Echoes of the Past

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Summary

Scott hasn't cried since his Mother's funeral. He knew he had to be strong, but one night after tucking his brothers into bed, he stumbles across something of mother's that brings back memories.

Notes

Just to give you an idea of how old the Tracy boys are in this fic…

Scott – 17
John – 15
Virgil – 13
Gordon – 10
Alan – 7

Enjoy the story…

No one had stepped foot in there in over a year. The door had been tightly shut, to keep the memories at bay. As he slowly shut the door to Alan and Gordon’s room softly so he wouldn’t wake his two sleeping hellions, he stared softly at the door just a little way down the hall. He knew on the other side of the door, would be a small humble room with an alcove that over looked the large back yard that was most likely covered in dust.
Go back to be Scott, his mind told himself.

But his heart screamed louder than his mind. He needed to go inside. He had too. His feet slowly started moving down the hallway, towards the closed door at the end of the hall. As he stopped in front of it, he had felt the bitter taste of nostalgia.

This room never used to be closed. It was always open; a gesture of warmth and invitation. He could remember being younger than Alan and running into the room, where his mother would be reading a book or crocheting. He would run across the oak floors to his mother’s side and would bounce next to her until she looked down at him with a loving smile. She would run a hand through his brown locks and pull him into her lap to cuddle next to her while he would talk about anything and everything under the sun. Sometimes, he would just lay on the floor with John and they’d play while she would dance around them to work on some sewing or other projects.

He gulped as a hard lump filled his throat. Those memories had turned into bittersweet moments.

Just one last look, his heart prompted.

Nodding to himself, Scott pushed open the door and his mother’s study had come into sight.

It was just as he had remembered; the soft yellow walls were glowing softly in the moon light streamed in through the alcove’s window that had been surrounded on each side by bookshelves on each side. The shelves had been filled with a plethora of genres, but he knew each one had been special to his mother. Across the room, Lucy Tracy’s craft table had been covered in scrap material that she had used to make Allie’s Halloween costume two years ago. Vases of flowers, now which were dead, had been placed all around the room. And in the corner, there was the old oak rocking chair that his mother had used to rock all of the boys in when they had been young.

His heart twinged at the sight of the dark room that use to be so full of light. Memories were flooding back to him the further into the room he walked. He was seeing himself, standing on a step stool while his mom had hemmed his jeans for school, whining when she told him to hold super still. His mother was sitting in the alcove reading to a baby Virgil as he looked at the picture book in her hands. He and John were helping her bring in things she had bought at the craft store to make winter sweaters. Gordon was crawling underneath the handing fabric of a large quilt that his mother was finishing. Alan was gurgling as she held him on her hip and watched the younger boys play out in the back yard with their father.

Scott gulped as he came and stood in front of the alcove. This was his mother’s favorite spot to sit and he knew exactly why even when he was young. Not only could she see down into the huge backyard where her son would play, but she could also gaze out into the distance and she the mountains and the expanse of the hills – she had a beautiful view of each sun rise.

He perched himself on the alcove bench; he couldn’t stand anymore. It felt wrong now to be sitting in his mom’s favorite room when she could no longer sit here with him. He felt like he was disturbing the shrine that this room had become. Putting his hands on his knees, he leaned softly back against the pillows and took some deep breaths.

He wished he could see her one last time. If only he could hug her goodbye, receive a small kiss on the cheek and listen to her say that she loved him once more.

But he couldn’t.

Lucille Tracy had been gone for over a year now.
He slid onto his side and laid his head on the pillows. He remembered doing this when he was tired but didn’t want to leave his mom’s side. She used to carefully guide him over to the alcove and tuck him under a warm quilt, before returning to what she was doing. He was too tall to fully fit on the alcove seat anymore and his mother wasn’t there to tuck a blanket around him to sleep.

He turned and buried his face in the plethora of pillows that had occupied the alcove when his cheek came in contact with something so very soft. He lifted his head as he pulled the thin material from out beneath his head. He stared softly at the cloth in his hands and rubbed the material between his fingers for a few moments. His mother’s favorite sweater was lounging in his hands, with its soft wool and polka dot pattern. He felt tears well in his eyes as he brought the sweater close to his chest, clinging to it like it was a life line. He curled into a fetal position, the sweater still tucked close to him.

That was when the smell hit him. The wool smelt of her; of vanilla, warm honey butter, and sweet honey suckle. Scott bit his lip and buried his face in the material. This was something she had left behind, something that had last been touched by her. This was one of the last fragments of her that they had left, and as if fate had placed it there for him, he had found it.

In his emotional haze, he hadn’t heard the door squeak open or feel the soft dip in the alcove bench, but he knew who had come as soon as he felt his father’s soft hand running through his hair.

“Momma’s sweater?” He murmured softly as he looked down at his son with sad, gentle eyes.

Scott nodded vigourously, “I miss her.”

He heard his father’s soft melancholy sigh, “Me too, Sparky.” Scott nodded softly as he felt a horrible stinging behind his eyes, “I haven’t been in here in a long time.” Scott nodded in agreement and, at a soft nudge from his father, sat up to make room for him to sit next to him without the threat of falling off the edge of the seat.

Jeff put an arm around his son’s shoulders softly and pulled him close. He had come home from working very late at work. He knew his two youngest sons, Gordon and Alan, would be tucked into bed. Virgil probably would have been asleep as well, which was confirmed when he peeked in to his middle child’s bedroom. He had already seen John perched on the roof watching the stars when he pulled into the driveway. His heart had stopped the first time he had seen his second child perched along the sloping roof at the age of six, and still to this day, he couldn’t help but worry as he watched his son, lay amongst the roofing times and stare lovingly up into the abyss of the stars. That had simply left Scott, whom he figured would be busying himself with homework or reading up on the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Normally, he would find his oldest, draped in the oddest positions while studying or reading, but tonight he was met with silence and no sight of his son at all when he peered into the room. He had felt anxiety well inside him as he had come back out into the hallway. That’s when he had noticed the door to his beloved wife’s favorite room had been ajar.

He had found Scott quickly; it had been hard to miss the 6-foot giant that had curled up in the alcove. If he hadn’t seen the heartache that was clear across Scott’s face, he would almost find the position of his eldest son comical.

And now here they were, both sitting in the dark room of his late wife’s study; Scott clinging to Lucy’s sweater and Jeff clinging to Scott.

“You know,” Jeff began, “When we found out that we were pregnant with you, your mother just about cried. We had been trying for so long and just when we had given up hope, you came along. We didn’t know what hit us at first. She would hardly ever put you down for about six months. She probably would’ve kept holding you if you hadn’t demanded to be put down. And once you
could crawl, Scotty, you were adventurous. You climbed just about anything and you climbed quickly. It gave us a heart attack half the time when we’d find you standing or toddling the edges of high places.”

Jeff chuckled softly at the memory, “Your mom always thought you’d love flying. She took you out to base to watch the jets all the time when you were little and I was away. She’d send me pictures of you just in awe of the planes.” He brushed a hand through Scott’s dark brown tousled hair.

Scott sniffed, “I thought you took me to see the jets for the first time.”

His father just shook your head, “Nope. It was your mom. She thought you’d love to watch them fly since you enjoyed watching the ceiling fan rotate when you were a baby.”

They were silent for a while then, save for the soft creaks of the alcove as Jeff shifted his weight and Scott’s soft sniffles.

“Dad?” Scott gulped softly.

“Yeah, son?”

“I-Is it bad that I sometimes forget what she sounded like or smelt like?” Scott asked softly.

His father gave a soft sad sigh, “No. That’s the thing about memories. They are fresh and then they fade until they are just an echo of what use to be. Sometimes those echoes are bliss, and other times they cause heart ache.”

Scott felt his throat clench slightly at the thought. He didn’t want her to become an echo. He didn’t want to forget her. As if sensing Scott’s inner distress, Jeff murmured softly to his son, “But those memories live on with us forever. They are never truly gone, but they are instead a part of you.”

Scott’s eyes welled with tears and for the first time since his mother’s death, Scott sobbed.

End Notes

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