Not Good Enough

by brookwrites

Summary

Dan is completely in love with Phil, and he’s finally convinced himself Phil loves him back. When Dan finds out he’s wrong, he thinks comfort can only be found in a razor blade. Turns out he’s wrong again.

Notes

SERIOUS Trigger Warning: Fairly graphic depiction of self-harm; please don’t read if that triggers you.

Dan is happy. Phil is happy. Dan and Phil are happy together, as friends. And Dan doesn’t want to ruin that.

He paces back and forth in the hall, wringing his hands impatiently. He wants to walk into the living room and say it, but there’s something holding him back.

He doesn’t know why he won’t just do it; he’s 99.9% confident that Phil likes him too. He liked him back in 2009, when they first met; he knows that for a fact. But after people started talking about them being together, they stopped talking about them being together. But, eight years later, Dan’s
feelings still linger. He’s never understood people just being able to get over other people. If he can’t do it, Phil can’t do it either, can he?

Eight years is a long time. That’s what he decides worries him. .1% of his mind knows this. Phil is his best friend on the planet. Is it worth it to risk their friendship for something more?

Something more. The word more is key. To Dan, a relationship is more than a friendship. It’s something he’s been craving for eight years, and he doesn’t know if he can hold himself back anymore. Dan wants, no, needs, more.

And suddenly his feet are moving. “H-hi, Phil,” he stutters out, barely realizing he’s standing in front of the couch where Phil’s scrolling CrunchyRoll.

“Hey, Dan.” he glances up from the television. “What’s wrong? You look really pale and sweaty. Are you sick?”

Dan shook his head and sat down. “I-

“Okay, good!” Phil interrupted, obviously unaware that Dan was going to speak. “Wanna watch Attack on Titan?”

Dan opens his mouth, unsure of what’s going to come out. He hesitates, his brain suddenly forgetting how to function. “Sure.” He’ll tell Phil later. He might as well enjoy what could be their last night as friends, whether they end up as more or less.

Midway through their third episode, Dan realizes how close he is to Phil. The two seem to have gravitated near each other on the couch; it’s something they do often, and recently Dan’s started to take notice.

He decides to rest his head on Phil’s shoulder, taking the opportunity to get closer to him and maybe have the ability to tell him. He feels chills run down his spine as he breaks into a cold sweat; the stress is getting to him again. It’s now or never. “Hey, Phil,” he says, cocking his neck up to look at Phil’s head above his.

“Yeah?”

“Can I tell you something?”

“Anything.”

Dan takes a deep breath, staring up into Phil’s eyes. It’s dark now, but the faint, wavering light of the television illuminates his colorful irises. “I still have feelings for you.”

The irises flicker away. “Oh, Dan…” His heart sinks; Phil hasn’t even answered yet, but he already knows. “I had no idea… I haven’t even thought about it in years.”

“Phil, our fans bring it up every day.”

“But I never thought about it in a serious sense. I haven’t had feelings for you since about 2010. I’m sorry, but I-”

Dan doesn’t hear what he says next; he’s already running away, his feet grazing across the rough carpet. He nearly runs into the wall, barely able to see through the tears filling his eyes and clouding his vision. Finally he stumbles into the bathroom, slamming the door without bothering to lock it and sliding down against it.
He allows the tears to roll; they leave his chestnut eyes and drip down to stain his typically black shirt. They’re invisible against the dark fabric, but there nevertheless. Dan can’t help but relate himself to the tears; he’s there, but nobody can see him. He doesn’t matter. He’s not good enough.

That’s the one phrase he keeps repeating in his head.

He’s not good enough.

How can he be? Nobody’s good enough for Phil Lester, the literal sunshine of the universe, especially not him, Dan Howell the repressed emo. More like depressed emo. He’ll never be good enough.

He’s not good enough.

He stands up, making his way to the sink and looking in the mirror.

He’s not good enough.

A foreign face stares back at him; its cheeks glisten from tears he wishes it wasn’t crying.

He’s not good enough.

Its chestnut eyes stare into his; its chapped lips tell him to pull open the mirror.

He’s not good enough.

Inside the mirror is his medicine cabinet, full of ibuprofen and replacement blades for his and Phil’s razors.

He’s not good enough.

He pulls out a blade, toying with it with his fingers.

He’s not good enough.

He peels back the sleeve of his black shirt.

He’s not good enough.

He winces as the blade connects to his wrist, but the sting soon turns into the fond memory of his past, when Phil loved him.

He’s not good enough.

No matter how many cuts he makes or how deep they go, he never hits a vein; he’s had enough experience to know how to make the cuts just right.

He’s not good enough.

The shiny, red blood shines on his arms as he starts to feel a bit lightheaded; the blood loss is like a high for him.

He’s not good enough.

He falls to the ground, salty tears stinging the already burning cuts on his wrists.

He’s not good enough.
“Dan?”

The door creaks open along with Dan’s eyes. They’ve both been closed for a while now, but Phil’s evidently decided to finally come speak to Dan. He wishes Phil hadn’t been able to track him down. Phil shouldn’t see him like this.

Phil shouldn’t see him with the tears still rolling down his cheeks. Phil shouldn’t see him with the blood still fresh on his wrists. Phil probably shouldn’t see him at all. Phil shouldn’t see him babbling the phrase, “not good enough”.

“Oh, Dan,”

That’s when it all sinks in for Dan. After years, he’s relapsed. He never expected himself to; they didn’t even see the danger in keeping the blades in the flat anymore. He just felt so drawn to the blade… Dan doesn’t even know what happened anymore. He doesn’t even know if he’s fully conscious. All he knows is that Phil sits down beside him and takes the blade he didn’t realize was still in his hand, throwing it in the bin beside them. “It’s okay… I’m here… you’re here… you’re going to be okay.”

Suddenly, Dan’s overcome with rage. “How can you tell me it’s going to be okay when it’s clearly not? This is your fault in the first place. You don’t love me anymore.” Dan doesn’t even believe the words coming out of his mouth. It’s his fault. He’s the one that was ignorant enough to think Phil still loved him after eight long years.

“Dan, of course I love you. I just don’t love you the same way you love me, but that doesn’t matter. All that matters right now is that we’re here. Anything else can wait.”

“But-”

“It can wait.”

Phil wraps his arms around Dan, and Dan is filled with a sense of security. He should throw Phil off. He hates himself for allowing Phil to lie with him like that; he knows his own head is leading him on. This means nothing. Phil doesn’t love him. He’s not good enough. But he leans back on Phil’s chest anyway.

Dan can feel Phil’s chest moving up and down, his breath ruffling his chestnut hair. It’s a calming rhythm, one that puts Dan almost to sleep. As he feels himself drifting off, he hears a voice. “Dan?”

“Mm?”

“I just wanted to tell you… You are good enough.” Dan lets himself smile just a little bit before slipping away into the dark yet comforting world of sleep.