

i'll give you my best shot

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/39391791) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/39391791>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hermitcraft SMP
Relationship:	EthosLab & BdoubleO100
Character:	Ethoslab , BdoubleO100 , Xisumavoid , Keralis , Docm77
Additional Tags:	Hermitcraft Season 9 , Blood and Injury , EthosLab-centric (Video Blogging RPF) , Hurt EthosLab , Vomiting , Dadsuma , Eldritch EthosLab , Hurt/Comfort , Sickfic , sort of ig , Light Angst
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-06-02 Words: 2,700 Chapters: 1/1

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by [Mothervoid](#)

Summary

After spending months in the void, Etho appears on Season Nine.

Notes

i randomly decided i was gonna give [but we're gonna be well](#) a sequel, bc i didn't wanna let that concept go yet. love me some eldritch etho. so here's another fic but more angsty than the last one

also i havent been keeping up w/ hc9 as much as i'd like so if anything is off that's why

< *Etho has joined the game.* >

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Etho finally pops back into existence, stumbling from the shock of the bright sun overhead and the solid ground finally beneath his feet once more. After months in the howling dark of the void, being able to touch and feel and see was almost completely unbearable. Etho lets out a low groan as he clamps his eyes firmly shut, hearing his kneecaps crack as he falls onto the hard stone at spawn.

He coughs, tugging down his mask as the cough quickly turns into a retch, the stress of having finally been able to jump to another world combined with all of the new, unwelcome stimuli

turning his stomach and before he knew it Etho was emptying his stomach onto the ground. He lists to the side, barely managing to catch himself with his shaky arms before his head met the stone below.

He manages to open his eyes just a fraction, baring his teeth with another quiet groan from how bright the sun was overhead. His vision swims—but he could *just* make out a patch of green a few feet away.

Yes, grass... he could make it to the grass. He didn't know what he was going to do once he got there, but he knew he was going to go to the grass.

Unable to stand, Etho crawls on his hands and knees, away from his puddle of vomit and the harsh, hard stone. Once he was on the grass—soft but still warm from the sun, almost unbearable to him—all of the energy abruptly left his body. Etho crumples like a discarded puppet, shivering as if from the cold.

Was it this bad last time he jumped? No, but he had been floating in the void for a while. Bdubs' hand had been unceremoniously ripped from his grip, carrying him off to Devs-know-where, and Etho had floated in limbo, without sight or sound or warmth.

His vision tunnels, and Etho abruptly returns to the soundless void.

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Bdubs was just finishing up with the latest addition to his build when the notification comes through. Just some roadwork, trying to blend his and Scar's styles together for NOT Aque Town.

He checks his communicator and nearly drops it when he sees who joined the game.

“Etho!” Bdubs cries out in excitement. The last thing he remembered of Etho was his hand slipping from Bdubs' fingers as their code unspooled, sending him to Hermitcraft and Etho... somewhere else.

But here he was! On Hermitcraft! A little late, but he was here nevertheless.

Glancing back at the build behind him—it was finished *enough*. Bdubs adjusted the straps on his elytra harness before pulling out his rockets, launching himself up into the air.

With an elytra, spawn was just a short flight away. He's there in no time at all, practically vibrating with excitement.

But what Bdubs finds kills his excitement almost immediately, and he finds that his hands are shaking for a completely different reason.

Laying in the grass a few feet from a *concerningly* red puddle of vomit, was Etho. He was facedown on his belly, arms crumpled beneath him, legs bent as if he had been crawling.

Bdubs simply stands there and stares, almost in disbelief. He's frozen, unable to move or speak, or even hear. All sound drains, the breeze seems to cease and the birds cease to chirp for a moment as he stares at the still form of one of his best friends.

And then everything comes crashing back to him in a storm of sound and movement, sharp cries for help ripping desperately from his throat as he falls to his knees at Etho's side.

“Xisuma!” He shrieks, “Doc! Beef! Tango! Stress! One of you! *All* of you!”

Bdubs seizes Etho by the shoulders, gently rolling him over, trying to get him into the recovery position. There's blood on Etho's face that reminds Bdubs of when they jumped the night the moon fell on Season Eight—it hadn't been this bad that time, so what changed?

He scrambles to check for a pulse, to make sure Etho hasn't slipped through his fingers again—and sighs in relief when he finds one. He practically collapses on top of Etho, and doesn't notice someone else had arrived until he felt a hand on his shoulder.

Bdubs jumps. “Xisuma?”

“Keralis!” Keralis replies in his usual cheery tone, “Shishwammy is in the Nether. Not to worry, I messaged him!” He walks around and kneels down in front of Bdubs and Etho's unconscious body. “Now, what do we have here—do you know what happened?”

“No, I just found him like this—but—”

“But?” Keralis prompts, “But?”

“But this has happened before. Me and Etho, we escaped from Season Eight together. He teleported us to a different world. He called it voidjumping. When we reached that new world, he started bleeding and puking and he slept for like three days—said it was because he cheated. And when he tried to teleport us both to Season Nine we got separated,” Bdubs can't help but feel a sharp stab of guilt as he describes what happened. Their code unspooling, Bdubs' fingers slipping. Etho, somehow screaming in the soundless void and Bdubs somehow able to hear it. “He got lost in the void when he jumped, somehow.”

“Ah, good thinking calling for Shishwam then, this is his area of expertise—”

Between them, Etho whimpers.

The both of them look to Etho's face. His brow scrunches and his lips twitch, pulling at old scars he earned all the way in Alpha.

“Etho?” Bdubs asks, voice barely above a whisper.

Etho's head jerks up at the sound of his name, but whatever he was going to do is interrupted by a coughing fit that sends him curling into the fetal position. Keralis directs Bdubs to stay with Etho before sprinting back to his house to grab water and health potions.

Where the hell is Xisuma?

“Bdubs?” A rasp, so quiet he almost misses it.

“I'm here,” Bdubs replies, gently squeezing Etho's shoulder.

“Where...?”

“Hermitcraft,” Bdubs assures him, “We're on Season Nine. You made it, dude.”

“Oh...” Etho huffs out a chuckle, which quickly turns into another cough. Once he manages to catch his breath, he rasps out a quiet, “Awesome...”

“Yeah, it is awesome,” Bdubs can't help but crack a soft smile. Etho was talking, and he was aware enough to know that Bdubs was there. That had to be a good sign, right? “Just sit back and rest, dude. We'll handle the rest.”

Etho grunts, sluggishly attempting to roll over onto his back. Barely conscious and already he was back to being stubborn.

“*Etho*,” Bdubs scolds, though there’s no real heat behind his words, “Stop it.”

“I’m fine,” he slurs, but does as Bdubs tells him.

“Oh yeah, you’re right as rain, dude,” Bdubs chuckles, “Ready to fight the Ender Dragon.”

Etho replies with a confident—yet shaky, “Heck yeah…”

The conversation lapses, and they sit in silence while awaiting Keralis’ return and Xisuma’s arrival. Bdubs tries to keep Etho awake, tapping on his arm, saying his name, occasionally asking him something and awaiting Etho’s half-coherent response.

Xisuma messages him, letting him know he had made it to the portal and was about to cross back into the Overworld.

“Xisuma is almost here,” Bdubs reports, “At this rate he might beat Keralis.”

“Hey Bdubs?” Etho murmurs instead of responding to what Bdubs had just said.

“Yeah?”

“I’m glad I got you here safe.”

Bdubs is glad Etho’s eyes were still closed, because he would never let Bdubs live it down if he saw him crying in this situation. He could hear Etho’s teasing now. *“D’aw, you were worried about me!”*

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Keralis miraculously managed to get back before Xisuma.

Together, Keralis and Bdubs attempt to coax Etho into taking a sip or two of health potion diluted in water. They manage to get some in his mouth, but most of it ends up trickling down his chin.

Xisuma arrives soon after.

“Not to worry,” Xisuma says after several minutes spent examining Etho. He had the admin panel pulled up, displaying Etho’s stats. “I’ve seen this before. The most important thing is that he gets rest and he stays hydrated. He’s strong, and the Universe is particularly forgiving when it comes to him.”

“I can watch him.” Bdubs volunteers himself before anyone else can.

Xisuma looks at him, or at least, he thinks he is. It’s hard to tell with the tinted visor. “In your monolith?” He sounds genuinely confused.

“I have a bed on the ground floor,” Bdubs says, “My builds can wait.”

“Don’t worry Shishwam,” Keralis interjects. Bdubs wants to laugh. Xisuma, not worry? That’s hilarious. “You can always check on them.”

Bdubs is already gathering Etho in his arms. He’s fallen unconscious again and subsequently had gone boneless, and despite all of the time he must have spent in the void, Etho had not gotten any

lighter. He's stubborn, even in his sleep.

Xisuma sighs, and Bdubs foresees the admin frequenting his monolith in the future. "Call me if you think he's getting dehydrated, alright?"

"I will."

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The world comes back to Etho slowly. He could just barely remember what happened, finally having come back to a reality where there was solid ground beneath his feet only to pass out on the grass moments later. He's not on the grass anymore, whatever surface he's on is too soft to be grass. It had to be a bed.

He was in a bed and by the looks of things when he slowly cracked an eye, he was in someone's house too. Etho vaguely recalled voices around him at one point, murmuring amongst themselves—and him murmuring back. Asking for Bdubs.

Bdubs.

Bdubs' hand slipping out of his, pulled along by some unseen current. Even as his code unravels Etho reaches out, stretching the phantom of his arm in desperation, but Bdubs was gone, and Etho was alone.

Not alone anymore. *Hermitcraft... Season Nine... made it.* He made it. He was on Season Nine.

Etho abruptly pulls himself up into a sitting position, blinking back the lights and dizziness that exploded in his skull and in his vision from sitting up so fast. Okay, maybe that was a bad idea. He sways, throwing out an arm to catch himself and finding a cold stone wall.

Stone? Was he in a cave?

He tries to focus on the room around him, aggressively blinking in an attempt to clear the scattered lights and static from his vision. Clarity returns to him slowly, and so do his surroundings.

He's in a diorite room. So not Iskall's house then.

There's a sheet still spread across his lap, though the blue comforter lay bunched up at the foot of the bed. His jacket was hung up on a coat rack and—oh, these weren't his clothes. He was in soft sleep clothes. The crook of his right arm itched from adhesive, from medical tape having secured a tube in his arm. Someone had given him an IV as well. How long has he been here?

There were houseplants decorating shelves, and there was furniture besides the bed Etho was in artfully arranged around the room as well. Etho only knew of a few Hermits who actually bothered with interiors, and these plants looked well taken care of, which could only mean...

"Etho!" It's Bdubs.

Bdubs came out of nowhere, dropped all of the shulkers he had been carrying on the ground, and practically launched himself at Etho. He dives at the bed, narrowly missing the IV pole as he wraps his arms around Etho's torso and gives him a surprisingly gentle squeeze.

Etho returns the hug, and if he hadn't been feeling so weak, he had no doubt that he probably would have squeezed the living daylight out of Bdubs.

Despite his excitement, he keeps his tone as cool and casual as possible. “Heyy Bdubs,” he smiles. He doesn’t have his mask, feeling a little exposed even if it was just Bdubs.

“Hey Etho,” Bdubs shoots back as he pulls back from the hug, “Whoops, almost knocked over your IV—”

Etho laughs, thought at the moment it sounds more like a rasp. “Yeah, please don’t—”

Bdubs punches his arm. Not lightly either, hard enough that the ache lingered long after the initial shock of the impact. “Ow! What the heck was that for—”

“Do not EVER!” Bdubs all but shouts, “And I mean EVER, mister, do that again! You scared the shit out of me! I had palpitations, Etho—”

Bdubs’ face got redder with every word, though Etho could also see tears gathering in his eyes. With a lazy smile, Etho asks, “Aw, were you worried about me?”

And Bdubs deflates.

“You. Are. *Impossible*.” Bdubs hisses, before raising his voice once again to cry, “Of COURSE I was worried, ya dummy!”

Etho lets out another laugh. “I was worried too.”

“Wha—”

“You just slipped right out of my fingers... I told you, I don’t jump with other people. I thought...”

Etho lets the sentence drop. It’s not hard to pick up what he was going to say. *I thought you were dead. Or, I thought I lost you in the sprawling void.*

“You know, you should really talk to Xisuma about this jumping thing you can do,” Bdubs says, “He could probably help.”

“You’re probably right,” Etho agrees, “But until then, I wanna know what happened while I was away. What have you been up to, started a new horse course without me?”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself, Xisuma thinks you’re gonna need a few more days to recuperate. We can work on a horse course later.”

“So you’re saying there *is* a horse course?”

“I’m not sayin’ anything!”

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Turns out, there weren’t any plans for a horse course at the moment.

Cleo’s ruins were one of the first builds he explored as soon as Xisuma said he could walk around again. The snake hair was new, but *undead gorgon* was a good look on her. Cleo was happy to see him, and hugged him especially tight when she found out where he had been for the past few months; and he ended up walking away with a coupon for free armor stand work.

When he got a little stronger, he went and explored Hermit Town. It was gorgeous. From Scar’s tree to False’s eagle to Ren’s pie shop; the town was practically bursting with life and creativity.

When Doc finds him, the creeper insists he just *has* to come see the new World Eater he's built. When Beef finds him, the fellow Canadian pulls him into a bone-crushing hug and only lets go when Bdubs insisted that Beef was going to break him.

Etho ends up cramming his starter base halfway between Bdubs' monolith and Doc's sand shop in the birch forest. He would've preferred a jungle, but a birch forest would do for now. He was just getting started after all, he has the rest of the season to plan out a base and scope out the perfect biome.

At night, he, Bdubs, Doc and sometimes Jevin would gather around a campfire. Doc would tell them about the latest progress he had made using the World Eater, while Bdubs would talk about the latest business he had done with Scar, or the progress he was making on his build. On nights when Jevin decided to join them, he would talk about his farms and his Nether City.

Etho found himself looking up more than a few times, his eyes on the moon. He often caught his friends doing the same. But the moon on this world was stable, or at least it appeared that way.

He found himself leaning against the others as well, making sure they were solid. Making sure they were *real*, and that he was here. Nobody minded. In fact, sometimes, they would lean right back.

So every night, they would gather under the normal-sized moon, and they would talk about their days, and if Etho leaned a little closer than normal, no one mentioned it.

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