

dialetheism (a statement as true as it was false)

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Additional Tags:	ImpulseSV/BdoubleO100 (Mentioned) , ImpulseSV (Mentioned) - Freeform , Jealousy , Possibly Unrequited Love , Past Relationship(s) , Awkward Conversations , Failed Relationships , you ever show up at your ex's place because your other ex dumped you? yeah. , Light Angst , Modern AU , listen i'm a sucker for etho being jealous. the one (1) 40 second clip in session 5 has ruined me , Etho is Bad At Emotions! (Join the club king)
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dialetheism (a statement as true as it was false)

by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

It wasn't a lie, it wasn't the truth. It was nothing more than a statement.

"Things didn't work out between us."

That's what Etho always told someone if they ever asked what happened between him and Bdubs. He never delved into any reason why, he never got into the specifics, not even when pressed. There was nothing to be told, other than the fact that things just didn't work out.

(or, etho never really got over his ex. which causes issues when said ex shows up at his front door.)

Notes

hi yes hello. local traffic-series ethubs fan got one singular crumb of content and ran with it, and now i have fifty iterations of "etho is jealous of impulse and bdubs" running through my brain.

this is one of those iterations. enjoy :D

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

Things didn't work out between us.

It wasn't a lie, it wasn't the truth. It was nothing more than a statement.

Things didn't work out between us.

That's what Etho always told someone if they ever asked what happened between him and Bdubs. He never delved into any reason why, he never got into the specifics, not even when pressed. There was nothing to be told, other than the fact that things didn't work out.

And, after months and months of telling the same story of a single sentence, it slowly became the truth. There was no fight, there was no slow distance where the two faded away, there was nobody choosing anything over anybody. And there were no tears, no emotions bottled away like a bottle of wine, in an attempt to age away the bitterness. There were no shoeboxes of old gifts that remained tucked away in the bottom of a closet, only to be touched again years after he moved on. There was no watching from afar, as the bright white light of a phone cast a shadow against his wall, as he didn't look at photos of the man who replaced him.

His name was Impulse apparently. They seemed happy together. And that's what mattered most, right? As long as Bdubs was happy, no matter how much it pulled at him, leaving his ribs to feel hollow.

Things didn't work out between us, was a statement as true as it was false.

Because things worked out for Bdubs. But not for Etho.

Summer drew to a close in the same way the sun sank over the coast a couple hours before, growing darker and darker until you glanced outside and it slipped away before you could watch it. Etho sat on the couch and stirred his ramen absentmindedly, looking out the window at the sunset he missed.

Just another piece of the routine he developed, one that was as strict as clockwork. It could have been any other day in the year where he'd sit on the couch and watch reruns of some show that stopped airing long ago, and he wouldn't notice, because the outcome was always the same. Later that night he would either fall asleep, exhausted from work or he would be too restless to sleep, instead focusing all his energy into whatever new coding project he'll never finish.

And he followed that routine, with no reason to do anything but. That is, until something disturbed it. There was a knock at the door, leaving a bowl of noodles behind on the coffee table.

Etho slid his mask on and slowly opened the door. He didn't bother to check who it was, which may have been a mistake in hindsight.

A far too familiar face greeted him. "Hey, Etho!" He gave an awkward chuckle, as the shorter man pretended everything was fine.

And Etho could feel his heart plummet, leaving him hollow. He just hoped that Bdubs couldn't see the emptiness from his eyes. Bdubs was always good at telling what Etho was thinking, no matter what literal or metaphorical masks he wore.

Part of Etho was tempted to slam the door then and there, leaving Bdubs out in the dark, though he resisted. "Hey, Bdubs."

He racked his brain for what he could ask. Maybe something like, “*What’s up,*” or “*Why are you at my house at 10 in the evening,*” or “*Why didn’t you tell me you were going to be here.*” There were a million ways to phrase it, because showing up at your ex’s house unprompted definitely deserved some questioning.

But instead, all Etho could note was the lack of a small golden pendant around his neck. A gift from Impulse, long before the two started dating, one that Bdubs never took off. “You don’t have the clock.”

Bdubs sighed, but didn’t acknowledge Etho’s words, “Could I uhh, stay here for tonight? Just tonight.”

Despite every piece of him wishing he could, Etho had no real reason to say no.

It was strange, Bdubs being back here. Etho never expected to really see him in this apartment again, the one that the two had bought together a few months before Bdubs left. He couldn’t help but feel his heart ache as he saw Bdubs sitting on the couch, reminded of the movie nights the two would have every week; Etho would always bring over the popcorn that Bdubs could never cook without burning, and Bdubs would always pick out a movie because Etho was too indecisive. There were no movies playing tonight, as Etho brought over a second bowl of noodles for Bdubs.

“It’s smaller here than I remember,” Bdubs pointed out, as he glanced across the walls, his eyes falling on the paintings and portraits that lined the wall.

It made sense, the place that he and Impulse had was much larger, from what Etho had seen. A beautiful townhouse, newly constructed. Mid-century modern, at least he thought, he could never remember all the architecture terms and designs. If Etho were to guess, the bathroom sink’s faucet in their place never broke, and there wasn’t a window in the living room that never managed to close.

Etho shrugged, “I make it work, I suppose. It’s enough room, especially since…” He let his words trail off, before he could say what thought ran through them. *Especially since I’ve been alone.*

Bdubs didn’t question what Etho was going to say. “You kept all the decorations I put up,” he noted, with a soft chuckle, “It barely looks like it’s changed.”

“Did you expect it to?” Etho asked.

It was obvious that Bdubs had to think about that, as the normally-loud man had gone quiet. He glanced around the room, like he was checking to make sure that what he said earlier was correct. “I guess not. I know how you are, you were content with nothin’ but a mattress on the ground.”

Bdubs wasn’t wrong, to be fair. When the two had first moved in, Etho didn’t care about their distinct lack of furniture, whereas Bdubs spent most of the first two weeks dragging Etho around, looking everywhere for sales on whatever they could need for their new place. It was strangely painful to think about, the kind of bittersweet nostalgia that made Etho remember that he would never truly get those days back.

“I guess I was.” Etho stirred his ramen, but didn’t bother to eat another bite. The bowl was mostly empty anyways, just a couple stray noodles swirling around. It wasn’t worth the hassle of taking off his mask and putting it back on again.

“I assume you want the bed?”

“Huh?” Bdubs asked, looking back up towards Etho.

Etho didn't meet his gaze. "I mean, you're staying here, I'm assuming you want the bed. I can take the couch."

"No, no, you can have the bed. I'm the one who kinda came out of nowhere," Bdubs protested, uncharacteristically for him. Etho knew that Bdubs hated sleeping on the couch, he could never quite manage to stay asleep, for whatever reason. It wasn't a huge problem though, as they always just shared the queen-sized bed that barely fit into the one small bedroom.

He raised an eyebrow, but simply nodded. "If you say so," Etho responded. With nothing else to do, he stood up to take his bowl to the sink.

"So, what have you been up to, Ladders?"

The familiar nickname made him snicker, an attempt to lighten the melancholic mood. He shrugged, turning off the water so it didn't drown out his voice, "I'll be honest, not much."

"I mean like, in general. It's been half a year since I've spoken to you, Etho. How have things been?" Bdubs asked.

Etho let himself think as he slowly rubbed circles of suds into the bowl. What *was* there to even tell Bdubs? That barely anything of value had happened recently? That he scrapped fifty projects and started fifty more, just to scrap those fifty projects all over again? That he lost his ability to keep track of the days, letting the world fade into a stormy haze? Day in, day out, as repetitive and cyclical as the sponge scrubbing the bowl?

He hadn't realized how quiet he had been until he broke away from his thoughts, "Answer's the same, I guess," he responded, faking a huff of amusement behind his mask, under the false hope that Bdubs would hear it and think things were better than they were.

Etho set the bowl on the drying rack, and started walking back over to the living room. It felt awkward to sit back down, so he leaned against the countertop— close enough to have a conversation, but still distant. "How about you?"

"Yeah?"

"How have things been for you?" Etho asked, as if he hadn't been keeping up with the picture-perfect life Bdubs had held.

Bdubs made a little so-so motion with his hand. "I mean, as good as they can get when you have to show up at your ex's house unannounced because you have nowhere else to go," he admitted, "Sorry about that, by the way, I should've given ya more warnin', I think." He didn't look up at Etho, instead staring into the distance.

"No worries about that. But I mean, I thought well, you and Impulse..." Etho trailed off, stumbling over his words as he tried his best to figure out how to respond, with very little success.

And there was a hesitation, the kind of hesitation Etho found all too familiar, the kind of preparing a statement that you'd have to say over and over again until it eventually felt true. "Things didn't work out between us."

And so, despite all curiosities, Etho didn't press.

edit: thanks yall for all the love on this piece :D <3 i'm chronically bad at responding to comments but i appreciate all of yall

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