

## food poisoning

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## food poisoning

by [Beans\\_McGee](#)

### Summary

Bdubs is, unfortunately, still having trouble sleeping. Being a werewolf on a clear night will do that to you.

### Notes

hi yes this is for Fire\_Cat's vampire/werewolf thing. please go check it out its a nice 2am read. I hope this is up to your standards, Fire\_Cat. if it displeases you let me know and i'll strike it from the archives no sweat :thumbs up: i dont have any further energy to edit this so if there are mistakes then guess what! they live here now. this is their little house.

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

Bdubs is, unfortunately, still having trouble sleeping. Being a werewolf on a clear night will do that to you.

Full moon has passed, but night still finds him in the kitchen making cold cereal, so he can go and sit down in the patch of moonlight in his room until his brain stops insisting that he should go outside and chase cars until he's too tired to stand up.

So he's *technically* awake, but it's still jarring to hear someone buzz his apartment so late at night.

He should see who it is, at least check if it's just a prank.

But, then again, there's only really one person who bothers Bdubs this late.

"HELLO?" Bdubs says, flinging open the door.

"Hi," Etho says, leaning against the doorframe, shivering so hard that his outline blurs.

"What is wrong with you," Bdubs says in greeting.

"So much," Etho says, pushing past Bdubs like so much chest-high tacky interior decoration. "Oh, no—or–wait. Nothing. I'm flawless."

"What are you shivering for?" Bdubs scowls powerfully at Etho, in case he's watching for weakness or something with his weird vampire powers. He doesn't particularly care about Etho hanging around his living room at this point, not in a deep-down way; Etho feels as permanent and threatening as a slightly musty couch.

On a surface level, the hatred is definitely still there. Bdubs imagines ripping Etho's throat out from time to time. He is just sort of annoying like that.

"I poisoned myself," Etho says, and sprawls face-up on the coffee table. Bdubs' furious expression becomes real.

"Well, that's just great," and Bdubs walks over to kick Etho's boot. "Why'd you feel the need to crash at my place, huh?"

"You're funny," Etho says. His shivering has not diminished. Bdubs has the nagging suspicion that Etho was not, in fact, japing him for a fun time. "Best way to feel better is to laugh—no. That's not how that goes. Laughter is medicine."

"What did you do, anyway?" Bdubs says, going back to the mini kitchen to fix his bowl of cereal, which is what he had *been* doing before he was so *rudely interrupted*. "Eat some cyanide?"

"I think I ate from somebody who uh, had Italian."

Bdubs drops his spoon on the counter with a clatter. "You WHAT?"

"Aha," Etho says, a smile creeping into his voice and his eyes. "So you *do* care—" the tremors wracking his body shake him so hard that he can't speak for a second— "care."

"I care about my real estate!" Bdubs half-shouts. "If you die on my couch, what am I gonna do with your body?"

"If you, uh, put vampire bodies in the sun, they turn into ash," Etho says helpfully. His teeth have started chattering. "So you could do that."

"Why," Bdubs despairs, "do you know that?"

Etho, with significant effort, crosses his arms and tries to look nonchalant. "Reasons."

Bdubs shakes his head. "Well," he says, "I'm not *evil*, unlike you, so I'll give you until tomorrow night to get better, and then you have to scam."

"Mmm," Etho says. "Plenty of time for me to do evil, sneaky things. Like—" he shivers harder again, so hard that it draws his hands and knees up. He curls like a beetle that's been stepped on, and then abruptly, the shivering stops, lets Etho straighten out his limbs and breathe for a minute *even though he doesn't really need to*, and the shuddering starts back up again, milder than before.

"Ow," Etho says.

"I thought you ate from somebody who had garlic," Bdubs says, trying to convince his heart to slow down. "Are you sure it wasn't just crack?"

"Haha, yeah," Etho says. "This is a mild garlic poisoning, though. I've had worse!"

Bdubs doesn't do anything so far as facepalm. He doesn't really care about this vampire who crashes on his couch, after all. He's more of a—a friendly nuisance. An irritant. But he does helpfully let Etho know: "You're stupid."

"Yeah," Etho says, sounding surprisingly wrung out for a two-hundred-year-old vampire.

"Okay, I relent," Bdubs says, cramming a spoonful of cold cereal into his mouth. "How do you fix this?"

"Uh," Etho says, "I dunno."

"What?" Bdubs says irritably, and then eats another two spoons of cereal in quick succession.

"It just goes away after a while, you know? Garlic—" He spasms too hard to speak again, clenching his eyes shut— "garlic breaks down after a few days."

"How'd you get better the first time?"

"I waited until it wasn't so bad and then I went hunting," Etho says. He side-eyes Bdubs, who is innocently standing in his kitchen eating a perfectly normal bowl of cereal, thank you very much. "Hey, you wouldn't happen to—"

"Full moon just passed!" Bdubs says, at a normal volume. The normallest. "And I'm not going to be your chauffeur to your next unsuspecting meal, thank you! I—"

"You're welcome," Etho interjects.

" *I am going,* " Bdubs continues after being so rudely interrupted, "to get you like—a kidney flush. Or a poison neutralizer. Or the opposite of garlic. Or something normal."

"Oh, snappers," Etho says, sitting up. "I'll walk you—"

"Absolutely not," Bdubs undercuts. "No. Nope!"

"Buh," Etho protests weakly.

"I'm going to drive," Bdubs says, and then adds something he'd thought he'd never say: "you're staying here."

"I wanna come," Etho says.

"Too bad!" Bdubs drinks the rest of his milk and sets the bowl in his sink. "You're too sick. Crash on my couch if you're so inclined."

"But why," Etho says, trying to—and doing a pretty good job of—sounding pitiful.

"You're shivering like a hapless waif," Bdubs says, pulling his own coat off the hook in the hall. "Also, you'll bite someone. I don't want tha—"

Bdubs turns around to grab his keys and almost walks facefirst into Etho's chest from where the vampire has appeared, silently, moving at physically impossible speeds, behind him. Bdubs does not scream. Not even a little.

"I wanna go with you," Etho says.

"Look," Bdubs says, lowering his voice so the honest concern in it won't feel too big. "I trust you, but are you sure we shouldn't stop by the Court for—"

"No," Etho says, iron in his voice. "I'm not going there. You aren't taking me to the Court."

Bdubs holds up his hands in surrender. "Okay, okay, man," he says. "I trust you. We'll just go to the—DANGIT!" Bdubs palms his forehead. "I didn't mean to say *we!* I'll go to the store, and *you* will stay in the car!"

"So you'll take me with you?" And just like that the weight is gone from Etho's voice, replaced with an eye-crinkling smile.

"Okay," Bdubs says, "but on one condition."

Etho shivers harder again for a second, rustling his coat, doubling over involuntarily for a second before he straightens back up. "Mmm?"

"No arguing," Bdubs says sternly. " *You* don't say anything stupid, and *I* don't get mad about anything you say, and most importantly, neither of us will be shprea—sreak—talking *at all.* "

Five minutes later, they're in the car, talking.

"Tannins aren't *real*," Etho says.

"WHAT," Bdubs shouts, deafening in the car, "DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?"

"It sounds made up."

"YOU'RE," Bdubs says, and then sighs and lowers his voice; "that's stupid."

"They do!" And Etho, for his part, does sound a little bewildered. "I mean, the four humors were made up for a long time, and everyone believed those. You—I guess you've gotta, uh," for a few seconds he shivers too hard to speak, "humor me."

"I will choose to ignore that pun," Bdubs says loftily. "Anyway, tannins are backed by science. You could see them under a microscope if you wanted. All physical evidence alludes to their

existence. That's science."

"What do they do in coffee, anyway? Just sit there?"

"No," Bdubs says indignantly, operating on ten (10) hours of sleep that was twenty (20) hours ago and one (1) short news article that he read about tannins. "They make the coffee taste good."

Etho makes a fair attempt at snorting. Jittery as it is, the sound is more reminiscent of a weasel's death rattle. "Nooo," he says. "That's the caf–the–the cate–the *caff*. "

"The caffiene?"

"Yeah."

"If caffiene was coffee flavored, then all the energy drinks would taste like coffee," Bdubs points out, calmly and reasonably and a beacon of patience.

"Like you would know," Etho says levelly.

"EXCUSE YOU!"

Etho snickers.

"I–you know what," Bdubs says, remembering himself, "that's fair. That's totally fair. So I think I'm going to get an energy drink and–not tonight!–I'll drink it sometime and call you over. Then you'll see." Bdubs' voice darkens. "You'll *all* see."

"Oohhh, snappers," Etho says, smile still in his voice, "Bdubs on four hundred milligrams of caffiene sounds, um, almost threatening."

"You shut your mouth this instant."

"Mmm," Etho says. Bdubs can hear his teeth rattling in his mouth. "You drove past the store, by the way."

"WHAT—"

Eventually, Bdubs does navigate to the parking lot of a twenty-four-hour drug store. He turns the car off and heaves a long-suffering sigh.

"Can I come in?" Etho asks, unprompted, still shivering as if he just crawled out of the Arctic ocean. "I don't wanna sit here in the car all alone."

"Gosh," Bdubs gripes. "Yes. Fine. FINE. You're so clingy. I reserve the right to attack you if you start trying to eat from people."

"Consider the right reserved!" Etho says, and has difficulty climbing out of the car.

It's a pretty dead time of night, and a pretty dead part of town, and a pretty dead part of the year. The loudest sound in the drug store is the lights, which are buzzing so loud that they could put cicadas to shame.

Uhh. What to buy. There's probably a poison neutralizer in here somewhere, right? Antacids? Milk? Bdubs scans the shelves.

Etho keeps draping himself against objects of furniture, or failing that, Bdubs' shoulder.

"Are you sure you're okay to follow me around?" Bdubs says. "You, uh. You seem a little shaky."

"I don't know what you mean," Etho says blithely, and surreptitiously leans against a shelf so hard it creaks. The assorted boxes, by association, start to shake, too.

Bdubs rolls his eyes, glances down at the label on a box of gummies for ten seconds, looks up, and then realizes Etho has completely disappeared.



"Aw, shoot," Bdubs says, and turns his nose to the air.

The little drug store smells awful. Air fresheners, cleaners, cough syrup, dust dead bugs; Bdubs can *definitely* smell the bathroom, too.

But the smell of a vampire dwarfs those in comparison. Etho is to Bdubs' right.

Bdubs ambles in that direction and takes another noseful of the awful pharmacy climate-controlled air.

Etho's smell, it turns out, is also nearby a *human's* smell.

Bdubs sort-of-jogs closer.

Etho is a few aisles farther away than Bdubs thought; Bdubs is almost running by the time he catches glimpse of white hair. Etho is—oh, there's no way—

Etho has tracked down the *one* other person in here and is trying to have a conversation with them while they stock the shelves.

"Hi," Etho says cheerfully, leaning all casual-like on an endcap display of canned carrots, still rattling like a maraca. "So, uh, are you walking home *alone*, or—"

"Excuse me!!" Bdubs says to the world at large, grabbing a handful of Etho's jacket and pulling him bodily two aisles away.

"Hey," Etho says. "Don't shame a guy for feelin' a little snackish, Bubs."

"Don't you have social anxiety?!" Bdubs gripes, dragging Etho to a refrigerated section by the elbow. "I think I remember us having a conversation about your social anxiety!"

"Just because I have social anxiety doesn't mean I have standards."

"That's true—hey! What does that make me?"

"I don't know," Etho says. "Good luck, maybe?"

Bdubs stewes for a minute. "You're annoying," he decides.

"I know!" Etho says cheerfully, and shivers so hard he has trouble standing for a moment.

"We're getting milk!" Bdubs says, grabbing a pint of two-percent. "And I'm gonna get one more thing for you and then we are turning around and LEAVING!"

"What are you gonna get me?" Etho asks

It's like taking a child through the store, Bdubs reflects. Like, eight years old, tops. "Activated charcoal," he says, and grabs a bottle off the shelf. "I hope it tastes awful."

"Well, hey," Etho protests weakly. He doubles-over-shivers again for a moment, and resurfaces with, "that's just mean, Bdubs. Pull your punches."

Bdubs gives up and just starts grumbling under his breath in a low, constant stream of barely-audible sounds. It gets him through the rest of the store and all the way back to the checkout, and keeps Etho entertained and/or bewildered enough for him not to ramble off again.

Bdubs rounds the last aisle with a sigh of relief. The cashier visibly tenses up when Bdubs approaches the counter.

"Sorry to bother you so late," Bdubs says, mostly on autopilot, and settles his armful of stuff on the counter.

Etho looms behind him in the checkout. It makes Bdubs' hackles rise, but in a way he's used to. The cashier, however, who smells unfortunately human, is so close to having a heart attack that even *Bdubs* can hear it.

"Hey," Etho says, leaning over Bdubs' shoulder, speaking to the cashier with hunger in his voice. Bdubs can feel Etho's collarbone rattling. "Do I know you from somewhere?"

Bdubs is beginning to have actual trouble Not Snarling, not just turning around and chomping Etho's shoulder with his nubby not-wolf teeth.

"Etho," he growls in warning.

"Sorry," Etho says, but not to Bdubs. "You just look familiar. I guess I confused you for someone else."

The cashier presses a couple of buttons, looking well and truly spooked. "That'll be thirty-four twenty-two."

Etho has the forethought, or politeness, or maybe just *reason* to stop leaning on Bdubs' shoulder when he digs for his debit card. He's still close by, though, so close Bdubs is pretty sure he could feel Etho's bones through his coat. It would be warm, if Etho wasn't undead.

Etho is definitely close enough to see Bdubs' PIN. Bdubs, completely casually, puts his elbow on the screen so Etho can't see what's happening.

"You should get some cash back," Etho says, and spasms so hard his chin clips Bdubs' skull. "Like, sixty. For me."

"No," Bdubs says flatly. He puts his card back in his billfold.

"Have a nice night," The cashier says, standing as far away from them as politely possible.

"Thank you so much," Bdubs says, trying to make it as much of an apology as possible. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight," Etho says in a much-too-invested-in-this-person way, waving. Bdubs grabs his elbow

again and pulls him past the sliding doors.

"What," Bdubs says once the doors close, digging for his keys in his pocket, "the actual shit is wrong with you? Why were you going so hard for that guy?"

"I think I drank from him before," Etho says.

Bdubs stops dead in the parking lot. "I'm fucking sorry?" he says.

"I dunno," Etho says, shrugging in a jittery way. "I try to eat from tourists and stuff, but sometimes you just slip up, and there's only so many people here. Stuff happens."

Bdubs sets down his bags on the roof of the car, the better to hold his head in his hands. "So you said hi to him?" Bdubs says, slightly muffled. "Your next logical move was to say hi to the guy who probably has weird hypnotized nightmares about you?"

"Yep yep," Etho says.

"I'm going to bite you," Bdubs decides, freeing his head from his hands to glower despairingly at the waning moon. "Next month. I think I'll just remove one of your limbs this time."

"Why?" Etho says, and for the actual fucking life of him, Bdubs can't tell if Etho is joking or completely serious.

"I'm so stressed out," Bdubs says evenly, setting the bags inside the car. "I'm going to fall apart at the seams."

"Aw, snappers," Etho says, sounding vaguely distraught. "That sucks. I hope you get to feeling better."

In lieu of peeling out of the parking lot and leaving Etho behind, or maybe kicking his shins, Bdubs just sets himself up a pleasant little daydream–night dream?–dream where that *did* happen. In this lovely dream, Etho shows up at reasonable hours of the night. Bdubs has a slightly bigger apartment with east-facing windows. And last week's shipment of trees were not covered in root-

eating mold, and also, the landscaping job gives Bdubs a little more free time—

Bdubs is snapped out of his dream by an earsplitting crinkling sound. For a second, he thinks it is a catastrophic engineering failure, but then he glances to the side: Etho is opening a granola bar in the passenger seat. He pulls down his mask to take a bite.

"Where did you get that?" Bdubs blurts. "I didn't buy a granola bar??"

Etho pulls back and blinks his red eyes. "Nosy," he says. "But you're right, you didn't buy a granola bar. I stole it."

He opens his mouth to take a bite again and Bdubs slaps at his hand, veering to the edge of the road. Etho, of course, being the preternaturally fast creature of the night he is, dodges Bdubs without effort.

"Stop EATING THINGS that are BAD FOR YOU," Bdubs shouts. Says.

"It's not bad," Etho pulls down the wrapper a little further, side-eyeing Bdubs. The silver glints spastically in his trembling hand. "I just like chewing stuff, blood isn't very chewy."

Bdubs makes another lunge, this one successful, and prizes the granola bar free of Etho's spidery hand and throws it into the car's cupholder. "There is," Bdubs says, pulling the car back into the correct lane of traffic, "absolutely no way granola is good for you, and don't mix toxins."

Etho glances down idly at the granola bar. He leaves it for a few minutes, but eventually he asks, "Aren't you going to eat the granola bar?"

Bdubs taps the scar on his shoulder. "I'm allergic to chocolate."

Etho makes an interested noise and shivers.

Bdubs yawns and pulls into the parking lot. "Take the bags up," he demands of Etho, to absolutely ensure that Etho won't try to carry anything up the stairs, even though this means that Bdubs has to fumble his keys in a full hand and kick the door open.

"Didn't you already have milk?"

Bdubs, uh, forgot that he had milk in his house. After eating a bowl of cereal. Maybe. "I don't want your vampire stink on my fridge," he lies with rattlesnake speed. "Drink your milk. See if it helps."

Etho sits on the counter, instead of somewhere reasonable, and sips his milk. It jitters inexorably in his hand. "Nice," he says, about the milk, or maybe about the universe at this moment. It's hard to tell.

"And now I'm going to bed," Bdubs announces, shrugging his coat back off. "Don't die, don't do anything loud, yada yada."

"Wait, you're not going to make sure I don't just collapse from garlic poisoning? *Bdubs*," Etho says. "I thought we were friends!"

"Goodnight!" Bdubs says, not turning around. He pulls off his sandals at a fresh-faced–holy shit, three in the morning? He should definitely be allowed to kill Etho for that. Just a little bit.

While Bdubs is drifting off, Etho knocks on his bedroom door and pushes it open. "Hey, Bubs."

Bdubs makes a highly undignified sound and pulls a pillow over his head.

"I'm feeling better," Etho says. "I think th—" Bdubs listens to his coat rustle as he shivers again—"the milk will make me feel okay. Probably. I'm going home now, though. Thanks for everything."

"Wait," Bdubs manages while Etho is closing the door. The vampire pauses.

"Jus' stay the night," Bdubs says. "It's too late for you to go back anyway. S'gonna be light soon."

"It's really not," Etho says.

"Not safe for you to be out that late," Bdubs points out, not slurring at all. "You could get hurt or somethin'."

"I don't get hurt unless I'm being stupid," Etho points out.

"You *are* stupid," Bdubs says, still half-asleep but hitting those consonants like a champ. "Stay."

Etho's eyes crinkle slowly—or maybe Bdubs is halfway dreaming. But Etho says, "Okay, I'll stay the night. Only because you asked so nicely."

"Good," Bdubs says, and sleeps hard for about twelve hours.

## End Notes

i wish i could tell you that i blacked out and then suddenly almost 3.5 thousand words were on my computer, but i brainstormed, wrote, and produced this in a 20-ish hour sprint yesterday while i was also commuting from college to my house for the weekend. which is on average three hours one way. so this was in fact deliberate and i was conscious the entire time. what can i say, sometimes the adhd brainworms just absolutely take over me. for some reason the brainworms only strike when its two guys going to the store at godawful hours in the very early morning. its the beans mcgee brand. i have SUCH a headache i am going to go drink water now

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