend that Yuna is fully hit by what Shane had shared. Her heart breaks over again for Ilya. She had hated him just a week ago and yet, all she can think about is the quiet, angry teenager she saw in the rookie season.

She had thought lowly of him even then, thought he was too aggressive, played too dirty to be on the same ice as her own son. She remembers too, seeing Ilya with his father, noting to David about how tense their relationship looked.

“Yuna,” David says softly, breaking her from her thoughts. He raises a hand to her cheek, wiping tears she wasn’t aware were even falling. She shakes her head nonsensically, closing her eyes for a brief moment to gather herself.

“I’m okay.” She whispers, leaning into David’s open embrace. “I’m just sad for him.”

“I know.” David whispers into her hair, planting a light kiss. “Me too.”

Despite his third glass of vodka, the lump in his throat won’t go down.

The house is quiet, dark. He hadn’t bothered to turn the lights on, instead sits idly in the living room sparsely lit by the bright moon outside. He knows he should get up, pack his bags, leave before Shane returns, but he can’t get himself to move, desperately grasping onto the feeling of the space, of Shane’s home, for a little longer. A small mercy, for himself, despite how selfish it feels.

Ilya had been waiting for the other shoe to drop. He just hadn’t expected it to be about this, hadn’t expected, or maybe simply refused to accept, that his father would somehow still hurt him beyond the grave, that the punches and split lips and broken ribs would still, impossibly, ache within him after all this time.

When he was younger, he had wished for his father’s death often, as terrible as he knew it was. He had some idea that the man’s death would be the end all to this darkness within himself, that it would be like starting a brand new life, free and unscathed. Despite knowing, in the back of his mind, that this wouldn’t be true, it still tears him apart when his father’s body is 6 feet under but the pit in his stomach remains. It kills him now, to think that the man is responsible for the end of the best thing that had and would ever happen to him. It kills him more to know it’s only really himself to blame.

The fight replays over and over in his head, the way Shane flinched, how horrible Ilya had been, how scared. He hardly knew what he was saying, was even thinking, felt nothing but blind panic and defensiveness. He knew the nightmares would come up, knew that Shane would ask, and still he was at a loss when the time came. He doesn’t know if there would ever be a future in which the truth could come out of his own lips, doesn’t think there were words in either language to explain this to Shane. That it had been normal, expected, to get hit. That he felt at times that it was deserved, that the pain was the closest thing to absolution for his mistakes. Most of all that it wasn’t something to be talked about, rather these were things Ilya intended to take to his grave, memories and stories and scars that he swore Shane would never know, would never even think to ask about.

'Was he hard on you, too?'

His hands shake at his sides, the glass in his hand vibrating with them. He can't get up, can't possibly stand the idea, can't see anything, anywhere or anyone, outside of the cottage that he could go to. This would be it, he thinks, the final hit, the fatal one. It should scare him more. It shouldn't feel like going home, like giving into his own unavoidable destiny.

"Ilya?" Shane's voice suddenly cuts through the thick silence, startling him. He hadn't even heard the door open. Footsteps grow closer, lights turning on, and before Ilya can even think to move Shane is in front of him.

Ilya stands quickly, too fast, nearly falls back down immediately if not for catching himself at the last second. Shane's hands shoot out but hover just near him, hesitating, unsure.

"Sorry." Ilya chokes out, hating how his voice breaks. "I'm leaving now I just--"

"Leaving?" Shane cuts in, frantic, voice breaking as well. "Why would you leave?"

Ilya can't look at him, can't speak, only shrugs as if the answer is quite obvious.

"Ilya please- please don't leave." Shane says then, stepping closer, still untouching. "I'm so sorry. I'm so, so sorry. Please don't leave."

Ilya can't help but look at him then, confusion clouding. "I yelled at you, I- I fucked up. It's okay, I can go."

"No, no you didn't. I did. I fucked up." Shane's voice hits that nearly hysterical octave then. "I shouldn't have pushed you like that, that wasn't fair."

Ilya shakes his head at this, eyes closed. "My fault." Is all he manages.

"No," Shane finally touches him then, a hand to Ilya's jaw, so gentle Ilya nearly crumbles on the spot. "Not at all. Don't leave. Please don't leave."

Ilya's eyes stay shut, unable to meet Shane's undeserved forgiveness. Shane's other hand cups his face, pulling him in closer.

"Look at me, Ilya. Please."

Ilya, after a long moment, finally does. Shane's eyes are desperate, begging, searching his wildly.

"Stay. Please tell me you'll stay."

"I don't-" Ilya starts, unable to stop the tears that keep falling, far too gone to grasp how pathetic he is at this moment. "I don't deserve to--"

"What? Ilya, you-" Shane nearly begs, exasperated. "You deserve everything, Ilya. Everything. I'm not letting you leave, no fucking way."

Ilyas tries to protest, to argue, but his body fails. He can't control how his resolve crumbles, how Shane gathers him in a tight, nearly suffocating embrace. Can't help but hug him back, grasp onto him, bury his face in the crook of his neck.

"I love you, I love you." Shane is whispering, hand steadfast on the back of Ilyas head. "I'm so sorry."

Shane, despite his best efforts, falls asleep somewhere between settling Ilya in bed and tracing the curves of his jaw as he sleeps. When he wakes, he's relieved to find Ilya in the same spot, half on top of Shane and clinging onto him desperately, even in sleep. His cheeks are splotchy and red, and Shane is sure his look no better, but the sun is gentle and kind and the house is quiet and Shane, running his hands through Ilya's hair, has never been more thankful.

Shane carefully climbs out of the stronghold Ilya has on him and is able to shower, door wide open and water low in case Ilya wakes up and panics. When he emerges, half dressed, typing out an update to his parents, Ilya stirs. Slowly, hands feeling lazily across the sheets, before all at once, sitting up urgently, looking around in panic. Shane is quick to abandon his phone, climbing back onto the bed and touching Ilya's shoulder, centering him.

"Hey, hey- it's okay. I'm right here." He says softly, brushing Ilya's hair back. Ilya looks at him, eyes searching him frantically, disbelieving, before something seems to settle back over him and he's launching towards Shane, embracing him tightly.

"I'm so sorry." He's whispering over and over, kissing Shane's cheek, his neck, collarbone. Shane hugs him back just as fierce, holding the back of his head once more.

"I'm sorry, too." Shane says, can't help the watering of his eyes at the weight of it all. "It's okay, it's okay. I love you."

"I love you." Ilya says into his neck, and then pulls back, looking at his face. "I love you so much, Shane."

Shane kisses him softly then, sweet and slow and gentle. The sun floods the room around them, the outside world muffled; the future, at least for now, very far away.

"He didn't start until after she died."

The room is quiet, dark. Ilya is on his back, Shane draped over him and idly tracing the loon tattoo on Ilya's arm. They had gotten back from Christmas at Shane's parents only a few

hours ago. The snow outside is heavy and incessant against the windows, the world beyond hidden, nonexistent, drowned in white. At Ilya's sudden, hushed confession, Shane stills.

Ilya swallows hard, trying his best not to give in to the panic that sets in at saying those words out loud alone. He has been working with his therapist in Ottawa nearly every week now, as painful and nearly impossible as it is. He is trying to be better.

"He was okay, before. I mean he still- he was mean but he, I don't know."

Shane kisses his chest softly, a quiet encouragement.

"I reminded him of her, I think. He hated her. For leaving him, leaving us." Ilya continues after a moment. His throat feels tight, voice edging on watery despite himself. He couldn't seem to stop the tears on this topic, no matter how many times he had managed to talk about it now with Galina. "Hockey made it easy to hide, you know."

Shane hums, turning his head and resting his chin on Ilya's chest. His eyes are soft, patient.

"Did you tell anyone?" Shane asks, voice barely above a whisper.

Ilya shakes his head, unable to meet Shane's gaze for more than a moment and instead focuses on the frosted glass, the vaguest outline of trees beyond it.

"I thought was okay, normal. I thought it was-." Ilya struggles for a moment to find the word. "Deserved."

Shane shifts then, lifting his head up and moving his hand to cup Ilya's jaw. "Do you still think that?"

Ilya is quiet, can feel a tear slip down and the gentle touch of Shane's finger catching it.

"Maybe. I don't know." He finally says.

"You never deserved that." Shane urges then, trying to meet his gaze. "Never."

Ilya shakes his head, closing his eyes. Shane wipes the tears as they continue to come, kisses his eyelids, his nose, his forehead, his mouth, sweet whispers at each one— *ya tebya lyublyu*, *ya tebya lyublyu*, *ya tebya lyublyu*.

Ilya repeats it, reaches his own hand to the back of Shane's head and pulls him into a slow, hard kiss. When they pull away, breathless, Shane smiles softly.

"Thank you. For telling me."

Ilya opens his mouth to protest this statement alone but Shane kisses him again, and again, until Ilya can't help but smile too, small and fragile but there nonetheless. Shane wasn't rushing him, wasn't pushing, was happy to wait as Ilya worked through each confession.

And as each confession comes in the days and months and years that follow— quiet admissions over breakfast, in the dark after another dream; on the road, hands clenched

tightly on the steering wheel until Shane grasps one of his hands and kisses each of his knuckles— Shane is no less present, no less comforting each time. Only kisses him soft and slow until the lump in Ilyas throat subsides, holds him as if he is the most precious thing alive, loves Ilya over and over and Ilya loves him over again right back.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!