

said you'd pray for me (your hands around my neck)

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by [immolxtion_stxtion](#)

Summary

The dark has to be doing something to him. The hunger too. He can feel every inch of his stomach, pitted and desperate, and after the first few days of raging and railing and swearing, it's still not gotten any more full. It's almost like they've left him here to rot, decided that this time, there's no fixing him. They clearly don't want the liar around, not when he's so willing to escape. They'll let Ash die like this, alone in the dark, weak and pissed.

"I thought that I was getting better."

Emptiness | Setbacks | "Take it easy."

Notes

We are running in the same loose timeline as [day 21](#), and [day 28](#). This story sits right in the middle of both pieces, and throws reference to an (as of right now) unwritten, extra story.

Context and clarity out of the way, let's get some eye horror up in this bitch, no?

Title is from Hypocrite by Of Virtue.

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

Note to self: do not try to run away from the cult keeping you captive, especially when you've been pressured into saying you believe in their god.

In Ash's defence, he thought he could get away with it. He'd been beaten to a pulp, broken down with nothing left to lose. He said the vows, made the promises that he never meant to keep, and then dealt with Clown's hands on his skin, gentle in a way that sickens him to his core.

Even though he didn't want to, never planned on it, Ash went compliant. He buried the defiance in his spine six feet deep, and went along with whatever they wanted. He gained their fucking trust, and almost got away with it too, *if it weren't for those meddling kids*. Meddling Clown? Meddling dickhead, the asshole who thinks he's in charge of Ash's whole life.

Clown caught up with him right when Ash thought he was safe, halfway through the maze of tunnels that make up this godforsaken place. If he just could have made it a bit further, he could have found an exit, a staircase, maybe even a manhole cover, if he was lucky. There had to have been an exit in his reach, and Clown came in and fucked it all up.

His head still aches, a throbbing little pain that either came from being slammed against the floor, or the fact that he hasn't eaten in several days. Clown carried his thrashing body back, and then dropped him in a dark little room, sealing it shut behind him. If Ash was claustrophobic, he would have already broken down. As it is, he's starting to see things, grassy fields and bustling cities, places so bright that they're practically from a dream.

The dark has to be doing something to him. The hunger too. He can feel every inch of his stomach, pitted and desperate, and after the first few days of raging and railing and swearing, it's still not gotten any more full. It's almost like they've left him here to rot, decided that this time, there's no fixing him. They clearly don't want the liar around, not when he's so willing to escape. They'll let Ash die like this, alone in the dark, weak and *pissed*.

If they're going to kill him, they should at least kill him properly. He didn't survive through beatings and bruising and all of the shit done to him just to die like *this*. It's pathetic. It's a disgrace.

Light floods into Ash's prison, sharp enough to cut him open. He can't help the way he flinches away from it, head throbbing and body weak. There's no mercy, no time for his eyes to adjust, and while the cruelty is expected, it doesn't stop Ash from squinting, only a few seconds from closing his eyes all together.

But closing his eyes means being weak, unprepared, unaware, so he doesn't do it. He keeps his eyes open and looks through the floodlights aimed at him, making out Clown's silhouette in the doorframe.

Instinctively, he bristles, a sharp thread of something that feels like *fear* coiling in his gut. He's not afraid of Clown. He'll never be afraid of such a stupid-looking motherfucker, who talks like he's always in a library.

Ash can't let himself be afraid of Clown, or it's the beginning of the end. He's come too far to be scared now.

Slowly, he raises his shaky head, ignoring how doing so feels like fighting against a thousand pound weight, like sticking his eyeballs into a vat of boiling water. The light hurts, but he refuses to look away. Clown moves further into the room with steps that make no sound, and crouches down in front of Ash.

His fingertips are soft against Ash's face—at least, until he tries to pull away. Then, Clown's grip turns bruising, forcing Ash's head to stay in place, close by. "You really thought you could escape, didn't you?"

It's a question that begs no answer. Of course Ash did. Clown's been stuck with him this whole time; he knows Ash and his determination better than anyone else. He knows that Ash is a rabid dog backed into a corner, ready to lash out at everyone in sight. He should have known that Ash never meant his vows.

Answers under torture are never accurate answers, after all.

He meets Clown's stare dead on, raises his eyebrows. It's more than enough of a response. Ash has gotten good at those, after all. When he can't fight, he'll speak. When he can't speak, he'll scream. When he can't scream, he'll use every hell-given inch of his face to show just how many fucks he gives.

Clown clicks his tongue disappointedly. "Of course you did. And here I thought you were getting better. You said the vows, Ash."

"It's on you for thinking I meant them," he retorts, because it really is. How stupid and deluded does this man have to be? What kind of person says a few sentences and then is irreversibly changed? Does he not know jack shit about manipulation and lying? "I'm not the idiot here."

The grip on his face turns bruising, instantly reminding Ash of the fact that he has jawbones, and that they have a shape. He's not meant to feel that shit. Bones are un-feelable for a reason. "There will be consequences for that."

"I'm not stupid, *Clown*," he spits, with a vengeance. "Do you think I don't know how this works? Break my fucking bones. I don't give a single shit." They aren't going to have Ash. They don't get to take him alive. He's used to the pain. He's used to the hurt.

Clown lets go of his face, grabbing him by the collar instead. He yanks Ash to his feet, uncaring of how the shirt tightens around his neck. "Trust me, I know. Nobody is quite as infuriating as you."

"Are you flirting with me?" Ash asks flatly, torn between digging his feet in to make Clown have to actually *try* to drag him around, and going wherever Clown is taking him, because he really doesn't want to be reverse-choked. "You're so fucking weird. What the hell's wrong with you, huh? You're a deranged individual."

"Shut up," Clown says, dropping his grip on Ash's collar to wrap an unforgiving grip around his bicep. Ash momentarily considers biting him, but settles on trying to trip him with a well-placed ankle. "I would advise you remember your place."

"Suck my dick," he retorts, rather intelligently. It does not stop Clown from dragging him down catacomb hallway after catacomb hallway, passing by rooms full of candles, books, and the occasional group of people chanting. It's fucking *weird*. Their voices stay with Ash even once he's long past them, a chill that refuses to go away.

He can't help but wonder what Clown's got in store for him today. Maybe it's a little masochistic, but he's had no choice but learn how to become one, because there's no escape from the pain. If Clown wants to inflict it, he will inflict it. Ash had to learn to revel in it, or else sell his soul away and die. He's been beaten, bruised, whipped, had his nails pulled out and his bones broken, knelt on glass, and then had to pull every shard of it out himself. There's nothing they can do that scares him.

Clown pulls him into a room, shoves him into the chair sitting in the middle of it. A table rests in front of him, barebones wood with cracks in the grain, stained darker in some parts. He almost wants to ask what the stains are, but knowing this place. Ash wouldn't like the answer.

It physically *pains* him to stay in the seat, but Clown shoots him a look sharp enough to bleed, and his hand drops to his side, a good sign for Ash to stay the fuck still, and shut the fuck up. Unfortunately, only the first one is possible, and Ash opens his mouth, foolish as it is.

“Clown, look. I know you’re glad to see me back and all, but I was right in the middle of something. Can you save the feast for once I’ve gotten my shit together?”

Getting his shit together would look something like being back on the surface, tasting sunlight and pollution and the sounds of people, but Clown doesn’t need to know that. He can just let Ash go, and everything will be nice and swell. There’s gotta be other people for him to pick on. He won’t even miss Ash! He’s said himself that Ash is more trouble than he’s worth. Ash being gone would be good for the both of them.

“You’re not getting out of this,” Clown says from somewhere behind Ash, and he can’t help the way he startles. He walks too fucking quietly, turning into a ghost the second he leaves Ash’s sight. “You know better than that.”

“And what if I don’t?” he asks, leaning into whatever will make Clown the most upset. Long-term light deprivation absolutely *has* to have negative consequences. “Who are you? What day is it?”

Clown scoffs, and then there’s a presence at Ash’s back, someone standing directly behind his chair. “I’m not stupid, and you aren’t either. Eat.”

A plate is dropped in front of Ash with a loud clatter, Clown’s arm brushing his shoulder as he places a fork down beside it. So Ash was right about the feast. Unexpected, but still nice.

The meat on the plate looks . . . raw, for a lack of other words. There’s practically blood still pulsing through it, oozing out over the sides to pool on the bottom of the plate. Pinkness saturates the whole thing, not a single sear mark or brown piece visible. Yeah, he’s not eating that. Like hell.

“Fucking make me,” he taunts, grabbing the fork anyway. The tines are blunted, but with enough force, it should make a half-decent weapon. Stupid move. “You want to kill me through food poisoning? Fucking food poisoning? You are one of the stupidest people I have ever met.”

Clown puts his hands on Ash’s shoulders with so little force that it is admirable, and also incredibly threatening. His fingers tighten, though the weight stays light, leaving Ash grimacing at the incredibly strange sensation. “Did I imply anywhere that it was a choice?”

“Did I imply anywhere that I *care*?”

Clown’s grip ratchets tighter, to the point of pain. “Ash. Eat.”

Ash picks up the fork.

Then, deliberately, he slams it tines-down into the table. It takes a bit of force, and his arm shakes a little, but when he drops his grip, it’s embedded deep enough in the wood to stand on its own. “Make me.”

“You underestimate just how used to you I am,” Clown says, letting go of Ash’s shoulders to go stand by the side of the table. “I can, and I will. I wanted to see if you’d behave for once.”

“Not very used to me then, are you?” he asks, leaning far enough back in the chair for it to rock, the front legs lifting off the ground slightly. “Shame.”

“Ash,” he says in the tone of voice that usually preludes a beating. “Eat.”

“I don’t think I will.”

“Have it your way, then,” Clown’s voice is clipped as he reaches for the fork, pries it out of the table. Ash watches as he lifts it into the air, tips it back and forth like he’s looking for imperfections. A couple of the tines are dented, maybe a bit more blunt than before, but if he’s looking for a hole in the metal, he’s not going to find one. Ash leans back into his seat, feigns relaxation, and waits to see what Clown does.

Shakiness coils in his gut as he does, the feeling that comes right before stepping on hot coals. It’s a feeling that he hates, because it means that Clown’s wormed his way into his system somehow, able to put him on edge with a single stare. Ash has tried to choke the instinct out of himself, but he can’t, so he simply tries to ignore it.

Clown grabs Ash’s chin with a firm hand, tight enough that he can’t look away, and Ash can’t quite ignore the fear anymore. He steels his bones, tries to control his breathing, and looks up. There’s a deeply, deeply displeased look on Clown’s face, violence visible in the set of his eyes. Whatever he’s going to do, Ash isn’t going to like it.

“This could be so easy for you,” Clown says, like he’s sorry. “You could be great, Ash.”

“I *am* great,” Ash responds, shows his teeth. He doesn’t need a fucking god when he’s the god of his own life. Nobody needs to be better than him. “Do you think so little of me?”

“I think you’re a fool who doesn’t know what’s best for him,” Clown says, and there’s a fervent passion in his voice. “It is a miracle you’re even wanted. It’s a miracle the Cleanser decided that he wanted you.”

“It’s a miracle that you don’t know how to shut the fuck up.”

The grip on his face tightens until it feels like Clown could rip his jaw clean out of the socket, eyes shining dangerously behind his mask. “It’s a miracle you haven’t learned your fucking lesson.”

Now he’s under Clown’s skin. *Good*. Ash can do so much more damage when someone’s mad at him. It leaves him as the one in control, despite the fear in his bones. “Punish me, oh teacher.”

Instead of responding, Clown raises his free arm, metal glinting. Right, the fork. What’s he gonna do, force-feed Ash food until he chokes on it? How fucking intimidating of him.

He expects Clown to move to the table, pull the meat to pieces, or even just pick it up in one piece, and force Ash to bite down. That’s standard. It’s what he would do. Clown does not shift his arm towards the table, to the discarded plate.

Clown brings the fork closer and closer to Ash’s face, only stopping when the thing is hovering in front of his nose. Something in Ash’s throat tightens, eyes blurring the more he tries to look at the metal, glinting dangerously in the low light. Whatever he thought Clown was going to do, this is not it. It reeks of danger, coils in Ash’s gut, and a part of him wants to take back everything he just said.

But he’s fucking Ash. He doesn’t take back *shit*, no matter what it means for him in the end. Even if his heart is skipping beats, and his hands are threatening to shake around the arms of the chair, he won’t apologize. All he can do is live this out.

Just like Ash’s lack of hesitation when it comes to his mouth, Clown has no hesitation when it comes to violence. One second, the fork is in front of Ash’s nose, and the next, it’s buried in his eye. Metal meets tissue with a sick squelch that Ash can feel reverberate through his whole fucking

skull, a hoarse yell ripping from his throat. Expectation doesn't match reality, and Ash can feel every single prong of the fork piercing through his eye, unforgiving and cold.

Tears stream down his face without hesitation, the temperature turning them bitingly cold within seconds. His eye *pulses*, throbbing with pain that threatens to split his skull in two, sharp in ways that a stab wound has never managed to be. Air cuts his throat open with each heaving gasp he tries to take in, mouth half open and hands clenched so tight around the arms of the chair that his fingers feel like snapping.

Instinctively, his eyelid tries to close, only to catch on the end of the fork, tapering off towards the handle. It scratches against fragile tissue, and Ash can't help but try to jerk his head away. Clown holds his face still despite it all, prepared for movement, and Ash can't help but think that he hates him more than he did before. It's a hard task to accomplish.

The fork slowly twists, and Ash is screaming again, vision whitening out into millions of lightning shocks. His voice bounces off stone walls, echoing over and over until it becomes a monstrous sound, but Ash can't hear it, body narrowing down to the blinding points of pain shattering his skull in two.

Clown says something, but none of it registers to him, hands flying up to close around Clown's wrist. If he can only get the fork out—

Clown lets go of Ash's face to force his hands away, nails digging into his pressure points viciously. He drops them, but only as an afterthought, jerking his head off to the side like it could pull the fork out. All it does is end with the fork scraping the back of his eye socket, and Ash can't help the noise that escapes him, weak and soaked in agony. He can't fucking see. One eye, both eyes, he doesn't know, but his vision is fucked, and it's hell made real.

Only once he's stopped struggling does Clown pull back, taking the fork with him. Tension blooms through Ash's temples, and he only realizes what it means when it's too late, both the fork and his eye popping out of his skull. Instead of looking at Clown, looking at the thing that used to be in his skull, Ash draws his knees to his chest, hands moving to cover the empty socket where his eye once sat.

It's damp to the touch, and Ash isn't sure if it's with tears or with blood, fingers sinking into his skull when he lays them over his eyelid. Pain reverberates through his skull, and he sobs, voice cracking around the noise, because there's nothing left for him to do *but* cry. He's missing an eye. He's missing a fucking *eye*, half blind and stuck underground until Clown gives up on him and slits his throat like a pig.

Despair finds a home in Ash's chest, strong enough that he can't tell if the tears in his eyes are from it or from pain. If he makes it out of here, he won't be all in one piece. Clown, despite his soft voice and occasional shock of kindness, will make sure of it. He's going to make sure Ash dies in this godforsaken place.

His chest shudders weakly, breath catching and stuttering and slowly failing him, much like the hope he's tried to keep alive. Clown has his eye. Clown is watching him break. There is nothing Ash can do to stop any of this.

Slowly, he lowers his arms from his face, banding them around his knees. It's the most comfort he's going to get, tears streaming down his face like a waterfall. He rests his face on his kneecaps, presses them into his eye sockets like he can pretend the pain, now reduced to a dull throb, is from his position. This feels like a bad dream, even as every part of him screams the truth.

This is his life. This, despite the way everyone says otherwise, is his own personal hell.

Clown reaches out, and he forces Ash to let go of his knees, tips his head right back up. His nose is stuffed, so he breathes through his mouth instead, tears finally drying on his face as he stares at Clown, the man who has single-handedly made his life miserable.

Whatever he expected blindness to be like, it's not. Instead of seeing blackness, there's simply *nothing*, one eye frantic while the other is simply not there. It's like trying to see out of his elbow. He simply *can't*, and it's as nauseating as it is disorienting.

Clown does not say a single thing, just looks at Ash, who looks at him, right up until Clown moves his other hand, and Ash can see the mangled form of his own eye still stuck on it. It's off-white, veined with red, the pupil of it out of his range of sight. Maybe it's a blessing that he doesn't have to look at it, despite the curiosity burning in his chest.

Maybe, it's a fucking curse, because Clown moves his hand from Ash's chin to his lips, tapping on the bottom one before making a *here comes the airplane* move with the fork. Nausea burns in his chest, vicious and violent and strong enough to nearly make him vomit, filling up the empty space his tears left behind.

Clown brings the fork closer and closer, not stopping until it's pressed against Ash's lips. The texture makes him even sicker, but he doesn't fight, opening his mouth and letting Clown place it between his lips.

The fork pulls back, and Ash does not hesitate. He bites down, and his eye pops between his teeth like an overripe fruit, bitter and disgusting on his tongue. Under Clown's watchful guidance, he chews it to a pulp, swallowing down the remnants of his sight.

End Notes

This . . . feels unreal. Whumptober has been a constant in my life and my writing ever since the prompts were announced in September, and now it's over, with a completionist as well! Chronic illness works hard, but we work harder. This was a fun month, but I am never attempting a full completion ever again, LMFAO. My plan upon completing this month was to take a break from writing for a week or two, maybe catch up on some videos, but alas, I cannot stay away from a good story. I've got some fun stuff in the works, and a new WIP that's dragged me away from YouTube, so here's to writing, and the stories that refuse to let you rest.

All of my affection goes out to those of you who stuck around this month, with a huge thanks to Moon, for both enabling and working with me to achieve this absolutely insane feat <3 happy Halloween, everyone!

P.S. if you enjoyed the grand Whumptober saga, I can safely say I have some bonus stories waiting in the wings to be written, so this series isn't complete just yet :)

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