

## the world is melting

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## the world is melting

by [polyesterdreams](#)

### Summary

Etho walks through the snow fort, and everything is wrong.

### Notes

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

Etho walks through the snow fort. It's pristine, and silent, and there are no signs of the wither fight that took place hours earlier. (He doesn't want to think about that too much.) He spots an area of the south wall that has been repaired with dirt where someone had entered the day before.

The air is cold as he comes to a stop at the staircase. He only admits his design *is* kind of ugly when there's no one around to hear. He is alone now, he thinks, ignoring the prickle at the back of his neck that tells him someone is *watching*, watching and waiting for his guard to be let down. His hand is on the hilt of his sword even as he fakes nonchalance.

He resumes walking, the frosty ground crunching beneath his feet. Clouds of mist appear in front of his face whenever he takes a breath. (In, out, in, out, in.)

There is a thud and a crunch as someone lands behind him, breaking through the top layer of frost. He knows it's Bdubs before he turns around. He also knows something is *wrong*, the air is constricting his lungs and the birds are not singing. It is too quiet and too loud all at the same time.

When he turns around, Bdubs looks wrong too. He doesn't know why.

*Hey*, Etho wants to say, *I missed you*. His tongue is heavy in his mouth and he says nothing. They stand, facing each other silently for long enough that it would have plenty of time to become awkward silence if it were anyone else, but this is his Bdubs and he is one of Etho's closest friends.

Bdubs crosses the distance between them and embraces Etho, slowly enough he could pull away if he wants to. He hugs him back. It's wrong. Something about this is *wrong* like it's not supposed to happen and, and, "I thought you were *dead*," there it is.

"*I am.*"

As he pulls back, Etho realizes what was so off-putting with his appearance. This Bdubs is *yellow*, his glowing eyes standing out from his tan skin like a sick joke. His Bdubs is dead. (The reminder of this hits him like a slap to the face.) This Bdubs is changing, shifting with a sickening crunch and snap of bones, shrouded in shadows as he grows wings and sheds his mossy cloak and-

It's Grian.

This Bdubs is Grian and his Bdubs is gone (and he would give anything at that moment to see him again.)

Grian stands in front of him and he is holding a crossbow, arrow nocked and pointed at his head. He wants to scream, he wants to ask *why*, *why did you kill him*, even though he *knows* why and Lizzie is dead and so is Bdubs and it's his fault he was too slow- The words catch in Etho's throat, stuck on barbed wire, and he says nothing.

"Do you know what he said, Etho? At the snow fort, before he died?" He doesn't.

"*He said you loved him,*" Grian releases the arrow. It stops midair before it makes contact with his head, turning into a clock and harmlessly clattering to the ground. He feels a pain in his heart all the same as if he was stabbed, and he looks down and wants to *laugh* because there *is* a blade

sticking out of his chest and he *was* actually stabbed and it's the funniest thing in the world to him at this moment. Grian cackles and the walls of the snow fort *melt*, turning red as the water drips like Bdubs' blood, a stark contrast to the bright green blood running down Etho's chest (and staining his hands and smeared through his hair but there is blood *everywhere*) and he still wants to laugh. The sky is black and the stars are gone as if the clouds that filled the air during the wither fight have re-appeared, and then he remembers the wither never spawned in this world *wherever he is* because the snow fort was unblemished as he walked through it and no wonder it all felt so, *so wrong*.

Grian is cackling and Etho wants to join him but he's choking on his own blood and there is a new voice that fills the air from behind him and it's *Tango* of all people, it's *Tango* who stabbed him moments before. He wonders if Tango would have stabbed him before had he gotten the chance. (He would have deserved it, he thinks.) "Goodbye, Etho."

The last blocks of the snow fort melt, filling the air with a strong metallic scent. The liquid funnels into a river snaking through the terrain and suddenly he's standing on the black sand of a shallow bank. The two red lifers that were with him are gone, suddenly, as if they were never there, as if Etho was always standing here, on this river-side. It's the same river where he stole the brewing stand, he thinks, even if it's red and the beach and the sky are black and the voices that were there when he snatched the stand are nonexistent, now. The same chest is on the other side.

His chest doesn't hurt anymore (adrenaline is one hell of a drug) but he is still *bleeding* and he is going to die and- he really doesn't want to be down to two lives. He doesn't want to be yellow like the Bdubs that was suddenly Grian and... He doesn't want to be so close to being dead, knowing each step, each *breath*, could be his last. He wades across the river (Somehow, he knows whatever is inside the chest is important.) The liquid is too thick to be water and it is red and smells of iron and he *really* doesn't want to think about how he knows damn well what the river is full of. He slips on a mossy rock (Hah,) and as his head goes under the *blood* he gasps on instinct and his lungs burn but he *does not die, why isn't he dying, he should be dead three times over*.

(He knows he is bleeding out, painfully slowly, as if the universe wants him to be alive for the next part of the story. It's a cruel joke. "The universe loves you," the End portal says. The End portal lies.)

Etho's blood mixes with that of the river, the swirls of green mixing in with the rest, turning parts of it a disgusting muddy mess. After what felt like hours, minutes, days, but was in reality only seconds, his head breaches the surface of the river, practically coughing his lungs up. He has to pull down his mask and for only a second he is glad he is alone as his old scars are visible again. Only a second. He hauls himself onto the other bank near the chest, hardly sparing the spilled blood a second thought. He still wants to laugh for some fucked up reason but he is choking on the lives that have been lost on this godforsaken server, the blood that has been shed over the past weeks, months, years, and it's *horrible*. He wants to get out of the borders of the world and run all the way to a different server (Hell, he misses Side Kit, even if the last time he saw her the fox was being an absolute nuisance) but he knows he can't (He has tried, and he has tried again, not for the

last time).

He opens the chest and there is a single clock staring up at him. It is mocking him, he thinks. He grabs it and throws it as hard as he can. It lands three blocks away, and now he wants to scream. (He is still choking, and he can not open his mouth.) Smoke pours out of the clock and it spirals up, up, up, growing into a spine-like shape and he knows what it is before it resembles any variation of what it will become. But he has fought plenty of withers before and he is *afraid* of this one in a way he has never been afraid of one before. Etho scrambles backward as the smoke from the clock grows three heads and it fucking explodes.

He is thrown back down the bank. He can't move. His head hurts. He can't move. If the sounds of a regular wither are bad, they don't come *close* to whatever this is. It's absolutely horrific, he thinks, as he listens to the bones clank against each other (the sounds ring out, out, and repeat, repeat, like a bell ringing in an enclosed room) and one of the heads makes a terrible shrieking sound. He wants to run away, crawl if he has to. He can't move.

The wither-bell-creature-thing is glitching, he thinks, as it doesn't stop shrieking and its cries grow louder and more distorted the more he stares at it, frozen in place. Blood pours from the wound in his chest, and through his fingers, and is smeared in his hair, and now there is blood pouring from his ears (it all mixes in with the blood from the river. Bright green quickly overtakes the red.) and he can't do this anymore, he just *can't*. He closes his eyes, unable to lift even a finger, as a fireball from the wither ignites the ground in front of him.

The river is on fire and Etho relishes in the irony of it all as the flames consume him just like they consumed his tree and his woolen home in another life. (He is so, so tired, as the adrenaline fades and his limbs shake and he just wants to sleep.)

He wakes up with a gasp in a damp cave, the other green and yellow lives sleeping nearby. The sporadic *drip, drip drip, drip*, of a leaky crack in the ceiling makes him think of the snow fort *melting and dripping and there's so much blood and everything hurts*. He thinks, for a fraction of a second, he sees a shimmer of yellow-or-some-other-color in the corner, where the air is slightly warped. Something is there (something along the lines of a ghost, if he's lucky. One of the reds if he's not-so.) until it isn't anymore, and. And. He's tired.

(The nightmare doesn't stop.)

End Notes

help girl i miss them

(Edited as of 4/1/2022 to fix, like, a lot of this,, oops)

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