

poorly written guide on how to fold an origami star

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/54794023) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/54794023>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Lifesteal SMP
Relationships:	Ashswag & Reddoons , Ashswag/Reddoons
Characters:	Ashswag , Reddoons
Additional Tags:	Established Relationship , however. also , Ambiguous Relationships , Trust Issues , Character Study , Non-Linear Narrative , tagged as gen because it could be read either way , POV Second Person
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2024-03-29 Words: 2,161 Chapters: 1/1

poorly written guide on how to fold an origami star

by [oneirogen](#)

Summary

it's probably par for the course for you to dedicate yourself to this ultimately meaningless task instead of actually talking with your partner, but it's not like you've ever claimed to be *good* at this.

Notes

vaguely inspired by no big deal by dodie and the fic linked above. i'm sick and can't sleep and it's nearly 5am just take this away from me

- Inspired by [something stupid](#) by [starbamnk](#)

it's not even really about redd, when it starts.

the strips of paper are lined and white and when you remember to, numbered. make a loop— for the foundation, stability. pull through, fold over the edges, use your fingertips to make them puff up. easy.

that's thirty-one origami stars at the cost of a single graph paper and twenty-ish minutes of your time. you've got this shit optimized for minimum timeloss, which might beat the point of it being a quote unquote soothing, repetitive activity, but you shove that thought up away into the crawl space in your head. lots of things gathering dust up in there. if only the trash for your trash empire would accumulate at the same rate.

using colored papers would, probably, make them look nicer but that would require getting up from the floor and also, the graph papers give you neat, one centimeter borders to run a blade along. it's only when you make a sizable pile on the floor of your temporary bedroom that it occurs to you: 1. maybe you should keep a proper count of these and 2. when the fuck did three hours go by? you have things to do that's not folding origami. you have a business to run and coworkers to slowly drive crazy. get up from the floor, dumbass.

you do not, in fact, get up from the floor. it takes another one point five hours of folding paper and *get up get up get up* increasing in pitch and intensity in your head like kill bill sirens until redd mumbles something in his sleep and rolls over a little, which startles you enough to actually break away from your self-imposed task and shove everything into your inventory without giving a second thought to proper organization. near immediately, you can feel the weight of it sink into your chest, one that stretching your spine and rolling your shoulders would do fuck-all for, but you try anyway.

maybe that's the problem, you suppose, watching red's eyelids twitch in the dim light. maybe the problem is that you keep digging your heels in instead of letting go.

make a loop. pull through, pull again because if you leave even the slightest smidgen of an air gap this whole thing—barely the size of your thumbnail— will collapse in on itself, much like its namesake. fold over the edges, use your fingertips to make them puff up.

puff up is what he does, like a disgruntled cat poured into the form of a player. posturing, like it does anything to make the way he's keeping you in his peripherals more subtle. you don't need to be able to see his eyes to notice the way his body is angled towards you, left hand twitching back and forth from his hip, missing the weight of a sword.

the problem with redd is that he looks like you like he's stuck on the freeze frame right before a flinch.

honestly, you don't even know what to do about it, or whether you even *want* to do anything about it. you haven't spent this long weaving the tapestry of your reputation around yourself just to unravel the whole thing in one go, but maybe there's something to dragging your

partner up right in here with you, let the joke become an inside-joke until it's just a play between the two of you. what's that saying, what's yours is mine and what's mine is yours? something like that.

or maybe if you claw hard enough you'll be able to reach muscle and bone and whatever dried up, desperately-in-need-of-a-rainy-season well of tenderness lies underneath.

it's a stupid idea, you think, and fold another loop. in retrospect, you probably should've expected how long it would take to fold a thousand paper stars, as tiny as they are. if you'd picked cranes, at least, you have the excuse to fall back on the old legend of a thousand paper cranes granting a wish, but right now you have nothing but too many sleepless nights and half-spun, barely formed dreams.

pull through. fold over the edges until the piece is at just the right thickness: too thin and it collapses, too thick and it refuses to fold. use your fingertips to make them puff up. easy.

easy.

easy. easy. this should be easy. you *know* people, what makes them tick and turn, and you know redd, so why wasn't this easy?

“what's it going to take? how many times do I have to say it before you believe me?” you pull at a strand of hair, frustrated, and redd looks at you the same way he always does.

“a thousand,” redd drawls, grins at you and you shove his shoulder, scoffing, but the idea sticks in your head like a leech to skin even long after the moment is lost to roughhousing.

okay so maybe it's a little bit about redd. maybe it's about the shine to his hair and blade and the sheer devastating, bottomless well of *if you're leaving i'm coming with you* and the way he throws out a biting remark so casually you'd only really realise you'd been mocked once you're blocks away, replaying the conversation in your head. maybe at some point – around the two hundred star mark – you start leaving little notes about redd's stupid, enchanted to hell and back glasses and sock puppets and things that remind you of him and everything else that you're never going to be able to say out loud.

LOYALTY, you scribble in, half furious at yourself for giving in and still, strangely feeling as though you are thawing under the sun.

make a loop. pull through, fold over the edges, tuck in the last flap and then place your fingertips – *not* the nails, contrary to expectation– right at the edges to make them puff up.

boltzmann's brain is a thought experiment where, if given enough – a large, though not infinite – amount of time, the atoms of a void are capable of spontaneously arranging themselves to form a functioning brain. for just an instance, everything aligns in order. the world is not still, perhaps, but quietly waiting.

so, a glitch, if you want to be petulant about it.

a glitch, by nature of being a glitch, is one of a kind, spontaneous. you should not exist. no one else exactly like you will ever exist. at every given second your code warps, fixes itself, destroys itself – never-ending goddamn cycles.

the distinction between bugs and glitches is that bugs persist where glitches don't. maybe your lack of dedication to relationships was just a part of you that was predetermined by whatever initial change in voltage that created you, a change so insignificant and minor it's pointless to set any kind of failsafe or net to catch it, because it won't. you've lived your entire life knowing you could be unraveled at any moment, by virtue of the fact that you shouldn't *exist*.

nihilism, you know. everything you want you had to claw up for in spite of your own self.

so in the middle of night, five paces away from the form of your partner sleeping on your shared beds: you pour all the stars into a jar; realise, belatedly, you have too many just for one jar; end up pouring all of it into two of the largest bottles you own, seal the top shut with twine and cork and then promptly forget about it.

hah. you wish. if only it was that easy.

the problem isn't even redd, the problem is that you want things so badly it aches in your teeth. the problem is that you have hundreds of stars in a bottle and not once have you thought about actually showing it to anyone. to show it would be to admit that you care, care so deeply that the magnitude of it scares you, that you don't know what to do with any of it except turn it inwards and let it jab at every soft part of you.

“you're so angry about it,” redd had said once, thrown out into the air in a way that you know means he's been thinking about it for a while, despite the nonchalant, *woah who said that* effect to the way he's speaking. he's watching lava bubble under his fingers, close enough to be burnt. you've watched him be burnt before, and you don't know why he does it. you don't ask either. it had taken you a minute to break your focus away from running calculations long enough to blearily focus on him.

“about?”

“i dunno man. anything you care about, i guess.”

what even the fuck, dude. give a guy a warning.

i'm not, you want to say, and it burns in your mouth like spice because caring has always felt a little bit like it should hurt, otherwise it wouldn't be for you. red turns to look at you, an orange glow cast over what little you can see of his face, and you think he knows.

of course he fucking knows. the two of you are cut from the same cloth; power-hungry, reaching for the stars. your neuroses are the same flavour as his. it's why you flinch when he moves too suddenly and why he looks at you like he's waiting for the moment you decide to

leave him. idiots, the pair of you, circling each other like a binary star system in a convoluted game of who's going to leave who first.

it would be so easy, is the thing, to place the stars in his open palms and let him *see*. you're not even sure how many you've made at this point – you lost count at the eight hundreds, and according to the volume calculations you'd shoddily put together in the hours of the morning when even the ocean rolling above your base seemed to be subdued, you've well surpassed a thousand already.

it would also be the hardest thing you've ever done, and you're currently in the midst of contributing to sea pollution on a level that oil companies could only begin to dream of.

here's how to make an origami star: firmly, carefully.

leave the expectation at the door that you will get it right the first try. but there's no pussyfooting around to it either, you either crease this edge *well* or you watch the entire delicate structure you've created fall apart in your hands. origami is an art, alright, and you've barely dipped your toes into it. you can make paper cranes and lotuses and little jumping frogs. you can make enough stars to drown a small toddler or maybe a squiddo but it means little if you can't just reach across this three pixel gap between the edge of his bed and yours and just–

you think most functional relationships are about being good to each other, in whichever form that takes. and remembering to do your own half of the chores, whether the chore is managing a trash empire or not.

so what's it going to take? how many times do you two attempt this play again before you figure out what makes him skip over the edge of that freeze frame? how long until your luck runs out, reaches the upper limit of whatever keeps you sustained?

the world, quietly waiting. the ocean rumbles above you, white noise, and redd scrunches his face up and rolls over, seeking warmth and finding none. when he cracks his eyes open you clamp down on the instinctive urge to shove everything back in your inventory and hide – yourself – your bottles, your thousand and then some stars with an equal amount of secrets written in them which, in the end, all just amount to the same secret.

well, shit. you've come this far. your hands are steady when you nudge the bottles closer to him, or when he unravels the first star with calloused fingers carefully, picking at the folded flap. this is probably crossing some line from professionalism to so personal, it would probably be *tmi* to discuss it in front of someone else.

good thing the only people around are just the two of you then.

“i was joking, you know.” redd's eyes are fixed firmly on the stars spilling around him, the unfolded strip of paper still held in his grasp with the same care he shows to his shades. his voice is hoarse. in the morning, he'll blame it on having been unceremoniously woken up.

“i know,” you tell him, and you don’t know how to gentle the words but you can give him this, at least. it’s pointless, a safety net unable to catch anything, barely a drop in the ocean when there’s so much else anyone else would be able to do for him, but.

you catch his eye in the dark, shining, and you know, he gets it too.

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