

Hey, what's with the hair?

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Hey, what's with the hair?

by [ArShrum](#)

Summary

Etho and Bdubs decide to share a base. Also, Bdubs likes to play with people's hair.

Notes

check tags for warnings!

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

Bdubs had a weird fixation with hair. Etho didn't notice at first, but it didn't take long to realize once they moved in together.

The first time he noticed it was with Cleo, running a couple of errands. They met up to gather wood, and something caught Etho's eye. She had a messy braid in her hair. Cleo was many things. Unable to braid was not one of them.

“Hey, what’s with—”

“Not a word,” she interrupted. “He did a great job.”

Etho decided not to chance asking more questions, not when Cleo was holding a very sharp axe. Not when she wasn’t willing to talk about it, even unarmed. He shifted the conversation as they began chopping, but Etho would wonder about who ‘he’ was for a decent while.

The second time, Etho caught Tango desperately trying to fix his own hair.

“This sucks,” he complained loudly when he saw Etho. “He’s lucky I’m so nice! He keeps ruining my beautiful hair that I work so hard on, and I just can’t say no to the dang guy!”

“Beautiful is one way to put it,” Etho mumbled. “Anyway, who—”

“You are very mean and you have no taste, I’m not listening to a bully!”

Etho dragged a hand down his face. Tango obviously wasn’t actually mad, but he liked to be loud given any opportunity.

“Tango—”

“LA LA LA I CAN’T HEAR YOU, NO INSULTING TANGO ALLOWED,” he hollered, walking out of the room as he stifled a laugh.

The *third* time, he finally got some answers. Gem was sporting a messy braid of her own, and grinned when Etho brought it up.

“Isn’t it great? Bdubs and I were hanging out and exchanging build tips, and he insisted on braiding my hair! It’s gotta be his love language or something.”

“Gem, you have no idea how glad I am that you said that,” Etho breathed. “I’ve been wondering who’s been messing with people’s hair, but no one will tell me! Thank you so much for giving me a straight answer, seriously.”

Gem laughed.

“You’re welcome? I’m surprised he never played with your hair during Last Life. Didn’t you two live together?”

“Yeah, and we’re gonna share a base again soon. Bdubs was really tired during Last Life with all the stress, so he always conked out as soon as we got home every day. Not like I can blame him, though; I did the same thing.” He shrugged. Gem grinned again, more mischievously.

“Brace yourself,” she warned, “he’s literally obsessed with your hair. He’s been looking for a chance to mess with it since, like, forever!”

Etho rolled his eyes.

“As if,” he snorted. “There’s nothing special about my hair, and it’s too short to do anything with.”

With his questions answered, Etho forgot about the hair thing pretty quickly. Soon enough, his and Bdubs’ shared base was complete. Moving day snuck up on him, and it felt almost too sudden when he unloaded the last shulker box containing his belongings. His room still needed decorating, sure, but his stuff was all there and there was a nice soft bed in the corner practically calling his name. The sun was slipping under the horizon, so it really was time to hit the hay.

Etho poked his head out into the hall.

“G’night, Bdubs,” he called out. Once he heard a hollered response from down the hall, Etho closed his door and collapsed into bed.

Hours later, moon high in the sky, the whole server silent, Etho found himself still awake. Exhaustion weighed on his bones, and yet...

He was thinking about things he didn’t want to remember. Every time he closed his eyes, he saw things he didn’t want to see. His skin crawled with the kind of horrible feeling he knew too well, but most people never even imagine.

Etho had nothing to do but cry. He was careful to stay silent as tears rolled down his face unbidden,

not wanting to wake Bdubs. That man valued sleep more than anyone on the server, so Etho believed that he should never be disturbed under any circumstances. The only exception would be if Bdubs himself was in danger, of course.

He tossed and turned, unable to rid himself of that awful awful awful sensation.

Everything is fine, he tried to remind himself. *You'll drink some coffee in the morning, and start a new project to keep yourself busy. You'll go shopping for materials. It's okay. This'll go away, you're fine—*

But he WASN'T fine. Nothing about this was fine, he couldn't handle it any more, it was really gonna kill him this time—

The door opened, revealing Bdubs. The tiredness in his eyes was overridden by pure soft concern.

“You should be asleep,” Etho croaked.

“So should you,” Bdubs retorted, making his way over to Etho's bed. “What's wrong?”

Etho tried to wave him off, send him back to his own room to go back to bed, but there was no shaking Bdubs when his mind was made up.

“Do you want a hug?”

Well, there was no getting around it; Bdubs was too caring to let this slide. Etho nodded weakly, resigned to the horrible fate of being loved.

Without hesitation, he was wrapped up into a warm, mossy embrace. The tension fell out of Etho's limbs as he clung to his friend and finally let himself cry openly.

Several minutes later, Etho felt more calm, less like he was dying. His sobs and hiccups slowed and eventually stopped. Bdubs waited another moment before speaking.

“So... wanna talk about it?”

Etho was quiet for a long minute before he replied, barely even whispering.

“Yeah, I- I keep thinking about Last Life. I know I should be over it by now, but... well. Every time it's quiet, I hear explosions. When I'm not working, I swear I'm still withered, I can still feel it eating away at my heart, I can still- I can still see you *die*.”

“A lot of things happened... I did a lot of bad things. Betrayed a lot of people. Wanna know what the worst thing is about my actions, though?”

Bdubs nodded slowly, taking hold of Etho's hand.

"I don't regret a thing. I mean— I feel *bad*, obviously, I still care about the people I hurt— but I would do it again. I would burn the world to keep us safe, and that *scares* me, because good people don't even think about doing that, let alone actually go through with it—"

"-I'm gonna stop you right there," Bdubs interrupted. "First of all, you *are* a good person. Everyone did a lot of bad things in Last Life. It's gonna take a long time for some of us to forgive each other, but we all know that The Game makes us desperate. Morals are thrown out the window. But that doesn't make us all monsters.

"Joel killed Lizzie, like, a *lot*, but they're still married! Last season, Martyn took Jimmy's final life, but they were super close allies in Last Life.

"I mean, the stuff that happened still *matters*, but it's not all bad stuff. Scott and Jimmy wouldn't even be a thing without Third Life. We probably wouldn't have moved in together if we weren't so close in Last Life."

Bdubs hugged Etho again, more briefly this time.

"You know what I think? You shouldn't worry too much about being a good person or a bad person. You should just be *you*, Eefers."

Etho heaved a sigh.

"You're right."

"I'm *always* right," Bdubs bragged. Etho made a face like 'I'm not so sure about that', but said nothing.

Silence fell on the two for an indeterminate period of time.

"...Can I play with your hair?"

Oh, right. In all the hubbub, Etho had totally forgotten about Bdubs' hair fascination.

“Alright,” he chuckled, “but I don't get what's so special about *my* hair.”

“Are you kidding!?! Your hair is *so* pretty, man. It even practically glows in the moonlight!! I didn't even *know* that until tonight! Plus, it looks super duper soft, I've been literally dying to touch it for so so so long.”

Etho couldn't help but laugh a little more, ever so slightly embarrassed. He didn't normally care if Bdubs saw him without his mask, but having his expressions be so readable was a little more than a bit strange.

“Why haven't you asked before, then?”

“You're always busy, dagnabbit! You've always got new projects here, and we were occupied with surviving during Last Life, so whenever we got to rest we went straight to bed. It's not like I could just get up in the middle of the night to touch your hair, either, that would just be downright creepy! So, c'mere, you.” Bdubs made grabby hands, and Etho smiled as he scooted closer to make his hair more accessible.

Having someone mess with his hair was much nicer than he'd been expecting. Bdubs might be terrible in the styling department, but he didn't tug or tangle or anything of the sort. He was gentle, treating the silly activity almost reverently as he ran his fingers through Etho's hair.

“It's so soft,” Bdubs whispered. “*Please* let me mess with your hair more often. I pinkie promise I won't do anything bad!”

“Okay,” Etho conceded. “However you will not bring scissors or dye anywhere near my hair.”

Bdubs pouted, but didn't disagree.

“I promise! I'll make your hair super pretty tomorrow. It's time to sleep now, though.”

“Right, sorry,” Etho stammered. “You should probably go back to bed, I'll be fine—”

“No can do,” Bdubs interrupted. He lay back, dragging Etho with him.

“Oh- okay, that's happening-”

Etho took a moment to settle. Then, he closed his eyes. *Then*, he gave into his curiosity and opened them again to look at his friend.

“How did you know, by the way? That I needed... that something was wrong?”

Bdubs snorted. “You’ve been acting off for ages, man. It’s like the hair thing, though; I never got a chance to talk to you. I guess I had a weird feeling, too, when we went to bed... I dunno, it felt off, like I shouldn’t just go right to sleep, so I went to check on you, so. Yeah.”

“Oh,” said Etho, at a loss for a better reply. “Thanks. For caring so much, I mean.”

“Of course I care, you’re my bestest friend!”

Bdubs stifled a yawn.

“Anyway. G’night, Eefers.”

“G’night,” Etho mumbled, and with that they slept rather peacefully.

The next day entailed knowing looks from the other hermits at the sight of Etho’s strange new hairstyle. The following days involved more leisurely projects, and the corresponding nights were filled with cuddles and the occasional comfort after a nightmare. Things were still hard a lot, for both of them, but they became manageable. Their new shared base grew into a cozy home. And finally, finally, finally, they began to heal.

End Notes

i wrote this two whole months ago and forgot to post whoops

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