

atlantis

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by Anonymous

Summary

Planet is stuck in a space between life and death, waiting.

(A million miles away, Jaron is in the same position. A couple of feet away, Bacon had tried to run. Turns out there's not a lot to do when you can't respawn without being immediately killed)

Notes

set after the november 5th streams! this mostly covers the aftermath of jaron's 'resurrection' (the events of zam's stream), so uh, spoilers if you haven't seen that

The place between life and death is a strange one.

Planet knows he's not breathing. Being stuck on the respawn screen will do that to you; there's no point breathing if you're not quite alive, and you're certainly not alive if you're in a red-tinted void.

He *could* try. In fact, he *has* tried - several hours ago. Right when he'd realised how still he'd become, he'd tried to take in one shuddering breath. It says something about the sensation that he hasn't tried again. Maybe in another couple of hours he'll have forgotten the way his chest seemed

to get endlessly tight. He'll try again, only to be met with exactly the same feeling, with the same reminder of the situation hitting him like a ton of bricks.

(He hopes he doesn't forget)

But despite the alternative, it's still an odd feeling that he doesn't like. He hadn't realised how much he'd gotten used to the rise and fall of his chest - and what a strange thing to say. He's never been here long enough to notice before, and now that the thought is stuck in his mind, he knows that it'll be forever at the back of his mind.

(Until he forgets. See? It's only been a few moments, and they're already repeating themselves.)

Being stuck on the respawn screen is driving him a little crazy.

Through the haze, they can sort of see someone moving, and they grit their teeth. They'd grown used to the red tint to the world even before they'd realised they weren't breathing, but the hazy distance between the place he is and the rest of the world still makes his head ache.

There are a few things he can see:

Where his feet were is the stupid bed that had left him in his situation in the first place. The jungle wood and quartz of the base that they'd been so *stupid* in thinking was safe. The obsidian that had been around his chest. It's usually purple, but the contrast of the red has turned it impossibly black.

(He'd argued with Jaron about that, right? All those weeks ago at the prison. This almost feels like a prison now - but even then it hadn't been quite so impossibly lonely.)

They can't see the face of the person moving, but they know it's Zam. There's a glint of light breaking through the misty red that could only be a reflection from his crown. A million miles away, a thousand bells start ringing.

Planet opens his eyes a little wider. That's a familiar sound.

There might not be much in the place between life and death, but they'd spent so long working on the raid farm yesterday that the cuts from breaking glass on their hands are still a phantom pain. They sting now, listening to the bells.

(If they think hard enough, could they see the lights too? Around and around that tiny room. Planet wishes he could see the room. He hopes that they don't destroy it. Just one last time would be nice.)

It doesn't seem like Zam and Spoke know how to work the raid farm, which is one benefit of the whole situation. He doesn't doubt that they'll work it out eventually, but for now it's enough to distract him from the non-breathing and the non-seeing and the fact he can't leave without being sent immediately back.

Smiling makes it a little better. He feels a little less useless. A little less like it had all been for nothing, as if (if they could look down), they wouldn't see six empty spaces on the fabric of their hoodie.

(The ringing stops. Have they turned the farm off? Or have they dug into the floor, and torn up everything he'd spent weeks and weeks preparing?)

Planet hopes that Bacon managed to make it far away. He'd been so careful about the coordinates of their base not being leaked. It wouldn't be fair for him to get caught up in this mess, and it definitely wasn't just because Planet couldn't bear the thought of all three of them tumbling down

together. It had all happened so quickly - they'd still been reeling from the surprise attack - he hadn't had a chance to check.

Planet thinks of Jaron. Is this what the space in-between is like for everyone? They wonder whether Jaron can see the same red wash over the world, and whether he's also noticed how strange it is to no longer be breathing.

How much time has passed for Jaron? He'd been left there for much longer than Planet has been stuck here - before they'd run away, before the base had been found - and realistically there's no hope that he'll be able to leave any time soon. Whether the same can be said for Planet himself, that's another question altogether.

The three heart trio go down together , but it's starting to get dark. If they offered to let him leave the remnants of the place he'd sworn was safe, would he take it? What price would he take for the chance to breathe?

(They don't look at their remaining hearts. They don't need to - with every death today, every time he's been sent to this place - he hasn't forgotten how much more dangerous the world becomes.)

Planet doesn't think about whether they'd be able to save Jaron in this state.

Whether Jaron will still want to be saved after so long in a world of red and breathlessness. Whether he'll forgive them for not being able to come sooner. For leaving him there.

That's the problem with the space in-between life and death. It's not the fact that he's so close to the rest of the world without being able to touch it. It's not the tightness of their chest, or the fact that every minute seems to stretch on for much longer than a minute ever should.

It's being left alone with their thoughts and no distractions.

Well. Except one.

Planet doesn't like the feeling of trying to breathe in a place where breathing is impossible. He doesn't like being reminded of the fact his chest isn't moving.

He can still remember the way it made him feel the first time he tried, but he's beginning to realise that it's not the worst thing here. Not by far.

Planet tries to breathe, and it's just as they'd remembered.

(He hopes that next time, he forgets)

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