

## Honestly, Truthfully, and Sincerely

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## Honestly, Truthfully, and Sincerely

by [mariuspunmercy](#)

### Summary

Grian's first crime was accidentally getting Scar killed.

His second was befriending him in a place where nothing was permanent.

### Notes

creating my own angst >:)

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

Honestly, truthfully, and sincerely, Grian really had been playing a prank when he got Scar blown up by that creeper.

His intentions were never malicious in the beginning. He thought it would've been funny to lead the creeper into the middle of the group, watch everyone scatter, kill it and be done with it. He simply wanted to spook everyone, but instead, he got roped into a friendship that's lasted far, *far* longer than he ever anticipated.

On one hand, he didn't expect Scar to *last* this long. He doesn't think even Scar expected it. He was the first to die, and then the first to die second, and Grian assumed he'd be the first to die

third.

He was fully prepared to be left alone. He anticipated the moment when Scar would clumsily lose his final life and Grian would be free of his debt before it ever had to be paid.

But then Scar lived, and he lived the next day, then the day after that, and he continued living to the surprise of absolutely everybody. Grian was surprised to find that he didn't hate the fact that he got to stick around with Scar a little while longer.

At some points, namely when their alliance had first formed, Grian wondered if he could sneak away and never put up with Scar again. Scar forced him into the desert, made him watch over the llama (which he'd warmed up to after five minutes), and made him laugh with every stupid joke in the book while Grian resisted the urge to stressfully pluck his feathers.

But then Scar picked up on his trembling hands reaching for his wings, and gave him distractions. He'd say some silly things until they both lost track of time, and Grian's fingers weren't itching to pluck at his wings. It was... comforting, to say the least, and it surprised Grian more than Scar's ability to stay alive against all odds.

Scar's an enigma, Grian realized one day as he brought home a bee on a leash and refused to let it out of his sight for more than an hour. It didn't matter where Scar was, but he'd travel across the terrain they were trapped in until he reached his bee if he felt he'd been too long without it.

He's definitely an enigma, one that Grian thought would solve itself with time but still hasn't. He can't find an explanation for why Scar would extend a helping hand as Grian built their new base after the old tower blew up, or why he even went along with his plan to rig their home with TNT.

It even extended to Grian. He found himself checking up on Pizza, feeding the llama himself when Scar forgot to. He'd made them Pizza themed banners for the two of them to put on their shields because he saw how distressed Scar was about losing his beloved pet.

Grian had no explanation as to why they did the things for each other besides one word: fondness. Grian had grown fond of Scar over time, and he could sense that the feeling was mutual. He went from being tolerable of Scar, to becoming fond of him, to finding him straight endearing.

In and of himself, Scar isn't a fighter. Scar won't cut someone down with an axe unless absolutely necessary or craft the most hauntingly powerful sword with the intent to maim others. That isn't the person Scar is, because Scar puts his love and warmth into everything he does. He protects Grian, he's tender with the animals he encounters, and he's survived in an environment that wasn't prepared to host somebody as charmingly delightful as he was.

Grian's first crime was accidentally getting Scar killed.

His second was befriending him in a place where nothing was permanent.

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The buzzing in the bunker wasn't a welcome one.

Grian's fingers reached up to touch his temple, rubbing softly to try and soothe himself to sleep. It wasn't even a very loud buzzing, but he had also been putting up with it for the past half an hour. He wasn't going to be lulled to dreamland when there's a bee on a leash five feet away from him.

He sat up from the bed that he and Scar took turns on, depending on who was keeping watch. Scar noticed his movement, perking up from where he sat in the corner and kept his eyes on the outside world.

“You good, Grian?” Scar asked, the bee buzzing awfully close to his face.

Grian pointed to the bee. “It’s not really letting me sleep, if I’m being completely honest here. Can you leave it outside or something, just for an hour or two until it’s my turn to watch?”

He could see the way the corner of Scar’s mouth twitched. He didn’t want to leave it outside, and Grian knew why: he couldn’t hold the leash from the inside. His hand tightened protectively around the rope, his eyes cast downward as if searching for the way to politely tell Grian that the bee was staying in their base.

“Well, there’s a lava moat outside and I know you have plans to rig the place full of TNT in the morning. It probably wouldn’t be the smartest decision to let Mr. Bubbles loose out there,” Scar explained, though it was just a fancy way of saying *no*.

“You don’t have to let it loose, per say,” Grian tried. “Tie it to a fencepost or something. The buzzing is just... It’s keeping me up.”

Scar shook his head this time. “I think it’s best if Mr. Bubbles stays in here. I just don’t want him accidentally flying into the lava moat or somehow triggering one of your defense mechanisms.”

It’s a *bee*, and his larger lava moat had to be activated with a lever which he doubted the bee could pull. He has a feeling Scar knows this too, though he could tell Scar was going to get defensive if he asked for the bee to be moved outside for a third time.

Instead, he lied back, his vision blurred from exhaustion that could only be solved with sleep.

Again, the bee wasn’t *loud*. It’s never been loud, and it’s never really bothered him before. But he has plans tomorrow, and all of his senses seem to have been dialed to eleven in preparation. He was painfully aware of the lava flowing loudly outside of the base, and the sound of the torches burning to keep the light, and the crunch of sand underneath Scar’s foot every time he moved.

Of course the buzzing would ring pitifully in his ears. He’s woefully aware of every single thing that’s happening around him, and that includes the bee buzzing around like it normally would. His nerves for tomorrow were worse than he had anticipated, if he had to find a reason for his sudden annoyance.

“How’d you get attached to that thing in the first place?”

When putting himself in a position like Scar has, Grian doesn’t think he could have formed any more attachments. The one he had formed to Scar was enough, and even then he still has the llama he once cared for. He can’t imagine having *another* thing to be concerned with.

Scar didn’t say anything, the silence filled with the constant buzzing of the bee. Grian turned on his side to face Scar, finding his friend staring tenderly at his bee. “It’s nice to have something I can hold onto.”

Grian wasn’t following. “Huh?”

“You know how Pizza got kidnapped and we didn’t even know if it was alive until Cleo confirmed it? How Pizza is just a llama and died just like that? Or even how you can lose all of your lives in an instant? You know how none of it is something I can control?”

“You definitely can’t control my lives,” Grian murmured, and Scar chuckled at his sleepy tone.

“Exactly! The two constants in my life, and they can both go at any time and it’ll be out of my hands forever. At least with Mr. Bubbles, I can keep him on a leash and keep him tied around my wrist. I like that, you know? Control what I can when we’re otherwise helpless.”

Grian understood that helplessness. But he couldn’t determine what the bee had to do with that.

Scar seemed to be able to tell that he didn’t get it. He showed off the end of the leash that was tied around his wrist, the other hand gripped around the rope tightly. “Control. I know where Mr. Bubbles is, I can keep him on me, and he won’t leave unless I let him off the leash or untie him from my wrist. I have another constant, and I can control what I do with it.”

Grian opened his mouth to say something, but promptly closed it when Scar stood from his spot and headed towards the door. “I know you need to sleep. Big day tomorrow, with your plan to take everyone down with the desert full of TNT. I’ll hang out outside, no big deal.”

He sighed. He doesn't know how Scar had this effect on him. “No, Scar, you’re fine. I’ll try to get the last hour of sleep, stay in here.”

Grian didn’t exactly want to leave Scar outside, where it’s a thousand times more dangerous, just because Grian couldn’t stand the buzzing bee. It wasn’t right, and though he couldn’t quite see Scar’s reasoning for becoming so emotionally attached to the bee, he understood the motive.

Scar smiled. “Thanks, G.”

Grian nodded his head in affirmation, rolled onto his back, and shut his eyes.

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The crisp air ripped at his skin, and his red jacket didn’t do much against the piercing wind that made everything around him bitterly cold.

Grian coughed into his elbow, his back rough against the rigid pile of sand he piled together to lay on. Scar sat across from him, his arms wrapped around himself to protect against the harsh breeze.

He glanced at Monopoly Mountain, where the tower once stood proud, then to the enormous pit in the desert where the base had gone down with the TNT, then to where Scar sat across from him. The hardest fight of their lives so far, and both of them had come out alive.

Well, for the most part.

“How’d it feel when you lost your first life?” Grian asked. He’s heard the story before, the same night he got Scar killed by the creeper and demanded to know if he caused any excruciating pain.

He wants to hear it again. Scar picked up on why he was asking for a repeated story, judging by the way his eyes softened ever so slightly.

Scar tipped his head back. Remembering an event that felt *so long ago* in the midst of pure chaos isn’t what Grian would call easy. “Truthfully, I was more shocked than anything. We were just talking, and all of a sudden I was being launched into the air and... I was dead. Nothing much else to it.”

“And the second time?”

Scar grimaced. This is the death Grian never inquired about. The time they were presented with hadn't allowed for this conversation to take place until now.

“That one was harder to handle, I'll admit. As I fell into the ravine I could feel my heart drop, and it's not like I could do anything about it at that moment. I could see the ground coming towards me, but the only thing I did was hold my hands out in front of me as if that could shield me and I closed my eyes.”

Grian kept his gaze on the ruins of the desert. “I was there both times,” he said, but his unspoken message came across clearly; *I watched you die both times.*

“I wasn't anywhere near you when you died today,” Scar mumbled, meaning, *You died and I didn't even know about it.*

Which would've been easier? Would Grian have preferred to have been at Monopoly Mountain as Scar was plummeting to his death? Was he okay knowing he stood at the top of the ravine while his friend fell into his own demise by accident?

“Scott wasn't there when Solidarity lost his third life,” Grian mentioned, picking at one of the feathers poking out of his left wing. “Scott had just lost his first life, and wasn't even close to the battle when Skizz took Jimmy out. He got back after the TNT went off and Martyn had already killed me. I wanted to try and break the news to him slowly, but I think he realized what had happened when the battle was over and Jimmy wasn't rushing to Scott's side.”

“*Grian,*” Scar warned, pointing to the hand that was seconds away from plucking the crooked feather. He continued once Grian sat on his hands to resist the urge to just *pull*. “In their case, I think being away from death was worse. Scott didn't even know what had gone down, and he had to piece things together himself. He didn't even get a chance to mourn properly because things kept happening one after another.”

Meaning, *It hurts so bad when the only thing you know is someone died and nothing else.*

“What did yours feel like?” Grian tilted his head in confusion. “Your first death,” Scar clarified.

Grian took a second to breathe in the memories of earlier that day. “I lived through the TNT, then I fell into the lava moat and lived. Martyn even poisoned me with a pufferfish, but it wasn't until he shot me that I died.”

“Was it...” Scar hesitated. “Was it painful? Everything before Martyn shot you, I mean.”

His final moments consisted of explosions, scorching lava blazing across his skin, and the repulsive sensation of a pufferfish before an arrow pierced his chest and he was finally dead for the first time. It took *too long* to happen, and he was almost relieved when the finishing blow hit him.

“For the most part,” he answered simply. There's no point in dumping all the gruesome details when they likely won't be important come morning. He sighed, letting the silence pass over before starting again. “I hope Scott and Bdubs are doing okay right now. Must be hard, being in the Crastle and Hobbit Hole all alone.”

“Yeah,” Scar agreed, failing to elaborate. “I don't think I was supposed to last this long.”

Grian's taken aback by the sudden change in topic. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t act like you thought I wasn’t going to live past week four, Grian. I’m not mad, but I know you. You probably thought I would find a way to quickly lose my third life and be the first one to permanently die, I get it. If I’m being sincere, I did too. I was waiting for that final moment to just hit and I would wake up wherever I end up. It didn’t happen when Ren, Skizz, and Jimmy blew up and Ren confronted me. It didn’t happen when I killed Etho, or even today when arrows were flying all over the place and TNT was blowing everything up. Jimmy was in the bunker with me, yet somehow he’s the only one out of the two of us to have permanently died today. I don’t know, man. I didn’t think I would survive everything against all odds.”

Grian lifted his hands, holding them out in front of him for Scar to see he wasn’t going to pluck his wings. He took a deep breath and said, “Yeah, I guess we won’t know how your fate got so twisted and lucky that you’ve lived to this point.” Scar’s face dropped. He was about to say something, but Grian cut off his train of thought with, “But I’m glad it did.”

Another pause. It slowly dragged into minutes, and suddenly they were sitting in comfortable silence that neither of them minded. It’s the calmest things have been in a very, very long time. While time never permitted them to just sit back, relax, and enjoy the company of a friend, the night froze over to give them a couple minutes to live in the world where it was peaceful and quiet for the two of them.

They knew that wasn’t reality, but for a couple minutes they could pretend it was. Even as Scar offered to take the first watch and Grian got as comfortable as he could while laying on a pile of sand, they could pretend.

And pretend they would.

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Grian woke up on his own.

The sun was already rising over the horizon, and he attempted to rub the tiredness out of his eyes. It’s almost as if he’d gotten *too* much sleep, which was something his body hasn’t felt in forever. His arms were heavy, his legs unwilling to move, and his feathers had puffed up from both the frigid temperature and his exhaustion.

(The first time Scar saw Grian’s feathers puff from the desert cold, he cooed at him and Grian threatened to blow them both up on the spot.)

“Scar?” Grian questioned, peering over to where Scar was still very much awake.

Scar waved as if he hadn’t just stayed up the entire night keeping watch. “Good morning!”

Grian waited to see if Scar would offer an explanation, but his friend said nothing. His fingers dug into the sand, his mind seemingly in another world where Grian wasn’t staring at him and anticipating an answer to the question he’d just asked.

“...Scar?” Grian tried again, but Scar ignored him in favor of gathering more sand into his hand and letting it drip through his fingers. He did it once, then twice, and Grian let it go five more times before he put his foot down. “Scar, the sun is literally rising and you didn’t wake me up. What’s up with that?”

Scar shrugged, his nonchalant behavior quickly getting on the bottom of Grian’s nerves. “I wasn’t

tired, and you lost your first life today. I slept like a baby that night when I'd lost my first life, and I know you'd probably want your rest."

He's lying, and it hurts Grian's heart ever so slightly. He remembers their first night together because he'd spent most of it wallowing in guilt about his prank going horrifically wrong. A key detail from that night was the way Scar tossed and turned all night, and Grian knows he didn't get a single second of sleep. Not even a wink, and he knows without a doubt that Scar is lying to him right now.

But after recalling that particular night, it stuck out to him that he *had* managed to sleep peacefully. Scar definitely hadn't after dying for the first time, yet somehow Grian could?

"Okay, so now for the truth. Why didn't you wake me up for the second watch? I would've been fine, and I think I feel more tired now that I've slept for more hours than I think I've ever slept in my life."

Scar yawned into his hand, clearly trying to conceal his own fatigue. He's never done that before. In fact, he's more likely to complain to Grian about how tired he is after a particularly long night followed by an equally strenuous day than he is to try and be sneaky about his drowsy state.

Scar's the type of person to wear everything on his sleeve. It's not necessarily a bad thing to Grian. Stupid, maybe, but never something he'd actually consider unacceptable. He preferred it sometimes, when they've done something particularly rough and Grian can tell when it's bothering Scar. They don't even have to talk about it. Sometimes wrapping an arm around his friend's shoulder and sitting next to him is enough.

Grian does not know what to make of the situation at hand.

"Whatever," Grian mumbled under his breath, shaking himself out of his lazy haze that stemmed from his full night's rest. "We don't have anything to do today besides surviving, just sleep and I'll wake you if anything."

Scar shook his head, and he fought off another yawn. "Trust me, G. I'm fine!"

Grian's confusion is unmeasurable at this point. "Dude, I can tell that you're five seconds away from collapsing into that pile of sand and passing out. I got more than enough sleep, I'll be alright keeping watch for a few hours so you can rest."

Once again, Scar hesitated to accept his offer. At no time in the past has he ever passed down the opportunity to have extra shut eye time.

"Okay, what's up? Seriously man, you can tell me."

Scar bit down on his lip, his voice faint as he said, "Your loyalty to me was only supposed to last until you lost your first life. It's gone, and you're still here. Why?"

Before Grian could even begin to process the loaded question, Scar's hands ran through his hair and he grumbled, "What's to stop you from walking out on me right now? You've got nothing binding you here. You're free to leave at any time, but you tracked me down after you died and you're *still* sticking with me. I just... I don't get it? You've now trusted me to keep watch while you were asleep, but you don't have to anymore. Your debt is paid, I hold nothing against you and I never have. *You're still here*, but it's now a choice on your part. *Why?*"

The first thing Grian noticed was the difference in pace compared to their soft conversation last night.

The second was the way Scar's hands were tugging at his brown locks in frustration.

"Did..." Grian swallowed, racking his brain for the right words. "Scar, almost everybody either wants to kill you or is perfectly content letting you die. I'm not just going to walk out on you like that for no reason."

"Not for *no* reason," Scar pointed out.

Then it dawned on Grian how Scar's words and actions correlated. Scar's sudden desire to stay awake for as long as possible and his sudden concern with the technicalities of Grian's pledge went hand in hand with each other.

"Scar, I'm not going to leave if you go to sleep. I promise, my loyalty and allegiance to you goes far beyond what you can imagine. Without hesitation, I'm here and I'm fighting with you. I'm still going to stick to your side and follow you wherever you go because I want to, not because I said I had to when I got you killed."

He saw a flash of doubt in Scar's face, and he leaned forward to put a hand on his friend's shoulder. "I'm not going to just let you die after all this time, and I'm especially not going to abandon you. I don't have to be your lackey to want you to survive."

"Sleep, Scar. I'm not going anywhere."

He stared at the hand on his shoulder, and the corner of his mouth quivered into a small smile. His weariness was clearly getting the better of him, evident in the way he slightly leaned into the touch. Grian got up from his spot, prompting Scar to jerk himself back into a full sitting position.

Grian scoffed. "I was just moving so I could sit next to you."

Scar settled back into the sand as Grian moved next to him, receiving a reassuring pat on the back. Grian adjusted his wings as best he could, and by the time he'd gotten himself into a position that was both comfortable and practical to keep watch on the desert, Scar's breathing had evened out and he was fast asleep.

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Grian always knew when they weren't going to stop and rest for the next couple nights.

The day when they'd blown up Ren, Skizz, and Solidarity, they were on their feet for the entirety of the next week. They'd heard the whispers, the murmurs of a Red Winter that would be coming.

Once the Battle of Red Desert came to a conclusion, Grian realized very quickly that this was going to be another scenario where they wouldn't stop to smell the roses for a long time.

If ever again.

He stretched his wings out and shook them as best he could. Bits of sand and rocks fell out from that motion alone, but his disappointment was immeasurable as a feeling of discomfort lingered on his wings.

He glanced at Scar, who seemed very distracted with crafting as many arrows as possible, and pulled his left wing in front of him as best he could. He grimaced at the harsh white feathers coated



with sand and pebbles that didn't belong. If he squinted hard enough, he could still see the remnants of gunpowder from destroying the desert.

After staring at the feathers for a second, he touched a particularly rough looking patch of feathers. The feathers were brittle under his fingers, dust and sand falling out with his minimal movement. He ran his hand through the feathers, and to no one's surprise, he got caught more than once in a tangle and mess of misaligned feathers.

"What are you up to, G?" Scar asked, materializing beside him.

Grian's hand snaked into the depths of his feathers, knocking the pebbles out and allowing them to fall onto the sand. He opened his right wing as an invitation for Scar to sit beside him, trying not to flinch as dust and sand dissipated into a cloud from his simple action. He tended to keep his wings closed a majority of the time anyways.

"We're meeting with Bdubs and Impulse in the morning, and we both know it's in preparation for our final stand as much as we haven't wanted to say it out loud. I don't exactly want my wings to be in pain in my last moments, or should I survive, in every moment after that. I haven't preened them in awhile, but I figure now's as good a time as ever."

"I see," Scar said, his gaze carefully following where Grian's hands wove within the feathers and flicked the dust from underneath. "Do you need help?"

His hand paused. "What?"

"You have two wings and you're not even a quarter done with the first one. I could do the second one if you want."

Grian looked down at his own hand, the grains of salt uncomfortable under his nails, feathers crisp and uneasy with their unsettling texture. Scar's expression was one that was easy to read, as they always have been for Grian. His slight bounce on the balls of his heels and hopeful eyes was all he needed to see to know that Scar just wanted to help a friend out before they marched to their deaths tomorrow.

He smiled, shaking himself out of thinking too hard about what tomorrow would entail. He shook his wing a bit harder, a flurry of sand immediately once again spilling out from the feathers. Scar chuckled, and Grian couldn't help but replicate the sound. "Are you sure you want to help with this monstrosity?"

"Your wings aren't monstrosities," Scar reassured before sitting in front of his right wing. He carefully mimicked what Grian did, tossing the pebbles aside first before flicking sand, then straightening the feather to realign it into its proper place. He broke the silence after a minute, saying, "You... said they hurt?"

Grian exhaled as Scar took a particularly bothersome rock out and gently rearranged a rough patch of feathers. "It's not that they hurt necessarily, but once there's rocks and sand all lodged in, it does get a bit painful."

"A bit?"

"When I keep them closed I can hardly feel it." He brushed some gunpowder that dusted the tips of his inner feathers. "It's not like I have to open them very often."

He didn't usually get tired when he preened himself, but Scar's fingers were so *light* on the feathers that had been put into unforgiving conditions. Grian's shoulders slumped down, ever so

slightly, and he sighed in heavy relief as Scar worked at a tangled spot of feathers before brushing his nails through them.

Scar's hand stopped for a second before digging back in. "I've tried not to let curiosity get the best of me in case this was a sensitive topic, but I've got to know... Why is it that you can't fly?"

Grian gave the most honest answer he could, which happens to be the only answer he has. "I don't know."

Scar nodded in understanding, his hands going back through and picking out every individual rock and grain of sand from the feathers. "So you just have wings and can't actually use them?"

"I have them. I've tried to take off with them before, but to no avail. They just don't *work*. If they did, we wouldn't be taking this gunk out because I'd have a reason to preen myself and not keep them tucked all the time to avoid the pain."

"I know you try to pluck at your feathers sometimes."

Grian looked over to him, a grateful smile spreading across his face. "I know you're there to stop me every time."

"Does this help so they don't hurt you?"

The wings on his back are just that: wings. They always hurt him, even if he keeps them closed, because they're just adding weight. He's carrying a million things on his back and conscious, his brain filled with a thousand thoughts that he can't even begin to filter. The wings served to remind him of everything going on at once. They reminded him he had them, which led to him remembering he had to preen again, and that meant he had to find the time to do so, but then he *couldn't* find the time and he'd lose his mind all the same.

"Preening makes them feel a lot better," Grian said. "Of course, it can't solve all the other issues I have with the wings because quite honestly, I don't think anything can do that. But yeah, they don't hurt me physically once they're completely preened."

Scar stayed quiet, and Grian put a hand on his shoulder. "For everything you've done to be the friend I truly need, I thank you. You've helped me take care of these wings more times than once even though I never use them. I've told you just now that they're good for nothing, but you're here preening them with me because I said it helps with the pain. I appreciate it Scar, so thank you."

He didn't get a response right away. In fact, they didn't talk all that much unless Scar was making sure he wasn't hurting Grian when he pulled at the feathers. But when they'd finally finished preening the beautiful, useless pair of wings and his drowsiness was beginning to get the best of him, Scar had one last thing to say.

"I preened you, and I have one thing to ask in return."

He curled onto his side as Scar prepared to take first watch. "Anything."

"Stay safe tomorrow."

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Grian isn't stupid.

He went into the fight knowing it was the be-all end-all of his entire existence. He'd either survive, or he wouldn't. Scar would survive alongside him, or he wouldn't. Grian might end up alone, or Scar might. They'd either both survive, one gets left behind, or all traces that they ever lived would die with them.

As much as his goal was to wipe out the other side, he couldn't help but feel some twisted sense of empathy. After Scott was forced to return home without his spouse, Grian had a new understanding of this war. He wasn't just taking down Red Winter, but people who were trying to protect what little they had in the life they were cursed to live.

So was Grian. The sentiment only existed within a sentiment and wouldn't extend past that when it ultimately came down to the final fight.

Scott, Joel, Etho, and Tango all died before Scar came face to face with Ren and shot him with a bow. The Red Winter was slain by the Desert King, the kingdom falling onto its knees before Scar himself, not a whisper of surrender found as Red Winter refused to stand down and fought until it's final member shuddered his final breath.

"Ren, no!" Martyn had shouted, to which Grian pumped a fist in the air and responded with, "Yes! Scar!"

Scar would then turn on Martyn, shooting him with the same bow, and killing him seconds after their king had fallen. He would then turn to Grian, a hardened look in his eyes as his face slowly melted into something softer upon the arrival of his friend.

It was best case scenario, but as they watched Bdubs disappear in the direction of the Crastle, it slowly dawned onto Grian what *best case scenario* actually entails. The tension trailed the two friends as they walked after Bdubs, as they discussed what their next plan would be, and as Scar came to the same realization that Grian had.

It went unspoken. Their main focus was Bdubs, Impulse, and BigB. They couldn't tear themselves apart like this.

But it's impending. It's coming, and it's coming far too soon. *Best case scenario* wasn't actually the best case at all. Their allegiance was to each other, always has been and it always will be.

There's only five of them left, and *best case scenario* would leave only two. What happens then? When did the best case scenario go from what he prayed for to something that made him increasingly uneasy as they traveled in the direction of the Crastle?

He could see it written on Scar's face as well. Grian, as mentioned, can almost always perfectly read what Scar was feeling.

Scar isn't one to shoot the opposing side down with a bow. He isn't one to hold the hilt of his sword with a scowl, or to trail behind Grian as they hunt down the remaining people alive. Scar's a friend, one that gets a second llama after the first one was killed, and keeps a bee tied to his wrist simply because he likes it, even forgiving Grian when the first death was at his hands.

Grian isn't stupid.

He's just an idiot. One that didn't think things all the way through.

One that definitely knew he was going to die soon. One that's shocked that he managed to live

through the final battle that killed six people, leaving only five to deal with the aftermath. One that had practically prayed for the best case scenario without realizing what that actually meant, and he was beginning to come to understand.

One that's closer to death with every step he takes in the land of the living.

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“Will you come onto our side if I give you a clock?”

“Yes.”

---

Bdub's voice was vaguely saying something about taking everyone else down, but Grian was only distantly paying attention. His mind was running on the fact that *if we take down everyone else, all that's left is each other.*

“He's right behind us!” Scar shouts, cutting through Grian's ever increasing doubt about this extremely dubious alliance with Bdubs.

“I just wanted to make sure everyone was cool,” Impulse said, approaching the group.

Grian reached into his pocket and wrapped his hand around an instant damage potion. It's one of the few remaining potions, and there's a twinge of pain in his heart as he remembers they came from Scott. Scott, who never really wanted to fight, but rather settle down in a flower forest with his husband.

Good endings aren't to come. Not for Impulse, as Bdubs chases him down with a sword and swears he has to do this. Impulse shouts, “No! Bdubs, day one! What are you doing?”

Bdubs pulls his bow out as Impulse puts his hands out in an attempt to calm down the situation. “They gave me a clock.”

Impulse pulled his own bow out, attempting to shoot at Bdubs, but he wasn't landing many shots. Not nearly enough to make up for where Bdubs had already attacked him with the sword. Nothing saved him as Bdubs shot the finishing blow, and Impulse was dead where he stood.

“So, BigB next?” Bdubs asked.

Scar looked at him, and Grian knew what he was thinking. *One enemy left.*

This was happening much quicker than they would've liked it to.

---

There's three things Grian's always been sure of.

The first is that he does what it takes to survive.

The second is he's loyal to one person and one person only, because it's the only person that he can confidently say won't fail him.

The third is he follows Scar everywhere. Though he doesn't like where this is going, and his undying surprise that Scar persistently comes out unscathed of everything life has thrown at him continues, his third constant is one he carries as he watches Bdubs and Scar lead BigB to a lake for what's likely his final death.

---

BigB's been shot on the edge of a bank next to a river.

Grian has complete trust in Scar to do what's right. Where the three of them stand, near the water and with the ever lasting tension that's eating him alive, he has his trust. He has his friend, and his friend has his trust, and that's all he has to keep him alive.

---

*"You've turned on me after all we've been through!"*

Grian wiped the sweat from his brow as he ran back in the direction that Scar and Bdubs would be. He ran with nothing but armor that didn't belong to him, a diamond sword he'd stolen ages ago, a crossbow and some arrows, and a couple potatoes. He ran with *nothing*, and nothing could soothe that feeling of utter betrayal.

There's something so ultimately raw about what happened leading up to his second death. The look that wasn't quite apologetic when Scar turned to him, sword in hand to begin hitting him, the moment Scar stepped back and allowed Bdubs to claim Grian's second life, and the despair that radiated off of him as he fully processed what Scar had done to him.

A part of him can't believe this is what happened in the end. That their allegiance was something that only lasted until it wasn't convenient and useful to Scar anymore. He was ready to go until the very end with Scar on this. He'd pushed all of his anxiety and wavering unease down because he trusted Scar with his life.

He's put his life into Scar's hands before. He pulled the doomsday lever to destroy the desert, and Grian trusted him to not take him down with it. Even if he was prepared to die, Scar didn't kill him when he had the chance.

So yeah, there is a part of Grian that's honestly, truthfully, and sincerely devastated about the fact that Scar would betray him.

But there's another part that was expecting this. *Best case scenario* wasn't exactly the most dependable alliance this far into the game.

His ears picked up the sound of two people talking casually amongst themselves. He hid behind a tree, surveying the situation and simultaneously deciding his best course of action. Scar and Bdubs

haven't killed each other yet. That means that they're going to be teaming up against him, and Grian is going to have to go against the two of them.

"The sun's going to come up soon," he hears Bdubs say. "Where do you think Grian might be?"

Scar paused. "I don't know."

Grian closed his eyes for a moment and just *breathed*. His eyelids scorched with the image of Scar turning to him, sword raised and coming down onto him. He opened them, peering over the tree to see Scar and Bdubs standing at the edge of a cliff.

He saw the opportunity and ran with it.

"Traitor!" His shouts alerted the duo before anything. "Traitor!"

Scar watched him with wide eyes as Grian swiped him in the arm, and he jumped into the water at the bottom of the cliff. He heard Bdubs yell, and he redirected his attention to the other man.

"Traitor! Both of you! *Both of you!*"

Bdubs jumped likewise to Scar into the water, and they both looked up at him where he stood at the top of the cliff. He pulled his crossbow out, aiming it at Scar and firing his first arrow. "You traitor! *Traitor!*"

The arrow missed his target. His aim was almost comical, and he began to make his way down the cliff himself. He tried to be safe, but he saw Scar's expression change into something unreadable. Unreadable wasn't good, and he decided to jump into the water to get to the bottom quicker.

He was immersed in the water, and he stood ready for an attack from the other two.

But before he knew it, Scar was landing blows on Bdubs with a sword and Bdubs was dead.

"Scar?" He shook his head, raising his sword in defense. "*Traitor Scar!* As if these past weeks protecting each other and growing into the only other person I can trust didn't mean anything!"

But what Scar said next startled him more than just about anything Scar has ever said in the time Grian's known him. "You can kill me."

He might as well have punched Grian in the gut. "What?"

"You can kill me, for everything you did to keep me alive this long."

Scar bowed his head, and Grian didn't dare do anything other than lower his sword. "No, what? No, I can't. I can't do it."

Loud, whispering voices sounded in his head. He dropped his sword, his hands reaching up to cup his ears in some attempt to cut off the whispers. It's the voices of Martyn, and Ren, and Impulse and just about everyone else who had been alive alongside him at some point. They were all shouting, and they all wanted a fight.

They wanted blood.

"The ghosts..." Grian croaked out. He moved his hands to his side and took a couple steps away from Scar, who stared blankly at the water. "They want a fight."

Scar shook his head, gazing into Grian's eyes with a determined look. "No, no no *no*. We've got this. We have our friendship, Grian, don't let them break us apart."

Grian wondered if he heard the same thing in his head; if the ghosts were demanding blood from him as well. “They want blood. They call for blood. They want a fight, Scar.”

Scar walked forward until he was directly in front of Grian. He pressed his sword into Grian’s hands and pressed the tip against his chest. “Win it.”

“No, I’m serious. I can’t just *kill you* like this! I can’t. I won’t do it like this.”

Scar considered for a moment and let the sword slip from his grip. “Okay, here’s the deal. Let’s go back up to Monopoly Mountain, and we’ll sort everything out at Pizza’s grave. I want to say goodbye to him.”

“Scar, I-”

“My first death was because of you,” he reminded.

Grian choked out an answer as they began the journey back to where it all began. “Your second was directly in front of me.”

“My third will be for you, my friend.”

---

They’d once claimed this hill, when they were simply two friends peering out over the desert. “*Everything the light touches is ours,*” they had declared so long ago.

And this was the hill the two friends would die upon, yet neither could bring themselves to look the other in the eye. They’ve stood by each other for far too long, protecting each other from a war that looms over their lives even as they remain the final two standing.

In a way, Grian considers Scar’s survival something of an accomplishment. Scar died to a creeper and fall damage after diving down a ravine. He wasn’t killed by Red Winter despite being active on the front lines. He kept himself alive, and Grian couldn’t help but smile at that thought as he tossed what remaining items he had in his possession off the mountain.

Scar had two Red Army shields. He lifted them to the sky as if presenting it to the ghosts of those who once lived. He threw them down the mountain, not an ounce of remorse as he got rid of his final belongings.

Grian waited tiredly for Scar to look up at him. He’s *so tired*, drained from weeks of striving to stay alive, emotionally worn down from the earlier betrayal that strained every bone in his body. It stung, and he pushed out the image of Scar standing aside as Bdubs killed him out of his mind. His brink of apathy was only broken by the pure sorrow in his stomach as Scar stood across from him.

The ghosts demanded it happen in a circle of cacti, and they’d haphazardly thrown it together to appease their wishes. They walked into the center, and Scar opened his mouth just to make Grian feel all the more terrible about their situation. “We’ve been through too much for it to end like this.”

Grian stared at the rising sun, the light shining over the entirety of the desert. It was supposed to belong to them, *all of it*. And now they stand in the middle of a circle of cacti, awaiting official word from the ghosts.

“No matter what happens...”

Grian didn't elaborate. Scar understood. He always did in those moments where Grian didn't know what to say.

“Let's let the ghosts count us down,” Grian said.

“Alright.”

*Three*

*Two*

*One*

*FIGHT*

Scar charged first. Grian met him with the same vigor. No armor, no weapons. It was a fist only fight, one that seemed lackluster now when compared to the dramatic deaths of Red Winter or the emotional mess of a betrayal.

He's messy, he's uncoordinated, he quite frankly doesn't know what he's doing. If someone had told Grian to pick a partner to stick with until the very end at the beginning, his first choice probably wouldn't have been Scar.

Funny how those kinds of things work, because he's now choosing to die with Scar.. He can't imagine what his three lives would've been like had he not been stuck with him. Those wasted hours he didn't think he'd ever get back when they chopped down an entire dark oak forest didn't seem so useless anymore. The extra effort they put into having an enderman for security suddenly wasn't enough. His frustration at Scar as he carelessly jumped down steep slopes or treaded too closely to lava that's given him heart attacks was the least of his worries.

There wasn't any danger around anymore. Just Grian, Scar, and the screaming whispers of the ghosts as they entertained the fight that broke the duo to their very core.

“It hurts...” Scar muttered under his breath through gritted teeth. “It hurts so bad.”

Scar didn't mean for Grian to hear. The wind picked up his voice, and Grian's breath shuddered as he said, “I'm sorry.”

He stumbled over his apologies. He must've said sorry a thousand times in the span of a second. “Scar, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.”

“I know, Grian. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry too.”

Grian landed the killing hit on Scar.

Together since day one. Together, they've brought each other to the end. They'd won as a team, best case scenario working itself out after all.

But he didn't feel good. He didn't feel good at all. He's won it all. He shouldn't feel like he's lost. He moved towards the very edge of the mountain, the back of his heels brushing against the grave of their dead llama. *Scar's dead*, and so is everyone else he once considered a friend. So is he, in a way. He doesn't feel very alive. He's not sure he wants to be after everything.

“*One life left to go,*” he hears Ren's voice whisper.



Grian looked up to the sky, walked forward, and closed his eyes.

## End Notes

thanks for reading!! :DD vibe with me on tumblr: aviangrian

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