

## this is the death of beauty

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## this is the death of beauty

by [weareallstardustfallen](#)

### Summary

*You whispered to Renthedog: i want a truce*

*You whispered to Renthedog: just for an hour*

*Renthedog whispered to you: why?*

*You whispered to Renthedog: i want his body*

Or: When the dust settles, Scott walks into Dogwarts intent on bringing his husband home. Martyn follows.

### Notes

hello everyone! i have third life brainrot

this fic was actually written after session 7, and finished before the finale; i don't think there's any major inconsistencies, but if there are then that's why. also, the canon timeline does not work for this but it's not a major divergence, so it shouldn't be very jarring

warning for canon character death, grief, and panic attacks

also, the title of this is from wine red by the hush sound, because i listened to it on repeat for almost the entire time i wrote this

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

# Chapter 1

Scott couldn't sleep.

There was no real reason for it- the Crastle was peaceful, or as peaceful as it could be when the war had only paused for the night. Scar and Grian had fallen asleep quickly, and though Tango and Impulse had both been shifting for a long time they, too, had settled. Bdubs was on the top floor- he'd insisted on taking the watch, and no one had really felt like arguing with him.

There was no *reason* for him to be here, curled between two chests and turning his wedding ring over and over and over, instead of fast asleep in the corner he'd been pointed to. But he couldn't sleep.

Jimmy was... gone.

Sweet, clumsy, foolish Jimmy, who had defied the Red Army just to see Scott safe, who had never really wanted to hurt or kill anyone. Beloved Jimmy who hadn't deserved what he got.

His husband Jimmy. Gone. *Really* gone.

When Scott had first died, he'd been thrown utterly off balance by the sudden *lack*, the feeling of a third of his soul missing. Jimmy had described it, but he hadn't been prepared for the feeling, and it'd left him gasping.

It was nothing, *nothing*, compared to the feeling of seeing Jimmy's name on his communicator screen. Realizing he was dead, and then realizing that he was *gone*.

None of them had known before that their final deaths would leave bodies behind. *Scott* hadn't known, until he'd arrived at the desert to see the Red Army walking away with Jimmy's-

With Jimmy.

He hadn't been able to do anything. He had no armor, no weapons, no shield. He'd only had a bunch of extra potions, and clearly he wasn't much use with those either, considering he'd dropped the poison and left himself weak and nauseous until it wore off.

And then they were back into the war, stumbling through the forest, and there was no time to think between scavenging for armor and fighting with Martyn and struggling not to lose another life. Burning Etho's castle had settled something dark and vindictive in his chest, a little bit, and so had Skizz's death when it came.

But now, it was over for the night, and Scott was still restless. And so, *so* angry.

It wasn't *fair*. Jimmy shouldn't have been the first to die- it should have been Ren, who'd painted a target on his own back, or Scar, careless enough that he'd been the first to yellow *and* to red, running around with his llamas and his bees. It shouldn't have been Jimmy.

Above him, he heard Bdubs sigh and start to pace, and he swallowed down the urge to scream.

Maybe it was unfair, to be so angry and so grief-stricken when Bdubs had lost just as much as he had, but- but at least he'd *been there*. Not able to help, maybe, but able to be *there*. He'd told them later, as he showed them the grave that he and Tango had dug, that left dirt still beneath their nails, about the *free pass* Skizz had offered. To collect her body, and bring it back to the Crastle.

It wasn't an honor that Scott had been offered.

Even *Skizz* had gotten a burial, after he'd ripped two lives away. They'd brought his body out to the drawbridge and let the Red Army collect it, after a brief whispered discussion- Scott had almost wanted to keep it away from them purely out of rage, but the idea of leaving it somewhere in the Crastle to taunt them sounded worse. So back home he went.

And away from home Jimmy stayed.

Scott barely restrained himself from punching the chest beside him, tapping his fist against it instead, and pulled his wedding ring off to turn it over in his hands for a moment before he put it back on. Then, he pulled out his communicator.

*You whispered to Renthedog: ren*

*Renthedog whispered to you: major?*

*You whispered to Renthedog: i want a truce*

*You whispered to Renthedog: just for an hour*

*Renthedog whispered to you: why?*

*You whispered to Renthedog: i want his body*

There was a long minute of silence.

*Renthedog whispered to you: Dogwarts' gates are open to you*

Scott was on his feet before he really knew what he was doing, turning back towards the stairs, and only hesitated for a moment.

It was probably a trap. It made *sense*, strategically speaking, for them to take the opportunity he'd just given them, use this as a chance to weaken their team just a bit more. There was no guarantee that he wouldn't just be killed the minute he stepped inside the walls. If any of his allies knew what he'd be doing, they would probably ask what the hell he was thinking.

But then again, none of them had to watch the Red Army walk away with their husband's body, so he wouldn't expect them to understand.

Scott didn't bother gathering his weapons before he left. If it was a trap, it'd be stupid to lose them.

Instead, he crept downstairs, past Impulse and Tango, past Scar and Grian, over the hastily-patched hole at the doorway, and out the door.

Dogwarts wasn't far away, and there was shouting from the walls as soon as he was seen, quickly aborted once he came in earshot. There was the creak of bowstrings, but he didn't bother looking, just met Ren at the open gates.

"Lower your weapons," Ren snapped, voice leaving no room for argument, and when both of them did Scott was grateful for the first time that they'd chosen to bow to a false king. "Major."

"Where is he?"

The others, who had been whispering in the back, went dead silent. Ren looked at him with something heavy and not quite remorseful, like a cousin to regret.

“Follow me,” Ren said, and Scott did.

He trailed him blindly through the fields until finally he was standing in front of a plain door, which he tilted his head towards.

“He’s in there.”

Scott didn’t respond, just stepped forwards. He hesitated for a moment, hand on the doorknob, before he pushed it open, and behind him he could hear Ren murmur something quiet to the others.

And there was Jimmy, before him, looking as beautiful and as young as the day they’d met.

Scott knelt beside him, trembling, and touched his cheek with his fingertips. He almost recoiled at how *cold* he was, but he collected himself, and brushed Jimmy’s hair out of his eyes as gently as he could.

He looked peaceful, somehow, his expression soft and relaxed. Like he was only sleeping, like he’d wake up at Scott’s touch and smile when he saw his face, and Scott would scold him for going and dying on him again and Jimmy would apologize for letting Scott die even though he didn’t need to apologize, the noble idiot, and Scott would cling to him because *god, Jimmy, I thought I’d lost you.*

But he wasn’t sleeping. And he had lost him.

There was a bandage around Jimmy’s throat where the arrow must have struck, and Scott worried at the edges of it, feeling the rough texture under his fingertips.

Who had done it? Ren? Martyn? Skizz, even? Was it the same person who’d washed the sand from his hair and the blood from his face? The same person who’d laid him out here with such care and gentleness, like he was resting?

Scott leaned over and touched his forehead to Jimmy’s, just for a moment, then pressed his face against his chest, fingers trembling where they clutched at his jacket.

“I’m sorry, Jimmy,” he whispered. “I’m sorry I left you there alone.”

Had he been scared? He must have been. Jimmy had been *terrified* once he got to red, even if he tried not to be, even if he didn’t show it when Scott was forever calling after him.

He’d been an awful red, really. He wasn’t like Scar who’d been *delighted* that he was terrifying, or Skizz with his bloodlust, or Ren who’d wanted to be dangerous. He was just... Jimmy, the same Jimmy he’d always been, kind and nervous and a little overenthusiastic, who’d been so reluctant to hurt anyone. Who was so *scared*, of the Red Army, of losing Scott, of dying.

He hadn’t *deserved this*.

And he hadn’t deserved to die without Scott there to tell him it’d be alright.

Scott stayed there for a long time, head pressed against his husband’s unmoving chest, and he didn’t cry even though he wanted to. Eventually, though, he had to sit up, and he traced a finger along the cuff of Jimmy’s jacket.

Scott used to steal it, sometimes, when things were easier, and tease Jimmy about it as he pouted. Somehow, it hadn’t been destroyed yet- there were a few tears, some burns where Jimmy had gotten too close to fire, but nothing unsalvageable.

*What's mine is yours*, Scott had used to tease him, when he protested the theft, and they had both known already that Jimmy didn't really mind but he'd still grinned when Scott had said it, and conceded.

*What's mine is yours*, Scott thought now, bitterly, and carefully pulled the jacket off. The weight didn't feel right on his shoulders, but it was comforting.

Jimmy's ring glinted faintly in the low light, the twin to his own, and Scott took that as well, holding it carefully in his hand. He rose to his feet and went to the door.

"Do you have a piece of string," he rasped, and was surprised by the wretchedness of his own voice.

Ren frowned. "What for?"

Resisting the urge to hold it to his chest protectively, Scott opened his hand and displayed the ring.

Ren looked at it for a long moment, expression unreadable behind his glasses. Then, he reached up and unclasped something from his own neck- a simple black chain. He held it out. Scott took it.

He threaded the chain through Jimmy's ring and put it on, and the ring rested against his heart, cold against his skin.

"I'm taking him home," he said.

Ren glanced up at the moon above their heads. "It's the middle of the night."

"I'm not *waiting*," Scott snapped. "I am going to take my husband home, Ren."

"If you won't wait, let someone come with you," Ren suggested, voice maddeningly level. "You can't carry him and defend yourself from mobs at the same time."

"I don't want your help," Scott snarled. He was near-frantic and he knew it, but he felt crushed, terrified, for no reason at all. More than that, he felt *furios*, the pressure in his chest from seeing Jimmy's body rising and burning into something ugly.

Ren inclined his head. "Be that as it may, if you try to leave now, alone, you will not make it home."

Scott bit down on something cutting. Because- he was right, even if he didn't want to admit it. If he tried to take Jimmy home alone, with no way of defending himself, he'd be killed by mobs before he made it, and Jimmy's body would lie in the woods somewhere.

"If you would like, Martyn can go," Ren offered. "Both of you are yellow. You can't harm each other."

"You say that like the rules still apply," Scott said flatly.

"It's more of a guarantee than you'd have with me or Etho."

Scott looked up at Martyn, whose expression was carefully neutral, and for a moment he hated him so fiercely that he wanted to rip him to pieces with his bare hands.

But he had to get Jimmy home.

"Fine," he said, and turned back.

Jimmy's body was easy to carry, and he tried not to think about the weight of his head against Scott's shoulder as he walked to the gates.

"For what it's worth," Ren called after him. "If that's anything at all. I'm sorry things turned out this way."

"I don't care," Scott said, and left.

He didn't pay attention to Martyn's footsteps following him out, or the soft sounds of bowstrings that preceded a mob dissolving. Jimmy was heavy and utterly still in his arms, and the feeling of his hair against his cheek was near-overwhelming.

There was a whizz of an arrow, and Martyn stepped into view, scarlet shield held up in front of Scott. The arrow hit with a *thunk*, and Scott noticed idly that it would have gone through his shoulder if Martyn hadn't stopped it.

He didn't bother to thank him.

There was a creeper hiss, and the sound of Martyn's sword, and ridiculously Scott thought of Martyn's creeper pranks from when everything started, before the Red Army rose and the lines of war were drawn and friendship became a luxury. Jimmy had been so startled by it, and they'd laughed at him together, and there had been no discussion of sides or betrayals or sacrifices. Everything had been so much brighter, then.

When had they fallen apart? Surely there had to have been a point where everything changed- was it when Jimmy burned the banner? When Ren went red on purpose? Earlier than that?

He couldn't remember how they got here- how the three of them ended up like this, one dead, the second with his blood on his hands, the third ready to burn the world to ashes. At the beginning, they'd all been green, and Scott's biggest worry had been making the valley cute, and it had all been fine, really.

Now Scott and Martyn were yellow. And Jimmy was gone.

The wall- the second wall, since Joel had burned the first to nothing- rose before them, and Scott stopped at the entrance.

"You can't come in," he said.

"Fair enough."

Scott walked inside, and had to swallow a sudden rush of tears at the sight of the valley.

Nothing had changed. Nothing at all.

And of course it hadn't- they were tucked away from the fighting, not like Dogwarts or the Crastle or the desert, and no one had any reason to come here since Scott and Jimmy had left before... everything.

Scott laid Jimmy on the grass as gently as he could and turned slowly, trying to find the right place for a grave. When he turned back towards the wall, he frowned.

Martyn hadn't left- was sitting on top of the wall, bow in hand and shield in easy reach, occasionally sending an arrow out into the forest beyond the walls. He seemed to be... watching Scott, out of the corner of his eye.

He turned when he realized Scott was looking, and for a moment their eyes met, yellow to yellow, and neither of them spoke.

There wasn't any reason for Martyn to be there, really. Scott had thoroughly spawnproofed the entire area, enough that he wasn't in danger from mobs- even if he had been, Martyn had only been sent to make sure he got home safely, not protect him once he was there. It made more sense for him to leave, turn his back the minute Scott had made it inside the walls.

And it made more sense for Scott to want him to. To scream at him, threaten him, shoot him because really it *didn't* matter that they were both yellow. To be angry and vengeful and not be able to look him in the eye without wanting to rip his throat out with his teeth.

*You killed my husband*, Scott thought, and it was just... tired.

He turned away.

It was almost painful to leave Jimmy in the grass, even for just a moment, but he slipped inside his house just briefly to collect stone and a worn iron shovel before he returned to Jimmy's side.

There was a hill overlooking the valley that Jimmy had always liked- Scott had found him there so many times, sprawled out in the grass and flowers, almost glowing in the sunlight. Once, on an evening lit by the setting sun, Scott had seen him and thought foolishly of angels, with the way Jimmy's hair formed a halo around his face, lashes shining golden when he blinked up at Scott, and he'd let himself be pulled down beside him and tangled their fingers together, and he'd thought *this, this, this is all I want, this entire server can go to hell and I'll stay here forever*.

And then war had broken out, and they hadn't had the time for things like that anymore, and now Scott was carrying his husband up to dig his grave.

The shovel broke partway through the digging, so Scott just threw the pieces aside and kept going with his hands, and his arms were sore and his hands were aching and there was dirt beneath his nails and his breath was coming ragged and gasping but there was a grave in front of him.

He considered, for a moment, picking flowers for Jimmy to hold, but all the flowers in the valley still wouldn't be enough. So he didn't.

Scott reached out to lift him again, but his hands left smudges of dirt on his cheeks and there was nowhere to wipe his hands, so he stumbled back down the hill to the lake, blinking what could have been sweat and could have been tears out of his eyes.

He tripped when he was almost at the bottom, vision too blurry to navigate safely, and fell the rest of the way, landing hard in the grass. There was the clanking of armor as Martyn moved, but he stilled again when Scott shifted, rolling onto his back and covering his face with his hands.

For a while, he just stayed there, breathing.

Eventually, he dragged himself to his feet, and knelt by the lake, dipping his hands in. Most of the dirt scrubbed off easily, but there was still bits of stubborn mud beneath his nails, impossible to get out.

When his hands were mostly clean, he headed back up to the grave and wiped the dirt from Jimmy's face before, carefully, he lowered his body into the grave.

He looked smaller, lying there.



Scott closed his eyes and shoved the first heap of dirt back into the grave.

He tried not to think about it, tried not to register the sound it made as it fell, and carefully he shoved pile after pile of dirt into the grave.

Partway through, he made the mistake of looking down, and the sight of Jimmy's face half-covered in dirt made him choke, a panicky feeling clawing up his throat and making his head spin.

*He's not going to be able to breathe,* Scott thought hysterically.

By the time he could bring himself to keep going, there were tears on his cheeks, and his hands were shaking so badly he could barely shove the dirt in. The air smelled earthy and sickly-sweet from the flowers, and mobs groaned from beyond the walls, though Martyn continued shooting them intermittently.

Finally the grave was filled, and Jimmy was buried, and Scott collapsed against the disturbed dirt, gasping for air.

Half-blind with tears, he pulled himself up and stumbled over to a red tulip, waving cheerfully in the wind, and, as gently as he knew how, dug it from the ground.

It was simple, with the dirt still so disturbed, to plant it over the grave. When it was done, Scott sat back and scrubbed his hands over his face, even though it smeared mud across his cheeks more than it got rid of the tears.

"I'm sorry, Jimmy," he choked out, and bent forwards, until his forehead was nearly touching the ground.

He stayed like that for a long time. Eventually, though, he pulled himself to his feet and made his way down into the valley again.

Jimmy's house was quiet and empty, and the sight of it made Scott feel a little bit sick as he hesitated, scuffing his feet over the grass and considering the door. Eventually, though, he took a deep breath and opened the door.

The house was nothing remarkable, really. It was forever messy, which was so *Jimmy* that it hurt, but not really very lived in- usually, they both migrated to Scott's house, and as a result neither of them spent much time in Jimmy's.

Scott jumped through the false painting and looked down at the half-eaten cake left on the ground, and managed to crack a smile.

He'd made it mostly on a whim, something harmless to tease Jimmy with, maybe get him to roll his eyes at him the way he did when he was exasperated but so, so fond. And it had worked- Jimmy had been so worried, and pouted when Scott explained, and then they'd sat in this little room and ate cake together.

It wasn't a very good cake. Not terrible, but the texture was somehow off, and the frosting was far too sweet, almost enough to be sickening. But they'd both eaten it anyway, and Jimmy had gotten white smudged across his cheek and laughed with Scott when he pointed it out, and they'd lingered far longer than they needed to.

It wasn't a good cake, but it was... it was the last time he'd gotten to see Jimmy smile like that.

Robotically, Scott turned away, walked out of the room and out of the house.

It didn't take long to board up Jimmy's door, sloppy but enough to keep anyone from entering, and when he was done he stood in the middle of the valley, staring into the water. His reflection stared back, and it wasn't anyone he recognized.

Grief was constricting his throat, compressing his lungs, and the emptiness of the valley was a twisted mirror of the clawing emptiness that had chased him since he first saw the message, and rage was burning slow and heavy in the pit of his stomach but Skizz was *dead* and there was nothing left to avenge, he had so much love and nowhere to put it down.

Scott crumpled to his knees and *screamed*.

The sound echoed off the walls, and ragged sobs tore their way from his throat, shattering and impossibly heavy. He couldn't *breathe*, couldn't stop shaking, just wrapped his arms around himself in a mockery of comfort and cried.

He was *alone*. The valley was empty and Jimmy was dead and there was nothing left. His chest was caving in and a third of his soul was gone but so was half of his heart and there was nothing left.

There was nothing left.

An arrow flew past him, and he jerked to look just in time to see a spider dissolve into white smoke, mere feet from him. When he looked, Martyn was lowering his bow, and there was something twisted and sad in his expression, and Scott wanted to hate him.

*You killed my husband. You killed my husband and you just saved my life.*

Scott folded in on himself, pressed his forehead to the ground like a prayer for something that would never return, tore the grass to shreds and choked on his own despair. There was a feeling in his stomach like he'd swallowed the void, like he was being taken apart from the inside out, and he wondered if this is what it felt like beneath bedrock, if this is what falling out of the world felt like, some invisible force taking you apart so you'd hang there dying forever.

He curled on his side in the grass, somehow both numb and agonized, and stared blankly out over the water. Lying like this, he could just see Martyn on the wall, some kind of silent sentinel. His shield was just barely visible, and the flash of brilliant red made Scott want to rip his guts out but then he rose and took out his bow and a skeleton toppled into a pile of bones before it could even take a shot over the walls.

Maybe it should have felt wrong, having a breakdown in front of a man whose head he'd wanted on a pike, whose throat he'd tear out at the slightest opportunity, but the valley was too big and too silent and Scott was dissolving but the sound of another person on the wall kept him from drifting away entirely.

Neither of them spoke. Scott cried, and Martyn defended him, and Jimmy's grave watched over them both.

Eventually, the sun rose.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

this is just martyn's pov!

The first thing Martyn noticed when Scott approached the walls was that he was alone. The second was that his hands were empty.

The third, when he grew closer, was how utterly wrecked he looked.

It made something twist in his throat, but it didn't stop him from aiming an arrow at his chest, ready to let go the moment he made a move. Etho, beside him, did the same.

"Lower your weapons," Ren said with a voice like iron, and he did so instinctively, Etho only a half-second behind.

"What's he doing?" Etho whispered under his breath, as Ren stepped forwards to greet him, hands empty of any weapons.

Martyn hissed back, "It might be a distraction-"

"Where is he?" Scott demanded, and Martyn cut off as abruptly as if he'd been shot. Etho inhaled sharply.

"Follow me," Ren said, and there was something about it that was heartbreakingly gentle.

Ren showed him to the small room where Jimmy's body lay, and Scott slipped inside. Before the door shut behind him, Martyn caught a glimpse of the way he knelt, like a puppet with its strings cut.

Ren stood in front of the door, guarding it, eyes a silent challenge to them. It wasn't one Martyn was going to fight- he had no intention of intruding. From the look in his eyes, Etho didn't either.

Martyn had carried Jimmy's body away, after- they'd decided immediately that it would be wrong to leave it there, with Scott and Grian both gone and Scar more interested in running than taking his body. And Martyn had held him, and gotten his blood on his armor, and even through the adrenaline rush and the fact that they had won he'd still been struck by how wrong Jimmy looked lying motionless with an arrow through his throat.

When he'd gotten a chance between battles, he'd taken it out, wiped the blood from his skin and wrapped a bandage over the wound, brushed the sand out of his hair and off his clothes, closed his eyes.

He'd considered burying him, but it felt wrong. Jimmy wasn't of Dogwarts, and burying him beside Skizz...

They weren't the ones who had loved him. Martyn had respected him, not wished harm on him any more than he did any of their opponents, could care for his body, but they weren't the ones who had loved him.

He'd considered, briefly, calling Scott over to retrieve him, but there hadn't been time and it was likely that he'd have thought it was a trap. Besides, he didn't have the final call- as far as anything went inside the walls, it was up to Ren.

The door opened, and Scott emerged. He didn't look like he'd been crying, but his expression was devastated.

He was wearing Jimmy's jacket.

"Do you have a piece of string," he said, and his voice was rough and quiet and held so much pain that it punched the breath from Martyn's chest.

"What for?" Ren asked.

Scott opened his hand. A golden ring sat in his palm- a *wedding* ring. The pair of the one on his finger.

There was a long moment of silence, and then Ren took off one of his own chains, holding it out to Scott. Slowly, he took it.

Scott's hands shook enough that it took him three tries to latch the chain, but eventually he managed it, tucking the ring beneath his shirt. Then, his expression firmed, hands curling into fists.

"I'm taking him home," he said, and his voice left no room for argument.

"It's the middle of the night," Ren pointed out, and Scott's expression shifted to rage so abruptly that Martyn's hand instinctively dropped to his sword.

"I'm not *waiting*. I am going to take my husband home, Ren."

Ren didn't seem afraid, even with the tension running through Scott's every movement, the lethal rage in his eyes. "If you won't wait, let someone come with you. You can't carry him and defend yourself from mobs at the same time."

"I don't want your help," Scott snapped, and there was a look in his eyes like shattered glass, sharp and broken. Like the world had been torn from beneath his feet and now he was flailing for any sort of foothold.

Martyn let his hand fall from his sword.

"Be that as it may, if you try to leave now, alone, you will not make it home," Ren said, calm and soothing.

Scott was silent for a long moment, breaths harsh and uneven, and ran his fingers over a tear in Jimmy's jacket briefly.

"If you would like, Martyn can go," Ren said, and Etho sent him a startled glance but Martyn didn't argue. "Both of you are yellow. You can't harm each other."

Scott scoffed. "You say that like the rules still apply."

"It's more of a guarantee than you'd have with me or Etho," Ren said.

Scott looked at him, and Martyn met his eyes, trying not to flinch at the fury there.

He wasn't sure what Scott was looking for, but he must have found it, because he said, "Fine," and

went back to Jimmy.

Jimmy's body looked wrong hanging limp in Scott's arms, head lolling against his shoulder, still and quiet. Scott wasn't looking down at him, gaze carefully directed away.

"For what it's worth, if that's anything at all," Ren called as Scott walked away. "I'm sorry things turned out this way."

"I don't care," Scott said, and then he was gone, walking out through the gates.

"Martyn—"

"I'll get him home, my lord," Martyn promised, and ran to catch up.

Scott didn't seem to be paying attention to where he was going, or to the mobs approaching, so Martyn pulled out his bow, picking off the ones that got close. When a skeleton raised its bow, he dodged forwards to put his shield between the arrow and Scott, rocking back slightly with the impact.

Scott didn't even flinch. Martyn swallowed back the urge to ask if he was alright- he already knew the answer. And even if he didn't, he was probably the last person Scott wanted to hear that from.

They hadn't always been fighting. Towards the beginning, they'd gotten along, been friends, even. And they'd *known* that it couldn't last forever, that only one of them would end up alive at the end of it, that when lives started being lost they'd have to draw lines and it was unlikely all of them would end up on the same side, but they'd all been green and that had felt so distant, so unreal, that they hadn't cared.

They'd been friends once. They'd *loved* each other once. And then everything had fallen apart, and now Martyn was the Hand of the King and Scott was a widow and it hadn't been his arrow to kill Jimmy but it still felt like his fault.

Scott's eyes looked dead, tired and broken and empty, and maybe he had made a mistake, loving Jimmy so much. They'd picked each other, even though they'd known from the beginning that it wouldn't last. Eventually, one of them would have to lose the other.

And Scott had and now he was walking through the woods like a ghost with a body in his arms, and maybe it had been foolish of him to love so much but if it had been Ren lying in the sand with an arrow in his throat and his blood staining the floors, Martyn knew that he would look just as lost and angry.

He would walk into the heart of enemy territory to bring him home. He would carry him through the forests and it wouldn't matter if it was night. He would burn the world down in his grief.

So maybe Scott had made a mistake, loving anyone at all on this server enough that their death left him so shattered. But Martyn had made the exact same one. He'd just been luckier, for now.

Scott stopped at the entrance to the valley. "You can't come in."

"Fair enough," Martyn said, and watched him walk through, sword hanging uselessly in his hand.

He almost turned away, back towards Dogwarts, but Scott was setting Jimmy down in the grass and he looked so... lonely, there, standing over his husband's body. Illogically, Martyn thought he looked like the last person left in the world.

He couldn't go in, but he could climb the walls and sit down, overlooking the valley, the quiet lake. Mostly, he picked off mobs before they could attack him or shamle through the entrance, but he kept an eye on Scott as he turned.

He looked up at Martyn, and he still looked so angry but after barely a breath it crumpled into exhaustion, heavy and tired and empty, and some kind of unconscious understanding passed between them.

Scott turned away, back towards his house, and left Jimmy in the grass.

It was less than a minute before he returned, and he held Jimmy's body carefully as he picked his way up one of the mountains that framed the valley. When he reached the top, he started to dig.

It looked slow, and painful, and arduous, especially when the shovel in his hands broke with an audible *snap*. He didn't falter, just started to dig with his hands, and Martyn almost went to help him when he saw the way his shoulders were shaking but he didn't.

Scott crouched at Jimmy's side for a moment before he shot back to his feet, swaying as he stumbled back down the hill, far less careful than he'd been going up. When he was nearly there, he slipped on a muddy patch and crumpled, landing hard at the bottom.

Martyn shot to his feet, concern sharp in his throat as Scott lay unmoving, reaching out uselessly towards him. It hadn't looked like that far of a fall, but maybe Scott had landed hard or on his head, or maybe he'd misjudged it-

Scott shifted, dragging his hands over his face, and Martyn sat again, heartbeat settling.

He was fine. He wasn't hurt. He didn't need or want Martyn to step in.

Martyn kept an eye on him as he picked off the few mobs that he could hear outside the walls, waiting with his heart in his throat for him to stand. Long minutes later, he did, and fell to his knees by the lake, dipping his hands in the water.

To get the dirt off, he realized. Washing the dirt off after he'd dug a grave with his bare hands.

Scott stood, and headed back up the hill. After a moment's consideration, hands brushing across Jimmy's face, he lifted him into the hole he'd dug and started to slowly, painfully push the dirt back in.

He started to sob partway through, bent over the grave with his hair falling in his face, and the catches in his breath were audible even from Martyn's place on the wall, raw and sharp.

Martyn couldn't do anything. Scott was breaking in front of him, and he couldn't do anything, because even if the one who'd ended Jimmy's life was gone the weight of his death was still on the Red Army's shoulders. His blood was on Martyn's hands and he didn't get to run from that.

It hadn't been his arrow to kill Jimmy, but he had watched as he'd died, with his feet on the ladder. He'd stood aside and thought it just.

Jimmy's death had been for Dogwarts. During the battle, it had seemed so much more necessary than it did now, watching Scott weeping over his grave, bent over so far that his forehead nearly touched the ground, like a prayer, like he was begging the universe for mercy that wouldn't come.

Martyn watched as he got to his feet, muddy and tear-stained, and walked down to the valley. He hesitated in front of Jimmy's door, kicking at the grass, resting his hand on the door and stepping

away. Eventually, he pushed it open and entered.

For a while, everything was silent.

Scott emerged a few minutes later, every movement heavy with exhaustion, and blocked up the door behind him. Then he stood by the lake, watching the rippling water, motionless.

As suddenly as if he'd been stabbed, he crumpled to the ground and *screamed*, and it was the most awful sound Martyn had ever heard, worse than Ren's body falling to the ground, worse than the static when he'd died, worse than the choked noise Jimmy had made when the arrow pierced his throat. It was raw and animalistic and echoed over the empty place that had once been a home and trailed off into sobbing, so harsh and ugly that Martyn's first thought was *he's not going to be able to breathe*.

He wanted to leave, give Scott privacy in his grief- it didn't feel like something that he should be seeing, not when he was to blame, not when any love between them had been buried with Jimmy.

But he wanted to help, wanted to go to him and ease the pain however he could, wanted to do anything he could to stop Scott looking so devastatingly alone. He wanted to wind back the clock and go back to when they were all green and whole and brilliantly alive, he wanted to tear the server down and build it back kinder this time, he wanted to tell Scott he was sorry.

He was frozen, watching Scott scream himself to pieces in the grass, and then there was a hissing and scuttling and a spider crawled over the walls, headed straight for Scott. Before he knew what he was doing, he'd nocked an arrow, pull back, release, and Scott turned to look as the spider shriveled and died.

He looked up at Martyn, eyes glossy with tears, face cracked open with heartache, and for a moment he thought he was going to scream but he just stared, horrified and lonely and utterly lacking the rage he'd expected.

Martyn swallowed, almost stepped back off the wall.

This was something he was never meant to see. This was something that was for Scott and for Jimmy and never, never for him. He wasn't meant to see the way Scott collapsed, unable to stand anymore. He wasn't supposed to be watching as his enemy grieved, screamed and sobbed like he was being taken apart.

But Scott fell to his side, face turned towards Martyn, and as awful as it felt to be intruding it would be worse to walk away, leave him on his own. He couldn't step in, couldn't help, but he could stay, pick off the mobs that tried to approach with more brutality than was strictly warranted, and defend Scott as he mourned.

They would be missing him back at Dogwarts, most likely. It had been far longer than he'd planned to be gone, and even though they could see the lack of death messages on the communicators Ren and Etho would probably be worried. He'd be more useful for the war if he went home and rested.

Tomorrow, they'd be enemies again, and Martyn would bow to his king and take up his vow to give everything for him. Tomorrow, they would battle again, and Scott wouldn't have time for grief and Martyn wouldn't have time for remorse.

But for now, the war could wait.

He didn't leave, not until the sun stretched golden across the water.

## End Notes

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