

a million years away

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a million years away

by [BananasofThorns](#)

Summary

In this world, the Last Lifers do not remember 3rd Life, but the stories of the world are told in the stars. Some of them, inexplicably, know the tales of these constellations.

Notes

[title from Constellations - The Oh Hellos]

hiii I've been thinking about this concept for AGES but actually writing it was. very impulsive. I wrote the first chapter on discord and then suddenly I had 1.3k words on a google doc

that being said, however, I am Very pleased with how this entire thing turned out, so. enjoy!

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

The Martyr

Chapter Notes

originally posted on my [tumblr](#)

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

Dude, I can't sleep. I'm too on-edge.

Hm. I can tell you a story, if you want.

A bedtime story? Really? I'm not five.

...fine. Tell me a story.

You see those stars up there?

Yeah, I see a lot of them. Which ones, those?

No, further left. Where my finger is pointing. What's it look like to you?

...I don't know, stars? Dude, I'm not good at this kind of stuff!

This is doing the opposite of helping me sleep, by the way.

Shut up. It's supposed to be a sword - see? That's the hilt, and those four stars in a line are the blade.

Huh. I mean, sure? I guess I could see that. Is there a point to all this? ...ha.

That was terrible. You should be ashamed.

I am.

Good. And yes, there is, if you would just give me a moment.

That constellation's called the Martyr.

That seems...unhappy.

Yeah, well, its story kind of is. Way, way long ago, before this world even existed, there was a kingdom called the Red Kingdom. Its soldiers were fighting a war against two terrifyingly destructive men called the Trickster and the Silvertongue, I think. There were only two of them, but they were strong enough to conquer the entire kingdom, and so the Red King sent out his best Knight. And the Knight slayed two of the Trickster and the Silvertongue's allies, but he fell trying to protect his people. The Trickster killed him.

That's...yikes, man.

Yeah. The Red King forged a blade in the Knight's honor to keep his spirit with the army. When the Red Kingdom fell, the gods hung the blade and the banner in the stars.

Why's it called the Martyr, then? Why not the knight, or the sword?

I don't know, I didn't make the story! Anyway, if you look to the left and up from the sword, you can see the outline of the banner. And if you look...there, you can see the Trickster - or the Victor, I think people sometimes call it - and his Silvertongue. The gods immortalized them, too, I guess. I'm not sure if they deserve that, but hey, who am I to judge? They're just stories.

Yeah. Hey, speaking of which. How do you know all of this, anyway?

...Skizz?

Chapter End Notes

...something about Skizz telling his own story and having no idea

The Weapon

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I'm bored.

So go find something to do.

I've been doing things all day! Tell me a story, or something.

A story? Dude, I'm not good at those!

Yes, you are!

Come on, just one. And then I can tell you one! It'll be like a game!

Fine, fine. Just for you, Bdubs. Let me think of one, first.

...okay. Come here for a second. You see those stars up there? No, those. Just look where I'm pointing!

Oh, the ones that are kind of in a circle?

Mhm.

It looks kind of like a clock. If you squint really hard.

I think that's what it's supposed to be. I don't know, constellations aren't really my thing. I do kind of remember something about this one, though, so here's your story.

I think it's called the Weapon.

...it's a clock. How can a clock be a weapon, Etho?!

I'm getting there! It's kind of a long story. A really long time ago, there was a world, and there was a kingdom called the Red Kingdom, and for some reason, all the other factions on the world hated the Kingdom and its Army, so they destroyed it. The last soldiers left were the Bystander and the Traitor, who wasn't really a soldier at all.

This isn't a very good story.

Dude, be patient! The Trickster and the Silvertongue - they were the ones who defeated the Red Kingdom in the first place - wanted the entire army wiped out, but they didn't know how to get to the last two soldiers, so they went to the Traitor's old ally, the Weapon. His Queen was dead, killed by the Red Army's Martyr Knight, and he had locked himself away in their Crastle—

You mean castle?

No, the Crastle is what the Zombie Queen and her Weapon called their base. Anyway, the Trickster and the Silvertongue went to find the Weapon in his Crastle, and the Silvertongue paid him a clock to kill his ally. As soon as the Traitor returned, the Weapon put a sword in his back.

And that's it?

...yeah, pretty much. Sorry.

Some story, Etho, thanks. Is that all the Weapon did? Killed some guy and ended up in the stars for it? That's easy!

No, that's not why he got turned into a constellation. There's another story about how the Silvertongue pretended to betray the Trickster, and how he used the Weapon to do it. When the Trickster came back, they both turned on the Weapon instead. He was dead before he knew what was happening, but the gods took pity on him, and they put his clock in the stars.

...oh. Etho, I wanted a good story!

It's the only story I know!

Hey, where'd you hear that one from, anyway? I don't recognize these constellations, and I certainly don't know these stories. And I know a lot of stories!

...Grian, maybe? I'm not actually sure.

No, I don't think it was Grian, I haven't talked to him at all. Not about stuff like this, anyway.

...weird.

Huh. Well, you got any more?

Nuh-uh, it's your turn! This was your idea, Bdubs, come on!

Chapter End Notes

...something about Etho telling Bdubs about himself and neither of them having any idea

The Trickster and the Silvertongue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hey, Ren?

Yes, Shadow Queen?

Are there different constellations here? I don't recognize any of these.

What? Hold on, let me look...oh. Yes, there are. I can tell you about some of them, if you like?

Oh, I'd love that. You know them?

A few. You see that star up there? The very brightest one. I'm not sure it has a name, but it connects two of the most prominent constellations, the Trickster and the Silvertongue. Here.

Those are just rectangles.

You have to imagine the lines, too. The Silvertongue's is diagonal, see? It's supposed to look like the papers he made to scam people out of their items. He was quite good at that.

Was he?

That's what the stories say, anyway. And the Trickster is connected to him here, at the top left corner. His is more complicated...I'm not really sure what it means, to be honest with you. Only the bottom left and top right corners are connected. It's supposed to look like this, I think.

...oh, weird. I've never seen that symbol before.

Do the Trickster and the Silvertongue have stories?

Oh, plenty. They razed an entire kingdom to ashes, just the two of them. See, over there, that's the banner of the Red Kingdom. The Silvertongue was jealous of the Kingdom's magic, and so he and the Trickster broke through the Kingdom's walls and killed all its soldiers. The Red King and his Hand were the last two left, and the Silvertongue killed them both on the altar where the King was first crowned.

That's...terrible.

It is. In the end, the gods punished the Trickster for his hubris, and he went mad. Some say it was because he could hear the voices of everyone he'd murdered. Either way, he killed the Silvertongue on the highest mountain in their desert kingdom, and then followed his partner down to Hell.

And they were made into constellations?

It...appears so, yes. Maybe the gods admired their devotion.

They sound sad.

They sound like monsters.

Well, yes, but...at the end. That's just kind of sad, isn't it?

I mean...yes, I suppose so.

Do the other constellations have stories, too?

All of them do. What would you like to hear about next, the Pyre and the Scapegoat or the Wolf King?

Hm...how about the Wolf King?

Chapter End Notes

...something about Ren telling Grian and Scar's story

The Wolf King

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

You know, you being red really messes up all my ideas for Magical Mountain. I had all these plans, and business opportunities we could've made, and— well. I guess we can't do anything about that now, can we?

Oh, you're not going to talk to me now? Rude.

...go away, Scar.

Why? I'm bored, and I can't sleep, so now I'm here.

I could kill you.

Yeah, but you won't.

Hey, do you want to hear a story?

...I will take that as a yes!

Let me tell you about the great Wolf King. You like dogs, right? I'm more of a cat person myself, but—

Get on with it, if you aren't going to leave.

Right, right, of course. My deepest apologies.

Anyway! The Wolf King. Do you see that cluster of stars up and to the right of that tall tree over there? That's his constellation.

He lived in the middle of the world, on the neutral ground between all the territories. At first, he had no enemies, but he had no allies, either; his closest friends were his dogs. Not many people dared to climb up to where he'd built his house - it was said to be haunted, but I'm not really sure I believe *that* - but one day, the Gambler decided that the Wolf King would be the perfect person to test his new game.

The Wolf King was suspicious, at first, but he agreed. That would be his downfall. He lost his first life to the Gambler and woke up with new simmering anger in his heart. A week later, he helped the Pyre attack the Crastle.

The next day, he and his house both burned when the Zombie Queen set them aflame. His dogs dragged him out of the fire and into the woods, where he nursed his wounds and that ember of fury in his chest. He healed, but his body never felt the same; he could always feel the phantom fire in his veins.

Over the weeks, his army grew. Both wolves and the rare domesticated dog flocked to his home in the flowered forest. Eventually, the Silvertongue and the Trickster found him. They told him the Red King had been the one to burn his home; the Wolf King now had somewhere to point his blade. With the Silvertongue and the Trickster at his back and his wolvern army at his sides, he started to hunt.

...did he win?

No, he didn't. Once he had separated from the Silvertongue and the Trickster, the Red King and his Hand managed to corner the Wolf King and the Widow. They shot them down in the burning desert; the Widow had one life left. The Wolf King didn't.

His dogs ended up haunting the sands, long after even the Victor and his Silvertongue were dead. A lot of the stories say you can still hear them on full moons, howling and baying in an eternal hunt and search for their King.

...that's it?

That's it.

That's a stupid ending. Tell it again. But better.

...please.

Well, if you insist, my friend.

Chapter End Notes

...something about Joel being told his own story and having no idea

The Lovers

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Oh, you're still awake, too?

Yeah. I tried going to sleep, but I couldn't turn my brain off. You know how it is. Do you know how it is?

Yeah, I do. Usually I just tell myself stories until I'm calm enough to fall asleep. Is that silly?

No, I don't think so. Maybe I should do that. I don't really know any stories, though.

I suppose I could make one up. I don't think I'd be very good at that, not like Martyn.

Yeah, he's pretty good, isn't he?

...I could tell you one, if you want. I know a couple.

Oh, do you? That'd be brilliant.

Let me think...okay. You see that group of stars up there? Where I'm pointing. They look kind of like flowers?

What...? Oh, yeah! I never noticed that before. I don't really look at the constellations that much.

I don't, either, but I really like the story behind this one. It's called the Lovers, I think? There's actually two, but it's really hard to tell them apart...I think the one on the left is the Widow and the one on the right is the Harbinger.

...oh. That kind of gives away what happens, doesn't it? Oh, well.

It does a little. You can still tell it, though.

Alright. Well, the Lovers were part of this world that existed a super long time ago, like before you and I were even a thing, probably—

Oh, wow.

Yeah, I know. Anyway, they were made to be in this death game—

That sounds kind of familiar, doesn't it?

...oh, I'd never thought about that. Yeah, it does. There's even a similar life system and everything.

...huh. Well, anyway, they were in this death game, but they fell in love, and neither of them wanted to fight, so they secluded themselves in a corner of the world, right near the border.

Wait, there was even a border— oh my gods. Okay, I'm getting sidetracked. Anyway. Sorry. They lived in a flower valley at the edge of the world...all the stories made it sound really nice. I think I'd like to live in a place like that.

It was still a death game, though. The Harbinger lost his first life to a game the Gambler had made,

and not even a week later, he got caught in a trap the Trickster had set. He, the Knight, and the man who would become the Red King all died. Him and the Knight were on their last life, but instead of killing anyone, the Harbinger hid himself away in the flower valley with his Lover.

They were happy. They were happy, until the Red King showed up. He was trying to recruit the Harbinger into his army. The Lovers didn't trust him, though. They allied with the Trickster and the Silvertongue instead, which basically declared themselves as enemies to the Red Kingdom.

Wait, wasn't the Trickster the one that killed him earlier?

Yep. He hadn't meant to, though. He was targeting the Red Kingdom, the Harbinger was just unlucky. Poor guy.

I'm guessing it only gets worse for him, huh? Oh, dear.

...yeah. Yeah, it does. It got worse for everyone, actually.

There was this huge fight in the Trickster and the Silvertongue's territory...the Battle of the Red Desert, I think it was called. Anyway, the Trickster rigged a gigantic area of the desert to explode, and then he and the Harbinger's Lover lured the Red Army inside. There was this bunker that the Silvertongue and the Lover were hiding in, and the Silvertongue was the one that actually pulled the lever.

Did it work? I mean, an entire desert, that's got to be a ton of TNT— how did they even get that much? Surely—

The TNT didn't kill anyone, not even the Pyre, who had been right in the middle of it.

How?!

I don't know! The Red Army wasn't deterred and they...they killed the Harbinger. Straight through the windows of the bunker.

They killed his Widow and the Trickster, too. Took their first lives and then retreated while the Silvertongue hid. When the Widow got back and found his Lover dead...some of the stories say his grief manifested in the shape of crystals floating around his head.

Oh, that's— that's really sad, actually.

How would that work, though? Like, it's got to be magic, right? Or...sorry. Sorry, continue.

Yeah, I'm not really sure how that would work. Anyway, eventually, the Red King and his Hand killed the Widow, too. Some people see it as a mercy, since he got to be with his Lover - the gods immortalized his grief as stars, see? And the Harbinger is right next to him, and together they make up those flowers. What was I—? Oh, right. A lot of people see it as a happy ending, honestly. Since they got to be together in the afterlife.

That's...that's nice. I mean, it's quite sad, but...it's nice, in a way? You know.

Yeah. Yeah. I think that's kind of what I want, too? Just a nice afterlife. If there is one.

...something about Jimmy telling his own story and having no idea

The Pyre and the Scapegoat

Chapter Notes

we come full circle

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

You know, I didn't think being dead would be so...boring.

Yeah?

Like, we can't sleep, so when all the alive people are off resting, there's just...nothing to do.

Good point.

Hey, I could tell you another story? I mean, there's plenty of stars in the sky.

Oh, what the hell. Sure, why not?

Oh, great! Uh...what about the Pyre and the Scapegoat? Not a lot of stories talk about them, but.

Yeah, sure.

Okay. Their constellations aren't together, but if you look...the Pyre is up there, near the Red King. And the Scapegoat is down here, kind of. There aren't many other constellations around him, so he's easy to miss sometimes.

Right. So their constellations aren't together, but their stories are?

Well...kind of. They were allies at the start of the game. They started out in the Village, but after the Silvertongue burned the Pyre's tree, they both moved into the Swamp, along with the Traitor. The Pyre built himself a castle made of wool - a lot of people say he was an idiot for this, but personally, I think it was just to trick people into antagonizing him so he'd be justified in fighting back. The Scapegoat—

Didn't some people call him the Gambler?

Yeah, some stories do. What, you know them?

...no, I don't think so?

...huh. Weird. Anyway, you were saying?

Right. The Scapegoat couldn't kill, but he decided he'd take lives into his own hands and he built a game of chance. That's where the Gambler name comes from, I think. With the Pyre and the Traitor's help, he built a deadly game of chance. It was possible, and the Hand even managed to win, but two people died from it before the Crastle's Weapon decided he needed to be stopped. The Crastle didn't have any hold over the Swamp, though; don't tell anyone, but I think the tensions of the game were getting to him.

That's bullshit. The Gambler didn't even do anything!

The Weapon thought he had. So one day the Scapegoat woke up to the Weapon at his door - and he hadn't told anyone but the Traitor where his base was - and he was brought to the Crastle to be executed. The Zombie Queen was there, but so were the Traitor and the Pyre. All three of them had bows.

They sold him out?

Well— the Traitor sold him out. He was the one that got the final shot against the Scapegoat on the firing wall. His arrow went right—

Right through his temple. Yeah.

Are you sure you don't know these stories?

I don't think so!

I mean...I shouldn't? I didn't know them earlier, why would I know them now? This is weird. Just — keep talking. I want to see how this ends.

...okay. So the Traitor killed the Scapegoat, but the Weapon thought the Pyre should also be punished for helping the Scapegoat and refusing to give him up. The Scapegoat was more than happy to help in the second execution. He ended up killing the Pyre himself.

The alliance in the Swamp crumbled, and the Pyre joined the Red Army alongside the Traitor, who didn't actually join the Army at all. The Scapegoat allied with the Trickster and the Silvertongue out of convenience more than anything else. He was a survivor; I think if he thought he could've won on his own, he would have done that.

And that's...that's where their story ends, basically.

Are you serious? That's it?

Well...and then they died. In the same fight, actually, just on different sides. The Scapegoat's final death was unremarkable; the Red King's Hand shot him down, and that was it. I guess the gods thought he did something, though, since they put him in the stars.

And the Pyre? Let me guess, he burned?

You got it, buddy. It was the Traitor who killed him, actually. In the final battle of the Red Kingdom.

Man. That's messed up.

It is, isn't it?

...hey, Skizz?

Yeah, buddy?

This is going to sound really weird. But...I do recognize these stories, I think, but not like they're just myths or legends I've heard somewhere that people made up to explain shapes they thought they saw in the sky. It's like—

Like they're real, I guess? Like I remember—

Skizz, I remember an arrow going through my head. And I know nobody shot me this time around,

so—

Woah, hang on a second, dude. What do you mean, “this time around”? Tango?

Chapter End Notes

...something about Tango getting told his own story and having...no? idea? ...maybe.

End Notes

thank you for reading! comments and kudos are greatly appreciated <33 feel free to yell at me in the comments or on [tumblr](#)

Chapter 1: Skizz and Tango

Chapter 2: Etho and Bdubs

Chapter 3: Ren and Lizzie

Chapter 4: Scar and Joel

Chapter 5: Jimmy and Mumbo

Chapter 6: Skizz and Tango

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