

no notion of loving people by halves

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no notion of loving people by halves

by [classics_above_classics](#)

Summary

Quackity and Joe meet in the moments before and after a vote, and they have a conversation.

Notes

this is my official recommendation to vote in the mcytblr tumblr sexyman polls!! we're in the quarter-finals or whatever you call em, and i am So Normal about two of my favourite people going against each other in it. last round was INSANE, with both joe and quackity just barely winning in their matchups against wilbur and grian respectively! some of us joe voters on tumblr had an alliance with quackity then, so i got inspired!

vote joe or quackity here at

<https://www.tumblr.com/mcytblrsexymen/708971457111343105/round-5>! i personally am campaigning for joe, but what's most important is that you vote for whoever you want most to win!

"Hey. You're Joe Hills, right?"

The man who turns to him looks far too normal, a casual guy with long hair and green glasses and gloves. Quackity can't imagine why they beat Wilbur. Why her people campaigned so hard for him, why they had hundreds in the lead for hours upon hours until the polls closed and Wilbur lost to her. When the guy smiles cheerfully towards him, the question only becomes more poignant.

"Yup! That's me! Joe Hills, from Nashville, Tennessee." He offers their hand to shake, and in a flash Quackity takes it. Her grip isn't strong, and he blinks in surprise when Quackity's own is

firm. "And you're Quackity, right? Good job with your poll!! That was a *real* close win, but your people pulled through right where it mattered!"

Quackity waves it off. "I never had a doubt. Of course my fans wouldn't let me lose! I'm the sexiest red bird around here, after all!" Unbidden, his wings flutter. "But heyyy, that's not what I came here for. I came here for you! We had an alliance, didn't we? Come on, hi-five, *amigo*, we did well today!"

Joe blinks. "We had an alliance?"

"Uh, yeah? What, don't tell me you didn't know." He scoffs. "Your fans didn't tell you? I heard you were out there campaigning yourself. Posting shirtless videos and everything! Just my kinda guy." Cheerfully, he slings an arm around Joe, pleasantly surprised when the guy doesn't even flinch. "I thought you agreed to the alliance yourself!"

"... Oh, that alliance!" Their eyes light up in recognition. "Yeah, I saw a few people talking about that. People get really excited in my chat, y'know? Though they were pretty torn." He shrugs. "I mean, Grian's a friend of mine, even if I have *no* clue how he thinks. But yeah, that was all them!"

Quackity can't help but stare. "You didn't know they were allying against a friend of yours?!"

"Nope! They just kinda do what they want." Joe laughs, the sound tinged with fondness. Something in that makes Quackity's gut churn uncomfortably. They just... do that? Ally against friends? Work with people who they think will stab them in the back later? And all in the name of someone who doesn't even know what they're planning? "I think it's great that they all got together to support you! But hey, there's only one person I'm hoping will win, and you know who it is! I wouldn't be campaigning for myself if I didn't want that win."

"Ha! Yeah, I know how it is." He grins back, golden tooth gleaming brilliantly. "Don't feel too down when I thrash you, alright?"

"We'll see about that!" Normally, Quackity would be on edge from that kind of declaration, but there isn't a shred of hostility in her vice. There's only delight, friendly competition. "I have faith that my viewers will pull ahead, and that I can campaign hard enough to convince people! I've been working *really* hard, after all. Even bought some new rainbow eyes, just for the occasion!"

"Wait, what."

Joe blinks, and when their eyes open again they are joined by a hundred others, flickering with a thousand colours and all *seeing- staring- beholding*. Just before he can think the word *watching*, they flutter shut.

"That's not the right word for me, just to be clear," Joe chastises him. " *Watching*. I'm not a part of that group."

Quackity has no goddamn idea what she means. So after a moment of stunned silence, he continues.

"... Do your fans think the eyes are hot?"

"I think they're sexyman enough to win the contest," he says, which clears up nothing. "But, most importantly, I think they'd vote for me anyway! Even without my beautiful, glowing, rainbow-checked eyes. Which are, by the way, divinely beautiful, and should be appreciated."

"Hey, man, if you're the kind of guy to *buy new eyes* for a competition, they'd better vote for you."

Quackity shakes his head. "What, did they bribe you for it? Say they'd vote for you if you blinked in rainbows? That's not a healthy relationship, man, you gotta get out of there."

Joe snorts. "No, this is all for me. But thanks for worrying! If my people ever start demanding I grow new eyes before they tip me, I'll just find new people." He waves a hand nonchalantly. "I don't think my viewers would do that, anyway."

"... Hm." Quackity hesitates, settling a few feet away from Joe. "... I dunno, man. I mean, they made that alliance without you, didn't they? Hard to think you could trust 'em after something like that. Not a lot of unity in that kind of campaign, especially if there was some kind of in-fighting about voting me over your friend."

Some tiny, tiny part of him feels a little sick at the thought. But it dies down quickly enough. This isn't the first time he's brought people to blows over loyalty, after all.

But Joe looks unbothered. "They're good people. They'll figure it out for themselves. And they understand why people would vote you over Grian, or why their friends would support you."

"Oh?" Quackity raises an eyebrow. "You talk like you've seen it yourself. Did they shake hands and make up and write songs about their reconciliation? I'd love to see that- you encourage their poetry, it looks like. They've gotta have some skills."

"Nah, nothing like that. You're thinking too big, Quackity HQ." Their sunny smile shifts, softening at the edges. "They're just friends. They don't hate each other for wanting a different person to win. If this was something important like politics- *which is very important, remember to vote on both a local and national level to support what's best for your community!*- then it might be different. But this is fine."

He scoffs. "Please. I've seen the posts. Some of those guys came out swinging against me."

"And they know it's an exaggeration!" she assures him. "Just look around. All across this great land of Tumblr, there are people reminding each other to be kind. To be civil. To watch whether their feelings are turning into hate, and to take a step back and breathe if things go too far. Sure, things have gone too far. But that happens in all kinds of events, not just this one. And mostly, our viewers want to be kind."

"Man. You're a real ray of sunshine, aren't you." Quackity looks away. "But that's not really what I mean. It's more..."

He's not sure the words are right on his tongue. He says them anyway.

"They're supposed to be united," he tries. "I know you all wanted a Hermitsweep. Your people rule the polls. Doesn't it scare you, that they can split so much behind your back? Isn't it weird, to trust them with this?"

For a second, Joe is silent. Quackity grits his teeth, turns- but the faint green glow of his checkmarks is dim, and there's a twinge of honest fear in his eyes.

"... To be honest, it feels weird." He rests his head on their knees, fingers wrapped tight around her arms. "Just a little bit. I didn't expect this much. And the competition last round was a *lot*, let me tell you."

Quackity snorts. "I was *there*, man. No need to tell me. So much voter fraud..."

"And bribery! Don't forget bribery." Joe laughs. "But I do trust them. Whatever they do. I'll be

disappointed if I lose, obviously, but it happens. It's hard to really be angry when you think about the core of all this."

"Popularity?" he jokes.

"Well, a little. I've been told Scar is *not* a sexyman, just a sexy man. Still not sure what criteria people are voting by. But mostly, I think it's love."

"Love?" Quackity raises an eyebrow. "What made you think that?"

Joe sighs. "I dunno. It's just... it's the only thing that it could be, really. This contest doesn't mean anything. There's no prize. All it is is just people wanting the entertainers they love most to win. And look at everything they've created for that goal."

Quackity knows. He's seen the swathes of art, the stories, the people getting out drawing tablets or phones or paper and camera to thank people who voted in their favour. He's seen old artworks shared years after their making. He's seen silly powerpoints, walls of text, analysis and promotions of videos from the starts of careers. It's a little terrifying, really, in the same way angels are.

He's pretty sure Joe would know, too.

"Yeah, not every one of my viewers joined your alliance. Even with my personal campaigning, none of them brought it up to me. But whoever they voted, whether it was Grian because he's someone they fought to see this high up or you because they wanted to share the support your people offered me, they voted out of love. Because they love me, or they love you, or they love whoever else they wanted to win."

"... They love you, huh?"

It's an odd thought. Quackity's well used to heartbreak, to abandonment. To people only staying because he had something to offer. But in this silly contest, with tens of thousands of people cheering for him...

"They love you too," Joe says with a smile. "So I'm happy you won. I'd say you're a pretty worthy opponent."

Quackity barks out a laugh, turning to Joe with fire in his eye. "A worthy opponent? You'll be taking those words back when I *win*. My people love me, don't they? So I'm sure as hell they'll put their money where their mouth is."

"Oh, we'll see." A thousand eyes open, turning a rainbow gaze upon him. He meets their stare head-on. "After all," Joe Hills says, "You were right about one thing. We want a *Hermitsweep*."

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