

He Used To Be A Lovely Boy

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/81209021) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/81209021>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Heated Rivalry (TV) , Game Changers Series - Rachel Reid
Relationships:	Ilya Rozanov & Irina Rozanova , Shane Hollander & Irina Rozanova , Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov
Characters:	Ilya Rozanov , Shane Hollander , Irina Rozanova
Additional Tags:	Graphic Description , Married Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Ilya Rozanov Needs A Hug , POV Shane Hollander , Irina Rozanova Lives , Depressed Ilya Rozanov , Suicide Attempt , Implied/Referenced Child Abuse , Ilya Rozanov Needs Therapy , Protective Shane Hollander , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst with a Hopeful Ending , Major Character Injury , Past Suicide Attempts , Mental Instability , Not Beta Read
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-03-14 Words: 2,139 Chapters: 1/1

He Used To Be A Lovely Boy

by [Midnight_w0nder](#)

Summary

In which Irina never died, but Ilya still inherited her sadness.

Or,

Shane navigates Ilya's suicide attempt with Irina.

Notes

This is so hella angsty omg

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Hospitals were not Shane's favourite place in the world.

In fact, Shane would be pretty confident in saying he hated hospitals. The harsh bright lights, the smell of antiseptic, and the noise. There was so much noise.

He was still trying to understand what the fuck had just happened. He thought things were good, he thought they were OK.

Apparently, Shane was wrong.

"May I sit?" A distinctly Russian voice asked. Shane nodded, shifting slightly to make room for the woman.

Shane could smell her perfume. It was subtle, lavender and bergamot. He knew it, because he had bought it for her Christmas present.

"You don't have to ask," Shane said quietly.

"He's your husband."

"And he's your son," Shane turned to look at Irina, her hair scooped up in its usual plait. The purple under her eyes showed another sleepless night.

It must be a Russian thing, Shane decided, not being able to sleep because Ilya had nearly the exact same bags under his eyes.

Ilya, who was in hospital.

Ilya, who had slit his wrists six hours ago.

“I did not think... my sadness would be his too,” Irina said quietly. “I had hoped it would skip over him.”

Shane had wished the same thing as well.

“We found him,” Shane scrubbed his face. “That’s what matters. We found him.”

“He used to be a lovely boy,” Irina said quietly, looking at her hands.

Irina Rozanov was always quiet. It unnerved Shane slightly, how she could spend hours in silence, sitting in the garden without making a single noise. His own mom, Yuna, had explained to him one night how some women never get the chance to be heard, so they find comfort in silence.

Shane had noticed it in Ilya as well. When his boyfriend got overwhelmed, or frustrated, Ilya would go silent.

“He’s still a lovely boy,” Shane looked at her, but Irina shook her head.

“No, you will never know what he was like as a child. I am to blame for that,” she ran her finger over the cross on her neck. “Maybe if we had left Russia sooner, my sadness would not also be his.”

There was a lump in Shane’s throat, tangled inside him and it felt like barbed wire. Swallowing was difficult.

Shane had read the letter several times, the ‘note’ that Ilya had left him. The words were burnt into his mind, how Ilya had said that this would be better for Shane, that this life was

no longer for Ilya, that the weight of the world was twisted inside him, and Ilya could no longer find the strength to keep living.

And for a moment, Shane hated Irina.

He hated her and her depression, and not getting Ilya out of Russia sooner. He hated that they were now sitting together in the facility, waiting to see the consultant who had taken over Ilya's case.

But more than anything, Shane hated that someone (probably Ilya's father) had made Ilya feel as though he was not enough, and that feeling had never gone away.

"Do you think he'll be ok?" Shane asked Irina.

"I think he is stronger than either of us know," she looked at Shane. "I think he did not truly want to die."

"How do you know?"

"Because of how he did it. You forget, I have four suicide attempts under my belt. He only has two."

And Shane hated that fact.

He hated that both Ilya and Irina had gotten into such a darkness, that to them the only answer was suicide. It made him want to throw up.

"I thought he was getting better."

"I don't think we ever really get better from abuse," Irina murmured. "I think we just learn how to live with it. Like grief. Like anger. You do not get better, you just... keep living."

"Mr. Hollander?" The doctor poked his head out, and Shane turned to Irina but she shook her head.

"Go, I will wait."

Shane nodded, stepping into the stuffy office, looking at the pictures on the doctors desk. He had a wife, a kid, and a dog. In all the photos they were laughing together.

"How is he?" Shane asked, sitting down and looking at the consultant.

His teeth looked fake.

"He is as well as you can be after attempting to take your own life," The doctor said, pulling out his file and looking at Shane. "How are you?"

Shit. Tired. Angry. Worried.

"I'm fine," Shane said instead.

"It's ok to feel overwhelmed, it's a painful experience, when a loved one attempts suicide."

"Can you... can you stop?" Shane was just about holding it together, his leg bouncing as he looked at his hands. "I don't want pity."

The doctor hummed slightly.

“You know, Ilya said the exact same thing to me when we began his assessment. I want to chat with you about recovery, Mr. Hollander. So, Ilya is not going to be going anywhere anytime soon.”

There was a hum from one of the lights in the office, like a fly trapped in a jar. It was all Shane could hear.

“What do you mean?”

”I believe it is in the best interest for both parties if Ilya remains here for a minimum of three weeks.”

How could Shane live three weeks without Ilya beside him?

”What do you mean by both parties?”

”I think it could be a benefit for you to have some space to process what has just happened.”

”I...” Shane didn’t want Ilya to have to be alone.

The idea of Ilya being alone made his heart ache in a way that Shane had never experienced.

They had made a promise, all those years ago, never to go through life without the other. That had made the suicide attempt even more bitter, because they had promised each other, under the covers in a shitty dorm room bed, never to go where the other could not follow.

To be partners, and to find each other in every universe.

“He needs me.”

”Maybe, and you also need him. But, time apart can make healing easier.”

”I just need to know he’s ok.”

”He is, and he’s in the right place,” the doctor nodded. “But we are going to try and fix this.”

Shane wanted to snap. There was nothing in Ilya to ‘fix’ as the doctor said, that there was nothing wrong with his husband.

More than anything though, Shane was tired. He still had to clean the bathroom, he still had to feed Anya. It was strange to him, how life seemed to just continue. When Shane closed his eyes, he could still see Ilya’s blood on the white tiles, so dark it looked almost black.

The urge to vomit returned but Shane forced himself to take a deep breath.

“He doesn’t need to be fixed,” Shane answered.

“Forgive me, perhaps I did not word that well. It is not that Ilya needs to be fixed, but rather we need to fix his coping mechanisms, does that make sense?”

”His coping mechanisms.”

“Yes. We need to give Ilya a tool kit now for coping, so that this doesn’t happen again.”

This made sense. The work was preventative, it was going to prevent this from happening again, and that meant Shane wouldn’t have to clean up Ilya’s blood again.

“Do you think it will happen again?”

”We can never say,” the doctor shifted. “It’s down to Ilya. We can give him the tool kit, but it’s up to him to use it.”

Shane nodded blindly. Ilya was sick.

Ilya was sick, and this was to help him.

This was all to help Ilya.

Shane kept telling himself that, even when he visited Ilya and his husband didn’t even register he was there, or when he would visit and all Ilya could do was cry.

This was to help him.

“What was he like? When he was younger?” Shane asked Irina one evening after they had visited Ilya.

Irina was in the middle of washing the dishes, her face softened at the question.

“Loud,” she laughed. “Awkward. Always putting on a show. We would go skating together, and he was always so excited.”

She rinsed the plate off, running her fingers along the curve.

“And his father was so hard on him,” Irina sighed. “I could see it, you know? Ilya did not want to hate him. Not at the start. But there’s only so many times someone can hurt you before you understand it is intentional.”

”It must have been so scary to bring him over here.”

”It was not scary, because I knew he needed more. I knew he needed a better life than the one in Russia.”

“Your family…”

”My family is not family. Ilya is my only family.”

Shane glanced at his mother-in-law, trying to understand her. He had spent years trying to understand her. While Ilya slotted into the Hollander family, Shane felt like he and Irina had still some more bonding to do.

He had always known of Irina. Supporting Ilya through all of her attempts, how even though she had left Russia, her sadness came with her.

Now Ilya had that sadness too.

“And he is my baby,” Irina said softly, so softly that Shane almost missed it. ”My… sunshine,” she smiled sadly. “My beautiful and kind Ilya, my boy. He is my sunshine.”

When Irina visited Ilya the next day, they spoke to each other in Russian, so softly that Shane felt like he was intruding.

Because whilst Shane was aware his husband was in the hospital, he couldn’t imagine how it felt to visit your son.

Ilya sat with the bandages around his wrists, the bags under his eyes, but there was a smile.

It hit Shane as he was driving Irina home, the two weeks before his attempt, Ilya hadn't smiled once.

Navigating life while Ilya stayed in the hospital was strange. Shane had gotten so used to his husband being there, an extension of his own body. It made Shane wonder how he had even navigated life before Ilya.

Because every now and then, he remembered it. He remembered bumping into Ilya on campus, telling him he couldn't smoke outside the lecture hall.

That had been ten years ago.

In those ten years, Shane had experienced every single day with a sort of wonder. In those ten years, Shane had always had Ilya nearby.

The scars healed.

But Shane couldn't help glance at them when he visited. A reminder to him of how close he had been to losing Ilya.

"I want to get better," Ilya had said during one visit. "I need to get better."

"You need to do what is right for you," Shane replied, looking at Ilya. "I'm here. I love you."

Ilya kissed Shane's hand, nodding his head.

“Ya lyublyu tebya,” Ilya pressed a kiss to Shane’s hairline, then pressed their heads together. “Always.”

”You have to tell me, Ilya. You have to tell me if it gets that bad again. I can’t... I can’t lose you,” Shane managed to get out. “You are my world. My North, my South, my East, My West.”

Shane scrubbed his face, just letting himself feel Ilya beside him.

“You scared the shit out of me and Irina.”

”I found her, you know. The first time she attempted,” Ilya cleared his throat. “I have been talking about it here. I found her when I was 12.”

”Ilya...”

”And I thought... I thought, how deeply she must hate living to want to do that to herself, and sometimes I worry, does she hate me for finding her?”

There had been a late night conversation between Shane and Irina. Irina smoked her cigarette, and she spoke about her first attempt.

How Ilya had been such a lovely boy, before her first attempt. How Ilya had named every star in the sky before he would sleep, just so that star knew what it was to be loved.

Irina had said, perhaps it was not herself that she had killed in that bathroom, but rather Ilya in all his innocence.

How Shane wanted to find that wonder in Ilya again.

Perhaps the worst part about healing, in Shane's opinion, was having to heal the pain caused by others, and more often than not, that other person wouldn't even know a fraction of the hurt they caused.

The first day of having Ilya at home, Shane brought him to the Cottage.

They sat in front of the fire, Shane threading his fingers through Ilya's curls as they had done so a million times before.

"No more... no more living in the past," Ilya whispered to Shane. "Time to start living forward."

Shane kissed Ilya's head softly, pulling him close to his chest.

"Time to start living forwards."

End Notes

Comments make me happy x

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