We Are Only Pieces

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1555.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Slash (M/M)
Fandom:	Hunter x Hunter
Relationship:	Chrollo Lucifer/Shalnark Ryuseih
Characters:	Chrollo Lucilfer, Shalnark Ryuseih, Phinks Magcub, Feitan Portor, Machi Komacine, Pakunoda (Hunter x Hunter), Uvogin (Hunter x Hunter), Nobunaga Hazama, Franklin Bordeau, Sheila (Hunter x Hunter), Sarasa (Hunter xHunter)
Additional Tags:	Canon Compliant, Manga Spoilers, Angst, Minor Character Death
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Nostalgia
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-09 Words: 1,501 Chapters: 1/?

We Are Only Pieces

by SilverHypnos

Summary

When life follows a routine, it’s comfortable, like a puzzle piece that fits perfectly. When happiness and fate intertwine, every piece feels like it has a purpose. Chrollo fits here, Shalnark fits there, and… oops.

From the nostalgic Meteor City days to what they are now, this is a nuanced love story between Chrollo and Shalnark. Each chapter is like a snapshot, usually before or after major canonical events. While not necessary, this fic is meant to be read alongside When We Were Us.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

"There we go," said the young boy as he crouched by the grave and gently placed the desert poppies he had gathered in the morning. No matter how scorching the day was, there was always a sense of serenity whenever Chrollo visited the graveyard. Not many children spend time in such a place; it's too depressing for them. The cemetery was peaceful, quiet, and a place where he could lower his walls. There was no expectation of him.

In the eyes of Meteor City, he was seen as The Bright Future. The adults regard him as kind, intelligent, and creative, unknowingly putting pressure on him. However, outside of his small, tight-knit groups of friends, other kids see him as weak, nerdy, and easily bullied. So much so that even some of the kids he spends time with feel the need to be protective over him. And the strange thing about it is that he doesn't mind the pressure. He likes being able to please everybody. He wants to please everybody. But every now and again, he needs that time to unwind and be something else.

Chrollo is everything he cares about: his friends, Meteor City, and his desire to learn and know more about the world. But outside of that, who is he? Outside of his ties with people and the world, who is Chrollo? Other kids say he's weird for feeling this way. Adults say he's too young to be asking those questions. The more he spends time alone, the more connected and disconnected he discerns with himself. It perplexes him.

The crunch of gravel grew ever closer in the distance. Chrollo turned to see a figure rapidly approaching, arms out, waving, "Hey, Chrollo!"

Chrollo smiled with delight and waved back, "Shal." With the back of his hand, he wiped off the sweat on his forehead.

"Lisores said you'd be here." Shalnark smiled before looking around the cemetery. "Why are you here anyway?"

Chrollo glanced down towards his shoes. Other than Paku, most kids didn't know he had a routine of picking and laying flowers. Although he considers Shal a friend, he hates to admit it, but he's always felt a little insecure about the reality of their friendship. Unlike the other kids, Shal is hard to read. His demeanor and his tone of voice almost always contradict the words he blurts out.

There's only a blunt way to put it. Shal is a cute boy. The fluffiness of his dirty blonde hair gave him this cherub look; the missing tooth in his smile made him ever so youthful. The way his eyes were magnetic, the color of seafoam, bright, soft, and yet almost dead.

Chrollo pointed to the gravestones, "I've been replacing the old flowers with fresher ones."

"Oohh, did Lisores request you to do that or something?" Shal placed his arms behind his head, continuing to smile.

"No, it's something I've been doing for months now."

"Huh? Why would you waste time doing that?" Shal tilted his head, but the smile he gave never dropped.

Chrollo paused for a moment; had Shal been a stranger, he'd assumed it was just a poor choice of words. "Well, this cemetery is for other kids who have passed away. I guess I like to place flowers for them, so they know they aren't forgotten about." Truth to be told, Chrollo didn't fully understand why he spent time doing it. When he first started, it just felt like the right thing to do.

Shal chuckled and patted Chrollo on the back. "But they are dead. How are they going to know?" As he giggled, he continued, "You know, Chrollo, you're a real softie."

Chrollo couldn't help but stare back at Shalnark. He supposed any person would have been angered by his comments, however. Chrollo couldn't help but be enamored with Shal's sunshine facade. From the very first interaction, he has always found Shal interesting. Most of the adults were convinced Shal was just a late bloomer when it came to emotional intelligence. But Chrollo saw right through it. Shalnark has emotional intelligence; he simply does not care to coddle anyone. He will speak his mind with a bright smile on his face.

He's an honest enigma. He was something that Chrollo was not. Shalnark knew who he was. He only desired to please and entertain himself. And yet, Shal continued to seek out Chrollo. This had always alluded to him as most kids never saw him as fun to hang out with. Sure, he'd play with the others, sneak into Uvo's territory, and take the finds. But Shal could also do that with any other kid.

The answer was so simple: he could ask why. But maybe Chrollo was afraid of the response.

Shal placed his hand on Chrollo's shoulder and shook him gently. "Come on, Chrollo, let's play."

Chrollo nodded and followed.

° °

"Ouch, man, this really stings." Whined Shal as he walked aimlessly around town. Two days ago, Shal, Franklin, and Chrollo took a VHS tape from Uvo's territory. It appeared to be successful, though Uvo chucked something blunt to Shal's head, completely knocking him out. "Man, Uvo can be really rough at times."

While gently patting his head bruise, from the corner of Shal's eyes, he saw Phinks and Feitan. "Ah."

"Yo, Shal, heard you got a beatin'" Phinks approached him with a smug look.

Shalnark smiled back, "Yeah, I sure did. I heard you got swindled by the boy you tease so much. That must be embarrassing." He giggled.

A mix of bashfulness and anger painted Phink's face as he grabbed Shal's shirt, forcing him closer to his expressive face. "Hey, you pickin' a fight with me now?" Obviously, Phinks was exaggerating how intimidating he actually was.

Shal continued to smile, "Of course not. Remember, I'm still healing from the previous beating."

Phinks threw Shal to the ground before changing the subject, "Where is Chro anyways? I haven't seen him at all."

Shal looked up at Phinks and shrugged, "Don't know."

"You don't know?" Phinks raised an eyebrow.

"Nope," Shal said with a smile.

"You better not be lying." Feitan finally spoke up from behind Phinks.

"Isn't Chro your friend or something? Why wouldn't you know where he is?" Phinks added.

Shalnark got up, patting away the dirt from his clothes. "Yeah, he's my friend. But I don't keep tabs on where my friends are twenty-four-seven." It was as if Shalnark had zero self-preservation, he added, "But I guess that is a foreign concept for you two."

Phinks immediately lunged for his neck, gripping it. "Give me one reason not to end you right now."

"Aw, c'mon guys, I thought you two loved jokes." He giggled while secretly concerned for himself.

"Your joke not funny." Feitan glared.

"Hmmm... So all I have to do is give you one reason..." He pondered out loud. "Ah, how about this. Besides Fei, I'm the only other person who willingly laughs at your jokes." He had the cheekiest grin with that delivery.

Phinks was stunned a bit. Ruminating on a response to that. "Tsk," he clicked his tongue and let go of Shal. "Whatever." He said, practically hiding his defeat behind apathy.

Shal tilted his head. "Why do you pick on Chrollo so much anyway?"

"Huh? Oh, that's cause he's weak; I'm doing him a favor by toughening him up." Phinks paused for a moment. "Why do you hang out with him anyway?"

"He interests me." He says it so nonchalantly.

"Oh, so you actually like him?" Phinks obviously was trying to suggest a double meaning with that comment. Most likely due to all the times Shal had teased him about how close he was to Fei.

However, Shal just smiled back, though the emotions in his eyes were impossible to read. "Of course I like him. Why would I waste my time hanging out with someone who bores me? Chrollo is enthralling. Once you get to know him."

That was the thing about Shal that most people hated. Other than physically hurting him, it felt impossible to get under his skin. He did have an interest in technology and did get upset whenever someone touched it, but he's smart. He hides all of his toys well.

There wasn't much to add to that conversation.

"Whatever, man. Hey, Fei, let's go." Phinks gestured for Feitan to follow him.

Shal watched those two leave before pondering to himself. "Why has Chrollo been hiding and sneaking around?" Admittedly, he had a general idea where Chrollo could be, but lately, Chrollo seemed to be distracted by something. He was probably enamored with a new project, Shal thought. He was a little bummed that he wasn't involved. But knowing Chrollo, if it's a project, he will reveal it soon.

Shal clapped his hands together. "Alright, I guess I will have something to look forward to. Til then, I just have to find something to do." Before skipping around the streets, looking for anything to catch his eye.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!