

Find Peace Again

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Find Peace Again

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Summary

“They were coming for me,” Newt says, his leg bouncing rapidly. “They found me, actually, or Otachi did - ripped the ceiling right off the shelter I was in.”

Notes

"ugh newt being mentally ill and people respecting him and accommodating him for it will always and forever make me weep" - words of wisdom from katz

so, a quick summary of what i wanted to address with this: A) nobody else knew otachi was coming for newt at the time, B) there's basically no way he came out of that without some form of ptsd, C) he and mako are probably the only people in the shatterdome who know what it's like to have a kaiju pursue you on an individual level. also, my headcanons of their relationship are loosely based on designations congruent with things. so he was like the cool uncle figure for her growing up.

title from [so down](#) by mother mother!

Mako hasn't seen Newt since the breach closed. Before, that wouldn't have been surprising. He hardly leaves the lab to begin with, and she's been busy. But now, now that the war clock has stopped and the entire PPDC has been celebrating for days on end, it's just odd. She thought Newt would show up to steal some of the champagne, at the very least.

The last time she spoke to him was when a cheering crowd escorted her back into the Shatterdome. She made her rounds, hugging everyone, receiving congratulations, wiping away tears of relief. Newt squeezed her tight and said, "What did I tell you, kiddo? I knew you were gonna save the world someday," and then Mako was swept away.

The last time she saw him later that same night, leaning heavily against Dr. Gottlieb. They left shortly after. She wasn't one to make assumptions, but, well. She assumed it was a good thing.

Now, she's not so sure.

Newt hasn't sought her out. He hasn't been showing up to the mess hall. Mako even tried going to the lab, but Dr. Gottlieb cut her off before she could enter. "He's recuperating," he said. "My apologies, Ms. Mori, but I can't remember the last time he's slept, so you'll excuse me if I ask you to leave him be."

And so she left. But things are changing in the Shatterdome, now that they aren't being driven on by war, and Newt's absence is the most notable change of all.

Mako's boots thump against the floor as she makes her way through the halls. She's armed with a K-science magazine and her secret weapon: a mix CD of the songs Newt used to sing when she was young. This time, she's not leaving the lab until she's gotten a chance to talk to him. She wants to catch up with him, and if she's honest, she's a little concerned. Prolonged absences are never a good sign when it comes to Newt Geiszler.

She marches right in and stops in the middle of the lab. "Hello?" she calls. "Newt? Dr. Gottlieb?"

There's a clunk from the adjacent room. "Mako?"

"Newt!" Mako hurries over. Newt slides a rack of kaiju samples back into their refrigerated compartment. "Where have you been?" she demands. "I haven't seen you in days! You are not too cool for parties, I do not know why you are not celebrating with us."

Newt laughs. "Hey, you don't know me. I saved the world, remember? Maybe I am too cool for parties."

"You did not save the world," Mako says, grinning. "I did."

"Oh, really? Huh, we must be remembering it a little differently." Newt smiles at her before opening his arms. "C'mere, kid."

Mako hugs him. "You did save the world," she says. "We all did."

“Yeah. It was mostly me, though.”

Mako giggles. “So why have you been hiding? You are finally a rock star. I thought you’d be out having fun, not working.”

“Eh.” Newt lets her go. “There’s still a lot to be done. I’m not sure what’s gonna happen to all this once the we-survived-the-apocalypse euphoria wears off. I’m cataloguing everything we’ve got so it doesn’t mysteriously disappear if it’s transported through different countries.”

Mako smiles and shakes her head. Of course; what else could have been keeping Newt busy but his own classic stubbornness? “You can’t do that later she asks?”

Newt shrugs. “Maybe. You never know. Things can move pretty fast around here.”

There’s a loud rumble from above them - proof that what he says is true. Mako glances up. It seems like every time she wakes up, huge chunks of the Shatterdome are missing. They managed to salvage a few pieces of Cherno Alpha, but she’s already being further disassembled and shipped back to Russia. It sounds like they’re taking her apart right now.

“I wish they would slow down,” she says. “I know the war is over, but there is no reason we have to separate so quickly. We do not need to throw our alliances away as soon as the threat is eliminated.”

She looks back at Newt. His eyes are fixed on the ceiling. “Uh-huh,” he says.

“Do not let them reassign you,” Mako says firmly. “I doubt they will try, you’re too important, but still. Anyone who is not essential is already leaving, and I do not want to see you go.”

“Me neither,” says Newt. “Let them try and get rid of me, they can pry this shit out of my cold - “

Another blast of thunderous noise comes from above. Newt flinches.

“I think they’re working on Cherno Alpha,” Mako says.

Newt draws in a deep breath. “Yeah,” he says. “What are they even doing with it? Not Oblivion Bay, that’d just be fucking wasteful.”

“No. She is going back to Russia. I’m not sure what happens after that, but I think they will keep her for history’s sake.” Mako hopes so, at least. She’s one of the last jaegers they have, and the only Mark 1 still around. Leaving her to rust would be criminal.

“They should just keep it here. Fuck’s sake, we’re letting enough people go that the Russians could just come here and - ” Another rumble from above, and Newt jolts. “Fuck,” he mutters. He still hasn’t looked away from the ceiling.

“It’ll be okay,” Mako says, placing a hand on his arm. Newt jumps, finally tearing his eyes away. Mako frowns. “Newt, are you - “

Thunder rolls, and Newt's entire body shudders. "Fuck," he says. "Can we - can we do this another time, maybe? Or relocate somewhere?"

Mako's frown deepens. Newt has plenty of quirks, but noise sensitivity has never been one of them. Dr. Gottlieb's usually the one yelling at him to turn his music down. "Are you all right?" she asks.

"What? Yeah, I'm totally fine, why?" Newt asks, watching the ceiling like it could explode at any moment.

"You seem tense."

"Tense? Who's tense?" Newt's pupils are dilated. He reminds Mako of a frightened animal, ready to bolt at any moment. She's seen enough of his panic attacks over the years to recognize the expression.

"Come with me," she says, gently taking his arm. "We will go to your room."

"Yeah, that sounds great," he says, allowing her to lead him down the hallway. As soon as they're squirreled away in his room, the heavy door closed behind them, he collapses into his desk chair.

Mako sets down her magazine and CD on the desk and crosses her arms. "Are you going to tell me what's wrong?" she asks.

Newt looks away, drumming his fingers on the armrest of his chair. "Not if I can help it," he says.

"Newt."

"Mako."

"I am not stupid. If you don't tell me I will force you into a psych evaluation."

Newt grimaces. "Already did that. Failed with flying colors."

Mako wracks her brains for a suitable threat, and quickly lands on one. "I'll tell Dr. Gottlieb," she says.

Newt sits up, pointing one finger at her. "Do not," he says. "Don't you dare. He already knows, I don't need to hear it from him again."

"Then tell me," Mako says stubbornly. "I want to know what's wrong."

She can almost make out the roar of deconstruction. Newt's fingers twitch. He lets out a slow breath, averting his eyes. "Look," he says. "Hong Kong was... rough, okay?"

"I heard your shelter was attacked," Mako says, studying him closely. *Attacked* barely does it justice. It was nearly obliterated, if the pictures are any indicator. "That must have been..."

She trails off. There's no way to describe it. "Terrifying," she tries, but the word is flimsy and hollow in her mouth. Of course it is. How could one word possible capture that feeling?

"Yeah. Except it wasn't just the attack, it was more than that, it - " Newt pushes up his glasses to rub at his eyes, wincing. "You wouldn't get it." He pauses. "Or... maybe you would? You actually might be... yeah, okay, you would. You would get it." He laughs, a little shaky, like he's not sure that's something he's still allowed to do. "So, I drifted with the brain fragment first," he says. "But it's the same difference, fragment or full-on, I mean, we're talking hiveminds here. And the drift's like a trade, right? I got a little something, so they got a little something, too."

This isn't what Mako was expecting. "What did they get?" she asks, furrowing her brow.

Newt chews on his lip. "Our side of the story, I guess," he says. "Motivations. Limitations. Strengths. Nothing that mattered too much, obviously, it didn't last long enough for them to get anything important, and the differences in thoughtforms was fucking weird - that's probably a good thing, though, it slowed them down a little - but they wanted more, is the thing. And they had me, so that was a starting point. My mind. My location."

Mako's heart drops. "You," she says, almost meaning to form a sentence, but too horrified to voice the thought.

"They were coming for me," Newt says, his leg bouncing rapidly. "They found me, actually, or Otachi did - ripped the ceiling right off that shelter." He stops and swallows hard, gesturing a little with his hands. "She, um - it? Have we reached a consensus on that yet? I mean, sexual dimorphism wasn't really much of a thing for them, the whole genetic engineering thing made that a little obsolete - "

"Newt," Mako says. "I'm sorry, you don't have to do this. If you would prefer not to talk about it - "

"No," Newt says forcefully. "I'd prefer if she hadn't stuck her fucking tongue right down in my face, but that doesn't do anything, so I just have to live with it, okay? And that's the fucking thing I'm wondering about, Maks. How am I supposed to live with that?"

Mako hasn't seen Newt like this before. Even through the manic episodes she was too young to understand, the underlying anxiety they all shared, the shouting that carried down the hall from the lab - Mako's seen his highs and so many lows, but not like this. It freezes her in place. She was supposed to save everyone, bring them back to life as normal. It hadn't occurred to her that once she did it, they might not be the same people she had set out save.

Mako gives herself a sharp mental reprimand. He's still the same Newt, of course he is, he's just shaken. His right sclera is still bloody red. Maybe that's what's different. Maybe it's a whole combination of things; the dark circles under his eyes, the jitteriness, the way Mako herself still feels the need to constantly look over her shoulder, like the war clock might start ticking again at any moment. They all just need time to breathe.

Newt's breathing too fast.

“You get it, right?” he asks. “I mean, that’s how it was for you, wasn’t it, back in Tokyo? That thing was coming for you. *You*. And you probably thought you were gonna get smashed into a little Mako pulp right there, ‘cause that’s pretty much what I thought - you’re actually the only reason I survived, by the way, thanks for that. How the fuck do you just keep on trucking after that? Doesn’t it fuck with your head?”

Mako looks at the floor.

She doesn’t like thinking about Tokyo. Newt’s right - she was so young, too young to stand face to face with her own mortality. She couldn’t very well call herself a child after that day. But there’s an art to keeping up appearances.

“It was different for me,” she says quietly. “With my family, I... could distract myself. Revenge was the only thing I thought about.”

“And that’s all it was? Distraction?” Newt’s fingers drum against his thighs, keeping sixteenth-notes to the tempo his heel’s relentlessly tapping on the floor. “I’ve been trying that, and it doesn’t seem to work.”

It didn’t work for Mako, either. But she isn’t about to tell him that much.

“They were the most important thing to me,” she says with a shrug.

“Yeah, well, fighting the kaiju was the most important thing to me, and that’s kind of a non-issue now. What the hell’s gonna be as important as that?”

Newt tries so hard to be casual, even when he’s upset - especially when he’s upset. But he can’t quite pull it off.

“You have to find something else and make it important,” Mako says.

Newt adjusts his glasses. “Again,” he says. “What the hell else is - “

“You will think of something.”

“How?” Newt says, his voice cracking on the edge of desperation.

Mako gives him a small smile. “You have six doctorates,” she reminds him. “I’m sure you will be able to think of something.”

“Okay, if you’re trying to make a point about how unbelievably awesome I am, I’m totally with you there, but, like. For real. Did you do the therapy thing? I’m starting to think I might need that. Well, I’ve needed it for the last ten years, but I’m thinking about doing it, maybe,” Newt says. Then he blurts out, “Do you still get nightmares?”

Mako nods.

Newt relaxes a little. “Okay, cool,” he says. “Score one for any part of this being remotely normal.”

Mako smiles. "None of this is normal. That does not mean we cannot survive."

"Yeah." Newt sighs. "I guess that's a thing we're gonna have to do, huh? Make the new normal."

Mako hums in agreement. She reaches out and takes his hand. His fingers are still trembling, nervous energy buzzing just beneath the skin.

"For what it's worth," she says, "you are on the right track. If you want to feel better, you will need to talk to people."

"Oh, swell," Newt says to himself. "My favorite thing to do."

"There are people who care about you," Mako says. "Me. Dr. Gottlieb. We will help."

Newt rolls his eyes. "Hermann's not gonna like talking to me about my feelings. He doesn't like talking to me, period."

"You drifted with him. He will understand."

"Mmmyeah, cool, thanks for the life advice, Maks," Newt says, shifting up in his chair. "Anyway, we're talking about me a lot, let's talk about you maybe? How's Becket boy doing, are you guys rock stars yet? You should - "

"He was surprised that you were compatible," Mako says, tilting her head. "I was not."

It stops Newt right in the middle of a tangent. He blinks. "Wait, you're not? I was. Kind of. I mean, all the usual rules kind of go flying out the window when you're throwing a kaiju into the mix - "

"Have you talked to him about this?"

"Yeah, I have, actually. It was kind of unavoidable after the drift, since he saw everything, he felt it, and he knew I was still pretty fucking - oh, that reminds me, what's it like with Becket? Have you, like, discovered a sudden urge to pump iron and/or throw down with Chuck Hansen - " Newt cuts himself off, shifting uncomfortably. "Well. Anything ghost-drifty?"

They do not acknowledge the deceased Chuck Hansen. "I did experience a mild ghost drift, yes," Mako says, pushing away memories of Yancy Becket that do not belong to her. "Are you saying you did as well?"

"I most certainly did not. And even if I had, I wouldn't be talking to you about it, because *if* I had, Hermann definitely would've wanted me to be discrete about it, and I would probably feel more bad than usual about my own lack of discretion knowing how it feels on his end. Anyway, what were we talking about?"

"Your experience in Hong Kong."

“Nope, I’m pretty sure that’s not it. I’m pretty sure we were talking about your face being plastered over every TV station known to man, how awesome is that?”

Newt is not one to subtly shift from one topic to another, but to brutally steamroller over the old one until it’s impossible to continue. Mako decides to humor him. They can always continue this later. As long as he knows that people care about his well-being and want to help him cope with the big picture, she can try and help him cope with the smaller ones.

“It is pretty awesome,” she agrees. “Even if they are putting an unfair amount of emphasis on Raleigh. He has been very frustrated about that.”

Newt’s anxiety drops away in an instant. He rolls his eyes. “Aw, dude, he’s not the only one. Just because he was the one to blow up the reactor, honestly - it’s like they all forgot how jaegers work.” He waves his hands at some invisible force representing the international press corps. “It’s a two-pilot system for a reason, he wouldn’t have even gotten that far if you two hadn’t been kicking kaiju ass *together!*”

And with that, he sounds a little more like his old self. Mako smiles, relief running through her in a plume of warmth.

They may never have “normal” again. The future is wild and unpredictable. But as long as they have the spark in them to keep complaining about journalism and funding and the obnoxious mundanities of life post-apocalypse, as long as they keep *talking*, the past cannot touch them.

So, with the trouble and trauma of the past few days laid aside, Mako lets Newt talk them into a new world.

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