

Pretty sure that's normal, right?

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/34217731) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/34217731>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hermitcraft SMP
Relationship:	EthosLab & BdoubleO100
Character:	Ethoslab , BdoubleO100
Additional Tags:	Not RPF , Chronic Pain , EthosLab has Chronic Pain, and is an idiot about it , Author Projecting onto EthosLab , Mild Hurt/Comfort , Platonic Relationships , Cross-Posted on Tumblr
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Hermittober 2021
Stats:	Published: 2021-10-01 Words: 2,021 Chapters: 1/1

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by [cityscape \(worriedlywriting\)](#)

Summary

Hermittober 2021 -- Day 1 -- Wings

Etho's finally completed the No Wings Club! Which is great-- except for the fact that he no longer has an excuse not to use an elytra. (How do all the other hermits do it?!)

Or: Etho realizes-- with Bdubs' help-- that his experiences with elytra might not be the same as everyone else's.

Notes

Happy October! I am dumping my chronic pain onto Etho S. Lab. Enjoy!

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

To fly, or not to fly. That was the question.

Etho sighed, shaking his head. It was no use deliberating-- he might as well just get it over with.

After he reached his thousand days in the No Wings Club, he'd stored an elytra in his enderchest, as well as some rockets-- he didn't need it around his and Iskall's base, thanks to Riptide, but the other hermits were a different matter. Visiting Doc had been a hassle while the club was still ongoing, and with the giant mountains that every hermit on the server seemed to be constructing, it

would probably be best to get in back in the elytra routine as soon as possible.

He shuffled the wings out of his enderchest, shaking them out before inspecting their condition. After ensuring the wings themselves were flying fit, he moved on to the horrible, awful, terrible straps of leather they were attached to, which were unfortunately also in working order. Sighing, he buckled them on-- he'd tried to pad the things before, even tried to etch some sort of feather falling-silk touch combo onto the interiors to make them magically less painful to wear...it'd worked with the surface-level pain from the constant digging into his skin through his vest, at least.

"Ah! Etho!"

He turned quickly, gripping the hilt of his sword before relaxing at the familiar sight of his friend's round, googly glasses. "Hey, how's it going, Bdubs?"

Bdubs grinned brightly, leaning against a tree. "Oh, just fine, just fine. Been doing some work here and there on the Big Eyes shopping district-- ran out here to get a few more spruce logs, you know how it is." He pulled out his axe, tapping the butt of the blade against the trunk-- then paused, intrigued. "Wait a minute... are you wearing an elytra?!"

"Yeppers." Etho flexed the faux wings experimentally. Good, the locking mechanism was working. "Got my final medal a few weeks ago, figured it was about time to get back into using this."

Bdubs whistled. "Wow, got 'em dyed and everything already. A few weeks, though? You could wait that long?"

"Well... 's'not like I really need elytra to get around in the savannah."

"I guess." Bdubs shrugged-- then hefted his axe, wedging it into the bottom of the tree trunk. "Where are you headed, then?" *Thunk*. "Kinda"-- *thunk*-- "middle of nowhere"-- *thunk*-- he set the axe down, exhaling loudly. "Alright. Don't chop and talk, Bdubs, it's impolite. Where ya headed?"

Etho shrugged. "Nowhere, really. I was planning on just flying around for a few minutes, getting back into shape, getting used to the whole thing."

A snort. "Sure... getting used to it."

"Yeah, well. I gotta make sure I don't fall in public." Etho shot back, perhaps a bit sharper than he should have-- "can't have the people know I'm not an expert."

Bdubs nodded in mock seriousness-- "right, right. Of course! Gotta keep 'em all fooled." A sigh, a kind grin. "No, I'm just teasin' ya. Go do your flyin', poor old Bdubs'll be here chopping logs."

Etho chuckled, giving his friend a mock salute before grabbing a firework out of his inventory, pulling the start string, and taking off.

Flying fireworks were a pretty ingenious invention-- Etho hadn't come up with them himself, of course, but he couldn't help but admire the design. A string attached to a fire-starting strip pulled through the base of the firecracker in order to ignite the gunpowder-- he pulled the string upwards, avoiding the flame, though it wouldn't hurt him through his standard enchanted gloves. (He'd have to customize those later-- dying them like his standard blue ones should be fine if he didn't come up with a better idea.)

He'd only gone through a few fireworks out of his stack, but he considered that a victory. What had

it been, ten minutes? Twelve? Either way, his shoulders were already crying out for mercy; he grimaced underneath his mask, scanning the ground for a good place to land.

Normally he wouldn't have done his first flight around Bdubs, but... well. It didn't really matter-- his friend was probably having the same struggles, what with his flip-flopping between wearing elytra and going without.

He should probably tease him about that.

The forest below was missing... maybe three, four trees compared to before. Etho narrowed his eyes-- Bdubs was striking his axe into a fir next to the small clearing he'd created, completely oblivious to his altudiously advantaged watcher.

Etho grinned and *dived*.

"Aah! Wh-- *Etho!*"

He skidded to a stop in the grass behind Bdubs, twirling the stolen axe in the air with a snicker. "Did I get ya?"

"Get me? I almost had a heart attack!" Bdubs stomped over, slugging Etho in the shoulder as he swiped at his axe; Etho quickly adjusted so that the axe was held right out of Bdub's reach. "Oh good *grief!*"

Etho chuckled deviously. "Oh, sorry, I should hold this down for you, I forgot." He leaned down so that the axe was a few inches above the ground, earning an indignant shout from his friend-- and then dropped it, letting out an involuntary "*oof*" as his back protested at the motion.

Bdubs snatched his axe from the ground. "Hah! Serves you right. Old man Etho having back trouble?" he crowed triumphantly-- then paused, pushing up his googly-eye glasses to look at Etho in concern. "Hey, man, are you okay? Do you need to sit down or somethin'?"

Etho sighed. "No, I... okay, fine." He smacked away Bdubs' arm as the other tried to help him over to the shade of a nearby tree-- thankfully he was still able to stand up this time, at least for the most part. Using the tree to keep himself steady, he unbuckled his elytra before lowering himself to the ground with a pained huff.

"So," Bdubs started, flopping onto the ground next to him. "You okay, big guy? That was kinda out of nowhere."

Etho shrugged, then winced, immediately regretting the painful motion. "I mean, it wasn't out of nowhere, was it? It was my first elytra flight of the season. It's always gonna be a little rough, especially since I've gone so long without using one."

Bdubs frowned, raising an eyebrow. "You were up there for like... five minutes, tops. That shouldn't bother your back enough that you almost fall over."

"I did not *'almost fall over!'*"

"Did *too!*"

Etho rolled his eyes. "Did not. Besides, it was more like ten minutes, right?"

Bdubs scoffed. "Do you doubt the clock-keeping abilities of the Time King, Etho?"

"Ah, the Time King. How could I forget." Etho deadpanned.

"Hey! Stop trying to get me off topic, you... you... ohhh, I know you're laughing at me, stop that!" Despite his protests, Etho did not miss the fact that Bdubs was laughing along. "But... seriously. Does your back hurt often? Like, have you been doing any heavy lifting lately?"

Etho thought about it for a moment. "Not more than the usual, no. But the pain's been pretty normal, too."

Bdubs looked at him oddly. "Normal? Like, what's normal for you? Like"-- he tapped his leg, seemingly reaching for the right words-- "like, let's say you've got a scale of one to ten, and one is 'I'm Fine,' five is 'I'm pretty uncomfortable and I might have to not, say, fly as much' and ten is, uh. Bad."

"Uhh..." Etho snorted. "Like, daily, or..." after seeing Bdubs' affirmative nod, he continued. "Well, back in Season Seven when I was flying a lot more, it was like, a four on a good day?"

"On a good day."

"Yeah?" Etho answered, perplexed. "And normally it would be around a five. But nowadays it's been better, what with the No Wings Club. Like, maybe a four or five usually instead of six or seven."

"Instead of--" Bdubs spluttered. "Etho!"

"What?" Etho laughed. "That's normal, isn't it? Like, we aren't built for flying like Grian or Pearl are. S'just how the muscles work on most players."

"And the-- the other pain?! Without flying?!" Bdubs half-shouted.

Etho pondered this for a moment. "Dunno. Never really thought about it."

"Never really--" Bdubs covered his face in his hands with a groan. "Etho. My friend. My fellow redstone genius." He looked up at him, a desperate expression on his face. "Do you mean to tell me that you... just... feel pain, all the time, and... you think it's *normal*?"

He stared at him. "Is... is it *not*?"

Bdubs stared back. "Oh my gosh."

"What?"

"You're an idiot."

"Hey!"

"No, but seriously!" Bdubs jumped to his feet, pacing back and forth, gesticulating wildly in an attempt to convey his extremely confusing point. "You... feeling pain-- it's not-- it's not supposed to be *normal*. Does it ever stop? Are you ever-- what d-- the-- you--" He pulled up the bottom of his moss-colored sweater, holding it to his face to muffle his frustrated scream. When he uncovered his head, he looked back over at Etho, who was genuinely surprised at how distraught his friend appeared to be. "Did... we've been friends for *forever*, Etho. Why didn't you ever tell me-- or Beef, or Doc, or-- *or anyone*?"

"I..." He didn't know what to say. "I guess I thought it was normal. And, like, I didn't want to

bother anyone."

"You didn't want to... bother anyone," Bdubs muttered, disbelieving. "About... about... being in pain."

Etho shrugged, grateful his back had calmed down enough to allow him to move without dying. "I mean, yeah. Like, it's not a big deal, you know? I didn't think anyone would care."

"I would care!" Bdubs yelled suddenly, desperately putting a hand over his heart, waving the other towards the Boatem village-- "*Doc* would care! *Beef* would care! Hell, if you told any of the hermits '*hey, I'm Etho, my back hurts like I crushed it with one of my anvils, sorry to bother you*' I bet you fifty diamonds-- no, fifty diamond *blocks* they would have helped out in a heartbeat! You can't"-- he laughed, exhausted-- "you can't just say '*no one would care!*'"

Etho frowned, staring at nothing in particular. A few leaves fell off a stray oak tree. A squirrel darted through through a fallen trunk.

"Well." He sighed quietly, hauling himself off the ground. "I... I guess I just didn't know it was something I needed to ask about." Stretching quickly, he touched his gloved palms to the pine-needle covered floor, legs straight. "If... if you're mad at me, I--"

"*Mad at you?* I'm-- I'm--" Bdubs' face melted as he walked up to Etho, putting his hands on his shoulders-- then grumbling, taking a piece of scaffold out of his inventory, placing it down, climbing on top and trying again. "There. Equal height. But"-- he took a deep breath. "Etho, I'm not *mad* at you. I just... I'm worried! You... you're my friend, Etho. I don't want you to be in pain, and-- and it makes me feel awful that I didn't notice you were hurting sooner."

Etho stared at him for a moment, taken aback. "Oh."

Bdubs snorted. "Yeah! 'Oh,' he says, 'oh.' C'mere, stupid." He pulled Etho into a tight, quick hug, then let him go, looking at him with watery eyes. "Oh, you."

Etho grinned. "Who, me?"

"Yes, *you*, stupid!" A pause-- then a sigh. "Ah, I'm just kiddin'. Love ya, buddy."

A snort. "Love you too."

...

"By the way, you'd better talk to Stress about this later."

"Uh... nice talking to you, Bdubs, real-- real good talking to you, but I gotta"-- Etho shuffled through his inventory, grabbing an enderpearl-- "uh, gotta go." He lobbed it... somewhere. Hopefully not in a lava pool.

"Uh-huh! Sure!" Bdubs yelled after him, even as he vwoop'ed to his new location. "Yeah, I'll call her myself if I have to! You'd better watch out, I bet she makes house calls!"

Etho chuckled as he started at a leisurely pace towards home. He'd talk to Stress about it at some point. Maybe. Probably. Bdubs' threat didn't hold any water.

Hopefully.

End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! :] I dunno how many prompts I'm gonna complete this October but they definitely won't consistently be this long LOL. uhh sorry that bdubs said h double hockey sticks but i think he deserves to say ALL of the swears <3

as an etho + bdubs fan since 2013 though... man this was fun to write. anyway ohhh god i need to go to bed i have work in the morning.

ALSO this is a note for myself here: the title isn't properly capitalized i know buddy i know it's okay. it's because its a sentence and it's also not a book title youre okay bud.

tumblr crosspost: (i dont want to do an httml link its 10:33 pm.) <https://sodden-1730793-1280-2.tumblr.com/post/663901217323352064/pretty-sure-thats-normal-right>

ok thanks for reading have a nice day/ night! !!!! :]

oct 2 edit-- just changed the date to oct 1 on this because ao3 is ahead of my time zone :]

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