

(oh,) to be a comfort

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Summary

"It *is* good here, people say." Ash mutters. The words tug at his throat, and it's a bit hard to breathe. He'll manage. "Good place to take your partner."

"Says Josh?" Red quirks an eyebrow. Moves his other hand, then, the one that's free, to rest on his knee, and it's where he must register the metal against the palm.

Ash stares off silently. He thinks they say not to look at the sun for a reason, because it's too beautiful as it bleeds red into the ocean. But hey, the S.U.N. is the new sun, so they are, and really, the tiny reflections of it in Red's eyes when he hangs his head feel way more important. Just... not easier, to look at.

He blinks the tears off. Unlike someone, he doesn't have sunglasses, so that he can admit.

"Says Josh." He agrees quietly.

Notes

so!! what happened was i made up such a devastating little au it put me into a complete angst block. *me*. so here i am, writing you know what? *fluff*. faceinhands

based on the idea that if we go by the [bormethius family tree stream](#) where they're divorced they have to be married first. made your bed now lie in it.

shoutout to the two playlists i had to listen to after searching up "fluff" on spotify to get in

the mood while writing

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

The door opens with a calm mechanical *click* that he only faintly registers, taking a careful step out. Red it seems to bother more, because his head's already turned, squinting behind the glasses. Ash huffs and for a second he wants to avert his eyes, and he has to remind himself the most that look can get from his head is the smile that tugs at his lips.

He waits on it, and lets the smile win after all.

"The swamp's on another level here, right." He tilts his head, stopping a few steps away from the end of the dock, from Red's hand flat on the wood. "A whole 'nother sort of drugs."

Red snorts, and his shoulders finally fall slack. "It's a good place to think, alright."

"You're thinking?" He takes another light step, balancing close to the edge but not *on* the edge, for a second, leaning down.

Red clasps his hands together, doesn't turn his head. "It's not so hard if you're me." His voice is hiding the kind of smile that makes his voice rich and warm like the sun itself. If Ash lets the remark go, it's only because of that.

He cackles sharply and sits down, slowly, hanging his legs over the side of the dock next to Red's. "You better not have any doubts about this war, Red." He says lightly. "Not like that's a you thing."

He doesn't really want to talk about it. The thought of war lives under his skin like a constant slight prickle of adrenaline-dopamine-more adrenaline, and isn't it *good*, but it's not what he's here for anymore.

Red sighs slightly.

"*Don't* tell me." Ash gapes, mostly for show.

"Not telling you." The smile finally breaks Red's face, just drawing up a corner of his mouth. "I'm not... I'm not *worried*. Ash. You know what? No, no." He shakes his head, bites his lip like he wants to say something so bad it's starting to overwhelm.

Ash bops his head and puts a hand over his, pulling a hasty blank expression up on his face. It seems to work, even if he does a shit job. He thinks the light stuck in his chest is spilling out through his eyes the way he can't stop looking at Red, *in* the way he can't.

"No matter what we're doing tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, whenever, I'm glad I have this one thing." Red mutters. His fingers loosen the clasp on the edge, knuckles gripping Ash's now, not quite lacing their fingers together.

"Good." Ash's voice sounds a bit raspy, and he doesn't mean it, wants to show this is gonna be enough. "If *you*, you're our fucking tank, Red... Sorry. Sorry."

They laugh together.

"I'm a bit tired is all." Red shrugs. "Sometimes all a man can want is a piece of mind."

Ash's hand twitches, and he can't help the grin turning *just* a bit wicked. "Hey, I've heard the middle of the fucking ocean is great for thinking. You wanna strike an alliance with the Pond?"

"Oh, haven't you heard of *that*." Red just keeps his voice quiet now, almost empty, Ash thinks he's probably content now.

"It *is* good here, people say." Ash mutters. The words tug at his throat, and it's a bit hard to breathe. He'll manage. "Good place to take your partner."

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"Says Josh." He agrees quietly.

Red's hand slips away, and he curls his fingers in on themselves, uncomfortable, before he registers the clack, *one-two-three*... Red's armor falls away, and then disappears, netherite to nothing. Red doesn't comment, and neither does Ash, even if he's aware too sharply.

Red hunches over, elbows on his knees, stares down. Ash tries to slide closer, probably missing the chance to dunk them both into the water by third a block, until they're shoulder against shoulder, and it does feel really different, like Red's *allowing* him to touch. He knows it's not like that, and Red probably just forgot, has been slightly, very slightly stressing over it, has just been *Red*.

He reaches over Red's back and runs his fingers down his hand, leaning in so close he presses his lips together and the silent cackle must leave a warm touch on Red's face anyway. Red kisses him first.

A thought slips it always happens like that, so he kisses back a little too fervently, and he thinks Red knows, from the laugh he breathes into his mouth.

"Gonna abuse the Pond's hospitality like that, are you, Ashswag?" Red sounds impossibly soft.

"You kissed me first." He points out and doesn't let him answer.

In here, Red's that much easier, easy to the point Ash can feel... almost scared, and that doesn't push him away, never will. Maybe what he's scared of is losing it. He's not gonna admit that outright, though, because that *will* happen, and then that will be the only thing he'll think of, just get locked in the cycle, when instead of wasting every second of it he can hide his hands in the folds of Red's suit and have him close.

"And what did you want?" Red mutters, leaning back slightly. Ash chases, only for a moment before he catches the words.

"What?"

"Did you..." Red sighs, high. "You stayed so you could catch up on the ammo better. That's, that's good."

"I didn't." He snorts. Red tilts his head, so he puts a hand on his knee, and he thinks it doesn't really ground either of them. "I was promised the stars here would look best."

"Huh. Do they?" Red mutters.

The sun hasn't fully set still.

"Wanna check?" He replies in a whisper, like saying a secret. What he really wants to say tickles on the back of his tongue, and he wishes he could just kiss it into Red's mouth and have him understand, and never have the split seconds of saying and *waiting*.

Red smiles, like he did, *understand*. "Yeah." He hugs Ash.

Ash's first thought is, he doesn't have to hide his eyes much with his shades on. Second, he has no thoughts.

"Wanna marry me?" He chokes. Red stills, stops rocking him slightly.

"Yeah. You heard right." He says, at the same time as Red says his name.

Red grips him closer, and like this he thinks he must feel every little pathetic tremble, and he's muttering something just above his ear, in his hair, but Ash can't make it out until a few seconds later. He's not sure if it was the same one word to begin with, or if Red just let out a laugh or some warped noise first. "...yes. Yes. Yes." He lets him go too carefully, and Ash wants him to know he would not break if he said no.

He *needs* to say it, just not right now. Right now he might not believe it himself enough for that.

"Ash." There is a cackle building up somewhere in Red's throat until it pops, and the next words sound like Red really believes he's his most adored person in the world. Ash basks in it.

"Ash, I wouldn't want *anything* more. I need you to know that."

Ash breathes in loudly and grips his hand, counts his fingers in haste until he gets to the one he'd put a ring on, clutches onto it. Then just stares.

"Thanks, Red." He breathes. "Fuck."

They laugh together, quietly, again.

(The stars *are* beautiful. He wouldn't even tell Red if the moon was, when he could just say that about him.)

End Notes

i'm not naming the amount of diamonds ash would have to throw at delilah for this. she would wish him luck though

if that means anything to you this happens right after an s.u.n meeting at lila's a bit before the main sun vs bofa conflict

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