

old world underground (where are you now?)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/36065419) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/36065419>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Minecraft (Video Game)
Relationship:	Fruitberries & Kye Illumina (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Fruitberries (Video Blogging RPF) , Kye Illumina (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Epic Friendship , Legally Blind Fruitberries , Moth Hybrid Fruitberries , Ender Dragon Hybrid Kye Illumina (Video Blogging RPF) , Alternate Universe - 2b2t Setting (Video Blogging RPF) , Baking , Hurt/Comfort , legit so excited abt the new dragon hybrid illumina tag also illumina has a cat if that appeals to anyone
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of old world underground (series)
Collections:	Charma's Bookshelf of Favs
Stats:	Published: 2021-12-30 Words: 5,305 Chapters: 4/4

old world underground (where are you now?)

by [papurrika](#)

Summary

Fruit just wants to live a peaceful life on the outskirts of civilization. The person stealing his carrots has other plans.

Alternately, Illumina wants to escape 2b2t. It's not easy. Featuring pumpkin pie, a wither, and a tabby cat. (Written for a gift exchange!)

Notes

Brief explanation: 2b2t is described as the oldest anarchy server in Minecraft. It was founded in December 2010, and has never been reset since. I'm taking some creative liberties, but that's the setting the characters are in! Enjoy!!

credit for moth! fruit concept goes to seyf, though my version of moth! fruit is more humanoid and not nearly as cute.

i never knew you

It starts like this: Fruit is living peacefully on the outskirts of civilization. He's settled into a comfortable routine, unremarkable and repetitive. There is no one around to disturb him, and he does not miss them. Every morning he rises with the sun, his dull eyes drinking in the expanse of colours before they're chased away by eternal blue sky. Then he feeds his sheep wheat, he collects eggs from the chickens, he tends to his carrots. He's happy enough.

One day, he finds his crops missing. Their disappearance does not perturb him - it's what they mean for him. Even in all his years spent living alone, he has never put down his sword. He draws it now. His heart is a quick thump in his chest as he checks around the house. The basement is quiet, as is the ground floor and the first floor and the side rooms. When he strains his ears, he cannot hear a single block being placed, or the low hum of an end crystal waiting for him. Walking around his home is equally futile. The sound of animals drown out any noise an intruder might make, and he's reluctant to go too far. So he replants his crops from his stores, and he retreats into his home, wondering about an intruder that would steal his crops but not the armor buried beneath his floorboards.

When he wakes up the next morning, his carrots are gone again. So he sets traps around the perimeter of his base. Two can play at that game.

Later in the day, he's running low on wood for sticks. So he absentmindedly picks up his axe and wanders out in the direction of the forest to chop down some trees. He only realizes this is a serious mistake when he puts one foot on dirt and it immediately gives way below him.

This is how it begins: he falls into his own fucking trap.

"Oh my god, are you okay?" a voice says from the vague direction of above.

Fruit sighs. "Yeah, thanks!" he calls out, climbing out of his own pit. The pit he dug himself. The pit he should've known better than to step on after covering it up with leaves. It's good that he brought some food to mend his broken leg. His face is warm with mortification and his hands shake with misplaced adrenaline - he hasn't messed up that bad in a while.

"Oh, that's good. Phew." the voice replies.

He's too busy berating himself to realize the obvious until he's standing on the surface. Then he freezes, and slowly turns to the dark shape standing by the pit. He hasn't seen another player in ages. "Wait. Who the hell are you?"

The shape bolts, but he's faster. He crashes into the player, sending them both sprawling to the ground. Even though he knows for a fact they just ate dirt, they recover surprisingly fast. A bony elbow to the kidneys makes him wince. "I just wanna talk -" he tries, but they're having none of it. They twist to the side in a fluid motion that somehow extracts themselves from his grasp.

The stranger scrabbles to their feet. For a split second, they just look at each other. All Fruit can see in the dim moonlight is a blur of grey and black. There's something brightly colored around their waist - a belt, maybe? Before he can ponder further, they're off. Within seconds they're beyond the treeline.

"Stop stealing my fucking carrots!" he yells after them, futilely.

On the way back home, he thinks. No diamond armor, no weapon. Huh. Definitely not anyone he

knows, which lessens the possibility that they're out here for his blood.

Interesting. Weird, but interesting.

He also finds himself at a loss. Clearly the carrot thief was smart enough to avoid his traps and hide during the day. And it wasn't like he was going to find them by searching, as awful as his eyesight was.

So he goes with minimal effort and leaves a sign.

Got rid of the traps. Come to my house? I have more carrots. - Fruit

It technically isn't a lie. He does have lots of carrots.

He receives a reply a day later, sitting crooked amongst a field of freshly re-planted carrots.

No you haven't. Sry for taking so much food, don't have a farm. - Lumnum

No source of food? Is he new then? Also, what kind of name is Lumnum???

Okay you got me. Lumnum? - Fruit

Yes? - Lumnum

Oh god, a smartass. Somehow, Fruit can imagine them holding their breath in anticipation as they wrote the words on the sign. Probably couldn't wait to sneak off so they could laugh about it.

Look behind you. - Fruit

Fruit leans against the fence and grins smugly as the stranger screams and stumbles back.

"What the frick!" The stranger gasps. Fruit has his sword to their throat in a millisecond. The enchantments hum through the weapon, a threat. A warning.

"Who are you and how did you find this place." he says. It's not really a question.

"My name is Illumina." Lumnum, seriously? "And I don't know, I just escaped from spawn and I kept walking. Your house is the first I've seen in thousands of blocks."

He frowns, gauging Illumina's tone. They have a soft, faintly crackly voice. Not particularly confident or arrogant, though they do sound less nervous than most 2b2t newbies would be when faced with a pointy diamond blade. "No factions?"

"I don't know what that is."

Fruit didn't survive this long by letting down his guard. He sheathes his sword anyway.

-

Illumina downs the whole bowl in seconds. As in, he lifts the entire bowl up to his face and slurps the entire thing down. Fruit has never seen anything like it. To make it worse, he then declares, completely sincere: "This is the best soup I've had in months."

What the fuck. Now he's absolutely sure Illumina is buttering him up. "It's lukewarm."

"I was stealing raw carrots from your farm." he reminds him. He twists around in his chair, most

likely looking longingly at the pot sitting on the stove. "...Can I have some more?"

His voice sounds so small and pleading. Fruit slumps over. "Sure. I'll make a new batch for dinner."

"PogU!" Illumina cheers, already ladling a fresh batch into his bowl.

"Pog you?" Fruit repeats, confused.

"Oh, um. It's when something cool happens." he explains.

"Ooh." he answers reflexively. Then his brain catches up to him and he sighs, thinking very hard about how this was supposed to be an interrogation. Instead he's learning the cool kids slang.

"D'orry," Illumina mumbles around a mouthful of soup, recognizing his exasperation. He swallows it down to talk more clearly. "I just haven't had anything like it in a long time, you know? Just bread and apples."

"...Okay." Fruit frowns. "How long have you been on 2b2t?"

"Um," he's quiet for a while. The back of his neck itches, and he has to remind himself that he's probably just checking his statistics. "31 days. Oh. I have to go back."

"You can't go back." Fruit says automatically.

"What?" The chair creaks as Illumina rises, bowl forgotten. "I have to. HBG - "

"There's no hub to leave." Fruit cuts in. He files the name away for later. A person? A place?

Illumina stays frozen, either in shock or disbelief. "There's always a hub."

"I know," he says, patient. He doesn't know how many times he's explained this to newbies, watched the hope drain out of their eyes. "But not in 2b2t. One of the factions found a way to break the hub portal and prevent everyone from leaving. People can come in, but they can't leave. Only an admin can rebuild that portal."

A pause. Illumina's voice is quiet, slow. Like he's reaching deep into himself to drag out a question he can already answer. Like maybe if he asks slowly enough, the universe will take pity on him and give a different response. "Where's the admin?"

Fruit stares at a bug crawling up the leg of his table. This is always the hardest part. "No one has seen him in years."

-

He hadn't been there when the portal hub was broken. He thinks that if he had the ability to leave 2b2t, he would have done so in a heartbeat. No one wanted to stay in such a monstrous land except the visionaries or those who were monstrous themselves.

Fruit was neither. But he had visited the portal hub, once and only once, when he could still see clearly. Somewhere deep down, he thought there could be some way to fix it.

The ruined pillars told him otherwise. Where there should be a beautiful, well-maintained room with a tall marble arch beckoning players into the shimmering in-between, there was only crumbling broken stone, scattered carelessly to the mercy of the elements. It had been so long that grass was growing through the cracks.

Nothing remained of the doorway.

invitations to hesitate to

Fruit had been in the mood to bake some pumpkin pie.

Truth be told, there wasn't really much to do in his base. He'd built everything necessary a while ago, and farm work mostly took care of itself. The only thing that put him out of sorts lately was the carrot thievery. But with his mystery visitor accounted for, life went back to being as steady as life could be. So he rolls up his sleeves, fetches a pumpkin fresh from the patch, and cuts it in half.

His mystery visitor appears before he can even start scraping out the insides. He raises an eyebrow. "There's a door right there, you know."

"Nah. Doors aren't my style." Illumina says, sounding far too chipper. He hops down from the window sill that he'd crawled through, investigating the room with all the curiosity and grace of a cat. "What's that?"

"A pumpkin." Fruit lifts out a handful of goopy insides, dumping it into a bucket.

Illumina takes one look inside and backs up so fast he crashes into the wall. Fruit laughs at him, any awkwardness he might've had dissipating. "Have you not seen a pumpkin before?"

"It's disgusting," Illumina wails. "What is that? It looks like a bunch of orange hair attached to seeds. Please tell me you aren't going to eat that."

Fruit laughs at him some more. "That's the pumpkin guts. And no, I'm just going to save the seeds to roast. It'll smell good. Trust me."

"Nothing that horrible-looking can be any good." Illumina mutters, but Fruit detects a hint of melodrama in his voice. When he turns around, he hears the bucket clatter and has to suppress laughter.

Eventually Illumina slinks over to his side to watch him work. He doesn't say a word at first, just pulls up a chair and sits there quietly. Fruit is fine with that. Baking is something of a routine at this point, something that lets his hands create while allowing his mind to fade into peaceful blankness. If Illumina wants to stare at him, he's fine with that. Plenty of people have stared at him before. He got the nerves at first, still does, but it always fades.

"I haven't had a pumpkin before," Illumina offers, eventually. "I speedrun a lot, so I just kinda focus on stuff that's easy to get."

"Like bread and apples," he muses, but his mind is turning.

A speedrunner. Someone who Runs through world after world, clearing out the dragons that lurk in the End. It's a popular service, as thousands of worlds form every day. Some players choose to Free the End on their own, but for a non-speedrunner, the fight against the dragon is often perilous, deadly, and a matter of hours if not days. Most hire a speedrunner to do the job. Somehow, he isn't surprised. Illumina radiates a skittish energy, always up and raring to go. He can easily picture him dodging blazes and slaying the dragon. "What's your pb?"

"My personal best?" Illumina parrots, sounding surprised that he'd known enough to ask. "23 minutes, 51 seconds. Version 1.7.2." A sigh. "I've probably been beaten by now."

Fruit's done scraping out the inside of the pumpkin. He sprinkles some ground spices into the

pumpkin puree and stirs. “Hey, that’s pretty good.” From what he remembers of the speedrunning scene, anyway. His knowledge might be a few years out of date.

The black blur that makes up Illumina at the periphery of his vision wiggles in a pleased fashion, so he must not be wrong. “Yeah, it’s - it’s *decent* I guess. How do you know about speedrunning? Do you speedrun?”

His excitement is obvious. Fruit smiles despite himself. “Nah, just heard a bit about it. I was thinking about trying it out when Minecraft grows. More mobs, less painful respawns, that kind of thing.”

“That is so true,” Illumina says gravely. “Respawns *suck*.”

“Yeah.” Fruit agrees, dragging out the vowels. He pauses, wondering if he should tell him. Couldn’t hurt, right? “I wanted to speedrun the fun categories. Like get a stack of lime wool, that one sounds fun.”

“No way!” Illumina gasps, sitting up straight. “There’s this one new seed they found that gives you five groups of sheep all together in the same area, and it’s pretty competitive because you can get the iron pretty easy, but the rng for the wool drops can really kill a good run - ”

Fruit listens to him ramble about the strategies people had invented to get lime sheep and better drops faster, occasionally chiming in with his own thoughts. Eventually Illumina slows down. “I can’t believe you know about this. Speedrunning is cool.” he says, all in a jumble.

“Just cool?” Fruit teases, earning him a swat.

“Don’t look at me like that! You know what I mean.” he complains and falls quiet, seemingly depleted of his words.

Fruit pours the pumpkin puree into the crust he’d prepared the day before, and Illumina lays his head on the counter, just looking at him. It’s more comfortable than it should be, co-existing in the same space with someone he’s only known for all of two days. It’s probably because he hasn’t seen another player in a while. If he’s craving company, no one has to know.

Eventually, he’s slid the last tray into the oven, and out of a whim he skates his hand along the counter until he comes in contact with the black lump that is Illumina. He snags what he hopes is his sleeve. It’s criminally soft. “Help me wash.”

Illumina comes to life with a yelp and a frankly unnecessary amount of flailing. He’s starting to think that screaming might be part of his brand. It’s somehow endearing. “Oh gosh, okay.” he says, voice cracking. “Washing, yup, gonna get to it right away.”

Once he gets started, he’s really not that bad. They fall into an easy rhythm. Illumina washes the equipment, Fruit dries and sorts it. He’s also got unwashed bowls and cutlery for weeks, but Illumina doesn’t mention it. In fact, he cleans up pretty well. It’s a win-win for Fruit all around.

That is, until Illumina says: “What if we found the admin?”

Fruit frowns. “What?”

“The admin’s missing, right?” he clarifies. “So what if we went and looked for him?”

“We?”

“It could be ‘I’,” Illumina backtracks. “But do you want to stay here?”

“I don’t know,” Fruit says, slowly, half-wanting to watch him squirm. “It’s pretty cozy here, I mean.”

“Oh.” he might not be able to see Illumina that well, but he can hear him deflate. “Sorry to assume.”

“Just kidding.” Fruit nudges him. “I hate it here. Get me out.”

“Why would you say that,” he grumbles, but without heat. “Okay, I know the admin’s been missing for a while, but what if we asked around? Maybe there’s someone who’s seen him, or knows a way to contact him.”

Fruit digests this. “I mean, we could, but when I was active in 2b2t nobody really knew much.”

“When were you last active in 2b2t?”

The bowl he’s wiping slips out of his grasp with a clatter. He reaches blindly for it. “...2 years ago.”

-

He doesn’t remember arriving in 2b2t very well. One moment he was falling through the void, struggling for breath. In the next moment he was collapsing onto cobblestone. Then a sword went through his chest and he was dead again. There hadn’t even been any time to react.

When he finally picked his way out of spawn, he saw nothing but destruction; a canyon in the earth where grass and animals should be. Cobblestone stairs stretched into the sky and formed fragmented pathways to nether portals. He remembers going through one. He remembers coming face to face with a wither.

It had loomed over him, all three skulls with their jaws unhinged in a parody of a grin, and then the first hit withered away his entire arm and all he could think was ‘oh, shit’. And he was back on the cobblestone platform, pulling himself to his feet inch by painful inch. Blood was everywhere, both fresh and dried. He wondered how much of it was his.

One day he’d just. Left. Walked out thousands of blocks, until the destruction became a backdrop became nonexistent. Then he chopped down some trees, and built a home.

He doesn’t really remember why he left. Maybe he just got tired of it all.

(that’s a lie.)

-

To his credit, Illumina doesn’t bring it up again until they’re sitting at the table, enjoying the freshly baked pie. Fruit thinks he’s outdone himself with the flaky, buttery crust. He knew that he’d added too much water to the pie dough last time.

Unfortunately, he does bring it up again.

“We could ask around.” he offers. There’s something like hope in his voice.

Thoughts of Fruit’s baking slowly evaporate from his head. He shrugs. “I guess.”

A pause. “Do you think there’s no hope?”

Again with the disarming questions. Fruit shrugs again, feeling his wings buzz anxiously. He’s sure his face must look miserable but he doesn’t really care to change. “I didn’t say that.”

“You don’t really sound like you want to do it, either.” Fabric rustles, like Illumina is fidgeting in his chair. He’d barely convinced him to not sit on the table earlier. This man has pent up energy for days. “It’s okay if you don’t want to. I can go back and try to figure out something.”

“It’s not that I don’t want to.” Fruit says, feeling so present in this discussion that it’s a little uncomfortable. When was the last time he talked to another player like this? When was the last time he had to justify his opinions, lay out his arguments in straight neat lines? Too long. His head is a mess. “I just can’t. Don’t really want to go back to what 2b2t is. I’ve got a base here and everything. I’ve left it all behind.”

There’s a panicky black hole yawning wide inside of him, threatening to swallow him whole. *Don’t take me back there. Not without my sight. Not with everything I’ve lost.*

“Ah,” Illumina says, understanding. “No, yeah. I saw the spawn. Not a lot but - y’know.”

“It was kinda destroyed, yeah.” he agrees, trying for a weak smile.

Illumina laughs, a little sad. “Understatement of the century.”

less ways to wish for

There's a saying that you're made of the five people you spend the most time with. When you spend time with someone, you absorb pieces of them. Their mannerisms, their inflections, their knowledge. Fruit doesn't remember where he'd heard it from, but he's using it as justification as to why he's talking to Illumina's cat.

"Hello, Missie." He says when she rubs against his ankles.

"Do you want some food?" He asks the black tail disappearing under the couch.

"Do you miss your owner?" he mumbles one night, when his door creaks open of its own accord. Then, as the cat jumps up on his bed: "Oh god, don't you dare track mud on my sheets, I just cleaned them - "

Missie is too much like her owner. Prone to climbing up on surfaces, far too inquisitive for her own good, fast when she wants to be. Fruit once watched her drag an entire fish out of a river and immediately felt out of shape.

He's supposed to be feeding her, taking care of her, all that stuff. A few days before he was supposed to leave, Illumina had deposited her squarely on the table. "Can you take care of my cat?" he'd said.

"You have a cat?" Fruit had replied blankly.

"Yeah!" To prove it, Illumina petted the cat. It purred so loud, Fruit was forced to agree. That was indeed his cat. Who knew?

Anyway, Fruit is taking care of Missie while Illumina is off trying to figure out the whereabouts of the missing admin, and he's bored to death. He's only spent a week with Illumina, but somehow he's enriched his life way too much for him to go back to feeding his chickens and baking on odd days and sleeping through the rest. He wants to run around and take on an army of evil endermen. But mostly, he wishes Illumina would check in and tell him how he's doing. It's been a few days since he left.

At least he persuaded Illumina to wear armor. Briefly, he relieves the horror he'd felt when he realized Illumina was not only without enchanted diamond armor, but averse to it.

"I'm just not used to it." had been his response, followed by insistent attempts to pass it back. "The most I wear is iron, really."

Fruit vividly remembers wanting to curl up on the ground and sob in frustration. No matter how good Illumina is at speedrunning, he can't face players with superior gear and expect to win. He had then proceeded to impress this upon Illumina, at length and with passion.

" - Did I mention they have crystals, *Illumina*." He finished. "2b2t isn't made of slow mobs that you can see coming from a mile away, they have elytra and they explode crystals in your face and *that's why you need armor.*"

Illumina groaned, flopping sideways on the couch. A moment later, he perked up, distinctly more cheerful. "Are you worried about me?"

Fruit frowned. "What? No! It's just risky." He made a grab for the armor.

Illumina easily evaded his grasp and bolted out of the room. “Thanks, Fruit!” he yelled. The door to his bedroom closed with a soft *click*.

He can still remember the shit-eating grin in his voice. The smugness. What a bastard.

In whatever case, Illumina is definitely decked out, so that’s good. Fruit doesn’t need to worry about him. Fruit isn’t worrying. How can he worry about someone he barely knows? Never mind that he’s stayed up with Illumina till late, talking about whatever came to mind. Never mind that their conversations have evolved into friendly banter that he hasn’t had in years.

Suddenly irritated, he gets up, intending to chop wood till his brain’s fuzzy. It’s a wonderful day today, all warm and sunny. He shouldn’t be wasting it with introspection. Can you introspect about another person? Whatever.

Missie comes out of nowhere to twine between his ankles as he steps outside. “You and me both.” he says, a little fond. She just meows.

He turns in the vague direction of the trees and starts walking, but she gets underfoot again. “Missie.” he warns, stepping to the side. “If you’re looking for guilt pets after making a blind guy step on you, that’s kinda messed up.”

She meows again. He feels paws on the fabric of his tracksuit, and then claws. “What the hell!” he hisses, but Missie doesn’t let up. He crouches down, fully intending to pick her up and shut her in Illumina’s room. She can scratch his things.

When he passes through his living room, he freezes.

He normally doesn’t need his communicator. It might be portable, but all it does is show his coordinates and display death messages and private messages. He’d managed to smash the left side of the screen a while ago, so it doesn’t even do coordinates anymore. And no one messaged him, for obvious reasons. So he had just left it on the dining table today, figuring it wasn’t necessary.

But now, the communicator is vibrating in the way it does when he has unread private messages. He drops Missie on the couch and dives for it, scrabbling at the buttons.

The communicator turns on.

His stomach drops.

Illumina whispers to you: hey froub sry

His hands start to shake. Worst case scenarios swim through his mind.

fruitberries whispers to Illumina: what why

There’s no response for an agonizing minute. He curses himself, pacing back and forth. He has no way of knowing how long ago the message was sent. If Missie hadn’t clawed him, he never even would’ve thought to check.

He gave Illumina armor. He gave him armor.

The communicator buzzes again.

Illumina whispers to you: sry

Okay, maybe he was asking bad questions.

fruitberries whispers to Illumina: where are you

The response was way faster this time.

Illumina whispers to you: nether

The moment he sees it, he's equipping his armor, upturning shulker boxes to get his gear out. In his haste, he doesn't catch his newest messages.

Illumina whispers to you: dont come

Illumina whispers to you: pls

say you've been with me

Chapter Notes

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

When Fruit was younger, he lived in a world that was relatively simple. He had grown up, he had gone to Hypixel, he had spent most of his teen years rising through the ranks in tournaments. Unmatched in player versus player combat, they said. His situational awareness was insane, they said. His reaction times were on another level, though some did criticize the lack of strategy he exhibited. It wasn't long before he had sponsorships and praise flooding in.

He was happy. He was content. How many could say that they had found a career like his at his age? There was even talk that he was slated to enter the famed Minecraft Championship in a few years.

But even though the universe loved him, loved all players, the universe also wanted entertainment. And unlike Fruit, his happiness got boring real fast.

-

The nether roads are deserted.

That's the best thing about this situation, Fruit thinks grimly to himself. If the nether roads had players travelling through, there might be gossip about why the Fruitberries was suddenly running through the nether at best, and attacks at worst. He has time for neither of those.

He sorely regrets not asking Illumina for more information, but at the same time it would be pretty useless, seeing as 2b2t nether is a shredded landscape that lacks landmarks, and also he can't see in the first place. And his coordinate feature is broken. He vows to fix that when he gets home.

Briefly, he checks his communicator, and sees Illumina's latest messages displayed in big bold font. But there's nothing he can do and nothing that he wants to stop doing. So he says a silent apology and keeps going.

It's by a stroke of complete luck that he manages to find Illumina. Looking back, he'll wonder if the universe was seeing him kindly in that moment, a desperate wanderer combing the wasteland for his friend. He'll never know.

He smells it before he sees it.

Decay, thick upon the air.

And then a cold body, crumpled on the ground like a discarded toy.

"Illumina?" he goes, hardly daring to believe it. He kneels, wondering how the hell he's going to get him to eat a god apple, but Illumina saves him the trouble by groaning and reaching for his hand.

"I told you not to come here." he says, barely audible. The smell of decay grows stronger, and he realizes it's not just the air. It's coming from Illumina.

Suddenly he's very glad his eyesight is dogshit.

“And what, leave you to die from a wither attack?” he snarks, checking his vicinity just in case. The wither is gone. Either because Illumina ran far enough, or because it picked another target. He doesn’t really care, he’s just glad it’s gone.

“Dying anyway.” Illumina argues back, because clearly this is the most productive use of his rotting lungs. “Tried a god apple...not gonna make it, Fruit.”

Fruit shoves one at him anyway. “Eat this.” he says, and scoops up Illumina in a bridal carry. “We’re going home.”

“Home.” Illumina whispers, and falls quiet. He tucks his head into Fruit’s shoulder.

The journey back passes in what seems like seconds. He has no idea how he manages to find the right portal with how abysmal his sense of direction is, but he does. When the hot, arid dimension gives way to familiar just-rained air and knee-high grass, he almost cries with relief.

It’s not over yet, of course. He has to get Illumina to set his spawn while he’s still conscious. He has to, even if Illumina doesn’t feel that way, so he doesn’t end up on the blood-splattered cobblestone all alone. Fruit doesn’t know how he’ll get him back if he does.

He kicks the door of Illumina’s bedroom open, finally glancing down. “Illumina?” he tries.

Nothing.

This is the first time Fruit’s been close enough to make out his facial features. He’s nothing like what he thought he’d look; dark hair falls over one eye, ridged horns extend from his forehead and curve into the air. His eyes are shut, mouth downturned. He’s pale. Too pale.

The god apple that he’d told him to eat is still clutched in his hand.

Fuck.

“Illumina?” he croaks, already knowing the answer.

He takes the last few steps to his bedside, and lays the body down on the bed as gently as he can. He hovers, frozen and numb. He doesn’t know if he should pray for him. Of all the things they’d talked about, Illumina never said if he believed.

Oh god, why hadn’t he asked?

He arranges his body the best he can, and steps back. “See you at spawn.” he chokes. It will have to be enough.

His body evaporates between one breath and another. Fruit collects the contents of his inventory wordlessly, already planning how to sneak to spawn undetected. Is it worth it to try to track down a fortress to get blaze rods for invisibility potions? Can he grab Illumina and fly out of there? Will Illumina even be there by the time he arrives?

There’s a familiar meow at the doorway. “Oh, Missie.” he says, crouching to run his hand along her back and tail. “I’ll get him back, don’t worry. No matter what it takes.”

“Fruit?”

His world falls away.

He turns. Illumina’s sitting on the edge of the bed, blurry but whole and alive. He walks over to

him, and he's still there. He puts his hands on his shoulders, and he's still there.

"This is home?" he asks, dumbfounded.

Illumina grins up at him. It's one thing to see him with his features slack with death, it's another thing to see him when he's alive and well, his mouth pulled up into a smile. Despite his fierce horns, his eyes are a warm brown. It suits him.

He reaches up and pulls Fruit into a tight hug. It's only natural to go. Fruit flattens his hands across the expanse of his back, locking them securely into the embrace. He doesn't think he wants to let go. He wants to let go, if only so that Illumina doesn't hear him cry.

"This is home." Illumina confirms, and Fruit breaks down.

Chapter End Notes

i have a silly hc that to set your spawn you have to think that place is home :]

and that's a wrap! tbh, the story's not really done yet. i'd originally planned to keep writing all the way to them getting out, but then i kept adding scenes and suddenly what was only 20% of the story ended up being 5k words. so i thought it'd be best to wrap it up here, where fruit rescues illumina. if you want to read more, i've added this work to a series that i'll update at a far slower pace.

to belovedgamers, whom i wrote this fic for: if you've read this far, thank you so much! i tried to fit in the tropes you wanted the best i could. i hope you liked it!!

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