the day the music died

by dutiesofcare

Summary

Clara Oswald is a world renowned pianist who lost her passion for music after the loss of the person who mattered the most to her.

The Doctor is a professional violinist who's determined to help her find her way in music again before they both run out of time.

Notes

Hello. It is I. With another brand fanfic in which I somehow bring Ellie Oswald back to life (yes I'm a sucker for Clara and Ellie's relationship, deal with it u.u).

As always, I'd like to thank Marion for drawing the most magnificent fanart cover for this story (she's amazing check it out), and my beta who's so willingly put up with all my stories.

There are a bunch of rock stars au out there in the twelveclara tag, but not a Single classical musician one so I just thought to myself, "It's time I change this."

This AU is inspired by the anime 'Your Lie In April', which has me sobbing every time I watch it. I seriously recommend watching it if you have the time. However, watching it might spoiler you to what might eventually happen in this story, so if you don't like spoilers then I'd say postpone the anime until I'm done posting this lol.
As this is a musician AU, it'll be filled with classical music which are recommended to be listened to while reading certain chapters. That said, I recommend listening to Chopin's Nocturne op.9 No.2 while reading this chapter.

With no further delay, I hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Music had always been her life.

Ever since she was just a little kid; her bare foot touching the cold metal of the damper pedal underneath, even if she could barely reach it – she had always lacked in height – her little hands desperately trying to open enough to perfectly hit an octave, her short fingers struggling to play scales without slipping; music brought her to life.

But not anymore.

Clara Oswald would never forget the day her mother brought home that big brown piano. She was only four years old. It was so gigantic she had been terrified of it at first, afraid it would swallow her petite frame, but as her mother delicately placed the child’s index across the ‘do’ note and encouraged her to press down the key, she understood; the piano was her home.

But not anymore.

She played in recitals and school concerts. She competed in national contests, and overworked herself until her music was perfect and she won them all. She majored in classical music in university and she made the piano her master. And she was good.

But not anymore.

She made her career flow. She worked harder and harder until her talent reached the ears of other people. She allowed the music to speak through her until the music she played got national recognition. She would walk onto the stage tall, regardless of how small she was, demanding respect from all the people who would pay to see her play. And she would sit by the piano, taking ragged breaths until she was ready. Until the music took over her existence.

But not anymore.

She earned herself a name, through her talent and love for the music she played. She found herself fans who asked for pictures and autographs, which she gave them delightedly, but never as delighted as she played her music. She had never asked for fame, all she ever desired was to sound her sound and touch the souls of even the lost ones with her music. Her music was her salvation; her music could be someone else’s salvation as well.

But not anymore.

And always there, sitting in the front row, was Ellie Oswald. The woman who had always supported her, no matter how difficult her path was. She didn’t have the knowledge of music like the daughter, but she was the person who made that life for her possible. She was the person who had bought her the piano. She never failed to attend a performance of hers, despite how many times Clara would tell her that there was no need of it, that she had already heard her play enough times. But the truth was, Clara drew comfort from always having her mother stand up and applaud her. Ellie was always there for her.

But not anymore.

*Clara strode across the stage with the same confident expression she always wore on her face. The hall was full, filled with thousands of faces she had never seen and probably would never see again. As she made her way to the piano, her eyes searched around the crowd for the warm smile that*
always welcomed her.

Except... It wasn’t there.

Clara swallowed roughly, trying to sustain her composure. That didn’t make sense; she probably just missed her mother’s face. With shaky limbs, she sat by the piano and closed her eyes. She couldn’t let her heart be attached to earthly things, not when music transcended the limits of the physical body, not when music had the power to break the barriers of time and space, not when she was about to give life to Chopin. Not when she was about to fly.

She focused her eyes on the white and black keys. Sweetly positioning her hands, she prepared to pour life into Chopin’s Nocturne op.9 no.2. She reminisced how her mother would listen to it on vinyl on repeat when she was just an infant, it was one of her favorites; she remembered perfectly how Ellie’s eyes flooded with tears when she first played it to her; she could still feel the tight hug she had given her once she was done.

Her mother was so proud of her.

Clinging hard onto those memories, Clara played the first note.

She became the music herself.

Her hands gently caressed the keys. Her emotions took over her body. That moment, she was nothing more than the melody, obeying the composer’s sheet music she had long ago memorized faithfully. The world faded from existence as she and the piano became one only.

She played the final chord.

The crowd broke into applause, offering her a standing ovation. She felt lighter as she rose to her feet and her spine bent forward in gratitude. Her lips curved into a shy smile, taking a few steps back until she retreated herself from the stage, finding her way back to her dressing room. She just couldn’t understand what her grandmother was doing there, a pitiful and sorrowful expression written all over the lines on her face.

Clara felt her knees growing weak underneath her. Something had happened.

Something bad had happened.

Her mother was dead.

Her mother was dead.

Clara took a long breath, body widely spread around the mess of sheets and duvets that she had slept tangled with. Preparing herself for yet another music-less day. Every day was a battle to survive; she had no idea who she was anymore.

It had been almost one year since Ellie’s death. One year since a disease took over her and so quickly, so mercilessly consumed her until there was nothing left of her. One year since the strongest person she knew lost the battle to cancer. Ever since that day, music had lost its meaning to Clara. Music had faded away from her.

Clara could no longer play. Ever since she died. Although she had tried, desperately tried, although she had been encouraged by her friends and family, the piano was soundless to her.

Ever since that day.
The day that music died.
Sleep. Wake up. Not bother to change from her pjs. Clean up. Sit by the piano for hours still, just waiting to be found by the music, but never once daring to play the first note.

Repeat.

That had been her life for so long now. So monotonous, yet so comfortable. She had no intentions whatsoever of moving on from her boring routine.

Which is why she was startled by the sudden sound of her phone ringing, breaking all the low expectations she had for the day.

Picking it up, she stared at it, wondering why it would dare to intrude. For several moments, Clara just stared at the mobile in her hands, waiting for the buzzing to stop; praying the annoying beeping would just cease from existence - either that or that she went deaf.

It wouldn’t stop. Of course it wouldn’t, not when the caller ID showed the picture of a pretty redhead woman with mermaid hair.

Admitting defeat, Clara hesitantly brought the phone to her ear, greeting the friend in a monotone lifeless voice, contradicted by the enthusiasm met by the other girl.

“Clara!” the raspy voice of Amy Pond echoed through the phone, trying to hide her excitement but the high pitch of her tone clearly betrayed her. “What are you up to?”

Amy Pond. Clara’s best friend in the whole universe, pardon the cliché of it. They had met in music school and grew joined at the hip ever since. She was a cellist - she had arguably chosen the cello for it was the only instrument to properly accommodate the length of her legs - currently playing for London Symphony Orchestra; the two of them had even performed a couple of duets throughout their years of friendship.

Amy Pond was the one person who had never given up on her. Even if Clara had long since given up on herself.

“Hmm,” Clara frowned, desperately looking to her surrounding in attempts of finding something to busy herself with, “You know, same old—”

“Moping around your flat with no meaning to your life?” she pondered, her sharp voice cutting right through Clara’s façade.

*She knew her all too well.* “Well… When you put it like that…”
Clara could swear she had heard the rolling of Amy’s eyes. “Well, you better snap out of it. We’re going out tonight.”

“Out?” she nearly choked at the idea. “Out, where?”

“You know, out,” Amy was vague as possible. Intentionally or not.

Clara angrily puffed, “You can’t expect me to go out with you when you won’t even tell me where we’re going.”

The line was silent for a moment. A long moment. The change in the friend’s tone was so abrupt Clara shivered from it. “I worry about you, Clara. When was the last time you went out? Just to get some fresh air, for Pete’s sake. You lock yourself in that apartment and you forget to live.”

Her breathing became heavy and hollow, and Clara fell down at the couch. “Amy…”

“No. You don’t get to Amy me. I’ve been patient with you and I’ve run out of patience. I’m not allowing you to shut the world out anymore. We’re going out tonight, period. I’ll pick you up at eight, don’t be late. Oh, and it’s a gala event, so you’ll want to dig up some of those beautiful fancy dresses from your closet.”

“A gala? Amy, where are we going?” she pondered once more, feeling a twitch coming from her heart in fright of what the other woman had in mind. She knew it wasn’t just hanging out; she knew Amy still hadn’t given up on helping her.

Even though she should have.

“It’s just a ball, Clara. It’s the end of the season, people are happy, they want to celebrate. It’ll be fun!”

Exhaling loudly – with the main purpose of being overheard – she agreed. “Fine. I’ll work something out. But whatever you might have in mind, drop it already.”

“Pff, what kind of friend do you think I am?”

“The worst kind, actually,” she stated amusedly. The line soon after went dead.

By the time the clock stroke seven, Clara was sat by the edge of her bed, a puffy black towel securely wrapped around her midsection. Her eyes traveled along all the dresses with layers of dust above them — most of them also black, the adequate color for performing.

In the far corner of the wardrobe laid a dark blue tight dress, with straps that met in a knot in the back of the neck and a skirt that fell just above the ankles. That dress; she would never wear it again, even though she refused to get rid of it.

That dress. She had been wearing it that night.

The night her life changed forever.

_She wouldn’t easily admit that her legs were shaking so terribly she almost tripped off her heels._

“Gran?” She called for the elderly woman, trying to sustain her composure. She was a pianist, she didn’t get to be anything but calm. “What… What are you doing here?”
The lines across her face were built from sadness and sorrow and—could Clara see a hint of pity there? “You should grab your things, Clara.”

“Just tell me what’s going on,” she begged, wishing more than anything that she wouldn’t be shielded from the brutal and horrible truth — she could handle it.

Or, at least, she thought she could.

The grandmother sighed, torn between keeping the distance and bringing the young woman inside her embrace. She settled with placing her shriveled hand on her upper arm. “Your mum wasn’t feeling well. We’ve taken her to the hospital, but… It isn’t looking good.”

“Is she dead?” she was harsh and merciless, the fire inside her eyes being put out by a misty layer of salty tears.

“No, Clara.”

For some reason, she wasn’t reassured by the answer. “Is she dying?”

“Clara.”

Clara jerked back when an outside voice called for her. Her eyes blinked rapidly as she raised her head, searching for the origins of the sound. “Amy…? What are you… How did you…”

Amy merely shrugged, studying her almost naked small frame. “You gave me a key, remember?”

She wrinkled her nose, “I gave you that key for emergencies.”

“It was an emergency,” she argued, belittled. “You’re having a wardrobe crisis, aren’t you?”

Clara pulled back her head, making a face. “No, I’m not.”

Amy placed her hands on her hips, “You’re wearing a towel. You don’t intend to wear that to the ball, do you, now?”

She pursed her lips flatly together in sarcasm. “Not anymore.”

Ignoring her bluntly, she fumbled her hands across the great amount of dresses until settling on a dark red one, its cotton skirt so light it freely swayed and fluttered in the air. “This one will do.”

Although she accepted it with her hands, she made no effort to move. “Didn’t Rory want to go with you?”

“He’s working the night shift,” she stated indifferently, “Put it on. I’ll zip you up.”

Reluctantly, Clara stood up, the towel falling to the floor in the process. Whilst she pulled the dress over her head and down her waist, Amy messed around with her shoes, throwing black strappy stilettos on her way. “I don’t think I know how to walk in those anymore.”

“Of course you do,” Amy remarked, “It’s like playing an instrument, you can never unlearn it. You might fall out of practice, but once you’ve picked up the pace, it’s like you’ve never stopped playing.”

Clara fell silent, unable to ignore the not so subtle accusation. If only it were so simple, if only she could still hear her music, perhaps she would still play. She didn’t expect Amy to understand, though. Not when Amy hadn’t been the one that lost the meaning of music.
any feedback here or on twitter (dutiesofcare) is much appreciated :}
The moment Clara stepped into the hall, she was sure she was the lead character in some cheesy Hollywood movie, in which she was the freak and all eyes fell upon her at her arrival.

She wished she could disappear.

Ignorant to the rigidity of her muscles, Amy pulled her by the wrist, leading them straight to the barman. Clara picked herself a glass of champagne, understanding that would be the easiest and perhaps only way to survive the event.

At first, Clara tried to stay hidden between the tall figure of Amy and the nearest wall, throwing some frivolous talk towards the redhead. Of course, no matter how much she lacked in height, nor that she had a face that easily blended in the crowd, she still felt she had a spotlight aimed at her like a halo, announcing to every musician of the 21st century her existence here.

He was tall, even taller than Amy. He walked with awkward steps, clumsily, like his legs had a life of their own and the rest of his body wasn’t able to keep up. His hair was short but messy, his chin was so big and pointy and unique that not only was it sharper than a knife, but it also stole the emphasis from the hazel green of his eyes. And he approached screaming her name.

“Clara Oswald!” he basically pushed Amy aside, placing each of his hands across Clara’s shoulder pads and bringing her body near so he could smack a kiss to both her cheeks.

As soon as she was released from his grip and regained her balance, Clara forced a smile upon her lips. “Matt, you haven’t changed a bit.”

“Neither have you,” he exclaimed, circling his hands around the sides of her torso, as if trying to get some of her energy flowing. “You look the same as I last saw you. Have you found the secret to freeze time?”

She giggled softly. From the way Amy tilted her head, Clara was certain she could tell how uncomfortable she was. “No, I’m afraid not.”

“That’s too bad. But we’re not here to talk about that, no,” Matt condescendingly brought his fingers to her upper arm, “You’re here to tell me you’ve finally accept my offer.”

“You offer?!” her eyes enlarged instantaneously, and her glare shifted towards Amy. “You know what he’s talking about? Is that why you’ve convinced me to come?!”
“I swear, I have no idea what he’s up to,” she promised, turning on her heels to stand side by side with her friend in solidarity, burning the maestro with her eyes.

“Come on…!” he lowered himself to his knees, in a failed attempt to reach the same height as her. “I sent you an email…!”

“I don’t check emails.”

“She doesn’t check emails,” both girls spoke simultaneously.

His mouth shaped a soundless oh. “Well, might as well make you the proposal now. I want to play Rhapsody in Blue in the spring.”

“Rhapsody in Blue?!” Amy nearly gasped at the thought, “You want to play jazz? Now you’ve really stepped down on your game, Matt.”

“Orchestrated jazz,” he corrected her, raising his index high.

Clara ignored their bantering. “What’s stopping you?”

“Amy’s murdering eyes, for starters,” he gulped roughly. “I need a pianist, Clara.”

The color immediately faded away from her, she could no longer fake her smile. She shivered when her friend’s hand touched her back, in support. “You are the conductor to one of the greatest orchestras in the world. You can have any pianist you’d like.”

For the first time that night, his traits turned serious, holding no evidence of the childish and amusing expression they held before. “I don’t want any pianist. I want the best pianist. I want you, Clara.”

“Why, did everybody else turn you down?!?” Amy mocked him, sipping her wine, “I don’t blame them.”

“I turned them down!” Matt yelped, loudly, before turning his attention back to the petite woman, “What do you say?”

Clara wrapped her arms around herself; idealistically protecting herself from his pleas that felt more like attacks. “I don’t play anymore, Matt. You know that.”

“No, I know that you haven’t played in a while,” he fairly debated, “It doesn’t mean you won’t ever play again.”

“Actually, Matt, it means exactly that,” perhaps she had sounded a lot harsher than she’d originally intended — she didn’t care. “Please excuse me.”

Shoving her glass of champagne into Amy, Clara walked away before either of them had a chance to say anything else. The maestro attempted to go after her, but the redhead held him back, her blue eyes silently scolding him for clearly having upset her best friend.

With nowhere to go, but having the strongest urge to leave that place, Clara walked through the first door she came across. She climbed down a flight of stairs, her mind so far away from her physical body that she didn’t even notice entering a garden and being welcomed by the sharply chilly breeze of a late November night.

Clara was about to collapse.

The whiteness of the walls and the smell of the place made her dizzy; everything spun around her.
She was sure she would fall, didn’t the grandmother have her arm around her own, leading her towards the ward Ellie Oswald had been admitted to.

Clara didn’t understand why her father wasn’t by her mother’s side, but the image of him sank down in a plastic chair, head buried in his hands and shoulders uncontrollably shaking from his quiet sobs, was enough for her heart to break — just like his.

“Daddy,” she cried, causing the man to raise his head and show his reddened faces. He immediately stood up and paced towards her, throwing his arms around her and holding her head close to his beating heart.

“Clara.”

The grip around her was tight, close to suffocating her; she didn’t mind. If her father just needed to shield her in his embrace, believing he could protect her from all the harm and danger in the world, then she would gladly remain there.

She just wished she could protect her mother like that, too.

“You must be cold.”

It took her a few milliseconds to realize someone had addressed to her. At first, she assumed she had officially gone crazy and started to hear voices — there wasn’t anybody around — but she disposed of that thought when she turned around and saw somebody sitting on a bench.

His face showed age, yet not enough to call him old. His hair painted a halo around his head, its silver locks diving into a sea of curls that doubtfully had seen a comb in awhile. His eyes were hazel and green and blue, a mixture of colors that matched the shades of the universe; eyes that had seen the wonders and the evilness of the world.

Clara studied him calmly for a brief time. The way he had his legs crossed in signs of uncomfortableness to be there; the way his warm breath escaped his nostrils and defied the coldness of the air around him; the way his lips curved into half a smile, inviting her to join him in his self pity and regret of being there.

“Why aren’t you at the ball?” Clara wondered in a shy voice, her steps cautious as she approached him, taking a seat by his side but still keeping her distance.

“There are too many people there,” he argued, jerking back at the simple thought. “I’m a lone wolf. Social events frighten me.”

Clara wrapped her arms around herself — perhaps he’d been right; the cold was starting to bother her. “Why did you come, then?”

“I was told it’d be fun. Lied to, actually,” he offendedly cried, still in denial he had been tricked so easily. “Why aren’t you at the ball?”

“There are too many people there,” she made his words hers, adding a hint of sorrow and melancholic to them. “They were suffocating me.”

“See? People have no boundaries anymore,” he gesticulated widely with his hands. “Putting their hands around your neck until they steal the oxygen from you, pff. Society is on the very edge of losing its mind.”

She couldn’t tell whether he was being literal or just speaking in really twisted metaphors.
Nevertheless, she bursted into laughter. It was perhaps the most genuine laugh she’d had in a long time. “I didn’t mean it like that, silly.”

He joined her giggle, before offering his hand to her. “I’m the Doctor, by the way. I’m the first violinist for the Symphony.”

Clara failed to acknowledge anything past his introduction. “I’m sorry, the Doctor?! Pardon me, but what kind of name is that?!”

Wryly, the so-called Doctor scratched his non existent beard. “It’s what they call me. I never really liked my name, and this just sort of stuck to me.”

She seemed to consider it for a while. “I get that, but, why the Doctor? I mean, I’d understand if you entitled yourself the Musician, or the Violinist, but the Doctor? It just doesn’t make sense.”

“Now, that’s where you’re wrong,” he rose his finger in the air, “Music is something so strong, yet so ethereal, it holds the power to transcend. Music has the power, the magic, to heal, so long as you’re willing to hear it.”

His words fell to her ears like poetry, sending palpitations to her heart and chills down her spine — even if she didn’t agree. At last, she shook his hand in acquaintance, his fingers so long in comparison they reached her wrist. “I’m Clara. Clara Oswald.”

His smile broadened in a wicked manner; he didn’t end their physical contact. Instead, he locked her wrist between his thumb and index, the smoothness of her skin causing his pulse to throb harder. “I know, Miss Oswald. Your face isn’t exactly unknown.”

She blushed immediately, lacking the strength to break their touch. “It’s not like I’m a movie or rock star.”

“No, you’re a piano star,” he argued, grinning through his teeth, “In my world, in the classical music world, that’s just the same.”

Clara let out a breath. She had never asked for the fame, all she had ever wanted was to play, to give voice to her soul; not this. She was startled when he suddenly pulled back and began to free himself of his winter coat, handing it to her. She refused to take it, however. “I don’t usually disrobe men on our first encounter.”

“Don’t worry, I give you full permission to take advantage of me,” he teased, not waiting for an answer before placing his coat around her shoulders. “The patriarchy determines a gentleman must offer heat to a lady in distress, because the patriarchy also dictates a woman must endure all sorts of torture, such as heels and clothes that either make you too cold or too hot.”

“What about you?” she pondered, fixing his jacket tighter around herself; it warmed her bones. “I’d much rather if you didn’t freeze to death.”

“I have a low body temperature,” he brought his hands together in his lap. “I seldom, if ever, feel cold.”

Amy waited a few minutes, burning down the entire place with her glare, but aiming directly at the conductor and his stupid-looking bowtie, before going after Clara, concluding she had already given her enough space to breathe.
She barely reached the porch when the view in front of her caused her head to jolt. Clara was in the company of a man — specifically, the grey-haired violist, her coworker, who never engaged with any other players, let alone social events, and who carried an aura of sadness and sorrow around him.

Just like her friend.

The sweet giggle of the brunette echoed in the air, being met by a smile of his. They were either too good at pretending, or they had, somehow, lowered all of their defenses.

Smiling to herself, she went back inside, allowing their privacy to become their intimacy. She would warn her friend later how unpleasant the man usually was. Well, with what she knew of him, that would happen by itself, without her intervention.

“Let’s get out of here,” Clara suggested, her body aching to be away from musicians, even though she was taking a musician with her. “Neither of us want to be here, so let’s be somewhere else.”

His eyes flickered at the idea, but he didn’t dare to move. “What if I’m a serial killer?!"

She placed locks of her hair behind her ears. “Are you? A serial killer?!"

“No,” he crossed his arms, “But, then again, I wouldn’t tell you if I were. However, a daft grey man going out with the most beautiful woman here? People will surely think I’m holding you hostage.”

His compliment was at least somewhat subtle, but it was there — she didn’t flush again. She was rather flattered, instead. She leaned closer to him, whispering softly, teasingly, “Let them think.”

She got up and he was obliged to follow her. From the moment he laid his eyes on her, he only knew one thing.

He was so enticed by her he never stood a chance.

Chapter End Notes

soooo, what is it that you think Amy knows about the Doctor?? let me know!
Clara met the redhead in a cafeteria near her apartment building, greeting her with a kiss to the cheek before taking a seat. In front of her, Amy kept a permanent frown the whole time, studying every little significant trait written on the brunette’s face; trying to gather any information from it other than the grief she wore as a masquerade. “You look chipper.”

Showing her teeth in a confused manner, Clara barely nodded. “What’s so unusual about it?”

Amy gasped after her statement; she wasn’t easily surprised, but in that moment, she was astonished. “I’m sorry, have we forgotten completely about the last year gone by?! Where you were downright depressive and could go months without seeing the sunlight?!”

Shyly, she traced circle lines across the wood of the table, her gaze following the movements of her fingers. She just wanted to forget. “Come on, I wasn’t that bad.”

“You were,” her brows knitted together in disapproval, “When I told Rory you wanted to meet this morning, I swear he tripped on his feet and landed on the floor.”

“Yeah, but it’s Rory we’re talking about,” she fairly argued, “It’s not that hard for him to trip.”

They shared a light laugh, although Amy didn’t deepen it. “You disappeared last night. I was worried.”

Clara swallowed hard, her eyes slightly wider than before, slightly glowing more than before. “I told you I was leaving, Amy.”

“Yeah, but you didn’t tell me where you were going, or who you were going with. You didn’t even text me saying whether you’ve got home or you’d spend the whole night out,” regardless of the calm in her voice, her face showed how mad she was. Her face showed all her disapproval. “Is this a new phase of your grief, Clara? You’re now reckless with your own life?”

“I—“ her cheeks rouged; she didn’t think herself worthy of any excuses, but they were all she had to give, “I met someone.”

She stared at her blankly, barely blinking. “And you guys left the ball to fuck?”

“Jesus, Amy.”

“I’m not judging,” she clarified, “You’re a woman, you have your needs. When did you last have it, anyway?”

“We didn’t fuck, ” she rolled her eyes, “No. We went out for drinks.”

“You were at an open bar.”
She shrugged with her shoulders. “Neither of us wanted to stay there.”

“You had just met the bloke,” Amy shook her head. “He could be a serial killer. He could have murdered you.”

“He didn’t,” she displayed her lips flatly, “And he isn’t. I asked him.”

She bent her neck sardonically. “Because all serial killers bluntly admit they’re serial killers.”

Clara thanked the barista with their coffee. “Do you call all your coworkers serial killers?”

“No,” she was borderline offended, “Just the Doctor.”

Her eyes became phantom; her lifeless expression proclaimed a ghost taking over her soul — she almost spat out her drink. “I never told you his name.”

“Yeah, but I saw you two together,” her friend frowned again, and seemed to weigh her next words. “I don’t really like him.”

Clara allowed the heat of her mug to warm her hands. “He’s sweet.”

“To you, who’s famous and got capital,” Amy candidly accused. “We’ve been playing in the same orchestra for years now, and not once did he talk to me, or to anyone else, for what matters. There’s something off about him, Clara, with eyes that have long ceased to sparkle with life.”

She rested her chin on her palm, her vision glued to the dark liquid of her drink. “You don’t think I should see him again.”

“His soul is sad, and his sadness reflects on his music. His violin is so gentle, so tender, so melancholy it will bring tears to anyone who’s listening,” gently, Amy reached out to hold her other hand. “You don’t know how happy I am to see you stepping out of your comfort zone, finally. Heck, I’ve even got a list of very fine men who would make a perfect match for you. But, Clara… I don’t think the Doctor will be the one to help you. He’s so lonely in his own world, he won’t talk to anyone in the orchestra he’s been part of since anyone can remember, he’ll push anyone who tries to make contact away. I’m afraid he’ll end up hurting you even more. Because he’s also broken, Clara. And you’re already broken enough.”

Clara sniffed, sinking down along her friend’s words; thinking she was so broken that, if she shattered any further, it would be impossible to pick up the pieces of who she once had been.

There was a blaze of terror and pain stabbing her heart repeatedly when Clara stepped into her mother’s hospital room. Her steps were hesitant, her vision was blurry. She was completely synched to the world surrounding her and yet, so out of tune.

She only wished she could have met Ellie’s happiness to see her. Instead, she wish she could disappear forever. Because disappearing was the only way to escape everything that was bound to happen.

“Clara, my love,” she welcomed her with the brightest grin, attempting to sit up, but immediately wincing in pain. “How was your concert?”

Doing her best to stop her limbs from shaking, Clara grabbed a seat by her side. Her eyes were glowing; she judged best not to say anything or initiate any physical contact, not when she needed to be strong. For her mother.
Going against all her intentions, Ellie laid out her arm until she found the daughter’s wrist and locked it within her grip. “I’m sorry I couldn’t make it, you know how much I love seeing you play. Especially Chopin, you play it like no one else. Chopin himself must be jealous of your skills.”

“Stop,” the sharpness in her voice was so loud it made the ill woman lean back. “Don’t talk to me like everything is alright because nothing is alright, mum.”

Her jaw became rigid and she closed her eyes. Arresting her tears before they even had the chance to escape. “I’m sorry I couldn’t attend your concert, Clara.”

“Damn it, mum,” she unmercifully broke free of her mother’s hold, burying her face between her fingers. “Stop talking about my bloody concert! It doesn’t matter, it never mattered in comparison to you. And you’re here, and you’re in the hospital, and you’re... and you’re... and you’re—”

Watching her child on the verge of breaking down, Ellie no longer could feel her own pain; only Clara’s. She forced herself up until she reached the younger woman and pulled her into a nearly as broken embrace.

“Clara,” Amy called for her after whole minutes of excruciating silence. “You know that I’ll support you whatever you want to do, right?”

Clara suppressed a hint of a smile. “I know, Amy. And I appreciate it.”

Would her friend support her over the neverending daydreams she fell into about the day the music died in her? She doubted it, Which was why she couldn’t share it. Not that. Not yet. Maybe not ever.

“Even if you come crawling to me crying after you’ve got your heart broken,” she said, “I’ll refrain myself from saying I told you so .”

Clara forced a chuckle. “It wouldn’t be you if you didn’t say that.”

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Chapter End Notes

so *inserts eyes emoji*, do you think Amy is right about the Doctor? Let me know what you think, your feedback means everything to me :)

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The second time Clara met him, it had completely been a coincidence.

Or that was what she tried to convince herself of, after offering Amy to walk her to her rehearsal, butterflies tickling the insides of her belly in pure anxiety. She assumed that her anxiety would fade away when fate failed to bring them together, instead it only intensified when fate had other ideas, and he emerged into her field of vision.

“Right,” the redhead remarked, feeling herself burn between the looks the two of them exchanged, “I’m gonna go, then.”

They barely noticed the third party’s departure, too busy drowning themselves in each other’s eyes. Clara was frozen within her own body, requiring the raspiness of his voice to pull her back into phase, “Clara Oswald.”

Her brain certainly had a lot to say; her lips, however, were incapable of mimicking a single solitary one of her thoughts. “Hi.”

“You look nice. Much better than last night, if you ask me, without all that paint hiding your face,” this time, the red flushing her cheeks wasn’t artificial. “I assume you’re here to play and I’m getting on your way?”

“Oh, no, I don’t—“ the words I don’t play anymore were so common in her vocabulary they would come out almost automatically. That day, though, she decided she wasn’t a musician defined by her past; just Clara Oswald.. “No, I’m just passing by.”

“In that case,” he cracked a smile, one she wasn’t entirely sure he smiled for anyone else rather than her, “You won’t mind grabbing some coffee with me, will you?”

Clara wouldn’t willingly admit she had just had coffee. “Don’t you have a rehearsal to attend?”

His eyes were attracted to the watch on his wrist. “Shoot. You’re right,” he cursed, sighing loudly when he returned his stare to her, “Don’t go. Stay for the rehearsal. We can have lunch afterwards.”

Her expression dropped immediately — she couldn’t, she shouldn’t, she wouldn’t. “I… I don’t think that’s a good idea. I-I shouldn’t be here.”

“Come on, no one will mind,” he tried to convince her by placing his hand on her upper arm — her heart fluttered, somehow excited by such a mundane touch. “Parents will go home tonight telling their children, ‘Guess what? Clara Oswald watched my rehearsal today’, and their children will get mad because they didn’t take a picture nor got an autograph.”

Clara was rather uncomfortable by the nimbus of fame that followed her everywhere. “I don’t think children know who I am.”
“My children would,” he whiffed, his fingers entrancing her with a delicate touch at the small of her back, to encourage her to go along.

Pressing her lips together, she at last consented. The Doctor became so eager that it was nearly poetic, especially when, in his excitement, he kissed her on the cheek. “Shall we?”

She nodded, letting him lead the way. Somehow, he was nothing like the man Amy warned her about.

Clara sat in the far back, desiring to stay incognito for the entirety of the rehearsal. To her dismay, however, the lights to the theater hall were all turned on, and the lack of a crowd didn’t help hide her face. Especially from a certain redhead in the back of the orchestra.

Yet, her presence there wasn’t what terrified her the most. It was the music; she hadn’t heard the music in so long it scared her how the music would make her feel, how much sorrow it would lay upon her soul — and people knew that she didn’t play anymore, but they had no idea why she had stopped playing.

Other people weren’t allowed her story; they didn’t get to make small talk on behalf of her mother’s death. Telling them their story meant handing them power over her, and the power over herself was the only thing that allowed her to be in control of her life, even though that control was so keen on slipping away from her.

Matt, the maestro, opened his arms wide on stage. “Alright, folks, let’s play beautifully. We have a special visitor today,” he turned his head to her to shoot her a quick wink, forcing Clara to sink down on her seat and wish she could disappear.

Fluttering his magical wand in the air, the melody bursted into life, feeding her ears with the sound of Pomp and Circumstance — she felt dizzy. The music weighed on her and crushed her with its tune, making the air sharp, quite unable to fulfill her lungs’ need for oxygen.

“What’s her prognosis?” Clara Oswald demanded, staring at the doctor with eyes that could kill — they were no more than a façade. No matter the strength imposed upon her face, she was a mess inside, suffocating within the blood that vigorously pulsed through her fragile, mortal body.

She was sitting by the edge of the hospital bunk, still in her concert clothes, somehow strongly and somehow delicately holding her mother’s hand, so afraid she would fade away if she dared to let go. Ellie had her eyes shut; not because she refuted the words of her condition, but because a headache pounded her brains and cruelly drained away her energies and, consequently, her will to live.

In the far corner of the room, stood Dave Oswald. Completely still, unable to move, stuck within his own body. He dreaded to hear the words that still hadn’t touched the atmosphere, but had already shaped the anxiety and tension in the air.

“Just say it,” Ellie Oswald begged, still unable to open her eyelids. Her voice rasped through her throat, hurtful to be said; hurtful to be heard. “I can take it. They can’t, but I can. It’s my burden to deal with.”

“Whatever it is, we’ll deal with it together, mum,” Clara nearly lectured her, although her words were so low they were no different than the cry of a child lost in the darkness. The weak squeeze to her hand was more than an indication of her gratefulness.
The doctor was a master of silence, prolonging his truth until they reached their breaking point. “It’s cancer. I’m sorry, Mrs. Oswald.”

The hall suddenly became silent, a silence even heavier than the music. Clara concluded she was supposed to hold her hands together in reference — her arms refused to move. Raising her eyes to the platform, she found Matt already staring at her, his spine so bent forward to the point his wrist passed his knees.

“Come on, Clara, I know these guys are bad, but,” he said with intensity, “But are they really that bad?”

Clara shifted on her seat. How could she be a music critic when her ears failed to hear the music? She searched the crowd for Amy’s eyes, desiring to find some support in them, but one of the cons of being a cellist was being pushed to the far back of the orchestra. “No, um, they were good, yeah.”

“Good?!” he gasped, incredulous. “Clara, there’s no need for politeness here. Sir Edward Elgar must be rolling in his grave as we speak.”

She coerced an uncomfortable grin out of her lips. “They’re just requiring some practice; this is what, your first rehearsal? They’re all tired, Matt, they’ve just ended a season of playing The Magic Flute. You should consider giving them a break, where they can just rest until they grow so bored they resort themselves to practicing their music.”

Clumsily, he jumped down the stage to the auditory, walking his baby giraffe steps towards her. “You know better than that, Clara, you’re a bloody pianist. What happens if you go one day without playing?!”

Her fingers would rot in her hands and all the work and improvement she’d achieved in the past days, weeks, months even would completely go to waste, hence why she had long settled with the fact that she would never be able to play again — not that she had any intentions to. “I might be a pianist, Matt, but I’m also human. You orchestra is human first, musicians later. Don’t go too hard on them, or you’ll never reach the perfection you so desperately seek.”

He took a seat in the row in front of her, sitting on his knees and resting his elbows on the armrest to look at her. “Are you really going to tell me that you’ve never overworked yourself for days straight, sitting by the piano with your hands and fingers so sore they were on the edge of falling off, until all your energies were drained from you and you’d collapse?!”

“I have, and you know what I’ve learned from it?” Clara leaned closer, crying a whisper only meant for him, “That perfection doesn’t exist.”

His nonexistent brows became more cross than usual and he drifted away from her. “You’re wrong, Clara. Perfection does exist and it happens here,” he ferocity stated, his legs picking a slow pace down the hall as he yelled, “From the start!”

A huff of air escaped the gap between her lips — it was too agonizing staying. The theater flourished in music once more and Clara stood up. She tightened the coat around herself and departed the place before she lost her mind.

Chapter End Notes
thank you for everyone who’s kept up with me so far !! your feedback means everything to me :)
music is the essence of the soul

Chapter Notes

thank you so much for your feedback!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By the time the rehearsal was done, the Doctor was so surprised to see her outside; his fingers nearly lost their grip on his violin case. Clara was staring at the wall and yet she was looking at nothing at all. He was scared to disturb her daze as he sat by her side on a not so comfortable wooden bench.

“I thought you’d left.”

It was the sound of his voice — not the specks of the energy of his presence next to her — that brought her back to reality. She could feel his gaze upon her, absorbing with his sight every single one of her traits, but she didn’t dare turn her head. “I thought we had a lunch date.”

He agreed with a nod, the harshness of her voice like a dagger through his heart. “Are you mad at me?”

Her forehead turned into lines of confusion, “Why would I be?”

“You stormed out.”

The hot air of her lungs escaped through a gap between her lips. “Not everything’s about you,” she stated, her nails craving the wood underneath them. “I… I couldn’t remain there.”

Softly, he placed his hand above hers. “They were suffocating you again?”

The bow of her head was shy, but existent. “Yeah.”

Under any other circumstances, he would have mocked the incredibly small length of her hands when next to his. “I’m sorry. I would never want to willingly trigger you.”

A sardonic smile shaped her face as she finally allowed her eyes to meet his. “You didn’t know.”

He still didn’t, neither would that day be the one he would learn. “Let me take you somewhere you can breathe. I know a great restaurant just a few blocks away.”

The idea of walking away from music lit up her expression.

They chose a round table in the far back of the room, a curving sofa surrounding it in the corner against the wall. The fabric of the seat massaged her back when she sank herself in.

The Doctor focused on the menu — his stomach had howled loudly the entire journey there, to Clara’s amusement. She, however, locked her gaze on him, studying features of him she had yet to notice.
Her chin rested on her hand, “Amy told me about you.”

He didn’t give her the privilege of his eyes, “What is there to tell?”

Clara chose her words carefully. “You’re not the person she made you to be.”

“Clara, don’t be silly. We’re all different people according to who we’re with and where we’re at. We’re only our true selves when we’re on our own,” he flicked page after page, “I think I’m gonna have lobster. What about you?”

She was too busy understanding him to think about food. “That may be true, but we still carry bits of ourselves, our true selves, everywhere we go. We might build walls around ourselves, but they’re full of cracks, leaking pieces of our essence.”

“I am many people, Clara. The walls around me are too strong,” at last, he put the menu down, just in time to hear his insides groaning once more. “I really am hungry, Clara. Are you ready to order?”

His hunger was the least of her concern. “I just don’t understand,” she continued, studying him from the dark depths of her eyes, “She made you seem so distant, so cold. Why don’t you show them this self you allowed me to see?”

He pushed her menu her way, encouraging her to hurry her choice. “Maybe I’m really shy. Maybe I don’t like them. Maybe they’re not worthy of who I am.”

Her glare traveled quickly along the dishes, not really reading any of the options. “What makes me worthy?”

He merely chuckled, “Because you’re fa——“

“Don’t say it’s because I’m famous,” she interrupted before he got the chance to finish. Then, she spoke quietly, “I think I’ll have pasta.”

“That’s a good choice. You know what, I’ll have pasta too.” It was uncertain whether his wicked smile was in response to what he had just said or was about to say, “You’re not your true self either, Clara, not when near music. That fiasco with Matt? That wasn’t you — or, perhaps, the you you pre-established all the other musicians were worthy of. You may not realize it, but I did. I did the moment you fled the ball because you couldn’t stand being around the music, You can’t stand what the music has brought you.”

Her jaw fell the slightest down; was she such an open book or was he just that good at reading people? The smile never departed his face as he rose his hand in the air and told the waitress their order.

“I hope I’ve not scared you away,” he smirked. She wanted nothing more than to punch that proud grin off of his face.

Instead, she mimicked it as her own. “I’m not that easily scared.”

“Oh, you should be,” he teasingly changed his tone, “You have no idea of all the demons I carry inside of me.”

Clara whiffed — she was more than familiar with inner demons; she had lots of them, too. “I think I’ll take my chances.”

“Take them as you’d like,” he shrugged, bringing his glass of water near his lips, “I’m just saying,
I’m an old man. God knows when a stroke or a heart attack or a cancer might strike in.”

The blood immediately escaped her face, like a ghost had just gone by her eyes. “Those don’t come with age. They come with life. Death is promised to everybody and expected by nobody. And that is our own folly.”

The Doctor understood his sentence to be a trigger, yet it didn’t stop him from loudly elaborating, “Is that why you’ve retired? Because the person who meant music to you died and killed the music alongside them?”

She no longer was able to sustain the eye contact. The fallen hair upon her face hid her features very well. “I didn’t retire, I stopped playing. Music died a long time ago, all we do is to play requiems in its honor and its memory.”

He couldn’t tell whether she was trying to convince him or herself. He doubted he would ever be entitled to her pain — neither would he probe for it — however he could see the sorrow music weighed upon her shoulders. And it bothered him how much sadness music brought to her when music was supposed to heal the soul.

Although her stare remained fixed to the brown of the table, she felt his presence closer than before. Cara wasn’t surprised when his fingers brushed the skin of her face as delicately as he would brush the strings of his violins.

Her mother pressed her fingers softly against her hand, with the same tenderness Clara would play the pianissimo at the ending of a piece. They were alone, crowding a small hospital room. Dave had gone to work and the daughter had stayed behind, even though the parents insisted she’d go home to get some rest.

Clara refused to leave. Not unless her mother would leave with her.

She had her head lying across the uncomfortable bunk, using her own arm as a pillow. Ellie carried on playing with her hand, humming songs she had once heard her daughter play. The lullabies were calming, hypnotizing even, and under any other circumstances, she would have dozed off to them. She couldn’t; no matter how tired she was, her mind was traveling too fast to shut down.

“Tell me what’s bothering your mind, Clara,” the mother pleaded, feeling the tension and rigidness in the muscles her hand was made of.

Clara simply shook her head, causing the slightest shift in the mattress underneath. “I… It’s nothing.”

Ellie’s digits traveled through the locks of her hair, the child immediately shivering beneath her hold. “Something’s troubling you. You can talk to me, Clara. I’m still here.”

For the first time in a while, Clara dared to move on her seat and rose her torso just enough to initiate the eye contact. “For now, mum,” she argued, her voice betraying her, “You won’t be here forever.”

Despite of the harshness in the sentence, Ellie don’t let go of her hand. Instead, she squeezed it even more strongly. “Nobody lives forever, Clara.”

Her head swung sideways periodically. “You don’t want to get treatment, mum. You could have more time here.”

“You’re mad. I understand that,” she said, softly but sternly, seeing her own reflection in the teary
eyes of her daughter, “But, Clara, you heard the doctors. No treatment will guarantee anything further than a few more months. Months spent in weakness and ugliness and agony. I don’t want those months, not for me, not for you or your father. I want my last days to be spent with love and beauty and redemption. I want to go to your concerts and hear you playing and allow my soul to transcend through your music.”

With the oxygen stuck in her throat, Clara brought their joined hands to her mouth; hiding her features, wetting their skin with the moist of her lips. “It's not fair, mum. It’s not fair.”

“Life, Clara, is never fair,” she smiled sadly, bringing her daughter’s head closer to her chest. She didn’t know much; but she knew she was drowning inside his ocean eyes. The Doctor put her hair away from her face, leaving his hand behind her ear. “Music, Clara, can’t die. It’s the only thing that won’t ever die. It lives on inside of me, inside of you. We are its voice, even in our silence.”

Clara found herself completely under the spell of his lyricism. Every word he spoke was poetry to her. His hot breath warmed her face, tickling the hair on her neck. He should have become a songwriter, not a violinist.

Unexpectedly, their food arrived, forcing them apart — for which she was glad, otherwise she’d end up doing things she hadn’t intended to achieve throughout her day. It interested her, however, how insignificant she'd become to him next to his meal.

He raised his glass in the air and grinned, “Cheers.”

Clara didn’t mimic his movements, although he was so eager to start eating she doubted he had minded. He hadn’t been kidding when he said he was hungry. She picked her fork up; she was so allured by this peculiar man in front of her she had completely lost her appetite.

“I’d like to hear your story one day,” like he could read her mind, the Doctor spoke up, his eyes fixated on her; studying every tiny part of her face as if memorizing a piece of music.

She chewed her lower lip and smiled crookedly. “And I’d like to hear yours.”

“Ah, my story doesn’t matter,” he debated, the food quickly disappearing from his plate. “I’m not famous, it’s not my story that’s gonna make the front page of newspapers and become a bestseller book.”

She shook her head, one of her eyebrows arched high. “Why are you so obsessed with my allegedly fame? I’m not some divine goddess to be praised, I’m no more than an ordinary human.”

“I’m not obsessed, I’m intrigued,” the Doctor corrected, traveling his tongue across the borders of his mouth. “It amazes me how you built your career from nothing, how you worked your way to the top when no one had any idea who you were, when no one put faith in a twenty year old girl who looked too much like a teenager. You conquered their respect like the music conquered your soul. You built yourself a name, a name not so easily forgotten on the minds of the music elite. And then, you just stopped. Like it never mattered to you, you just quit. You gave up everything you dedicated your life to achieve, and you never cared to explain why. I am fascinated by you, Clara Oswald.”

For a moment, she wondered if that was what every other musician thought of her; an ungrateful bitch who threw away all the love and respect her public had given her. Her voice came out monotonously — she could bore herself, “Why does that fascinate you? I’m no more than a coward, who couldn’t face her own fears and demons. Not in the name of herself, not in the name of the music that had once meant everything to her.”
She didn’t know why she was telling him that, why she was opening her soul to him; for the first time, she was giving bits of herself to a complete stranger, and that scared her.

He cleaned his lips with a cotton napkin. “A coward?! That makes you the strongest person I know. God knows I would never be able to separate myself from my violin, for we make each other’s essence. You, on the other hand, you just killed the music to find back your essence.”

“I didn’t kill the music,” she cried in a whisper, “The music just died on me.”

Chapter End Notes

so, what do you think might be twelve's dark past? let me know!
The Doctor smiled at her with his head up, now that she stood a few steps higher than him. He had offered to walk her home, not taking no for an answer when she tried to decline with the excuse he should go home and practice before Matt had his head off.

“Tell me, now,” Clara prompted, a hint of teasing behind her voice, “The only reason why you’ve offered to take me home was to learn where I live so you can break in and murder me in my sleep.”

“And kill Britain’s most infamous piano player?” he faked a gasp at the idea, “I would dread to go down on history like that.”

She cracked half a smile, “I’m glad my fame will keep me safe from your murderous hands.”

His features suddenly dropped the smirk they always held. “I still have faith you’re going to play again one day. I can’t have you dead nor die myself before that day comes.”

Much like him, the color faded away from her face. The sparkle that had taken over the chocolate of her eyes no longer existed. “I… I don’t…”

In an attempt to silence her, he interlaced his fingers with hers and brought her knuckles to his lips — he saw her blush instantaneously. “Clara.”

The way he said her name was like music to her ears — not that she would know, for she didn’t know what music was anymore. She just couldn’t understand why or how he still had faith on her; everybody else had already given up on her. “Thank you, Doctor.”

There was so much she could be thanking him for; their lunch, his company on her way home, his unending faith in her. Despite his lack of knowledge, the grin returned to his expression. “I’ve had the most pleasant time, Ms. Oswald, I sincerely hope you’ll allow me the pleasure of your company once again.”

Shyly, she retrieved her hand from his hold. “I’d like that, yeah.”

He took a few steps back and began to disappear into the Londoner crowd. She sighed loudly and turned on her heels, climbing the remaining flight of stairs to her building. She had nearly reached the entrance when he called for her.

“Clara? I was hired to play in a venue and I’m in need of a pianist for a duo. Do you happen to know any available?”
She played obliviousness to his innuendo. “What are you playing?”

“Bach, I think.”

Her head dragged itself back and forth, “I’m sorry. I can’t think of any.”

“Right,” he cleared his throat, “Well, if you think of any, just give me a call.”

Clara frowned, “I don’t have your number.”

The smug smile again. “Check the pocket of your coat.”

Still pouting, she buried her hands in her pockets and found a piece of paper there. Written in a messy handwriting was his name, his number and a doodle of a smiley face. She had no idea how or when it had ended up there. “How did you—“

When Clara raised her head again, he was already gone. She whiffed, rereading his name over and over again as she made her way inside.

Perhaps he was just as much a mystery to her as she was to him.

Clara closed the door behind her and didn’t bother to lock it. She dropped her purse to the couch and hung her coat by the door. Like a magnet, her short legs were lured to the big shelf that decorated her living room; she seemed unable to stop herself from going there. There was dust piling up across the wood and the books, tickling her nose when her fingertips brushed across the names of composers long dead whose brilliance broke through the barriers of time and space.

She pulled out a book of Bach’s duets, flipping the pages until she found Bach’s Aria in G. With her eyes, she began to mentalize the melody the notes dictated; she could almost hear its barrochian sound.

Clara opened the piano and sat down, placing the sheets in front of her. He hands positioned themselves to play the first chord. The adrenaline flourished through her veins and arteries, causing the edge of her limbs to begin trembling. Her foot fell off the pedal and her hands lost control of the keys underneath them. She buried her face in her palms and her elbows sank down the keys, echoing the most desperate sound in the air.

She could never play again.

*Clara helped her mother lie down in the king sized bed, shutting the curtains right after. Ellie had just been discharged from the hospital, even though neither the daughter or the doctors had really approved it. They just couldn’t deny a dying woman’s request.*

“Is your headache any better?” she asked in a quiet tone, bringing a blanket up to the woman’s shoulders.

“Yes, a little,” she forced a smile upon her face, gesticulating she should take a place by her side. Hesitantly, Clara did. “Don’t you have a concert you should be preparing for?”

Clara’s jaw immediately dropped — she had forgotten completely. “I’ll just… I’ll cancel it, don’t worry.”

“Cancel it?! Now, I’m worried,” her Blackpool accent showed more than usual. “People have
already paid to see you. I have already paid to see you.”

She shook her head, avoiding eyes contact. “They’ll get their money back, then. I haven’t practiced
in two days, I probably don’t even remember how to play it anymore.”

Ellie huffed through her nose. “We have a piano here. I know you haven’t played it in forever, but
it’s still the reason you are where you are.”

“My first piano,” she smiled, thinking of all the good memories it was attached to; it soon faded
away. “Come on, mum. You have a headache. The incessant sound of the piano will only make it
worse.”

“It won’t. In fact, I think it’ll only heal me,” she argued, applying a soft squeeze to her hand.
“Please, Clara. Allow me to go to the sound of your music.”

Abruptly, Clara stood up, her arms crossing against her chest. She mumbled as she departed the
room, “You’re not dying today, mum.”

That day, her music was angry.

She was angry. Enraged at herself for allowing her pain and sorrow to overcome her music until
there was no music left in her. Her mother would be so disappointed to see she had allowed her grief
to steal the essence of her soul — and now it was gone, she had no way of retrieving it.

Not on her own. Not when she was so lost inside of herself.

Her elbows had been stamped by red marks from the pressure of the keys against the delicate skin;
she didn’t even notice them. Her hands were clenched in fists of rage and she lost control of herself.

Clara was puffing when she threw the sheets away from her sight, having them fly in the air until
reaching the floor. Her acts had been so hateful she triggered the piano case to fall closed, shutting
out the black and whiteness of the keys.

The black and white that obstructed her view and caused her to see the world in no more than shades
of grey.

She got up so furiously the seat scratched against the floor, begging for mercy. She tripped in her
own feet and placed her palms against the cold of the nearest wall. Her eyes turned with the
surfacing tears that dared to take over her vision rage.

She rested her temples against the bricks of the wall, exchanging energy flows with them. She had
tried; she’d put herself in front of the piano and forced herself to play something — it was the music
that had failed her.

The music had drowned her. It had grown tired of her whining and it was then seeking its revenge; it
was punishing her for abandoning her when she needed it the most — when they needed each other
the most.

Clara had betrayed the music and now it turned its back on her — and she saw herself deserving of
that. The music had always been her life, it was was what her soul was made of; they once were one
. Perhaps what was missing from her wasn’t her mother, but the music her mother had showed her
when she was no more than a toddler.

Clara fell down on her knees, as if she could beg the music to flood her ears and make her feel alive
again. She was redeeming herself, because for the first time in almost one year — the anniversary of
her mother’s death could already be seen in the near horizon — she understood.

She was nothing without the music.

It wasn’t Clara that had killed the music.

The music was killing her.

“Amy,” Clara called softly, the remnants of her panic attack still shaking her voice. She could almost hear the scared breathing of her friend on the other side of the line. “I don’t know what to do.”

The redhead’s heart was tight in her chest. “Clara? What’s going on, did something happen? Are you alright?”

She shook her head in response to both her questions, regardless of the physical incapability of the friend seeing it. “Can you come over?” she asked, doubting her words had left their own lips, so low they were. She felt bad, she felt ashamed, for she could hear the orchestra playing in the background.

She was willingly pulling Amy away from her music because, in her own selfishness, the music meant nothing to her.

“I’m on my way,” Amy didn’t hesitate. “Don’t do anything stupid until I get there, okay?” she begged, waiting for whole seconds for an answer that never came. “Are you alright, Clara?”

Clara took in a long breath, pulling her phone away from her face as she muttered, “I think I’m dying inside.”

She ended the call, but not before Amy could hear every one of her words.

Chapter End Notes

let me know what you think :)
The third time they met, Clara was wearing a fancy dress and heels. The Doctor was certainly astonished at the sight of her, standing by her door frame in a black suit with a red lining inside.

God, he looked like a ridiculous magician in that stupid outfit, especially when standing next to her. She was beautiful like he had never seen; his heart fluttered inside his chest like a horny teenager in love — he was ashamed of such an allegation, but the way she talked and laughed and looked did things to him that words failed to describe.

She had him completely under her spell and she was completely oblivious to it.

Clara had called him a few days prior, rambling him her thanks for their lunch; his ego, however, convinced her intentions hadn’t been that innocent. Hence why he had asked her out on a proper date — he just didn’t expect she would accept it right away.

“‘Good evening, Ms. Oswald,’ he spoke in formalities, taking her hand to his lips, like she was royalty; he was addicted to the shape of the bones that sculpted her frame. ‘Shall we?’”

She simply nodded, holding tight to her purse with the hand that wasn’t clung to him. “Where are we going?”

His palm traveled from her fingers to the origins of her spine, where her soul sat. “It’s a surprise. I assure, though, you’ll be amazed.”

Clara snorted, “Unless we’re going back in time to 20s Paris, I’m not that easily amazed.”

“Aren’t you a woman of high standards,” he amusingly joked, “I’m sorry to break this to you, darling, but my time machine is at the repair shop. She’s got a broken wheel.”

Chills were sent down her spine at his choice of pronoun of treatment — from his hand lodged there, she was sure he had felt them, too. She followed his lead to his car and climbed into the passenger’s seat, stealing sideways looks of him until arriving at their destination.

The moment they entered the facility, Clara was definitely amazed, although it wasn’t exactly for the best.

The place was dark and crowded. Above each table held a candelier, providing all the luminescence to the environment; Clara dug her nails into the fabric of his clothing so she wouldn’t lose him in the dark. There was a terrible singing in the background that made her ears hurt.

She turned her head to him and gasped, “You brought me to a bloody karaoke?!”
The Doctor was too busy looking for a table and pulling her amidst all the people to give her his eyes. “Surprised, aren’t you?!”

“You can say that, yeah,” she grunted, watching as he threw used glasses to a passing waiter’s tray and gesticulated she should take a seat; she did — with a little bit of a struggle, for both the table and the stool were too high. Her legs freely swung in the air after she managed to settle herself.

Unlike her, he remained on his feet, eyes focused right past her at the two people on stage squealing to Celine Dion’s *My Heart Will Go On* and mimicking the scene from Titanic where Rose and Jack stood on the edge of the ship. It was borderline ridiculous, the Doctor felt his own cheeks rouging.

Their drinks soon arrived, finally luring him back to reality. He caught a glimpse of her playing with her drink straw, freezing still when she noticed his stare upon her. She blushed.

He didn’t allow the awkward silence to prevail for long. “There’s something bothering me about you.”

Her eyes enlarged; his traits were so madly serious she was frightened she had scared him away before he’d even had the chance of getting to know her and her inner demons — she wouldn’t blame him for running after meeting them. “What? What is it?”

His glare was consuming her alive; torturing her with words that still had to be echoed in his throat. “It’s your hands.”

“My hands?!?” her jaw fell, perplexed. He was an *incognito*; everything he ever said or did always went completely against her expectations. She looked down on herself, “What’s wrong with them?”

“They’re too small!” he spasmed widely with his arm, *clearly* disturbed. “I don’t understand, Clara! How can you be Britain’s greatest pianist with those incredibly small hands?! I doubt they even reach an octave!”

Clara was forced to chew her lower lip to contain her laughter. “I’m very skilled, I’ll have you know.”

He merely scoffed. “There aren’t skills enough that might explain how *those hands* are able to play a Tchaikovsky piano concerto.”

“But they do play a Tchaikovsky piano concert,” she argued, leaning forward. Perhaps, she had used the wrong verb tense — her joints and muscles were already rotten. Still, she teased him with a hoarse voice, provokingly, “My fingers are very talented. They play like nobody else.”

The Doctor couldn’t miss the innuendo behind her voice, had she intended it or not; he gulped hard, the hair in the back of his neck tickling his skin. “I look forward to the day I’ll *feel* you play.”

Because the music had texture, of course, but that wasn’t the meaning Clara embraced. She leaned back, taking the straw between her teeth and sipping slowly; the alcohol burned her veins.

The *murdering* of Celine Dion finally came to an ending, and the Doctor didn’t waste any time. He caught her tiny wrist between his thumb and index and pulled her to her feet, not bothering with words and explanations. She only ever realized what he had in mind once they arrived at the stage.

“Doctor!” Clara cried his name, trying to break his speed. He dragged her up the flight of stairs. “Trust me, I *can’t* sing. At all. Those lovebirds singing Titanic are *nothing* compared to how bad I am. Really, my mum knew I was a lost cause since day one, hence why she put me in piano classes rather than singing ones. She *knew* it’d be a waste to invest in my singing career.”
She was rambling, only to make his grin increase - he found her adorable when she rambled. The Doctor placed his hands on her shoulders to ease her, “Clara, calm down. I don’t want you to sing, no, leave me to it.”

Clara frowned, tilting her head sideways, “Then what am I doing here?”

“Well, I need some accompaniment,” he explained, his smirk somehow gone and replaced by hints of hesitation.

She was oblivious at first, only understanding when she saw the piano in the corner. Her body petrified within itself, except for her heart — her heart was threatening to break free. “Doctor, I don’t… I can’t…”

He brushed the skin of her face with this thumbs; delicately, like a painter brushed their canvas. “I know you can. You’re Clara bloody Oswald. Besides, this isn’t a concerto, it’s just a few chords,” he spoke melodically, cupping her jawline with his palms. “Listen, I’m not trying to force you into doing anything you don’t want to, but whatever it is that’s stopping you, I know that, together, we can defeat it.”

Whether her head was nodding or shaking, neither of them knew. Clara stumbled on her feet until she reached the piano; she would have most likely fallen weren’t for the Doctor still holding her. Sitting by it, she flickered through the pages of the collection of sheets, waiting for him to pick one. *What* was she doing? She had no idea.

*Why* was she doing it? She failed to know.

*Who* was she trying to prove herself to? She couldn’t tell.


She squinted her eyes, trying to make shape of the chords and arrangements. *God*, she hadn’t played in so long; her breathing was erratic, her limbs were shaking, her heart had long escaped the traps of her inner walls. Still, she forced herself to sustain her composure. *He should be right, she could do it* “S-sure.”

He yanked the microphone from its pedestal and leaned against the piano, one eye on the sheets, the other on her. “Ready when you are.”

*If only she could stop her hands from shaking.* She bit down her lower lip strongly, her vision was blurry and she was certain she had missed all the notes as she played the first chords. *If she only could hear her music.*

The Doctor pressed the mic to his lips, his fingers close to touching her spine but never daring to initiate the physic contact. “Love of my life, you’ve hurt me. You’ve broken my heart and now you leave me.”

His low and throaty voice only made it all worse.

“You look beautiful, Clara.”

*Her smile was nearly nonexistent at the sight of her mother. Ellie wore a black flat dress, contradicted to Clara’s golden sparkly outfit, chosen intentionally to stand out to the darkness of the orchestra.*
And perhaps, to the darkness inside her soul.

Ellie approached her with weak steps; even past one week since she had left the hospital, she still hadn’t gotten back all of her strength. She never would. Clara had even put on a fight on how she couldn’t go to the concert, on how she should stay home and rest, but the mother would never willingly miss it. “Are you nervous?”

“No,” she stated simply. It wasn’t playing that was making her anxious, it was the idea that she was most likely playing her last concert with her mother there. She was angry for that — and taking it out on the one person who couldn’t be blamed.

Ellie pressed a peck of a kiss to her cheek. “Well, then, I’ll see you after the concert. I’d wish you good luck but I know you won’t need it.”

Clara was frozen within the barriers of her body as her eyes watched her go. She had no idea how time she’d spent standing still — she assumed a lot, as it required a flautist to enter her dressing room to grab her out of her haze and let her know they were about to start. Clara breathed in a terrified breath.

She followed him backstage and waited behind the drapes as the orchestra took place, the maestro lingering right by her side. The curtains finally opened and the whispering of the audience came to a sudden ending. They broke into applause as the conductor walked in.

Clara closed her eyes. She was no longer Clara Oswald; she was the pianist about to give life to her music.

Clara squinted her eyes as her hands messily traveled across the board. She was longer a pianist, she was just Clara Oswald, lost within her own sound.

And she was murdering the music she tried to play.

“You will remember, when this is blown over and everything’s all by the way—”

She did her best to follow his voice, to build him an orchestration, but she had no idea whether she was succeeding or not — she very much doubted she was. The carbon dioxide was piling up in the bottom of her lungs, slowly and unmercifully suffocating her, extracting the life out of her and consequently killing whatever was left of the music.

They were dying and dying and dying.

She couldn’t breathe. She was growing dizzy, but the world wasn’t spinning around her; it was crashing onto her, trapping her underneath all the pressure it applied on her shoulders. She couldn’t go on any further, she was falling and crumbling and collapsing and perishing and—

And she stopped.

“To remind you how I still—” there was a little delay as his voice faded out at the notion of the sudden interruption of the music. The Doctor was confused, seeing her startled eyes, her fingers trembling as they grew white from the strength she still applied to the last key she had played.

“Clara…?”

She failed to respond to his calling; she wasn’t even in the same physical phase as him. From the corner of her eyes, she could see all the stare of the customers on her, although she was uncertain if they’d rested on her all along, or if she had only attracted them at the abrupt cease of the sound. They all diminished her with their gazes.
“Clara,” he cried her name again, longing to help her but fearing any attempt of help would trigger her further. “Clara, talk to me.”

Her hands lost their grip and fell from the piano to her lap. Her fingertips brushed against her own palms, digging her nails deep into her skin, trying to cause herself to feel anything. Yet, she was numb.

The voices on the background grew louder; had they returned to their frivolous conversations? Were they whispering about her? She didn’t even process as her brain forced her legs to falter out of the stage, the Doctor always one step behind her.

She didn’t stop at their table as he had previously expected. He fetched a twenty pounds bill from his pocket and threw it above the table, paying for their drinks. He noticed her legs giving in underneath her, and, somehow, he doubted it was due to the alcohol she had ingested.

The Doctor only managed to reach her outside the bar. She was sweating, despite of the autumn night hardening onto them. Her gaze remained by her feet, he was uncertain she had seen him approaching. Still, he pressed his fingers to the chilly skin of her upper arm. “Clara.”

She shivered beneath his touch. “Just… Just take me home, please.”

“Clara.”

She shook her head in disbelief. “Never mind. I’ll just call an uber.”

He would never allow her to just go like that. The palm of his hand cupped her arm, guiding her towards his car. “I just… I don’t understand, Clara.”

She struggled with her hands to open the car door, although she wouldn’t ask for — or accept — his help. “Some things, Doctor, are too broken to be fixed.”

She disappeared within his sight, leaving him no alternative than to circle around the car and climb into the driver’s seat. He found her with her eyes glued to the outside window, avoiding his gaze and disrespecting it anyway, “Nothing’s ever too broken. You are not too broke n , Clara, you just have to accept the help other are willing to offer you.”

“I’m beyond help,” she cried in a whisper, resting her forehead against the transparent glass, with her eyes closed. “Didn’t you hear my music?! It’s broken, too.”

He traded looks between the road ahead of them and her small figure next to him. “Yes, Clara, your music was terrible. You were there, playing, but you weren’t there, listening. You and your music have parted ways, and the only way you’ll ever fix yourself is by becoming one with your music, like you once were.”

She held her arms together over her lap, trying to cut through the material of the seatbelt with her nails. “I am dead to the music.”

The Doctor didn’t agree with her; after hearing her attempt to play and fail miserably, he had thought the main intention of universe bringing them together was so he could assist her throughout her greatest sorrows — before it was too late, for either of them. Regardless, he nodded to her allegation, “I’m sorry to hear that.”

“Yeah. Me too.”
sooo, do you think the Doctor will be able to guide her back to her music? let me know!
the day the music died

Chapter Notes

The music mentioned and referred to in this chapter is Shostakovich's Piano concerto No. 2. Now, I strongly recommend listening to this while reading the chapter, for it can be quite hard to describe classical music (although I tried my best) and listening to it while you read it can be quite helpful, I suppose.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Clara had her back leaned against the cushions of the couch, her knees touching her chest while hiding her face between the gap formed with one another. That day, her soul was weak, yet strong enough to deprive her from her will to live.

Although it was still daylight, her apartment was dark. Perhaps because the skies were mourning, perhaps because her eyes failed to see her surroundings clearly. Nonetheless, that day weighed upon her and robbed her of her own breath.

All because that chilly morning of a december day marked one year since the perishing of Ellie Oswald.

Clara hadn’t gone to visit her grave. She didn’t want to; she dreaded the idea of visiting her resting place, especially when she had nothing to say. Just like the music, the words had faded away from her. After her mother’s death, she had lost everything, including her own essence. She was no more than the shell of the person she had once been.

Two weeks had passed since her ruined date with the Doctor, and she hadn’t heard from him anymore. Part of her wanted to believe he was respecting her personal wishes, allowing her the choice of being the one to reach out. However, she was certain she had, insteady, scared him away with her broken and disintegrating self. She had allowed her demons to come out and send away the only person who had sincerely cared for her in a long time.

Her father had called as soon as the dawn broke through; she refused to pick up. She was already hurting enough without the sorrow of the man who had lost the only woman he had ever loved. Amy also called a little after working hours had begun. Clara refused to take the call as well. She wasn’t in the mood to deal with her friend’s unintentionally patronizing words.

No. There were only two people with whom she desired to speak on that hazy morning of fall. One of them was her mother, but the barriers between life and death impeded any chances of communication. The other person, though very much alive, was however, the one person who didn’t know of her story, who was oblivious to the reasons why she had killed her music — or was it the music who had killed her?

She desired the Doctor, and she had no idea why.

That day tore all the walls she had built around herself down. Clara was her most vulnerable self. She was unfamiliar with the exterior forces that led her hand to her phone, scrolling around until she found his contact.
Her heart thundered inside her chest as her thumbs trembly typed him a message; “Can you come over? I need you,” it was simple, it was desperate, she regretted everything as soon as she hit sent. She tried to repair her obvious despair by adding, “I need to tell you something.”

It was out; her most intimate secret was brought to surface and it soon would be announced to the world. She was past the point of no return. She locked her phone and threw it far away from her, it landing on the floor with a loud crash, Clara buried her head in her hands. She would rather remain in ignorance than to grow anxious from his reply or lack of.

Clara fought back the tears emerging from her eyes, in vain. Her heart was tight inside of her, making her drown in the own oxygen she inhaled.

The hush once more broke into applause when the maestro opened out his arm to announce her. Clara walked on to the stage with her head high; she was sure she was smiling, but her lips were struggling to obey her brain’s command.

She sat by the piano, hushing the entire hall. She took several deep breaths, before placing her hands on the keys, indicating to the maestro that she was ready.

She was heavy.

The orchestra played its first melody, announcing the arrival of hers. Embracing their welcome, Clara pressed delicately the first notes, softly, quietly, brushing the music with the tip of her fingers.

Her pianissimo grew louder, soon being joined by the echoing of the drums. She was gaining speed, furiously, the violins soon overtaking her as she angrily played through octaves.

She was at war. War with herself, war with the music crushing her. The other instruments ceased from life and she was left in her own.

The floor was hers, and she held the higher voice. She was playing scales, crying for mercy, desperately trying to make peace with her own self, desperately trying no to lose her balance when she needed it the most.

She was disappearing… disappearing… disappearing…

There was a thunder. A loud strike by the trumpets, announcing the harm that was coming; the harm within herself. Her hands hit the keys angrily, scarily. She was at war and she was the vanguard. Leading herself towards destruction.

The flutes joined her side, marching at her rhythm. Using her anger and her ire as their fuel; following her regency. Soon, however, they were hushed by the cries of the strings of the violins, begging for mercy — a mercy she didn’t have in herself to give.

She was in the battlefield, and she seemed the only one willing to fight. And she was falling… falling… falling… so low she would soon run out of heys. She was alone. Drowning underneath the tip of her fingers; she wouldn't give up. She grew higher and higher until she was facing the violins again. The were strong against her.

The flutes gained their voice once more, standing by her side. Fighting on her behalf when she was too weak to continue, when she was no more than a voice fading away in the background, trying desperately to gather her strength.

Her return came as unexpectedly as a lightning bolt cutting the sky in two; as loudly as the thunders that brought children’s nightmares to life. Every other instrument was scared of her. They were all
at war against her rage. And they swallowed her in.

Complete silence.

She ended the quietude with dizzy chords, dazzling in circles until the child inside of her was set free. Her music became sweet, an infant walking through the field of war and no one dared to take the first shot; no one dared to rip a child’s innocence from her.

But the child grew amidst the violence, until soon, ending a childhood built from love, she was leading the war. The violins attempted to silence her small voice; she was stronger than she looked. The beating of her heart echoed the beating of the drums — she was ready for her victory. She was deserving of her victory.

However, like any other child born from war, her doom had been set ever since her birth. She was rounding around herself, the insanity taken over the entirety of her, mercilessly.

She was going crazy and the other instruments dwelled on her misfortune; dancing on her accord until they betrayed her and swallowed her music into oblivion. Silencing her forever.

And Clara collapsed over the piano, her skin sweaty, her mind and soul weak. She had given so much of herself there was nothing left to give,

The entire hall broke into applause, even if she had been drained of all her energies to stand up and bow before them.

Knocks came to her door; four hesitant knocks that dreaded to pound against the hard wooden surface, but its sound echoed through the air nonetheless. Clara nearly jumped, startled, at its reverberation through her sensitive ears. She brought her legs closer to her chest — she didn’t have the strength to get up.

“It’s open,” she whispered, for her vocals failed to speak up. She doubted she had been heard, especially when the knocking came again. She laid her cheek sideways across her knees, naively thinking the smaller she looked, the harder it would be for anyone to see her.

“Clara? Clara, it’s me. Open up.”

Her heart thundered inside of her, hardly, louder than the vibrating of drums; she feared he would hear it from the other side of the door. Regardless of his calling, of the hint of worry behind his voice, she remained perfectly still, frozen within time and space.

There was a click of the knob turning over, and a draft broke in when the door was pushed open. The oxygen got stuck in her throat, her desire of hiding away growing by the second — she shouldn’t have texted him; now, it was too late.

Had she had her eyes open, she would have seen him emerging into her field of vision. The Doctor was cautious to approach her, bending down midway to retrieve her phone from the floor; all the notifications from his worried texts had never been opened, perhaps they hadn’t even been seen. He placed it on the coffee table.

“Clara,” he cried her name, carefully sitting by her side. She was a mess; there were dark circles under her eyes, her cheeks red and puffy. Her clothes were baggy, too big for her small frame — perhaps they had fitted her once, too many moons before, but not anymore. The hair on her arm was up in goosebumps, matching the chaos of the hair on her head. All her barriers were down, — she was her most vulnerable self; — not even his presence there would bring them back up.
She was allowing him to see a dark side of her she probably never allowed anyone to see. After the realization, he made a silent promise to himself of his duty of care for her, always.

Gently, he placed his hand on her leg, over the loose fabric of her trousers. Even though she knew he was there, Clara shivered underneath his touch, only then acknowledging his presence, shooting her eyes open in terror — not because of him, but because she was terrified at the prospect of anyone seeing her like that.

So small. So vulnerable. So broken.

Still, she was unable to look away in shame and self-disdain.

The Doctor removed some of the brown locks of hair fallen over her face, leaving his hand hovering over her head. He daren’t say anything, break the silence, no matter how much it weighed upon them and attempted to crush them under its heaviness. No; he would give her all the time she required in order to find her voice.

Even in the possibility she might never.

“I’m sorry,” she began, hoarsely; she hadn’t spoken in so long her vocal chords betrayed her. “I shouldn’t have bothered you.”

“Bother me?! Clara,” he was unnerved under her conjecture, “You could never bother me, Clara.”

Something on the way he pronounced her name, she couldn’t quite figure out what it was, sent chills down her spine. Like he was singing the music she was made of. “I’m a bother to everybody around me, including myself. Why would you be the exception?”

She wasn’t pitiful, she was disgusted with herself. Of who she was and how she came to be. Clara could only assume he felt the same towards her, perhaps even worse. His words, however, were sweet and contradicting of the thoughts she saw as truth; “Who told you that? Yourself?”

Clara gazed down almost instantaneously. She didn’t need to be told of what she already knew. She just wished he would see her for who she really was, not from the shrine he had built under her feet. “Doctor—”

The call of his name was hollow and empty, for she had nothing to say — she had lost the essence of her own voice. Unexpectedly, he dropped to his knees in front of her, trying to find the path to her eyes, to her soul. “I’m here, Clara. Forget about everybody else, about the world, just… just let me help you.”

Her head swung sideways, her eyelids shut once more. She wasn’t denying his request, however she knew better. “I’m beyond help. No one can help now.”

He held her by both her ankles. Not to restrain her, but to impede her from fading away. “If you truly believed that, Clara, I wouldn’t be here.”

She repeated, monotonously and lifelessly, “I shouldn’t have bothered you.”

The Doctor sighed loudly. Before she could process it, he was back to her side, even closer than previously. “Do you want me to go, Clara?”

Her chin trembled during her attempts of saying anything. He demanded an answer from her that she didn’t know how to give. “I…” she tried; she couldn’t say it, hence why she probed, “You can go if you want to.”
“That’s not what I asked, Clara,” he suddenly found himself addicted to her name; it tasted sweet on his lips. Still, he replied, “I don’t want to go anywhere.”

“Okay.”

Under any other circumstances, he would have rolled his eyes at how she made her decision sound like his idea. Not today, though. Even if she refused to let him in, he would willingly hold her hand as she walked through her own hell. “You must be hungry. When did you last eat?”

Her lips fell slightly apart, her stomach turned into knots at the mere idea of food. “I’m not hungry.”

“You need to eat, Clara.” there, her name again. He caught her wrist between his index and thumb, her bones sharp underneath her skin. “Look how thin these fists are, they need some strength if they want to fly across the piano ever again.”

She was calm. And then, she wasn’t.

The Doctor was uncertain of what he had said or done to trigger her, her eyes started leaking salty water before he had the chance to analyze every one of his actions. She was burying her head in her hands, elbows digging into her thighs. Her silent sobbing could be easily mistaken for some sort of epileptic seizure.

“Clara?” he called for her, a bit of desperation behind his own voice. Each of his hands touched on of her shoulders, squeezing them slightly, “Talk to me, Clara.”

He was surprised when her forehead, the only bit of skin in her face no hidden by her hands, leaned against his chest; giving herself to him, when she hadn't given herself to anybody in a long time. Her words were scared to depart her lips, “I don’t think I’ll ever be able to play again, Doctor.”

He didn’t know what kind of exterior force possessed him to welcome her inside his embrace, trying to steady her within his arms. His black tee was moisturized by her cries. “I think you’re wrong, Clara. I think that even though you might have lost your way in music, the music has never left your side.”

She hadn’t cried that day, she didn’t find herself entitled to tears; not until she was dissolved under his touch. She had no recollection on how she ended there, out of breath, against his chest, except she felt so vulnerable she couldn’t pull away and look at him again. Perhaps ever again.

If only he felt the same way. “Come on, now. I’ll put the kettle on and make you breakfast, while you gather yourself together. And then, if you’re feeling like it, you can tell me anything, and I’ll do my best to help you.”

She wasn’t given much of a choice as he detached himself from her hold and strolled towards the kitchen, leaving her there.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo, Clara's weakest day. Do you think she'll tell the Doctor about what that day means to her? Let me know!
“What the hell was that?”

Clara was startled by the sudden appearance of her best friend, although she daren’t turn around and face her, pretending to be busy putting away her stuff in her dressing room. Still, she could see very well her frown in the reflection of the mirror. She played naïve, “What was what?”

“You knew damn well what I’m talking about,” Amy Pond exclaimed loudly, closing the door behind her and they were stuck there. “You just murdered Shostakovich!”

“I did no such a thing,” she was defensive, struggling with the adrenaline of her hands to close the zip of her bag.

“Clara, I know your music for years now,” she argued, leaning her back against the wooden door, crossing her arms. “That wasn’t you. That was different, that was… angry.”

She threw the bag across the counter, resting her palms against its borders. “Perhaps, I reread the music in a more feeling manner. I don’t know.”

“It wasn’t like that in our last rehearsal,” her voice was lower than before, however, still mad, “Critics are going to be crazy about this.”

Her head swung from side to side, her vision failing to focus on anything surrounding her. “I don’t care.”

“You don’t care?!?” Amy nearly gasped, pacing towards her a hesitant path. She stood by her side, “This is your career we’re talking about.”

Although her lips were moving, her words barely made it past them. “I don’t care about that, either.”

Brutally, the redhead forced the brunette to sit down by the puffy sofa that sat there. Her tall figure towered over her, “Spill it out, Clara, everything. Now.”

There was a bang cutting loudly into her distant mind when a cup of tea landed on the surface of the hard wooden table in front of her. Her hands immediately wrapped around the mug, its heat warming her body. She heard the scratching of a chair against the floor; she daren’t look up.

He was hovering; she didn’t need to stare at him to feel his glare upon her. “Eat your toast, Clara.”

And she tried, she really did; a squirrel gnawing its teeth against its nut. Her stomach, however, couldn’t settle on the food it was offered, she failed to ingest anything more than a few bites, before tossing it aside. She ignored the Doctor’s eyes of despair and reproval.
Clara was taken by surprise when his hand laid atop of hers. During her quietude, he owned all the words, “Are you going to tell me what’s going on in this pretty little head of yours?”

He wasn’t *flirting*, he was trying to break a smile from her thin lips, to ease the tension and, if possible, the pain from her body and mind. To this deception, she wouldn’t budge. “Do you… do you want to know?”

“This isn’t about me, Clara,” he couldn’t understand why, his brain just urged to insert her name into every little sentence. “This is about you coping and accepting your story, as ugly as it might be. This is about you telling the words that have been haunting you for what, years now?”

“One year,” she confessed, nearly inaudible, “It marks one year today.”

“Oh,” his mouth shaped the onomatopoeia, “Is that why you’re triggered today?”

She nodded. “I don’t know why I called you here. I swear I don’t, but… There was no one else I’d rather have here with me. There’s no one else I’d like to know my story, because, for whatever reason, I feel like you won’t judge.”

“I won’t, I promise,” he assured, giving their joint hands light squeezes. “You don’t have to tell me if you’re not comfortable, but I am here for you, Clara. It doesn’t matter how little we’ve known each other for, or how much burden it might be, I will *always* be here for you.”

She could do it. Perhaps, if she closed her eyes and blocked him from view, she could pretend he wasn’t there, and she wasn’t confessing her sorrow to anybody but herself. “It’s been one year since she died.”

The Doctor didn’t know the person behind the pronoun, hence why he assumed *she* was the personification of music itself. He concluded, “And you haven’t been able to play ever since.”

“Nope,” her lids remained closed. It was hard to see the failure of her life amidst the darkness. “Ever since that day, I can’t hear the music. Everytime I’m near it, I just… phase out.”

“That day I invited you to watch our rehearsal,” he remembered, trying to find he eyes she refused to show. “Your face was numb when Matt asked for your opinion. You just mumbled a few things that said nothing at all. Because you hadn’t listened to us.”

“Nope,” she repeated, her fingers pulling along the skin of her temples, until her palms hid most of her face. “I know it’s stupid. I’m a grown woman who’s been stuck in a permanent state of grief for the past two years, unable to cope with loss, unable to move on.”

“It’s not stupid, Clara,” he assured, sweetly. “Everybody deals with grief in their own way. Music was once your entire life, it’s not your fault to lose your ground once it died.”

At last, she allowed him the lost sparkle of her eyes, her smile matching their sorrow. “It wasn’t the music that died. It was my mother, she just took it along with her. Because the music and she meant the same to me.”

He breathed in heavily. “And once you lost one, you couldn’t find your way back to the other,” he drew his own conclusions; she didn’t respond. “I’m so sorry, Clara.”

His apologies fell on deaf ears. “I’ve never told anybody why I’ve quit, and *God*, did people ask. Critics and maestros and musicians, they *longed* to know my reasons, but I could never tell them, and soon I was left in oblivion. Perhaps because I still had faith I would be able to play again, perhaps because they weren’t *worthy* to make small talk on behalf of my mourning.”
Clara was uncertain of what led her to turn her hand around, so their hands were not only touching but holding one another; she evoked her strength from the simple bound. “You, Doctor, never asked me why. Maybe that’s why I felt the need to tell you.”

“I’m glad you did,” his voice was closer than before, sending invisible chills across the hair in her arm, “Because now I know God’s only reason to cross our paths was so I could help you find your sound once more.”

He wasn’t religious — at all — he just had a way with his words that drove her insane. She rested her chin on closed fists; like magnets, her head was lured by his — she tried her best to say back. “What if I’m beyond help?”

Her eyes were so wide he was being swallowed by them. “I don’t believe anyone is ever beyond help, not unless they want to be. There’s still hope for everybody. Allow me to help you, Clara, and, together, we can make our music fly.”

Before she could think of her actions and darkest desires, Clara had pressed her lips onto his. It wasn’t a hungry kiss — neither was it hollow; she was simply exploring feelings and sensations so foreign to her. She wasn’t invasive, but merely giving herself in. Perhaps because that day brought out her most fragile and vulnerable self, and all she wanted was someone to build her up until she was good as new.

The sweet taste of tea in their mouths mixed with one another; it taste the same as the food of the gods. When he placed his hands on her shoulders, she assumed he would pull her closer; instead, he pulled her away.

“Clara.”

She closed her eyes — she wasn’t ashamed, but she wouldn’t be able to look him in the face and say, “You said you wanted to help me. So, help me.”

That wasn’t what he had meant, at all, however he didn’t have much of a choice when she threw herself at him. Clara was shy, hesitant to explore the inner depths of his mouth, rubbing her tongue alongside his cheeks, his teeth, his palate; fighting with his own tongue for space; trapping his lower lip gently in her own dental trap.

“Clara,” her name tried to echo away from his vocal chords, failing, given the phonetic incapability from his tongue and teeth and lips to pronounce anything. Without his notice, they suddenly were both standing; he was obliged to bent down his spice, otherwise their height difference would get in the way of their lust — she had already provided herself a few more inches by raising on her tiptoes.

Her fingers invaded the silver mess of the curls of his hair, pulling his face nearer hers; begging his tongue to enter her mouth and make her weak to her knees. He was scared — terrified he would break her even more; afraid he would break something that could not be fixed.

Unlike him, she was out of breath. The adrenaline rushing so roughly through her veins and making her capable of flying. It only he’d allow himself to fly with her. “Doctor. Fix me, Doctor.”

Before he could over think his actions, the Doctor slipped his wrists under her armpits and rose her in the air. Clara’s legs immediately locked themselves around his waistband, their sexes inevitably grinding against one another.

At last, he deepened their kiss, receiving dry moans from her in return. The oxygen was stuck in his throat, slowly choking on her tongue — it was the greatest feeling he had endured in a long time; it
made him alive again.

In that moment, he forgot how everything was ephemeral and how quickly everything faded away.

“Clara,” he cried her name once more, that time succeeding in pronouncing it properly. Like she was desperate for contact, she gently pulled the skin of his well shaved chin as he spoke, “Are you sure this is what you want?”

She carved her nails into the back of his neck, laughably getting him by surprise. “Surer than I’ve been in a long time.”

With a little boost from her, he paced in raggedy steps towards her bedroom. It was dark, a single crack of light emerging from between the shades — enough to see everything and perfect to see nothing. The bed was messy and hadn’t been made, the pillows were crumpled and the blankets were scattered across. He fell on his arse by the edge of the soft mattress.

He stroked his fingers against the delicate skin of her apple cheeks. “You’re beautiful, Clara,” and he felt them burning underneath him. From the way she was acting, he assumed that had been ages since anybody showed her love — were it for their refusal or her reclusion. Perhaps that was the main reason he was there; to willingly help her out of her seclusion.

“You’re not so bad yourself,” she teased him, diving into the soul inside his eyes; she could see the constellations inside of them, lighting up the essence inside of him.

The Doctor brushed the fallen hair away from her face. Even amongst the silence, he could still hear the music in her soul; even amongst the darkness, he could see see the music that shaped her existence.

He was so lost and distracted by the image of her he was taken aback when she pulled his shirt up over his head, giving way to his body worn of age. Usually, he’d be ashamed of his decaying self, especially when next to someone so wealthy in youth; however, there were both so intimate with brokenness they were one at heart.

Clara traveled her fingertips alongside his torso, her touch trying to memorize every single inch of him — and he was clearly shivering beneath her fingers, even more when they reached the base of his waist and hovered just above the growing bump between his legs.

He caught her wrists when they were about to invade his trousers, bringing them to his mouth and kissing each one of her knuckles. Gently, he turned around and laid her on her back in the bed, “I’ll take care of you.”

He wasn’t only talking about feeding her sexual desires, he was promising her so much more. He promised her all of his love, for as long as she allowed him. Trapping her underneath him, their legs tangled, he freed her from her top.

He should have been surprised to find her braless — for whatever reason, he wasn’t; she was, in her most truthful form, herself, not hiding behind any layers as she’d been for the past year. He crashed their lips together, whilst his hands tapped and squeezed the bountiful pair of breasts. Sending chills all across her body.

Her hair locks were scattered all over the pillows, glueing themselves to the sweat of her face when she laid her head sideways to give him further access to the path of kisses he was creating all over her; the corner of her lips, the hidden dimple in her cheek, the well defined edge of her jawline, the pulsing artery trying to break free from her neck, the sharpness of her collar bones, the copiousness...
of her boobs, the peaks of the mountains of her nipples, and the red halos surrounding them.

He circled his tongue around the redness, playing with her tit, nipping and sucking and swallowing like a baby desperate for milk. Causing her to shut her eyes tightly; simultaneously sinking her hands into his hair to encourage him to keep going. He was faithful to her request.

His mouth created a wet trail of saliva down to her most intimate part, tipping his hands under her buttocks to raise her waist in the air and pull down both her trousers and underwear. His lips touched the red and swollen button of her clit, filling it with gentle kisses and feeling it thundering against his own flesh; inviting him in.

The Doctor received a breathless gasp from her when he separated her folds with his fingers and rubbed the entrance of her slit with the tip of his tongue. Her hips bucked forward and forced his tongue all the way in.

She tasted like ambrosia.

Her legs and thighs formed a forty five degree angle with one another, her knees consequently trapping his head. Clara had lost all control over her body when her hips thrust in a steady rhythm and rode his mouth, getting him to explore depths of her inner walls he didn’t think possible. He was the tidal wave inside of her.

His fingers traveled in motions against her clitoris; the friction only increased when she placed her hand above his own and stimulated him to gain speed. And she could have easily choked him with her thighs when her orgasm struck her; and he could have easily drowned in the hot fluids her climax drenched him with.

He finally freed himself from her now trembling legs, climbing up her petite frame until their eyes met once more. He brushed his lips against hers; Clara could taste herself on him. The soft moans escaping his throat sent vibrations to her — he played her with the same tenderness he played his violin. The bow he was made of brought the most beautiful melody while vibrating her strings. She was his violin.

Perhaps, she could almost hear the music they were composing.

Her hands descended until her fingers were struggling with the buckle of his belt and the zipper of his pants. She could easily feel the bump of his erection underneath all the layers of clothing that tried to restrain him from his freedom. It was almost poetic the moment he finally conquered his liberty.

Clara stroked her palm up and down his shaft, rubbing her thumb against the tip of his slit. The sounds of his groans were so erotic she longed to have him inside of her. Her grip around him strengthened.

He used his knees to open her legs wide, allowing him the perfect view of the already familiar entrance of hers; if he concentrated enough, he would see the erratic pounding of her heartbeat there, pulsing and begging to pulse with him. Neither of them knew for sure whether it was her hand or his needs that aligned their sexes perfectly — most likely, both.

She was tight — too tight, choking his penis as he slowly pushed himself inside of her. Tears surfaced her eyes at the sensation of him, yet her arms wrapped themselves around his neck, bringing him even deeper and closer to her.

The Doctor picked up a slow pace, thrusting in and out of her; gently, she was even more delicate than his violin. She was music herself. Each of his fists were fixated to opposite sides of her body,
leaning against the sheets, his head hovered above the curve between her neck and shoulder, his warm breath tickling her skin. He gradually grew faster.

Their lips motioned in the same rhythm, smacking against one another, echoing loud noises of flesh against flesh that could never be called music. Her legs attached themselves to his waist, giving him even further ground. And the faster he thrusted her, the faster her orgasm built on her inner walls. She threw her head back, her eyes lodging way up under her lids. The veins of her neck were hard underneath her skin — soon, they would burst way and she would explode.

Their climax came like a tsunami, destroying everything that dared to come in between them — and they were breathless amongst the destruction. Her chin had fallen down, and all her limbs had lost all their strength; he had collapsed above her, his sweat mixing with her own.

And the moment he fell off of her, Clara felt like the most perverted, the guiltiest, and most selfish person of all of time and space for banging her brains out on the day she should have dedicated only to honoring and preserving the memory of her mother.

Chapter End Notes

Well, do you think Clara will finally let him in or allow these events to just push the Doctor even further away? Let me know :)
I’m so sorry for taking so long to update. I went through a few things and decided to take a little break. But I hope this chapter will make up for it!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Do you want me to leave?”

The hoarse sound of the Doctor’s voice broke the ice of the silence they had built around themselves; both still equally naked. Clara was lying sideways, her back to him, the white sheets wrapped inches above her breasts. She was ashamed of herself, lying in a fetal position like a cowards and feeling so small.

She brought her arms closer to her chest, finding herself too unworthy of looking at him in the eyes. “Do you… have somewhere else to be?”

“No,” he uttered; it wasn’t, however, exactly true. It was a weekday and he really should be at the rehearsal, he just couldn’t find it in himself to leave her willingly. Not ever again, if she allowed.

She nodded, so slightly she doubted he’d seen it — not that their positions favored him at all. She didn’t answer him; perhaps because she didn’t know the answer, perhaps because she didn’t think herself deserving of the answer she wanted to give. Her lips were frozen in a permanent gap.

The Doctor sighed loudly, having given up waiting for her response. Until she verbalized her desires, he wouldn’t leave her side. He had the perfect view of her back, her spine sharp and sculptured underneath the skin that hid it. He was as enchanted with everything about her as he had been when he first got a violin for his seventh birthday after his parents had starved themselves to buy him it.

The Doctor had no control over his actions when his fingers were allured and their tips traced lines across each of her vertebrae; she shivered away from his touch. Still, he didn’t back again. “I’m here, Clara. I’m not going anywhere.”

Never once could she dare to turn around. “I wouldn’t blame you if you did.”

Hesitantly, he crawled closer to her. She was as perplex as a character from Joyce’s Ulysses; he was caught in between her fear of letting anyone in and her desire of anyone there to hold her up. “Why not?”

Clara was having trouble breathing, were it due the weight of that day upon her or her vulnerability lying there completely naked, she couldn’t tell. “Nobody wants damaged and broken people around them.”

“Good thing I’m not nobody, ” he amused, failing to crack any laugh or smile from her. “You’re not damaged or broken, Clara.”

She snorted, ironically, “Aren’t I?!” she was harsh; angry with herself. At each passing second, she felt even more pathetic. Her mother must have been so disappointed, staring down at her and seeing the joke she had become.
Tired of waiting for an invitation, the Doctor wrapped his arms around her waist, bringing her closer; she was as fragile as porcelain — even though those broke so easily, he wasn’t about to let her fall and shatter herself. Was she quivering under his touch?

“You’re only broken if you want to be, Clara.”

She wished she could bring the walls she had built around herself back up; what was it about him that brought her most truthful self, the one she had tried so hard to keep hidden? “The music is dead, Doctor.”

“The music can never die,” he announced, the rebeveration of his voice bringing static to the hair in the back of her neck, “The music is something far greater than us, than you and now. The music shall outlive all of us.”

Clara sank her back against his torso; for whatever reason, she longed to feel his body. Not in a sexual way, but in a physical and emotional need to feel love. She didn’t want to be loved, she just wondered if love itself still existed, and if she was still capable of feeling it. “Then the music has disinherited me. I am dead to the music.”

He planted his wet lips on the crook of her neck, his mouth fitting perfectly the gap formed by her collar bones, “You suffered a great loss, a loss that’s shaped everything that you are. I’m not saying you should just let go of your mourning, God knows that’s not possible. But, if you allow yourself, that grief can achieve you so many things. Great happenings are always moved by great pain.”

She turned around, at last, the palms of her hands touching his bare, warm chest, feeling the heartbeat hidden in there; sensing the lungs inside fill and empty with oxygen. Still, she daren’t look at him in the eyes, focusing her stare on the lines traced by her fingertips across his torso. “The music and she meant the same to me. I don’t know how to have music without her.”

He cupped one side of her jawline, trying to glance at the universe inside her own eyes. “What your mind has failed to understand, Clara, is that the music is the only way you can communicate with her. The music is something so great it’s the only way she’ll still be alive.”

Her eyes were slowly attracted to his; the hollowness in them were contradicted by the life in his. “Will… Will you help me bring her back to life, then?”

His heart tightened and he placed a wet kiss to her temples; her shy and vulnerable request was the thing he’d desired to hear the most, ever since she confided in him her darkest secret. “You don’t even have to ask.”

Her head rested upon his chest, rising and falling according to his breathing pattern. She closed her eyes; she wasn’t tired, but she’d completely succumbed herself to him.

Amy sat by her side in the hard surface of the couch, holding Clara’s hand tightly. She tried to establish an eye contact that the brunette simply refused to offer. The tension in the air was so rigid not even knives could cut it through. “Clara, I’m… I’m so sorry.”

The laugh that broke through her lips was borderline ridicule; everything about the whole situation was ridiculous. “Sorry won’t change anything.”

She was rude. She shouldn’t be rude; Amy didn’t deserve her rudeness, she was being nothing but calm and kind with her. Could she blame her? Yes, she could. The whole world could collapse above her and Clara wouldn’t still have the right to lash out. She was a terrible person.

“T’Am sorry, I just…” no; there were no excuses. “I’m sorry.”
Clumsily, Amy laid her head in the perfect curve between her neck and shoulder; Clara inevitably shivered at the contact, but her head soon fell above the redhead’s. Under any other circumstances, the weird angle provided by their height difference would bring laughs to their lips.

“How long do you have?” Amy asked, even though it wasn’t the friend who was condemned to death. Perhaps, it had been written since before the beginning of time that Clara would die alongside. Perhaps, Mozart had composed his requiem specifically for their death.

“Not long enough,” she whispered, uncertain if her words had departed her lips. She was a hostage to her own sorrow and grief; a mourning she felt long before death itself. “Damn it, Amy.”

The tall girl wrapped her big arms around her, in an attempt to bring some sense of comfort. In an attempt to let her know she was there — even if she wasn’t the woman she needed by her side. “She doesn’t deserve to… to go like this.”

Abruptly, Clara pulled away, burying her face in the palms of her head. Her voice betrayed the composure she struggled to sustain. “She’s always been there, Amy. Ever since the start. Always supporting me, amidst my failures and my achievements. … I don’t know what I’m going to do once she’s not here anymore. I don’t know how to voice the music when the music would mean nothing if it weren’t for her.”

Amy traced circle motions on her back. Wordlessly.

“And the worst is,” she gasped on the very edge of her breakdown, “Is that my mum is pretending everything is normal. She’s acting like she’s not going to drop dead anytime, soon.”

Like she had jinxed it, the door suddenly was pushed open and Ellie stepped in. The two ladies did their best to look alright, although their traits sold them out. Still, the mother was peaceful, “There you are, I’ve been looking for you,” she prompted; she couldn’t stand being away from the daughter any more than she had to. “Amy, how are you, dear? It was a beautiful concert. Hey, I was thinking we should go out to grab a bite. Whatever you feel like. You too, Amy. Is Rory here? I didn’t see him around, but he should come too. What do you say, hm?!”

Clara glanced at the cellist with wild eyes; there it was, the normality she was talking about. Unable to turn down a dying woman’s wish, they all went out for dinner without too much of a fuss.

The buzzing of the telephone nearly made her heart jump out of her chest; she jumped in a start. She wasn’t asleep, but so lost within her thoughts she would have fallen victim to any external force that dared to disturb her.

“Sorry,” the Doctor was quick to apologize — regardless of how unsure she was of what he was apologizing for. Since she had already departed his embrace after her scare, he didn’t apologize again for fetching his arm down to the floor to grab his phone from the pocket of his discarded pants.

Clara waited for him to settle again to fall above his shoulder; she was so comfortable there, she never wanted to leave. The Doctor swung his phone in the air, showing the most hideous picture of Matt as caller ID. She was obliged to chuckle at it.

She was surprised, however, when he turned down the call, even more when his face was replaced by about a zillion texts from the same man. She stared at the corner of his jawline, “Why didn’t you answer it?”

He merely shrugged, scrolling down quickly through all the notifications. “Can’t be arsed.”

Clara yanked the phone from between his fingers, texting the maestro that he would be right over,
receiving gasps from the man next to her; she silenced him by crashing their lips together. “Go. You have a rehearsal to be at, the orchestra is just waiting for you.”

He buried both his hands amidst her hair. “I’d much rather stay here with you,” he deepened the kiss. “You’re much nicer to look at than Matt.”

Clara laughed, loudly and freely — it felt good to laugh like that. Against all her body desires, she pulled away from him, “It’s not my fault if you’re a star and the orchestra relies entirely on you.”

With not much of a choice, the Doctor was forced to sit up; he was a hostage of her stare. “I’m not a star, the orchestra could very well manage without a violin for the day. Matt just enjoys torturing us way too much.”

Clara sank her head down the pillow, spreading her entire body across the warm mattress. “Matt’s looking for a perfection he cannot reach.”

He simply nodded. Once fully dressed, the Doctor bent forward and caressed her apple cheek with his thumb. “I’ll be back. Tonight, with dinner, because even though your fridge might protest, you can’t live from tea only.

She wrapped both her palms around his hand, bringing his knuckles to her wet lips. Clara watched him taking all her happiness with him as he walked away.

Chapter End Notes

So, is Clara finally considering playing again? Let me know what you think!
Like he had promised, the Doctor knocked on her door around 7pm that evening. Clara opened it to find him with a smug smile across his face, one hand carrying a bag of take out, the other holding tightly to his violin case. She let him in.

Although she didn’t resemble at all like he’d last seen her — completely naked — instead wearing the same baggy clothes from before; her hair, however, announced that she had recently showered. Her face wasn’t colored by the make up she’d have on every time she went out, and he found her beautiful.

He walked straight towards her kitchen, laying his violin case in the floor and the takeout above her table. Even if he didn’t have his eyes on her, she still stood inside his vision field, “I didn’t know what you liked so I decided to be safe and get some pasta. Everybody likes pasta, right? You can’t do wrong with pasta.”

He was talking ahead of himself; Clara thought him cute. “Yeah, pasta is fine.”

Realising her lack of initiative to do anything, he made himself at home and pulled two plates out of a cabinet. He searched her fridge for any beverage and could only find some OJ that looked like it had been there for the past decade or so. He decided against it.

She remained perfectly still, leaning against the door frame. “I’m sorry, I’m such a bad hostess today. It’s just… this day…” her gaze fell to the ground, “I can’t seem to function this day.”

Forgetting all about the food, he walked in her direction, towering over her. Her eyes remained down at the floor, seemingly more interested in all the invisible life happening there than in the visible being right next to her. “There’s nothing to apologize for, Clara.”

“She’s right,” she mumbled, a hint of irony in her voice that couldn’t be ignored, not by him.

The Doctor brushed away locks of her hair from her face, bringing an unwanted emphasis on her saddened features. His heart ached from a sorrow so familiar to him. “You don’t have to be sorry for grieving, Clara.”

The sound of his raspy voice so close to her lured her head up and she was drowning inside his ocean eyes. Clara definitely blamed it on her mourning when she smoothed his lips with her own, trapping the flesh of his mouth between her teeth. Her lust could only be explained through her grief.

Clara wasn’t falling in love with him — at least, she hoped she wasn’t. But she loved the way he deprived her lungs of oxygen, the way her heart beat faster when next to him. She loved every little sensation his presence brought to her skin. He made her body feel weak and fragile; he made her feel the strongest in her mind and soul.

The Doctor slipped both his hands underneath her blouse, holding her by the bare skin of her belly;
his cold hands brought her goosebumps. He was the one to pull apart, resting forehead against forehead. “Dinner will be cold.”

Although a little frustrated, Clara agreed with her head. She felt him locking her wrist within his thumb and index before being pulled towards the table. Under any other circumstances, she would have given him hell for pulling the seat out for her — because, under any other circumstances, she would be capable of doing it herself.

Soon after, they were both having their meals. Unlike him, she played with the food in front of her, drawing circles and invisible lines with her fork, only bringing it up to her mouth when he’d dare to shoot a look on her way — if only she knew he was thoroughly watching her the entire time.

“I’d like to propose a toast,” Ellie broke the awkward silence they were all trapped in, regardless of the noise from tingling metal and nearby conversations from the surrounding tables. She rose her champagne glass in the air, “To Clara and Amy, who have so beautifully brought the music to life tonight. To music.”

The two musicians and the father weren’t in the mood for a toast; toasts required a happiness that the promise of death denied them. But they followed the dying woman’s lead — society demanded that the dying had their voice heard and got their wishes come true. Even the most futile desires, such as proposing a frivolous toast to music.

Clara drenched herself with all the content in her glass with a single gulp, despite Amy’s hand on her thigh, encouraging her to slow down. The alcohol was rapidly traveling up to her head, otherwise she wouldn’t have stated, “Our music was a mess. Nobody wants to hear angry music. They should reclaim their money’s worth.”

“Clara,” Amy pinched her leg under her dress, trying to shut her up before she said something she would regret later. She was uncertain whether the pianist was reproducing something she had heard from her or if she really believed the chaos of her sound.

“Who told you that?” Ellie was a little baffled — she definitely blamed it on the booze, not on the possibility her cancer was devouring her brains. “Everybody around me was astonished, and so was I. Your music was so powerful, it brought chills to all of us.”

The laugh that shook through her closed lips wasn’t legit, it was full of disdain — a disdain directed at herself. To her eyes and ears, she hadn’t been powerful. She had been weak and scared, and her music was the mirror of her feelings. She dreaded the image it formed of her.

She hated the music she brought to life.

Perhaps the music was dying, too.

Clara felt Amy strongly holding her hand under the table. Preventing her from slipping away; preventing her from losing the grip over everything that made her who she was; preventing her from dying inside when everything around her was dying, too.

Giving up on the hope she would finish her meal, it being a torture to watch her trying, the Doctor licked his lips and got up. The sound of the chair screeching against the floor clearly started her, bringing her back to reality from wherever her mind has traveled to.

Clara’s eyes were remarkably reduced as she watched him amble back to her living room. With frown lines across her forehead, she went after him after a few seconds, finding him standing in front of her shelf full of CDs.
Although his eyes remained glued to the cabinet, he heard her heavy steps approaching. He pressed his fingertip alongside all the titles. “You’re right handed, correct?!”

She stopped by his side, her shoulder brushing his upper arm. “Yes…?”

His head swung up and down in a single motion, a crooked smile shaping the corner of his lips. “Your favorite tracks are on the right side of the shelf, in the most accessible height for your overly small stature.”

She merely shuddered, “And you can tell that only because I’m right handed?!”

“Psychology explains everything,” he stated, trading glances between her and the shelf to estimate the right stature. Once he did, he was obliged to bent down on his knees to properly look at the collection, before pulling out a CD. “Ah. I love this.”

He brought Beethoven’s Piano Sonata no. 14 to the stereo and soon the music echoed through the air. Had Clara become bothered by the sound, she showed no signs of it. Instead, she grinned at the image of his fingers dancing and spiralling according to the piano — and she was the pianist one.

“I don’t like it,” he spoke up, his mouth pouting, “It’s too fast, this is not a race. You played it much more beautifully that one concert.”

Her cheeks blushed immediately. “That was what, almost 10 years ago. I was just a child, I had no idea what I was doing.”

The Doctor whiffed, “And yet you played with your soul, not with your mind — like they are playing. They think themselves master of the music, whereas you make the music your master. That’s, Clara, why you’ll always be the better pianist.”

She buried her teeth into the flesh of her lower lip. “How do you even remember that concert?”

“Because I was there…?” he teased, sardonically. “They’ve uploaded it to youtube, Clara. It’s got over 500 thousand views. I’m surprised you didn’t know that.”

“I’m sorry if I don’t stalk myself on social media,” she grunted, arms crossed before her chest.

He didn’t allow her traits to remain crossed for long, however. With that same smug look he had dominated, the Doctor approached her, placing one of his hands on her hip, the other fighting to get a hold of her fingers.

A little reluctant, Clara loosed her lips, offering him full control of their movements. He raised their joined hands high in the air, their torsos gridding in the course of their closeness. The laugh she expelled was melodical when he started to lead their bodies in a waltz.

The music held a sad melody and they danced to its rhythm full of sorrow. The Doctor continued, “I like your version better. This is… too robotic. It doesn’t bring the same joy and pleasure to our ears as you playing it with your emotions. As you giving all of yourself in the name of music. I love watching you play. It’s poetic.”

Clara glared right into his eyeballs, swearing she could see specks of his soul trying to break free. “You’re just flattering me.”

“Of course I’m flattering you,” he agreed, seeing himself one step from being swallowed by the black holes of her eyes — so much destruction she held inside; so much beauty that lured him in, like the song of mermaids that attracted the sailors towards their calamitous and eminent ending. “But it
doesn’t make my words any less truthful. It wasn’t *my words* that turned you into the world’s greatest pianist.”

She wished their height difference wasn’t so remarkable, and she would have the perfect angle to kiss him. She had no idea why she felt that way, nor how he brought all those feelings to her; sensations so atypical to her, and she was *high* on them. “Now you’re just exaggerating.”

The Doctor pressed his forehead to hers, their feet glued to the ground, but their bodies still swung in a rhythm only they knew. “No, Clara. I’m not.”

Distracting herself from all the lust thundering in her veins, Clara laid her head across his chest; his heart beat in a composition comprised only for her. “Thank you, Doctor.”

He buried his nose in her hair — it smelled like flowers. “For what, telling you the truth you’ve long forgotten?”

“No,” she offered the fabric of his shirt a closed smile. Even if he had reminded her of things she didn’t know anymore, she was thankful for so much more than that. “Thank you for helping me *forget*. Even if just for a while.”

Beethoven came to an end at the same instant he searched for her lips.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think :)
Clara was awakened by the first rays of daylight breaking through the drapes of her bedroom. When she first came back to herself, she panicked on her inability to move. It took her a few milliseconds to comprehend she was locked inside a manly set of arms, belonging to the violinist she had innocently invited to spend the night.

Unlike him, she woke up still wearing her pjs, although she deduced his nakedness had originated on his lack of clean clothes to sleep in. She recalled offering him a promotion shirt she had gotten after a contest, obviously too big for her petite frame, but it was still too small for him. Despite of his effort, his torso suffocated inside of the tee.

She had laughed at him. She should have taken a picture.

She was happy. She didn’t know how long her happiness would last. It’d be clever of her if she got any evidence that she was still capable of feeling happiness and being happy herself.

Clara remained still, dreading the possibility of disturbing him, loathing the idea of leaving the warmth and strength of his embrace. It was still early, too early; the prior day had been so emotionally draining for her she ended up slipping into unconsciousness the moment her head touched the pillow. She really wished she was simply sleepy enough to fall back into slumber.

She wished she weren’t enslaved by her own thoughts.

Clara was feeling like death itself.

A comparison too sardonic given that death was indeed surrounding her; narrowing her in until she no longer to breathe.

Regardless, she saw herself as a living personification of death itself.

The light coming through her bedroom windows stabbed her closed eyelids; she regretted being so drunk the previous night that she forgot to shut the drapes. She regretted being too hangover to find the strength to get up and shut them before she was blinded by the sunlight.

She let out a long and loud moan escape her throat — she had recently discovered that groaning and yelling had a positive reaction on her mind and body; it helped her feel better. Unfortunately, her squeal failed to provide any relief on her hangover.

She pulled the pillow from under her head and threw it above her face, trying to have the darkness swallow her in. Her skinny arms worked then as cushions. Her legs were tangled and trapped around white sheets; she had no intentions of going anywhere anytime soon. She wasn’t willing to move, at all.

Not even when she heard what assumed was either a murderer or the ghost of the mother that had yet to die; pushing the door open, lurking their way in, shifting the mattress as they sat. Ready to either kill her or haunt her soul.

She sincerely hoped she was about to be assassinated when the pillow was yanked from her hold. At
least, that way, she wouldn’t have to witness her mother dying in front of her. It was an abnormal and selfish way to be in control.

“Here. I’ve brought you coffee and aspirin,” the voice of Amy Pond echoed through the silence, breaking the thin ice it was made of. She settled herself comfortably in the bed, even though the brunette’s body was spread right in the middle of the mattress.

It took Clara several seconds to find the will to open her eyes. Once she did, she lacked the effort to grab the mug the friend was holding for her. She didn’t even hear the words her own lips emitted, “What are you doing here?”

Amy sank down herself, until she lied completely on her back, the cup of coffee resting above her belly. “You were really drunk last night, Clara — as I’m sure you feel it right now. I judged best to stay with you for the night.”

She dragged herself above the soft surface, bringing her knees close to her boobs. “Did I do something stupid?”

Amy chorted loudly. “You would have, hadn’t I snatched that one extra glass of champagne you intended to drink. Come on, drink your coffee.”

With a lot of struggle, she forced herself into a position halfway between lying and sitting. She threw the pill inside her mouth and took a long sip of the dark liquid — it burned down her throat. She stretched out her arm to place the mug above the nightstand, before crashing her body next to the redhead’s. “Did I embarrass myself in front of my parents?”

“Lucky for you, your best friend has a very high convincing power and managed to get them to leave before you did or said something you’d regret later,” she bragged. “Clara…”

She hummed, waiting.

“You need to take it easy on her, Clara,” although she didn’t say her name, they both knew her hidden identity. “I know you’re mad, and you’re angry, and you need to grab that rage and let it go.”

Clara held her arm near her heart — each beat it took pained her soul. She was such a terrible and selfish person; she was breaking her mother’s heart. “I know.”

“Do you?” Amy searched for the black eyes that refused to look on her way. “Because, Clara, your mother didn’t ask to be sick. Your mother dreads dying and leaving you behind. She feels so guilty, she hates herself for all the hurting she’s inflicting upon you. And you can’t let her walk to her grave with such a heavy burden. You’ll never forgive yourself if you do.”

She let out a restless sigh; yet, she was so tired, so exhausted of everything. “I know, Amy.”

Condescendingly, Amy rested her temple against Clara’s. Neither of them dared to say anything else, comfortable enough to coexist.

A warm breath tickled the hair on the back of her neck, sending goosebumps to the entirety of her body; she clearly shivered. The arms trapping her bought her even deeper inside their embrace. Clara felt herself dissolving within his touch.

“Good morning, sleepy head,” the Doctor spoke in his copious accent, planting his lips gently on the crook of her nape and leaving several kisses there.
“I’ve been awake for a while now,” she protested, expanding her skin to give him further access. “You’re the sleeping beauty here.”

His lips traced a path alongside her well defined jawline, hearing closer the erratic sound of her breathing. “Well, I can’t argue with my looks.”

A loud and relaxed laugh rasped out of her throat, and she nudged her elbow between his ribs. “Silly, I didn’t mean it like that.”

He spun her around until they finally glanced at each other’s eyes. “Just because you’re young and beautiful, it doesn’t make it any less rude to call me daft and unattractive,” he played hurt, however his words were contradicted by the smug smirk across his features. “Are you calling me daft and unattractive, Miss Oswald?”

His hands invaded under her shirt; her spine was shaped with the same curve as the body of his violin. Her nose grazed lovingly the smooth tissue of his cheek, and she teased, “Yes, I am, Mister Doctor.”

Immune to her attributions, perhaps even oblivious to them, the Doctor dove inside the mystery of her eyes, the mystery he had yet to figure out. They held a certain sparkle that wasn’t there the prior day. “I think you’re gorgeous, Clara. I think you’re even more beautiful than your music.”

Her faces immediately reddened, but she daren’t look away. Their bodies were completely pressed against one another; she wondered briefly about how their curves were sculptured to fit against each other so perfectly. “Maybe I should just give up on music and become a model instead.”

He dug his fingers amidst her messy hair, pulling back her head just enough to establish the clearest path between their souls. “I won’t let you resign on your music. Not when the music has turned you into who you are today. Not when you and your music are one only.”

“The music has omitted me, Doctor,” she whispered, her lungs suffocating with her own words. “I don’t know how to ever be in synch with the music again.”

“I do,” he held out his palm for her; an invitation to so much more than a simple hold of hands. He invited her to rediscover everything that her soul was made of.

Together and hesitant about the unknown, she followed him out of bed. Part of her screamed she should run away; the other tried to ease her mind as she was led towards her piano.

Chapter End Notes

so, is Clara about to give life to her music again? i love hearing your thoughts :)
play it again

Chapter Notes

i have nothing to say for myself rather than how sorry i am for taking so long to update this. i have no excuses other than my own lack of time. that said, i hope you all haven't given up on me and will enjoy this chapter as much as i did.

music for the chapter: Erik Satie’s Gymnopédie No.1.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The Doctor thoroughly analyzed the giant bookcase where all kinds of sheets were stored, from the early days of baroque until the greatest pieces of the contemporary. The only muscle he had moved at all for what felt like an eternity was the ones of his eyes, whilst his hands rested against his hips and his head stood high.

Clara was growing more impatient by the second, her arms crossed under her breasts in defiance. “If you tell me what you’re looking for, then maybe I’ll be able to help you.”

He stretched his arm behind his back, waggling his hand to shush her. “I’ll know when I see it.”

She barely snorted, her eyes ready for a one-man war. “There must be over one thousand sheets here, Doctor. You can’t actually intend to go through them all.”

“It’s Saturday. I’ve got nowhere else to be, ” he carried on, still too busy to turn around and have her in his vision field. “No, Clara, I’m only looking for the worn books. Those are the ones you’ve used the most; the ones that have driven you crazy in a false promise that you’d conquer a perfection that doesn’t exist.”

She hummed, not being given the chance to say else, for he objected, “I’m going to stand for as long as it takes you to do that one thing I asked you to do.”

Her stare unconsciously landed a the piano on the opposite side of the room, where she had been promptly asked to sit at. Nothing further than to simply sit there, yet she walked straight past. Regardless, she pondered innocently, “You’re staring forwards. You can’t possibly know what I might have or might have not done.”

For the first time, his head glanced over his shoulder; at her, not at the piano. “I know you, Clara.”

She chewed her own lips, unsure of how he managed to say entire sentences through her name only. They were both addicted to the way it shaped his lips. “Am I such an open book?”

“Oh the contrary,” he assured, eyes back front again and he finally pulled out a booklet. “You’re the most difficult sheet that I’m determined to play.”

Clara pursued the corners of her mouth into an attempted smile; weren’t it for his poetry, she wouldn’t have walked up to the big instrument. She didn’t open its fallboard, she didn’t sit down; she simply ran her fingertips along the dark grain of its wood.

She wasn’t surprised when his tall figure hovered behind her; his long arms circled around her waist
and raised the lid, before placing the stock of paper on the music rack. His chin rested above the curve of her neck, his hands locking in her belly.

“Erik Satie,” Clara grinned at his choice, leaning further back into his embrace. “Gymnopedie no. 1.”

“It’s so simple, yet so powerful and beautiful,” he commented, swaying their bodies to the music playing in his head. “Satie composed the gymnopédies in an attempt to cut himself loose from conventional 19th century music. It was something never done before, it exploits nudity and antiquity. It invokes certain transgression from the sinful world.”

Clara nodded, quoting, “Slanting and shadow-cutting a bursting stem, trickled in guts of gold on the shiny flagstone, where the amber atoms in the fire gleaming mingled their sarabande with the gymnopaedia,” her smile widened, “I’ve always love the mystical universe it hid behind its few notes. A sacred halo around it.”

“Well, then,” he offered her little spurs of encouragement, “Go on. Play it. Bring to life its hallowed music.”

Her breathing hardened inside her lungs and her face immediately dropped, “I… I don’t know if I can.”

The Doctor broke their touch, pulling back the stool and sitting on its far right. He tapped over the cushion, indicating she should do the same. Reluctantly, she did, although still remained with a certain distance from the keys. “Yes, you can. I believe in you, you should believe in yourself, too.”

Her eyes were having a hard time to find their focus over the sheet. “I want to believe, Doctor. It’s not that easy.”

The Doctor situated his hand right above the keys — with a struggle he wasn’t proud of. He leaned the index of his free limb under her wrist and led it to the back of his dominant hand. Its weight above it was almost cipher; under any other circumstances, he would have laughed at how small hers was in comparison to his.

“I’d appreciate if you didn’t mock my lack of skills,” he humored, “I’m only just a violinist. Hence why I’ll be playing the basic melody, I’ll leave the rest for the professional pianist.”

He didn’t expect her to engage in the harmony — and she didn’t. He memorized the notes, for the wouldn’t be able to read and play at the same time. And the music echoed within the narrow walls as he pressed down his thick fingers. A sharp fa, a la, a sol, a sharp fa, a sharp do, a ti, a sharp do, a re, a la. Playing a music that became their own. Her hands was barely moving, still she felt every little vibration breaking through her skin and tickling her nerves.

Clara pressed her cheek to his shoulder, and his head rested above hers. Still, his music didn’t cease, simplistic and modest; an epiphany to the humbleness that music stood for, a bewilderment to the sanctified that the music revered.

Music had been her religion. The piano had been her shrine.

The composition came to an end, and the Doctor turned his palm around to cup her hand inside his hold. He brought it to his lips and kissed every one of her fingers, planting the seeds of music in them. “It’s your turn. Go on, now.”

He positioned her hands on the board, believing that, without that little push, she wouldn’t bring herself out of her comfort zone. Her wrist evidently trembled; it hurt him to trap her in that stance, however he knew he couldn’t bring it to an end. Not if he desired to keep the music from dying.
Clara closed her eyes — her lashes grazed her skin, her lids frowned to forcefully hide her pupils away. She was so familiar with the melody she could play it with her eyes closed, *if* she had the strength to play it. *No*, she had to. She owed it to everything the Doctor had done to her, she owed to the mother whose soul could only be reached through the transmission of her sound.

She only wished her own soul could, somehow, travel so far, too.

Although unable to steady herself, she pressed down the keys. A sharp fa, a la, a sol, a hesitation; a sharp fa, a sharp do, a ti, a slip, a sharp do, a re, a faulty la, ending the phrase before going on to the next one.

Her music was as flawed as she was, contradicting the flawed perfection that she once had been known for. Her ears fazed at the sound she was making, driving her dizzy, forcing her out of phase.

She was losing herself within her own music.

*Clara was completely alone in her penthouse — it felt bigger and colder than usual; she concluded her own soul had become lonely and frigid.*

*Her hangover headache had disappeared, thanks to her early aspirin. Amy had left a couple of hours prior, saying she had booked a venue and needed to practice, but not before begging to take her out for lunch. Clara declined, arguing she desired to spend some time alone with her thoughts.*

*Had only she known her thoughts to be so distant and so desolated.*

*Clara circled around her grant piano over and over again. Waiting for it to bring out any sort of sensation from her dead emotions, any kind of feeling rather than the feeling of death, pursuing the essence of her being.*

*Her soul was dead, it had simply forgotten to take the rest of her with it to the other side.*

*She fell to the stool — it was harder than usual underneath her. Her right foot touched the freezing pedal, sending chills to the hair of her body; she didn’t retreat, she thought herself worthy of the discomfort. She pressed it over and over again, regardless of the nonexistence of the music her fingers were ought to produce.*

*There was only one piece consuming her mind; the one music she dreaded to play. She feared the repercussions it would cascate into her life, into her lack of life. Yet, her hands longed its melody. Perhaps its sound was everything missing for her soul to transcend.*

*Her fingers played the first chords to Chopin’s Piano Sonata no. 2 — popularly known as the Funeral March. She played it with sorrow, she played it with grief; she played in memory of the dead composer, she played in honor to everybody who had ever died and everybody who would ever die.*

*She was writing her own requiem.*

Clara played the last chord, missing all the notes in between. Her wrist lost all its strength, falling lifelessly onto his thigh, soon after being locked inside his own hold. She hid her eyes on the fabric of his shirt, ashamed of herself, ashamed of however her music had sounded like.

He spread his arm around her back, pulling her close. “Hear it, *feel* it, Clara. Let music caress you.”

She unconsciously shivered, her skin glowing with cold sweat. She confided so softly she doubted he had heard him, “My music is broken,” because Clara was broken, too; she and the music were the
His heart tightened inside his chest until it was hard to breathe; to his ears, her music was always *beautiful*. The Doctor scattered several kisses across her blushed faces, despite how hard she attempted to hide herself *from* him.

“I’m proud of you, Clara. *So* proud,” he promised within smooches, until she eventually dared to look at him.

“How?”

He sighed; he couldn’t tell her *why*: the only way she would ever find herself again was if she found the answers to her own questions on her own. He cupped each side of her jawline, “Play it again.”

She did.

**Chapter End Notes**

> your feedback encourages me to update as soon as i can, i'm just saying hihihi
This was probably one of my favorite chapters to write, and I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I did.

I've been asked by a few people if there's going to be a scene of Twelve playing and/or TwelveClara playing together: I promise you won't be let down (and this chapter might be the gateway to it hehe)

the music used in this chapter is Bach’s Minuet in G Major.

A hint of a smile shaped the corner of Clara’s lips when her phone buzzed somewhere inside her apartment. There was only one person who’d ever text her, even though she wouldn’t admit that easily the reactions he brought to her, the anxiety that consumed her veins during his silence only to be replaced by the most extravagant joy at a simplistic message from him.

However, as hard as it was, she didn’t get up to go after her phone; trying to prove herself to herself she wasn’t some hopeless teenager in love. She wasn’t, hence why she remained sitting by the piano making a mess of Bach’s minuets. She had been so distracted, trying to find her way inside the maze of her thoughts, she couldn’t focus on her music; she had become so distracted, wondering what he had texted her, she couldn’t pay attention to her music.

Still, she prevailed there. Forcing her fingers into that beginners’ melody that was, regardless, too complex for her retired hands. Re, sol, la, ti, do, re, sol, sol. So simple, so delicate, so capable of touching one’s soul.

Not her soul, though.

Whole eternities passed disguised as minutes. Ten, fifteen, thirty. Until she could no longer take it and went after her phone. She held her breath and read the texts still in her lockscreen.

Can you come over?

There’s an emergency.

I need you.

Clara saw her own life fading away; the worst case scenarios flooding through her mind. She didn’t bother to check her image on the mirror, she didn’t pursue her bag, she didn’t care to look down on her feet and make sure she was wearing two shoes of the same pair.

Her heart thundered its beats on her ears; she was so anxious she couldn’t rationally wait for the elevator, choosing instead to climb down all those flights of stairs until she reached the street, passing rudely by the doorman and not greeting him. She made a mental note to buy him some pie later as a form of lame apology.

She waved for a cab — she would probably engage in an accident if she dared to drive herself; one
emergency was already enough. She gave the driver the same address he’d sent her through text.

She tried his phone a few times — he never answered. Giving up, her fingers started to nervously tap against the leather of the seat, counting her inhales and exhales that loudly echoed inside the coach.

Clara didn’t know what it meant; being so panicked and frenzied about him. She wasn’t scared at the prospect someone else in her life would disappear, she was terrified at the idea of losing him. She didn’t know what he meant to her, or how he turned her entire world upside down, or why he brought unexplainable sensations to the nerves of her skin every time she thought of him, but she dreaded the possibility of forfeiting him before she got the chance to figure it out.

He was the last chord on the sheet of her life.

She wasn’t asleep — at least she thought she wasn’t — but the buzzing of her phone above her mattress startled her and disturbed her peace.

She was drowsy, and she blamed it on her previous state of semi consciousness. It didn’t help that her heart was pumping the life out of her after her scare and her brain still struggled to take control of her body and command her to step out of her haze.

With some difficulty, she searched amidst her dark room for the light of her ringing phone. She didn’t recall at what time she had lied down, she didn’t know how long she had been lying there, and unless she saw the light, she could not know it it was dark outside or light.

Still, she forgot to check the time on her screen before she brought the mobile to her ear. Or the ID caller, for what mattered. “Hello?”

“Clara, it’s dad,” his voice was monotonous, without an ounce of emotion behind it.

She immediately sat up, her legs tangled around messy duvets. Her heart pounded even harder than before, it possible. “Dad? Is everything alright? What time is it?”

“A little after one,” he didn’t specify if day or night, but she had her suspicions. “I’m sorry to wake you, honey, Your mother didn’t want me to call you, but I thought it was the right thing to do.”

The mention of her mother was enough to tense her muscles. “Is mum okay?”

“She was having a really intense headache, I concluded better to bring her to the hospital,” he said, “She’s fine now, you don’t need to worry. She’s on fluids and sleeping.”

Her breathing was heavy, easily heard from across the line. “I’m on my way.”

“No, you don’t have to come,” Dave assured, “She’s going to be discharged first thing in the morning. Besides, you need to rest. Don’t you have some big concert coming up?”

Her brain was fuzzy, she didn’t remember if she had or not. He wouldn’t know either, for he mainly only listened to rock n’ roll. She uttered again, “Daddy, I’m on my way.”

It was a while before she noticed the engines were dead and she had arrived at her destination. She offered the driver a few words and stumbled out of the car, struggling to find her balance. She found his house and stood by the door.

Clara rang the bell, but no response ever came — or, perhaps, she didn’t wait long enough. She wrapped her fingers around the knob and turned it over; to her surprise, it was unlocked. She judged he wouldn’t be cross if she came to his rescue by breaking into his place.
“Doctor?” she called his name loudly, eyes too busy looking for him to analyze the environment of his home. “Doctor, where are you?”

She thought she heard his voice, but couldn’t be certain of it. There was a faint music in the air; she tried to follow it, being led to a small den, in which the door left an even smaller gap between the doorframe.

She found him sitting on a couch, knees far apart from one another. He wore jeans and a black tee, not at all befitting someone supposedly dying. Nonetheless, she rushed to his side, bending down and palpating his arms to make sure he was alive.

“Clara! What took you so long?!” he was clearly annoyed by her delay, a scenario that certainly didn’t match the death state she had built for him. Although he didn’t push her way, he evidently couldn’t comprehend her oppression. “I’ve been waiting forever.”

Clara brought her arms to her chest, brows forming a straight line. “You said there was an emergency!”

“There is!” he consented with a bow, gesturing she should sit by him; she didn’t. Still, he raised a white controller in the air. “I need someone to play Wii Music with me!”

The colors warmed her faces — she could kill him. He wasn’t dying, then she definitely could kill him. Her eyes were wild, obfuscated by darker shades of black, shooting him threatening glares that he’d be only lucky to survive.

“What’s that look?” he pondered, innocently. Under any other circumstances, his obliviousness would be cute; not in that moment, though.

“It’s the look you get when I’m about to slap you!” she warned, but didn’t give him much time before striking her palm across his cheek. Her hand stung from the touch; she believed her fragile skin hurt more than his age worn faces.

Still, he overreacted. “Ouch! Clara!”

Clara turned on her back to him, arms fiercely crossed under her breasts. She couldn’t bear to look at his puppy eyes and lose herself on them. “You can’t do that to me, Doctor! I was dead worried about you, thinking you were lying dead somewhere. I’m not ready to lose you, okay?! Not yet, not ever. The idea of losing you hurts and I couldn’t breathe when I believed you were dying on me.”

She was letting out more than she was willing to confess; more than she had yet to admit to herself. Her feelings were out and they were past the point of no return. The Doctor swallowed hard, believing himself deserving of her scolding. His voice was hesitant, “Does that mean you’re not going to play Wii Music with me?”

She paced around herself, so her blood would better circulate and her anger wouldn’t remain lodged on her brain and heart. She stated clearly, sternly, and specifically, “I could murder you with my own bare hands.”

He was completely lost within her line of thinking, “But what about all those things you’ve just said?! I really can’t understand you, Clara.”

Defeated by his absurdity, Clara sank down by his side on the couch, eyes refusing to look either at him or at the telly. “I’m too mad to play with you.”

“But,” cried he, placing the controller on her lap in vain attempts. “I’ve even made you a Mii!
"Look!"

"That looks nothing like me," she argued, offended even. The room was hot and she was compelled to remove her coat; suddenly, she felt herself naked next to him, on her black top, grey sweatpants and funnily patterned socks, her face completely free from makeup. Some would even dare to say it was impolite to be that underdressed.

She completely blamed him, though.

The Doctor pretended he didn’t see her discomfort, watching from the corner of his eyes as she hugged herself, desiring to hide from him. Didn’t she know he found her beautiful with or without makeup; he was at a loss to understand how such a gorgeous woman willingly wanted to be with his decaying corpse.

Despite of her uneasiness and crossness, he leaned closer and pressed his lips to her cheek, at last properly greeting her. “Hi.”

She blushed immediately in surprise; melting beneath his silent deed of love. Still, she smiled — almost forgetting how mad she was at him. “Hello.”

Relieved she was slowly lowering her defenses, he encouraged her hand around the wii remote. “You know, it really was an emergency,” he debated again. “I was dying from missing you.”

She was satisfied of his confession, finally giving in. “Alright. I’ll play with you.”

He stole a kiss from her closed lips in gratitude, refusing to give up their proximity to settle back in a sitting position while he flicked around the game screen. Her mocking chuckle at the sight of his own Mii pleased him.

The Doctor wasn’t sure how or when his head ended up resting on her shoulder — even if her small stature deprived him from the possibility of a comfortable position. He refused to move, however, especially at the notion she was starting to loosen up; the tension freed her muscles, she kicked off her shoes, she brought her legs up to the couch. She laid her head above his.

“Pick a song,” he instructed, helping her point the controller at the telly. She obviously spent her entire childhood playing the piano with no access to any sorts of video games. The piano had been her only friend.

She read a few the titles out loud. “Bach’s Minuet in G Major. I was playing that before I got your message.”

The Doctor was surprised; he wasn’t expecting to hear that. And her little confession sent his heart fluttering. “That’s good, Clara. I’m happy for you.”

Still, she couldn’t be happy for herself. “It was nothing. I was more of murdering the music rather than playing it. Bach must have rolled on his grave.”

“Yes, so he could better hear his music being born again,” he conjectured, his masculine lips pressed to her smooth skin; he could feel the throbbing pulse of her neck against his forehead. He didn’t allow her to drown further down in her self disdain. “We’re playing it, then. Come on, choose your instrument.”

“The piano, of course,” Clara didn’t even bother to check the long list of instruments.

The Doctor at last pulled himself away from her, his eyes squinting. “You get to play any instrument
you want and you refuse to leave your comfort zone?!”

She was clearly struggling to aim her arrow across the screen; an irony for a pianist with steady hands. “Well, the piano is my master.”

He made some noises with his throat, seeing himself with no other alternative rather than choosing the violin. “I was really looking forward to playing with the barking dog, you know.”

Clara merely laughed at him, but then, she didn’t know he was being serious and the game actually allowed to play a barking dog. “Alright, what do I have to do?”

“It’s quite simple. Just weave it according to the melody, like pressing down the keys of the piano. You can even improvise between the notes.”

She clumsily wagged her hands for practice, having no coordination whatsoever. “Okay, I can do this.”

Clara definitely couldn’t, except it was a child’s game that didn’t require either skills or effort. He had gotten it just for her; he much preferred his shooting games. “You’re ready, yeah? It’s starting.”

She didn’t wait for the countdown to end before rapidly bouncing her wrists up and down; laughing at her character playing with fingerless hands. She wasn’t playing according to the sheet at all, leaving his violin to carry out with the melody.

The Doctor’s smile was warm, eyes glancing at her instead of the telly and swinging the bow of his controller. She purposely turned the music into a mess; and it pleased her. Just like the sound of her careless laugh pleased him.

The song came to an end. Clara fell with her head to his lap, once more catching him by surprise. Her features were soft — she had sparkles in her eyes and a grin on her lips.

She was breathless from her incessant laughter. Neither of them knew the cause to her amusement; and the Doctor was obliged to join her giggle. He bent down and kissed her temples and her cheeks and her nose and her lips.

The sound of her laughter and the sound of his affection composed a symphony only they would ever hear.

Chapter End Notes

your feedback is the solemn reason I'm still here :D
drying on dry land

Chapter Notes

I originally wrote this very specific chapter for an AU I had in mind based on the movie *The House Of Spirits*, in which Meryl Streep (coincidentally playing a girl named Clara)’s character gave up speaking after her words caused the death of the person she loved the most (she was a prophet, you see). Anyway it’s a great movie that I 12/10 recommend. And when I started writing this AU, I just knew that this scene I had in mind would fit in perfectly.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They played video games for as long as they could, from Super Mario to the shooting games the Doctor was so fond of; he absolutely crushed her, having no mercy to give. Clara didn’t really mind, she enjoyed seeing his happiness every time he won.

He was clearly a geek; he could spent his entire day and evening playing. Clara did her best to follow his enthusiasm about something so earthly, it wasn’t even her that suggested they take a break; he did, not oblivious to her tired features.

The sun was still up in the sky, although the late days of autumn wouldn’t allow it to shine for much longer. Without expecting an invitation, Clara stumbled around his place, exploring his home. It was humble, far more modest than his salary, far more discreet than the extravagant of her pent. Still, it was homely and cozy, so contradicting to the coldness of her house.

Perhaps, because unlike her, he still carried a soul.

The Doctor remained by her side all the time, offering little anecdotes on everything her eyes would lay on. Always getting a nod from her, eyes burning with curiosity and maybe just a little bit intrigued about the person he was when not a violinist. He opened the door to the outside, revealing the big pool he had never gotten around to using.

She walked enchantedly towards it. Completely amazed. Within her silence, he always struggled to know whether she was happy or sad or lost. Not until she turned around to face him and her traits bursted with all the emotions her vocal chords didn’t know how to express.

Shyly, and yet daring with her eyes, she wrapped all her hand around his index finger, bringing him close to the edge of the pool. She stepped out of her shoes, expecting him to follow her commands. She knew he would.

The Doctor almost gasped at her intentions. “You want to swim?! Right now?! It’s fall, the water is borderline freezing and we’re going to fetch ourselves a cold…!”

Clara rolled her eyes. He would have expected her to change her mind, like any sane person would; however, he was already familiar with the remarkable impredictivness of her mind. Confirming his line of thinking, she turned her back to the pool, spreading her arms in the air until they formed a 180° angle with one another and relaxed her body, allowing gravity to bring her down the water. Eyes watching the sky fade away until her body dove away.
“Clara?!” he called for her, worried that something could have happened when she lay completely still underwater. Until the need for oxygen was too excruciating and she slowly emerged back to the surface.

Her lips opened a bright smile at the sight of his perplexed and worried expression. Her flesh and bones burned in contact with the water; she would soon turn blue. Still, she refused to move. “You know what,” he uttered softly, mimicking her previous movements and getting rid of his black shoes. “There’s no point in living if you don’t catch a cold every now and then.”

And he jumped into the pool, legs meeting arms whilst in the air before reaching the water. He couldn’t help himself but to cuss when the cold met his bones, “Son of a—“

Clara broke into laughter before he had the chance to finish the sentence. She was floating, unlike him, too small for her feet to touch the ground beneath them. He would have mocked her height, weren’t he too busy himself shaking all around in failed attempts of getting used to the freezing water.

She swam towards him, her own chin slightly trembling — although she would never admit it. She cupped his face with the palm of her hand, before giving in to the laws of physics and allowing her body to submerge.

“Clara?” he spoke her name, too late for her to have heard him. Filling his lungs with oxygen, he sank down after her.

He was met by her welcome grin, her eyes almost drying up the path to his. She reached for his hands, little bubbles of air escaping her lips when she giggled, soundless. Clothes floating all around them, revealing the skin of bare bodies none of them seemed to remember that existed.

The Doctor tried to mouth some words to her, but the hard liquid between them made it impossible for any to be reverberated. And that only made her grin enlarge. He mumbled a few others given her reaction, getting the same response from her, in an endless loop.

And then, he understood.

Clara was giving herself to him.

She was allowing him the most intimate depth of herself: the absence of music. She was showing him the likeness of her life, teaching him the silence. Lecturing him how to listen to everything without hearing nothing at all.

And he smiled at her. Swimming closer to her, the Doctor brushed the skin of her temples with his thumbs, before taking her lips into his. Tugging her body so near him they were on the edge of becoming one, until natural buoyancy pulled them up and they were met by the chilly atmosphere.

When she drew her head away, none of them dared to say anything. His hold under her armpits was enough so she wouldn’t need to work her way to float, although she wouldn’t cease the movement of her feet. Anxious after having invited the man before her to know her like she had never allowed anyone else.

Keeping his face serious, he pushed the wet locks of the chocolate-brown hair away from her face. “Clara Oswald,” he whispered faintly, so no one else would overhear them, even if they were completely alone. His words were destined for her only, no one ever in the universe had been entitled to them, no one ever again in the fabric of the time continuum would ever be allowed ownership of them. He was giving himself to her. “I love you.”
Her cheeks rouged immensely — yet she didn’t turn away. Instead, she laid her forehead against the crook of his neck, the tip of her fingers struggling to hold onto a spot of the tee he wore. Holding him close; she would never dare to let go.

Because, he knew; she was saying *I love you too.*

Even if she wasn’t ready to say those words aloud; the feeling was there, planted in her mind and soul and heart, and he would wait for her until all the barriers she had built around herself came down and she allow herself to feel again. He wasn’t a cliché man, he was simply a man in love, unwilling to let her go.

He was astonished when her cold lips touched the edge of his cheek, close to his own lips, and her legs locked around his waist. Contracting to the rest of her body, her breath was warm against him. “Doctor, I…”

He stole the words from her mouth in a kiss, catching her inner lip between his teeth. He pulled her close, strangely at ease from her frame perfectly fitting into his, “I know, Clara.”

“I just…” she breathed in heavily, unable to bring her thoughts and feeling into word form. Even if she had already emerged from down the water, she looked at his eyes and she was *drowning.*

He led her to the counter of the pool and rested her back against its ceramics. “Clara, it’s okay. I’m in love with you, and that’s not going to change. Not now, not ever.”

“I don’t want to hurt you,” she cried, so small and vulnerable next to him, “But neither do I want to say something I’m not ready to admit. When I say them, and I will say them, they’re going to be my words to you. No one else will ever be entitled to them. When I say them, my heart will belong sincerely to you.”

“Clara,” his call of her name mimicked the beauty of his bow against the strings of his violin. “All I want is to love you. Loving you is the greatest privilege.”

And she was so drawn to him, intoxicated with him, she was obliged to let him.

_Schubert. She had always loved Schubert and the magic of his music, even if she lacked the ability to play his concertos — her hands were too small, they couldn’t reach all the notes displayed in his chords. Still, she loved Schubert._

_Her earphones were softly wafting one of his piano concertos as she lay on the sad excuse of a couch in her mother’s hospital room — fortunately, she was tiny enough to fit in it. She had her eyes closed, waiting for something — anything — to happen; anybody who walked in would conclude her to be asleep. She wasn’t, her mind was too adrift to drift off. She only lacked the strength to show any signs of life._

_Her mother had been taken to do some exams and her father had tagged along, leaving her completely alone at the mercy of her despicable thoughts. It had been hours since, the first rays of sunlight were starting to break through the window — Clara wished she could tell it to fuck off; every new day meant a day closer to her mum’s inevitable fate._

_There was a sudden noise, the sound of people entering the room. She remained still, frozen within her own body. Their entrance disturbed the melancholic of her music, but not her. She was untouchable._

_“You shouldn’t have bothered her, Dave,” the scolding of Ellie Oswald was loud and reproving. “She’s exhausted. She’s been working so hard lately, she needs to rest.”_
“You say that as if you didn’t know your own daughter,” the man argued, “She’d be hellish mad had we kept it from her.”

She sighed loudly. “I don’t want to wake her. She looks peaceful.”

“She won’t mind. You’re tired, Ellie, you need to go home.”

There was a heavy silence, then a hand to her shoulder and a kiss to her forehead; those links brought Clara back to reality of the word that she despised. She blinked a few slow times before regaining complete control over her body. “Mum, how… Is everything okay?”

She clumsily sat up, pulling the plugs out of her ears and tangling herself with the wires. Her mother smiled, “Yes. Everything is just fine.”

Although both women had very different definitions of fine, Clara didn’t ask for any further details, instead hopping onto her feet and hugging her mother by the waist — offering her and herself support. Ellie once more planted a kiss on to p of her head, and it felt no less than a kiss of death.

She took a desperate breath. She was standing on dry land, and yet, she was drowning.

Chapter End Notes

Sooo, do you think Clara will run away now that she’s learned about the Doctor’s feeling for her? Let me know what you think!
the shepherd’s boy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Clara stood in the middle of his living room, wearing nothing more than a tee of his, big enough to fit her as a dress, and white socks, her hair wet against her shoulders. When she’d first woken up in the morning, she never expected she would find herself in that situation — but neither did she think she would adventurous enough to jump into his pool while still fully dressed.

It had been worth it, though. Their shower sex afterwards had been mind-blowing. The simple recollection of him on his knees and his tongue flickering inside of her made her legs weak.

The Doctor walked into the room carrying one mug in each hand, which she accepted gratefully — it brought heat to her hands. His hair was somewhere between wet and dry, his curls had already started to build a halo around his head. She would never admit it, but he looked sacred with his angel eyes and angel hair.

Unlike her, he was too devoted to her to miss out an opportunity to evaluate her. “You look beautiful in my clothes. More than in your own, if I’m honest. They make you more faithful to your true self, different than your fashion clothes and your makeup. They hide you away and disguise your personality. No, I like your true self better.”

Her cheeks rouged, making the grin that shaped her lips even more adorable. “Mind me, I don’t look much different than how you first saw me today. I was in no state to produce myself after the fright you gave me with your emergency text.”

“Still,” he argued, placing his cup of tea down at the nearest surface, “You look much more homely like this.”

Clara frowned, her own cup near her lips. “Is that supposed to be a compliment?”

He brought his hands to her, catching her cheek bones within his hold. “What I’m saying is, you’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.”

He had no ulterior motives behind his words, still they set fire to her body and soul. Not even the ocean inside his eyes was powerful enough to put it out — and was it powerful. All her lust conveyed in the kiss she brought to his lips; she was surprised, however, when it simply melded into the love she had for him.

“I have a question,” she spoke quietly, unconsciously standing on her tiptoes so she could get closer to his eyes — it barely made a difference. “Why do you keep your violin in a shrine?”

Both their gazes moved towards the glass case serving as decor in the corner of the room. The Doctor wrapped his digits around her wrist, taking her closer to the pedestal after she had put her mug next to his. “It’s a special violin. I don’t use it for rehearsal, only in the week leading up to the performance.”

Her fingertips delicately touched the transparent window, her eyes entranced by the perfect shape of the instrument. “Why is it special?”

Carefully, the Doctor opened the case and pulled it out, placing it in her hands. “It’s a sad story.”
Her eyes dropped, both at his hint of sorrow and her desire to further analyze the very worn instrument. “You don’t have to tell me, not if it hurts to tell.”

“We’re all conceived from sad stories, Clara,” he cried, although the sadness had completely faded away from his tone. “You’ve told me yours; so I’m entitled to tell you mine.”

She nodded shyly, feeling the burden of his tale over her own shoulder. She quietly waited.

The Doctor traced his fingers alongside the wood of the violin; however he didn’t remove it from her hands. “Growing up, we didn’t have much money. We lived in the countryside, running a small farm, and there wasn’t much return to it — and neither did it help that there were too many mouths to feed.”

He paused for a bit, his eyes refusing to look directly at her. “My parents saved a lot of money to get us a violin. Not just me, but to my great amount of siblings as well. We all took our turns with that foreign object in our hands, but it was soon left forgotten by idle hands — not by me, though. I was simply fascinated by that instrument, it was love at first sight.

“There was an old rich man down in the village, a friend of the family — he bought our milk — who offered to give me classes. I had to walk miles everyday just to reach his house. And I did it happily, proudly. I had just met music but she was already my best friend.

“I had classes with him until I was sixteen. Times were rough, money was even more scarce, I would work all day long at the farm only to attend class at night. It was exhausting, but music was my home and nothing else mattered. Until Mr. Lockhart, my teacher, was taken gravely ill. And I thought the music was dying alongside him, too.”

“I’m sorry,” Clara lamented, a lump forming down her throat. She knew his feeling all too well; they both had lost the person who had made the music everything to them.

“I still remember the last time I saw him, on his deathbed. He was weak, but lucid, which made it so much worse — knowing you’re on the edge of dying is terrifying. I was crying, and he called me to sit by his side. He told me that death is a natural part of life, and feeling sad about it doesn’t change anything, it only makes it more distressing.”

Clara offered him a lifeless smile. “Yeah, my mother told me that far too often. Except they’re going to be dead, you’re the one left to pick up the scraps they left behind. You’re the one who must build your life all over again, without them.”

“Yes,” he agreed sadly, a heavy silence perpetuating them until he was ready to continue. “He sat me by his side and grabbed my hand. He told me to take his violin — he didn’t have any kids, I was the closest thing he had to a son. Of course, I didn’t want to, it would hurt too much to look at it — it still does — but he insisted, instructed me to sell it for it would provide my family and I enough money to survive the rough times. I decided against it, I dreaded the idea of this beautiful violin falling into hands that didn’t know how to properly cherish it.”

“And you’ve kept it to this day,” Clara prompted, handling the instrument carefully for she could the heavy significance it held.

He nodded. “I started playing for money, at streets and bars and restaurants. I didn’t make much, but I made enough, enough to start saving to go to music university — it was the dream, after all, to follow my passion and make the music my master.

“I auditioned to Glasgow university and I was good, so they offered me a scholarship. It was the
hardest decision I ever made, leaving my family behind when they needed me the most to pursue my dreams. But they encouraged me, and I guess that’s all that matters in the end.”

Clara wordlessly agreed. If it hadn’t been for the support of her mother, she wouldn’t have made it through the pressure and difficulty of becoming a musician. She wouldn’t have become the pianist she once had been.

“I was going to uni, so I decided to sell my very worn violin and get a new one. I walked into a fancy music store in Glasgow and that’s when I learned. The clerk took my violin in his hands to assess it and I’ll never forget the look on his face. That’s when I learned: I was playing a Stradivarius.”

Clara’s eyes surely matched the look on the clerk’s face that day so many years before. Her jaw fell down in vain attempts of forming words. She felt her whole body tremble, and her mind foresaw her fingers losing their grip over it, and dropping that rare and most expensive violin to the floor. “Please, take this before something catastrophic happens.”

The Doctor loudly chuckled, although he obeyed her command. “I had no idea what that meant, which made the salesman even more perplexed. How could a poor boy come across a violin built by the Stradivari family? How could a poor boy possess a violin whose most beautiful sound is worth millions today?”

Her digits remained sore from touching the instrument. “And you didn’t sell it.”

“How could I, it’s a Stradivarius, Clara,” he teased. “No. It meant too much, its value and its emotional meaning to me. And I couldn’t just give up its sound. It isn’t a pretty looking violin, it’s old and dusty and brightless, but it makes music like you’ve never heard.

Clara was entranced both by the instrument and his voice; her eyes were sparkly towards it all. “Can you play it for me?”

The Doctor scoffed. “That’s not fair. I can’t get you to amaze my ears with your piano and still you’d like me to play for you?!”

She ignored his bantering, instead showing him the inner flesh of her lips. “Please, Doctor.”

And when it came to her, he never stood a chance. Holding both the violin and its bow in one hand, he caught her fist with the other and led her towards the couch. He waited until she was comfortably seated — her legs crossed in front of her, her hands resting upon her thighs, her spine bent forward and her lips half open in amusement — before his bow brushed his strings.

The music flourished in the air and Clara quivered, chills running down her spine. She got goosebumps from the sounds he was blessing her with, the song so sad and melancholic and beautiful like she had never heard before; it brought tears to her eyes. He played it magnificently, he played it painfully; his eyes were closed and his face was rigid. He gave in all of himself, in name of the music.

He soon was done, but Clara wished he would never stop playing.

“Doctor, I’m...” she was troubled to find the right words, most likely because they didn’t exist.

He smiled with the counters of his mouth, at last sitting down next to her. “I told you. Its sound is powerful enough to heal the soul.”

“No, Doctor,” cried she, holding her hands together so they would stop shivering. “It doesn’t matter
the quality of the instrument if the mediator isn’t proficient. You’re the voice to the music, you’re the bridge between the physical atmosphere and the transcendence of the the sorrow, the pain, the joy, the love]. You carry the burden and life of music, not the violin.”

He put the violin aside, afraid to dive in into her gaze, but knowing nowhere else to look. He drew strength from her eyes. “Clara.”

“It was beautiful, Doctor. Heartbreakingly beautiful,” she insisted, her emotions breaking through her voice. “What’s it called? I don’t recall ever listening to it.”

“The Shepherd’s Boy,” he elaborated simply.

She frowned, trying to match its name to some composer and failing. “Yeah, never heard of it.”

The Doctor lowered his gaze all of sudden. “That’s because I’ve never played it to anyone else.”

Clara’s expression immediately dropped and she froze. She tried to find his face with her enlarged eyes, however he was doing a fair job in hiding himself away. “Why… Why me?”

He chuckled soundlessly. “Isn’t it obvious, Clara? I’ve given you all my story. I’ve showed you all my sorrows. It wouldn’t make sense to give you all of myself and not give you my music.”

Her cheeks instantaneously rouged; she suddenly found incredibly hard to look at him, and yet she saw herself with no other alternative than to climb over his lap and seal their love in the most truthful kiss. “Your music… It’s beautiful, Doctor. Thank you, it means a lot that you allowed me to hear it.”

He tangled his hands around her hair and brushed his fingertips against the scalp hidden within.

“You mean a lot to me, Clara.”

*Clara helped Mrs. Oswald into bed, the drapes of the window completely shut and the only light in the room coming from the crack on the door. She pulled a blanket over the tired ill body. “Dad’s already left for work, but I’m not going anywhere. If you need anything, I’m just outside.”*

*Ellie caught her daughter’s arm and refused to let go. “Stay with me, Clara. It’s a big bed.”*

*Time was so precious to them, Clara couldn’t refuse. Her mother meant so much to her she didn’t want to miss a single second of their remaining time together. She lay by her side, yet she was so physically tired and emotionally drained it didn’t take her long to fall asleep.*

Chapter End Notes

if you follow me on twitter, you probably know of my love for Murray Gold’s music, and that i’ve covered many of his songs on piano. if you don’t, then i say you go listen to my covers on twitter. if you don’t even know who he is, well, he’s the composer of doctor who s1-10, and *The Shepherd’s Voice* is probably one of his most magnificence songs (played both in Heaven Sent and when Twelve was regenerating), and I decided to bring his songs to the story because nothing describes Twelve more than them. If you love Murray Gold’s music as much as I do, I hope this was a nice surprise uwu
“Tell me about that wedding venue.”

The Doctor was taken aback by the sound of her request; not due to its unpredictability, but because music was still a sore subject, and she rarely brought it up. He looked from whatever book he had in hands to her direction — she was lying upside down across the mattress, her legs forming a 90° angle with her waist, and her feet rested high against the wooden headboard.

“What do you want to know?”

Clara shrugged, the movement causing one of her earplugs to fall out of her ear. “Are you… still looking for a pianist?”

He treaded carefully, for if he rushed into it, he could scare her into changing her mind. “Yes.”

Her breathing was heavy; and although she blamed it on the weird position she somehow found herself in, she knew her origins to be others. “What are you going to play?”

“Haven’t decided yet,” he elaborated, fixing his eyes on the tension on the clenched muscles of her very well defined jaw. “Probably some Brahms or Bach.”

She hummed in acknowledge, before falling silent again. She wasn’t sure why she was probing for information; she didn’t know why she desired to hear the answers; she didn’t know what she wanted to do—

“Would you like to play with me?”

His voice was so sweet and inviting, hesitant but hopeful. She had so many arguments against and yet they all frazzled her. “Y-yes.”

The heart inside his chest fluttered at her consent — he wouldn’t show his happiness, however, not when the possibility of her backing down still hung in the air. “Okay.”

“Okay,” she repeated, refusing to look at him, even though she could feel his heavy gaze upon her.

*Clara wasn’t at ease. The calendar marked a lazy Sunday afternoon and she was distressed. The close days of autumn were heavy on the skies outside, and the polemo tea in front of her failed to ease her nerves.*

*Time didn’t exist, and yet time was suffocating her.*

*She sniffed, attracting her mother’s attention from across the table. Still, she didn’t look up, instead trying to read the leaves in the bottom of her cup — even if she didn’t believe in that, or have the skills of doing so.*
She refrained herself from commenting how much more uncomfortable she became with the dying eyes locked on her.

For she knew — her mother only desired to memorize everything about her before she faded away, Clara just wished she was brave enough to do the same.

Before it was too late.

Time was closing in on her.

All of sudden, Clara raised herself in a sitting position, startling the Doctor. Her eyes were wide and sparkly; they consumed the image of him and drew their strength from it. “I don’t want to miss out anymore, Doctor. On anything.”

Her assertion brought lines to his aged forehead. Clara was a puzzle that only she had the means to solve — he was only in for the ride and a little moral support. “Clara?”

Clumsily — and with a little difficulty from her sore cramped legs — she crawled near him, invading his personal space. “I mean it, Doctor. I’ve already missed out too much.”

He agreed with a slow nod of the head, uncertain of her line of thinking. “Okay…”

Clara grasped his arm, feeling both excited and fearful — she couldn’t tell which emotion had originated the slight trembling of her hands. “Before you came into my life, I hadn’t played in so long. I told myself I’d never play again. I hadn’t listened for music for so long, the music had died on me and I could only feel the pain of it. Now, you’ve brought it all back to me. You’ve restored the music in my life, you’ve made me crave music again. I’m not saying it’s stopped hurting, but… you’ve made it worthwhile again.”

“The music of happy people will never be as beautiful and as significant as the music of a person who’s lost everything. Your pain is what makes your music shine, Clara,” he declared, pulling her hands to him and kissing each of her knuckles, “I didn’t do anything, Clara. Only you could tear down the barriers you built around yourself. Only you can use the pain in your favor. Be proud of that, Clara.”

She didn’t debunk him, for he would never willingly see the impact he had on her. She only wished he would accept her gratefulness for everything he had done for her, intentionally or not.

“You amaze me, Clara,” he spoke honestly, with no ulterior motives. Everything she was, everything she did amazed him.

Clara laid her head on the crook of his neck, feeling the beat of his heart against her skin. For some reason, she felt extremely at ease when showing her vulnerability to him. She allowed him herself when no one else had ever been entitled to that gift. She whispered to herself, not expecting him to hear her. “Thank you for saving me.”

His gentle hand on her spine was enough acknowledgment of her gratefulness for him. His touch was tender and soft, brushing the path of her vertebrae with the lightness of his fingers. He was playing the silent music in her.

That night, he held her close — closer than he had ever dared before. His devotion to her body and self was adorable, as she lay calmly on her back and he had his head resting against her neck, and arms wrapped around her waist.
Unlike her, he was fast asleep — or at least he appeared to be; Scottish silence could only last so long. For some reason, Clara couldn’t bring that same serenity upon her tired features. There were just so much going through her mind.

That night, she could only think of songs of love. Whenever she closed her eyes, she would see and hear scenes of romantic ballets, written and composed by romantic names that far too often brought the heroines to their dismay, but sometimes, very rarely, allowed love to prevail and conquer their happily ever.

She wondered if love could be the heroine of their story, too.

Clara looked down on his silhouette amidst the dark, and her heart was warm. His lips were pressed to her skin and his heavy arm had somehow trespassed under her blouse and rested just under her breast. His hair shared the scent of her shampoo — he had fairly argued his curls would only still amaze her if he washed his hair everyday, therefore he had no other alternative than to use her shampoo. She wouldn’t lie, it had made his hair even fluffier than before.

A couple months into their relationship and they couldn’t go a day without seeing each other. He’d spend most of his time at her penthouse, he even had a key and a few drawers to keep his stuff. Still, sometimes she would surprise him by showing up at his place, on those days she knew he was killing himself to make his music perfect. She would simply be there and watch him rehearse, offering little notes and remarks while mentally cursing Matt for being so rough on his orchestra.

“Doctor,” she called for him, in a tone that dreaded to wake him up, but hopeful he would slip back from unconsciousness. When he didn’t move, she let out a restless sigh.

Clara turned her body sideways, until heart was touching heart. She buried her nose amidst his good smelly hair, while one of her legs tangled between the two of his. She desired him near as he’d never been. “I’m in love with you, Doctor.”

The words were finally out and she was light. She was at last ready; Clara smiled to herself and closed her eyes, for now the main characters of the ballet were him and her.

She was surprised when the form of a grim appeared against her skin. His sharp teeth grazed her neck; he was overly happy after her simple confession of love. Still, Clara wasn’t mad at him for eavesdropping, or for pretending to be asleep; instead, she rolled over and burst into an incessant giggling.

“Say it again,” the Doctor demanded, his voice raspy and hoarse, as he tucked an arm under her and drew her close again. He suddenly found himself addicted to the sound of those words. “Don’t ever stop saying it.”

A lump formed down her throat at the sensation of his thumb climbing her breast and circling around her nipple. Her hips immediately bucked and she cried, “I love you.”

The Doctor pressed his hand flatly and firmly against her breast. Whatever sleep that still haunted him was then completely gone. He had far more interesting activities in mind than sleeping, he decided, as his other hand invaded the waistband of her pajamas, landing between the fabric of her underwear and her skin. “Say it again.”

For a while, only her breathing could be heard. Her legs were unconsciously spread to allow him further access — his finger on her clit, aboring a slow pace, up and down her most sensitive area. “I love you.”
His fingertips rubbed the entrance of her inner walls, moisturizing them with her natural juices. He knelt at her side, giving his hand a better position to satisfy her. “Say it again.”

She threw her head back, the vein of her neck throbbing hard against her skin; encouraging him to go faster and stronger. He merely chuckled at her desperate attempts. “I love you.”

His rhythm accelerated due to her demand, and he knew he was doing it right when her breathing became erratic and her hips started riding his palm. “Say it again.”

She dug her nails into the skin of the back of his hand. “I love you.”

He went faster and faster again. “Say it again.”

Her orgasm was piling up on her. “I love you.”

He penetrated his rough digits inside her. “Say it again.”

“Fuck—“ she cried, her waist bucking forward and back and trying to reach the speed of light. “I love you.”

“Say it again.”

“I love you..!”

“Again.”

“I love you!”

“Again.”

“I love—“

Clara Oswald came like a tsunami, drenching and drowning his fingers with her girly cum. She was shaking and sweating and breathing unevenly, her body reactions clearly pleasing the Doctor and bringing a twisted smile upon her features.

He pulled his hand out of her trousers — it was glossy and viscous and he brought it to his own mouth to clean them off. Clara remained frenzied, heartbeat threatening to break through her skin.

The Doctor pulled her to him, holding her close, building her a home within his embrace. She was heavy on him, for she had at last given him all of her. He caressed her frame with moist hands gently, “Those words shape your lips beautifully.”

“Shut up,” she grinned.

“But you know what?” he whispered close to her ears, “I love you too.”

She smiled tenderly. Even though he had said those words before, they felt much more honest and lighter that time. It had felt natural, like something they would do for the rest of their lives.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry I keep taking so long to update, life's been busy. Let me know what you think
of the chapter, your feedback thrives me to update as quickly as I can :)

End Notes

Appreciate a writer's effort to writing thousands of words for free and take the time to leave a comment. Your incentive is the solemn reason why we're still here :) 

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