

king of disappointment

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/49800700) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/49800700>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Lifesteal SMP
Relationship:	Mapicc/PrinceZam (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	PrinceZam (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Extended Metaphor , Failing relationship , Modern AU , breakdowns , Third Person POV
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of PENTHOUSE NIGHTMARES / KING OF DISAPPOINTMENT
Stats:	Published: 2023-09-02 Words: 893 Chapters: 1/1

king of disappointment

by [immolxtion_stxtion](#)

Summary

Zam is not a prince. He is just a man in an apartment, one hand pressed against a wall of nothing but glass, leaving a print behind when he pulls away. There is the coldness of the glass and the coldness of his heart, the stifling walls of the living room closing in despite the space being massive.

Pretend you are Prince Zam, trapped in an unlocked penthouse apartment to which you hold the key. Pretend you are Zam, and you have ruined everything good you have ever held.

Notes

This one's been a long time in the works, because the idea came in pair with the first fic of the series, but I could not make it work for the life of me. It ended up coming out shorter than I expected (and prefer) but it works nonetheless.

Title is from King of Disappointment by Echos.

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

Somewhere in the universe, there is a world where Zam is a prince. There is a world where he tries his best, says the right words and smiles at all the right times, making enemies into allies. Sometimes it feels like he is only making allies into enemies, the careful dance of diplomacy pushing people further and further into anger.

A crown is only a crown until it becomes a burden, a tangled mess of gold and gems that only serves to guide your eyes to the floor and present the back of your neck like a prisoner waiting for execution. If Zam can be crowned, then he can be de-crowned, stripped of his honour and his royalty in less than a minute. There is nothing he can do to stop it. Maybe he'll even aid the enemy, the one who wants to see him fall.

He'll stand on the balcony in front of the kingdom that was supposed to be his, and he'll remove his crown, let it fall to the ground like strands of dyed-yellow hair. A mirror; an executioner's axe, both reflect haunted eyes, full of loneliness and sorrow over something that cannot be put back together so easily.

He is the one who did this, after all. He drove his kingdom to ruin, he let his hands reach out and grab hold of something good until it turned to ash. Prince Zam is not King Midas. He does not turn what he loves, what he touches, to something useful. There is tragedy in gold taking over what once was alive, but at least it still retains its shape. Ash has no such quality.

Prince Zam loses his kingdom, but he does not lose his life. Maybe that is the worse outcome of the two, because that means he has to live with the grief and the guilt, the knowledge that he could have done better and *didn't*. Left to find a new life for himself, he misses the glamour and the comfort that comes with knowing yourself and knowing your castle, all of the secret paths and honest truths told behind the walls.

As a prince, he is lost, he is lost, he is losing everything he once took for granted, with no way to get it back. Once something is gone, it is *gone*, and you can only live with the regret.

But Zam is not a prince. He is just a man in an apartment, one hand pressed against a wall of nothing but glass, leaving a print behind when he pulls away. There is the coldness of the glass and the coldness of his heart, the stifling walls of the living room closing in despite the space being massive.

He's walked these halls before, slid across laminate-wood flooring and danced on the tile of the kitchen, but never has he paced. Zam has not followed the same path from wall to wall, tracing his hand along the back of the couch every time he passes. Despite the space, the thirty-two step journey from the end of the hall feels short and halting, soft footfalls ringing in Zam's ears and driving him insane. It feels like his life is falling apart right in front of him.

This apartment has not felt like home for ages. Not when him and Mapicc exchange cruel words just as often as they curl up on the same bed, not when all the food he makes starts to taste like ash in his mouth. Time slips by, days going past in the span of seconds. Hours feel like weeks. When was the last time Zam changed his clothes?

His chest is tight, it has been for a while. Laughter and sobbing feel much the same, and Zam is too far gone to try and differentiate what the heaving in his chest and the closure of his throat means. It was supposed to be him and Mapicc against the world, and yet these days it seems like him against Mapicc, words bitter like bile.

It would be easier to let this go. It would be easier to look out over the city skyline and let himself fall, body still pressed against polished glass. Zam could let this go, let the pieces of his future fall onto the ground and shatter like a cracked mug. There would be no more late night talks, no more resting his head on Mapicc's chest to listen to his heartbeat, arrhythmic in ways that he should really get checked out. There wouldn't be a pot of coffee dropped in the middle of the breakfast table while both of them try and blink the sleep out of their eyes, no more playing obnoxious songs and laughing at the playful annoyance radiating from Mapicc.

He could let this go, but letting it go means losing everything. There is no Zam without Mapicc. He's been woven into Zam's bones and sinews for a long time, looped around him like yarn whose strands have matted together, something that can no longer be pulled apart.

The door is unlocked, see? You can leave at any time, can turn your back on walls of mirrored glass and set yourself free from the prison you call your home. Leaving is easy.

Leaving is easy.

So why does the idea of leaving now feel like exile?

End Notes

Extended metaphor my beloved. My creative writing course talked about it last semester, and I finally got to put it to use, god bless.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!