Pieces of a Clock that Lies Broken

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Pieces of a Clock that Lies Broken

by Skaboom

Summary

When a picture of Ilya's mother falls, the frame shattering, Ilya is pulled back, as he has been so many times, to the horrible memory of finding his mother's body. This time, though, he is not alone. This time, he has Shane to pull him back to reality.

Notes

This is for Whumpuary Day 3, Prompt - Broken Glass.

Title from Unsaid Emily from Julie & the Phantoms!

“What…is that?” Shane asked, the ground shaking as he snuggled against Ilya on the other man’s sofa in Boston. “Holy shit, is that an earthquake?”

“I think so, yes.” Ilya tightened his grip around Shane, but the shake was light, and in spite of a couple of crashes indicating broken items, it was over almost as soon as it began.

“Wild,” Shane breathed. “I can’t remember the last time I felt an earthquake.”

“Me neither.” Ilya pressed a kiss to the top of Shane’s head and pulled himself up. “I will go clean up, I’ll be right back.”

“I can help,” Shane said, moving to follow his boyfriend.

“No, no, it sounds like it was not much, just…stay here, you look perfect.” Ilya smiled, pausing a moment to gaze at Shane before going to deal with whatever of his items had been destroyed.

A few moments later, however, Shane heard a thud from the room Ilya had just disappeared into - a room Shane didn’t spend much time in, a spare room that Ilya used as an office.

Quickly, Shane got to his feet and hurried to the room, finding Ilya on his knees on the floor, bent over a picture frame, the glass shattered to pieces, and a photo of a gorgeous woman peeking out through the splintered wooden frame.

“Oh…” Shane sank to his own knees, his arm instantly going around Ilya as the other man gently lifted the broken frame, carefully wiping away the shattered glass from the photo. “Is that…”

“My mother,” Ilya said softly.

“Well, look,” Shane gently reached out, his own hand covering Ilya’s, holding the broken frame. “The frame is broken, but the photo isn’t damaged.”

“No, I know, I just…of all…of all the things to break…”

The sniffle, the way Ilya’s body shuddered, coursed through Shane and he tightened his hand over that of the other man.

In a moment, the picture was back on the ground, and Ilya was in Shane’s arms, his body twisted in a manner that looked uncomfortable as he buried his face in Shane’s stomach.

“Whoa…hey, it’s okay, it’s okay,” Shane encouraged, raking his fingers gently through Ilya’s curls as he held him. “It’s okay, we’ll get it re-framed, it’ll be good as new.”

“Won’t…it won’t bring her back,” Ilya whispered softly, his entire body shuddering as he tried to keep back a sob. “You don’t understand, and I am glad that you don’t, but…my

whole family is yours now, it is not…she never saw any of this."

"I know." Shane gulped, feeling tears beginning to well in his own eyes.

Sometimes, he forgot about this, about the pain that lived so deeply inside of Ilya, because he masked it so well. The playful, douchey, competitive side of Ilya that he pushed in front of the world was so convincing that even Shane, who liked to think that he knew Ilya better than anyone, was often fooled by it.

They rarely talked about Irina. They had named their foundation after her, they had started an organization that would benefit people with the same mental health struggles that she had, but sometimes, Shane didn't realize fully that those struggles lived on inside of Ilya, buried deep in his chest, coming out when Shane least expected it.

He was never ready, and he should have been.

"She was beautiful," he tried, looking at the picture.

Ilya kept the photograph in his office, and as a result, Shane hadn't really ever looked at it before, not closely. He had seen it, of course, but he always sort of waited for Ilya to bring her up, not wanting to set the other man off, and he did so so infrequently that Shane just assumed that it wasn't something that Ilya wanted to talk about.

Maybe, though, it was something that he *needed* to talk about.

For now, though, Shane just let Ilya cry. He held him close, he played with Ilya's curls with one hand and rubbed his back with the other, wanting to be comforting, and trying to remember that it was okay that people cried. He didn't let himself do it, or at least he tried not to, he didn't like the way it felt, but it was important, and he knew that.

He reminded himself that telling Ilya not to cry would be unhelpful and actually might be very harmful. While to Shane, those words might seem comforting, *it's okay, don't cry,* to Ilya, was a reminder of a childhood where boys, where men, didn't cry, where his tears had made him weak and he had had to hold them in, even when they had needed to fall the most.

The last thing that Shane wanted to do was to make this worse for the man that he loved, so instead he sat there for what felt like an hour, trying to calm Ilya.

Ilya couldn't get off the floor. It felt stupid, he knew, that a picture frame breaking could set him off like this, but coming into this office, finding it like that, it had triggered him. He couldn't help the intense visceral reaction that he had had to it, and thankfully, with Shane, he knew that he didn't have to.

Thank god Shane was here. Having someone to collapse into made a world of difference, and he knew it. When he finally pulled away, his tears had stained Shane's grey t-shirt, but he felt better, if only a little bit.

"Do you want to go to the sofa, or do you want to stay here?" Shane asked softly as Ilya

began to right himself.

They would both be more comfortable on the couch, but that didn't always mean that was the right place to be and being with Ilya, Shane was understanding things that he hadn't before.

"I can make it to the couch," Ilya said, his voice hoarse.

Shane rose first, helping Ilya up and putting his arm around him, guiding him to the sofa. He knew that Ilya wasn't injured, but Ilya was grateful for the physical support. Sometimes, being reminded that Shane was truly there for him, that there was someone else in this with him, that he wasn't alone, was all that he needed.

They had been together for so long, and sometimes, it was still difficult for Shane to remember that he wasn't alone anymore.

When they got to the couch, Shane lay back, taking Ilya in his arms so that Ilya's head was resting on his chest.

"Talk to me," he said softly.

"It's okay," Ilya said, shaking his head.

"No," Shane leaned down, gently kissing the top of Ilya's head. "Talk to me. Please. I know this is living right here." He placed one of his hands on Ilya's chest. "Let me in."

That was all it took for Ilya's eyes to start welling up again, and he nodded.

"It…it was the glass."

"The glass?"

"The glass." He nodded. "From the frame, shattered all around her. When I found her…when I found her…" his voice caught, and Shane tightened his arms around Ilya. "She had dropped a glass, it was broken all around her."

"Oh, Ilya…"

"I know it is not the same, but it took me right back to that day." Ilya squeezed his eyes shut, but hot tears seeped out anyways, running down his chest and hitting Shane's t-shirt. "I am sorry."

"No," Shane shook his head. "Don't be sorry, Ilya. Let it out. You're with me. You're safe here."

"Sometimes it makes me so angry," Ilya said softly. "Thinking about how she just…gave up, she left me with them. I was always more like her, and when she was gone, I was the odd one out. I pushed so hard into hockey because it made me…relevant to my family, but I wish…I wish she were still here. I wish she had seen my successes, I wish she had met you."

Ilya tilted his head up, his eyes still wet with tears.

“Of all of the things that I have accomplished in life, this would have made her the most proud.”

“What?” Shane asked, his own voice now wobbling.

“That I found a man who treats me the way that you treat me,” he said softly. “Who will hold me while I cry instead of telling me to pull myself together. You bring out every part of me, Shane, you let me be whole.”

You let me be whole.

God, for someone who didn’t speak English as a first language, Ilya sure knew how to pack a punch with his words.

“I love you,” Shane said softly. “I know…sometimes I don’t react the right way, it can be hard for me, but I’m learning, and I love you so much. Sometimes…nevermind.”

“No, what?” Ilya asked.

“Sometimes, when I see this…this sadness in your eyes, like now, I worry that it’s not enough.”

“I think…” Ilya sighed. “I think maybe it’s not. I think that’s not how this works, but that doesn’t change the fact that it would all be so much worse without you. Before you, I had to hide parts of myself from everyone. Sure, many people had little pieces of me that were true, there were ways I could be myself with everyone, but with you, I can be all of it.”

“Always.” Shane kissed the top of his head. “She looks like you. You don’t really look like your father, but you have her eyes, her bone structure, her…beauty.”

“Thank you for saying that.”

“It’s true.” Shane smiled. “You didn’t just get the sadness, Ilya. You got her beauty, and from what you’ve told me, you’ve got her heart, her soul, her sweetness. We know you didn’t get these things from your father.”

“No.” Ilya shook his head. “Some of them I got from her,” he agreed. “Some, I think, I get from being with you.”

For the second time in just a few minutes, Shane felt shut down by Ilya’s words. He wasn’t as good with words, and sometimes, he wished that he knew better what to say, that he could give Ilya the same sweet words that made Shane feel so good. He had his own ways, of course, of showing how he felt for Ilya, but sometimes it just didn’t feel the same.

“She would be so proud of the man that you have become,” he said. “The hockey, yes, but the

foundation, the way that you live your life, Ilya, you are an incredible leader and captain, and the fact that you learned all of this in spite of the way that you were raised? That you lead with love, even though you weren't shown that…she would be so, so proud of you."

Slowly, Ilya turned so that he was on his stomach, his chin resting on Shane's chest, his eyes flicked upwards towards his boyfriend.

"I love you." Ilya tipped his head down, pressing a gentle kiss to Shane's chest over his tear-soaked t-shirt.

"I love you, too." Shane smiled gently, running his hands over Ilya's back.

"Good thing you have agreed to be my boyfriend, then."

"Only took what, like a decade?"

"Doesn't matter the time," Ilya said with a shrug. "You were mine from day one."

"Oh, was I?" Shane asked.

"Mhmm. I knew it. You did not know it, but you knew it soon."

"I did," Shane agreed.

"Sometimes I think she sent you," Ilya admitted. "I don't know how it is possible, but I felt like I was being struck by lightning when you shook my hand, when you smiled at me…I don't know. It was like she was gone, but she wanted me to have someone who would make me happy, make me whole. You make me both of these things."

Shane didn't have the words, so he leaned in, kissing Ilya very softly, the angle awkward, but sweet nonetheless.

As Ilya rested his head back on Shane's chest, a comfortable silence washed over them. Ilya was still sad, still thinking of that day when he was 12 years old, his mother on the floor surrounded by broken glass and an empty pill bottle. It was a grief that had consumed him so entirely for so long, but now? With Shane, it felt more manageable.

The grief of his mother's passing would never shrink, would never go away, but that didn't mean that Ilya could not grow around it, and that, he felt, he was beginning to do. When he had been all alone with it, it had felt all encompassing. With Shane here, holding him, supporting him in his grief, it felt like a part of his life. Not the entirety of it.

Feeling emotionally exhausted, but also safe and comfortable, Ilya fell asleep. He had a partner who loved him, who supported him, and while it didn't fix everything that hurt inside of him and never would, it did make everything so much better.

He loved Shane, and more than that, he was safe with Shane.

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