Flowers for Mama

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Flowers for Mama

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Summary

It’s Mother’s Day. Ilya needs to show Yuna just how much she means to him while navigating his own grief.

Notes

This is a one-shot spinoff of my original it's always been you. It may be read as a standalone but will be much better understood if the complete work is read first. However, with that being said, this one needs the least context from the work.

It was the very first Mother's Day where Ilya was free to celebrate as he thought appropriate, and it was only the second Mother's Day in a very long time that Ilya had a mother to celebrate. Last year, Shane and Ilya both tried to have a Mother's Day breakfast for Yuna, but Misha had caught a cold, which quickly developed into an ear infection that left him distraught and distressed all the time. They had to scarf down their breakfasts, say a simple thank you to Yuna, and bolt home before Misha shattered all of the windows of the restaurant.

Ilya woke up bright and early from sheer anticipation, getting out of bed before either Shane and Misha could even stir. His home office was perfumed by the several bouquets that he had preordered: twenty-one red roses for Yuna, eleven red roses for Shane, and four white roses with two baby's breath for his mama. Odd numbers for the living, and even numbers for the dead. He had them secretly delivered and brought them into the home while Shane was showering and Misha was down for the night. Shane never went into the home office—no one in the household did—so Ilya knew that his secrets were safe here.

Bringing the bouquet for his mama to the backyard, Ilya sat beneath the pink magnolia tree that he and Shane planted this time last year. It was small and scrappy looking but Ilya knew that it would grow into a magnificent tree in a couple of years. Ilya sat down across from the base of the tree and set the bouquet bouquet down.

His chest always felt heavy on Mother's Day, but it was a little bit lighter this year. Ilya's fingers wrapped around the cool gold of his mama's crucifix as he held it close to him.

"*Mama, I hope you are well*," Ilya shakily spoke in Russian. It wasn't often that he gave himself the time and space to address her. "*I miss you, but I am a lot happier these days. It is impossible not to be happy when I have my Shanya and Misha. Everyday I am with them, I am even more sure that you would have loved both of them. Little Misha has a mole right beside his left eye where you had one too. I see you in him whenever he smiles*."

Taking a deep breath, Ilya readjusted her bouquet. He made sure that the pink wrapping paper and the white ribbon were perfectly neat and free of any dirt from the ground.

Even though he did feel better this year, it didn't make things any easier for him. Beneath the layers of excitement, Ilya was still just twelve years old and staring at his mother's still body. Even now, after years—decades of life without his mama, there was still a part of him waiting for her to wake up. That longing always sat in his chest and was nestled in his heart. The love that he carried for his family never replaced the grief, but it did make it a lot more bearable.

"*I hope-fuck*." Ilya stopped himself to wipe away his tears. "*I hope that you are not mad at me, Mama. I have another mother in my life now and I would like to make her happy too. I want to show her all of the love that I wasn't able to show you. I still love you very much.*"

Ilya stayed sat in front of the tree for several more moments, just feeling the gentle spring breeze flow past him. The sun was warming up his skin, and bees were buzzing off in the

distance. Sitting like this made Ilya feel as if she were here with him. She was alive in the wind, sun, and all of the nature around him.

As soon as he entered the house, Shane enveloped him into a strong hug. Ilya immediately melted into his arms, allowing Shane to be his strength. Shane rubbed soothing circles onto Ilya's back as they stood there.

"*I love you, Ilyusha*," Shane said in Russian.

Ilya breathed deeply, letting Shane's sweet autumnal scent fill his nose. "*I love you too."*

With one more deep breath, Ilya composed himself. It was time to celebrate now. Ilya kissed Shane's temple before running back to the office. He got Shane's bouquet, which was wrapped in a baby blue wrapping paper and ribbon, and ran back with it hidden behind his back.

Shane fondly chuckled. "What is going on?"

"Happy Mother's Day, *my beloved*." Ilya smiled as he presented Shane with the flowers. "I know you are Misha's daddy but you are kind of like his mama too—you brought him into the world."

Shane took the bouquet and gave it a deep sniff before holding it close to his chest. "These are beautiful. Thank you."

Ilya remembered how touched he felt when Shane gifted him a bouquet of flowers at his graduation. Now, he just wanted to make sure that he could get Shane flowers for any possible reason and occasion. The love of Ilya's life deserved all of the flowers in the world.

Gently, Ilya pulled Shane in by his waistband to kiss him. The taste of Shane's peppermint toothpaste instantly filled Ilya's mouth as they explored each other. Shane gripped Ilya's hips, trying to pull himself closer while still holding the bouquet. It wasn't often that they got to spend time with each other like this now that they had a toddling twenty-one month old now, so each chance they got felt even sweeter—tasted sweeter too.

Once they pulled apart, they gave each other a moment to catch their breaths.

"Shall we go see if our little *Malyshka* is awake?" Ilya asked.

Just as he did as a baby, Misha often woke up silently and entertained himself until someone got him. This morning, Misha was rolling around his crib with his favourite teddybear in his arms. The moment he caught a glimpse of them, a smile broke out in his face—the very smile that reminded Ilya so much of his mama.

"*Good morning, Misha! Did you sleep well?*" Ilya sang as he scooped Misha out of the crib.

Soundlessly, Misha just looked at him and Shane with his toothy grin. Ilya used his palm to smooth out some of Misha's hair and thought of how cute it would be if he could tie it up into pigtails. Misha's hair would probably be just long enough to have inch-long curly pigtails. Misha had more hair than any other baby that Ilya had ever seen. It was thick, curly, and

unruly, which exactly how Ilya's hair was, but its colour was somewhere in between his sandy brown hair and Shane's ebony hair.

"Do you mind if I dress him today?" Ilya asked.

"I don't mind at all. You don't have to ask me twice," Shane said with a shocked expression.

Ilya had another surprise up his sleeve that involved their baby.

First, Ilya immediately took Misha to the bathroom. They were starting to potty train him and it was going better than they had anticipated. After hearing horror stories from Jackie, Ilya was anticipating for the worst. But of course, Misha was his perfect baby angel, so Ilya shouldn't be surprised.

"*Great job as always, Misha!*" Ilya exclaimed as he helped Misha was his hands.

Misha clapped his hands in response, eyes still crinkling in delight. Water sprayed everywhere from his hands, but Ilya just gently towelled off their hands.

"*Now, we will brush your teeth. Papa got you this new toothpaste—it's strawberry flavoured!*"

As Ilya squeezed a dollop of the toothpaste onto Misha's tiny dinosaur-themed toothbrush, Misha patiently waited with an open mouth. Misha hummed in content as Ilya started brushing his teeth, probably liking the new flavour.

To make toothbrushing more entertaining, Ilya always liked making sounds or pretending they were in different scenarios. One of Misha's absolute favourites was when Ilya pretended to be a zookeeper brushing a hippo's mouth. Misha would constantly chomp down on the toothbrush and Ilya would feign terror. Today, they pretended they were in a car wash of sorts and Ilya made water or mechanical sounds as he brushed away.

Misha let out a little chuckle as Ilya made a spraying sound as he brushed his front teeth. It was like music to Ilya's ears. He wondered if his own mama ever thought about him like this—if Ilya ever brought her this much joy. It terrified him enough that he could barely remember what her laugh—her voice, even—sounded like.

"*All done! Now we spit and rinse."*

"All done!" Misha repeated with a mouth full of foam.

Gently, Ilya brought a cup of water to Misha's lips. With his hands clasped around Ilya's, Misha took a big gulp of water, held it in his mouth for a second, and then let it dribble out.

"*Misha, you're supposed to rinse it around. Like this!*" Ilya mimicked the motion of swishing water around his mouth.

Misha tried again, but this time he shook his head around to imitate the motion Ilya had just shown. Ilya could only fondly laugh and accept his baby's attempt.

Led by Misha, they walked back into the nursery. Ilya dressed him in stretchy pants and a shirt that he had specially bought for today. It was a simple white shirt that said "I Love My Grandma" in pink bubbly letters. Ilya put a short-sleeved button up over the shirt for fear that Misha would dirty the shirt before the surprise could be revealed. He did have to admit that having a little bit of the shirt peak out from behind the button up made Misha look like a little old man, but he was the cutest little old man that there ever was.

"*It is your Grandma Yuna's special day today, so we have to be extra nice and loving to her today. Do you think you can do that?"* Ilya rubbed his nose against Misha's chubby cheeks.

"*Yeah, yeah! Love Granma Yuna.*"

"*That's exactly right. We love Grandma Yuna.*"

In the kitchen, Shane had rearranged his bouquet so that it was in a vase with water. Shane was now dressed in a white linen button up and navy blue shorts. Ilya still couldn't believe that he had such a beautiful partner and could be with someone like Shane.

"There's my handsome little man!" Shane cooed, reaching for Misha.

Misha instantly went into his daddy's arms. As Shane peppered Misha's face with kisses, Misha let out the quietest squeal, eventually putting his hand against Shane's face.

"Why don't you go get dressed? I've got him," Shane said.

Wordlessly, Ilya went to their bedroom. He took a steadying breath and readjusted his mama's crucifix. He put on a blue button up that reminded him of his mama's eyes, and it helped that the one time he wore it Yuna had complimented him too. He also put on a pair of shorts that made Shane crazy because apparently it made his ass look good and were a tad too short for Shane's liking.

Ilya smoothed out his hair with the help of a little bit of water, making sure to tame the curls that had become extra unruly in his sleep. He tried to not look at himself too much in the mirror. His father always said that Ilya took after his mama—he said that every time he looked at Ilya all he saw was weakness. Just the thought of his father alone made Ilya stare at himself. He was his mama's son. He had her hazel eyes, sandy curls, moles, and deep cupid's bow.

Ilya was her living legacy.

"All good to go? Our reservation is in forty minutes." Shane held Misha on his hip as Misha held a sippy cup of warm milk.

"Yes, I just have to get a few things."

Ilya went to the office and got Yuna's bouquet and a gift bag that he had also prepared. It was a small lilac bag with white tissue paper overflowing from the top. Shane's eyes immediately softened further once he caught a glimpse of Ilya.

"*Ilyusha,* you really didn't have to." Shane kissed Ilya's temple.

“I did. She means a lot to me.”

Yuna was the one who immediately accepted Ilya with open arms the moment Shane brought him home, and did so despite everything that she had heard about Ilya’s deplorable reputation. Yuna was the one who cheered the loudest from the stands when Ilya scored. Yuna was also the one who booed the opposing team with the most tenacity Ilya had ever seen when. Yuna was the one who started learning Russian cuisine as soon as she heard that Ilya hadn’t been to Russia since he was twenty—all so that Ilya would have a taste of home for their family dinners. Yuna was the one who stayed up late with them when Misha was born, coaching them through every burp, cry, and feed.

Yuna was his mama. How could he not celebrate her?

Shane set Misha on the floor and pulled Ilya in for a kiss. It was much shorter than their kiss in the morning but it was just as as sweet.

“You’re killing me… especially with those shorts,” Shane whispered.

“Later.” Ilya smirked.

They made a reservation for a small mom-and-pop brunch place that Yuna really liked. It was an added bonus that because it was on the smaller side, there were going to be less people and therefore less chances for them to be recognized. Ilya wanted to make sure that the day was all about her. As Ilya sat Misha in his high chair, he took off Misha’s button up to reveal the shirt underneath.

Shane chuckled as soon as he caught wind of what Ilya had done. “You’re insane.”

“It’s what she deserves, Shane.” Ilya smiled at his baby who was beaming at him.

“She’s going to go crazy.”

In a few minutes, Yuna and David came into the restaurant. Yuna was wearing a simple but elegant white blouse with jeans while David wore something eerily similar to Shane. Upon seeing them, Yuna immediately engulfed all three of them in hugs, which was shortly followed by David.

“Happy Mother’s Day,” Ilya said as she embraced him.

“Thank you, baby.” She smiled, making sure to give him an extra squeeze and a peck on the cheek.

Ilya’s chest felt inexplicably warm and tight at the same time.

Yuna lifted Misha up from his seat. “And what’s this? ‘I Love My Grandma?’ How sweet is that! And it’s extra sweet because it’s coming from my beautiful grandson.”

Misha squealed out of joy in his grandma Yuna’s arms. “Granma Yuna. Love.”

“Thank you, baby boy. I love you so, so much.”

As they sat down, Shane set his hand on Ilya’s knee. Ilya turned to Shane and shot him a smile, grateful that Shane was checking up on him. But he was okay. He had his family all around the table with him, and Ilya really couldn’t ask for anything else.

After ordering, it was finally time for Ilya to do what he had been itching to do for months. First, he pulled out the bouquet, which he had hidden behind both his chair and Misha’s baby bag. Yuna’s eyes shone with delight as she smelled the flowers and pulled them to her chest, exactly as Shane did earlier this morning. Afterwards, Shane handed her a baby pink envelope.

“What’s this?” Yuna looked so happy, which only made Ilya’s heart race.

“Open it, Mom!” Shane urged.

Ilya waited with bated breath as Yuna opened the envelop. With watery eyes, she quickly scanned the card with floral motifs and her jaw dropped when she got to the end of the card.

“No, you didn’t!” She gasped.

Shane and Ilya got tickets for her and David to see the Stanley Cup Final as well as accompanying plane tickets and hotel reservations. Ilya had to pull some strings to guarantee that they would have the best seats in the house, but he was more than happy to do so. He just wanted to make the Centaurs’ number one fan happy.

The Centaurs had actually made it into the first round of the playoffs this year, which was an incredible, historic win for the team. But, Ilya was glad that he was home for the season. He didn’t want to spend any more time away from his family—the constant traveling made him miss his family more than he thought possible. FaceTime calls, texts, and pictures were not enough to cure the ache he felt from longing for his family.

“They got us tickets to see the final, David,” Yuna said, still shell-shocked.

David whistled. “Wow, you guys! Thank you.”

Immediately, Yuna stood up from her seat and hugged both Ilya and Shane in unison. “Thank you so much. I love it.”

“It was Shane’s idea,” Ilya explained as Yuna returned to her seat. “But we have something else for you too.”

“Something else?” Yuna said, eyes almost popping out of their sockets. “You guys, the tickets were already more than enough.”

“You and David gave me the entire world. This was the least I could do.” Ilya passed her the lilac gift bag.

Yuna seemingly melted upon hearing Ilya’s comment. Carefully, she took out the tissue paper and set it aside before taking out a blue velvet box. Once again, Yuna’s jaw dropped. Ilya could see so much of Shane in her expression.

“It’s from the three of us,” Ilya said.

It was a ten karat white gold necklace with a freshwater pearl on it. Ilya didn’t trust his taste so he had a very long FaceTime session with Svetlana to buy something that they both figured Yuna would like. He was grateful that Svetlana had met Yuna before so she had a better gauge of what would be an appropriate piece of jewelry. Svetlana instantly shot down the chunky emerald necklace that Ilya had picked, citing that it was too much. Yuna was a classy woman who deserved classy jewelry.

“I think you’re trying to steal my wife, Rozanov,” David laughed.

His last name only ever came came out during family game nights when things got too competitive, as they were always prone to do. Ilya never knew that he could hear his surname spoken with so much love.

“And I think you’re trying to become Mom’s favourite,” Shane pitched in.

“There’s no competition here. Of course Ilya’s my favourite.” Yuna winked Ilya.

Ilya didn’t know how to respond. He could only muster up a smile with his warm face. Thankfully, no one teased him for how red his face had gotten.

As Shane strapped Misha in his carseat, Yuna pulled Ilya off to the side. They stood in the corner of the tiny parking lot, shielded from the empty street by a wall of trees. The sun shone brightly over them.

Yuna held both of Ilya’s hands. “Thank you for everything today. I really appreciate all that you have done for me. I know today must be a hard day for you.”

Ilya wanted to say that Yuna made it better for him—that he could feel his mother’s love extend through Yuna—but he couldn’t find any of the right words to vocalize it. Even Russian would be insufficient for him to express his thoughts. Instead, he just looked into Yuna’s warm brown eyes with his own watering up.

“I know she’s looking over you all the time, just as I know she is so, so proud of you. I love Shane with all of my heart, but I’d never thought that I’d have a son who loves so loudly and fiercely—who protects his family with his entire being. You are a wonderful father, partner, and son. I love you.”

Once again, Ilya found himself in Yuna's arms. Even though he towered over her, he felt like he was wholly engulfed by her love. Ilya breathed in her subtle floral scent, letting it settle deep in his chest, and felt the warm rays sun against his back.

"Thank you, Mama. I love you, too."

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