

## no hard feelings

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## no hard feelings

by [sinoptics](#)

### Summary

“Hey, Redd,” Clown starts as he reaches Redd, voice ever so slightly out of breath, and then he pauses awkwardly. “So.”

“So?” Redd repeats, confused as to where this is going to go.

“Our arrangement is off. From now on.” Clown states. What the fuck.

or; the fic in which Clownpierce fumbles not one but two bad bitches

### Notes

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

Clown’s working on some new build, that much is obvious. Building materials are strewn haphazardly all over the place, mostly sandstone, and part of a wall stands already, casting a long shadow in the dusk light. Redd vaults over a portion of the wall, noisily enough to signal his arrival, and still gets a scythe swung at his neck for the trouble.

“Relax, I’m not here to fight.” He says after ducking out of the way, in the same tone as one placates a yapping dog or perhaps a small toddler. Redd can’t see Clown’s face, but he can imagine the scowl he’s currently receiving, and it pleases him immensely. “Building something new?”

“A funhouse.” Clown heaves a shulker closer to his place of work.

“Fun for who, exactly?” Redd asks, making a mental note to never come near this place upon completion. At least not in daylight hours, anyway.

“Me.”

“Yeah, I thought as much. Could I tempt you away, for a while? A few moments of the illustrious Clownpierce’s time?” He teases, and waves his trump card between his fingers in front of the other’s face.

“Where do you get this shit, Redd?”

“I have my ways.” He replies enigmatically.

“Parrot is such a stick in the mud about it.”

“Ah, ah,” Redd wiggles his finger at Clown, “what Parrot doesn’t know won’t hurt him, my darling jester. Just don’t snitch.”

“Now why would I do that?” Clown airily snarks back and gestures for Redd to follow him. He’s brought to Clown’s nearby hut, and then the basement underneath. It’s a bit dank, but Clown is very particular about who gets to see under the mask, and while Redd can’t relate to that particular paranoia, he does respect the sentiment. They don’t need a flashy setting for what they’re about to do anyway.

Clown has a single bed down here, black duvet, black sheets, scarlet red pillows. Redd admires the dedication to the aesthetic and sits on the covers, back against the wall. Clown positions himself next to Redd, loosely hooking their ankles together as he takes off the mask and places it on his bedside table. It’s not often Redd sees Clown’s face, even with their – arrangement – and he hungrily drinks in every feature like a man led to water in a desert.

“Get on with it, then.” Clown nudges him in reminder, elegant eyebrow arched highly in displeasure.

“So impatient.” Redd hums, and flicks his lighter to light the joint he’d brought. He holds the lit joint between two fingers, and with his other hand, firmly holds Clown’s chin and brings their faces closer together. He evenly keeps Clown’s gaze he takes a deep drag, holds the smoke in his lungs, and tilts his head, moving it forward, so he can breathe the smoke into Clown’s own open mouth, a hair’s breadth from his own. Reddoons is by no means a religious man, but there is something exquisitely divine about the way Clown’s hot breath mixes with his own, about the way Clown shifts to press their mouths gently together, mouth still open.

Redd pulls away after a moment, to take a another deep inhale of smoke. He doesn’t shotgun it, this time, just languidly hands the joint to Clown, and intently watches as Clown’s lips close over where Redd’s own had just been.

“You do have your uses, Reddoons.” Clown says, after exhaling plumes of curling smoke. Redd rolls his eyes, not without fondness.

“Yeah, yeah, you keep me around for my usefulness, I know.” He retorts playfully, and then feels a sudden flare of panic as he realises for the first time that not only might that be true, he very much wishes it isn’t. He wants – he wants Clown to want him, to want his company, just to have it.

Clown nudges him, after a moment, and breaks him out of temporary stupor to hand him back the joint. “Out of it that fast, Redd? You’re getting old.” He teases.

Redd gives him a friendly shove in return, pretending as if he isn’t having a mini internal crisis with the ease of a professional.

They return to silence after that. Clown slowly closes his eyes and leans his head against the wall, and Reddoons is acutely reminded of how cats slow blink as a sign of trust. He suddenly feels woefully unequipped to bear the weight of that trust. It’s not that he would betray it, or that he’s incapable or unwilling to back up Clown if he ever needed it, it’s just –

Redd doesn’t know what it is.

On impulse, he reaches out a finger to brush against the exposed skin of Clown’s throat. Clown doesn’t even jump at the contact, just lazily opens his eyes to give Redd a judgemental stare.

“You’re in a weird mood.”

“Mhm. On account of all the drugs I’m doing.” Redd retorts drily. Clown rolls his eyes, but the corners of them crinkle up in amusement. Redd moves in to feel the heat of Clown’s mouth against his once more. Clown’s hand curling around his neck, pulling him closer is a familiar tug.

It’s easy. It’s so easy. He’s suddenly terrified he’s taking it far too much for granted.

He leaves Clown’s base under the dark of night.

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*ClownPierce whispers to you: can we talk*

Reddoons makes a face at his communicator at that. Such vague messages are normally a red flag, here. Oh yeah, sure, we can ‘talk’, with our swords. With Clownpierce though, sometimes talks are a little more... fun. Though they usually keep their rendezvous for night-time. It’s a little early right now, which puts Redd on edge. Clown is definitely not completely above a murder attempt, even with their precarious arrangement.

Well, should be some kind of fun, whatever it turns out to be.

He makes his way over to Clown’s funhouse – kitted out for a fight, naturally, but hopeful it won’t turn out that way. Redd prefers to win, and while he is *capable* of beating Clown in a one vs one, it’s never an easy task.

Clown spots him as he arrives, and waves over at Reddoons, quickly jogging over. His body language doesn’t *look* like he’s raring for a fight, but Redd shifts his hand closer to his sword just in case.

“Hey, Redd,” Clown starts as he reaches Redd, voice ever so slightly out of breath, and then he pauses awkwardly. “So.”

“So?” Redd repeats, confused as to where this is going to go.

“Our arrangement is off. From now on.” Clown states. What the fuck. “Y’know, we had fun, but... I can’t. Anymore. Sorry. No hard feelings.”

Reddoons is, unusually for him, stunned into silence. Okay. Yeah. Definitely not what he thought Clown was going to say. Fuck.

“I thought... we had a good thing going.” Reddoons tries very, very hard to sound as cool and unbothered as he can muster, but he’s rather uncool and bothered right now, and his voice is pitched a little higher than he’d like.

“Yeah, it’s not. It’s not you. Just – don’t worry about it. It’s not like it was serious thing, right? It was never a permanent thing, so. All good things come to an end, as they say. Time for a new chapter.”

“Do I get a reason why this chapter is ending?” Silence from Clown. “Do you not think I’m owed – anything?”

“In a place like this? Not really, Redd. Sorry.” Redd grits his teeth and tries very hard not to experience the emotions he’s experiencing right now. He’s not very successful.

“Fine. Okay. See you around then, Clownpierce.” Redd doesn’t give much effort into making that not sound like a threat. Clown shifts on his feet.

Reddoons turns on his heel and heads home to his base. He doesn’t look back at the funhouse.

Three weeks later, he spots Clown at spawn, a protective arm around Branzzy’s waist.

Seriously, fucking Branzzy?

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The air is eerily still. Maybe it’s just normal, and Reddoons is just used to chaos. Misses it.

The silence makes it easier to spot Branzzy.

“Hey,” Reddoons says, making sure to approach from behind with as silent steps as possible, because he knows Branzy’s reaction will be funny, and he needs cheering up. Branzy doesn’t disappoint, either, solemn gaze swiftly switching to fear as he scrambles to his feet, pulls his sword from his inventory, and promptly drops it.

“Uh, just, hold on a sec,” Branzy stutters as he fumbles for his sword. “I can be a threat, just give – give me a minute here.”

Redd huffs out a laugh. “I’m not here for a fight.”

Branzy’s shoulders sag in relief. “Oh, thank god.” He says, putting his sword away. “I thought I was the only one left. You all jumped in the void trap.”

“Oh, I jumped alright, I just lied about having one heart left. Didn’t feel like leaving, just yet. I don’t know. Wanted some time to think.”

“Yeah. Yeah, I get that.” Branzy frowns. “We all really did a number on this place, didn’t we?” He adds, staring over the ravaged landscape.

“Mhm.” Redd doesn’t really feel any regret over the destruction. That part’s fun. “D’you mind if I sit with you?” Branzy looks a little surprised at the request, but gestures for Redd to sit with him.

Redd doesn’t say anything, not at first, just takes in the sights. He can’t say he’s hung out with Branzy much before, never trusted the guy – a wise decision, he’s sure – and he certainly wasn’t seeking him out when the other was inseparable from Clown. That was just asking for trouble. There’s no reason to pick a fight now, not when they’re the only two left. He’ll just – enjoy the company.

Branzy sniffs beside him. Redd graciously ignores how Branzy awkwardly turns from him and tries to subtly wipe his eyes.

Well, he tries to ignore it. He hopes Branzy doesn’t think he’s actually being inconspicuous.

“Boy problems?” He drawls, after putting up with a solid fifteen minutes of Branzy sniffing.

“Yeah...” Branzy replies miserably. “It’s just,” Redd brought this upon himself, really. “I don’t know, we had a really good thing going, I thought.” Reddoons knows the feeling. “I’ve never liked someone so much, and I know he liked me too. Probably still does. He’s just...” He trails off.

“Clown wouldn’t know what’s good for him if it punched him square in that mask of his. It’s not your fault.” Redd replies, because it’s true. None of what happened – to him, or Branzy - was Branzy’s fault. Redd getting his feelings hurt is also not really Clown’s fault, either, if he’s being completely fair. He’s still gonna be mad about it, but he was the one that kept his mouth shut. Maybe it wouldn’t have changed anything, maybe it would have. But not doing anything about his – feelings – was definitely never going to achieve anything.

“I know, I know. He is the way he is. Nobody’s gonna change that. I just hoped...” He doesn’t need to finish that sentence for Redd to guess what he means.

“Nah, you’re right. No one’s changing Clown. That guy just has something seriously wrong with him. Doesn’t matter what you do, you can’t change who a person is, at their core.” Redd absently picks up a pebble from beside him and angrily flicks it into a crater in front of them, with a little bit more force than he’d intended.

They lapse back into silence, for a while, until Branzy tentatively asks: “Redd, did you and Clown...” He seems to wimp out of actually asking the question last second, but Redd tenses up anyway, and that in and of itself is incriminating.

“I don’t know what you’re talkin’ about.” He says lamely instead. It’s unconvincing.

“Did he break up with you to date me? Because you did seem weirdly upset about it at the time. I mean, I had my suspicions, but I thought you two didn’t even *like* each other, let alone, y’know –“

“No, I *don’t* know. He didn’t break up with me, because that would actually involve datin’ in the first place. Which we never did.” All technically true, but it comes out defensive enough to sound like a lie. Branzy is viciously perceptive when he wants to be, though, so he seems to take it for the truth it is.

“Break up without even dating, ouch.” He replies, and it’s weirdly more insulting than being accused of lying. “I hope there’s no – bad blood, between us, or anything.”

“Nah, I just hate Clown. Also, Branzy?” Redd adds nonchalantly.

“Yeah?” Branzy turns his head to meet Redd’s gaze.

“Whatever you think mine and Clown’s relationship status is or was, know that if you breathe a word of it to *anyone* I will hunt you down in every single server iteration until you are permanently killed in perpetuity. Do you understand?” His voice is even and calm, and he can see Branzy’s pupils dilate with fear in real time. He’s beginning to understand why Clown likes having him around. Branzy nods vigorously and fearfully, as he should.

“Can I ask *what* said relationship status was?” He asks tentatively, after a moment.

“No.”

“... Have you kissed him?”

“...” He’s not gracing that with an answer. Branzy hums appraisingly.

“Stop thinkin’ about whatever it is you’re thinking about right now.”

“What is it that you think I’m thinking of?” The faux-innocent voice Branzy uses is pissing Redd off.

“Branzy, don’t make me mad.”

“... If he tries talking to me again, next season, I don’t know if I’ll be able to say no. I know I should, but. I like him a lot. I don’t know.”

“I would advise staying away from him.”

“Is that actual advice, or just jealousy?”

“What did I say about making me mad?” Redd says, making as if he’s going for his sword, and



Branzy giggles breathlessly and shifts away. “Whatever. It was good talking to you, or somethin’. I’ll see you next season.”

“Yeah. You too. Kick Clown’s ass when you next see him, will you?”

“That I can do.” Redd pushes himself to his feet, and dusts himself off. “See you round, Branzy.”

“Until next time, Redd.”

## End Notes

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