

## Phantom in Your Foyer

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/45156169) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/45156169>.

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| Rating:          | <a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>   |
| Archive Warning: | <a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>   |
| Category:        | <a href="#">M/M</a>   |
| Fandom:          | <a href="#">Lifesteal SMP</a>   |
| Relationship:    | <a href="#">ItzSubz/PrinceZam (Video Blogging RPF)</a>  |
| Character:       | <a href="#">ItzSubz (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">PrinceZam (Video Blogging RPF)</a>   |
| Additional Tags: | <a href="#">Not RPF</a> , <a href="#">POV Outsider</a> , <a href="#">POV Alternating</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Cyberpunk</a> , <a href="#">Mentions of Arson</a> , <a href="#">Canon-Typical Violence</a> , <a href="#">there is not explicit description of injury but be warned zam does almost die, he gets better though</a> , <a href="#">The Leviathan are mentioned but do not appear</a> |
| Language:        | English   |
| Stats:           | Published: 2023-02-18 Words: 1,324 Chapters: 1/1  |

## Phantom in Your Foyer

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### Summary

Half the damn crowd had been cheering.

### Notes

title from the song paranoia by neoni

you know the drill, don't show this to ccs/talk about it on twt/yt/twitch but if they have an ao3 acc i can't stop them from reading anything

also note about the pov characters: they are not ls members they are just random members of the public. they are also not intended to represent chat/the fandom. i also do not necessarily endorse any of their actions.

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

In all honesty, she'd been one of the ones who'd wanted to leave Zam behind. Sure, it was probably callous as hell, but she didn't want to go apartment hunting again because he'd been allowed to recover.

She hadn't been the only one though, not by a long shot. Half the damn crowd had been cheering when he'd fallen, after all. She recognized some of the faces, neighbors new and old. They really oughtn't applaud for a man's death, but she knew for a fact none of them could bring themselves to

fucking care. Zam hadn't been the one who'd started the fire, but he'd fanned the flames. If they couldn't have Mapicc and Roshambo, they could at least have him.

Subz had scooped Zam up in his arms, almost instantly turning his previously-grey overalls a dark red.

She nearly hadn't been close enough to the front of the crowd to hear him, but he *had* been yelling rather loudly. "Are all of you morons? What do you think the cops are gonna do if they come by and see a dead body on the ground? 'Cause they're not gonna be nice, that's for sure!" There was a bit of a collective mumble from the crowd, over a hundred voices all trying to negotiate as one. "Yeah. Dumbasses."

He'd cradled Zam closer to him, starting to make his way through the crowd, towards his apartment. No one really tried to stop him, though it was a close thing in a few cases.

After he left, a sort of shocked silence had descended on all of them. They'd scatter soon enough, fearing Mapicc and Roshambo still lurking about, but first they all had to take a second, to drink it all in. The closest man they had to a leader walked away, carrying a man who'd fucked so many of them over.

They'd just have to trust Subz, she'd supposed.

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There were a lot of things he hadn't been expecting when he knocked on Subz's door at 7 in the afternoon on a Friday. Enough that even if he hadn't been in excruciating pain, he probably couldn't have put together a proper list.

Subz answered the door pretty quickly. He always did, if he was awake. It was half the reason he was the de facto doctor, really. But, he wasn't the only one who'd answered it.

The way the story spread later, it was bad. But his first reaction had really only been a mild confusion.

Subz answered the door as usual, starting to ask a few questions, determine how bad his injuries were. The standard procedure for anyone even close to being a doctor. However, what wasn't standard procedure was the man standing behind him.

A little shorter than Subz, with long yellow hair growing out brown at the roots. He was wearing loose pants, but his chest was bare besides some bandages, not enough to hide the expanse of segmented steel that shifted across the front of his body as he breathed. The mod was clearly new, raw skin still healing around it, though it was free of blood. It was also pretty clearly the only thing keeping him alive.

Really, though, the only thing he'd needed a look at was the man's face. Terrified, tired, yes. But most of all familiar.

Subz followed his gaze, looking back to where Zam was leaning against the wall. "Look, I can explain."

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They weren't sure what Zam was trying, actually. It was *something*, that much they knew. The gas mask, the kindness, all of it.

He'd trained to be an engineer, he said. And the mask was to filter his air for him, not strain the lung that'd been remade out of scrap metal. They honestly believed the second part. After all, they

all knew what he looked like, they all knew who he was. And they'd all seen his blood on the ground, most of them cheered for it.

Part of them wished they hadn't. Only a part, but after Green Street? After he'd gotten people out of that building, gotten *kids* out of that building? After he'd helped rebuild, make sure it was safe enough, even though it hadn't been a Leviathan hit? They'd started to listen to it.

The Leviathan were claiming dominion over the area, of course. That didn't change the fact that half the fires were started by them, by two bored teenagers who thought they could own the world. ("The world" being about 5 city blocks, but again, they *were* teenagers.)

Subz had contested it, of course. Hell, *Zam* had contested it. That one had been surprising, more than anything.

And, they couldn't help but note, more than a little appreciated. Zam probably couldn't fight them, what with his injuries, but the stand meant something nonetheless.

Hell, maybe *that* was what he was trying. Get them to warm up to him, get a little bit of trust. Not that they were paranoid or anything, but it was all-

They opted, then, not to dwell on it for too long. Better off that way, after all. And really, there was no way Zam nearly got himself killed just to get them to trust him. It was too big of a risk. Subz could have been a little too late, or missing supplies, or unwilling to save his life, and that would have been it.

Of course, it hadn't been. (And they weren't blind as to some of the other consequences of that. They just weren't worth bringing up.)

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She wasn't sure if she should really be spying on Subz and Zam, no matter how much she wanted to know what was going on.

Well, she hadn't really been spying intentionally. It was just that Subz and Zam had been standing out in public, and she was curious. And because she was curious, she'd hidden to hear what they were saying, and not disturb them.

No, it was definitely spying. And she certainly wasn't proud of herself for it, but Subz could probably find her if he wanted to, so it wasn't like she was being *that* creepy.

Before she'd hastily hidden herself, she'd gotten one last glimpse of them. Zam had been practically slumped against Subz, forehead against his left shoulder and arms wrapped tight around his back. Subz was holding Zam in return, metal hand just above his waist and the other in his hair, where the dark brown that had been growing out transitioned into the somewhat faded yellow.

Subz was talking, so quiet it was almost a whisper. She was sure she wasn't supposed to be hearing any of it.

And, to be fair, she wasn't hearing most of it. Only little snippets, here and there. *Know. Sorry. Stupid, we'll. Promise. Love.*

She *really* wasn't supposed to be hearing anything. That did not stop her from peeking her head out from her hiding spot, just in time to see Subz press a kiss to the top of Zam's head, smoothing out his hair.

The movement was painfully *soft*, and certainly sweeter than anything else she'd ever seen him do.

She was almost impressed, though she wasn't sure who with.

Weirdly, some part of her was glad Subz was getting out again, after. Well. But she didn't really know him well enough for that. None of them really *knew* him, only speaking with him in passing when they needed help with some injury they couldn't handle at home. And he didn't exactly have any sort of bedside manner.

But they'd all been able to see how broken up he'd been after August, and it was good to see him comfortable with someone else.

She *really* should not be spying on them. (At another glance, they weren't doing anything, just holding each other. Still.)

In some ways, though, maybe she was glad she had. After all, maybe she'd been a bit hard on Zam. Maybe they all had.

## End Notes

some notes:

- subz is technically a bioengineer but he just calls himself a mechanic
- zam's hair is like that bc hydrogen peroxide doesn't interact well with copper, which is what subz used for wiring in a lot of mods including his arm, so it would be annoying to rebleach (not to mention the fumes which are already hell for me (lungs are like. mostly functional))
- i wanted to include more of zam healing and also eclipse evil moments but i already rewrote this one time and honestly did not have the energy
- vitalasy does exist in this au he's just not here right now (if i write more in this au he will show up but like. this fic does take place over a fair amount of time)
- i don't like the ending so i might go back and edit it later, do not hold me to that

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