

Would you still love me?

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/77485826) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/77485826>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationship:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Shane Hollander , Ilya Rozanov
Additional Tags:	Domestic Fluff , Silly , Canon Compliant , Idiots in Love , Explicit Language , Humor , Comfort , Shane has a fever , Ilya is a worm
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-01-11 Words: 2,662 Chapters: 1/1

Would you still love me?

by [iwishyouwouldstop](#)

Summary

Ilya wants to know if Shane would still love him if he were a worm. A question that requires a lot of consideration.

'Yes, I would love you if you were a worm,' Shane lied and stroked Ilya's hair softly. He leaned down closer, 'I'd love you even if you were a better hockey player than me.'

It was a sign of Ilya's state of consciousness that he didn't rise to this bait, only shifted his head and pushed his lips out to plant a kiss on Shane's thigh. He sighed contentedly, snuggling into Shane and back into a deep sleep.

Notes

I saw a HR joke about the worm question online and this happened. Enjoy!

'Would you still love me if I was worm?'

Shane let the book he was reading drop into his lap and look down at the mess of honey blond curls nestled against his thigh. He had thought Ilya was asleep, worn out by the day of swimming, helping Shane's dad mount a new TV, topped off by a series of voracious sexcapades in each of the four bedrooms of the cottage. Looking at him now, Shane wasn't sure his boyfriend was entirely awake. Ilya was always adorably less fluent when half-conscious.

'Umm ...' Shane pondered the question. Since they had finally begun being honest about how they felt about each other, Shane had grown to understand that while Ilya often asked unserious questions it didn't mean he wanted unserious answers. The idea of his six-foot, 190-pound human boyfriend turning into a worm was patently ludicrous. Such a thing would never, ever happen.

Nevertheless, he imagined how it might look. A worm was hairless, so that was an immediate downside. Shane would no longer be able to wind his fingers through Ilya's tangled locks, so useful for holding him still, down and close. Worms didn't have eyes either, did they? Shane tried to remember the last time he'd seen a worm. Probably when he was digging out a post hole at his parents' cottage a few summers back.

The memory of their shining, wriggling bodies, desperate to return to the earth from which they had been unceremoniously ejected made him wrinkle his nose. So, no eyes. No blue-green ocean to drown in, no sparkling mischief to thrill his heart. Come to that, no soft lips, no strong, confident hands. It would be very difficult for Shane to love a worm, he decided. Unless ... unless *maybe* the worm kept Ilya's personality? He tried to imagine a wry, whipsmart worm with a Russian accent. Shane shook his head, a small smile curving his lips at the fact he had been lured into giving this ridiculous scenario so much thought.

'Yes, I would love you if you were a worm,' Shane lied and stroked Ilya's hair softly. He leaned down closer, 'I'd love you even if you were a better hockey player than me.'

It was a sign of Ilya's state of consciousness that he didn't rise to this bait, only shifted his head and pushed his lips out to plant a kiss on Shane's thigh. He sighed contentedly, snuggling into Shane and back into a deep sleep.

'I *am* a better hockey player than you.' Ilya suddenly turned on Shane, pointing the trowel he'd been digging with at his chest.

'Huh?' Shane straightened with a suppressed groan and rubbed his lower back as he tried to follow Ilya.

'Last night, you said.'

'Oh, right. I thought you were asleep.'

'I was. But I still remember.' Ilya tapped his temple with narrowed eyes and Shane laughed.

'So you must also remember that I said I could never love you as a worm. Ugh,' Shane shuddered and then ducked as Ilya flicked a clod of earth at him.

'Ah so you only love me like this?'

'You should be happy I'm not into other animals. I will never leave you for a worm,' Shane teased, letting himself get caught by Ilya as he stood and grabbed for his boyfriend. Shane stiffened and held his face away for a moment, just to enjoy the feeling of being wanted, of all Ilya's strength working on having him. Then he relaxed and went willingly into the kiss, moaning at the grip Ilya had on his ass as he kissed his way across Shane's jaw and captured his lips. Ilya tasted of sunshine and the mint they had been pulling up.

Before they could be completely distracted from their task, Ilya broke away with a cheeky grin, '*I would love *you* if you were a worm, a spider, anything.*'

Shane scoffed disbelievingly and turned to grab the bottle of water he'd brought out for them, chugging half of it. They'd been out in the garden for an hour at least and he was starting to wilt, especially after being groped by his steaming hot boyfriend.

'We should have lunch soon.'

Ilya didn't answer and Shane turned, surprised that the mention of food didn't elicit any response. Ilya was nowhere to be seen. A squiggle of excitement ran through Shane's gut. Were they going to play hide and seek again? Last time it had ended with Shane bent over the pool table and the anticipation of where Ilya might be hiding this time set Shane's pulse racing.

'Ilya? Oh no, where did you go?' He called in a sing-song voice as he began to hunt. Not in the garden. Probably in the study. Ilya had a thing for Shane's childhood mementos. He slipped through the back door into the cool of the house and wandered casually from room to room, his anticipatory excitement growing with each empty room.

Huh.

Shane had been through the entire house, every room. Nothing.

'Ilya?' For the first time, Shane considered that maybe this wasn't a game. As unlikely as it seemed, a claw of fear hooked into his chest and wouldn't let go. What if something happened? Like what, though? What could possibly happen to a grown man in such a short space of time, without Shane noticing?

He speed-walked to the front door and checked the driveway. His car was still there, also empty. There really wasn't anywhere else to hide out here so he returned to the garden, circling the place where they had been working.

'Ilya? Enough, come out.'

His voice cracked and Shane covered his mouth with a hand, telling himself to calm down. He was about to walk deeper into the garden, check the lakeside area, when he saw something on the ground. In three steps he was crouching over the thing, staring in disbelief at the unusually large, dark pink worm. A sudden chill set over Shane and every hair on his body stood to attention. This was weird, and creepy. Ilya was gone and here was this worm ... right after they'd been talking about worms.

Shane peered closer, the worm was thrashing around too much to see clearly so he flipped it into his palm and stood. He'd never picked up a creepy crawly in his life, but there was something about this, some instinct that made him close his fingers gently over the worm and take it with him into the house. He went straight to his bedside table and pushed his glasses onto his nose, then stood beside the open window to examine the worm in detail. It now lay still, as if understanding what Shane was trying to do. There was something marking the body ... something that was not a smudge or merely stripes.

About an inch from the head, right where Shane supposed an upper arm would be if a worm were a human, was a tiny loon.

Ilya's loon tattoo.

'Ilya?' Shane whispered, barely able to voice aloud the utterly impossible conclusion his mind had reached.

The worm began wriggling like mad again, twisting itself over and over in his palm.

'Can you understand me?' Shane asked, heart thumping, eyes boggling out of their sockets.

'If you can understand me, stop moving.'

The worm went still instantly, lying limp like a shoelace.

'Holy fuck.'

The room seemed to tip, first backwards, then sideways and Shane slumped onto the bed, careful not to squash the tiny invertebrate that seemed to be all he had left of the love of his life.

'How? What ..?' He fumbled around for words, mind swirling with panic. This couldn't be real, could it? How on earth could a person turn into a worm? And more importantly, how could a worm turn *back into a person*?

'Oh fuck, I could really use you in human form right now,' Shane gasped as he bent double over his knees and tried to remember how to breathe.

Slowly, a thought broke through the panic. Shane had to fix this. There was no one else—no one else would believe him for a start. But more than that, the only other person involved no longer possessed anything useful. No hands, no eyes, no mouth, probably not even a brain.

He opened his palm to find the worm, no, *Ilya*, Ilya had wriggled into the crease where his palm met his fingers and now that Shane had relaxed his hand he began to wind his moist body around his index finger. Shane gawked at the pink creature he had found so repulsive until now and blinked tears out of his eyes. Was worm Ilya trying to *hug* him? Fuck, he needed to reverse whatever had caused this, immediately. The idea of never being hugged by Ilya again began careering through his mind, threatening to flatten all other thoughts. Standing abruptly, Shane forced himself to focus. Just like before a game, he needed to block everything else out.

'Ok, it's ok. I can fix this.' He tried to reassure the worm.

A twitch at the other end of the worm made him think of the little hand gesture that tended to accompany one of Ilya's sarcastic remarks. Trust him to find a way to have an attitude even in worm form.

'I won't let you stay like this. Umm, shit. Just let me think.'

First thing was to keep Ilya alive until he could reverse whatever fuckery had happened. Shane pulled out his phone and googled "worm care". This confirmed that his boyfriend no longer possessed a mouth, or eyes, ears or teeth. However, he did have five hearts. Based on how his singular heart was coping with this shocking turn of events, Shane could not imagine how it felt to have *five* of them.

'Ok, looks like I need to keep you in soil or you'll dry out,' Shane said out loud, aware that Ilya couldn't read his screen and probably had no idea what he was doing. 'Let's get you some dirt and then I'll work on the rest.'

Shane had no idea what "the rest" meant but he kept his voice as steady as possible, smiling at Ilya with what he hoped appeared to be optimism. He grabbed a plastic container from his kitchen drawer and took it outside, back to the fresh soil they had overturned in their gardening efforts. With one hand, he scooped some dirt into the container, then gently tipped Ilya onto the heaped pile. Ilya rolled down the side and began wriggling violently again, trying to right himself. Although ... was there a right way up when you were a worm?

'That good? I'll get you some more dirt.' Shane dug back into the earth and caught sight of a fresh footprint alongside the hole. A perfect impression of the old sneakers Ilya had brought to leave here at the cottage. Sneakers Ilya probably thought he would use for years to come, ready by the door for quick trips to the trash and barbecuing his disgusting fatty sausages. Tears filled Shane's eyes once more and he pressed his hand over the footprint, almost overtaken afresh by the fear that Ilya might be gone forever. A flapping beside his elbow jerked him from his spiral and he turned to see a sparrow lunging at Ilya.

'No!' Shane screamed and waved his arms, scaring the bird away before it could snap up its target.

'Oh my God, are you ok?' Shane grabbed the container and held it protectively against his chest, heart thumping as he stroked what he thought was Ilya's head. 'I'm sorry, I didn't see him. I guess you look like a snack in any form.'

The stupid joke made Shane cry more and he could barely see as he scooped more soil into the container and hurried inside where Ilya would be safe from predators. Sitting at the kitchen table, he watched Ilya wriggle deep into the dirt and dropped his head onto his arms.

'I don't know what to do. This is just so weird. What were you doing before you turned into a worm?'

Shane tried to replay the moment before his transformation occurred. What had they been doing and saying? Perhaps if he repeated that, Ilya would return. But try as he might, he could not remember what they were saying. All he could recall was the fresh mint and Ilya's hands squeezing his butt. Standing up in frustration, Shane stepped over the chair he didn't recall knocking over and paced the kitchen. After perhaps the tenth lap of the kitchen island he froze, one hand still pressed to his eye where he was all but plucking out every eyelash in a bid to soothe himself.

This was all his fault.

Ilya had asked if he would love him if he were a worm and he'd decided he wouldn't. And now Ilya was a worm! But it wasn't true. Shane did love him in this disgusting form, so much. Fuck, Ilya could be a mouldy sandwich and Shane would still love him. Shane darted back to the table and dug through the dirt looking for Ilya.

'I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Of course I would still love you as a worm. I mean, I do love you. Even more, if anything.'

Where was he?

Shane began sifting through the dirt faster, fast as he could without harming the delicate worm that must be somewhere in this mess.

'I'm sorry, please. Please change back, please.' He begged, his breathing ragged now as his heart thudded in his chest.

Where was he?

Shane tipped the container out onto the table and smeared the dirt around, hands caked black.

Nothing.

No worm.

No Ilya.

He staggered back, clutching his heart as an alarm sounded in his head. Beep beep beep. No, not in his head. It was his sports watch, alerting him that his heart rate was too high. Stop, stop it. Shane stabbed at the watch on his wrist, desperate to silence it but nothing was working and he gave up to clap his hands over his ears, and squeeze his eyes shut, bending forward and rocking back and forth to block everything out. Black rolled over everything and he clung to it like a life raft.

'Shane, Shane!' Ilya yanked at Shane's wrist and with great effort, undid the strap of his watch. He couldn't turn off the stupid alarm while Shane was thrashing around like that.

'Hey, shhh, it's ok. You're ok.' He pressed a damp washcloth onto Shane's forehead and tried to push him back down into the pillows. He must be having a nightmare of some kind, but the medicine Ilya had managed to get him to drink would soon kick in and get this fever under control.

He hated seeing Shane like this, but he had to admit there was some pleasure in being able to take care of him. Usually if Shane was injured or sick they were kept apart by their hectic travel schedules. So Ilya was choosing to see these wasted sick days during their summer break as a privilege rather than a frustrating waste of their precious time together.

'Ilya? Ilya?' Shane's panicked voice cut straight to his heart.

'I'm here, *moy pseekh*. Rest, please.' Ilya soothed him, tracing a thumb over the freckles that stood out against too pale, sweaty skin.

'Don't be a worm, please don't be a worm,' Shane mumbled as he began to settle, his body slowly relaxing into the bed.

'Ok. I will not be a worm,' Ilya agreed easily, eyes sliding away from Shane for a moment to rest on the composting book that lay on his nightstand.

Ilya shook his head slowly, lips tight in an affectionate smile. He couldn't wait for Shane to recover so he could tell him all the crazy shit he'd said when he was out of it.

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