

## Phantom Pains

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/35145559) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/35145559>.

Rating:	<a href="#">General Audiences</a>
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Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a> , <a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Hermitcraft SMP</a> , <a href="#">3rd Life   Last Life SMP Series</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">John Booko &amp; EthosLab</a> , <a href="#">John Booko/EthosLab</a> , <a href="#">Up to interpretation - Relationship</a> , <a href="#">Nothing Explicitly Romantic - Relationship</a>
Character:	<a href="#">John Booko</a> , <a href="#">EthosLab (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">TangoTek (Video Blogging RPF) (mentioned)</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Fluff</a> , <a href="#">EthosLab Has Nightmares</a> , <a href="#">and by extension</a> , <a href="#">Nightmares</a> , <a href="#">Phantoms (Minecraft)</a> , <a href="#">Helping each other sleep</a> , <a href="#">Literal Sleeping Together</a> , <a href="#">References to Last Life SMP</a> , <a href="#">Mild Hurt/Comfort</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-11-15 Words: 1,712 Chapters: 1/1

## Phantom Pains

by [funkily](#)

### Summary

“Oh... y’know,” Etho said, in reference to the other’s earlier question, “Just- the usual, for when someone can’t sleep, I guess? Nightmares,” He elaborated when Bdubs gave him a look.

“Ahhh, I see, I see,” He nodded, “Do you wanna talk about them? If it’s anything in particular- unless-” Bdubs’ brow furrowed for a second, “Is it..?”

Etho cleared his throat, awkwardly looking at the ground and pointedly not answering the question. He should’ve known he couldn’t get away with a half-truth for too long. Bdubs was smarter than people gave him credit for- with a knack for guessing to boot.

or

etho cant sleep, so he goes to bdubs' base for help. it doesnt take long for bdubs to find out why.

### Notes

i dont care WHAT happens tomorrow i am beating it with a stick . no thank you !!!!!  
enjoy ethubs fluff <3

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

The sun rose, and so did Bdubs.

Like clockwork each morning, he awoke in his room (or, far more often, a bedroll by this newest project), bursting with energy. Ready to start the day, to be productive!

He said he was a morning person. Others said he was insane.

As he blearily opened his eyes today, that routine was interrupted. Bedroom, check! Energy... not so check. He was groggy and barely this side of awake. He was *not* up and at 'em.

He grumbled to himself and moved to rub his eyes, but the warm weight across his chest prevented that. He furrowed his brows and looked down, and the source of the problem became apparent fairly quickly. The mess of silver hair poking from the blankets was what gave the mass a name. He looked around the room in some attempt at sparking his memory. And it worked, because out of the corner of his eye, just above him, he saw a glint of gold, and that was when the night before came back to him.

Bdubs wasn't exactly what you'd call a light sleeper, and like everything else about his sleep schedule, he was usually consistent on that fact. Because of this, he had been the victim of numerous mattress-on-water type pranks. But if there was one thing that could wake him up in seconds, it was phantoms.

He heard the hissing loud and clear outside, and from there it wasn't difficult to pinpoint why he'd been so rudely awakened. He groaned and looked out the hole near the foot of his bed. It was very much still night, and he watched as three blurs of grey, blue, and green swished past, diving down somewhere below.

Okay, he thought, weird. It wasn't all that uncommon for his fellow Big Eyes to attract phantoms, but they were never *this* near his base. Had Tango come to pay a visit at lord-knows-o'clock at night? He leaned to the side to see the front steps of his base.

The figure was pretty easily recognizable from there, if not from just his hair and signature mask, from the quick, almost effortless way he sliced through one of the phantoms diving down at him. After the others retreated momentarily to hovering over him like vultures, he stood on the steps, just in front of the door. He lingered, clearly considering something.

Another phantom dived down, jaw open and ready to bite, and he used his axe to cut through that one as well. Bdubs could hear him groan as the phantom fell pitifully to the ground and disappeared into a wisp of smoke.

"Can you guys knock it off?" He asked the single phantom continuing to hover above him. He pulled out his bow and aimed high, targeting the body of the beast, when he caught Bdubs peeking out from the hole in the wall.

"Etho," He acknowledged. Etho put his bow down, but before he could say anything, Bdubs continued, "What are y'doin' out there? There's phanims!"

Etho laughed slightly at the bizarre enunciation as Bdubs quickly waved at him to come inside. Etho shot through the phantom, hearing it thump to the ground before disappearing, then did so. He hadn't seen the inside of Bdubs' base this season- it was very cozy, he noticed, just this side of cramped, and pleasantly warm. He heard the approaching thud of Bdubs walking down the stairs to meet him. He emerged in his pale blue t-shirt, moss hoodie having been traded in for the thick

green blanket that hung over his shoulders. It was painfully obvious he'd just woken up- Etho felt a twinge of guilt.

"Hey, Bdubs."

Bdubs shot him a tired smile "Hi. What are you doing over here?"

"Uh-" Etho cleared his throat, "Well, it's, uh..." He hesitated for a long moment. Bdubs waited patiently, leaning against one of his shelves.

"It's a bit silly," Etho admitted quietly, chuckling slightly.

"Oh? Now I'm curious."

Etho laughed again. He rubbed the back of his neck.

"I, uh. Can't sleep. Figured the sleep master himself would be able to help."

He decided part of the truth was better than nothing.

"Ah!" Bdubs grinned, brightening in moments, "Of course, of course! You've come to the right place, what seems to be the issue? C'mon, follow me."

Bdubs waved to accentuate his point as he walked back upstairs. Etho did so, stalling in giving his answer as they walked up to the third floor of his small little starter base. Bdubs sat on the edge of his bed and motioned Etho to do the same. He looked at him expectantly

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"I see," Bdubs said, more meaningfully this time. "*Do* you want to talk about it?"

Etho shuffled in place.

"It's not really... anything too weird. It's just- well, it's mostly you, to be honest."

Bdubs nodded, an invitation to continue.

"Like- when you went red the first time, and when you- y'know. And then there's this... dread, too, because..." He sighed, trying to put his fear into words, "'Cause there was always a tipping point, I guess. We saw it in the first season, and then everyone was trying to avoid it the second time 'round, but it happened anyways, and it's just sort of... I mean, it doesn't make sense, but- there's this sense of dread where... what if that happened *here*, I guess."

Bdubs nodded again, and began to rub small circles into Etho's back.

"Like- it's dumb, because how could it- but just the idea of, you know, playful wars or whatever could suddenly turn into... *that*. We've got a lot of people with experience here, obviously, but there are also those that don't and even still- Ah, it's a whole thing. It's been keeping me up for a

few nights, I guess.”

Etho had shrunk in on himself a bit as he explained.

“No, I get it,” Bdubs said, voice serious, “It’s that, uh. That dread. It never really goes away, does it?”

“I guess not,” Etho sighed, “I mean, I dunno, everyone else seems to be doing fine, so I feel a bit silly for getting so worked up over it.”

“I thought you of all people would know people aren’t what they seem,” Bdubs nudged him with his shoulder, “Because- come *on*, that was a big thing that happened to us. That changed us. That changed the way we felt about people, and things, and whatever else. I mean, our friendship- mine and Cleo’s, even- they were built on that. It changed what- what made us happy, and what made us sad- because that’s what everything does. Fear’s a part of that. Just means you’re human.”

Etho laughed slightly. He felt something burning behind his eyes.

“You’re good at that,” He muttered.

“Oh, thank you,” Bdubs responded, a hint of that playful arrogance returning, “I’m good at most things.”

Etho snorted. There was a comfortable silence between them. As Bdubs continued to graze his back, Etho leaned into his side. Bdubs smiled.

“So, uh,” Etho said as Bdubs stifled a yawn. He looked up at him. “I- I have something for you, actually.”

“A gift?” Bdubs asked. “I like gifts.”

“Oh, something like that.”

Etho dug into his back pocket and placed something into Bdubs’ palm. A small gold statue sat there, emerald eyes staring back at him.

“A totem,” He observed aloud.

“Not quite the same, but- since I never got to give you that life.”

Bdubs’ hand tightened around the totem as he realized the weight behind it.

“Oh,” He said. “Oh. *Etho*, you didn’t-”

“No, no, save it,” He waved dismissively. “Long overdue. At this point it’s basically a gift, like you said. See it as that.”

Bdubs looked from the totem to Etho, from Etho to the totem.

“Okay,” He eventually said quietly, “I will.”

Bdubs’ eyes looked a little glossy, but he hadn’t mentioned when Etho’s did as well, so he returned the favor.

“It’s late,” Bdubs mumbled, setting the totem- endlessly carefully- next to the plant on his headboard, “I take it you don’t want to go home.”

“That wasn’t exactly my plan, no.”

“Well, then get comfy,” Bdubs stood out of the way and Etho awkwardly removed his shoes, vest, and headband, set them aside, and stiffly laid down near the wall. Bdubs rolled his eyes, blowing out the lantern, laying down next to him, and throwing the blanket across them both. After a moment, Bdubs found Etho’s hand and took it into his own. Etho squeezed back, grateful. Bdubs scoffed.

“Oh, just snuggle with me, doggone it,” He said. Etho laughed. He turned over and put his head on Bdubs’ chest, draping his arm across it for good measure. It was slightly awkward, seeing as one was *certainly* taller than the other, but Etho pulled his legs up so it felt more natural. Bdubs began running his hand through the white hair and felt with relief as Etho began to relax against him.

And, just like had been the case back in their fort of snow, Bdubs would lie there for hours, unwilling to wake Etho. That had been less so as the series progressed, and he would always be up in time for the Boogeyman to be chosen, but here? Here, they didn’t have to worry about that. They didn’t have to worry about keeping guard around their base, or about early morning quests to do something-or-other before most people would sensibly be awake; And frankly, Bdubs was very comfortable here.

He could lie here all day if it meant Etho got a good rest. He deserved it- he really did.

## End Notes

ill be real im not real proud of this one but its gone through like 22 million drafts so  
whatever !! whatever  
anyways girl help !!!!! i love them so bad  
fun fact i discovered how much i loved this duo just before session 7 :) ow :))

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