

The Worst Birthday Present

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/46149859) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/46149859>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hermitcraft SMP
Relationship:	EthosLab & TangoTek (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	TangoTek (Video Blogging RPF) , EthosLab (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Modern Setting , Alternate Universe - Vampire , Vampires , Blood , Blood Drinking , Vampire Bites , Mentions of alcohol , mentions of assault , Origin Story , I think that's everything that needs tagging??
Language:	English
Series:	Part 11 of Vampires and Werewolves
Stats:	Published: 2023-03-31 Words: 4,707 Chapters: 1/1

The Worst Birthday Present

by [Fire_Cat](#)

Summary

Tango's plan had been to go out and have some drinks for his birthday. That was it. It was supposed to have been a fun night night out.

Tango's plan had *not* involved being bitten by a vampire and chased through the streets by some weirdo in a mask a week later.

But, that did seem to be what was happening.

(Also known as, Tango's plans didn't go quite how he'd expected. Good thing there's a friendly vampire around to help him out, even if he's not too willing to accept it at first.)

Notes

Hello everyone! I am back with more vampire/werewolf au fic! This one has been in the works for a couple months but I finally got it done! Took a while, but got there in the end.

We have some more origin stories in this fic! I did say I'd focus on some other characters, and- okay, Etho is in this one, but the focus is Tango! Despite how long it took to get written I had fun with it!

We're timetravelling again for this one as we go back to the 1990s, that also means that unless I move the fics around they're no longer in order in the series list but eh, it doesn't matter.

Don't have much more to say for this one I don't think, so yeah. Thank you to DoctorBethany for doing some beta-reading, and as always thank you to my wonderful friend CJ for building the AU with me!

Enjoy! <3

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

-- April, 199X, 30 years ago --

The past week had been little more than a blur of fever and nausea. At first, Tango had thought it was just a bad hangover, he did have a little more to drink than maybe he should have the night before after all.

But instead of easing up throughout the morning like a hangover usually would, he found himself feeling worse and worse. Until, by the evening, he barely had the strength to sit up in bed, let alone anything else.

At that point, Tango assumed he must have caught the flu, or maybe a nasty stomach bug. Something like that. It would explain why he felt so ill. He'd been surrounded by people in a busy club the night before, catching something from somebody was far from unbelievable.

Whatever it was, Tango would much rather be at home in his own bed, than here in a hotel room on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

It wasn't until the second morning, after all but dragging himself into the bathroom and spotting his reflection in the mirror, that he'd noticed the mark on his neck. Hazy, drunken memories from two nights ago finally cleared in his mind.

He'd gone out with some work friends for his birthday, he remembered that much. This trip was supposed to be for work, but since the dates had coincided he'd decided to have a bit of fun. And besides, it was a Saturday, so it'd be fine.

He had too much to drink, he could admit that. Had maybe gotten a little carried away. He could remember dancing to the loud music, the colorful lights shining in his eyes. Could remember a stranger coming up to him at the bar. Could remember them smiling and flirting with him.

He hadn't turned them away, maybe he should have.

Too drunk to think rationally, he'd flirted back. He didn't resist when they'd taken his hand and led him through the crowd to a quieter part of the club.

He'd kissed them. Or they'd kissed him, he wasn't entirely sure which way around it had been.

In truth, he couldn't remember if it had been a man or a woman either, that usually wasn't a good sign. Both were perfectly possible, but not remembering wasn't ideal.

God, if it was a man he hoped no one he knew had seen him kissing them. He really didn't want to deal with that.

He could remember a pain in his neck and a glimpse of sharp fangs. A struggle that had somehow ended up with him outside, lightheaded and alone. Sat on the ground with his own blood on his

hands and the foul tang of copper in his mouth.

He stumbled back to his hotel room after that. Had fallen asleep within moments of his head hitting the pillow, and woke up the next morning feeling awful.

Now, a week later, Tango felt okay. Or, better than he had since he'd fallen ill anyway. He didn't feel sick, his head didn't hurt, he wasn't feverish and he could think clearly again. Well, mostly.

Something was nagging in his mind. Something that he couldn't quite figure out. He felt hungry. Starving. He hadn't eaten in days, trying to had only resulted in him throwing up whatever he managed to swallow. So maybe it was just his brain telling him to eat. But it felt different from any food craving he'd ever had before.

He wasn't sure, but maybe trying to eat would solve the issue. What snacks and things he'd been hoarding in his room were all gone, so he pulled on his boots and jacket and made his way outside.

The spring air was cold and damp, the yellow glow of the street lights reflected off the wet sidewalk under his feet. It must have rained, though the dark sky was clear now.

Tango kept his head down as he walked. There was a little shop not far away, he'd go there, get a sandwich or something and hopefully, that would make him feel better.

He didn't know what time it was, or what day. But there were people on the street, going about their night. None of them seemed to pay him any mind, but he wasn't sure why they would.

Something was drawing him towards them though. Something in his head briefly locked on to each person who passed by. Staring at them for a moment before pulling his gaze away.

Tango couldn't work out why he kept doing it. He wasn't interested in these random strangers, but something was telling him to get closer. That these people were what he needed right now. Somehow.

It didn't make sense. He was hungry, he needed food. That was it.

Right?

The more he thought about it, the more on edge he felt. His eyes lingered on passersby more and more. Having to pause and remind himself more than once why he was out here in the first place so that he could get back on track.

A coppery scent caught his attention, faint but there. His brain quickly told him it was blood. That he should follow it.

Tango turned his head to where the smell was coming from. Two men were laughing across the street, a broken bottle at their feet. There was red on one of their hands. Blood.

He licked his lips, fighting to pull his gaze away. The now very loud *something* in his head was telling him to go over there.

Maybe he should stop fighting it and listen. Maybe...

"Hey buddy, you look a little disorientated, you alright?" came a voice from behind him as someone's hands squeezed his shoulders.

Tango whirled around to see a tall man with bleached blonde hair, scars slashed across the left side

of his face and mask over his mouth and nose. He smiled with his eyes, and dropped his hands to his sides, "You okay?" he asked again, sounding genuinely concerned.

Tango took a step back, glaring up at the stranger. He wanted to say something, tell him he was fine. But no words came.

"Easy does it. I think I know what you're dealing with right now. But I can help, okay? You just need to calm down." said the man, his voice level and calm.

The *something* in his head told him to get away from this stranger. Pointing out how his eyes shimmered with red under the street lights. Tango didn't know what to do, other than to listen.

He didn't recognize the growl that escaped his throat before he turned and ran down the street. The stranger shouted after him, but he ignored it and kept moving.

Despite the hunger in his gut and how tired he felt, he was certain he was running faster than he ever had in his life. Sidestepping other people on the street with remarkable ease, as if his reflexes were heightened.

People yelled at him and told him to watch where he was going, but he paid them no mind.

Not until he heard the stranger's voice again, anyway. A glance over his shoulder told him that the man was catching up.

Tango turned a corner, hoping he might be able to lose him. He didn't know who that guy was, but there was no way in hell he was letting him anywhere near him.

Distantly, he was starting to realize that despite running so much, he wasn't getting out of breath. He couldn't feel his heart pounding in his chest as he would expect either. That was... Strange.

Tango looked over his shoulder again, and this time he didn't see anyone following him. He slowed to a jog, glancing around to make sure he had gotten away. He wasn't going to let his guard down so quickly.

If he wasn't being chased, he could do what he'd planned on doing. He had run right past his original destination, which was annoying. But he could probably loop back around and find his way there again, shouldn't be too difficult.

He took a deep breath, vaguely aware that it felt like he had to force the air into his lungs, before he started walking again. This street was a lot quieter, and he wasn't entirely sure where he'd ended up, but he couldn't be that far from where he'd wanted to go, it'd be fine.

A ruffling of fabric caught his attention, and a shadow dropped down in front of him. Tango stumbled back as it stood straight, the darkness clinging strangely to the figure, before fading to reveal the blonde man from before.

"You're pretty speedy for a fledgling." he smiled, hands in his pockets.

"Where did you.." Tango muttered, looking up as he tried to figure out where the man had come from. The buildings here were tall, he couldn't have jumped down from up there. How would he have even gotten up there in the first place? What was going on??

"Oh so you can talk, that makes things easier." said the man, "I know you're confused and probably frightened right now, but I really do just want to help you."

"Why would I- I don't even know you, dude! Stop chasing me!" Tango snapped, balling his hands into fists at his sides and taking another step back.

"I'm not going to hurt you."

"Then leave me alone!"

The man raised his hands in surrender. "I want to help you. I know what you're going through right now and I know how to help."

Tango shook his head and stepped back. "No. I don't need- I don't need you to- you probably just want to- leave me alone!" he said through gritted teeth, hearing himself growl again before he turned and ran back down the street.

The stranger yelled after him, clearly he wasn't giving in so easily.

Who the hell was this guy anyway? Did he not realize that chasing people around offering 'help' was insanely suspicious? Tango didn't particularly want to get murdered or kidnapped tonight, thank you very much!

Maybe he should have stayed on busier streets, he was probably less likely to get attacked if there were people around. But on the other hand, if he turned down smaller quieter streets enough times maybe he could shake off his pursuer.

Empty alleyways weren't the nicest place though, perhaps especially not in a busy city like this. But if it gave him somewhere to hide then it was probably fine. Right?

By now he should be exhausted and out of breath, but he wasn't. That crossed his mind as he ran. He felt faster and more agile than he ever had in his life. Sprinting down small streets and alleyways, sidestepping anything or anyone that got in his way, and leaping over a fence as easily as he might hop over a puddle on a rainy day.

What the hell was going on?!

Maybe this was just some weird dream. Maybe he was still laying in bed delirious from fever.

Yeah, yeah that'd make more sense than whatever was actually happening. Endless stamina? Feeling fitter now, in his thirties, than he had when he was fifteen and considerably more active? Yeah. Had to be a dream.

Then the weirdo chasing him was also just a dream. Why was he dreaming about being chased though? Did that have a meaning? Dreams had meanings right? He could never remember any of them.

Tango kept running, glancing over his shoulder to check for the guy following him.

There was nobody there, had he lost him? For real this time?

Before he could work it out he collided with something. *Someone*. Someone who then wrapped their arms around him and held him tight.

"Hey!" Tango yelled, trying to push against their chest and get away. "Get off me!"

"Easy." It was the blonde man from before. "You need to calm down."

"What the hell do you want from me, get off!!!" Tango tried his best to free himself, but it wasn't

working. Whoever this guy was, he was strong. Ridiculously strong. And he didn't even budge despite Tango's struggles.

This was where he got murdered, right? Or kidnapped? That's what was happening here? That'd be fun...

The man didn't say anything else. Tango felt him shift his grip and, almost gently, pull his feet out from under him. Lowering him down onto the ground.

Tango hit the sidewalk with a muffled grunt, trying to squirm free but stopped when the man's weight pressed against his back, his legs pinning Tango's arms to his sides.

Tango growled again, he wasn't quite sure how he was making that sound but he didn't care either. It fit how he felt right now. Angry and confused and just a bit scared. So he'd snarl like a frightened animal.

"You really are feisty." said the man, his voice still calm. Tango turned his head and looked up to see the man pull his mask down. Showing more scars on his pale face and sharp fangs in his mouth.

Fangs. Sharp fangs just like when he was attacked a few days ago. Or- whenever it was. Last week. He wasn't sure.

Still. Was this the same guy?

There was too much going on in his head and the memories were hazy. He couldn't remember!

"You- you- was it you who-" Tango stuttered, struggling to get words out.

"Who attacked you before? Bit you? About- maybe a week ago?" The man spoke as if he knew exactly what was going through Tango's head, it was unnerving. Had it been this guy that he'd met at the bar before? "No," he added, answering his own questions with a small shake of his head, pushing his hair away from his eyes as the movement made it fall over his face. "No, it wasn't me. I wouldn't do that." he shrugged as he pulled the sleeve of his jacket up to his elbow.

"Wouldn't- wouldn't do what?" Tango asked, swallowing hard against the spark of fear in his chest.

"I don't see the point in turning humans. Especially if you're just going to abandon them afterward." he seemed to know what he was talking about, though it didn't make any sense to Tango. 'Turning humans'? What was he talking about? Who was this guy?!

Tango opened his mouth to speak again but stopped when the man brought his own wrist to his mouth and sank his fangs into the skin. It must have hurt, but he didn't even wince. Blood seeped from the wound and slid down his chin. The scent caught Tango's attention immediately.

He couldn't pull his eyes away from the dark red liquid on the man's arm, and he followed it effortlessly as the stranger leaned forwards and held his bleeding wrist close to Tango's face.

He heard him speak, but he was so focused on what was in front of him that he didn't process any of the words. The *something* in his brain was screaming now. Yelling that this was what he needed!

But why? Why blood? Why did he need blood...

"Drink. I know you want to. It'll help, I promise." the man said, his voice getting through to Tango

this time.

Tango fought against the urge to bite. He shouldn't want to do that! He shouldn't- but- right now. For some reason. He needed it. It felt like it would solve everything.

The man moved his wrist closer, the metallic scent of blood filling Tango's nose and leaving room for nothing else.

He could only resist it for another few seconds before he gave in.

The moment he sank his teeth into the man's wrist, hot blood filled his mouth. He'd expected the unpleasant tang of copper on his tongue, but instead, it almost tasted sweet. Not quite, but almost. It certainly wasn't metallic though. It wasn't unpleasant either.

With each mouthful of blood he swallowed, the hunger pains in his stomach settled, and the *something* that had been shouting in his head- instincts, maybe? - grew quieter before fading completely.

Drinking blood calmed him down and made him feel better. Okay. That gave him some idea of what might have happened to him.

He didn't like it. Didn't see how it could be real. But, it was an explanation. Albeit, a ridiculous one.

After about a minute the man pulled his wrist free. Tango hissed as it was taken from him and froze a second later, wondering where the heck that had come from.

The response he got was a light chuckle, the weight on top of him shifting slightly as the man leaned down, almost face-to-face with Tango. "If I get off of you now will you try to run away again?" he asked, his smile creasing the corners of his eyes.

It took a few moments for Tango to reply. He didn't want to run anymore. He didn't feel tired, if anything, he felt better now than he had a mere five minutes ago. But running hadn't worked before. Whoever this stranger was, he was far too fast to be outrun.

"I'll stay," Tango said simply, not entirely sure what he was getting himself into, but also not sure he had a choice in the matter.

With that, the man stood and moved to crouch in front of him. Waiting and watching as Tango pushed himself up onto his knees and wiped the blood from his mouth with the sleeve of his jacket.

The man chuckled again and reached into his coat pocket. Tango eyed him warily, but couldn't help the small smile that tugged at his lips when all that was pulled out was a packet of tissues.

"Here, clean yourself up," he said. Tango took the tissues with a small 'thanks' and tried to get the worst of the blood off his face. He could feel it on his skin, he must look a mess. "My name's Etho, by the way," the man added. For some reason, Tango hadn't expected to be told his name. 'Etho' was a bit of an unusual one though. Then again, it could be a nickname. And as someone who was known mostly by a nickname, that wasn't something Tango could fault the guy for. "I'm sorry for being a bit rough with you. You kept running from me and I ran out of ideas."

"It's... Well, it's not *fine*. But, don't worry about it. I think." Tango shrugged, what else was he supposed to say?

"You feeling better now?" Etho asked, his smile almost looking nervous. Tango couldn't quite

place his accent, he didn't sound British, so he probably wasn't local, but he didn't sound American either. It'd come to him in a moment.

"Yeah. I don't know what's going on though. What... What happened to me.." An explanation for what had happened and why this whole incident occurred in the first place would be great.

Etho hummed and shifted so that he was sat cross-legged on the ground, rather than crouching. "Considering the state you're in now. I'm gonna guess that about a week or so ago, you were attacked and bitten by a vampire."

"Vampires aren't real, dude."

"And yet, here we are."

Tango stared at him. "This is a nightmare."

"Yeah, it can be kinda hard to figure out."

"No, I mean this is an *actual* nightmare. I'm still in bed with a fever. This is some crazy fever dream."

Etho chuckled but didn't confirm or deny Tango's ramblings. "What's your name, buddy?"

Tango paused, sighed, and then answered. "Tom. Though, pretty much everyone calls me Tango nowadays."

"Tango? Sweet. Can I call you that?"

"Yeah, go for it. To be honest, anyone other than my grandmother calling me Tom feels weird at this point." Tango said, smiling a little. "Actually no, that's not true. My grandma calls me Thomas. My brother-in-law calls me Tom, and my boss calls me Tim."

Etho laughed. "How the heck did that happen?"

"I don't know, I just gave up trying to correct him." Tango shrugged.

Etho's laugh calmed to another chuckle, and he looked down at his hands for a few seconds before speaking again. "You probably have questions for me, don't you?"

"Yeah, quite a few actually, dude," Tango said with a nod. "Like- like vampires are real?? And- and why would somebody that I don't even know want to- to randomly- vampirificate me!"

"Vampires are indeed real," Etho said like it was obvious. "But as for why someone would turn you. I don't know. I've been around a long time and I still haven't figured out why anyone would want to put this curse on somebody else." he continued, looking off down the empty street for a moment as he spoke.

Tango briefly wondered how old he was. How long was a 'long time' to a vampire? Were they immortal like in stories? Did he not like being a vampire? So many questions...

"Do you remember anything about the person who bit you?" Etho asked.

The question brought Tango out of his thoughts and he found himself staring for a few seconds before he processed what he'd been asked. "What? Oh. Uh- no. No not really." he said, rubbing at the back of his neck. "I- I was drunk. So. It's all a bit of a blur, really."

Etho hummed and scratched his cheek before pulling his mask back up over his mouth and nose. "You don't remember anything?"

"Does it matter?"

"Not necessarily." Etho shrugged, "But if they're someone I know I could talk to them about abandoning their fledglings."

"Sorry dude, if I'm honest, I couldn't even tell you if they were a guy or a girl. They just came up to me at the bar and, yeah.." he trailed off, not sure he wanted to go into more detail than that right now. Not that he remembered much else.

They stayed silent for a moment before Etho hummed and hopped to his feet. Tango looked up to see him holding out his hand "Think about it, okay? If you remember anything it could be useful." he said, the corners of his eyes creasing with a hidden smile.

"Yeah, alright, I'll think about it." Was all Tango managed to get out of his mouth, taking Etho's hand in his and letting him pull him upright. In that action alone he could feel the strength in Etho's arms. How strong was this guy? "So um. What now?" he asked, deciding that was probably more important.

After all, what *was* he supposed to do now? He was a vampire. Apparently. That still sounded *insane* but he supposed he'd just have to roll with it. This random guy - Canadian! He was *Canadian!* That's what his accent was - was *also*, apparently, a vampire. And had, somehow, for some reason, helped him. He didn't *seem* to be actively planning on murdering him, though the possibility of kidnapping wasn't entirely off the cards yet.

"That depends. You sound American, so I'm gonna guess that you're not local." Etho said, crossing his arms over his chest as he spoke.

"No, I came here on a work trip."

"You got drunk on a work trip?"

"It was my birthday. So. We went out and had some drinks. Kinda... Kinda wish I'd stayed home now." Tango said, his voice coming out a little tight. It had been a fun night until the whole 'being bitten by a vampire' thing. Staying at home probably would have been the better option, looking back.

Hindsight was a wonderful thing.

"Snap. Crappy birthday then huh."

"Little bit, yeah!"

Etho patted his shoulder, before putting his arm around him and leading him down the otherwise empty street. Tango didn't try to resist, maybe he should have, but he didn't. And he walked alongside Etho, wondering where they were going. Although for some reason asking that wasn't what came out of his mouth. "You don't sound local either."

"Nope, I'm Canadian. But I've been in this city for a long time now."

"How long is a long time?"

Etho hummed and looked up at the sky, the yellow glow of the streetlights blotted out most of the

stars. "In this case? Sixty years? I think?"

"Sixty years.." Tango muttered, looking down at his boots as he walked. Etho had been in this city for twice as long as he'd been alive, and yet if he had to guess his age, Tango probably wouldn't put him at older than twenty-five. "How old are you?" he asked, not sure if he'd get an answer to that one, but he was curious.

"Much older than you." Etho smiled, squeezing his shoulder before dropping his arm away from him and tucking his hands in his coat pockets. Tango decided to take that answer for what it was and not pry any further. Though he was curious, he didn't want to give this guy any reason to get annoyed with him.

"So. Where are we going, exactly?" he asked instead.

"I'm going to take you to the Vampire Court," Etho said simply, looking ahead as he walked.

"Vampire Court?" What did that mean? 'Court' made him think of some kind of legal thing but somehow he didn't think that was the case.

Etho nodded. "It's the best place for a new fledgling to be, especially one who's been abandoned by whoever turned them. They're good people, they can help you figure out what to do next."

Tango didn't reply straight away, what he'd do from here had crossed his mind but now that it had been said so plainly, what the hell *was* he supposed to do now?!

He couldn't go back to his boss and say 'sorry I vanished for a week, I was turned into a vampire!'

He couldn't call his parents or his sister and say 'not sure when I'll be back home, I'm sort of a vampire now!'

How would he even get back home? The flight took eight hours, and vampires burnt in the sun, what was he supposed to do to avoid that happening?

Were vampires even allowed on planes?!

Tango didn't realize that he'd stopped walking until he felt Etho's hand on his shoulder again.

"Tango? You okay buddy?"

Tango blinked, bringing his focus back to the world around him. "Yeah... Yeah just- dude what *do* I do next? How the hell am I supposed to get home or- what do I do?" he was rambling a little, running his hands through his blonde hair and trying not to panic.

"That's why I'm taking you to the Court. Xisuma and the others can go over your options with you. Help you decide what to do from here." Etho said calmly, squeezing Tango's shoulder before moving his hand away. "I won't say it'll be easy, but they'll help you come to a decision. Whether you want to find a way home or stay here, or whatever you want to do."

Tango nodded and took a breath, it really did feel like he had to force oxygen into his lungs. Though, maybe that was because he was a vampire now. Vampires were usually undead so he probably didn't need to breathe anymore. That would explain it.

"Right. Okay. Let's- let's go then. Lead the way." he said, shoving his hands into his jacket pockets and looking down at his boots as they started walking again.

This would be... Interesting. Yes. Interesting. This wasn't how he'd expected to spend his time away.

Etho seemed nice though, the odds of him being some kind of criminal felt fairly low at this point. Time would tell, but still.

Vampires. He was a vampire now. Vampires were real. He had been attacked by a *vampire*.

This was nonsense.

Nonsense.

Probably still just a fever dream!

Felt a bit too real to be a weird dream though.

Oh well, life did like to throw challenges at him, this was just another oddity to work around.

He was good at solving problems. Usually. It'd be fine.

Right?

Whatever happened though, Tango did know one thing.

Vampirism was probably the *worst* birthday present *ever*.

End Notes

Welcome to the world of vampires Tango, enjoy your stay! You're gonna be here a while. Etho will make sure you get to the Court and get the help you need.

Originally I was going to end the fic with them arriving at the Court but I felt like that would drag things out a bit too much so I didn't end up doing that. Doc was also supposed to be in this originally, but writing a chase scene with two characters was already tricky enough, yet alone adding a third halfway through, so I decided to remove him in the end and just have Etho.

There's some other stuff for this AU that I want to write, little things and longer stuff too. Not sure what I'm gonna do next, but I do seem to have found my writing groove again lately which is awesome, so I guess we'll have to wait and see what happens next ~ (And if I start posting Naruto fic I apologise, I seem to have reawoken my weeb phase over the past few months or so and have watched- well, a lot of Naruto pfft)

But yeah! That's everything I think. As always you can find me on Tumblr, [this au has it's own tag](#) where I post art and stuff for it! I did some doodles for this fic before I started writing that I might post at some point. But yeah! As always, thank you so much for reading and for leaving comments and kudos! I love you all!

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