

Swap

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Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings , Major Character Death
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Lifesteal SMP
Relationship:	Ashswag & YeahJaron , past ashswag/reddoons
Character:	Ashswag , YeahJaron
Additional Tags:	Oneshot , Alternate Universe - The Magnus Archives Fusion , Alternate Universe - Modern Setting , avatar of death!ash , not!red , He/Him then It/Its Pronouns for Not Them , Ashswag Has a Gun , don't worry its plot relevant , you can read this without any tma knowledge , Not RPF , this fic is clickbait btw ash spends half of this fic talking about his marriage with red , Roses and Smoke Week
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Swap

by [cherubium](#), [swagcore](#)

Summary

[CLICK]

[Jaron]:

Statement of Ash...*Swag*, regarding events surrounding his husband, Red Doons. Statement recorded live from subject on April 4th, 2023, recording by Jaron Yeager from the LIFE Insitute, London,...*Ohio*. Statement begins.

[Ash]:

Are you seriously gonna be recording on *that*?

or: a fic written for day 2 of roses and smoke week, **swap/horror**.

Notes

hello if you're a cc reading this feel free to read it on stream or whatever. no mangus archives knowledge is needed to read/understand this fic and this is a one-off fic/oneshot so there will be no continuation of this au besides this fic. either way, enjoy the fic!

tws for brief and non-graphic mentions of death, car crashes, guns, shooting, and burying a body. there's also character death, but it's not with ash or jaron. stay safe!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

[CLICK]

[Jaron]:

[clothes shuffling against a recording device]— you be a *little* less rude when barging into the institute and interrupting my lunch?!

[Ash]:

It's not *my* fault that you guys have a “walk in at anytime” policy. Besides, I've got places to be.

[Jaron]:

Then why are you— That doesn't mean you can just— **[grumbled sigh]**. Okay, fine just—tell me what happened and then we'll start the statement...oops.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

[Jaron]:

Statement of Ash... *Swag* , regarding events surrounding his husband, Red Doons. Statement recorded live from subject on April 4th, 2023, recording by Jaron Yeager from the LIFE Insitute, London,... *Ohio* . Statement begins.

[Ash]:

Are you seriously gonna be recording on *that* ?

[Jaron]:

The tape's already rolling.

[Ash]:

You're not even going to— whatever. Fine.

[sigh]

[Ash (Statement)]:

Huh. I expected to come in and be ready to talk about it but...

It's...still hard to believe that I was the one who killed hi—no. Killed *it*. **[muttered]** *Whatever it was, it was not human, I'm sure. Just someone wearing—it wasn't even him!*

Whatever, that's not the point now. Still, I haven't found *him* — the *real* Red. And considering what happened? Don't think I will. Not alive, that is. That's the only thing I'm certain of.

...It was strange having someone you care about and who cared for you in return. I guess I should start off with that for a bit of context. For the longest time, I've been surrounded by death. Edgy, I know, but the point is, ever since I could remember, people dropped like flies around me. It was... hard at first, but you sort of became numb to it at some point. After all, once you've been to your 7th funeral when you're 12, that's all you can do. **[slightly muffled static]** "*No one is spared from death*"—that's something I learnt early on. So why try to connect with others if, after all of this, they're just going to be lost to time—even your memories?

Combine those two facts alongside teenagehood, and you get a moody, angsty teenager who pushed everyone who dared to get close to him away. I did not have many friends in high school. Which was fair enough, I totally was a total dick then. It's still the case now, but not to *that* degree. Either way I developed pretty bad depression—or at least that's what my therapist says. I just remember being numb and cynical the entire time.

[static] Though that's not just how human nature usually is, right? You usually crave for things to get better. Despite it all you still expect it to get brighter. Except for me the only brightness I expected was the light at the end of the tunnel. And it wasn't even me going there—

[Jaron]:

We figured it out, Ash. Could you get closer to the point?

[Ash]:

...Fine.

[Ash (Statement)]:

I met Red when we were in college. I was taking accounting as an additional class and he was a business major. *What a couple we were, huh*. By some luck we got paired up for a group project. Or it could've been our professor deciding it'd be more beneficial if me and a couple other students who weren't majoring in business got paired up with someone more knowledgeable in that territory. Either way, we exchanged numbers and started talking.

[laugh] We actually had a little bit of a rivalry at the very beginning, staring each other down and seeing who could finish their part of the project the fastest. We ended up finishing the project a whole month before it was due, and we spent the rest of the time talking to each other. It felt... nice, especially considering that it was during the time when I was still distancing myself, which you so kindly *made me stop talking about despite it being related to the story* —

[Jaron]:

[annoyed sigh] You, apparently, have a therapist to tell all of this to, Ash.

[Ash]:

Sure man, *su u ure* . You can just say you don't care about those who come here , I understand.

[words of protest get cut off by Ash] A spooky story you want, a spooky story you get. Just let me talk.

So where was I...? Oh yeah.

[Ash (Statement)]:

Despite me being obsessed with the idea of death and everything related to it, he still wanted to hang out with me—it even got to a point where I showed him my poetry! I was reluctant to do so, honestly, the last time anyone saw anything I've written they either got into a car accident, or ended up being...weird afterwards. Sloppier.

He even saw the one which I'm still embarrassed to admit I wrote—the one where I was praising death. I hoped it would take me as some kind of savior or some shit. I thought that would *maybe* make him understand that getting too close to me was a waste of his time, that anything other than immediately going straight to the end didn't matter.

I remember him reading through it— *out loud!* — and then just stopping, looking at me with that *smirk* of his and saying: " *Ya know what, Ash? Nihilism doesn't suit your pretty face.* "

I immediately punched him for that. He kept laughing at me. It was...I've *never* heard something more wonderful than this laugh before. I suppose it's not hard to guess that we continued talking.

He was still trying to change my point of view and—*magically*—it was working. But I think what stuck with me was the one when we were hanging out like usual. I was being my edgy self and noticed how we still kept being friends. I made a joke about how most relationships end in divorce or something. And *I kid you not!* He started reciting that one picture with a borzoi dog that went like, "a book does not begin just to finish, *blah blah blah*, and life is good even if we die in the end." The most insane part was that he confessed that he found it on Tumblr!

[amused snort] *This fucking guy.*

Then we got married.

[Jaron]:

Waitwaitwait . Like...immediately after? With rings an—

[Ash]:

Wh— *what* ? Who do you think we are? We might be insane, but not insane enough to— *wait* .

Why are you so interested all of a sudden? Literally a couple of minutes ago you were making me shut up!

[Jaron]:

That was different! You were saying...sad stuff and I'm not — and I repeat — *NOT* your therapist, Ash Swag.

[Ash]:

Hey, no full names! I can just walk out of here if I don't feel appreciated enough, you know—

[Jaron]:

[static noise] No you can't. You seemed pretty upset to me when coming in here. Stop pretending like you don't want to get it out of you.

[Ash]:

Woah, chill out dude...fine. *Fine*, I'll continue.

[Ash]:

We got married. And *no*, it wasn't immediately after we had *the* talk. Marriage doesn't work like that, you know that, right?

[Jaron]:

Pfft.

[Ash]:

Okay, I'm glad I don't need to explain it. It happened a little bit after college. We ended up proposing at the same time, funnily enough. We both said yes, of course, and we were on our merry way.

[Ash (Statement)]:

We were happy together. Those were the happiest two years of my life, honestly. I was terrified that I would lose him, but that didn't seem to be the case. We had a *connection*, and it seemed like not even Death herself dared to break it. Maybe it was because she was done with my loved ones,

or maybe she didn't want to have him...*yet*, since...you know, I'm here now, about to tell you how Red is probably *dead*.

Like you heard, it was a peaceful 2 years of my life...but things got *weird* afterwards.

It all began one day when I had a day off and decided it was a good idea to clean up the house and stuff—Red wasn't the type of person to deal with cleaning, he was usually the one cooking. And to be fair, I'm also not a big fan of cleaning, either, but calling cleaning services wasn't something I felt like dealing with. Plus, I thought, a little exercise never hurt anyone.

And there I was, huddled with a box of things that we got for each other but never really used. Bracelets, pendants, and so on. There were a couple of photos from those photo booth things—like one of those older ones where photos get exposed and developed...or at least I think that's how this one worked? Basically, I'm saying that because they ended up looking kind of blurry, especially compared to the ones we had printed out.

That wasn't the weird part— it was what happened next.

I felt a piercing pain in my chest—as if I were shot or stabbed or... I can't even imagine *what* that could've been. The pain was immeasurable, I don't even know how I didn't *at least* pass out from the shock. My eyesight went blurry and I thought to myself, “ *Is this how I die? From a fucking heart attack while cleaning up in an attic?* ” It felt so absurd.

But a second passed, a minute, even. The pain passed and I could see properly again—I was kneeling on the floor, the box with stuff near me scattered across the floor. I might have been depressed and apathetic and didn't care about myself in the past, but this time I had someone I *cared* about, so I...quickly grabbed everything, put everything back, and decided to lie down and schedule a meeting with a doctor.

That's when Red came back. His day didn't seem too busy and I was glad to see him. Though when I looked up at him...there was just this...*feeling* in my stomach that told me *something* was wrong whenever I looked at him. I didn't know what, though. Whenever I looked at Red, he looked the same as he did before, and I couldn't remember anything *different* about him, either. I brushed it off as stress, made some joke about him looking extremely goofy and that he must have had an affair with someone to look like that. He added onto the bit—because *of course* he did—and eventually the...ick went away, but I felt a bit uneasy at the fact I'd be uncomfortable around him at all.

I did tell Red that I had pain in my chest. He seemed concerned—furrowed his brows and his green
—

[pause]

[Jaron]:

Ash?..

[Ash]:

[quieter] Sorry.

[Ash (Statement)]:

It's so weird. I remembered him looking the same way he did in every photo on my phone. I remembered nothing out of the ordinary. He'd had brown hair but he would always dye it red. It wouldn't *look* red, it was never the bright red he wanted anyway, but he kept dying it. He had green eyes. That's what I'd remember, at the time.

He was the same as I could remember *at the time*. Now though...*I know* that's not true. The same day I had...*whatever* that heart-attack or whatever was when Red was...*changed*.

...Maybe this is how Death wanted to warn me? ...No, wait that sounds—it's insane. This is...creepy. *God*, I'm glad it didn't go further.

[silence]

I went to the doctor the next day and the initial check-up said there was nothing wrong with me—a more in-depth check-up confirmed it.

I'd still get that feeling near not-Red. The best way I can describe it is as if...something is missing but it's also there in a way that doesn't fit, like a leftover puzzle piece next to an almost complete puzzle. Except it doesn't fit the rest of the puzzle, even though it looks like it's part of the rest of the kit. Like it's one of those cheap ones in the same shapes and you can put any of them together.

Does that make sense? It's just...

I had no idea why I was feeling that way. I mean it still was my Red, right?

Well. I'd get my answer, eventually.

Believe it or not, some employers *are n't* actually assholes! After learning that I was feeling unwell and was concerned enough to go to the hospital, I was given a couple more days off. I guess it was because it was a less work-heavy month, but it was nice either way.

I decided to return back to the attic. Yeah, yeah I know how it sounds. It's just...I felt like I needed to finish what I started there with the clean up, you know?

When I looked at the box that I hastily picked up last time, I had a funny thought. “*What if I end up getting a stroke and stay lying here until Red comes?*” I dismissed it, of course, but the thought still made me pick up the box with more care than I usually would have.

It was nothing special, just like the last time. Bracelets, pendants, and so on.

Well, it shouldn't have had anything special at least.

The photos.

I...I really have no idea why I didn't remember them the way they were. *I literally saw them a couple of days ago*.

It was still me and Red making faces in the exact same photo booth, complete with the same poses and clothes. The only thing differing was Red *himself*. It was the Red I didn't know—it was *my* Red, *real one*, not *whatever the fuck* took his face. His face structure was different, nose and cheekbones and such, his hair was blond instead of red and brown, his eyes were blue...

I felt dizzy and had to sit down on the floor. I tried to remember *something* and... my memories started getting blurry and uncertain, as if they were changing the moment I tried to think about them. Everything mixed together, one second I felt like I saw the familiar green but then *it turned out that "familiar" was blue and it just kept going and going* and I couldn't just stop thinking about it! But...

That's weird, right? How can you *forget* how your husband looks like, right? How could no one else just...not realize it wasn't him? Surely there would be at least someone who would contact me—Red is an outgoing person and was always surrounded by people, some of them have my number or—! It doesn't make any sense!

[pause]

I remember the pain I had. It felt like I was reliving it but—however corny it sounds—this time it was because of heartbreak. I was just... *there*, memories conflicted. There was no one I could talk to without looking insane—for fucks sake, the only person I would've been crazy enough to tell this to was the one who made me feel this way! There was literally *no one else*!

I...decided to clear my mind a little. Went to a bar. *It* seemed concerned because of my pains. It tilted its head just like Red would sometimes. I felt like I was about to snap right there and then. I just smiled and said it was nothing, I just decided to change something in my life for once or some other bullshit.

And—I don't know maybe it *was* just me going completely off the rails or— *I have no idea*. But I saw it smile. Smile more than a human should be able.

But it immediately went back to...“normal”. Not-Red complained about how I'm not taking him with me, said how I probably needed a drink because I looked like I didn't recognise him.

Maybe before that I just thought that—I don't know. Stressed myself out, hit my head with something hard and got a concussion or something but—! That was it for me.

And...you can't use this in court, alright? I've already checked your confidentiality policy twice, and I'm certain that the courts won't use this as evidence, full offense. Might as well clear my mind off of it.

I...I knew where Red stored his gun. It was in some public storage facility locked behind a safe. Red gave me a second pair of keys, *just in case*. I never learnt what that case might've been but at the moment I thought that *this* was it. This was where I was going the next day.

By the time I got there, the sun was already set and there was no one to greet me at the reception, thankfully.

Once I got into the storage unit, I tried to book it out of there with the gun. I didn't think I would actually need to use it, but I made sure there was a bullet in there, just in case.

When I arrived back home, it was already night time. It wasn't back home yet, so I stood there. Gun pointed at the door, waiting. While I was standing there I looked at the photo that began it all. It made me think. What exactly happened? Did something actually...replace Red? Did no one really notice anything wrong? If...I trust the mess that are my memories, and that was some... clone, *then where is my Red*?

It came back half an hour later, and I was going to get my answers.

It was surprised to open the door only to see a gun pointing straight towards its face. There was

nothing in my head at the time but the question: “ *Where is Red.* ” It had the *audacity* to pretend it didn’t know what I was talking about when I asked about him. It said how he was right there, before me, in flesh and bone.

I was having *none* of that. I made myself clear, and repeated the question again. “ *Where’s Red.* ” For good measure, I made sure it knew I wasn’t afraid to shoot.

It started trying to repeat itself, trying to pretend to be him, but then its eyes fell on the photos. Its face...changed at that. “You’re not supposed to—”, it trailed off. There were no more traces of it pretending anymore. It looked me dead in the eyes and I got goosebumps—it was staring at me as if trying to figure something out. And then it smiled and said:

“ *Why are you asking me where he is if you already know the answer?* ”

I...didn’t understand at first. It seemed like it was just said to confuse me even more even though I already got my answer. But then I remembered. The day when I was first cleaning up was the turning point, since when I remembered this Not-Red instead of having blurred memories like the ones before that. Then thought dawned on me:

Red was dead. And he’s been dead for a while.

That’s when it lunged at me. It was trying to get the gun out of my hand but...

I didn’t know how to actually use the gun. Red only told me where the safety locks were and to always keep them on. I panicked and just barely got the thing unlocked before shooting a blind shot.

I don’t know how I shot it, but I did, even with the recoil of the gun afterwards. I must have closed my eyes sometime during it too, because I remember opening my eyes, I and seeing the body on the floor, with a hole in its chest and lifeless.

[sigh] I ended up hiding the body. We live pretty far out, so there likely wouldn’t be any neighbors to hear the gunshot. I buried it somewhere *far* away so that it wouldn’t be found. I know I wouldn’t be suspected of the murder considering there wouldn’t be a reason or motive behind a potential murder—everyone knew I didn’t have any problems with Red and we were happy together, and there wouldn’t be much financial motive since I got a promotion and was on the track to become the breadwinner of the house.

[pause]

I loved him, you know? Even despite everything...I still miss him. Fake Red or not, I still miss him. And...I do wonder about my Red. Maybe I *am* wrong and maybe that thing was lying to me and he is still alive but...I doubt that. I did try to search for him by myself, don’t get me wrong. But it’s kind of hard when it’s just you and you have no leads as to where to look for, you know?

It’s been a few months since. If I told this to anyone else, they’d look at me like I’m crazy...but you’re used to this kind of stuff, right? I certainly can’t bring this up to my therapist without them reporting me, so this is the next best thing.

[Jaron]:

Who do you think —is that the end of your statement?

[Ash]:

Mhm, now I do have places to—

[Jaron]:

Wait, before you leave, is there a reason why Red and you have different surnames? Just for the record.

[Ash]:

[laugh] Oh yeah, that's a funny story, actually. After the proposal, he asked me who was going to be the one to change their surname, and we decided to flip a coin to pick who would keep theirs. It landed on its side, so we just decided to keep our surnames. It's on official papers, if you need that.

[Jaron]:

Okay, yeah. Just making sure it wasn't weird like you changing your name afterwards, or something. That's good to know. You can...get back to whatever you were doing now. Statement ends.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

[Jaron]:

Following Mr. Swag's statement, we were able to find out that he is indeed married to Red Doons, and Mr. Doons has been reported missing for a few months now.

Police records don't say anything much beyond what Mr. Swag has provided, besides the neighbors hearing something loud on October, 7th, 2022, lining up with Mr. Swag's statement about shooting a gun.

There's not much follow up we can do besides that. Mr. Swag couldn't provide any more detailing when we contacted him unless we want to try to find a body in the middle of *New Jersey*, which is apparently Mr. Swag's and Mr. Doon's residence was located at the time of the incident, we have another dead end.

[sigh]

I still can't help but feel for the guy, though. Everyone you love ending up dead?

[pause]

Maybe I should do something nice today. You know, “living in the moment with your loved ones” or whatever.” End Recording.

[CLICK]

End Notes

hope you enjoyed! thank you so much to my cowriter/editor, cherny, for coming up with the prompt/idea and editing the entire fic! couldn't do it without you <3 (cherny upd: core i literally wouldn't have been able to start any big fics at all sooo i think it's u who should be thanked !!) hope yall enjoyed the fic and happy swagdoons week! (hope yall are enjoying our silly little week :))

p.s. london, ohio is a real place btw. originally it was going to be the london in Ontario but i found out there's like. 20+ fake londons and london, ohio was TOO funny to pass up, so that's why jaron says ohio 3 the more you know

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!