

All Our Ghosts

written by
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PAST - ELENA

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

Black. The sound of wind chimes outside a window.

Some blackout curtains are drawn, letting only a slither of light in. A tall mirror in the corner of the room glows, and there's a folded-up letter by its corner. ELENA is sat against a wall at the other end, looking out at the window. expressionless.

ALEX (O.S.)
You okay?

CUT TO:

PRESENT - BOTH

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - DAY

ALEX is visiting ELENA's house. She's just moved in, the house is still mostly empty, and there are boxes everywhere. ELENA is looking out the window here too - daydreaming, lost in memory.

ELENA
Yeah, just could've sworn I heard something.

A beat. She eventually turns her gaze back to ALEX.

ALEX
Think I'm getting lost in the walls too.

Some time passes, and ELENA gets up and walks towards some boxes in the corner of the room. ALEX sits for a second, almost waiting for her to get something. She's kneeling, rummaging through a large cardboard box with '2002' drawn on.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're still good with me here?

She stops for a beat, turning her head to acknowledge ALEX.

ELENA
It's fine, you're fine. Besides...
if you weren't here...
I wouldn't get to show you this.

ELENA pulls a grey shoebox out and gives it to ALEX. He goes to lift the lid off, but she interjects -

ELENA (CONT'D)

Wait a sec.

ALEX slowly lowers his hands to move the shoebox away from his chest and to his side. Eventually, ELENA closes the box and walks back to lean against the wall. ALEX heads over to the fireplace and looks to her, as if to ask if he should leave it there.

ELENA (CONT'D)

So when did you -

When did you know that I'd left?

ALEX goes to speak but stops himself and pauses for a second. He puts the box down on the fireplace.

ALEX

Must've been a few weeks back. I'd just gone to the phone -

CUT TO:

PAST - ALEX

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

ALEX is inside a small phone booth on the street, talking to his mum on a wired phone.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, it's only the basics, right?

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)

(muffled, on the phone)

Just some bread and those teabags I like, don't worry.

ALEX

Okay, I can pick them up... tonight. I'll drop them over about 7ish.

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)

Oh, you busy?

ALEX

No - it's just coursework today.

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)

I'd say I'm surprised you're not out with Lena again - but y'know...

ALEX
Haven't heard from her in a minute.

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)
Don't you know what's happened
already?

ALEX
Know what? What's happened?

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)
I think she's moving out. Thought
she'd have told you that by now? I
thought you spoke often.

A beat.

ALEX
No, no - I'm sure everything's
okay. She would've told me. She
couldn't have just left.

ALEX'S MUM (O.S.)
I'm sorry dear. Once she's settled
down, I'm sure you'll eventually
get back into contact. Why don't I
give you her aunt's number?

ALEX
Okay. She'll pick up. She'll know
it's me. It's fine.

After ALEX'S MUM gives him the number, he hangs up abruptly -
scrambling to put his change into the dial unit. He quickly
presses the numbers.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I tried calling - I tried. I kept
trying. And I kept trying.

The phone rings...

And it rings... and it rings...

And it goes straight to voicemail. ALEX drops the phone,
distraught.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - BOTH

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - DAY (CONT'D)

ALEX turns to ELENA just a bit more, judging.

ALEX
And I really thought that I'd never
hear from you again.
(a beat)
That that was it.

There's silence for a second as guilt looms over ELENA.

ELENA
What happened wasn't my choice,
Alex.

ALEX
And you never thought to send even
a letter? So I'd at least know you
were okay?

ELENA stands up, and walks towards the boxes again. She turns back around once she's decided what to say.

ELENA
We were all over the place. It took
a while for me to get all my things
over.

ALEX
(voice breaks)
Was there not even a day?

There's silence again as ELENA thinks of some way to reply.

ELENA
I was caught up.

ALEX
Did I really matter that much to-

ALEX is suddenly cut off as the sound of ELENA's phone ringing from her memory spills into the present.

PAST - ELENA

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - DAY

It rings, it rings and it rings. There's an eerie silence after each ring. In the present, ELENA begins to raise her voice.

ELENA (O.S.)
I didn't ask for what happened.

ELENA just sits there and does nothing as it rings.

ELENA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Okay? I didn't ask to be here.
(a beat)
Do you know what it's like? Like -
to live somewhere empty?

ALEX (O.S.)
You know, I wanted to help. I want
to help.

She calmly sits back down and looks out the window. The wind
chimes aren't there yet.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - BOTH

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - DAY (CONT'D)

There's a moment of silence again as ALEX is too stunned to
respond.

ELENA
It wasn't for you act on. It's not
for you. It wasn't your fault.

ALEX
So you blame yourself?

They both stand in anxious silence again. ELENA walks over to
the fireplace, picks the shoebox up, and takes the lid off.

ELENA
(softer, slower)
Why would I? Never got to change
what happened.
(a beat)
And I never really will. And
neither could you.

ALEX sits down against a wall, visibly relaxing. ELENA
eventually joins him, and hands him some old glossy photos
from the box. There's an old film camera with some small
reels in there too.

ALEX
(quiet)
I didn't think you kept these.

ELENA

Well, my family weren't that big on them either.

ALEX shuffles through them.

ALEX

You had a good eye for it. I can't take a photo to save my life.

ELENA

Someone had to do it.

ALEX eventually gets to a photo of the sea. It shines in the sunlight as he holds it out. He turns it over, and it's dated 07/01/02 - a few weeks ago.

ELENA (CONT'D)

...got to have something to remember.

ALEX turns the photo back over, gives it to ELENA, and she puts them back into the shoebox. There's the sound of a car pulling up on the driveway outside, and they both get up.

ALEX

So, when do you think you'll be settled?

ELENA takes the shoebox back to the boxes in the corner of the room. ALEX leans against the doorframe, looking towards the front door as he speaks.

ELENA

Don't know, still need the rest of my stuff.

ALEX

Well, should be better by then.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Could always be back next month.

ELENA

I'll... let you know.

ELENA gets back up, and ALEX walks to the front door.

ALEX

(breathes in)

See you.

ELENA
See you. And I'll call you next
time.

ALEX opens the door, and just before he's through, ELENA
interjects:

ELENA (CONT'D)
I-um - did write you something.
Since you were such a reader. I
really did - it just had four-week
delivery.

ELENA takes a small letter out her pocket, the same one that
was by the mirror, and holds it out for ALEX to take. ALEX
hesitates for a second.

ALEX
I don't know if I can.

ELENA
You don't have to read it now.
It's okay.

ALEX
Okay.

ALEX takes the letter and walks out the door towards the car
on the driveway. His figure is swallowed by the blinding
sunlight. ELENA closes the front door, walks down the hall,
and back into her empty room.

FADE TO:

PRESENT - ALEX

EXT. GARDEN - DAY (CONT'D)

In a quiet garden somewhere, ALEX sits in the shade, looking
at the letter. Birds call; trees blow in the wind. He flips
it over and then unfolds it quickly. As ALEX reads the
letter, we can hear ELENA's voice.

What follows is a montage of their past and present, slowly
intertwining and resolving.

ELENA (V.O.)
Alex, I'm so sorry. I can't tell
you a lot right now.

In her memory of the phone, ELENA unplugs it.

The world has spun things up again,
(MORE)

ELENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
and I need to find my way. Just
know that I'll be here for you
here.

In his memory of calling her, ALEX slowly leaves the phone booth and walks away.

And don't ever think any of this
was your fault. I'll be back in
town one day. Okay?

In the memory of the wind chimes, ELENA puts them up.

I've got a poem. For now. I'm sure
you can find some semblance of
meaning in it.

In the present, ALEX is still sat reading the letter.

You were always good at that.

Not far from the past, ELENA walks around a dark garage full of boxes.

Back in the garden, ALEX starts reading the words out under his breath. There's the sound of the wind chimes.

There're a hundred lights out in
pitch black rooms, and you won't
see them.

ELENA walks around her room, and undraws the curtains to let the light back in.

And there's hundred ghosts, all
ours, but you won't see them.

In her memory of the phone, an old painting of the sea rests against some boxes.

And a hundred different versions,
all ours, but you won't see them.

The wind chimes, blowing in the wind.

And all the ones I once knew,

They both say the words in sync with each other now.

And all the ones we will know,

ALEX sat in the garden; ELENA sat against a wall. Only she speaks the last line:

And only one I'll ever truly be.

End.