

Left to Bloom

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/36904360) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/36904360>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hermitcraft RPF , Minecraft (Video Game)
Relationship:	John Booko & EthosLab , hermitcraft ensemble - Relationship , No Romantic Relationship(s)
Character:	John Booko , EthosLab (Video Blogging RPF) , Viktor Iskall85
Additional Tags:	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD , Hurt/Comfort , Vulnerability , Etho is self-conscious , Out of Character , Mental Growth , Baking , Whump , Physical Trauma , Platonic Relationships
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-02-05 Words: 2,103 Chapters: 1/1

Left to Bloom

by [thatoneintrovert](#)

Summary

"That one. What happened?" Bdubs asked quietly, tracing his fingers softly over the scars.

Etho felt his shoulders tense, and suddenly he was much more aware of the chilly draft in the room.

A beat of silence.

"Etho?"

Notes

tw:// mentions of traumatic & violent experiences. pls read with caution, ty! <3

Etho regretted ever coming to the conclusion that he could in fact bake a cake. All the times he'd seen the other hermits do it they'd make it look so easy; now as he stood in Bdubs' kitchen in a ridiculous apron Bdubs had given him, he knew that it wasn't as easy as it looked.

"You're supposed to mix it in gradually? Why can't I just mix it all in at once?" Etho asked, his brow furrowing with confusion.

"Fold it. Like this." Bdubs gently took the spoon from Etho's gloved hands, and showed him how

to mix the cake batter correctly. “You gotta be gentle with it ‘so you don't go deflatin’ the thing.”

“Deflate?”

“It can’t lose its fluffiness, or the cake won’t bake soft and squishy like how we want.” Bdubs incorporated the flour gently into the mix, scraping the edges of the bowl as he did so. “Think of it like redstone. You can’t stick everything together at once, there has to be some order involved, or it won’t work.”

“Huh.” Etho watched Bdubs mix the batter until it was a light, creamy consistency. When Bdubs finished, he wiped the spoon on the side of the bowl.

“Wash your hands, and then we can get started on the icing!” Bdubs looked up and smiled brightly at his friend, who smiled back fondly. Bdubs really was in his element here.

Etho walked over to the sink and took his gloves off, and turned on the faucet. Warm water flowed over his rough and beaten hands, and he examined them carefully while he washed them. The scars had faded even more since the last time he’d looked at them. He gave a small exhale, and felt his hands begin to shake-

“Etho?”

Etho was startled out of his thoughts, shut off the faucet and wiped his hands on his apron quickly, giving Bdubs a nervous grin.

His smaller friend had poured the batter into a baking sheet, and was kneeling to place it in the oven. He stood up, taking his oven mitts off.

“Etho, you oka-”

“Yes! I’m fine, just thought of something.” Etho turned his back to Bdubs and put his gloves back on. His hands were still shaking. “I- I should go.” He untied the apron and handed it back to Bdubs, who stood bewildered.

“Etho- you sure? We haven’t even finished the cake-”

“I know, I'm sorry Bdubs. Maybe some other time.” His voice was quiet; he refused to let himself look his friend in the eye.

Bdubs’ ~~concerned~~ *disappointed* expression was enough to make Etho’s heart ache. He gathered his belongings and after a slightly awkward goodbye- *strange, we’re never awkward around each other before*- he took off with his elytra and headed towards home.

He let the breeze carry him, gently floating above the landscape. He thought he should go home, but he knew that’s where Bdubs would look if he decided to visit. Why did he feel like avoiding?

Etho took his time getting home, flying around the server to look at other people’s bases and builds. He tried not to think about Bdubs, but his mind kept wandering. What if Bdubs hated him now? What if he never wanted to spend time with him again? What if he got mad and-

Etho faltered in the air, feeling himself break out into a cold sweat. His head felt light and fuzzy,

confused -

The hazy shape of the shattered Savannah base he and Iskall shared came into view, and Etho shifted his wings to move him through the air faster.

Hm. The air was thinner up here, harder to breathe. *Lower the altitude, lower it-*

A strong gust of wind blew up from under him, pushing him upwards and past the clouds, sending him soaring high into the sky. He gasped, the air having been ripped from his lungs. What was his *problem* ? He normally wasn't this clumsy in the air, or *any time for that matter-*

He only increased in altitude, the air only getting thinner and making it harder to breathe. *Where were his rockets ?*

Etho struggled for breath, gasping and heaving his lungs for oxygen. He ripped off his mask to breathe. The base is clear in his vision now-

He swoops down onto the balcony of the base, crashing onto the floor with a loud *thud* . A burst of pain bloomed from his right shoulder and down his arm, and he screamed.

You should be used to the altitude, you should be better at flying, you should be better-

Etho propped himself up on his left arm and gasped for air, his chest heaving with a few heavy and dry sobs. What had just happened?

His shoulder was hurt badly, but he hardly noticed in the haze that filled his head. He stumbled through the base and into the bedroom. He collapsed onto his bed, ignoring the twinge of pain in his arm.

He groaned, his body feeling like it was made of lead. He let sleep pull him under.

“Etho. Etho!”

Muffled heavy footsteps. The clink of glass on wood, and the creak of a bed being sat on. Typing on a communicator.

“Etho- Void, this can't be happening.” It was Iskall's voice.

Etho groaned, and struggled to turn his body over to face the man but kept his eyes closed.

“What're you doin' here, Iskall?”

“Dude, you look wrecked. What happened to you? To your arm?” Etho cracked an eye open, revealing a very concerned Iskall and the rest of the bedroom.

Etho suddenly became aware of the warm, sticky substance coating his right arm and some on the bed. “Oh. I fell.”

“You fell? From where?” Iskall asked incredulously. The popping and bubbling sounds of brewing potions reached Etho's ears.

“Was on my way home from Bdubs' .” he said drowsily, ignoring the sharp, throbbing pain in his

shoulder as he sat up.

“Woah, dude,” Iskall said, pushing Etho gently back onto the pillows he’d propped up. “You’re not going anywhere until I get that arm of yours fixed up, okay?”

Iskall reached for the sleeve of Etho’s shirt to pull it off, but Etho jumped. “*No* !”

Iskall recoiled, surprised. “What? But we have to treat it, you’re bleeding-”

“I said no,” Etho said quietly, staring at the sheets that were clenched in his trembling fists.

“Okay,” Iskall said gently. “Do you want to do it yourself, or-”

“Please just go,” Etho croaked, rubbing his face with his hands. “I need some time alone to do... whatever.” Iskall was silent with mild shock, but respected Etho’s boundaries and trusted him to take care of himself.

The loud fizz of fireworks sounded from outside, and Iskall got up to see who it was. Before he reached the door, Bdubs slammed it open and ran inside to the bedroom.

“Etho! What happened to you, are you okay?” his face was ridden with anxiety and concern for his best friend. “Etho... talk to me.”

He gripped Etho’s hand in his own, sitting on the bed next to him. “Are you okay?”

“Bdubs.” Etho held a guilty expression on his face. “Sorry for walking out on you like that earlier today, that was stupid of me-”

Bdubs pulled Etho into a tight hug, holding him close. Etho hugged him back.

“You’re concerned about what happened earlier?” Bdubs talked into Etho’s shoulder. When Etho nodded slightly, “You idiot, I’m just glad you made it home safe. Ish.” Bdubs pulled away, and looked at his friend’s shoulder. “You’re hurt.”

“I guess I am, huh,” Etho remarked, glancing down at the wound with disinterest. It was still bleeding, just a trickle seeping through his shirt now.

“You guess?” Bdubs raised an eyebrow at the man sitting next to him. “Sir, you are bleeding profusely. Let’s get you a potion.”

“Not really...” Etho mumbled, and Bdubs got up and took a potion from the brewing stand.

Etho leaned back on the pillows, and closed his eyes. He felt tired. Woozy, ready to fall back asleep and wake up sometime else. Why did he have to be awake now. He could just sleep and things would be okay in the morning. Things would be fine. He would be fine. Bdubs wouldn’t see the ugly scars covering his torso, hands and arms. He would give Etho the potion and leave, and Etho would sleep in peace.

“Um. Can you take that off for me?” Bdubs’ voice came into focus again. “You can sleep soon, I just want to see your wound.”

Etho’s eyes flew open, and his left hand instinctively came to his arm. Bdubs set the potion on the nightstand, and helped Etho sit up more.

“Can you tell me about some of your scars? I’ll tell you about mine.” He smiled gently at Etho, pointing to the small white mark on his jaw. “I got this one from a Vindicator. Would’a sliced me

up if i hadn't dodged it like I did, I was pretty cool."

He gave a smug smile, and Etho chuckled a bit. "You know Scar, he's got plenty of 'em." Etho remembered Scar's scars. They gave him a tough and protective look about him, but all the hermits knew it was just from his notorious reputation of dying so often.

"Stand up for me, please." Etho did so, and Bdubs removed his jacket and shirt carefully. When Bdubs saw the countless marks in Etho's skin, he frowned slightly.

There was that look. Pity, feeling sorry for him. Every time he showed someone.

But Bdubs wasn't judgmental, or called him clumsy. He just talked.

A few minutes went by, and Bdubs was finishing with cleaning the wound and had begun dressing it. They talked about various marks and scars all over each other's bodies, and only when Bdubs turned Etho around to bandage the back of his shoulder did he pause.

Two long scars covered the expanse of Etho's back, stretching from his shoulder blades to his lower back. Claw marks. Jagged and deep.

"That one. What happened?" Bdubs asked quietly, tracing his fingers softly over the scars.

Etho felt his shoulders tense, and suddenly he was much more aware of the chilly draft in the room.

A beat of silence.

"Etho?" Bdubs' breath hitched in his throat. "Sorry, did I cross a line?"

"They're from a Ravager," Etho said, his voice hushed. "I was helping Tango finish a raid a long time ago. It almost mauled me to death."

Bdubs stayed quiet, only continuing to dress the wound. He couldn't fathom the pain that Etho had gone through then, or any time for that matter due to the sheer amount of marks that littered Etho's skin.

"They hurt sometimes," Etho said. "When I stretch or strain the muscles there too much. I've accidentally reopened them a few times. Not fun." He chuckled, smiling sadly at the memories. Tango screaming his name, carrying his tired and bleeding body away from the raid site. Apologizing over and over for having to stitch the wounds. Crying endlessly, his glowing red eyes watering with guilt and pain. Xisuma had been there, caring for him like he always did with his hermits.

"Etho..."

"I think he still blames himself," Etho said. He suddenly became aware of Bdubs' arms around his waist, holding him as tightly as he could while trying not to disturb Etho's wounds.

"I'm so sorry, Etho. I wish you'd have told me sooner so I could help you," Bdubs pressed the side of his head to Etho's back.

"I-," Etho's voice cracked with a heavy and dry sob, trying with all his might to keep from breaking down in front of his smaller friend. His chest hurt.

Bdubs shifted so that he was facing Etho, and sat him down gently on the bed. He grabbed the

potion from the nightstand and handed it to Etho, who downed it in one swig. “That should help with the pain, you’ll be alright by morning.” He took the bottle back from Etho, who laid back on the bed with a tired groan.

A few minutes later, Etho was asleep. Bdubs had turned the lamp down to a dim light, it had gotten pretty late in the night. Iskall hadn’t gotten home yet, he’d said he would be out getting materials for a project he was working on.

Bdubs sat down on the floor, resting his head on the edge of the bed while gripping Etho’s warm hand. A few minutes of shut-eye wouldn’t hurt anyone. And besides, he was right next to Etho if he needed him.

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