

these are such sweet shortcomings

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by [unvexes](#)

Summary

post-death etho + bdubs reunion

tumblr: unvexes

Notes

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

Etho frantically tried to hold up his shield to protect himself from a blow he knew would be his last, but he wasn't fast enough. He felt the familiar feeling of an axe slicing through him, but this time he wasn't greeted by his bed, he was instead looking down at his corpse as Joel frantically ran the opposite direction.

He knew what being dead felt like. This wasn't exactly his first time doing this sort of thing, and so he floated to his body to inspect the wounds Joel had managed to deliver. The guy was much stronger than he gave himself credit for, especially after surviving for so long. It eats away at you.. that urge for blood, for vengeance.

His body was still clutching his shield, the last piece of Team BEST left for the world to see. He'd let them down.. but they'd let him down as well. All is fair in war, and sometimes that means breaking promises. And those promises that were broken were all that he could think about for a long time.

“Etho?”

He sort of forgot he wasn't the only one on this ghostly plane.

“Hey, Cleo.” After observing Joel’s damage on him and his armor a moment longer, he turned to face her.

“How’re ya holding up?” She had her arms crossed, but looked far more concerned than angry.

“I’ve been better.” She laughed, which was nice to hear among the chaos that was unfolding around them. “Have you seen Bdubs?”

“I knew you’d ask that.” He rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly while smiling beneath his mask. She began to float towards the Snow Castle, and Etho followed, occasionally phasing through trees just for the fun of it, “He found me right after I died and told me how excited he was to see you this soon.”

“Really? Oh man..” He smiled, he hadn’t really realized how much he’d missed Bdubs until now.

The pair made their way there slowly, sounds of voices drifting in and out of their ears as they passed certain groups along the way. Mumbo and Jimmy were sitting by the river, talking about Grian and Martyn, and how long they’d been waiting for them to finally die.

It was weird to hear after living for so long, to speak of death so casually felt freeing. He was dead and all his friends were as well.. It was like being alive but without the risks that came with.

“I’ll leave you here. Pearl wants me to come meet up with Scott now that he’s the last one of us left.”

Etho nodded and gave her a small wave as she phased from view. His closest ally was just within these walls. He didn’t know if he was ready.

Taking a deep breath, despite not needing to anymore, he phased through the wall and into the charred remains of the place he had all sorts of memories in.

Bdubs’ voice rang out, “Etho!” He had been sitting on the elevated platform near where their snow golems and chests had been kept, looking over the crater that they’d both called home.

He quickly approached Etho and opened his arms for a hug, which Etho happily obliged to. It was weird, to embrace as a non corporeal form, but it was so good to have something as familiar as Bdubs’ arms surrounding him.

Still embraced, Etho said quietly, “Bdubs.” He was smiling more than he had in a very long time, and was maybe a bit teary eyed. His voice was louder now as he continued, “I missed you, buddy.”

He pulled away, far too excited to see Etho to stay still. “I missed you too!” He floated around Etho, inspecting his wounds. “Joel and Grian truly are a force to be reckoned with! Well, not anymore.. obviously.”

“I died.”

It wasn’t like the realization had just hit him, he knew that. Just the fact that he was here with Bdubs and they were able to be happy while their bodies were left to be absorbed to the Earth was something he didn’t know how to comprehend. All he knew is that he was happier now than he had been when he was alive.

Bdubs’ grin faltered for a moment, before he said, “You did.. but hey, you lived longer than me!”

“That’s fair, yeah.” He chuckled, trying to dispel the odd sense of existential dread that had very

suddenly overcome him. “How have things been?”

He seemed hesitant, “It’s been.. okay.”

“Doesn’t seem like it.” Bdubs’ voice was always a dead giveaway for how he was feeling.

He turned away from Etho, sinking downwards slightly, “Lonely. It’s been lonely.”

“Where are Tango and Skizz?”

“Not here, obviously.” He was bitter. “I don’t really know if they’d want to see me after everything that happened.”

Etho’s brows furrowed, “Bdubs, of course they would.”

“Really?” Etho could tell this dilemma had been something he’d been struggling with since he died to Grian’s arrow. Bdubs shook his head, like he was disagreeing more with himself than Etho, “Watching over you has been good enough company, even if you couldn’t see me.”

“I think I knew you were there.”

“You did?”

“You wouldn’t leave me alone, even after death.”

“No way, man! I had to see what you’d do.”

“I wanted to kill Grian, for you.”

“You.. really?”

Etho nodded, he wasn’t really sure why he was telling Bdubs this, since none of his plan actually worked, “I hoped to get him instead of fighting Joel, but I got stuck with the ‘first red life’ himself.” Bdubs laughed quietly. “I couldn’t give you a life in time, so I thought I’d take away his.”

Bdubs just looked at Etho, smiling sadly, “You deserved to live.”

“No I didn’t.” He couldn’t help but laugh. “I didn’t do what I promised. I deserved to die as much as anyone else here.”

“What did you promise?”

Etho knew Bdubs’ knew the answer to his own question, he just wanted to hear Etho say it, finally, “To give you a life.”

“I thought we’d be buddies again.”

“We are now.”

“Why didn’t you?”

“There wasn’t enough time and I..” He sighed. “Bdubs, I love you, you know that, right? I never told you.”

“Grian said you didn’t ever care about me.”

He laughed, pitifully, “When have you ever believed what Grian tells you?”

“I dunno.” He drifted down to the ground and stared at the crater.

“Bdubs, of course I care about you. I would have done anything to bring you back there just..”

Without turning to face him, he said, “You ran out of time.”

He floated down next to him, and placed his hand on his shoulder, “Yeah.”

“It’s always about time with us, isn’t it?” Etho didn’t respond, but that was enough of an answer for Bdubs. He leaned against Etho as they both hovered a bit above the ground, staring into the blackened pit caused by numerous explosions, some life taking and some not.

“This place has so much death attached to it.”

Bdubs. Tango. Impulse. Probably more that he couldn’t think of at that moment.

“Well, we’re dead, so it makes sense for us to be here.”

“You died here.”

“I died everywhere.” He was smiling.

“I wish you hadn’t.”

“If I hadn’t we wouldn’t be here together right now.”

“Maybe we would be, just .. alive.”

“Oh.” He looked up at Etho like he was going to say something, but turned his head again.

Eventually, they would sit together in one of the remaining towers of the castle and stare into the sky. It was a peaceful life, that of death.

End Notes

(comments + kudos are very appreciated !!)

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